



## New Hampshire's Poets Laureate

by Mary A. Russell, Director  
NH Center for the Book

On April 20, 1967, New Hampshire RSA230 was signed into law and the position of Poet Laureate of New Hampshire was established, effective June 19, 1967: "There is hereby established the position of poet laureate for the state. The governor, with the advice and consent of the council, shall appoint the poet laureate. Said person so honored shall be a resident of the state and he shall serve in such position during his lifetime." The law goes on to recommend that "prior to the appointment of a poet laureate the board of directors of the Poetry Society of New Hampshire shall submit to the governor and council the name or names of persons whom they deem worthy of the honorary position. Upon the death of a poet laureate the society shall again submit to the governor and council a name or names for a successor. The position thus established shall be an honorary one and the poet laureate shall not be entitled to compensation." This law had been introduced by Representative Greene of Rockingham District 22 at the urging of the Poetry Society of New Hampshire (PSNH), which made Mrs. Greene an honorary member of the Society that June.

The PSNH held a board of directors meeting May 14, 1967, at which Raymond C. Swain nominated Paul Scott Mowrer for the honorary

position of Poet Laureate. The board voted unanimously (Mr. Mowrer, a member of the board, abstained) in favor of the choice and authorized the PSNH president to write to Governor John King with their recommendation. At a Governor and Council meeting held September 19, 1968, Paul Scott Mowrer of Chocorua was nominated to be New Hampshire's first poet laureate. Despite his having been present at the May PSNH meeting, it was reported in the local papers that Mr. Mowrer was unaware of his nomination until his neighbors began congratulating him. He was unanimously confirmed as New Hampshire Poet Laureate in December of 1968. During his tenure Mr. Mowrer was honored at several gatherings around the state and, at the urging of *Union Leader* editor William Loeb, he worked with a local composer, Thomas Powers of Bedford, to set his poem "New Hampshire Hills" to music. It became the state's third official state song (under House Bill 988) in June 1973.

On August 9, 1972 – four months after the death of Paul Scott Mowrer – Eleanor Winthrop Vinton of Concord was confirmed by the Governor and Council as the state's second poet laureate. She had been nominated several weeks earlier by Governor Walter R. Peterson. He had been supplied with a list of nominees by the PSNH, which was also working on legislation to limit the appointment to five years. He chose to nominate Miss Vinton for a lifetime ap-

pointment as New Hampshire Poet Laureate. "I really was not their choice," Miss Vinton explained in the *Concord Monitor* in February 1976. "They were working to have a five-year appointment when the governor named me for a lifetime. I really do not subscribe to the view that there should be a five-year appointment. I think the appointment deserves the dignity of a lifetime appointment." Miss Vinton's views did not sway the legislature, however, and in 1977, House Bill 329 was introduced by Rep. Andrea A. Scranton of Keene limiting the term of the Poet Laureate to five years, with no restriction on reappointment, to take effect "upon the expiration of the term of the person who holds the position of poet laureate on the effective date of this act." This bill was approved April 15, 1977. This is the current law regarding New Hampshire's poet laureate.

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## **Eleanor Winthrop Vinton 1899-1977**

Born in Stoneham, Mass. on July 25, 1899, Eleanor Winthrop Vinton was one of five children of Clarence D. and Annie M. (Downs) Vinton. Her family moved to Concord, N.H. in 1908 and Miss Vinton lived there for the rest of her life. Following in the footsteps of her grandmother and her sister she began writing poetry in grammar school. She graduated from Concord High School in 1918. Her first published poem appeared in the Concord High School magazine, and as class poet she wrote verses for the school paper on each of her 45 fellow classmates. After high school she started at Concord Business College, but had to leave soon after she had begun to care for her dying mother. After her mother's death she kept house for her father and then for a bachelor uncle. During these years she also worked as a clerk at Apple Tree Book Shop

*Highlights, Hartford Courant, Journal of the American Medical Association, Kaleidograph, Ladies Home Journal, Life, Lynn Sunday Post, Manchester Union Leader, Monitor of Newark (NJ), New Hampshire Club Woman, New Hampshire Profiles, New Hampshire Sunday News, New Hampshire Patriot, New York Sun, Nutmegger, Portland Oregonian, Spur, Sunburst, Kansas City Star, Town and Country, and Yankee.* She explained in a newspaper interview in 1973 that she became a professional poet in 1928 when the *Chicago Daily News* paid her \$2 for the verse "Leap Year." She served as editor and contributor to *An Anthology of NH Poetry*, NH Federation of Women's Clubs, 1938. Miss Vinton's first book of poetry, *Sounding Piquant Verses*, was published in 1940. Her second volume, *On the*

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**"I have to write. Something is wrong with me if I'm not writing." —E.W.V. on the occasion of her confirmation as NH Poet Laureate (August, 1972).**

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(1929-1952) and then as a practical nurse in private homes (1955-1965). In later years Miss Vinton lived with her widowed sister, Mrs. Clara E. Sims, in a small white house at 8 Humphrey Street in Concord.

Throughout her life Miss Vinton wrote poetry which was published in numerous newspapers, magazines, and journals including *Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Boston Post, Bostonian, Chicago Daily News, Christian Science Monitor, Concord Monitor, Denver Post, Diplomat, Farm Journal, Granite Monthly, Haiku*

*Contoocook, and Other Poems* was published by William L. Bauhan of Dublin, N.H. in 1974.

Eleanor Vinton enjoyed reading biographies, gardening, playing the piano, and swimming. She was also active in a variety of organizations throughout her life. She served as president of the Concord-Stratford Shakespeare Club (1969-1971); was a member of the Concord Women's Club, the NH Historical Society, the Epiphany Chapter of O.E.S. Concord, the Western World Haiku Society, and the Concord Music Club; was a charter member of the Poetry Society of

## Paul Scott Mowrer 1887-1971

New Hampshire, and an honorary member of the Massachusetts Poetry Society.

