

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

and

POETRY FOUNDATION

present



2007 National Finals

May 1 - 7:00 pm

**George Washington University Lisner Auditorium
Washington, DC**



The National Endowment for the Arts is the largest annual funder of the arts in the United States. An independent federal agency, the NEA is the official arts organization of the United States government, dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts—both new and established—bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education.



The Poetry Foundation is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. The Foundation publishes *Poetry* magazine, sponsors a variety of public programs, and supports creative projects in literature.



Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation supports the richness and diversity of the region's arts resources and promotes wider access to the art and artists of the region, nation and world.

Support for the 2007 National Finals is provided by





Photo by Vanees Jacobs



Photo courtesy of the Poetry Foundation

Welcome to the *Poetry Out Loud* National Recitation Contest finals. This exciting program invites the dynamic elements of theater and spoken word to poetry instruction in high school classrooms. *Poetry Out Loud* helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.

Poetry Out Loud began as a pilot program three years ago in Chicago and Washington, DC. Now in its second year nationwide, all 50 states and the District of Columbia held recitation contests, thanks to the tremendous efforts of State Arts Agencies, arts organizations, schools, and teachers across the country. More than 100,000 students—from Alaska to Florida, from Maine to Hawaii—competed to be here today. This event presents the State Champions. Congratulations to all the students who traveled to compete these two days.

Competitive recitation has its roots in ancient Greece. And while all contests pit competitors against one another, the oldest function of poetry is to unite a culture by sharing its common stories. Recitation of the best classic and contemporary poems is an art that continues to create and deepen communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana Gioia". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dana Gioia
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Barr". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John Barr
President
Poetry Foundation

Prizes

National Finals

1st place	\$20,000 college scholarship prize
2nd place	\$10,000 college scholarship prize
3rd place	\$5,000 college scholarship prize
4th-12th place	\$1,000 college scholarship prize

The schools of the top 12 finalists will receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry books.

Each of the top 12 finalists will also receive two roundtrip airline tickets courtesy of Southwest Airlines.

State Finals

1st place	Student received \$200 award and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC School received \$500 for the purchase of poetry books
2nd place	Student received \$100 award School received \$200 for the purchase of poetry books



National Finals Program

Musical Prelude

The Joe McCarthy Quartet

Presentation of the State Champions

Welcome

Chairman Dana Gioia, NEA

Opening Remarks

Scott Simon, Host

First Round

Remarks

President John Barr, Poetry Foundation

Second Round

Intermission

The Joe McCarthy Quartet

Announcement of Five Finalists

Final Round

Awards Ceremony

Announcement of *Poetry Out Loud* National Champion



Semifinals Program ■ April 30

Semifinal One

9:00 am

Semifinal Two

1:00 pm

Semifinal Three

4:30 pm



Welcome and Introductions

Leslie Liberato
Stephen Young

Hosts

Felicia Knight
Dan Stone

First Round

Second Round

Third Round

Top 8 competitors in each Semifinal will recite a third poem

Awards Presentation

Announcement of Finalists

Top 4 competitors advance to National Finals



Host and Judges for National Finals

Host

Scott Simon, a Chicago native, brings a well-traveled perspective to his role as host of National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition Saturday*. During his career he has covered ten wars, from El Salvador to Iraq, and he has won numerous prestigious awards in broadcasting, including the Peabody, the Emmy, and the duPont-Columbia. Simon also accepted the Presidential End Hunger Award for his series of reports on the 1987-88 Ethiopian civil war and drought. He hosts the quarterly PBS series, *State of Mind*, and the public television series, *Voices of Vision*. His books include the bestseller *Home and Away: Memoir of a Fan*; *Jackie Robinson and the Integration of Baseball*; and a novel, *Pretty Birds*.

Judges

Marilyn Chin is an activist, poet, and translator currently serving as Poet-in-Residence at Bucknell University. Born in Hong Kong, Chin immigrated to the United States as a child and was raised in Portland, Oregon. Chin's work is widely anthologized and she is the recipient of two National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowships, a Fulbright Fellowship, and four Pushcart Prizes, among other honors. Chin has published three collections of poetry, most recently *Rhapsody in Plain Yellow*. Chin received her B.A. in Chinese Literature from the University of Massachusetts and an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa.

