

2023 SENATE EDUCATION

SCR 4002

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SCR 4002
1/16/2023

A concurrent resolution designating Dr. Denise Lajimodiere as Post Laureate of ND.

11:30 AM Chair Elkin opened hearing. Present: Chair Elkin, Vice Chair Beard, Sen Axtman, Sen Conley, Sen Lemm, and Sen Wobbema.

Discussion Topics:

- Honorary post
- Reverence to indigenous community
- Dr. Denise Lajimodiere's life

11:30 AM Sen Tim Mathern, introduced the resolution in support. No written.

11:36 AM Kim Konikow, Ex Dir ND Council of Arts, testified in support #13388

11:42 AM Dr. Kathy Brock Enger testified in support #13553

11:47 AM Dr. Ruth Plenty Sweetgrass-She Kills testified in support with no written testimony.

11:50 AM Dr. Denise Lajimodiere, Belcourt, ND, testified in support #13396

Sen Wobbema moved a DO PASS.

Sen Conley seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Jay Elkin	Y
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Cole Conley	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Michael A. Wobbema	Y

VOTE: YES 6 NO 0 Absent 0 Motion PASSED

Sen Conley is carrying the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Suzanne Kelley, in support #13481

Loretta DeLong, in support #13453

Jacqueline Frederick, in support #13432

Bonnie Staiger, in support #13385

Denise Low, in support #13356

11:53 AM Chair Elkin closed the hearing.

Pam Dever, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SCR 4002: Education Committee (Sen. Elkin, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4002 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This resolution does not affect workforce development.

2023 HOUSE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

SCR 4002

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Political Subdivisions Committee Room JW327B, State Capitol

SCR 4002
3/2/2023

A concurrent resolution designating Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as Poet Laureate of North Dakota.

9:44 AM Chairman Longmuir opened the hearing. Members present: Chairman Longmuir, Vice Chairman Fegley, Rep. Hatlestad, Rep. Heilman, Rep. Holle, Rep. Jonas, Rep. Klemin, Rep. Motschenbacher, Rep. Ostlie, Rep. Rios, Rep. Toman, Rep. Warrey, Rep. Davis, and Rep. Hager.

Discussion Topics:

- Poet Denise Lajimodiere.
- Two year term limit.

Senator Mathem: Introduced the bill. Testimony # 21741

Rep. Davis: Testimony #21659

Denise Lajimodiere: Testimony #21296

Kim Konikow, Executive Director, NDCA: Testimony # 21294

Carole Woiwode, Jamestown, ND: Rep. Ostlie read Testimony #22715

Additional written testimony:

Bonnie Staiger: Testimony #21510

Jamie Parsley, Fargo, ND: Testimony #21332

Jill N. Kandel: Testimony #21549

Patricia Gourneau. Testimony #21687

Erik Kornkven, Testimony #21410

The hearing closed at 10:09 AM.

Delores Shimek, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Political Subdivisions Committee Room JW327B, State Capitol

SCR 4002
3/2/2023

A concurrent resolution designating Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as Poet Laureate of North Dakota.

1:20 PM Chairman Longmuir opened the hearing. Members present: Chairman Longmuir, Vice Chairman Fegley, Rep. Hatlestad, Rep. Heilman, Rep. Holle, Rep. Jonas, Rep. Klemin, Rep. Motschenbacher, Rep. Ostlie, Rep. Rios, Rep. Toman, Rep. Warrey, Rep. Davis, and Rep. Hager.

Discussion Topics:

- Amendment
- Committee action.

Rep. Klemin moved the amendment 23.3004.02001.
Seconded by Rep. Davis

Voice vote carried.

Rep. Hatlestad moved a Do Pass as Amended;
Seconded by Rep. Davis

Representatives	Vote
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Clayton Fegley	Y
Representative Jayme Davis	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Patrick Hatlestad	Y
Representative Matt Heilman	Y
Representative Dawson Holle	Y
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Lawrence R. Klemin	Y
Representative Mike Motschenbacher	Y
Representative Mitch Ostlie	A
Representative Nico Rios	Y
Representative Nathan Toman	Y
Representative Jonathan Warrey	Y

Roll call vote: 13 Yes 0 No 1 Absent Motion carried.

Carrier: Rep. Davis

The meeting closed at 1:27 PM.

Delores Shimek, Committee Clerk

23.3004.02001
Title.03000

Adopted by the House Political Subdivisions
Committee

March 2, 2023

OK
1/21
3-2-23

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4002

Page 2, line 29, after "Lajimodiere" insert ", a resident"

Page 2, line 30, remove "by the Legislative Assembly"

Renumber accordingly

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SCR 4002: Political Subdivisions Committee (Rep. Longmuir, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4002 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 2, line 29, after "Lajimodiere" insert ", a resident"

Page 2, line 30, remove "by the Legislative Assembly"

Renumber accordingly

TESTIMONY

SCR 4002



MAMMOTH PUBLICATIONS

610 Alta Vista Drive
Healdsburg, CA 95448
785-925-3509

January 15, 2023

mammothpubs@gmail.com

www.mammothpublications.net

To Whom It May Concern:

I fully support Denise Lajimodiere for the position of North Dakota Poet Laureate. As former Kansas Poet Laureate, I understand what is needed for success in this role. Dr. Lajimodiere has the abilities to interact with the public in a leadership role with innovative ideas and adaptability. This position is an honor, but it also requires commitment and service. She will represent the literary arts and North Dakota splendidly.

I have been familiar with Lajimodiere's writings for years as a Native educator—I taught at Haskell Indian Nations University. I met her in person at the Native American Literature Association conferences, where she is an active and respected participant. I deepened my relationship with her during an intensive arts residency at Mallard Island. I appreciate her intelligence and writing skills. Her poems are a striking blend of lyrical power and narrative. Her poems and academic articles are important indicators of her North Dakota ties, especially Ojibwa. She has courage to work with difficult materials and to find reconciliation and solutions.

My husband and I respected Lajimodiere's work so profoundly that we invited her to publish a chapbook with our press, Mammoth Publications. The result was *Bitter Tears*, which is a bestseller for the press and an important companion publication to the author's prose book *Stringing Rosaries*, both about boarding school years and the tribulations that resulted. Her other books of poetry are well respected. She is becoming a well-known poet nationally.

I follow Dr. Lajimodiere on social media, where she skillfully presents her artworks and updates on writing projects. She is also a person I look to for community connections, both human and those of the natural world. You are lucky to have such an outstanding individual apply for this important position. Do not hesitate to contact me if you wish further [information—deniselow@gmail.com](mailto:deniselow@gmail.com) and 785-925-3509.

Dr. Denise Low

Co-publisher, Mammoth Publications

**Testimony In Support of SCR 4002 with Modification or a Broader View
Senate Education Committee – 16 Jan 2023**

Chairman Elkin & Members of the Committee,

My name is Bonnie Staiger. While I am a registered lobbyist – mostly retired (#186), I'm not here in a professional capacity but as a private citizen actively pursuing life writing poetry and as an Associate Poet Laureate.

I'm here in support of Denise Lajimodiere serving as our next Poet Laureate. Nothing I'm about to say should dilute the fact that she is the best person to hold the title and continue this role at this time.

Going forward, North Dakota needs a mechanism for naming future Laureates with realistic terms of service and one that offers continuity outside the purview of the legislature. No other state names Laureates for a life sentence, er, I mean service. For some background, I've attached a list of several smaller or nearby states and how their Laureates are chosen and their terms.