According to the minutes of the PSNH Spring Meeting, March 27, 1965: "The Richard Recchia Medal was awarded to Eleanor Vinton for her sonnet entitled 'Sonnet to TV' and was presented to her by Kitty Parsons." She was the recipient of numerous other prizes over the years as well, including Poetry Society of NH prizes awarded to "Flashback," "Sonnet for Redheads," "Broad Cove," and "Lines on a Theme of Finality" and NH Federation of Women's Clubs prizes for "Andrew Jackson's Concord Weekend" and "The Bow Controversy."

Eleanor Vinton was named as the second New Hampshire Poet Laureate in August 1972 by Governor Walter Peterson who called her on July 25th (her birthday) to notify her of her appointment. She was suggested for the post, which was a lifetime appointment at that time, by Dorothy Kendall, president of the Shakespeare Club. She was honored at a reception at the McDowell Colony on October 22, 1972. The reception was co-hosted by the MacDowell Colony director and Governor and Mrs. Walter Peterson. Miss Vinton had never worked at the colony; much of her writing was done while at camp on the Contoocook River. As Poet Laureate she continued to write poems which appeared in various publications and to do readings for local events.

Eleanor Vinton died at Concord Hospital September 12, 1977, at the age of 83. She was buried at the Blossom Hill Cemetery. Services were held on September 16, 1977, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where Miss Vinton had been a parishioner. Former Governor Walter Peterson was an honorary pallbearer.

Paul Scott Mowrer was born in Bloomington, Ill. on July 14, 1887 to Rufus and Nellie (Scott) Mowrer. He had one brother, the columnist Edgar Ansel Mowrer, who was born in 1892. His father was a merchant and the family was forced by his business troubles to move to Chicago when Paul was in the sixth grade. He graduated from Hyde Park High School in Chicago in 1905. While a student there he had begun writing poetry and was coeditor of the school's literary magazine, *The Hyde Parker*. Immediately after graduating his perseverance landed him his first job as a reporter for the *Chicago Daily News*.

He left the paper from 1906 to 1908 to attend the University of Michigan where he took the classes that interested him and served as editor of the *Michigan Daily*, a university paper.

war service in France from 1914 to 1918; official war correspondent accredited to the French Army from 1917 until the end of WWI; head of the *Chicago Daily News* Peace Conference Bureau from 1918 to 1919; associate editor and chief editorial writer 1934-5; editor from 1935 to 1944.

In 1918, Mowrer published his first volume of poetry: *Hours of France in Peace and War*. His second book came out of his experiences as Paris Correspondent during the first Balkan War: *Balkanized Europe: A Study in Political Analysis and Reconstruction* (1921). He continued writing books and articles on political topics as well as publishing poetry and several plays throughout his career.

The first Pulitzer Prize given for cor-

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**"Poetry is not architecture, yet it should have a well-built form. It is not painting, yet it should depict. It is not sculpture, yet it should be chiseled. It is not music, yet it should sing."**

— P.S.M., *The Mothering Land* (1960), p. xxiv.

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He did not receive a degree until the university made him an Honorary Doctor of Letters in 1941. While at college he met Winifred Adams, whom he married on May 8, 1909. They had two children: Richard Scott Mowrer and David A. Mowrer.

Paul Scott Mowrer returned to the *Chicago Daily News* in 1908 and remained there until 1945. He held a variety of positions during his career at the *Daily News* including Paris correspondent beginning in 1910; director of the *Chicago Daily News*

response was awarded to Mowrer in 1928 "for his coverage of international affairs including the Franco-British Naval Pact and Germany's campaign for revision of the Dawes Plan." He also earned the Sigma Delta Chi National Scholarship Award in 1932 for his writings as a foreign correspondent and had been one of eight correspondents who received the French Legion of Honor in April 1918. He was promoted to "officer" in 1933. That same year he and Winifred divorced, and on July 3, 1933, he married

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# Richard Eberhart 1904-2005

*Richard Eberhart was a founder and Honorary President of the Poetry Society of New Hampshire and served as New Hampshire Poet Laureate from 1979-1984.*

## ***In Memoriam: Richard Ghormley Eberhart***

*Reprinted Courtesy of  
Dartmouth College  
Office of Public Affairs*

Richard Ghormley Eberhart, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and Dartmouth College Class of 1925 Professor of English, Emeritus, died June 9, 2005 at age 101.

Professor Eberhart, a 1926 graduate of Dartmouth, died of natural causes in Hanover, N.H. after a short illness. A memorial service will be held in Rollins Chapel on the Dartmouth campus at 2 p.m. Sunday, June 19. A reception will follow at the Top of the Hop.

Professor Eberhart was regarded as one of the nation's finest and most highly honored poets. Winner of the 1966 Pulitzer Prize for poetry, the Bollingen Prize for Poetry from the Yale University Library and the National Book Award, he also served as New Hampshire's Poet Laureate from 1979 to 1984 and as a fellow in the Academy of American Poets. He authored more than a dozen volumes of verse and verse drama. His works include *A Bravery of Earth* (1930), *Undercliff* (1953), *Shifts of Being* (1968), and *Ways of Light* (1980). His poems are collected in *Selected Poems, 1930-1965*, for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, *Collected Poems, 1930-1976* (1976), *The Long Reach: New and Uncollected Poems, 1948-1984* (1984), and *New and Selected Poems: 1930-1990* (1990). His *Collected Verse Plays* was published in 1962 and his poems have

been included in hundreds of anthologies.

Dartmouth President James Wright said, "The passing of Dick Eberhart represents a substantial loss to Dartmouth, the world of poetry and the world at large. His presence and his work graced all three. We will miss him greatly."

Born in Austin, Minnesota on April 5, 1904, Eberhart received a B.A. from Dartmouth. After working his way across the South Pacific as a steamship crewman, he made his way to England where he went on to earn a B.A. and an M.A. from St. John's College at Cambridge University. He studied at the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in 1932-33. Shortly after his return from England, he was recruited to tutor the son of King Prajadipok of Siam (now Thailand), for which he was awarded the keys to the city of Bangkok and the Order of the Royal White Elephant, Third Class.

