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Madison Names New Poets Laureate

by Office of the Mayor
February 02, 2012

MADISON — Madison Mayor Paul Soglin announced that Sarah Busse and Wendy Vardaman have agreed to serve as Poets Laureate for the City of Madison. Busse and Vardaman will share the volunteer position from January 16, 2012 until January 18, 2016.

"Sarah Busse and Wendy Vardaman, co-editors of Verse Wisconsin, were chosen to receive this honor together in recognition of their dedication to promoting poetry, commitment to inclusion and diversity, relationships with community organizations, their capacity to further develop the position and its programs, and their body of excellent work," explained former Poet Laureate Fabu. "We believe, that working together, they will be able to take the position to an even higher level and increase recognition of the power and importance of poetry in our City."

"They are bright and their energy seems limitless," wrote current Wisconsin Poet Laureate Bruce Dethlefsen, in support of their nomination. He concluded by saying, "They are inspiring poets and tireless supporters of the arts in Wisconsin."

David Wells, former executive director of Edenfred wrote, "Because they enjoy working with the public to help create a better understanding and appreciation of poetry, they would be a dynamic and significant force as co-poets laureate."

Madison's first Poet Laureate, John Tuschen, was appointed in 1977 by Mayor Paul Soglin during his first term in office. Tuschen remained Poet Laureate for over 20 years. Former Mayor Susan Bauman appointed his successor, Andrea Musher in 2001. In 2007, former Mayor Dave Cieslewicz appointed Fabu Phillis Carter. And Mayor Soglin is once again encouraging poets to be an important part of civic discourse by appointing Sarah Busse and Wendy Vardaman as Madison's Poets Laureate.

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