

Mary Pinkoski named Edmonton's fifth Poet Laureate

Canada's top female slam poet brings unique voice to role

Edmonton – On July 1, 2013, Mary Pinkoski will become Edmonton's newest Poet Laureate. Pinkoski is a dynamic spoken word performer who has traveled throughout North America to represent Edmonton's poetry scene, where she has been active as a poet for nearly a decade.

"I am extremely honored to have been selected as Edmonton's fifth Poet Laureate and to carry on the great tradition of laureates that have served the City of Edmonton," said Mary Pinkoski. "I am grateful for the possibilities of serving as Edmonton's Poet Laureate for the next two years and look forward to making poetry come alive across the city."

Pinkoski has won numerous competitions and accolades as a poet. She placed third at the 2013 Canadian Individual Poetry slam, making her the current top ranked female slam poet in the country. In 2011, she was voted Most Valuable Poet at the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word, where she was also Captain of the Edmonton Poetry Slam Team that won the national championship that year.

"We are thrilled to welcome Mary as Edmonton's fifth Poet Laureate. As an accomplished slam poet, performer, collaborator, teacher and mentor, Mary has many skills to bring to this role, and an obvious passion for the past and present of our city," said Mayor Stephen Mandel. "I look forward to seeing Mary in the community as our literary arts ambassador and to hearing Edmonton's story told through her unique and dynamic style of poetry."

Locally, Pinkoski sits on the board of the Edmonton Poetry Festival. She is the founder of YOURS: Edmonton Youth Open Mic Series. Pinkoski is also active in the community as a teacher and mentor, leading numerous workshops on spoken word poetry with both youth and adults.

"We are excited to work with Edmonton's newest Poet Laureate," said Pilar Martinez, Deputy CEO of the Edmonton Public Library. "EPL's goal is to *Spread the Words* and Mary's commitment to storytelling and sharing the power of words throughout our community fits perfectly with that goal. We look forward to a great partnership."

Pinkoski will serve a two-year term as Edmonton's Poet Laureate. Anna Marie Sewell's term as Poet Laureate ends on June 30, 2013.

The role of Edmonton's Poet Laureate is to reflect the life of the city through readings and poetry. As an ambassador for the literary arts, the Laureate brings poetry into a range of official and informal city events.

Edmonton's Poet Laureate program is supported by The City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Arts Council and the Edmonton Public Library.

The Edmonton Arts Council is a not-for-profit organization that supports and promotes the arts community in Edmonton. The EAC works to increase the profile and involvement of arts and culture in all aspects of our community life.

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