



Arlington Poet Laureate Committee

The Arlington Poet Laureate Committee commends Steven Ratiner, Arlington's third Poet Laureate, on the completion of his term. Steven has served Arlington and served poetry through all the turbulence and danger of the pandemic, bringing to the task not only his energy and intelligence, but his patience, his good will, his talent, and his inventiveness.

Unable to organize in person events because of public health rules during the pandemic, he began the "Red Letter" series, in which he developed an extensive email list, ultimately reaching not only beyond Arlington but beyond the United States, to which he posted weekly poems from poets from Arlington and surrounding communities, with a brief biography of the poet and a brief commentary on the poem. This series raised the spirits of many during a difficult time, and brought to Arlington the resources that poetry has to bear on human troubles. We hope the series will continue to flourish under his editorship.

He has conducted monthly poetry workshops at Robbins Library – the Beehive sessions. For most of the first year, this was done in-person and, since Covid, virtually. This has also included individualized assistance to some of the poets who are attempting to publish manuscripts or who have personal dilemmas related to their writing. He also informally organized financial assistance for one of the poets at a time of need.

He commissioned poems for performance at public events – including Heights Haiku for the Arlington Heights community (which included a special session to instruct/inspire some of the poets who were unfamiliar with haiku); the Martin Luther King Memorial celebration; and other arts events such as the Arlington International Film Festival and the Food Bank benefit concert.

He ran a six-week poetry residency program for Hardy Elementary School including workshops, field trips, an anthology and poetry display.

He met with the Arlington School Superintendent, trying to encourage increased use of local poets and artist in school settings.

He organized collaborative projects with area musicians -- and an ekphrastic project with the ArtLinks group which resulted in a poetry/visual art exhibit at the Arlington Center for the Arts.

He created four in-person poetry events -- Red Letter Live! – as part of the Arlington Center for the Arts' Open Studios celebration, featuring a selection of some of the most accomplished poets working in Arlington and the surrounding towns

He communicated with area writers and cultural groups to foster partnerships, and collaborative projects.

In view of all this, the Arlington Poet Laureate Committee expresses its gratitude to Steven, and offers its congratulations to him for his excellent work. We wish him every success in the future.