

News Releases & Media Advisories

A list of news releases and media advisories issued by the City of Toronto.

City of Toronto announces its new Poet Laureate


6-Mar-2019

Al Moritz (A.F. Moritz) has been selected to be Toronto's sixth Poet Laureate, pending approval by City Council at its March 27 and 28 meeting.

Described as a "master of metaphor," Al Moritz has published 20 books of poetry and was the 2009 Griffin Poetry Prize winner for *The Sentinel*. His book *The New Measures* received the League of Canadian Poets' 2013 Raymond Souster Award and was a finalist for the Governor General's Award. His most recent work is the 2018 retrospective collection *The Sparrow*. He lives in Toronto and is the Blake C. Goldring Professor of the Arts and Society at Victoria College, University of Toronto.

The position of Toronto's Poet Laureate began in 2001. The position honours a Toronto poet whose work displays excellence and who has written on themes relevant to Torontonians. The Laureate is an ambassador for poetry and the arts and infuses poetry into a range of official and informal city activities to attract people to the literary world. The Poet Laureate's mandate also includes the creation of a legacy project that will be unique to the individual. Moritz's legacy project will be announced at a later date.

He will hold the position for three years and will receive an annual honorarium of \$10,000 to serve as Toronto's literary ambassador championing local literary arts and wordsmiths. The following people, listed chronologically, have served as Toronto's Poet Laureate since 2001: Dennis Lee, Pier Giorgio di Cicco, Dionne Brand, George Elliott Clarke and Anne Michaels.

Moritz was nominated by a selection committee in consultation with the literary community. More information about the Toronto Poet Laureate and its programs is available at toronto.ca/poetlaureate (<http://toronto.ca/poetlaureate>). More information about Moritz and his works can be accessed at afmoritz.com .

Quotes

"Al Moritz was chosen unanimously by the selection panel for his influential body of work that has profoundly shaped Toronto's literary community. I would like to congratulate and thank Anne Michaels for her tremendous commitment and passion as our Poet Laureate for the past three



years."

- Mayor John Tory

"The Poet Laureate position affirms the importance of the literary arts within Toronto's cultural landscape. The City's support also includes initiatives that recognize and celebrate the city's writers, including the Toronto Book Awards, the Toronto Arts Council and the extensive programming available through the Toronto Public Library."

- Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson (Councillor for Ward 21 Scarborough Centre), Chair of the Economic and Community Development Committee

"I'm honoured to be chosen Poet Laureate of our beloved Toronto, so vibrant in poetry as in all the arts. I look forward to engaging with Torontonians around poetry's particular gifts: its unique, necessary knowledge, and its powerful search for community, for what makes us both different and alike."

- Al Moritz, poet

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