During World War II, he served in the U.S. Naval Reserve as a Lieutenant and Lt. Commander and on his discharge, worked as the assistant manager to the vice president of The Butcher Polish Company in Boston. In 1952, he returned to teaching, serving as poet-in-residence, professor and lecturer at a variety of institutions of higher learning, including the University of Washington, the University of Connecticut, Wheaton College and Princeton. In 1956, he was appointed Professor of English and Poet-in-Residence at Dartmouth. In 1968, he was named Class of 1925 Professor of English and in 1970, he entered semi-retirement, but continued to teach part-

time at Dartmouth until the mid-1980s. From 1975 until the mid-80s he was also a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Florida in Gainesville, his winter home.

From 1959 to 1961, Professor Eberhart was Consultant in Poetry at the Library of Congress, in which position he succeeded poet Robert Frost. In 1959, he was appointed by President Eisenhower to the Advisory Committee on the Arts for the National Cultural Center in Washington. He received honorary doctor of letters degrees from Dartmouth, Skidmore College, the College of Wooster and Colgate University. He was also named an honorary vice president of The Butcher Polish Company and appointed to its board of directors. In 1991, the Austin Public High School in Minnesota renamed its library the Richard Eberhart Media Center during a community-wide celebration. That same year, he and his wife turned their family home at 5 Webster Terrace over to Dartmouth, which marked the site with a plaque honoring his accomplishments. In 2004, Dartmouth celebrated Professor Eberhart's life and work for his 100th birthday, renaming its poetry reading room in his honor.

Those who knew him remember Professor Eberhart as warm-hearted, energetic and generous of spirit. His poetry, though contemplative and philosophical, was characterized by this passion and energy as well. Accepting his National Book Award in 1977, he told the assembly, "Poets should not die for poetry but should live for it," and it is in his poetry that he will live in the public memory, as the author of such verses as "The Groundhog" which begins:

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**“I think the Poet Laureate is a position that honors poetry. It is important to any state, to any state of mind of the populace, so that poetry in our state would be better served. It’s not a vainglorious thing. I didn’t put in for it. If there were any work involved, I wouldn’t have accepted. But I like to think I’m open-minded to about everything, I wouldn’t be adverse to writing an occasional poem as poet laureate.”**

**—R.E.**

**in a 1979 interview with  
the *Concord Monitor***

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*In June, amid the golden fields,  
I saw a groundhog lying dead.  
Dead lay he; my senses shook,  
and mind outshot our naked frailty.  
There lowly in the vigorous summer  
His form began its senseless change,  
And made my senses waver dim  
Seeing nature ferocious in him.*

Professor Eberhart’s friend and colleague Cleopatra Mathis, Professor of English and Director of Dartmouth’s Creative Writing Program, remembers him warmly, saying, “Dick was one of our finest American poets, not only in his work but in his embrace of other poets. He was generous and openhearted, and in that way, his life exemplified what his poems expressed.”

He loved the immortal qualities of poetry as he explained in an interview in 1979, “Poems in a way are spells against death. They are milestones to see where you are now, to perpetuate your feelings, to establish them. If you have in any way touched the central heart of mankind’s feelings, you’ll survive.”

Professor Eberhart was married to Helen Elizabeth “Betty” Butcher from 1941 until her death in 1993. They

spent more than four decades summering in Maine on Cape Rosier where he would skipper his pride and joy, a cruiser he named *Rêve*. In it, he ferried his large circle of fellow poets, writers and artists to islands for summer picnics.

He spent his final years living quietly at Kendal-at-Hanover, a retirement community.

Professor Eberhart is survived by two children, son Richard Eberhart ’68 of Phippsburg, Me. and daughter Gretchen Eberhart Cherington of Meriden, N.H. and six grandchildren: Ben Cherington of Boston, Molly Cherington of Denver, Lena Eberhart of Brooklyn, N.Y., James Eberhart, currently serving with the Peace Corp in Bulgaria, Samuel Eberhart and Rosalind Eberhart of Phippsburg, Me.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Austin Public Education Foundation for the benefit of the Richard Eberhart Poetry Prizes established by his family in 1994 annually to honor young poets in grades K-12 from his home town. Donations may be sent to: Austin Public Education Foundation, Richard Eberhart Poetry Prizes, P.O. Box 878, Austin, MN 55912.

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## Maxine Kumin

Maxine Winokur Kumin was born on June 6, 1925, in Philadelphia. She spent her youth in Germantown, Pa., a suburb of Philadelphia. Her father worked as a pawnbroker in the business that his father, Max Winokur, started. Her family history provided what she has referred to as “tribal material” for her poetry, and she wrote at some length about the members of her tribe for an autobiogra-

phy in the *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series* in 1989.

In April 1945, she met Army Sergeant Victor Kumin (Harvard '43) on a blind date. They were married in June 1946, following Maxine's graduation from Radcliffe. Between 1948 — when Maxine Kumin completed her Masters in Comparative Literature at Radcliffe — and 1953,

they had three children. As a young mother she was a Great Books discussion leader and worked as a medical writer. She has described this time in her career, when she wrote poetry only for herself, as unfulfilling.

In March 1953, Kumin sold a quatrain, “Factually Speaking,” to the *Christian Science Monitor* and was soon publishing similar work in a variety of publications. In the winter of 1956, she attended a poetry workshop at the Boston Center for Adult Education, where she met Anne Sexton. The two women — though very different in their styles, poetic and otherwise — became friends, co-authors of children's books and supporters of one another's work. In October 1974, Anne Sexton committed suicide. In 1979, Kumin told an audience at a Women's Writer's Conference that she was concerned that she could not write after Sexton died as she had been a vital link between the poet and her own art. Kumin did continue to write, however, including a series of elegies for Sexton that were included in *Our Ground Time Here Will be Brief*.

Maxine Kumin taught at a variety of schools over the years including Tufts, Columbia University, Princeton, and MIT. She was on the staff of the Bread Loaf Writers Conference during the 1970s and the Sewanee Writers Conference in 1993.

Since 1963, Maxine Kumin and her family have lived on a farm in Warner, N.H., which has allowed her to fill her life with animals, including rehabilitating abused horses. She has traveled extensively to teach and promote poetry, including participating in the US Information Agency's Arts America Tour in 1983.

