

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, 2018? In each activity describe the more important features of the work, and connect your work to the [NCTE Vision Statement](#), if applicable.

1. List names, affiliations, and geographic regions for all committee members.

2020 Selection Committee Members		
Name	Affiliation	Geographic Region
Patricia Bandré	USD 305, Salina, KS Public Schools	Midwest
Donna Friend	Hebron High School, Carrollton, TX	Southwest
Theodore (Ted) Kesler	Queens College, Cuny, Flushing, NY	Northeast
Judy Rowe Michaels	Princeton Day School, NJ, Emerita	Northeast
Heidi Mordhorst	Rockview Elementary School, North Kensington, MD	Southeast
Lisa Patrick	Ohio State University, Columbus, OH	Midwest
Yoo Kyung Sung	University of New Mexico, Albuquerque	Southwest

2. What actions, projects, initiatives, or studies are “in progress” at this time?

- At present, the 2020 selection committee members are reading, reviewing and rating the 2019 poetry books we have received from publishers. As chair, I have been communicating with publishers since late March and requesting copies of their 2019 poetry titles for committee review. All books received are recorded on a Google Sheet in a Google folder accessible by the committee members. After reading and rating each book, we will discuss them at length during our meeting at the 2019 NCTE Annual Convention. The most outstanding books meeting the award’s criteria will be named to the 2020 list of Notable Poetry Books and Notable Verse Novels. Submissions have been slow to arrive thus far. At present, we have received 22 books. Several more have been requested. November 1st is the deadline for accepting 2019 titles.
- In the next few weeks we will begin finalizing plans for two 2019 NCTE Annual Convention presentations. One session will feature the 2019 Children’s Notable Poetry and Verse Novels. Poet David Harrison, whose book *Crawly School for Bugs* (WordSong, 2018) was selected for the list, will discuss his work and conduct some poetry warm-up activities with the attendees. Members of the 2019 selection committee will present all of the books on the list. Attendees will

receive handouts that provide information about all of the books selected as well as ideas for using poetry in the classroom. The second session will celebrate the work of Paul B. Janeczko, winner of the 2019 Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children. Those who knew Paul and admired his work will be sharing poetry and thoughts about his work in memoriam.

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

- The 2019 selection committee wrote and submitted an article about the 2019 Notable list for *School Library Journal*. This was published in print form and online in April. Two of the committee members prepared an article about Paul B. Janeczko to appear in a forthcoming issue of *Language Arts*.
- Over the next few months, the 2020 selection committee will continue to read and review books in preparation for our meeting at the 2019 NCTE Annual Convention.
- Following the selection of the 2020 Notable Poetry and Verse Novels, publishers will be notified and the list will be shared via social media and posted on the NCTE website. Committee members will prepare reviews of the selected books for publication.

4. 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 many teachers are uncomfortable teaching and sharing in the classroom. The goal of our committee is to promote poetry and provide teaching ideas through our conference presentations and journal publications. We have shared, and will continue to share, what we consider to be 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.
- Since 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 especially desire to locate and recognize children's poetry that celebrates Native American people and culture.
- We continue to strive to find and recommend notable poetry books for the youngest children in our age range – 3 to 5 years old.

Suggestions from your group: Your good ideas help direct future NCTE actions.

1. What significant changes or trends in our field point to action from the Council?

- Committee members have noticed an increase in the number of verse novels written for young adults. Because our age range is 3-13 years old, we are unable to recognize these wonderful books. Perhaps NCTE could discuss a way to recognize poetry and verse novels for young adults in a formal way?

2. What trends need to factor into medium- to long-term NCTE planning?

- The website and social media connections are critically important in today's classrooms and styles of teaching and communicating. Keeping these areas user-friendly, easily accessible, and easily navigated are essential.
- Sessions selected at annual conference are critical in reflecting current trends and enough cannot be said about the importance of issues of diversity today. All of the NCTE communications, website articles, author presentations at annual conference, need to reflect this. Many efforts have been taken and are greatly appreciated. We need to continue to make diversity a focus.

- Those who want to attend sessions about children's poetry at NCTE are often the same people who desire to learn about other notable books – the Orbis Pictus books, the Charlotte Huck books, and the Notable Books in the Language arts to name just a few. It would be wonderful if every effort was made for these sessions to be held on different days / different times. When they all occur at the same time, it is very difficult for attendees to decide what session to attend.

Patricia Bandré, Chair