



CALL FOR POETS: BICENTENNIAL UNITY PLAZA LEGENDS MURAL

[Indiana Humanities](#) and the [Indy Arts Council](#) seek to commission an Indiana poet to write an original poem inspired by the lives, careers, and legacies of a group of Indianapolis “legends” from the past 200 years, to accompany a new multi-portrait mural to be installed in the summer of 2023. The goal of the poem is to provide a literary perspective on the legendary status of these individuals, and to help viewers understand their enduring impact on Indianapolis and the world.

COMMISSION AMOUNT: \$2,000

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Sunday, June 18, 2023, 11:59 p.m.

HOW TO APPLY: [Apply here](#).

About the Bicentennial Unity Plaza Legends

With the Capital Improvement Board, Downtown Indy, Pacers Sports & Entertainment, and the entire city of Indianapolis as stakeholders, the Bicentennial Unity Plaza Legends Mural highlights 43 individuals from the past 200 years of Indianapolis history (1820-2020) who have influenced the culture of our community through their work for the common good, and who have inspired connection and understanding in Indianapolis and beyond. Some of these figures are household names, and some are not; some are well known if you grew up in certain eras and neighborhoods, and some will be completely new (and definitely worth learning about!). A group of 40 community experts developed the list, which was reviewed and verified by a team of 4 locally-based professional historians. Civil rights leaders, educators, creatives, “famous firsts,” and nationally-known names are all part of the fabric of this place we call Indy. [Find the complete list of the mural’s Legends here](#).

About the Mural

The mural will be installed on the east wall of the “Steak & Shake Building” at 107 S. Pennsylvania St., overlooking the newly constructed Bicentennial Unity Plaza at Gainbridge Fieldhouse. For details about the mural design and the artist, [please visit the project website](#). The mural will be installed in late summer, 2023 with a dedication event held before the end of September.

POET SELECTION & COMMISSION INFORMATION

Review and Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by a conflict-free panel that includes scholars, literary artists, and community representatives. One applicant will be identified by the panel for each mural and awarded the commission.

Please note: we are not asking you to complete the poem to apply. Applicants are asked to provide a statement of interest and a selection of previous work in order to be considered. After selection, the poets will have time to research, write, and workshop the poem.

About the Poetry Commission

Poems should provide additional insight and the poet's personal perspective on the mural's subjects. Selections from the poem will be posted alongside the mural, with hopes that visitors to the murals will read and reflect, finding further connection and inspiration in these individuals' lives and legacy through the written word.

The commissioned poet may write their poem in their primary language. If that language is not English, the poet should provide an English translation. Both the original language and the English translation will be displayed on the mural signage.

The poem must be delivered by August 15 and will be unveiled alongside the mural at its dedication ceremony.

Commission Fee and Terms

The selected poet will receive a \$2,000 stipend, with half the stipend paid at the outset of the project, and the second half paid upon delivery of the final poem. The stipend includes compensation for the finished poem, a videotaped reading/performance, and a live performance at the mural dedication. Further compensation for additional program participation will be negotiated with the poet.

How to Apply

- Provide a brief statement describing your interest in the project and your preliminary vision for the poem. Here are a few questions you might consider addressing in the statement:
 - Why do I want to take on this project?
 - What do I find compelling about these individuals' life and work?
 - What do I hope readers would take away from my poem?
 - How can poetry help readers get a better understanding of these individuals' lives, in a way that complements the mural?
- Provide writing samples: 5-8 previous poems to help reviewers get a sense of your poetic style and approach. You can upload them individually, or you can collate them into a single Word or PDF document and upload that document.

Apply using [this form](#) before midnight on Sunday, June 18, 2023. Applicants will be notified of the committee's decision in early July and will be provided with additional resource materials for reference.

Questions?

- For more information about the poetry competition and how best to apply, contact Megan Telligman, mtelligman@indianahumanities.org or 317.616.9409.
- For more information about the Bicentennial Legends mural initiative, [visit the project website](#) or contact Julia Moore, jmoore@indyarts.org or 317.624.2556