

Cheshire's Own Poet Laureate? Mottola Wants The Job



Pat Mottola

by Mariah Melendez
Herald Staff

How does one become a Poet Laureate?

It helps, of course, to be a poet already and someone passionate about the medium. It also helps to want the "job."

So, when Cheshire resident Patricia Mottola discovered that Cheshire didn't have an appointed Poet Laureate of its own, she thought she would be a perfect fit.

"I have been writing poetry for a long time and teaching it to stu-

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Mottola: Have Received Positive Feedback From Local Leaders

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dents and senior citizens. I am so passionate about it and what it can do for people," she said. "A Poet Laureate is someone who is responsible for bringing poetry and culture to a town, and I believe that is something I can do."

A Poet Laureate can be anyone a community chooses; someone who shows a dedication to the craft of poetry and has an interest in sharing that with others. Mottola, who is currently a professor of creative writing at Southern Connecticut State University, has received multiple awards for her work and has had it featured in journals such as the *Connecticut Review*, *Main Street Rag*, and the *Paterson Literary Review*.

She is the author of two collections of poetry — "Under the Red Dress" and "After Hours."

According to the Connecticut Coalition for Poets Laureate (CCPL), 29 towns in the state, including Hamden and Wallingford, currently have their own dedicated writer, and the state of Connecticut has listed Margaret Gibson as its official Poet Laureate.

"The Poet Laureate can be appointed by the mayor, the Town Council, the Arts Commission, or the Library Board," states the CCPL, on its website. "Requirements might include some of the following: age 18 or older, resident of the community, desire to engage with the community in ways that promote poetry, evidence of knowledgeable engagement with poetry through the years."

While the requirements listed by the CCPL are not official or binding for how a municipality can go about choosing a Poet Laureate, and there is nothing set in stone for what a Laureate must do once named, Mottola already has plans for what she would like to accomplish if the honor were bestowed upon her.

"I would love to create a Cheshire poetry anthology of poems about different places in town," she began. "I would also love to see poems lining parts of the Farmington Trail, maybe even a poetry garden of some sort, and provide various open mic nights to showcase the talent we have in town."

Mottola has already met with the Town Manager Sean Kimball and the various members of the Cheshire Public Library Board in order to garner support for her candidacy, and all that remains is an official town order. According to Kimball, the Poet Laureate

proposal has been submitted and is currently in the hands of the Cheshire Town Council as to her nomination.

"They have all been very kind to me in my journey," Mottola explained. "I really want to put Cheshire on the map for poetry

and culture in Connecticut."

If you are interested in learning more about Mottola and her work, visit <http://patmottoapoetry.com/index.html>

To learn more about CCPL and the Poet Laureate program, visit <http://ctpoetlaureates.com/>



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