Kwame Dawes was born in Ghana and grew up in Jamaica. Poet, actor, playwright, novelist, and critic, Dawes teaches at the University of South Carolina (USC) where he serves as Distinguished Poet in Residence, Director of the USC Poetry Initiative, and Executive Director of the USC Arts Institute. In 2001, his collection *Midland* won the Hollis Summers Poetry Prize, judged by Eavan Boland. The most recent of Dawes' 12 collections of poetry is entitled *Wisteria*. He is the program director of the Calabash International Literary Festival and is a contributor to the Poetry Foundation blog, Harriet.

Jackson Hille is from Columbus, Ohio, and was the 2006 National Champion for *Poetry Out Loud*. He is currently studying theater at Otterbein College in Ohio and hopes to become an actor. Shel Silverstein and Billy Collins are two of his favorite poets.

Steve Karesh of XM Satellite Radio is currently program director of XM's public radio stations. He created and served as executive director of XM's Sonic Theater channel from 2002-2006. A native of Westchester County, New York, Karesh began his broadcasting career in high school—as the engineer for a local morning talk show—and subsequently worked his way from intern to producer of various nationally broadcast talk shows airing on Westwood One and NPR stations across America. He holds a B.A. in American Studies from Pitzer College in Claremont, California, and an M.A. in Culture and Communications from NYU. In 2002 he received the bronze medal for talk-radio programming at the New York Festivals of Radio Programming and Promotion.

Garrison Keillor is the author of more than a dozen books including *Lake Wobegon Days*, *The Book of Guys*, *Love Me*, and *Homegrown Democrat*. He is also the creator, host, and writer of the radio variety show *A Prairie Home Companion* and *The Writer's Almanac*, heard on public radio stations across the country. He won a Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word in 1987 for the audiobook *Lake Wobegon Days*. Keillor is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2006, *A Prairie Home Companion* was released as a major motion picture, written by Keillor and directed by Robert Altman. The late summer of 2007 will also see the publication of his new novel, *Pontoon*, by Penguin Books.

Dominique Raccah is the founder and CEO of Sourcebooks, Inc. Formerly employed by the Leo Burnett Agency in Chicago, Raccah left the agency 20 years ago to start Sourcebooks, which has been recognized as the fastest-growing publisher in the industry. She has won the Blue Chip Enterprise Award as well as the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award for Illinois and Northwest Indiana, and serves as co-chair of the Book Industry Study Group. She is the publisher of the best-selling anthologies *Poetry Speaks* and *Poetry Speaks to Children*, as well as the Sourcebooks Shakespeare series. Born in Paris, France, Raccah earned her M.A. in Quantitative Psychology from the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Judges for Semifinals Program

Major Jackson is an associate professor of English at the University of Vermont and is the author of poetry collections *Hoops* and *Leaving Saturn*. His poems have appeared in *The American Poetry Review*, *TriQuarterly*, and *The New Yorker*, among other literary journals and anthologies. He is the recipient of a Whiting Writers' Award, the Cave Canem Poetry Prize, a Pew Fellowship in the Arts, and is a former Witter Bynner Fellow at the Library of Congress. Currently, he is a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and is serving as the 2006-07 Jack Kerouac Writer-in-Residence at University of Massachusetts-Lowell.

Jonathan Katz has served as CEO of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies since 1985. Recently appointed to the U.S. National Commission on UNESCO, he advises the board of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies. He has served as the executive director of the Kansas Arts Commission and has taught communication, literature, and creative writing at universities in Indiana, Ohio, and Kansas. His doctoral dissertation proposes a national agenda for literary activities in the United States.

Maurice Kilwein-Guevara is a professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is the author of three collections of poetry, *Autobiography of So-and-So: Poems in Prose*, *Poems of the River Spirit*, and *Postmortem*, which won the National Contemporary Poetry Competition. Kilwein-Guevara has received awards from the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and is a past Fulbright Senior Scholar. In 2003, he was the first person of Latino descent elected President of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP), the largest organization serving writers in North America.

E. Ethelbert Miller has been the director of the African American Resource Center at Howard University since 1974 and is a commissioner for the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. His poetry collections include *How We Sleep On the Nights We Don't Make Love* and *Whispers, Secrets, and Promises*. Miller's memoir is *Fathering Words: The Making of an African American Writer*. In 2005, he was a Fulbright Scholar to Israel and he was recently presented with the 2007 Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award.