I understand a Senate bill is being drafted (Sen. Karen Krebsbach, sponsor?) that may offer practical protocols for the legislature's consideration. I hope you will keep this conversation open to look at those options as a forward-thinking mechanism gets codified and while naming Denise Lajimodiere Poet Laureate.

Thank you.

According to Michael Wood: Shakespeare said, "poets and writers are the explorers of the human heart and long after the conquerors of the governed, their legacy will be the most valuable to us."

Bonnie Larson Staiger

ND Associate Poet Laureate

In Plains Sight published by NDSU Press (2021)

WILLA Literary Award Finalist in Poetry

Nominated for the PEN America Literary Award in Poetry

Midwest Independent Publishers Award – Silver Medal

Destiny Manifested published by NDSU Press (2018)

Poets of the Plains & Prairies Poetry Prize

Independent Press Award: Distinguished Favorite

Both books available from NDSU Press <https://bit.ly/3CN1Ax0>
and Amazon

www.bonniestaiger.com

State Poets Laureate (Selected: low population / mostly rural)

from Library of Congress <https://guides.loc.gov/united-states-state-poets-laureate/current>

(BLS Note: The Library of Congress website lists 4 states with No Position: Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. This could be because those states have larger metro areas that may have a local poet laureate. Philadelphia, for example, has a PL for example and many larger metro areas have city and/or county PL. 3-4 states are listed with Position Currently Vacant.)

Current North Dakota Laureate: Larry Woiwode (deceased 2022)

Start of Term: 1995

Position History: Position established February 8, 1957 ([Senate Concurrent Resolution E, 1957 S.L., p. 843](#)). It is a lifetime position; however, the [Academy of American Poets notes External](#) that on June 25, 2004, "Woiwode named seven associates to help bring 'an enlightened literary consciousness' to people around the state: Dave Solheim, Shadd Piehl, Madelyn Camrud, Rick Watson, Heid Erdrich, Louise Erdrich, and Jamie Parsley." (footnote: he named Bonnie Larson Staiger in 2019)

On June 20, 2019, current poet laureate Larry Woiwode [named Bonnie Larson Staiger External](#) an Associate Poet Laureate "to help bring an increased awareness of poetry to people around the state." The official installation ceremony occurred July 10, 2019. During the three weeks between Woiwode's announcement and the installation ceremony, and unbeknownst to Woiwode at the time, the Budget Section of North Dakota's Legislative Branch considered a grant transfer proposal from the state Council on the Arts that would have eliminated the entire poet laureate program. The Budget Section [rejected the request External](#) in a 34-1 vote.

In 2000, David Solheim was named North Dakota Centennial Poet by the North Dakota Centennial Commission.

Previous Laureates:

- Corbin A. Waldron (1957-April 1978)
- Henry R. Martinson (1979-November 1981)
- Lydia O. Jackson (1979-April 1984)

Current South Dakota Laureate: Christine Stewart-Nuñez *see BLS note below

Start of Term: July 1, 2019

Position History: Position established 1937 with the appointment of Charles "Badger" Clark. Position enacted by Legislature in 1959 (SL 1959, ch 307; SDC Supp 1960, § 55.0115). Text of law available online as part of the South Dakota Codified Laws, [Sec. 1-22-7](#). The laureate is "appointed by the Governor to serve during the pleasure of the Governor."

On September 27, 2014, poet laureate David Allan Evans resigned after more than 12 years in office in order to [provide an opportunity for other poets to serve in the position External](#). He served as Poet Laureate Emeritus until the appointment of Lee Ann Roripaugh as the state's next Poet Laureate.

On March 13, 2015, [Senate Bill 86](#), which limits the term of the South Dakota Poet Laureate to four years, was signed into law by Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Previous Laureates:

- Charles "Badger" Clark (1937)
- Audrae Visser (1974-October 2001)
- David Allan Evans (June 15, 2002-September 27, 2014)
- Lee Ann Roripaugh (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2019)

* BLS Note: Christine Stewart-Nuñez vacated her appointment when she moved to Winnipeg. Applications for her replacement are being accepted by the SD State Poetry Society. According to their website:

The term will be from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2027. The SD State Poetry Society is tasked with finding a suitable South Dakota poet to recommend to our Governor for consideration for appointment as Poet Laureate for a four-year term of office.

The potential candidate needs to be a South Dakota resident with a recognized, published body of work. The successful candidate is expected to actively promote and encourage the writing of poetry in South Dakota through workshops, speaking engagements, etc. No actual monetary salary exists for this position, but funding to pursue programs may be available from various sources.

Applications will be accepted beginning Nov.1, 2022, through Nov.30, 2022. If interested, go to SDPOETRY.ORG and click on Submissions/SD Poet Laureate. Click on the link to Submittable.com. Include a cover letter stating how you would be an ambassador for poetry in South Dakota. Innovative ideas for inspiring the writing and sharing of poetry are important components of the nomination. Please attach a resume and bio. Please also attach a Word file (xxx.docx) that includes a representative sample of published work (up to 20 pages) in one document.

Current Montana Laureate: Mark Gibbons

Start of Term: August 25, 2021

Position History: [Senate Bill 69](#), which creates the honorary, unpaid post of Montana state poet laureate, was signed into law by Gov. Brian Schweitzer on March 24, 2005. The first Montana state poet laureate, Sandra Alcosser, was appointed by Gov. Schweitzer on July 13, 2005. Laureates serve a two-year term. The 2012-2012 poets laureate, Melissa Kwasny and Mandy Smoker Broaddus, were the first to share the position.

Previous Laureates:

- Sandra Alcosser (July 13, 2005-July 13, 2007)
- Greg Pape (August 14, 2007-September 2009)
- Henry Real Bird (September 25, 2009-August 2011)
- Sheryl Noethe (August 2, 2011-July 31, 2013)
- Tami Haaland (August 1, 2013-October 22, 2015)
- Michael Earl Craig (October 23, 2015-July 31, 2017)
- Lowell Jaeger (August 1, 2017-July 30, 2019)
- Melissa Kwasny and Mandy Smoker Broaddus (July 31, 2019-August 2021)

Further Resources

[Montana Arts Council's Poet Laureate Page](#)

Current West Virginia Laureate: Marc Harshman

Start of Term: May 17, 2012

Position History: Position established 1927 (*Code*, [Sec. 29-7-1](#)). The text of the law follows: §29-7-1. Appointment; qualifications; salary.

There shall be a poet laureate of West Virginia, who shall be appointed by, and serve during the will and pleasure of the governor. No person shall be eligible to such appointment who is not a resident of this state, and who has not written and published poems of recognized merit. The poet laureate shall receive an annual salary of two thousand dollars, payable in equal quarterly installments.

The first West Virginia state poet laureate was Karl Myers. The poet laureate is appointed by the governor and, previously, served "during the will and pleasure of the governor." Currently, laureates serve a term of two years with no restrictions on reappointment.

