

Governor Cooper Inducts North Carolina's Ninth Poet Laureate, Jaki Shelton Green

By Administrator

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Governor Roy Cooper inducted North Carolina's Ninth Poet Laureate, Jaki Shelton Green, at a ceremony in the North Carolina State Capitol.

Green is the first African American and the third woman to serve as the state's ambassador for poetry and the spoken word. Green succeeds Shelby Stephenson, who was named poet laureate Feb. 2, 2015.

The ceremony included readings by both Stephenson and Green.

"Jaki encourages us to open our minds to the importance of telling stories from the heart and from personal experience," said Governor Cooper. "She has encouraged North Carolinians to create poetry and contribute to the voice of our state — an uplifting voice that documents the expressions of a diverse people who are shaped by their experiences, their communities, and the history of North Carolina."

A native of Alamance County, Green has been active in North Carolina's literary and teaching community for more than 40 years. She has penned eight books of poetry, co-edited two poetry anthologies and written one play. She is a 2014 North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame inductee and was the recipient of the North Carolina Award for Literature in 2003.

Green currently teaches Documentary Poetry at Duke University Center for Documentary Studies. Over the last 40 years, she has taught poetry and facilitated creative writing classes at public libraries, universities and community colleges, public and private schools and with literary organizations across the U.S.

"I want to add my personal congratulations to Jaki Shelton Green, for her appointment a Poet Laureate," said Susi H. Hamilton, secretary, N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. "Jaki is not only an accomplished writer and poet, but she is deeply devoted to encouraging diverse voices across the state to tell their stories through poetry and spoken word. She will be a wonderful Poet Laureate."

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Green plans to focus her efforts on the creation of documentary poetry, working with North Carolina communities to explore the ways they document their unique regional histories and significant historical events.