

NCTE Children's Poetry Awards Committee

Charge: *To recommend every two years a living American poet or anthologist to receive the NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children in recognition of his or her aggregate work.*

- *To establish an annual list of Notable Poetry Books published in the current year by any poet, living or deceased, and of any nationality.*
- *To establish an annual list of Notable Verse Novels published in the current year by any poet, living or deceased, and of any nationality.*
- *To sustain a collection of poetry books of past and future award winners in the University of Minnesota, Kerlan Collection (<https://www.lib.umn.edu/special>)*
- *To recognize and foster excellence in children's poetry by encouraging its publication.*
- *To explore ways to acquaint teachers and children with poetry through such means as publications, programs, and displays.*

For more information on the NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry, please go to:

<http://www2.ncte.org/awards/excellence-in-poetry-for-children-living-american-poet/>.

Major activities: **What major actions, projects, initiatives, or studies in your charge have been completed by your group since July 1, 2017? In each activity describe the more important features of the work, and connect your work to the NCTE Vision Statement, if applicable.**

1. What actions, projects, initiatives, or studies are "in progress" at this time?

- We are in the final stages of selecting the new 2019 Poet/ Award for Excellence in Children's Poetry considering the four criteria for the award: literary merit (art and craft of aggregate work--as poet or anthologist), poet's or anthologist's contributions, evolution of the poet's or anthologist's work, and appeal to children. The goal is to have this poet selected prior to our meeting prior to the start of NCTE 2018. The 2019 poet will be announced at the Books for Children Luncheon.
- Another current project is reading, reviewing and rating the poetry books we have received from publishers. As chair, I have been communicating with publishers since late February/early March requesting them to submit their 2018 poetry titles for committee review. All books received are recorded on a Google Sheet in a Google folder accessible by the committee members. Once the books are read and rated the books, we select our top picks for the current list of Notable Poetry Books and Notable Verse Novels. We have had 62 books submitted as of this date and several more have been requested. November 1st is the deadline for accepting 2018 titles. We will use our committee session time on Thursday, Nov. 15 from noon to 4:00 to discuss our final selections with voting to conclude by December 1st. Requesting books from publishers has proven somewhat challenging as the contact person from each publishing house changes frequently. It's difficult to keep the contact list up-to-date. Without a specific person to contact at the publishing house, requests for titles often go unfilled.
- We are also planning our Conference presentation - NCTE 2018 Excellence in Children's Poetry Notable Poetry and Verse Novels – in Houston. This session will have a PowerPoint presentation with handouts and poetry "warm ups" that will provide teachers in the audience with ideas for using poetry in the classroom.

2. What have you accomplished so far, and what is your timeline for future work?

- We wrote and submitted an article about the 2018 Notable list for *School Library Journal*. Three of our committee members prepared an article about the 2018 Notable verse novels for *The New England Journal of Reading*.

3. How has the work of your group contributed to NCTE's role in shaping the profession of teaching and/or the understanding of literacy in educational contexts?

- Poetry is a genre that not all teachers are comfortable teaching or promoting in the classroom. The goal of our committee is to do just that – promote good poetry and provide teaching ideas through our conference presentations and journal publications. We have shared, and will continue to share, not only what we consider the best poetry available from the current publishing year and offer suggestions to teachers to make them more comfortable in reading and teaching poetry in the classroom. We want to encourage the writing of poetry on the part of students and the enjoyment of listening to and discussing poetic language.
- Because one of our goals is to seek out poetry from diverse languages and cultures, we hope to promote the multicultural and diverse language and setting that poetry offers. This speaks directly to the opening sentence of the NCTE Vision statement: “NCTE and its members will apply the power of language and literacy to actively pursue justice and equity for all students and the educators who serve them.”
- We are also striving to find and recommend notable poetry books for the youngest children in our age range – 3 to 5 years old.

Patricia Bandré, Chair