Previous Laureates:

- Karl Myers (1927-1937)
- Roy Lee Harmon (March 12, 1937-1943)
- James Lowell McPherson (1943-1946)
- Roy Lee Harmon (October 11, 1946-1960)
- Vera Andrews Harvey (1960-1961)
- Roy Lee Harmon (March 7, 1961-1979)
- Louise McNeill (Pease) (1979-1993)
- Irene McKinney (1994-February 4, 2012)

Current Idaho Laureate: CMarie Fuhrman (Official Title: Writer in Residence)

Start of Term: July 1, 2021

Position History: The position of Idaho Poet Laureate was established in 1923 with the appointment of Irene Welsh Grissom by Governor C. C. Moore. Following the death of Sudie Stuart Hager in 1982, the position was changed to Writer-in-Residence.

Previous Laureates:

- Irene Welsh Grissom (1923-1948)
- Sudie Stuart Hager (1949-1982)
- Ron McFarland (1984-1985) (first person named Writer-in-Residence)
- Robert Wrigley (1986-1987) Eberle Umbach
- (1988-1989) Neidy Messer (1990-1991)
- Daryl Jones (1992-1993)
- Clay Morgan (1994-1995)
- Lance Olsen (1996-1998)
- Bill Johnson (1999-2000)
- Jim Irons (July 2, 2001-2004)
- Kim Barnes (April 2004-2006)
- Anthony "Tony" Doerr (July 2007-July 2010)
- Brady Udall (July 1, 2010-June 20, 2013)
- Diane Raptosh (July 1, 2013-2016)
- Christian Winn (July 1, 2016-June 2019)
- Malia Collins, Boise (July 1, 2019-June 2021)

Further Resources

[Detailed history of the Writer-in-Residence award from the Idaho Commission on the Arts](#)



2023 Senate Education Committee

January 15, 2023

Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Hello, my name is Kim Konikow, and I am Executive Director of North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA). I am here today to talk a bit Senate Concurrent Resolution 4002, introduced by Senator Tim Mathern regarding the State Poet Laureate position.

We are one of 50 states and several territories, part of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. Of these, 46* have a Poet Laureate, either by Gubernatorial appointment, or selected by panel through the state humanities or arts councils; very few are named by a Legislative body. There are a variety of term limits, responsibilities, and payments, ranging from 2- 6 years {with only three in perpetuity}.

This is an honorary post which promotes reading, writing and an appreciation of poetry. Most of the Poet Laureates have published a book, have a long history of their writing appearing in publications, and have received recognitions and honors. They are often involved in State speeches, conventions, inaugural celebrations, and other opportunities designed to inspire, encourage, and educate. On occasion they are asked to specifically write poetry for a state event. Some famous National Poet Laureates include Tracy K. Smith, Billy Collins, Robert Penn Warren, Howard Nemerov, William Carlos Williams, and Elisabeth Bishop.

In North Dakota there has been a named Poet Laureate since 1957, including Corbin A Waldron. Henry R. Martinson and Lydia O. Jackson were named Associate Poet Laureates. Larry Woiwode was designated the ND Poet Laureate for life in 1985, and in 1995, Senate Concurrent Resolution 4039 was attached to the appointment for \$10,000 per biennium.

Mr. Woiwode passed away last spring, 37 years into his tenure. During 2004-2019 he named 12 Associate Poet Laureates. They are:

- Jamie Parsley –Fargo
- Rick Watson - Minot
- Dave Solheim - Dickinson, Bismarck
- Shadd Piehl - Minot, Mandan
- Madelyn Camrud – Grand Forks, Fargo
- Rick Watson – Mott, Minot
- Heid Erdrich – MN, Wahpeton
- Louise Erdrich – MN, Wahpeton
- Denise Lajimodiere - Belcourt
- Warren Sturlaugson - Bismarck
- Mark Vinz – Born ND, Moorhead

- Ron Vossler – Wishek, Grand Forks
- Bonnie Larson Staiger, Bismarck

NDCA strongly supports the post of a ND Poet Laureate; poetry uplifts us in so many ways. We would like to see this position be far-reaching and more available to all ND citizens. SCR 4002 resolves to name Denise Lajimodiere to this honorary position. At this time, naming a Native woman of such strong credentials and stature would be a very positive benefit to our state. As a current North Dakota Associate Poet Laureate, NDCA is fully in favor of this recommendation.

There is another bill forthcoming from Senator Krebsbach that addresses a term length and operational arrangements for the ND Poet Laureate designation. As the Council is currently the named agency responsible for Poet Laureate payments, we are in support of term limits and more structure related to this position. The best way to proceed would be to have a variety of qualified people fill this post for a set period of time, perhaps those already named as Associates... Our understanding is that Senator Mathern and the nominee agree that another bill can be passed to accomplish this.

Respectfully,



**Four States do not have a named Poet Laureate – Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey and Pennsylvania but do support individual Poets participating in a variety of activities on an ongoing basis.*

January 16, 2023

2023 Senate Education Committee

Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee,
Boozhoo, Indinawemagonadoog. I greet you as my relatives.

Wabishka Binese Awanaakwat Ikwe dizinakaz.

Mikinak Wajiw nindoonjibaa,

Aajijjak nindodem.

My name is Dr. Denise Lajimodiere. My Ojibwe name is White Thunder Cloud Woman. I am from the Crane clan. I am an enrolled member of the Turtle Mt. Band of Ojibwe, and I live in Belcourt.

I am a retired educator having spent forty-four years as a teacher, principal and professor.

My journey as a poet began when I was in Elementary school. I took Creative Writing classes in High School.

As a shy student with little self-confidence, I noticed there were no Native poets, or novelists. I figured that Natives just don't write, and so I stopped writing for over a decade. Then, in 1984 the book Love Medicine was published. Not only was the author a Native female but she was from my tribe! I began writing poems in earnest and that culminated in my first book, Dragonfly Dance, and had the honor of Louise writing the introduction.

As a young student I had no mentors. As Poet Laureate I hope to be a mentor and role model for students across North Dakota.

US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo says that Poetry is "singing on paper, it is soul talk, and we must be friends with silence in order to hear. We must learn how to listen. She also says every poem has ancestors behind it."

We are all story tellers and as North Dakota Poet Laureate I hope to encourage everyone to tell their stories.

Coming from a troubled childhood, poems were my healing, my therapy. My poems held what I could no longer carry, and I could rest. Not all my poems are autobiographical, but they do hold some personal truths.

While working on my Doctorate at UND I walked over to the English department and asked if I could register for poetry workshop classes. I took Larry Woiwode's classes for over a year. He became a mentor. He encouraged my writing, he line edited my poems. He invited me to read at some of his poetry readings. At one reading he announced that I would be an Associate Poet Laureate. He read and help edit my latest book of poems, *His Feathers Were Chains*. I owe much of my success as a poet to his mentorship.

Since the resolution was written I've gotten notice that I'm going to the moon! Well, one of my poems has been selected to go to the moon! *Gizhebaa* will be sent to the Moon when the NASA flight is launched, scheduled for 2024. It will be published this month in the Earthly edition of *The Polaris Trilogy*.

I hope to celebrate my moon landing as North Dakota's next Poet Laurate. Help me celebrate by supporting this resolution! I would also be the first Native American Poet Laureate in North Dakota.

I ask for a DO PASS recommendation on SCR4002.

Miigwech, thank you to Senators Tim Mathern, Estenson; Weston; Representatives Davis; Johnson and Vetter for sponsoring this Resolution.

