



**Max Garland**  
2013-2014

**What is poetry? What does poetry do?**  
My answer is more or less in my poem "Good Fortune" on the accompanying poster of poems.

**Favorite/Most Influential Poet**  
William Stafford was one of my favorite poets and mentors. His poems had a surface appeal, an accessible voice, but another deeper and sometimes darker level beneath. He wrote poetry as a way of life and helped open the door for many poets and would-be poets.

**Poet Laureate Project** (Poetry of Place)  
In my project, I encouraged an awareness of not just the demographics of a place, but a recognition of poetry as a kind of history, a vital "inner" history of who we are and what we love, fear, and imagine.

**Website** [www.maxgarlandpoetry.com](http://www.maxgarlandpoetry.com)



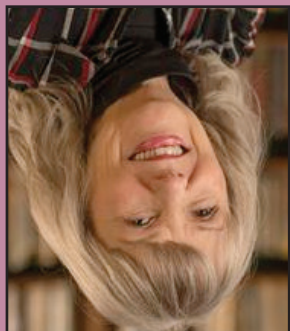
**Bruce Dethlefsen**  
2011-2012

**What is poetry? What does poetry do?**  
The poet is a witness of the whatness unexpressed.

**Favorite/Most Influential Poet**  
Marge Piercy

**Poet Laureate Project**  
I set up local readings in Public Libraries.

**Website** [www.bruce-dethlefsen.com](http://www.bruce-dethlefsen.com)



**Karla Huston**  
2017-2018

**What is poetry? What does poetry do?**  
Poetry helps me remember; it allows me to play with words. To quote Emily Dickinson: "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry."

**Favorite/Most Influential Poet**  
Doranne Laux

**Poet Laureate Project**  
I worked with the elder community bringing poetry to those with mild dementia, often within the Memory Cafe projects within the state.

**Website** [www.karlahuston.com](http://www.karlahuston.com)



**Kimberly Blasler**  
2015-2016

**What is poetry? What does poetry do?**  
Poetry is an act of attention and inquiry. As poets we look closely and extend our inquiry beyond the surface of things—because surface is just illusion. Poetry builds meaning through gesture. The poem invites the reader/listener to a physical, emotional, or spiritual reality beyond the words themselves.

**Favorite/Most Influential Poet**  
Linda Hogan

**Poet Laureate Project** (Recitation Project)  
I created in-person events where people recited, by heart a favorite poem and shared why they found that poem meaningful. An online map featured recordings of people reciting poems.

**Website** [www.kblasler.org](http://www.kblasler.org)



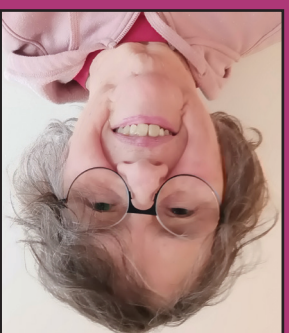
**Dasha Kelly Hamilton**  
2021-2022

**What is poetry? What does poetry do?**  
Poetry is an open invitation to cherish humanity and life.

**Favorite/Most Influential Poet**  
Patricia Smith

**Poet Laureate Project**  
I created a statewide poetry exchange that included and centered the participation of incarcerated writers.

**Website** [www.DashaKelly.com](http://www.DashaKelly.com)



**Margaret Rozga**  
2019-2020

**What is poetry? What does poetry do?**  
Poets seek to marry the beauty and emotional power of language to their deepest and most profound concerns, including social, civic, and political concerns.

**Favorite/Most Influential Poet**  
Gerard Manley Hopkins "Spring and Fall: To a Young Child"

**Poet Laureate Project**  
My project (1) encouraged the development of community poetry groups; (2) prompted public officials in Wisconsin to reference their favorite poets in talks with constituents; and (3) created an anthology of all past Wisconsin poets laureate as well as active poets throughout the state.

**Website** See profile at: <https://write.org/Sys/PublicProfile/69133816/4946371>



**Brenda Cardenas**  
2023-2024

**What is poetry? What does poetry do?**  
Poetry is alchemy. Because it can contain subtle nuance, it is imbued with mystery that does not need solving and is often packed with emotional resonance. Poetry evokes, hints, wells, conjures, and layers. It takes us both deeper inside ourselves and out of ourselves into the world around us and the larger world beyond that. Poems surprise us, challenge us, keep us company, teach us, and sometimes change us.

**Favorite/Most Influential Poets**  
Juan Felipe Herrera, Ross Gay, Cecilia Vicuña, Ada Limón, Harryette Mullen, CD Wright...

