

46. Adopt resolution approving panel recommendation of 2025-26 Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate, and take related actions ()



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Parks, Open Spaces, and Cultural Services

Subject: Poet Laureate

Meeting Date: January 28, 2025

Formal Title: Adopt resolution approving panel recommendation of 2025-26 Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Adopt resolution approving Nancy Miller Gomez to serve as the 2025-2026 Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate; and
2. Authorize the Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services or designee to take necessary actions to support the Poet Laureate in implementing poetry programming county-wide

Executive Summary

The Department of Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services (Parks), with the support of the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission, is requesting that the Board approve Nancy Miller Gomez as the 2025-2026 Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate and appoint her to the honorary two-year position.

Discussion

The Santa Cruz County Laureate position was approved by your Board on October 18, 2022. Farnaz Fatemi, 2023-24 County Poet Laureate, has completed her two-year appointment to the position. The 2025-26 County Poet Laureate application period was open through October 30, 2024 and several local poets applied for the position. A seven-member selection panel convened by Santa Cruz Public Libraries staff and comprised of a County Arts Commissioner, an Arts Council Board Member, a previous Poet Laureate, a poetry student, a spoken word poet, a member of Writers of Color Santa Cruz County, and a community member reviewed the applications at their November meeting and selected Nancy Miller Gomez to recommend for the position. Should she be approved by the Board to serve as Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate for 2025-26, she will use poetry to bring people together not only for connection, but for opportunities to build bridges and to engage with one another in ways that are deeply meaningful.

The arts are essential to a community's vitality and economic development, and appointing Ms. Miller Gomez to the Poet Laureate position will elevate poetry in our community, educate the public about the value of creative expression, inspire diverse voices to emerge, create new points of connection among residents in our county, and increase access to our cultural resources. The County Poet Laureate cultivates the arts in accordance with Objective 2.5 (Partnerships), and Objective 3.2 (Arts) of the Parks Strategic Plan.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact from the recommended action.

Strategic Initiatives

Equity Framework - Community Voices & Partnership

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.



BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO. 9-2025

On the motion of Supervisor Cummings:
Duly seconded by Supervisor Koenig:

The following resolution is adopted:

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE DESIGNATION OF NANCY MILLER GOMEZ AS
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY 2025-2026 POET LAUREATE

WHEREAS, the Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate position was approved by your Board on October 18, 2022, with the objective to elevate poetry in our community, educate the public about the value of creative expression, inspire diverse voices to emerge, create new points of connection among residents in our county, and increase access to our cultural resources; and

WHEREAS, in collaboration with Arts Council Santa Cruz County, Santa Cruz Public Libraries, Santa Cruz County Parks, and Poetry Santa Cruz, the application process for this honorary position was developed, and a seven-member panel convened to review applications; and

WHEREAS, the selection panel reviewed the applications and, in November 2024, selected Nancy Miller Gomez to be recommended for the Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate for a two-year term, from January 31, 2025 to December 31, 2026; and

WHEREAS, her work has appeared or is forthcoming in many publications, among them *Best American Poetry*, *Best New Poets*, *Prairie Schooner*, *TriQuarterly*, *The Adroit Journal*, *The Hopkins Review*, and she received a special mention in the 2023 *Pushcart Prize Anthology* and her chapbook, *Punishment*, was published as part of the *Rattle* chapbook series; and

WHEREAS, Nancy Miller Gomez co-founded an organization that provides writing workshops to incarcerated women and men and has taught poetry in Salinas Valley State Prison, the Santa Cruz County Jails and the Juvenile Hall; and

WHEREAS, during her two-year term as Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate, Nancy Miller Gomez will work to coax poetry off its academic pedestal and bring it back to members of the community who have little to no experience with poetry, and especially to those who have been marginalized and are most in need of the connective lifeline that poetry offers;

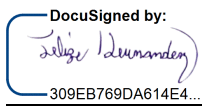
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz does hereby approve Nancy Miller Gomez as Santa Cruz County's Poet Laureate from January 31, 2025 through December 31, 2026, and honor her for her significant contributions to advancing and enlivening the art of poetry in Santa Cruz County.

Resolution 9-2025

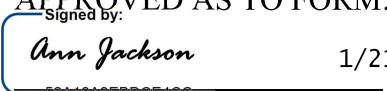
PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz,
State of California this 28th day of January 2025 by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors Koenig, De Serpa, Cummings, Martinez and Hernandez
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

ATTEST:  2025
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Juliette Rezzato
Clerk of the Board

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Felipe Hernandez
Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

 1/21/2025
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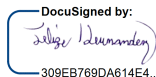
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Felipe Hernandez

Felipe.Hernandez@santacruzcountyca.gov

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Juliette Rezzato

Juliette.Rezzato@santacruzcountyca.gov

Chief Deputy Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz

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