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Lorna Goodison named Poet Laureate of Jamaica

The National Library of Jamaica is pleased to announce that Jamaica's next Poet Laureate is the esteemed Lorna Goodison, OD. Goodison will be installed as Poet Laureate on May 17th at a ceremony to be held at King's House. Goodison was selected by a secret ballot vote from a pool of publicly nominated persons by the Poet Laureate Committee of The Board of Management of the National Library of Jamaica.

Goodison will serve as Poet Laureate from May 2017-May 2020 and she succeeds Professor Mervyn Morris who was invested in 2014 as Jamaica's first Poet Laureate in 61 years. The Poet Laureate is charged with stimulating a greater appreciation for Jamaican poetry and creating avenues for public involvement in poetry.

Goodison has published more than twelve (12) books of poetry, including *I Am Becoming My Mother* (1986), *Turn Thanks* (1999), *Travelling Mercies* (2001), *Controlling the Silver* (2005), and *Oracabessa* (2012). She has written three short story collections, *Baby Mother and the King of Swords* (1990), *Fool-Fool Rose is Leaving Labour-in-Vain Savannah* (2005), and *By Love Possessed* (2011). Her memoir, *From Harvey River: A Memoir of My Mother and Her Island* (2007), described as "a masterpiece of timing and texture", received much critical praise and was awarded British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-fiction in 2008. Her influential work has been anthologized in several collections, including *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, *The HarperCollins World Reader*, and *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*.

A graduate of St. Hugh's High School for Girls, the Jamaica School of Art, and the Arts Students League in New York, Goodison has taught at the University of Toronto, the University of the West Indies, the Sitka Summer Institute in Alaska, University of Miami, and at the University of Michigan. Goodison is also a painter and has been featured in exhibitions internationally. She has illustrated several of her own book covers.

Among her many awards and accolades are the Commonwealth Poetry Prize for the Americas Region, the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, the British Columbia National Award for Canadian Non-fiction, and a Gold Musgrave Medal from the Institute of Jamaica in 1999. She received the Jamaica National Order of Distinction, Commander Rank in 2013 for outstanding achievements in Literature and Poetry.

The Poet Laureate programme is administered by the National Library of Jamaica and has received funding from the CHASE Fund, Tourism Enhancement Fund and is a line item in the NLJ's budget. For more information, visit the programme website at www.nlj.gov.jm/poet-laureate/
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