### The Poetry of Maxine Kumin

*Bringing Together: Uncollected Early Poems, 1958-1988.* New York: W.W. Norton, 2003.

*Closing the Ring: Selected Poems.* Lewisburg, Pa.: Press of Appletree Alley, Bucknell University, 1984.

*Connecting the Dots : Poems.* New York: Norton, 1996.

*Halfway.* New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1961.

*House, Bridge, Fountain, Gate.* New York: Viking Press, 1975.

*The Long Approach: Poems.* New York: Viking, 1985.

*The Long Marriage: Poems.* New York: W.W. Norton, 2002.

*Looking for Luck: Poems.* New York: Norton, 1992.

*The Nightmare Factory.* New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

*Nurture: Poems.* New York: Viking, 1989.

*Our Ground Time Here Will be Brief.* New York: Viking Press, 1982.

*The Privilege.* New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

*The Retrieval System: Poems.* New York: Viking, 1978.

*Selected Poems, 1960-1990.* New York: Norton, 1997.

*Up Country; Poems of New England, New and Selected.* New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

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**“Maybe my poetry will save some of those particular observations of roots in the soil, the shape and the taste and the feel of vegetables as they grow, the texture of life in the country, which is not God and butterflies and brownies but black flies and lizards and frozen pipes and sick animals, and death, just as much as it is the autumn leaves and blue lakes.”**

—M.W.K.

***LC Information Bulletin,*  
October 16, 1981.**

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Ms. Kumin has won numerous awards and grants including the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1973 and The Sarah Josepha Hale Award in 1992. In 1981, Ms. Kumin was chosen to serve as Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress. In 1989, she became the New Hampshire Poet Laureate.

At the age of 73, Kumin suffered a broken neck and severe internal injuries while preparing a horse for competition. She described her recovery from this accident in the book *Inside the Halo and Beyond*. Maxine Kumin continues to be a prolific writer and has published poetry, novels, essays, short stories, and children's books.

In a 2002 interview in *The Hippo Press*, Kumin was asked how she felt about her life: “. . . I'm here, I'm mobile and I am still writing!”

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### *My Elusive Guest*

Thoreau loved the grayness of them, homespun with leafy horns like lichen made of bone.  
*God's own horses, poor timid creatures,* he said in 1846 in THE MAINE WOODS  
and then went on to wonder why they stood so high at the shoulders, why so long a head, no tail to speak of. *How like the camelopard,* he said, rolling the archaic word on his tongue: *high before and low behind* and stayed admiring them, upwind.

A hundred years later, the widow Blau whose rockbound farm I now inhabit broomed a moose out of her kitchen garden thinking it the neighbor's brown cow marauding among the vegetables at dawn then looked up to behold those rabbit ears, that wet nearsighted eye that ferny rack of gray on a still-gray sky and none since. Spring mornings at first light sometimes through fog some heavy weight shifts and wavers against the line of trees and wanting it in my blood, like a spray of musk, I beckon the elusive guest, willing it close. My wild thing, my moose.

— Maxine Kumin

From *Selected Poems, 1960-1990*, W. W. Norton & Co., 1997. Reprinted with the permission of the poet.

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# Paul Scott Mowrer

Continued from p. 3

Hadley Richardson Hemingway (the first Mrs. Ernest Hemingway). Mowrer became the European editor of the *New York Post* in 1945 and remained there until his retire-

ment to Chocorua, N.H. in 1948.

In New Hampshire, Mowrer continued to write poetry and was involved in several poetry societies, including

the Poetry Society of New Hampshire (PSNH), of which he was a charter member. He served as the guest speaker, reading his poetry at the Society's first meeting. He was an active member of the Society including serving as chairman of the National Poetess High School Awards. He recorded his poetry for the Library of Congress in 1961 and won the Lyric Poetry Award for traditional poetry in 1961 and 1962. In October 1965, his poem "O Little Men" was selected as the winner of the PSNH Poetry contest. At an Executive Board meeting of the Society in 1965 "by unanimous vote Paul Scott Mowrer was nominated as Poet Laureate."

The official position of New Hampshire Poet Laureate was not established by the NH Legislature until 1967. However, Governor John W. King and the Executive Council followed the lead of the Poetry Society of New Hampshire and voted to appoint Mowrer the first Poet Laureate of New Hampshire in September 1968. At a PSNH meeting held in June 1969 Mowrer explained about being Poet Laureate: "I was much impressed with the commission, but I had to take an oath of loyalty to the state." At that time the Poet Laureate was appointed for life and Mowrer went on to say "that's pretty tough, a life sentence, what's more, I'm only 82 years old and I could be hanging around for the next 50 years. But there's a way out of that, too; it says my tenure is subject to good behavior."

Mowrer's tenure as New Hampshire's first Poet Laureate was, sadly, shorter than he anticipated. He died April 7, 1971, at age 83 while vacationing in Beaufort, S.C.

## The Poetry of Paul Scott Mowrer

*And Let the Glory Go: Poems.* Sanbornville, N.H.: Wake-Brook House, 1955.

*The Good Comrade and Fairies.* New York: E.P. Dutton, 1923.

*High Mountain Pond.* Frankestown, N.H.: Golden Quill Press, 1962.

*Hours of France in Peace and War.* New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1918.

*The Island Ireland.* Frankestown, N.H.: Golden Quill Press, 1966.

*The Mothering Land: Selected Poems, 1918-1958.* Frankestown, N.H.: Golden Quill Press, 1960.

*On Going to Live in New Hampshire.* Sanbornville, N.H.: Wake-Brook House, 1953.

*Poems Between Wars: Hail Illinois! France Farewell.* With an appreciation by Carl Sandburg and a preface by Donald Culross Peattie; illustrations by Frank Sohn. Chicago: L. Mariano, 1941.

*The Poems of Paul Scott Mowrer, 1918-1966.* Revised and rearranged by the Author. Frankestown, NH, Golden Quill Press, 1968.