Sandra Reeves is the senior editor of *Education Week*, an independent national newspaper covering American education. A former science writer, magazine editor, and university official, she has received recognition for her work that includes an AAAS-Westinghouse Science Writing Award and three Robert A. Sibley Awards for excellence in university-based publishing. She has written on special assignment for publications such as *U.S. News & World Report*, and has taught both journalism (at the University of Alabama) and fiction writing (at Brown University). She is a graduate of the Brown Writing Program, where she studied for two years under novelist R.V. Cassill.

Don Selby co-founded the *Poetry Daily* Web site with Diane Boller and Rob Anderson following a career in the law publishing industry. *Poetry Daily* (www.poems.com) is an online nonprofit organization that features the work of a different contemporary poet each day. Selby is co-editor of *Poetry Daily's* newest anthology, *Poetry Daily Essentials 2007*. He is a graduate of Swarthmore College and the University of Virginia School of Law.

Joanne Yatvin has published more than 70 articles including commentaries in *Education Week* and the *New York Times*, and has authored three books for teachers. During her 40-year career in public education she has taught and held administrative positions in New Jersey, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Puerto Rico. She is president of the National Council of Teachers of English and her honors include the Wisconsin Elementary Principal of the Year; Kenneth S. Goodman "In Defense of Good Teaching Award"; and an NEH fellowship. She is also currently an adjunct professor at Portland State University in Oregon.

