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2010 Texas State Poet Laureate Karla K. Morton Launches *Little Town, Texas Tour* to Take Poetry and Arts across the State

Tour Kicks Off at Morton's Alma Mater, Mansfield High School, September 17

Denton, TX – September 15, 2009 – 2010 Texas State Poet Laureate Karla K. Morton (www.kkmorton.com) is hitting the road September 17, launching her *Little Town, Texas Tour* across the state to serve as an ambassador of poetry. The first stop will be Morton's alma mater, Mansfield High School.

The tour's main mission is to bring poetry to teens across Texas, making poetry more accessible and relevant to students, especially in towns that may be underserved in the arts. Morton will host a "Day of Poetry" in different cities, partnering with schools, libraries, community centers and other venues across the state.

A typical "Day of Poetry" will include a Little Town, Texas Poetry and Art Contest, readings by Ms. Morton from her selected collection of works, readings from the top three poetry contest winners, a question and answer session with students, and the incorporation of other art forms into the day's festivities.

Morton's long-term goal as part of the *Little Town, Texas Tour* is to create and publish a book to include her own poems about the towns she visits and the first place student poem or artwork winner from each town on the tour.

Ms. Morton's currently scheduled high school, library and university visits include:

- September 17, 2009 - Mansfield High School (Morton's alma mater)
- September 22, 2009 - Bonham High School (plus stops at Bonham Kiwanis meeting and VA Center)
- October 10, 2009 - Texas Women's University
- November 19, 2009 (evening) - Lamar High School in Arlington
- April, 2010 - Sul Ross State University in Alpine
- April 17, 2010 – Austin Public Library
- April 23, 2010 - North Central Texas College in Gainesville
- May 8, 2010 – Irving Public Library

Other Little Town, Texas Tour stops will include (dates to be announced):

- Midland/Odessa/Permian Basin
- Houston/Baytown
- Shiner
- Justin
- Nacogdoches
- Salado
- Weatherford
- Brenham
- Laredo
- Sugar Land
- Georgetown
- Lufkin
- Bastrop
- Abbott
- Buda
- Austin

Along the way, Ms. Morton will also speak at various cancer/oncology centers, fundraising events and support groups, where she will share from *Redefining Beauty* (released later this month by Dos Gatos Press), a poetry collection she wrote during her own diagnosis, treatment and survival of breast cancer.

Morton's other scheduled appearances include:

- September 11, 2009 – Langdon Literary Weekend in Granbury, Texas
- September 12, 2009 - Silver Spurs Gala in Arlington, benefiting The Cancer Research Foundation of North Texas
- September 22, 2009 - Bonham Kiwanis meeting and Bonham VA Center
- September 26, 2009 - A Night on the Wilkie Way in Fort Worth, benefiting Cuisine for Healing
- October 3, 2009 – Mockingbird Poetry Society in McKinney, Texas
- October 8, 2009 – Texas Speech and Communication Association Annual Convention in Dallas
- October 25, 2009 – Denton Center for Visual Arts Poet Laureate Reception
- January 29, 2010 - You're Beautiful event in Denton, benefiting the American Cancer Society
- March 22, 2010 - St. Michael and All Angels Church Woman's Cancer Support Group in Dallas

"I am so honored to serve as an ambassador of poetry," said Karla K. Morton, 2010 Texas State Poet Laureate. "On this tour, I look forward to inspiring the dreams of others, connecting with students through poetry and art, and giving hope and encouragement along the way with *Redefining Beauty*."

Morton is the first woman named as Texas State Poet Laureate in more than fifteen years. Described as a "celebrated poet" in the bill presented to the Texas State Legislature, she has been widely published in literary journals and serves as a board member of the Greater Denton Arts Council and a founding member and officer of the Denton Poets' Assembly (part of the Poetry Society of Texas). She loves to promote poetry, and has read her work across Texas, performing at such venues as schools, universities, bookstores and festivals. Morton is also author of the book/CD titled *Wee Cowrin' Timorous Beastie*, a North Texas Book Festival Awards Finalist, *Redefining Beauty* and several upcoming books, including *Becoming Superman*, *Names We've Never Known*, and a collection of her works as part of the *Poet Laureate* series by the Texas Christian University Press (to be published in 2010). She has a journalism degree from Texas A&M University and is currently featured on a

nationally-aired episode of *The Art of Living Gallery* for her promotion of poetry as a healing tool for the soul.

To learn about more about Karla K. Morton, her work and upcoming events where she will perform, speak and/or sign books, please visit www.kkmorton.com.

If you are interested in having Karla K. Morton come to your town, school or event during her *Little Town, Texas Tour*, please contact Kelly Kirkendoll Shafer at kelly@shafercommunications.com.

About Karla K. Morton

Karla K. Morton, the 2010 Texas State Poet Laureate, is a celebrated poet, author and storyteller. She is the author of *Wee Cowrin' Timorous Beastie* (a North Texas Book Festival Awards Finalist), *Redefining Beauty* and several upcoming books, including *Becoming Superman*, *Names We've Never Known*, and a collection of her works as part of the *Poet Laureate* series by the Texas Christian University Press (to be published in 2010). Ms. Morton's poetry, which spans many subjects and forms, has also been published in a variety of literary journals, including *descant*, *AmarilloBay*, the *Concho River Review*, the *Southwestern American Literature*, *Oak Bend Review*, *Wichita Falls Literary and Art Review*, *The Langdon Review of the Arts in Texas*, the *Texas Poetry Calendar*, *Illya's Honey*, *Austin International Poetry Anthology*, *New Texas*, *Denton Writer's League Anthology*, and *ARDENT*. Additionally, she serves as a board member of the Greater Denton Arts Council, a founding member and board member of the Denton Poets' Assembly (part of the Poetry Society of Texas) and as a member of the esteemed Western Writers of America, the Writer's League of Texas and the Academy of American Poets. She has been featured on the Art of Living Gallery national television show (episode titled "Commemorating Life") and loves to promote poetry, logging hundreds of miles across Texas, reading her work at such venues as schools, universities, bookstores, the Langdon Weekend, the Salado Highland Games and the North Texas Irish Festival. Morton was born in Fort Worth, graduated from Mansfield High School, holds a Journalism degree from Texas A&M University and currently resides in Denton, Texas, with her two children and husband. For more information, please visit www.kkmorton.com or www.facebook.com/pages/Karla-K-Morton/84970557709.

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High-resolution photos are available.