*School for Diplomats.* With an introduction by Loy W. Henderson; illustrated by Emery Kelen. Frankestown, N.H.: Golden Quill Press 1964.

*This Teeming Earth.* Decorated with 28 symbolics by Jeanne Caskie. Frankestown, N.H.: Golden Quill Press, 1965.

*Twenty-one and Sixty-five: Poems.* Mill Valley, Ca.: Wings Press, 1958.



## Donald Hall

Donald Andrew Hall, Jr., was born September 20, 1928, in New Haven, Connecticut. He grew up in a "literary household" where poetry was read and recited and reading was a large part of his life from an early age. He began writing at age 12 and continued through prep school (Exeter) and college. At the age of 16 he attended the Bread Loaf Writers Conference and the same year his first published poem appeared in *Trails*, a small magazine published in Esperance, N.Y.

Hall attended Harvard University, from which he received a B.A. in 1951. In September 1952, he married Kirby Thompson and they went to live in England, where Hall attended Oxford. While there, he won Oxford University's Newdigate Prize for his poem "Exile" and was widely reported to be the first American to have done so. In fact, he was the third American to earn this honor. He received his B. Litt. from Oxford in 1953. The couple returned to the U.S. and Hall had a fellowship at Stanford University for a year before returning to Boston to spend three years in the Society of Fellows at Harvard.

During this period Hall took on a variety of projects including serving as poetry editor for *Paris Review* (1953-1961), doing radio broadcasts for the BBC (1959-1980), and getting involved with The Poet's Theater (founded by Richard Eberhart). Hall's first book of poems, *Exiles and Marriages*, was put together during his years in the Society of Fellows at Harvard and was published in 1955. His first published book of prose, about the summers he spent on his grandparents' New Hampshire farm, was entitled *String Too Short to be Saved* and was published in 1961.

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## The Poetry of Donald Hall

*The Alligator Bride*. New York: Harper, 1969.

*A Blue Wing Tilts at the Edge of the Sea*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1975.

*Brief Lives*. Concord, N.H.: William B. Ewert, 1983.

*The Dark Houses*. New York: Viking, 1958.

*Exiles and Marriages*. New York: Viking, 1955.

*The Gentleman's Alphabet Book*. New York: Dutton, 1972.

*Great Day in the Cows' House*. Mt. Carmel, Conn.: Ives Street Press, 1984.

*The Happy Man*. New York: Random House, 1986.

*Here at Eagle Pond*. New York: Houghton, 1992.

*Kicking the Leaves*. New York: Harper, 1978.

*Museum of Clear Ideas*. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1993.

*Old and New Poems*. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1990.

*The Old Life*. New York: Houghton, 1996.

*The One Day*. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1988.

*The Painted Bed*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

*A Roof of Tiger Lilies*. New York: Viking, 1955.

*To the Loud Wind and Other Poems*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Advocate, 1955.

*The Town of Hill*. Boston: Godine, 1975.

*The Toy Bone*. Brockport, N.Y.: Boa Editions, 1979.

*The Twelve Seasons*. Deerfield, Mass.: Deerfield Press, 1983.

*Without*. New York: Houghton, 1998.

*The Yellow Room: Love Poems*. New York: Harper, 1971.

*White Apples and the Taste of Stone: Selected Poems 1946-2006*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2006.

Continued from p. 9

Hall planned to get out of New England entirely when he began to look for work following his Harvard fellowship and he took the best job that was offered – it was also the one farthest away — at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The family, which now included two children, Andrew and Philippa, moved to Ann Arbor in 1957. Hall and his wife divorced in 1969. Aside from two separate years when Hall went to England to write, he taught at the University of Michigan until 1975. Throughout this time he continued to write and publish extensively and to edit various publications.

He met Jane Kenyon, a student at the University, in 1969. They began courting in 1971 and were married on April 17, 1972.

In 1975, Hall bought the New Hampshire farm that had belonged to his maternal grandparents, where he had spent his boyhood summers. He had taken a leave of absence from the University and went to New Hampshire with Jane Kenyon. It didn't take long before the couple realized that they were in New Hampshire to stay. In August 1976, they moved to "Eagle Pond Farm for good with seven thousand books and two tons of manuscript." (*Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series*, vol. 7, p. 66) They lived there together until Jane Kenyon's death in 1995.

### *Scenic View*

Every year the mountains  
get paler and more distant –  
trees less green, rock piles  
disappearing – as emulsion  
from a billion Kodaks  
sucks color out.  
In fifteen years  
Monadnock and Kearsarge,  
the Green Mountains  
and the White, will turn  
invisible, all  
tint removed  
atom by atom to albums  
in Medford and Greenwich,  
while over the valleys  
the still intractable granite  
rears with unseeable peaks  
fatal to airplanes.

— Donald Hall

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permission of the poet.

### **The Work of Jane Kenyon**

*The Boat of Quiet Hours:  
Poems.* Saint Paul, Minn.:  
Graywolf Press, 1986.

*Collected Poems.* Saint Paul,  
Minn.: Graywolf Press, 2005.

*Constance: Poems.* Saint Paul,  
Minn.: Graywolf Press, 1993.

*From Room to Room: Poems.*  
Cambridge, Mass.: Alice James  
Books, 1978.

*A Hundred White Daffodils:  
Essays, the Akhmatova  
Translations, Newspaper  
Columns, Notes, Interviews,  
and One Poem.* Saint Paul,  
Minn.: Graywolf Press, 1999.

*Let Evening Come: Poems.*  
Saint Paul, Minn.: Graywolf  
Press, 1990.

*Otherwise: New and Selected.*  
Saint Paul, Minn.: Graywolf  
Press, 1996.

*Twenty Poems.* By Anna  
Andreevna Akhmatova;  
translated by Jane Kenyon  
and Vera Sandomirsky  
Dunham. Saint Paul, Minn.:  
Nineties Press and Ally  
Press, 1985.

