

OKLAHOMA'S WOMEN POETS LAUREATE

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Since 1923 Oklahoma has been among those states designating a state poet laureate. The honorary position includes no salary or official duties; however, the poet laureate is expected to promote the art form through participation in writers' workshops and groups, readings, and involvement in community and school events. In 1994, the position of poet laureate was codified into state law, O.S. 25-98.4, and became law in 1995. Under this statute, the governor appoints a new state poet laureate at the beginning of each odd number year from lists provided by poetry societies and organizations.

Fifteen Oklahomans have received the honor of this designation, nine of them women, including the first poet laureate, Sapulpa's Violet McDougal and the current poet laureate, Dr. Francine Ringold of the University of Tulsa.

Oklahoma's Women Poets Laureate

1923	Violet McDougal, Sapulpa
1940	Jenny Harris Oliver, Fallis
1941	Della I. Young, Cheyenne
1942	Anne R. Semple, Durant
1945	Bess Truitt, Enid
1977	Maggie Culver Fry, Claremore
1995	Carol Hamilton, Midwest City
1996	Betty Shipley, Edmond
2003 & 2005	Francine Ringold, Tulsa

Source: www.state.ok.us/~arts/resources/poet.html



DID YOU KNOW?

1940 and 1945 Oklahoma poets laureate Jenny Harris Oliver and Bess Truitt are the only women poets laureate to have been inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame? (page 116, 134)

Officers of the Omega Literary Society at Oklahoma A&M College (now Oklahoma State University) pose for the college newspaper in 1909. Co-educational literary societies fostered a greater appreciation for literature and poetry. Some single sex literary societies were the nucleus for groups that later became social sororities and fraternities when Greek Life was organized on college campuses.

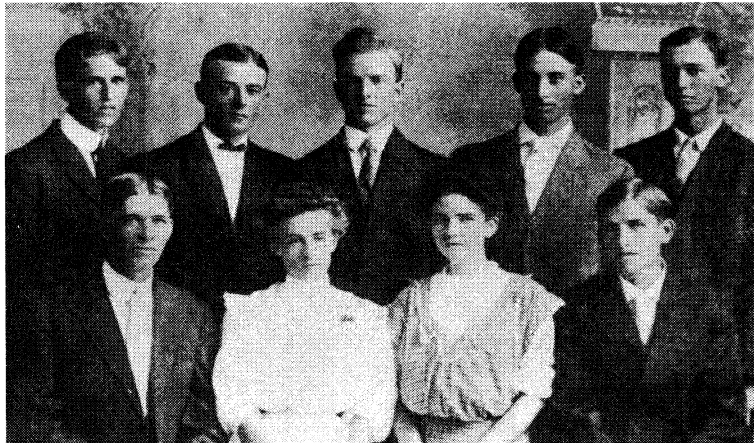


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