SCR 4002 Poet Laureate Resolution

January 15, 2023

Senator Mathern and other members of the North Dakota legislature: Boozhoo! Noodin Adizokaan indizhinikaaz. Hello! My name is Jacqueline Frederick and I am an enrolled citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe in Belcourt, North Dakota. I am writing in support of the resolution to name Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere, Poet Laureate of North Dakota.

I have known Dr. Lajimodiere for about thirty years. I met her as an instructor at Turtle Mountain Community College when I took an elective class over the summer. Then in 2002, she was the Principal at Turtle Mountain Elementary School when I started my first teaching job. Later, I moved up to Turtle Mountain Community High School as the librarian, and continued a working relationship with Dr. Lajimodiere as she led the Turtle Mountain Art and Writers workshop for the students of Turtle Mountain Middle School and Turtle Mountain High School.

In my personal experience, I have known Dr. Lajimodiere to be one of those individuals that improves the integrity of the room by her passion about the issues she cares about. She works very hard in everything she does, and has high expectations of herself. She also sets the necessary boundaries she would need to give her 'labors of love' the full attention they deserve.

I had the unique pleasure of attending a field trip she hosted for some of the seniors at my school. We attended the Fort Totten State Historic Site that was once a military post, then eventually, a boarding school. A guide was arranged to take the group on a tour, but at several stops, Dr. Lajimodiere addressed the students and offered some context of the place we were standing, and shared poetry from her book, Bitter Tears. I distinctly remember a poem of an old pot-bellied stove she read while we were touring the boys' dormitory. There was one heat source for 3 or 4 floors of students, and we all know how cold North Dakota weather is in the winter months. In other words, the students on the field trip were able to have a tangible experience of her written words and were given a chance to 'see' how poetry can serve as a catalyst to heal.

As the librarian at the high school from where Dr. Lajimodiere resides, I feel the need support her if ever and whenever I can. It is my opinion that Dr. Lajimodiere's work in poetry and her efforts at bringing light to the boarding school issues, has made all of us better human beings.

Miigwech (thank you) for hearing my testimony.

In the Spirit of the Anishinaabe,


Jacqueline M. Frederick

SCR4002-A concurrent resolution designating Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as Poet Laureate of North Dakota

WHEREAS, Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere was born in 1951 on the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation where she lived until her family relocated to Oregon, began writing poetry at the age of 10 having her first poem published, and continued writing throughout high school, having poems published in Franklin High School's anthology "The Conceited Scribbler"; and

Denise's spiritual journey was founded in writing about traumatic childhood experiences, enabling a resiliency which allowed her to turn that poetry into stories of hope and healing for others.

WHEREAS, Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere returned to North Dakota in 1972 to complete her teaching degree at the University of North Dakota and later completed her master's and doctorate degrees from the University of North Dakota; and

During this time, Denise spent time with children, sharing and teaching through writing and oral lessons both academic curriculum and the Native American traditions, opening the view of young learners to a diverse landscape in which they were a part.

WHEREAS, Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere is the editor of the Turtle Mountain Teen Writers book of poetry titled "Heart of the Turtle"; and has published four books of poetry, "Dragonfly Dance", "His Feathers Were Chains", "Bitter Tears", and "Thunderbird"; a children's book, "Josie Dances"; and an academic book, "Stringing Rosaries: The History, The Unforgivable, and the Healing of Northern Plains American Indian Boarding School Survivors"; and

These books together present a powerful voice emanating in the world, one that reaches the soul of humanity. Separately, as we read, hearts become broken, laughter echos causing cheeks to ache, minds resound with Why? Why? Why? and we become entranced.

WHEREAS, Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere's books have received the North Dakota State Library Association Notable Documents Award, Independent Book Publishers Benjamin Franklin Award, Independent Press Awards, and Midwest Book Awards, and have been nominated for the Minnesota Youth Reading Star of the North Award and the prestigious Stubbendieck Great Plains Distinguished Book Prize; and

North Dakota literary minds have acknowledged Dr. Lajimodiere and her collective work through awards presented in the past. That is no small achievement. Denise's writing encompasses a diversity of thought reflecting the differing landscapes and cultures of North Dakota. Within that we sense the love/hate relationship with the beautiful snow and the damaging accompanying

cold and wind chill, an element almost intolerable for Denise, but yet she stays because of that call to her homeland and the people of North Dakota.

WHEREAS, Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere's poem, "Tawkwaymenahnah", has been adopted by Carnegie Learning's language arts basal textbook for grades 6 through 12; and

The positive impact of Dr. Lajimodiere's research and writing that is used in teaching in schools to diverse populations of children is widespread and our world is better for that.

WHEREAS, Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere is considered a national expert on American Indian boarding schools and has given over 50 television, radio, and podcast interviews and has been the invited speaker at numerous conferences, including Concordia Social Justice Advocates Conference, Guest Lecture at Verizon, National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, National Native American Boarding School Healing Conference, Northern Great Plains History Conference, and the Midwest Law Enforcement Administrative Support

The life work researching Indian Boarding Schools and all that implies has resulted in world-wide recognition for this outstanding poet/writer. Her poem "North Dakota" captures a meaning for us not always understood, but there, nonetheless. This poet writes this 'other' North Dakota poem and you know she is Poet Laureate.

"North Dakota on a Sunny Thirty below Zero Day"
Kookum, with smiling eyes,
Says to my daughter gazing
In awe at the rainbow sun dogs,
Crystalline and brilliant against the cobalt sky,
*It's so cold, even the sun
Has ear muffs on!*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE CONCURRING THEREIN:

That Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere of Belcourt, North Dakota, is designated and shall serve as Poet Laureate of North Dakota until a successor is named by the Legislative Assembly; and

Please support and name Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere-Poet Laureate of North Dakota. **YES!YES!YES!**

From: Suzzanne Kelley, PhD

Regarding: SCR 4002 Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere / Poet Laureate of North Dakota

Greetings:

I write this morning in support of designating Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as Poet Laureate of North Dakota. Although I am editor in chief for North Dakota State University Press, I do not represent NDSU in this matter.

I am long acquainted with the previous Poet Laureate, Larry Woiwode (may he rest in peace), and with the present proposed designee, and I am an admirer of their work. They share many qualifications for this position including stellar credentials and experience as teachers of their craft, presenters of their work, and proponents of the literary scene in North Dakota. They both have national—and in Lajimodiere's circumstance, international—recognition for their writing and presentation of prose and poetry as essential elements to understanding the place in which we live. In fact, other than Lajimodiere, no North Dakota poet is on equal footing with the stature set by Woiwode.

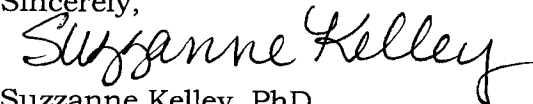
In addition to her insights when writing about the nature and people of this place, she brings a broad perspective to topics from her positions of being female and Native. And yet, neither of these perspectives take over the writing, which is accessible to all public audiences and abhors the esoteric, exclusive writing that sometimes claims modern poets. No matter the audience, Lajimodiere's poetry speaks to universal topics of parental and generational love, loss, youth, culture, and the responsibilities and joys of the elderly.

As a successor to Woiwode, Lajimodiere will carry on the tradition of being well spoken—no matter the audience size or composition—and able to meet the needs of her audience. I have seen her receive a standing ovation from a room of hundreds of historians, and I've seen her teach her craft to a group of six youth. In all cases, she is attentive to cues from the audience, patient, and nimble in her response to meet their needs. As Poet Laureate, she would exemplify the visible role of an advocate for poetry in our state.