**“The poet’s job is to find  
a name for everything; to  
be a fearless finder of the  
names of things; to be an  
advocate for the beauty  
of language, the subtleties  
of language.”**

**– Jane Kenyon**

## Jane Kenyon 1947-1994

Born May 23, 1947, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Jane Kenyon grew up in what was, at the time, a rural part of Ann Arbor. Her father was a jazz pianist who had toured with American dance bands and in later years gave lessons and played in local bars and clubs. Her mother was a singer and when her children were born (Jane had an older brother) she began working as a seamstress and sewing teacher.

Jane Kenyon attended the University of Michigan where she majored in French and in English, earning a B.A. in 1970 and an M.A. in 1972. While a student at Michigan she met the poet Donald Hall, who was a professor there. The two began courting in 1971 and were married on April 17, 1972. In 1975, Hall bought the New Hampshire farm that had belonged to his maternal grandparents and the couple moved to Eagle Pond Farm where Kenyon would live for the rest of her life.

She had begun writing at an early age and throughout her life she contributed to numerous magazines, including *New Criterion*, *New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harvard Magazine*, *Pequod*, *Ploughshares*, and *Poetry*. She also wrote a regular column for the *Concord Monitor*. She received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1981), NH Commission on the Arts (1984), and the Guggenheim Foundation (1992-3) to support her work. In the mid-1970s she and Joyce Perseroff founded a poetry review, *Green House*. They served as editors of the journal and published the work of many leading American contemporary poets in the six issues (1976-1980).

Kenyon published four books of her own poetry during her life: *From Room to Room* (1978), *The Boat of Quiet Hours* (1986), *Let Evening Come* (1990), and *Constance* (1993). She also published the translation *Twenty Poems of Anna Akhmatova* (1985) which she worked on with Vera Sandomirsky Dunham. Akhmatova was a favorite of Kenyon, a devoted reader, who was also drawn especially to the work of Keats, Chekhov, and Bishop.

In January 1994, Kenyon was diagnosed with leukemia. She spent the next sixteen months fighting the disease. During this time she was also working on what would become her fifth collection of poetry, *Otherwise: New and Selected Poems*. Jane Kenyon was chosen as New Hampshire Poet Laureate in 1995. She died only a month later on April 23, 1995.

Joyce Peseroff and Alice Mattison, whom Donald Hall describes as her "writing friends," worked with Hall to finalize the selections and editing for *Otherwise* which was published in 1996. In 1999, *A Hundred White Daffodils: Essays, Interviews, the Akhmatova Translations, Newspaper Columns, and One Poem* was published and Greywolf Press issued her *Collected Poems* in 2005.

### *Mud Season*

Here in purgatory bare ground  
is visible, except in shady places  
where snow prevails.

Still, each day sees  
the restoration of another animal:  
a sparrow, just now a sleepy wasp;  
and, at twilight, the skunk  
pokes out of the den,  
anxious for mates and meals. . . .

On the floor of the woodshed  
the coldest imaginable ooze,  
and soon the first shoots  
of asparagus will rise,  
the fingers of Lazarus. . . .

Earth's open wounds – where the plow  
gouged the ground last November –  
must be smoothed; some sown  
with seed, and all forgotten.

Now the nuthatch spurns the suet,  
resuming its diet of flies, and the mesh  
bag, limp and greasy, might be taken  
down.

Beside the porch step  
the crocus prepares an exaltation  
of purple, but for the moment  
holds its tongue. . . .

— Jane Kenyon

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Poems* with the permission of  
Graywolf Press, Saint Paul,  
Minnesota.

## Marie Harris

Born November 7, 1943, in New York City, Marie Harris grew up in Rye, N.Y. In 1961 she began at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. She left two years later when she married the poet William Matthews. Later Ms. Harris attended the University of North Carolina and completed her B.A. in English at Goddard College (Vermont) in 1971. Harris and Matthews had two sons, William and Sebastian.

In 1971, Ms. Harris moved to Portsmouth, N.H. The following year she and William Matthews divorced. Ms. Harris now resides in Barrington with her husband Charter Weeks. The two married in 1977 and together they own Isinglass Studio, a business-to-business advertising firm. The couple adopted a teenage son who is the subject of Marie Harris's most recent book of poetry: *Your Sun, Manny*.

### *New Year, New Hampshire*

"How few have ever had anything more of a choice in government than in climate?"

John Adams; Thoughts on Government

The Hunger Moon draws icy tides upriver,  
heaving gray-green slabs of seawater  
onto the salt marshes. Inland, a house  
rides snow swells into evening  
while inside the householder, satisfied  
in the knowledge of a well-provisioned root cellar,  
a woodshed stacked with even cords,  
pulls the shutters to, turns from the darkening window.  
And still, quarrelsome winds bay down the chimney.  
The urge to retreat to hearth  
and leatherbound studies of certainty  
is as strong as the pull of the moon;  
but there are times  
when what we may need most  
are the rude and raucous disputations  
that sputter and spark  
like bonfires on frozen ponds,  
attracting a quorum of neighbors.

— Marie Harris

On the occasion of the inauguration of Craig Benson  
as the 79th governor of New Hampshire  
January 9, 2003

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Ms. Harris wrote her first poem, about a toy donkey, when she was about 9 years old. She has always identified herself as a writer and a reader and has been publishing her work since she was in her 20s. Her writing has appeared in numerous journals including *Rivendell*, *Poet Lore*, *Paragraph*, *Poetry Miscellany*, *Turnstile*, *Hanging Loose*, *Sojourner*, *Heaven Bone*, and *The Formalist*. Marie Harris has published four volumes of her poetry and two children's books. She has also edited several books, and as a travel writer her articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe* and *Corvette Fever*.

Ms. Harris has done readings all over New England. As her listing on the New Hampshire Council on the Arts' Artists Roster explains: "Marie Harris has presented her work to schoolchildren, college students and senior citizens. She has appeared before audiences ranging from the New Hampshire State Legislature to small town meetings, and at conferences on issues ranging from agricultural sustainability and arts in education to modern poetry and politics. She has worked as a resident artist in public and private schools throughout New England for over 25 years. Harris is a trained voiceover specialist and she brings drama and humor to her performances."

