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Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg

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Poetry Caravan Lands in Emporia to Call for Arts Funding

March 30, 2012

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The Poetry Caravan -- poets published in the *Begin Again: 150 Kansas Poems* edited by Poet Laureate of Kansas Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg -- is landing at 7 p.m., Saturday, April 14th in the Emporia State University Memorial Union (Room Lower 048) to give its 20th reading and call for restored state arts funding.

Approximately 30 poets will be caravanning to Emporia State University for the reading from throughout Kansas, both to share their poetic vision of Kansas and their collective belief in state support for the literary arts.

"We have been touring the state since last November when *Begin Again: 150 Kansas Poems* debuted, and the Emporia reading, our 20th statewide event, seemed the perfect moment to speak through our poetry about the importance of the arts," Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg explains. As poet laureate of Kansas, she has continued on in her post despite the loss of the largely dismantled Kansas Arts Commission, which previously housed the state poet laureate program. "We come together from many walks of life because arts matter. Through our poetry, and through how our lives are continually changed for the better by what we write and read, we know how essential the arts are in helping Kansans live lives of connection, meaning and joy."

The poets will each read a poem from the anthology, which was based on 150 poems Mirriam-Goldberg curated on the website www.150KansasPoems.wordpress.com throughout 2011 to celebrate the state's 150th anniversary of statehood. The year, the website, partnered with the national organization *America: Now + Here*, is focused on a renga entitled "To the Stars Through Difficulty" -- a conversational poem in which 150 Kansas poets each write 10 lines as part of one large poem. Poets reading in Emporia will also read their renga portions, and the readings will conclude with all the poets singing a special version of "Home of the Range."

Poets reading include from Wichita: Roy J. Beckemeyer and Diane Wahto; from Pittsburg: Steve Meats and Olive Sullian; from Lawrence: Karen Ohnesorge, Ronda Miller, Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg, Gary Lechliter, Brian Daldorph, Elizabeth Black, Iris Wilkinson, William Jo Harris, Peter Wright, Nancy Hubble and Ken Lassman; from Hutchinson: Bill Sheldon, Jo McDougall and Daniel Pohl; from the Kansas City area: Al Ortolani, Linda Rodriguez, Maril Crabtree, Donna Wolff, Wyatt Townley, Roderick Townley and Thomas Reynolds; from Emporia: Kevin Rabas; from Leavenworth: Rock Nichols; from Topeka: Max Yoho and Eric McHenry; from Salina: Hazel Hutchinson; from Cawker City: Lee Mick; and from Bridgeport: Jackie Magnuson Ash. The reading, organized by Kevin Rabas (one of the poets and a professor at ESU) is free and open to the public and will conclude with a reception.

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