Lajimodiere's numerous poetry publications—with multiple presses and journals—speak volumes about her dedication to the craft and to her reception among layman, peers, and professionals. She is a dedicated writer and proponent of writing as a skill, and she has received numerous awards in response to her work.

It is without reservation that I recommend Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as our next North Dakota Poet Laureate.

Sincerely,



Suzzanne Kelley, PhD

Editor in Chief, North Dakota State University Press

Past President, Midwest Independent Publishers Association

Editorial Board Member, *North Dakota Quarterly*

Madam Chair/ Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I humbly seek your support of Concurrent Resolution 4002, designating Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere, citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, as Poet Laureate of the State of North Dakota. It is my great honor to speak with you, today.

My name is Dr. Kathy Brock Enger. I am a colleague and friend of Dr. Denise Lajimodiere's. Dr. Lajimodiere and I taught together at North Dakota State University from 2006 to 2011.

I've served the citizens of North Dakota for a total of 15 years, first at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine as a clinical librarian at the Southeast Clinical Campus at the Veterans Administration in Fargo and subsequently at North Dakota State University, first as Social Science Librarian, then as a doctoral advisor and professor in the School of Education.

Both North Dakota State University and The University of North Dakota hold a special place in my heart and Dr. Lajimodiere's. We served as professors at North Dakota State University, and we were also conferred our Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Education -- Educational Leadership -- from the University of North Dakota. I would like to publicly record my gratefulness to the Citizens of North Dakota, today, for employing Dr. Lajimodiere and me at North Dakota State University and for educating us at The University of North Dakota. A special note of gratitude to The University of North Dakota for the National Teacher Corp. program in Belcourt, North Dakota, which graduated American Indian teachers, starting in the 1970s. Dr. Lajimodiere's service to North Dakota began as an educator over 40 years ago. It is fitting that the state would honor her for her long-standing dedication to the State of North Dakota by naming her Poet Laureate of North Dakota.

Most recently, Dr. Lajimodiere has been interviewed by over 100 news organizations worldwide for her acclaimed book, *Stringing Roseries* (2019), which brings to light the atrocities experienced by a generation of Native American children attending boarding schools across the United States.

While Dr. Lajimodiere is a recognized scholar, poetry and art are critically represented through her many books of published poems.

A citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, Denise Lajimodiere is first and foremost a poet. Her poems are beautifully written with compassion,

insight, and a sorrow. Through her work, we come to understand the joy of loving relationships and the deep anguish experienced by beloved family members and friends growing up as Native Americans. Denise sensitively characterizes stories of the Anishinaabe people she loves. Her poetry opens one's heart to the timeless voices of art.

Her published poems are found in the following titles:

Josie Dances a children's book published by the Minnesota Historical Society

His Feathers Were Chains

Dragonfly Dance

Thunderbird Poems

Bitter Tears

As I read Denise's work, I am brought to tears; yet, experience joy at the same time. As I read, I see the steady light in Denise's eyes and hear her gentle laughter. I see a woman who loves this place and has found refuge at the center of the North American continent.

Denise Lajimodiere is a true artist. Exquisitely museum quality, Denise's birch bark biting art is practiced by few in North America. She reintroduced jingle dancing to Turtle Mountain and has won numerous prizes over her fifty-five years of Pow Wow dancing. The beadwork on her many jingle dresses is her own. I am encouraging Denise to donate her poetry, beadwork, dresses, and birch bark biting to The North Dakota Museum of Art, which will be a true legacy to the State of North Dakota.

This moment is the time to designate Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as Poet Laureate of North Dakota. It is time. The time is now. This is your legacy. This is your opportunity.

Thank you for your time, for your thoughtfulness, and for your service to the citizens of this Great State.



2023 House Political Subdivisions Committee

February 27, 2023

Chairman Longmuir and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

Hello, my name is Kim Konikow, and I am Executive Director of North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA). I am here to talk a bit about Senate Concurrent Resolution 4002, introduced by Senator Tim Mathern, regarding the State Poet Laureate position.

We are one of 50 states and several territories, part of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. Of these, 46* have a Poet Laureate, either by Gubernatorial appointment, or selected by panel through the state humanities or arts councils; very few are named by a Legislative body. There are a variety of term limits, responsibilities, and payments, ranging from 2- 6 years {with only three in perpetuity}.

This is an honorary post which promotes reading, writing and an appreciation of poetry. Most of the Poet Laureates have published a book, have a long history of their writing appearing in publications, and have received recognitions and honors. They are often involved in State speeches, conventions, inaugural celebrations, and other opportunities designed to inspire, encourage, and educate. On occasion they are asked to specifically write poetry for a state event. Some famous National Poet Laureates include Tracy K. Smith, Billy Collins, Robert Penn Warren, Howard Nemerov, William Carlos Williams, and Elisabeth Bishop.

In North Dakota there has been a named Poet Laureate since 1957, including Corbin A Waldron. Henry R. Martinson and Lydia O. Jackson were named Associate Poet Laureates. Larry Woiwode was designated the ND Poet Laureate for life in 1985, and in 1995, Senate Concurrent Resolution 4039 was attached to the appointment for \$10,000 per biennium.

Mr. Woiwode passed away last spring, 37 years into his tenure. During 2004-2019 he named 12 Associate Poet Laureates. They are:

- Jamie Parsley –Fargo
- Rick Watson - Minot
- Dave Solheim - Dickinson, Bismarck
- Shadd Piehl - Minot, Mandan
- Madelyn Camrud – Grand Forks, Fargo
- Rick Watson – Mott, Minot
- Heid Erdrich – MN, Wahpeton
- Louise Erdrich – MN, Wahpeton
- Denise Lajimodiere - Belcourt
- Warren Sturlaugson - Bismarck
- Mark Vinz – Born ND, Moorhead

- Ron Vossler – Wishek, Grand Forks
- Bonnie Larson Staiger, Bismarck

NDCA strongly supports the post of a ND Poet Laureate; poetry uplifts us in so many ways. We would like to see this position be far-reaching and more available to all ND citizens. SCR 4002 resolves to name Denise Lajimodiere to this honorary position. At this time, naming a Native woman of such strong credentials and stature would be a very positive benefit to our state. As a current North Dakota Associate Poet Laureate, NDCA is fully in favor of this recommendation.

Senate Bill 2338, which this committee is also reviewing, outlines term length and operational arrangements for the ND Poet Laureate designation. As the Council is currently the named agency responsible for Poet Laureate payments, we are in support of term limits and more structure related to this position. The best way to proceed would be to have a variety of qualified people fill this post for a set period of time, perhaps those already named as Associates...

Respectfully,



**Four States do not have a named Poet Laureate – Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey and Pennsylvania but do support individual Poets participating in a variety of activities on an ongoing basis.*

March 2, 2023

2023 House Political Subdivisions Committee

Dear Chairman Longmuir and Member of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

Boozhoo, Indinawemagonadoog. I greet you as my relatives.

Wabishka Binese Awanaakwat Ikwe dizinakaz.

Mikinak Wajiw nindoonjibaa,

Aajijak nindodem.

My name is Dr. Denise Lajimodiere. My Ojibwe name is White Thunder Cloud Woman. I am from the Crane clan. I am an enrolled member of the Turtle Mt. Band of Ojibwe, and I live in Belcourt.