In 1999, Governor Shaheen appointed Marie Harris to be New Hampshire Poet Laureate. During her term she organized *Poetry & Politics*, which was the first-in-the-nation gathering of the state poets laureate. Marie Harris continues to play an active role in the New Hampshire literary community. Recently the Portsmouth Poet Laureate Program chose her and her husband as finalists in its "Voices and Vision" project. Their piece is titled "Working the Piscataqua" and you can see it at <http://www.marieharris.com>.

## New Hampshire's Poets Laureate

Continued from p. 1

### The Work of Marie Harris

*Dear Winter: Poems for the Solstice.* (edited) Thomaston, Me.: Northwoods Press, 1984.

*An Ear to the Ground: An Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry.* (edited with Kathleen Aguero) Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989.

*G is for Granite: A New Hampshire Alphabet.* illustrated by Karen Busch Holman. Chelsea, Mich.: Sleeping Bear Press, 2002.

*A Gift of Tongues: Critical Challenges in Contemporary American Poetry.* (edited with Kathleen Aguero) Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987.

*Interstate.* Pittsburgh, Pa.: Slow Loris Press, 1980.

*Primary Numbers: A New Hampshire Number Book.* Illustrated by Karen Busch Holman. Chelsea, Mich.: Sleeping Bear Press, 2004.

*Raw Honey.* Cambridge, Mass.: Alice James Books, 1975.

*Weasel in the Turkey Pen.* Brooklyn, N.Y.: Hanging Loose Press, 1993.

*Your Sun, Manny: A Prose Poem Memoir.* Minneapolis, Minn.: New River Press, 1999.

After Miss Vinton's death in September 1977, a new poet laureate was not named until 1979 when Richard Eberhart, the Honorary President and one of the founders of the PSNH, was appointed to a five-year term as New Hampshire's Poet Laureate. Donald Hall followed in 1984, then Maxine Kumin in 1989 and Jane Kenyon in 1994. When Jane Kenyon died in April 1995, Donald Hall was once again appointed as New Hampshire Poet Laureate and served until March 22, 1999.

In 1999 the position of New Hampshire Poet Laureate was once again the focus of controversy when Governor Jeanne Shaheen appointed Marie Harris of Barrington without the approval of the Poetry Society of New Hampshire. As New Hampshire Poet Laureate, however, Harris brought together not only the poets of the Granite State, but those of the entire nation. What began as Harris's search for a suitable job description for a state's poet laureate became *Poetry and Politics* – the first-ever gathering of poets laureate from across the United States. Harris worked with the New Hampshire Writers' Project, the NH Council on the Arts, the Commissioner of Cultural Resources, and the Governor's office to create a two-day event in April 2003 including free poetry readings by state poets laureate held all over the state; a full-day conference on the role of poetry in society; and a gala dinner with keynote speaker Dana Gioia, then recently appointed as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. At the time there were thirty states that had poets laureate, and most of them attended the event.

The 'job description' for the poet laureate varies from state to state, and Marie Harris explained her under-

standing of her own position in an interview with the *New Hampshire Sunday News* in April 2003: "I am the public face of poetry in the state for now and that means that from my point of view, my job is to promote poetry and specifically New Hampshire poets." Asked about constraints on what she can write, she continued, "I don't think any poet would take the position knowing that it came with constraints. That would be just sort of counter to the whole point of the role of the artist. The role of the artist is to be a gadfly, to interpret the world as they see it, to speak out if they choose and how they choose."

On January 21, 2004, Cynthia Huntington was approved by the Governor and Council as the state's eighth poet laureate. She had been nominated by the Poetry Society of New Hampshire and was appointed by Governor Craig Benson. In an interview with *The Hippo Press* in 2004 Ms. Huntington described the position: "... I also think that just being a writer and staying with that and taking it into everything I do is part of being Poet Laureate. It's not an outreach mission, but an honor to poetry in general, that one person at a time gets to represent." In 2006, following the lead of Robert Frost, Ms. Huntington left this "most restful state" and at present is living in Vermont. Consequently she resigned her post.

Following the recommendation of the PSNH, Governor John Lynch appointed Patricia Fargnoli of Walpole to complete Ms. Huntington's term, which ends in March 2009. The nomination was approved by the Governor and Council on December 21, 2005. Ms. Fargnoli has indicated that she is interested in using her position to introduce poetry to more people, both children and adults.

## Granite State Readers Recommend Poetry

Please check out the complete list of Granite State readers' recommendations and tell us about a book that you would recommend by visiting [www.nh.gov/nhsl/bookcenter/programs](http://www.nh.gov/nhsl/bookcenter/programs)

Concord, NH

**Don Kimball**

Poet / Retired family therapist

*Rebel Angels: 25 Poets of the New Formalism*, edited by Mark Jarman and David Mason. Still the best anthology of contemporary poets who use meter and rhyme. David Mason's *The Poetry of Life and the Life of Poetry*. The most delightful yet insightful book of essays on poetry I've ever read! I am awed by way this poet blends feeling and thoughtfulness in what he writes; the deep human insights found in his essays as well as his poetry.

Manchester, NH

**Mary Russell**

Librarian, NHSL

*The Poetry Home Repair Manual: Practical Advice for Beginning Poets* (Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2005), by Ted Kooser. The intended audience for this book is people who write poetry, but as a reader of poetry I found it very interesting and it showed me several new ways of looking at poems. If you want to know more about what goes into the creation of a poem and how that relates to ham cubes, this is the book you want to read.

Walpole, NH

**Patricia Fargnoli**

NH Poet Laureate

*White Sea* (Sarabande Books, 2005), by Cleopatra Mathis. This stunning 40 poem book by one of New Hampshire's best poets swings from poems rich with the landscapes of the poet's southern childhood to those rich with oceanscapes of outer Cape Cod. Fiercely beautiful and often elegiac, what I like best about them is the way they dare to explore the meaning and location of the soul even in the face of the mortality of the body. This is one of the two best books of poems I've read in the last year.