2007 State

Alabama

Khadijah Robinson

LAMP Magnet High School

Alaska

Deja Husberg

Chugiak High School

Arizona

Mark Jacobson

Arizona School for the Arts

Arkansas

Hannah Eakin

Clarksville High School

California

Karen Hong

Montgomery High School

Colorado

Passion Lyons

Gateway High School

Connecticut

Mara Dauphin

Rockville High School

Delaware

Daniel James Foster

Delmar Middle & Senior High School

District of Columbia

Amanda Fernandez

Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Florida

Chris Robinson

Douglas Anderson School of the Arts

Georgia

Kelsey E. Bogue

Roswell High School

Hawaii

Tucker Haworth

Mid-Pacific Institute

Idaho

Shaun Engstrom

Boise High School

Illinois

Robi Mahan

Harrisburg High School

Indiana

Branden Emanuel Wellington

Broad Ripple High School

Iowa

Spencer Gilbert

Valley High School

Kansas

Patrick Kuhn

Salina High Central

Kentucky

Dean Muir

Trimble County High School

Louisiana

Mercedes Murial Wilson

Baton Rouge Magnet High School

Maine

Katherine Reynolds

Erskine Academy

Maryland

Taylor McLean Myers

South River High School

Massachusetts

Gabrielle Guarracino

Rockland High School

Michigan

Sarah Harris

Holt Senior High School

Minnesota

Thandisizwe Jackson-Nisan

North Community High School

Mississippi

Melissa Cline

Ridgeland High School

Missouri

Michael T. Brown, II

Blue Springs South High School

Champions

Montana

Joshua Kelly
Flathead High School

Nebraska

Shuqiao Song
Lincoln East High School

Nevada

Jake Reid
Douglas High School

New Hampshire

Laura Messner
Exeter High School

New Jersey

Naja Selby
Arts High School

New Mexico

Fantasia Lonjose
Santa Fe Indian School

New York

Allison Tepper
Niskayuna High School

North Carolina

Aimee Elizabeth Isbell
Mooresville Senior High School

North Dakota

Michael P. Sly
Shanley High School

Ohio

Barrie Anthony Jackson
Westland High School

Oklahoma

Jessica Sims
Putnam City West High School

Oregon

Ian C. Jones
The Center for Advanced Learning

Pennsylvania

Olivia Lee Meldrum
Homeschooled

Rhode Island

Jean-Paul D. Lagace
Providence Country Day School

South Carolina

Samara Simmons
Academic Magnet High School

South Dakota

Janessa Nickell
Lincoln High School

Tennessee

Austin Johnson
Davidson Academy

Texas

Albert Drake
G.W. Carver High School

Utah

Amanda E. Fujiki
Meridian School

Vermont

Henry Kiely
Peoples Academy

Virginia

Alanna Rivera
Washington-Lee High School

Washington

Olivia Seward
Stadium High School

West Virginia

Elizabeth Ann McCormick
Capital High School

Wisconsin

Matthew Scales
James Madison Memorial High School

Wyoming

Joshua Schaberg
Buffalo High School

Semifinals One, 9:00 am

Connecticut

Mara Dauphin

“anyone lived in a pretty how town” by E.E. Cummings

“Detroit, Tomorrow” by Philip Levine

Delaware

Daniel James Foster

“Theme for English B” by Langston Hughes

“A Psalm of Life” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

District of Columbia

Amanda Fernandez

“Dulce et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen

“Ma Rainey” by Sterling A. Brown

Maine

Katherine Reynolds

“The Shooting of Dan McGrew” by Robert W. Service

“Hysteria” by Dionisio D. Martínez

Maryland

Taylor McLean Myers

“The Meaning of the Shovel” by Martín Espada

“Alabanza: In Praise of Local 100” by Martín Espada

Massachusetts

Gabrielle Guarracino

“Litany” by Billy Collins

“I Go Back to May 1937” by Sharon Olds

New Hampshire

Laura Messner

“Playing Dead” by Andrew Hudgins

“Sweetness” by Stephen Dunn

New Jersey

Naja Selby

“Chicago” by Carl Sandburg

“Ma Rainey” by Sterling A. Brown

New York

Allison Tepper

“Onions” by William Matthews

“Planetarium” by Adrienne Rich



North Carolina

Aimee Elizabeth Isbell

“Dulce et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen

“La Belle Dame sans Merci” by John Keats

Ohio

Barrie Anthony Jackson

“How I Discovered Poetry” by Marilyn Nelson

“The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus

Pennsylvania

Olivia Lee Meldrum

“Agoraphobia” by Linda Pastan

“Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold

Rhode Island

Jean-Paul D. Lagace

“John Lennon” by Mary Jo Salter

“A Psalm of Life” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

South Carolina

Samara Simmons

“Bilingual/Bilingüe” by Rhina P. Espaillat

“Ballad of Birmingham” by Dudley Randall

Vermont

Henry Kiely

“Chicago” by Carl Sandburg

“Litany” by Billy Collins

Virginia

Alanna Rivera

“Walking Down Park” by Nikki Giovanni

“Conversation” by Ai

West Virginia

Elizabeth Ann McCormick

“Beauty” by Tony Hoagland

“The Spider and the Fly” by Mary Howitt

Semifinals Two, 1:00 pm

Alabama

Khadijah Robinson

“Playing Dead” by Andrew Hudgins

“Birches” by Robert Frost

Arkansas

Hannah Eakin

“Unknown Girl in the Maternity Ward” by Anne Sexton

“Playing Dead” by Andrew Hudgins

Florida

Chris Robinson

“Chicago” by Carl Sandburg

“The Secret Garden” by Rita Dove

Georgia

Kelsey E. Bogue

“Sentimental” by Albert Goldbarth

“Sweetness” by Stephen Dunn

Illinois

Robi Mahan

“When I Am Asked” by Lisel Mueller

“Beauty” by Tony Hoagland

Indiana

Branden Emanuel Wellington

“Analysis of Baseball” by May Swenson

“Facing It” by Yusef Komunyakaa

Iowa

Spencer Gilbert

“anyone lived in a pretty how town” by E.E. Cummings

“Beat! Beat! Drums!” by Walt Whitman

Kansas

Patrick Kuhn

“Chicago” by Carl Sandburg

“Kubla Khan” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Kentucky

Dean Muir

“The Weary Blues” by Langston Hughes

“Beauty” by Tony Hoagland

Louisiana

Mercedes Murial Wilson

“A Psalm of Life” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“How I Discovered Poetry” by Marilyn Nelson

Michigan

Sarah Harris

“The Cremation of Sam McGee” by Robert W. Service

“The Weary Blues” by Langston Hughes

Mississippi

Melissa Cline

“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes

“Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou

Missouri

Michael T. Brown, II

“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes

“O Captain! My Captain!” by Walt Whitman

Nebraska

Shuqiao Song

“Lunar Baedeker” by Mina Loy

“Preludes” by T.S. Eliot

Oklahoma

Jessica Sims

“If—” by Rudyard Kipling

“Scary Movies” by Kim Addonizio

Tennessee

Austin Johnson

“A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General” by Jonathan Swift