I am a retired educator having spent forty-four years as a teacher, principal and professor.

My journey as a poet began when I was in Elementary school. I took Creative Writing classes in High School.

As a shy student with little self-confidence, I noticed there were no Native poets, or novelists. I figured that Natives just don't write, and so I stopped writing for over a decade. Then, in 1984 the book Love Medicine was published. Not only was the author a Native female but she was from my tribe! I began writing poems in earnest and that culminated in my first book, Dragonfly Dance, and had the honor of Louise writing the introduction.

As a young student I had no mentors. As Poet Laureate I hope to be a mentor and role model for students across North Dakota.

US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo says that Poetry is "singing on paper, it is soul talk, and we must be friends with silence in order to hear. We must learn how to listen. She also says every poem has ancestors behind it."

We are all story tellers and as North Dakota Poet Laureate I hope to encourage everyone to tell their stories.

Coming from a troubled childhood, poems were my healing, my therapy. My poems held what I could no longer carry, and I could rest. Not all my poems are autobiographical, but they do hold some personal truths.

While working on my Doctorate at UND I walked over to the English department and asked if I could register for poetry workshop classes. I took Larry Woiwode's classes for over a year. He became a mentor. He encouraged my writing, he line edited my poems. He invited me to read at some of his poetry readings. At one reading he announced that I would be an Associate Poet Laureate. He read and help edit my latest book of poems, *His Feathers Were Chains*. I owe much of my success as a poet to his mentorship.

Since the resolution was written I've gotten notice that I'm going to the moon! Well, one of my poems has been selected to go to the moon! *Gizhebaa* will be sent to the Moon when the NASA flight is launched, scheduled for 2024. It will be published this month in the Earthly edition of *The Polaris Trilogy*.

I hope to celebrate my moon landing as North Dakota's next Poet Laurate. Help me celebrate by supporting this resolution! I would also be the first Native American Poet Laureate in North Dakota.

I ask for a DO PASS recommendation on SCR4002.

Miigwech, thank you to Senators Tim Mathern, Estenson; Weston; Representatives Davis; Johnson and Vetter for sponsoring this Resolution.

TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF BILL SCR 4002 DESIGNATING DENISE
LAJIMODIERE AS POET LAUREATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

My name is Jamie Parsley. I am a poet, the author of 13 books of poems and a collection of short fiction. My first book was published in 1992. I currently serve as Poet-in-Residence at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. I am also an Episcopal priest, serving as Rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Fargo. I am a life-long and very proud resident of the state of North Dakota.

I have had the truly great honor of serving with Denise Lajimodiere since 2004 as an Associate Poet Laureate for the State of North Dakota. We were both chosen by Larry Woiwode to assist him in that position at that time. In addition to being fellow writers, poets and Associate Poets Laureate, I consider Denise a very dear and precious friend, and someone that I personally admire and hold very high esteem.

Denise Lajimodiere is a prolific and amazingly talented poet and writer. Her influence as a well-respected writer, teacher and activist, is far-reaching, extending far beyond the borders of North Dakota. Her poetry, especially in her collections Thunderbird and Dragonfly Dances, is a beautiful and poignant reflection not only of the sometimes complex and difficult aspects of life in North Dakota, but also of nature and life in general. Her non-fiction writing, especially her book Stringing Rosaries, has been a powerful example of strong and competent writing exposing a dark chapter in our collective history. It is a book that has loudly and defiantly given voice to generations of native people whose voices were silenced by prejudice, societal norms and repression.

I cannot think of another poet or writer in North Dakota at this time more deserving of the designation of Poet Laureate than Denise Lajimodiere. Her position as such will honor and represent all the various voices and faces of our great and diverse state.

Submitted by Jamie Parsley

Fargo, North Dakota

February 27, 2023

February 27, 2023

Dear Chairman Longmuir and Members of House Political Subdivision Committee:

I am writing to share my unreserved support for the nomination of Dr. Denise Lajimodiere to the position of the North Dakota Poet Laureate. I first met Dr. Lajimodiere through my association with Turtle Mountain Community College where I have been an English Faculty for the past eight years. During that time, I have collaborated with Dr. Lajimodiere on a number of initiatives including work with local high school students in a summer writing camp, attending writing retreats focused on developing writing within an indigenous framework, and collaborating with her in our Poetry course at our institution. Dr. Lajimodiere's breadth of work, community involvement, and exceptional artistic ability uniquely situate her to fulfill the role of Poet Laureate for the state of North Dakota.

While Dr. Lajimodiere's artistic and scholarly achievements span from her award-winning book on the Boarding School Era *Stringing Rosaries* to her successful children's book *Josie Dances* it is her poetry that best defines her voice in the North Dakota Landscape. Her poems are a glimpse into the realities that confront all North Dakotans and serve the purpose of all great literature by helping readers better understand the nature of their own existence. Dr. Lajimodiere is an excellent candidate for this recognition, and I have no doubts she will represent the state of North Dakota with grace and artistic vision in this role.

If there is anything else I can contribute in support of this nomination do not hesitate to reach me at 701-367-5628 or by email at erik.kornkven@gmail.com

Sincerely,



Erik Kornkven

Testimony In Support of SCR 4002
House Political Subdivisions Committee – 2 March 2023

Chairman Longmuir & Members of the Committee,

My name is Bonnie Staiger. While I am a registered lobbyist – mostly retired (#186), I'm not here in a professional capacity but as a private citizen actively pursuing life writing poetry and as an Associate Poet Laureate.

I'm here in support of Denise Lajimodiere serving as our next Poet Laureate. Nothing I'm about to say should dilute the fact that she is the best person to hold the title and continue this role at this time.

Going forward, North Dakota also needs a mechanism for naming future Laureates with realistic terms of service and one that offers continuity. No other state names Laureates for a life sentence, er, I mean service. For some background, I've attached a list of several smaller or nearby states and how their Laureates are chosen and their terms.

I understand you are also hearing Senate bill 2338 (Sen. Karen Krebsbach, sponsor) that offers practical protocols for the legislature's consideration. I hope you will also keep that legislation moving forward while naming Denise Lajimodiere Poet Laureate in this resolution, SCR 4002.

Thank you.

According to Michael Wood: Shakespeare said, "poets and writers are the explorers of the human heart and long after the conquerors of the governed, their legacy will be the most valuable to us."

Bonnie Larson Staiger

ND Associate Poet Laureate

In Plains Sight published by NDSU Press (2021)

WILLA Literary Award Finalist in Poetry

Nominated for the PEN America Literary Award in Poetry

Midwest Independent Publishers Award – Silver Medal

Destiny Manifested published by NDSU Press (2018)

Poets of the Plains & Prairies Poetry Prize

Independent Press Award: Distinguished Favorite

Both books available from NDSU Press <https://bit.ly/3CN1Ax0>

and Amazon

www.bonniestaiger.com

State Poets Laureate (Selected: low population / mostly rural)

from Library of Congress <https://guides.loc.gov/united-states-state-poets-laureate/current>

(BLS Note: The Library of Congress website lists 4 states with No Position: Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. This could be because those states have larger metro areas that may have a local poet laureate. Philadelphia, for example, has a PL for example and many larger metro areas have city and/or county PL. 3-4 states are listed with Position Currently Vacant.)

