

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