



JOHN J. TECKLENBURG
MAYOR

City of Charleston
South Carolina

OFFICE OF
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AMAKER NAMED POET LAUREATE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON

Charleston, S.C.—Mayor John Tecklenburg announced the appointment of Marcus Amaker as the first Poet Laureate of the City of Charleston. The position of Poet Laureate of the City of Charleston was established at the May 24, 2016 meeting of City Council.

Amaker is an award-winning web designer, graphic designer, videographer, musician and author. He graduated from the University of South Carolina with a bachelor's degree in journalism.

As an author, Marcus has released seven poetry books and has performed for national TV. His poems can be found in several volumes, including "*Home Is Where: An Anthology of African American Poetry from the Carolinas*," "*Seeking: Poetry and Prose Inspired by the Art of Jonathan Green*," "*My South: A People, A Place, A World of Its Own*" and *Charleston Salt and Iron*. As a spoken word poet, he's performed for the MOJA, Piccolo Spoleto, Spoleto and North Charleston Arts festivals.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We established the position of Poet Laureate to encourage the appreciation of poetry throughout Charleston. Marcus is a well-known artist in our community who has the drive, passion and talent to make poetry accessible to everyone."

As Poet Laureate, Amaker will— in conjunction with the Office of Cultural Affairs —implement a community outreach and education program to encourage the writing, reading and performance of poetry within the city; participate in civic events by providing public poetry readings, workshops, lectures and/or presentations; promote literacy through poetry in schools and foster the development of a youth poetry initiative, with the goal of providing a system and platform for emerging youth poets to present their works in conjunction with City sponsored events; commemorate the City of Charleston by composing poetry that speaks to, for and of the region, which will be presented at an annual City of Charleston sponsored event.

"This honor is not just for me, it's for every poet in Charleston," Amaker said. He continued, "Poetry is such an important and vital art form. I'm looking forward to working with nonprofits, businesses and schools to give literacy a bigger platform. It's going to be fun to come up with creative ways for poetry to be spread throughout Charleston. I'm also excited to be an advocate for the City through my words. Charleston has inspired me since the minute I decided to move here in 2003."

The City of Charleston will hold a poetry reading and reception featuring Amaker at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, June 29 at the City Gallery at Waterfront Park. Amaker will be at the Charleston Farmers Market on June 25 with other local poets typing and writing poetry for people on a typewriter. He will also be presenting the inaugural Charleston Poetry Festival, in late October.

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