**Poet Laureate Project**  
Within seven regions, ekphrastic relays occur between poets and visual artists via the website: [www.wisconsinpoetlaureateproject.com](http://www.wisconsinpoetlaureateproject.com).

**Website** [www.brendacardenas.net](http://www.brendacardenas.net)



**Nicholas Gulig**  
2023-2024

**What is poetry? What does poetry do?**  
Poetry is what the mind becomes when the music that a language is replaces ordinary speech. The gift of the poem is the world that happens after.

**Favorite/Most Influential Poet**  
George Oppen

**Poet Laureate Project**  
I made a documentary film for PBS Wisconsin titled Welcome Poets about Lorine Niedecke, poet, and place.

**Website** [www.kblasler.org](http://www.kblasler.org)

## Wisconsin Poets Laureate

Since 2001, each of the eleven Wisconsin Poets Laureate has acted as a statewide emissary for poetry and creativity.

The Wisconsin Poet Laureate Commission (WPLC) selects the Poet Laureate (PL), defines PL responsibilities, advises and supports the PL in promoting the appreciation of poetry in Wisconsin, and promotes and seeks funding for the continued operation of the WPLC and for the PL's annual honorarium. The WPLC is comprised of 15 commissioners plus the current PL. Commissioners are either at-large or those who represent literary and poetic organizations in Wisconsin—see back page.

**For details about the WPLC, how to donate, and how to apply to be a Wisconsin Poet Laureate:**  
[wisconsinpoetlaureate.org](http://wisconsinpoetlaureate.org).

### Ellen Kort

2001-2004



Ellen Kort (1936–2015) served as the first Poet Laureate of Wisconsin—chosen in 2000. She authored 11 books and eight poetry collections.

Ellen was passionate in her belief that poetry is for everyone. She traveled Wisconsin presenting poetry workshops in schools and for at-risk teens, parents grieving the death of a child, families touched by cancer and AIDS, domestic abuse survivors, and women in prison. She kept a bucket of glow-in-the-dark chalk in her car so she could write poems on city sidewalks.

**Websites to find information about her poetry and legacy**  
[www.wfop.org/ellen-kort](http://www.wfop.org/ellen-kort)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen\\_Kort](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Kort)  
[www.msa-ps.com/our-experience/ellen-kort-peace-park/](http://www.msa-ps.com/our-experience/ellen-kort-peace-park/)

### Denise Sweet

2005-2008



**What is poetry? What does poetry do?**  
Just about anything it decides to do. Ultimately, the job description of a poem is to witness both the mundane and the spectacular, track a specific fleeting moment, disrupt the ordinary things in the everyday until they are no longer taken for granted.

**Favorite/Most Influential Poet**  
Seku Sundiata is one favorite—spoken word, performance poet, storyteller.

**Poet Laureate Project**  
I had a full teaching load at UW-Green Bay and chaired First Nations Studies. As PL, my goal was to travel the state, give readings, facilitate workshops, have conversations about creative writing, tips on getting published, selecting residencies, etc. (one engagement every week).

**Website** [wisconsinlitmap.com/denise-sweet](http://wisconsinlitmap.com/denise-sweet)

### Marilyn Taylor

2009-2010



**What is poetry? What does poetry do?**  
Finding the best words, and putting them down in the best order.

**Favorite/Most Influential Poet**  
Four poets, from four different generations, probably had the most influence on my own work: (1) Emily Dickinson; (2) Thomas Hardy; (3) Richard Wilbur; and (4) Alicia Stallings.

**Poet Laureate Project**  
My experience (as opposed to later PLs who accomplished far more in the job than I did) was to increase statewide awareness of poetry, to attract and spotlight "undiscovered" Wisconsin poets, and to bring pleasure to everyone who enjoys reading it, hearing it read aloud, and, of course, to writing it themselves.

**Website** [www.mtltpoet.com](http://www.mtltpoet.com)

# Celebrating 25 Years

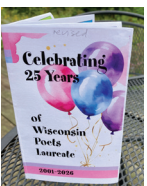
# of Wisconsin Poets Laureate

2001-2026

### Organizations with a representative on the Wisconsin Poet Laureate Commission



To create a folded booklet, please follow the instructions at [www.origamipoems.com/who-we-are/folding-an-origami-book](http://www.origamipoems.com/who-we-are/folding-an-origami-book)



Layout and design by Lucy Tyrrell.

[wisconsinpoetlaureate.org](http://wisconsinpoetlaureate.org)