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TOD MARSHALL NAMED 2016-2018 WASHINGTON STATE POET LAUREATE

THE SPOKANE POET AND GONZAGA PROFESSOR IS
THE FIRST EASTERN WASHINGTON RESIDENT TO HOLD THE POSITION

OLYMPIA – Tod Marshall, an award-winning poet and a professor at Gonzaga University, has been appointed the fourth Washington State Poet Laureate by Governor Jay Inslee. Marshall's term will run from February 1, 2016, to January 31, 2018.

Marshall is the author of three poetry collections: *Dare Say* (2002), *The Tangled Line* (2009), and *Bugle* (2014), the latter of which won the Washington State Book Award in 2015. He also is a professor of English at Gonzaga University. He succeeds Elizabeth Austen, the state's previous laureate, who served from 2014–2016. Kathleen Flenniken (2012–2014) and Sam Green (2007–2009) held the position prior to Austen.

The Washington State Poet Laureate program is jointly sponsored by the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) and Humanities Washington. Poets laureate work to build awareness and appreciation of poetry—including the state's legacy of poetry—through public readings, workshops, lectures, and presentations in communities throughout the state. Laureates are selected through an

application and panel review process which evaluates candidates' proposed project plans, writing acumen, and experience promoting poetry.

Karen Hanan, executive director of the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA), and Julie Ziegler, executive director of Humanities Washington, agree that it takes a unique combination of skills to be successful in this position.

"The Washington State Poet Laureate must be more than a talented writer," said Hanan. "We've been fortunate that all our past poets laureate—and now Tod—have been willing to travel the state meeting communities face-to-face. He or she must be a relentless advocate for the importance of poetry."

"Tod is a terrific poet and a gifted teacher," added Ziegler. "We are excited to have our next laureate based in the Northeastern corner of the state. This will bring a new perspective and opportunities for outreach to this program."

Marshall was the first in his family to attend college and has dedicated himself to bringing humanities experiences to underserved populations.

"Poetry matters—not just to poets, professors, and students: poetry matters to everyone," said Marshall. "I was a first-generation college student, and because of that, I understand the skepticism that many have for the arts. But I've also come to realize that the inner life that the arts and humanities can nurture is important to living deliberately and introspectively. So I am interested in how poetry and all of the arts can help us find our best selves."

"When I meet people throughout the state," he said, "I hope to reinforce a message that as children they probably took for granted: their voices, their words, their songs of the self, are important and need to be heard."

UPCOMING PUBLIC EVENTS

February 4: Welcome event, Spokane (*venue and time TBD*)

February 9: Short reading at the board meeting of the Washington State Arts Commission, Olympia, Washington Center for the Performing Arts, 12:00 p.m. (*Note: this will take place during a working lunch of an open public meeting of the ArtsWA Board. The public is welcome to attend and listen; however, food will not be provided to the public.*)

February 9: Joint reading with former Poet Laureate Elizabeth Austen, Seattle, Hugo House, 7:00 p.m.

February 10: Reading at Arts & Heritage Day luncheon, Olympia, Cherberg Building, 12:00 p.m.

ABOUT TOD MARSHALL

Tod Marshall earned an MFA degree from Eastern Washington University and a PhD from the University of Kansas. His first collection of poetry, *Dare Say*, was the 2002 winner of the University of

Georgia's Contemporary Poetry Series. His second collection, *The Tangled Line*, was published by Canarium Press in 2009, and was a finalist for the Washington Book Award. Marshall has also published a collection of his interviews with contemporary poets, *Range of the Possible* (EWU Press, 2002), which was named to the New York City Public Library Poetry Book List for 2003, and an accompanying anthology of the interviewed poets' work, *Range of Voices* (2005). In 2005, he was awarded a Washington Artists Trust Fellowship. His third collection of poetry, *Bugle*, was published in December of 2014 from Canarium, and won the Washington State Book Award in 2015. He is also the recipient of the 2015 Humanities Washington Award for Scholarship and Service. He lives in Spokane, Washington, and teaches at Gonzaga University where he is the Robert K. and Ann J. Powers Professor Chair of the Humanities.

ABOUT THE WASHINGTON STATE POET LAUREATE

The Washington State Poet Laureate position was established in April 2007 when the Washington State Legislature passed a bill that recognized the value of poetry to the culture and heritage of the state. Washington joined several other states in appointing an official state poet laureate position. The Washington State Poet Laureate is a joint program of the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) and Humanities Washington, and is appointed by the Governor. The position is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, ArtsWA, and Humanities Washington. Information and events calendar at: wapoetlaureate.org.

ABOUT HUMANITIES WASHINGTON

Humanities Washington sparks conversation and critical thinking using story as a catalyst, nurturing thoughtful and engaged communities across our state. For more about Humanities Washington, visit humanities.org.

ABOUT ARTSWA

The Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) advances and supports arts and culture in Washington State through leadership, funding, and resources that build participation and access to the arts. For more about ArtsWA visit arts.wa.gov.

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