## Cynthia Huntington

Born in western Pennsylvania in 1952, Cynthia Huntington, like several of New Hampshire's Poets Laureate, came to the Granite State by way of the University of Michigan. She began writing poems when she was in her 20s and began sliding poems under the door of Professor Donald Hall, whom she met at the University. It was the beginning of what Huntington has called a "15-year tutorial," which she credits with having taught her much of what she knows about writing.

### *White Roses*

White roses in fog,  
whiter than fog, spun in air,  
open clear on dark green  
branches below, unmoving,  
clutching the hillside  
at the edge of the world.

The air is numbed  
in reflections of vapor.  
Only the wind is blowing,  
no sound of surf below the hill.  
Even the sea is invisible.  
We are not under the sky,

we are not risen,  
heaven has not come down.  
Just this blurring of worlds  
in dense light, these white roses  
so still, they turn  
and look into themselves.

— Cynthia Huntington

From *The Radiant*.

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She began teaching at Dartmouth College in 1989 and is Director of Creative Writing and Professor of English there. She also teaches in the MFA in Writing program at Vermont College in Montpelier. She has been a trustee of the New Hampshire Writers' Project and has worked with the New Hampshire Humanities Council, the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire, and the Frost Place in Franconia. She has received fellowships from, among others, the MacDowell Colony, the N.H. State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Huntington was appointed New Hampshire Poet Laureate in 2004.

Cynthia Huntington has published three books of poems and one memoir: *The Fish Wife* (University of Hawaii Press, 1986), *We Have Gone to the Beach* (Alice James Books, 1996), *The Radiant* (Four Way Books, 2003), and *The Salt House: A Summer on the Dunes of Cape Cod* (University Press of New England, 2003). Her poetry has also been published in numerous journals including *Ploughshares*, *TriQuarterly*, and *The Harvard Review*.

Until recently Huntington lived in Hanover with her son. In August 2006, she moved to Thetford, Vermont, coincidentally the home of Vermont's state poet, Grace Paley, and resigned her position as N.H. Poet Laureate. Huntington continues to teach at Dartmouth and is working on a new book.

## Patricia Fagnoli

Patricia Fagnoli, the current New Hampshire Poet Laureate, is the author of *Duties of the Spirit*, which was the 2005 winner of the Jane Kenyon Poetry Book Award; *Necessary Light*, which won the 1999 May Swenson Book Award; and *Small Songs of Pain*. She has also published two chapbooks of poetry.

A member of The New Hampshire Council on the Arts Touring Roster, she's read her work throughout New England and has published poems in numerous journals including *Poetry*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie*

*Schooner*, *The Laurel Review*, *The Indiana Review*, *Poetry Northwest* and *The Mid-American Review*.

Ms. Fagnoli holds a B.A. from Trinity College in Hartford, Conn. and a Master of Social Work from the University of Connecticut. She moved to New Hampshire from Windsor, Conn. after her three children were grown and has now lived here for over a decade. Initially settling in Keene, Ms. Fagnoli now resides in Walpole.

In 1998, Ms. Fagnoli retired from a

career as a clinical social worker and psychologist to devote her time to teaching and writing poetry. That same year she was awarded a fellowship at the MacDowell Colony, and is a frequent resident at The Dorset Colony in Dorset, Vermont. She was on the faculty of The Frost Place Poetry Festival, and has taught at The Keene Institute of Music and Related Arts and the New Hampshire Institute of Art, where she was awarded an honorary B.F.A. She has taught for several years in the Lifelong Learning Program of Keene State College.

### *The Undeniable Pressure of Existence*

I saw the fox running by the side of the road  
past the turned-away brick faces of the condominiums  
past the Citgo gas station with its line of cars and trucks  
and he ran, limping, gaunt, matted dull haired  
past Jim's Pizza, past the Wash-O-Mat  
past the Thai Garden, his sides heaving like bellows  
and he kept running to where the interstate  
crossed the state road and he reached it and ran on  
under the underpass and beyond it past the perfect  
rows of split-levels, their identical driveways  
their brookless and forestless yards,  
and from my moving car, I watched him,  
helpless to do anything to help him, certain he was beyond  
any aid, any desire to save him, and he ran loping on,  
far out of his element, sick, panting, starving,  
his eyes fixed on some point ahead of him,  
some possible salvation  
in all this hopelessness, that only he could see.

— Patricia Fagnoli

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Laureate project possible!**

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**at the New Hampshire State Library**  
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*The mission of the  
Center for the  
Book at the NH  
State Library  
is to celebrate and  
promote reading,  
books, literacy,  
and the literary  
heritage of New  
Hampshire and to  
highlight  
the role that  
reading and  
libraries play in  
enriching  
the lives of the  
people of the  
Granite State.*

## **The NH Center for the Book Authors' Room**

Part of the mission of the Center for the Book at the New Hampshire State Library is “to celebrate and promote . . . the literary heritage of New Hampshire” and with that in mind we have established the *New Hampshire Center for the Book Authors' Room* at the New Hampshire State Library in Concord.

According to State Librarian Michael York, “the New Hampshire Authors' Room is a special place in the State Library dedicated to New Hampshire's writers. Its purpose is to highlight the accomplishments of New Hampshire writers, and it is our hope that they will feel welcome here and that they will use our resources about New Hampshire.”

Currently, the Authors' Room features a display on the works of the Granite State's nine poets laureate including images of each poet, a display of their books, sample poems, and binders of resource materials on each of them. The Center for the Book plans to have a couple of different displays in the room each year that focus on some specific aspect of New Hampshire's literary heritage. It might be work of a particular type, such as novels or biography; work by a particular group of writers, like the poets laureate; or writings on a specific topic, like the Old Man of the Mountain.

When asked for her thoughts on the new space, Barbara Yoder, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Writers' Project, said: “the Authors' Room has a warm, wonderful feeling with photos of our poets laureate, beautiful book display cases, and comfortable chairs. It is a stunning, light-filled room and a great place to read books by New Hampshire authors.”

The Poetry Society of New Hampshire held a reading at the State Library on April 15, 2006, and they offered light refreshments following the reading in the Authors' Room. We hope that this will be the first of many literary gatherings in this space.