

Mississippi Poetry Society Newsletter

November 2014

Notes from the President:

Spring Contest: As most of our members have already discovered, our Spring 2015 Contest is available on our website. I trust that many of you have begun putting pen to paper to craft your best poems for our several categories. Our contest coordinator, Sheila Grieco, will be accepting your entries from now until **March 16, 2015**. Poems not received by that date will not be eligible for judging.

Spring Festival Preparations: MPS South Branch is gearing up to provide a memorable Spring Festival on April 18-19, 2015 at Gulf Hills Hotel & Conference Center in Ocean Springs, a location that will be familiar to many of you. South Branch has blocked several rooms for that weekend for attendees at a rate of \$89.00/night, but please make your reservations early by calling 228-875-4211. Join us for a weekend of awards for fine poetry, workshops, readings, food and fun. We will discuss business pertinent to our organization, honor our 2015 Poet of the Year, and have an opportunity for our members to purchase books at our book sale. Our guest speaker will be James (Jim) Barton, the NFSPS first vice-president. Jim is a well-known figure in poetry circles and has numerous awards and honors to his credit. He will be speaking on "Writing for Today's Poetry Market: For Better or Verse."

Business Matters: We want to address your concerns at our annual business meeting. To facilitate that, please email me any subject or concern you feel should be discussed by the membership at our meeting and, if practical, voted on at that meeting. Please send your concerns for discussion to my email at judydavies@cableone.net or by mail to me at 1418 Louis Alexis Trail, Gautier, MS 39553. We do already have a couple of matters that have come to our attention, but we want to hear from you. Please contact me no later than February 1, 2015 as I want to include the subjects for discussion in my February newsletter so that each member will be aware of what is up for discussion and/or possible change.

Announcements from our POY Chairman and Lifetime Achievement Award Coordinator: It is our privilege to have Jeanne Kelly continuing as our POY Chairman and as coordinator for the Lifetime Achievement Awards. We are grateful Jeanne is again able to be active with our Mississippi Poetry Society. Here are the winners selected for the coming year:

MPS 2015 POET OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to **Sandra Bounds**, Mississippi Poetry Society's 2015 Poet of the Year. Sandra joined MPS in 1997. Having received the honor in 2005, Sandra is our first repeat winner. Sandra has served as Secretary of MPS North Branch and MPS state Corresponding Secretary. Widely published, her poetry has appeared in journals in 40 different states. Her work has also been included in numerous religious publications, including two anthologies published by June Cotner, *Gratitude Prayers: Prayers, Poems, and Prose for Everyday Thankfulness* and *Back to Joy: Little Reminders to Help Us Through Times*. In addition, Sandra's poems have been published in two foreign countries, Australia and England. When Sandra is invited to speak about her work, she credits the important role Mississippi Poetry Society has played in her development as a poet.

Also nominated for the Poet of the Year were Linda Watson Owen of Central Branch and Judy Davies

of South Branch.

Our judge wrote, “This [judging] was a very difficult task because the work of each of these poets would certainly warrant publication. . . .It is indeed reassuring that Mississippi has poets with such an understanding of what good poetry should be.”

MPS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2014-2015

Dr. Emory D. Jones—A member of the Mississippi Poetry Society since 1981, Emory has been published in numerous journals and anthologies. His tireless service has helped keep the organization intact. He is a member of North Branch, where he currently is Treasurer. For the state organization, he served several terms as President in addition to being Contest Coordinator and Journal editor for 20+ years. In his years as a teacher, he was a founder of the Mississippi Community College Creative Writing Association. He has sponsored categories and judged in our MPS contests. A William Winter Scholar in 2000, more than 100 of his poems have been published. Emory was the MPS Poet of the Year in 2003.

Judy Davies—Joining the Mississippi Poetry Society in 2008, Judy has used her varied administrative skills in service to our organization. She has been South Branch Secretary and President, state Treasurer and is the MPS Journal editor. She is the current President of the Mississippi Poetry Society. With the help of her husband Ken, she has been the driving force in establishing the MPS website. She has sponsored and judged a variety of contests, participated in public readings and presented workshops. Published nationally and internationally, Judy has received numerous honors, including recognition by Great Spirit Publishing as a four-time Mississippi Senior Poet Laureate and the 2013 National Senior Poet Honor Scroll winner. Her poem *Artistry* was a grand prize winner in the 2014 Dancing Poetry Contest sponsored by Artists Embassies International and was choreographed and danced at their festival. Her composer husband has set several of her poems to music, which they have shared with music and poetry organizations in Mississippi and nationwide.

Reminder: If you have not yet paid your dues for 2014-15, please contact your branch treasurer or, if you are an at-large member, our state treasurer, with your payment of \$25.00 to keep your membership current.

Approaching a New Year: The year of 2014 is rapidly winding down. Soon Christmas shopping will be in full swing and there will be parties and family gatherings filled with sweet memories and abundant laughter. I hope that each of you will have a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends; there is much for which we can be thankful. As you deck the halls, frolic with friends and worship with your families this Christmastime, may the blessings of this special time of year warm your hearts and feed your souls.

Judy Davies
MPS President

"Poetry is the shorthand of the soul." ...author unknown