Current North Dakota Laureate: Larry Woiwode (deceased 2022)

Start of Term: 1995

Position History: Position established February 8, 1957 ([Senate Concurrent Resolution E, 1957 S.L., p. 843](#)). It is a lifetime position; however, the [Academy of American Poets notes External](#) that on June 25, 2004, "Woiwode named seven associates to help bring 'an enlightened literary consciousness' to people around the state: Dave Solheim, Shadd Piehl, Madelyn Camrud, Rick Watson, Heid Erdrich, Louise Erdrich, and Jamie Parsley." (footnote: he named Bonnie Larson Staiger in 2019)

On June 20, 2019, current poet laureate Larry Woiwode [named Bonnie Larson Staiger External](#) an Associate Poet Laureate "to help bring an increased awareness of poetry to people around the state." The official installation ceremony occurred July 10, 2019. During the three weeks between Woiwode's announcement and the installation ceremony, and unbeknownst to Woiwode at the time, the Budget Section of North Dakota's Legislative Branch considered a grant transfer proposal from the state Council on the Arts that would have eliminated the entire poet laureate program. The Budget Section [rejected the request External](#) in a 34-1 vote.

In 2000, David Solheim was named North Dakota Centennial Poet by the North Dakota Centennial Commission.

Previous Laureates:

- Corbin A. Waldron (1957-April 1978)
- Henry R. Martinson (1979-November 1981)
- Lydia O. Jackson (1979-April 1984)

Current South Dakota Laureate: Christine Stewart-Nuñez *see BLS note below

Start of Term: July 1, 2019

Position History: Position established 1937 with the appointment of Charles "Badger" Clark. Position enacted by Legislature in 1959 (SL 1959, ch 307; SDC Supp 1960, § 55.0115). Text of law available online as part of the South Dakota Codified Laws, [Sec. 1-22-7](#). The laureate is "appointed by the Governor to serve during the pleasure of the Governor."

On September 27, 2014, poet laureate David Allan Evans resigned after more than 12 years in office in order to [provide an opportunity for other poets to serve in the position External](#). He served as Poet Laureate Emeritus until the appointment of Lee Ann Roripaugh as the state's next Poet Laureate.

On March 13, 2015, [Senate Bill 86](#), which limits the term of the South Dakota Poet Laureate to four years, was signed into law by Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Previous Laureates:

- Charles "Badger" Clark (1937)
- Audrae Visser (1974-October 2001)
- David Allan Evans (June 15, 2002-September 27, 2014)
- Lee Ann Roripaugh (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2019)

* BLS Note: Christine Stewart-Nuñez vacated her appointment when she moved to Winnipeg. Applications for her replacement are being accepted by the SD State Poetry Society. According to their website:

The term will be from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2027. The SD State Poetry Society is tasked with finding a suitable South Dakota poet to recommend to our Governor for consideration for appointment as Poet Laureate for a four-year term of office.

The potential candidate needs to be a South Dakota resident with a recognized, published body of work. The successful candidate is expected to actively promote and encourage the writing of poetry in South Dakota through workshops, speaking engagements, etc. No actual monetary salary exists for this position, but funding to pursue programs may be available from various sources.

Applications will be accepted beginning Nov.1, 2022, through Nov.30, 2022. If interested, go to SDPOETRY.ORG and click on Submissions/SD Poet Laureate. Click on the link to Submittable.com. Include a cover letter stating how you would be an ambassador for poetry in South Dakota. Innovative ideas for inspiring the writing and sharing of poetry are important components of the nomination. Please attach a resume and bio. Please also attach a Word file (xxx.docx) that includes a representative sample of published work (up to 20 pages) in one document.

Current Montana Laureate: Mark Gibbons

Start of Term: August 25, 2021

Position History: [Senate Bill 69](#), which creates the honorary, unpaid post of Montana state poet laureate, was signed into law by Gov. Brian Schweitzer on March 24, 2005. The first Montana state poet laureate, Sandra Alcosser, was appointed by Gov. Schweitzer on July 13, 2005. Laureates serve a two-year term. The 2012-2012 poets laureate, Melissa Kwasny and Mandy Smoker Broaddus, were the first to share the position.

Previous Laureates:

- Sandra Alcosser (July 13, 2005-July 13, 2007)
- Greg Pape (August 14, 2007-September 2009)
- Henry Real Bird (September 25, 2009-August 2011)
- Sheryl Noethe (August 2, 2011-July 31, 2013)
- Tami Haaland (August 1, 2013-October 22, 2015)
- Michael Earl Craig (October 23, 2015-July 31, 2017)
- Lowell Jaeger (August 1, 2017-July 30, 2019)
- Melissa Kwasny and Mandy Smoker Broaddus (July 31, 2019-August 2021)

Further Resources

[Montana Arts Council's Poet Laureate Page](#)

Current West Virginia Laureate: Marc Harshman

Start of Term: May 17, 2012

Position History: Position established 1927 (*Code*, [Sec. 29-7-1](#)). The text of the law follows: §29-7-1. Appointment; qualifications; salary.

There shall be a poet laureate of West Virginia, who shall be appointed by, and serve during the will and pleasure of the governor. No person shall be eligible to such appointment who is not a resident of this state, and who has not written and published poems of recognized merit. The poet laureate shall receive an annual salary of two thousand dollars, payable in equal quarterly installments.

The first West Virginia state poet laureate was Karl Myers. The poet laureate is appointed by the governor and, previously, served "during the will and pleasure of the governor." Currently, laureates serve a term of two years with no restrictions on reappointment.

Previous Laureates:

- Karl Myers (1927-1937)
- Roy Lee Harmon (March 12, 1937-1943)
- James Lowell McPherson (1943-1946)
- Roy Lee Harmon (October 11, 1946-1960)
- Vera Andrews Harvey (1960-1961)
- Roy Lee Harmon (March 7, 1961-1979)
- Louise McNeill (Pease) (1979-1993)
- Irene McKinney (1994-February 4, 2012)

Current Idaho Laureate: CMarie Fuhrman (Official Title: Writer in Residence)

Start of Term: July 1, 2021

Position History: The position of Idaho Poet Laureate was established in 1923 with the appointment of Irene Welsh Grissom by Governor C. C. Moore. Following the death of Sudie Stuart Hager in 1982, the position was changed to Writer-in-Residence.

Previous Laureates:

- Irene Welsh Grissom (1923-1948)
- Sudie Stuart Hager (1949-1982)
- Ron McFarland (1984-1985) (first person named Writer-in-Residence)
- Robert Wrigley (1986-1987) Eberle Umbach
- (1988-1989) Neidy Messer (1990-1991)
- Daryl Jones (1992-1993)
- Clay Morgan (1994-1995)
- Lance Olsen (1996-1998)
- Bill Johnson (1999-2000)
- Jim Irons (July 2, 2001-2004)
- Kim Barnes (April 2004-2006)
- Anthony "Tony" Doerr (July 2007-July 2010)
- Brady Udall (July 1, 2010-June 20, 2013)
- Diane Raptosh (July 1, 2013-2016)
- Christian Winn (July 1, 2016-June 2019)
- Malia Collins, Boise (July 1, 2019-June 2021)

Further Resources

[Detailed history of the Writer-in-Residence award from the Idaho Commission on the Arts](#)

Dr. Denise Lajimodiere and I have been members of the same writing group for six years. Her understanding of poetry and writing has been foundational to our group's success which includes the publication of over ten books. Dr. Lajimodiere is consistent, hardworking, kind, easy to work with and always willing to share her knowledge of poetry and poetics with us.