“A Blessing” by James Wright

Wisconsin

Mathew Scales

“Booker T. and W.E.B.” by Dudley Randall

“In Memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr.” by June Jordan

Semifinals Three, 4:30 pm

Alaska

Deja Husberg

“I Go Back to May 1937” by Sharon Olds

“Siren Song” by Margaret Atwood

Arizona

Mark Jacobson

“Hysteria” by Dionisio D. Martínez

“Annabel Lee” by Edgar Allan Poe

California

Karen Hong

“Fever 103” by Sylvia Plath

“Snow Day” by Billy Collins

Colorado

Passion Lyons

“Ballad of Birmingham” by Dudley Randall

“The Weary Blues” by Langston Hughes

Hawaii

Tucker Haworth

“Forgetfulness” by Billy Collins

“Why I Am Not a Painter” by Frank O’Hara

Idaho

Shaun Engstrom

“Conversation” by Ai

“Beauty” by Tony Hoagland

Minnesota

Thandisizwe Jackson-Nisan

“Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou

“A Supermarket in California” by Allen Ginsberg

Montana

Joshua Kelly

“Dulce et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen

“Degrees of Gray in Philipsburg” by Richard F. Hugo

Nevada

Jake Reid

“The Secret of the Machines” by Rudyard Kipling

“Walking Down Park” by Nikki Giovanni

New Mexico

Fantasia Lonjose

“Windigo” by Louise Erdrich

“anyone lived in a pretty how town” by E.E. Cummings

North Dakota

Michael P. Sly

“Booker T. and W.E.B.” by Dudley Randall

“The Cremation of Sam McGee” by Robert W. Service

Oregon

Ian C. Jones

“Litany” by Billy Collins

“To a Mouse” by Robert Burns

South Dakota

Janessa Nickell

“Unknown Girl in the Maternity Ward” by Anne Sexton

“The Spider and the Fly” by Mary Howitt

Texas

Albert Drake

“Touch Me” by Stanley J. Kunitz

“Frederick Douglass” by Robert E. Hayden

Utah

Amanda E. Fujiki

“Siren Song” by Margaret Atwood

“Scary Movies” by Kim Addonizio

Washington

Olivia Seward

“Beauty” by Tony Hoagland

“The Pomegranate and the Big Crowd” by Alberto Ríos

Wyoming

Joshua Schaberg

“One Art” by Elizabeth Bishop

“How I Discovered Poetry” by Marilyn Nelson

Acknowledgements

When the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation decided to launch *Poetry Out Loud* nationally, we needed to find the perfect partners. Since *Poetry Out Loud* exists in so many layers, from the classroom to the state to the national level, organizing and running the program is no small task. We found those perfect partners in the State Arts Agencies and their collaborators. Their expertise and candor helped us shape the expansion of *Poetry Out Loud*. Our deepest thanks to this intelligent and passionate group of folks.

Thanks to the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation—particularly Karen Newell, Cheryl Derricotte, and Melanie Robey—and to Peggy Dahlquist, for devoting their considerable expertise and hard work to coordination of the National Finals.

We extend special thanks to Southwest Airlines, which generously supported the 2007 National Finals with a donation of airline tickets to help bring the State Champions and their chaperones to Washington, DC, for the competition. Each of the top 12 finalists will also receive two roundtrip airline tickets courtesy of Southwest Airlines.

The Poetry Foundation is grateful for the following gifts to each State Champion:

- Sourcebooks, Inc., for the donation of *Poetry Daily Essentials 2007*
- Library of America for the donation of *American Poetry: The Twentieth Century, Vols. 1 & 2*

Thank you to GE - Aviation, for its donation of journals for each State Champion.

The Joe McCarthy Quartet

Joe McCarthy, *Drums*

Max Murray, *Bass*

Gary Malvaso, *Guitar*

Steve Williams, *Alto Saxophone*

In Memoriam

Roshundalyn Scribner
2006 Arkansas State Champion
Poetry Out Loud

1989–2007

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears
—*from “No Coward Soul Is Mine” by Emily Jane Brontë*

A Great Nation Deserves Great Art.

www.poetryoutloud.org

