

# **For Immediate Release**



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **POMONA, CA – Pomona Board of Library Trustees Appoint Inaugural Poet Laureate**

The tradition of a poet laureate to speak to and for a city is an ancient one, dating back to ancient Greece. Cities, states, and nations around the world have begun to reinstate this ancient tradition of honoring a local poet to increase community connection to and vitality within the art of poetry. Pomona has been a poetry hub for years, with numerous gatherings, open mics and poetry centric events hosted locally.

With the Cultural Arts Commission supporting, the Pomona Public Library Board of Trustees agreed to oversee a new Pomona Poet Laureate program, and the Pomona Public Library Foundation agreed to fund the program. The City Council of the City of Pomona voted to establish the Poet Laureate program on August 5, 2019.

A Library Trustee ad-hoc committee was tasked with reading and weighing the applications. Above all what they were looking for in an inaugural Poet Laureate was a poet active in the community, who could represent the fullness of Pomona, and who had a vision and plan for bringing poetry into public spaces. Through discussion at the board meeting it became clear that the board should invite David (Judah) Oliver to serve as the inaugural Poet Laureate of the program.

Judah has published two books of poetry, and is the co-host and founder of LionLike MindState Poetry and Art series, hosting events at the Pomona Fairplex and other locations. He was a member of the Los Angeles Slam Team and coached the Empire MindState Poetry Slam Team of Pomona, winning 2nd in the nation. As an entrepreneur, he owned and operated Machine Pomona Art Gallery. He is an Art Consultant for the Ontario Montclair School District, and he has taught poetry at every level of education, spanning kindergarten to college. He has also worked as an Art Instructor for the Prison Education Program. Judah has dreamed for years of bringing more poetry to Pomona, and as the new Pomona Poet Laureate, he begins his work the first of January, 2020 for a two year term. With a warm welcome and congratulations, we look forward to the poetry ahead!

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