Dr. Lajimodiere's published works stand for themselves. She has six published books which include four books of poetry, one academic book and one children's book.

Dr. Lajimodiere is articulate and knowledgeable. She is a great communicator and connects well with audiences of various backgrounds and ages. A wealth of information and understanding infuses her writing as a Native American woman.. North Dakota would be fortunate to have Dr. Lajimodiere as their poet laureate.



North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Jayme Davis

District 9A
601 John Street
Rolette, ND 58366-7209

jdavis@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:
Human Services
Political Subdivisions

March 2, 2023

Good morning, Chairman Longmuir, Vice-Chair Fegley and Members of the House Committee on Political Subdivisions. For the record I am Representative Jayme Davis. I work for the people of District 9A in Rolette County which includes the International Peace Gardens, the Turtle Mountain Reservation, and south past the town of Rolette which is where I reside.

It is my absolute honor to bring to you today, Senate Concurrent Resolution 4002 that would designate Dr. Denise Lajimodiere as Poet Laureate of North Dakota.

Dr. Lajimodiere is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe. She is an artist through and through. She is an exquisite painter, quilter, fancy shawl and jingle dress dancer, and has brought back the precontact traditional Ojibwe art of Birch Bark Biting. She is also an Ojibwe and Cree language keeper. With all of those wonderful attributes, what I am here today to speak on is her gift of writing.

Dr. Lajimodiere was born and raised in Belcourt, ND on the Turtle Mountain Reservation up until her family relocated to Oregon when she was 10 years old. It was at this time she began writing poetry and continued through high school. She was first published in the Franklin High School's anthology "The Conceited Scribbler".

Dr. Lajimodiere returned to North Dakota in 1972 to complete her teaching degree at the University of North Dakota and went on to complete her Master and Doctorate degrees from the University of North Dakota.

Some of Dr. Lajimodiere outstanding credits and accomplishments include:

- Being named the Decree Associate Poet Laureate by North Dakota poet Laureate, Larry Woiwode
 - Mr. Woiwode once said, "Denise was one of my fastest-moving students I've had in my thirty years of conducting poetry workshops. Once she found the fountainhead of form, essential to all of life, her poetry came alive and every week she had a new and better poem. It's no surprise she has an excellent book published."
- Is the editor of the Turtle Mountain Teen Writers book of poetry titled "Heart of the Turtle"
- Has had four books of poetry published
 - *Dragonfly Dance*
 - *His Feathers Were Chains*
 - *Bitter Tears*
 - *Thunderbird*
- Published a children's book called *Josie Dances*

- Has had a widely renowned book published called *Stringing Rosaries: The History, The Unforgivable, and the Healing of Northern Plains American Indian boarding School Survivors*. Which you may see referenced during a television show this fall.

Dr. Lajimodiere published works have received the North Dakota State Library Association Notable Documents Award, Independent Book Publishers Benjamin Franklin Award, Independent Press Award, and Midwest Book Award.

Dr. Lajimodiere was the invited poet along with the National Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo for the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read Program, which is a partnership between the National Endowment of the Arts and Arts Midwest.

Today, Dr. Lajimodiere is being requested from all corners of the nation as the lead expert on American Indian boarding schools and has given numerous television, radio, podcasts interviews and has been the keynote speaker at a number of conferences. Including as a guest Lecture at Verizon, National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, National Native American Boarding School Healing Conference, Northern Great Plains History Conference, and the Midwest Law Enforcement Administrative Support Conference.

It is for all these accomplishments and more that I request a do pass on Senate Concurrent Resolution 4022 that would designate Dr. Denise Lajimodiere as the Poet Laurate of North Dakota.

With that I stand for questions

Miigwech, Philamayayapi, Thank you.

Testimony for Bill SCR 4002 designating Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as Poet Laureate of North Dakota

Chairman Longmuir and Members of House Political Subdivisions Committee

AND

Sen. Mathern, Rep. Davis, Sen. Estenson, Rep. D. Johnson, Rep. Vetter, Sen. Weston

Please consider this testimony as unwavering support for designating Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as the next Poet Laureate for the Great State of North Dakota.

My name is Patty Gourneau and I am a retired educator, having served as a teacher, administrator and librarian in my 36 years in ND public schools. I met Denise in the early 1990's when we served on the same committees within our community. In 1998 we were both hired as administrators within the Turtle Mountain Community School system. As an administrator, Denise was instrumental in creating an environment that was rich in literacy opportunities for students. She knew the importance of exposing students not only to many diverse voices but also the importance of having their own voices heard. Students were supported in their journey as readers and writers under her administration.

Denise left the local community to acquire her doctorate and then began working as a professor at North Dakota State University. It was in this capacity that she teamed up with other NDSU professors, the Red River Writing Project and local teachers to establish a Teen Writers and Artists Workshop. This annual event afforded teens the opportunity to work with established authors and artists to create and polish their personal pieces. Her involvement in this project will serve her well as Poet Laureate.

Denise is already doing much of what is expected of a Poet Laureate. She has championed the writing of teens, she has helped to organize poetry readings, she has talked to groups about her writing and she has published multiple volumes of her own poetry. She is ready for the roles and responsibilities of such a position.

I am confident in my recommendation of Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere for this position.

Sincerely

Patricia S. Gourneau

March 2, 2023

2023 House Political Subdivisions Committee

Chairman Longmuir and members of the Committee,

My name is Tim Mathern. I am a senator from Fargo. I know your expansive work is crucial for our state. I hope the Resolution before you today will be one of the more positive experiences in your career in the House.

I introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 4002 for three reasons;

1. To honor our talented citizen Denise Lajimodiere (Laasch moe dear) as the Poet Laureate of North Dakota. (She was planning to be here but the storm made it impossible)
2. To have the legislature, as the broad voice of the general citizenry, weigh in on the poet laureate process, and
3. To bring reverence and attention to our Indigenous community.

SCR 4002 by way of the WHEREAS paragraphs on pages 1 and 2, lists the many accomplishments of Dr. Denise Lajimodiere.....(review resolution)

(Not sure if others can attend today but did so in the Senate)

Kim Konikow, the Executive Director of the North Dakota Council on the Arts, is here to explain why having a Poet Laureate is important.

The legislature may consider another bill dealing with the Poet Laureate designation term length. I have discussed this matter with this nominee and we are in agreement that a term limit to the Poet Laureate designation is acceptable if the other bill were to pass to do that.

I ask for a DO PASS recommendation on SCR4002.

Thank you.

Senator Tim Mathern

Carole Woiwode
304 7th Ave NE
Jamestown, ND 58401

March 1, 2023

House Committee on Political Subdivisions
2023 Session North Dakota Legislature

Re: SCR 4002

Dear Members of the House Committee:

It is my privilege to know Dr. Denise Lajimodiere as one of the ND Associate Laureates appointed by my late husband, Larry Woiwode, during his tenure as Poet Laureate of North Dakota.

He was honored by his appointment to serve the State and its people. His concern was to convey the necessity of poetry as an expression of the individual heart and mind, and with the beauty and excellence of that expression.

He recognized in Denise this same commitment. I believe he would be fully in support of her appointment as the next Poet Laureate of North Dakota, as I am.

Yours sincerely,

Carole Woiwode