



# Worcester County Poetry Association



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## **Announcing the 2017 Recipient of the Third Annual Stanley Kunitz Medal**

Carle Johnson of Worcester, MA, has been chosen to receive the Third Annual Stanley Kunitz Medal, which is awarded by the Worcester County Poetry Association. The award was established in 2013 through a bequest from Worcester native Stanley Kunitz. Kunitz served twice as Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress and received the Pulitzer Prize in 1959. He died in 2006.

The medal is awarded to a person with a strong Worcester County (MA) connection who best exemplifies Stanley Kunitz's (born in Worcester in 1905) life-long commitment to poetry and poets. The award recognizes the total commitment to poetry as Kunitz lived it: teaching poetry, mentoring poets, speaking poetry, publishing poetry, and supporting organizations which nurture poetry.

Joseph Gustafson, one of the many who sent letters of support for Johnson's nomination, said, "No one has done more for poetry than Carle Johnson. He has worked tirelessly for the craft, not out of ambition, but simply out of love for the word."

Carle A. Johnson hosts the Worcester Barnes & Noble Bookstore Open Mic and the Sugden Writers Workshop in Spencer. Since 1989, he has been an editor of the WCPA's journal, *The Worcester Review*. He was the founding editor of the WCPA's Poetry Newsletter in 1979 and has produced and hosted over 100 original TV programs, "Poets-In-Profile," for WCTC-TV, Worcester. He organized the Stanley Kunitz 80th Birthday Festival in 1985 and the 2005 Stanley Kunitz Symposium at Clark University. He was the Executive Director of the Elizabeth Bishop Conference and Poetry Festival, which received the Worcester Telegram & Gazette 1997 *Visions 2000* Cultural Enrichment Award as the outstanding cultural event in Worcester for 1997. Carle has studied at the Bread Loaf Writers Conference and with poets Sam Cornish and Kathleen Spivack. He has published articles on poets and has lectured on poets and poetry throughout New England. He has had poems in *Concrete Wolf*, *Sahara*, and *The Worcester Review*, among others. Johnson is originally from Laconia, N.H. but has lived in Worcester, MA throughout most of his adult life.

Committee member Beth Sweeney who teaches English at The College of the Holy Cross said, "Carle Johnson had a special knack for discovering young poets, befriending them, and fostering their eager participation in the poetry community."

Rodger Martin, chair of the selection committee, indicated of Johnson, "For almost half a century, Carle Johnson has been an organizer of poetry, a speaker of poetry, a writer of poetry, and a scholar of poetry. Where would poetry in Worcester County be without him?"

An award ceremony and reception, which will coincide with Kunitz's birthday celebration, will be held at the Worcester Historical Museum (30 Elm Street, Worcester, MA), on Thursday, July 27, 2017. The event will run between 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. It is free and open to the public. It will begin with a 30-minute open reading celebrating Stanley Kunitz.