**For Release after 5:00 p.m. on October 24, 2020**

**LOCAL POET GRETCHEN MCCOSKEY NAMED POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE POET LAUREATE**

**October 24, 2020, Memphis, Tenn.** – Poetry Society of Tennessee announces the appointment of Gretchen McCroskey as PST Poet Laureate 2020-2021. McCroskey has served as president of Poetry Society of Tennessee – Northeast Chapter and promoted awareness and development of poetry throughout her time with PST-NE. It could not be more fitting that McCroskey takes up her duties as PST Poet Laureate than during both PST-NE’s 10th anniversary and Poetry Awareness month, which aims to promote and develop voices of poetry in the region.

As the current PST-NE president, Calvin Ross says of McCroskey, “I’m delighted with the honor that PST has bestowed upon one of our own, Gretchen McCroskey. She is truly deserving of this outstanding recognition ... her welcoming spirit set a predominant tone” for meetings during her time as president. Ross recalls “I had put into a port of tranquil waters with her and other poets. Gretchen was the harbor pilot.”

McCroskey grew up on a farm in Abingdon, Virginia, and has continued to live in the region since graduating from King College in 1967. She has taught English and writing to students of varying ages and served as editor to Northeast State Community College’s *Echoes and Images.* McCroskey’s work has appeared in journals such as *Now & Then, Appalachian Heritage, Clinch Mountain Review, Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel,* and many more. Along with her many publications, her chapbook *Finding My Way Home* engages the region and its people as a personal community. Her works ask the reader to speak about living without restraint, for in every experience there is a poem, and in every person, there is a voice.

McCroskey follows a long line of distinguished poets who have served in the position, such as Lori Goetz, Janet Qually, Charles K. Firmage, Prince McLemore, Lesie Blackburn, and Rose Klix. PST looks forward to McCroskey’s continued work in sharing poetry with the regional community and beyond. Join Poetry Society of Tennessee and its subsequent chapters in extending a warm congratulations to PST Poet Laureate Gretchen McCroskey.

For more information about the society visit pstne.weebly.com. Questions about the award or the society may be directed to Matthew Gilbert or Lisa Kamolnick at poetrysocietytnne@gmail.com.

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**About Poetry Society of Tennessee-Northeast Chapter**

Poetry Society of Tennessee-Northeast chapter, founded February 2010, is a branch of the Poetry Society of Tennessee. The society is a member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. The chapter is home to a diverse group of poets and poetry lovers dedicated to excellence in poetry writing. Members strive continually to perfect their craft and welcome all who share a desire to develop as poets. Members may participate in a variety of programs and receive periodic newsletters at the local, state and national level.

**About Poetry Society of Tennessee**

Poetry Society of Tennessee is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded by poets for poets in Memphis in 1953 and is recognized by the National Federation of State Poetry Societies as Tennessee’s founding state society. It is an inclusive, supportive, "learn by doing" club with members who range from beginners to accomplished poets. Members also include non-writers who simply enjoy poetry. The society has three chapters: West Tennessee, based in Memphis; Northeast Tennessee, based in Johnson City; and Knoxville. A Middle Tennessee chapter is being developed in Hendersonville. Membership in the society is open to adults of all ages. High school students may become student members. For more information, visit [www.poetrytennessee.org](http://www.poetrytennessee.org).

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