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Dufferin County?s inaugural poet laureate reflects on ?wonderful? term in office

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Dufferin County's inaugural Poet Laureate, Harry Posner, is honoured to have completed his term as an ambassador promoting literary and other arts in the community, and has set the bar for future laureates.

The program, introduced by Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson, gave Mr. Posner the ability to inspire other local writers/artists in celebrating the County through their work. He served as a cultural ambassador from June 2017 to the end of the County Council term this year, promoting arts in general and the rich literary community.

?It felt wonderful,? he reflected on his time. ?The idea of having a poet laureate is a really good thing for any community.?

For the past year and a half, Mr. Posner was a very busy poet, offering a variety of events. He hosted three poetry workshops at the Mill Street Library, held an Open Mic Night, organized the first-ever Day of the Poets, worked with the Dufferin Arts Council, and helped launch some books and CDs with other artists.

?Lots of activities happened during the year, and its because I really felt that I wanted to set the bar high for the next poet laureate. I hope that the community got something out of those efforts.?

He also went to Hyland Heights Elementary School in Shelburne where he did a poetry workshop for the Grade. 6 class. ?That was a great experience.?

He even read some poetry at the swearing-in ceremony of Orangeville's Deputy Chief, Leah Gilfoy. . ?It's great to be stretched as a poet, and be asked to do something that's unique to what poetry is expected to do.?

Asked to pick his favourite, Mr. Posner said the Day of the Poets. ?It was just a wonderful event, very busy with activities. I've decided that whether I'm Poet Laureate or not doesn't matter, I'm going to do the festival again next year.?

?I'm proud that I got to do a lot of the things I felt were valuable to the community,? he added.

He noted that during his time at the poet laureate he learned through his work that there are multiple audiences. ?Now more poets are learning to make contact with their audiences more intensely, more viscerally, and to be more passionate in their delivery, and that really helps to engage people.?

He also saw an increase in people who became interested in poetry, who otherwise would not have gotten into it if not for the program. ?Long live the program, I say.?

Mr. Posner's advice to the next poet laureate is to be active and creative, and says he will fully support whoever it may be. ?As a laureate, you're expected not only to appear in public, but to create work. Get out into the community, that's important, and don't let anything dissuade you.?

He thanked Mr. Tilson for introducing the program, the committee that chose him, and everyone who came out to support him during the workshops and events.