



Association of Writers
& Writing Programs

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: press@awpwriter.org

November 14, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Farewell from the Chair of the Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) Board of Directors

RIVERDALE PARK, MD – This past weekend, the Board of Directors of AWP met in Kansas City, Missouri, for its annual business meeting. Following that meeting, the board is proud to make the following announcements.

The board welcomed nine new members to its ranks, each of whom brings a wealth of nonprofit and literary experience from multiple levels.

Mitzi Angel is the senior vice-president and publisher at Farrar, Straus & Giroux, and a previous publisher at Faber & Faber.

Regina Brooks is the founder and president of Serendipity Literary Agency, the largest African American-owned agency in the United States, as well as the author of several books on writing.

Kim Chinquee, a professor at SUNY-Buffalo State, is the author of several story collections, and she will serve as the Northeast Regional Council chair.

Mimi Herman is a Kennedy Center teaching artist, director of the United Arts Council Arts Integration Institute, and codirector of Writeaways writing workshops in France, Italy, and New Mexico. She serves as the WC&C representative.

Jeff Kleinman, previously with Graybill & English Literary Agency, is a founding partner, agent, and literary attorney with Folio Literary Management.

Becka Oliver, after sixteen years in publishing in New York City, is executive director of the Writers' League of Texas, the largest statewide literary arts organization in Texas.

January Gill O'Neil is the author of several poetry collections, and she is the current John and Renée Grisham Writer in Residence at the University of Mississippi, Oxford. Having completed

her term as Northeast Regional Council chair, O'Neil remains on the board as an at-large member.

Stephanie Vanderslice is the author of several books, most recently, *The Geek's Guide to the Writing Life: An Instructional Memoir for the Rest of Us*. A professor and director of the Arkansas Writers MFA Workshop at the University of Central Arkansas, she serves as the Southern Regional Council chair.

Dan Vera, poet, presenter, and teacher, brings extensive board experience with nonprofit arts/writing organizations, including six years as chair of the board of Split This Rock Poetry Festival.

New officers were also elected at this meeting by the full board. This year's chair is **Kathleen Driskell**, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council chair. Vice chairs are **Ruth Dickey**, executive director of Seattle Arts & Lectures, and **January Gill O'Neil**, the John and Renée Grisham writer-in-residence at University of Mississippi; the treasurer is **Robb Trott**, attorney and member at-large; and the secretary is **Kris Bigalk**, the Midwest Regional Council chair.

Jerod Santek, the WC&C representative, rotated off the Board of Directors after three terms of service to AWP. He served as an officer for many of those years. The other board members who remain on the board include **Susan Rodgers**, Northwestern Regional Council chair; **Rigoberto González**, San Antonio Conference chair; and **Ryan Stone**, Southwestern Regional Council chair.

At this meeting, the board discussed the annual budget, received an update on the audit (still in progress), approved new certified bylaws, and addressed the governance and staff needs of the organization. Most importantly, the board hopes to announce very soon a decision on the future leadership of the organization. In the next few weeks, all information will be placed on the AWP website as it becomes available to be shared with all members.

Lastly, I am rotating off the board after eight years of service, including three years as the first chair of the fiduciary board of directors. After making multiple choices this past weekend, I can proudly say that the board did its full due diligence to not only protect and sustain the organization, but also allow the association to thrive. Under Kathleen's able leadership, this current board will take AWP into a fresh, bright future. Under the guidance of new leadership, the staff will continue its excellent stewardship of existing programs while seeking even better ways to meet the needs of all members.

Respectfully and proudly,

Bonnie Culver
Outgoing Chair, Board of Directors, AWP

#

The mission of the Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) is to foster literary achievement, to advance the art of writing as essential to a good education, and to serve the makers, teachers, students, and readers of contemporary writing.