

# STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



## Executive Order No. 1054

**WHEREAS**, the Governor of the State appoints Mississippi's official Poet Laureate to serve as the state's representative of and inspiration for poetry, as well as for literacy and the literary arts; and

**WHEREAS**, a careful and rigorous selection process should be conducted by an impartial panel of qualified persons through a comprehensive process that includes input from a strong partnership among the Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC), Mississippi Humanities Council (MHC), the Mississippi Library Commission (MLC), Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), and other entities as jointly determined by these partners and the Governor, to assist the Governor in making an appropriate appointment to this position; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Haley Barbour, Governor of the State of Mississippi, by virtue of the authority invested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Mississippi, do hereby promulgate the following executive order, effective immediately:

There is hereby created and established an advisory council to be known as the Mississippi Poet Laureate Selection Panel. It shall be the responsibility of the Poet Laureate Selection Panel to review all applications for Poet Laureate and to recommend to the Governor, in accordance with this executive order, and such rules of procedure developed by the Panel, persons qualified and eligible to fill the vacancy of the Poet Laureate position created by death, resignation, or removal from this position.

The Mississippi Poet Laureate Selection Panel shall consist of distinguished judges, including one (1) widely published poet from Mississippi, one (1) professor of literature from a Mississippi college/university, one (1) representative from the University Press of Mississippi, and one representative from each of the partner institutions: Mississippi Arts Commission, Mississippi Humanities Council, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and Mississippi Library Commission. The Mississippi Arts Commission representative shall serve as chair of the Panel and is empowered to call meetings of the Panel and serve as the liaison between the Governor's Office and the Selection Panel.

Upon a vacancy in the state's Poet Laureate position, the Mississippi Poet Laureate Selection Panel shall issue a public call for nominations to serve in this capacity. Nominees shall meet the following requirements:

- a. Be either born or domiciled in Mississippi at the time of nomination;
- b. Possess a body of quality works;
- c. Have works widely published in books, anthologies, literary journals or magazines by recognized, reputable publishers;
- d. Reflect the essence and unique cultural heritage of Mississippi;
- e. Be available to travel and actively serve in the state;
- f. Have letters of support from the general public and the literary community;
- g. Be available for a personal interview with the Poet Laureate Selection Panel.

The Mississippi Poet Laureate Selection Panel shall conduct interviews with nominees as deemed appropriate by the panel and shall recommend to the Governor no fewer than three (3) and no more than six (6) names for consideration to fill this position within ninety (90) days of the vacancy.

Nominee must be able to perform the following duties of the state's Poet Laureate. The Mississippi Poet Laureate's role shall include but is not limited to the following:

1. To serve as the official state poet, creating and reading appropriate poetry upon state occasions and state agency activities;
2. To represent the rich cultural heritage of Mississippi;
3. To help identify Mississippi poets, write poetry, promote literacy and the literary arts by attending events and speaking with schools and organizations;
4. To serve as the Honorary Host of the NEA's *Poetry Out Loud* initiative in Mississippi;
5. To serve as a Mississippi Arts Commission Teaching Artist.

Upon receipt of qualified nominations from the Mississippi Poet Laureate Selection Panel, the Governor shall name a Poet Laureate within fourteen (14) days to serve a term of four (4) years. If any of the nominees shall be rejected by the Governor or shall notify the Governor of their unwillingness or inability to accept this appointment, the Governor may request the Mississippi Poet Laureate Selection Panel to submit additional recommendations.

With approval of the Governor, the Panel shall adopt such operating rules, forms, and notices as it may deem necessary to properly implement this order.

Nothing contained herein is intended in any way to impair or delegate any constitutional and/or statutory duties or prerogatives of the Governor in the filling of vacancies. The right to reject any or all of the nominees so selected and recommended is reserved unto the Governor.

Any executive order relating to the subject matter hereof and contrary hereof is hereby superseded by this order.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereupon set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, on the 7th day of June in the year of the Lord, two thousand and eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

*Haley Barbour*  
HALEY BARBOUR  
GOVERNOR

BY THE GOVERNOR

*C. Delbert Hosemann, Jr.*

C. DELBERT HOSEMANN, JR.  
SECRETARY OF STATE