

# NCTE News Release

A Professional Association of Educators in English Studies, Literacy, and Language Arts

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## National Council Announces Excellence in Poetry for Children Award

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has awarded the 2009 Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children to Lee Bennett Hopkins.

NCTE, through the Poetry Committee, recognizes and fosters excellence in children's poetry by encouraging its publication and by exploring ways to acquaint teachers and children with poetry through such means as publications, programs, and displays. As one means of accomplishing this goal, NCTE established the Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children in 1977 to honor a living American poet for his or her aggregate work for children ages 3–13.

A distinguished poet, writer, and anthologist, Lee Bennett Hopkins has created numerous books for children and adults. His poetry autobiography, *Been to Yesterdays: Poems of a Life*, received both the Christopher Medal and a Golden Kite Honor. Additional recognitions include the anthologies *Marvelous Math*, which won a Parents' Choice Gold Award and was a Reading Rainbow selection, and *Spectacular Science*. He is the recipient of the University of Southern Mississippi's Medallion for "lasting contributions to children's literature." Lee Bennett Hopkins will be honored at the Books for Children Luncheon and at a Poetry Session during the NCTE Annual Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania this November.

The Award for Excellence in Poetry was given annually until 1982 and every three years until 2009. In 2008 the Poetry Committee changed the time frame to every other year with the next award being given in 2011. The criteria include Literary Merit (art and craft of aggregate work—as poet or anthologist); Poet's or Anthologist's Contributions; Evolution of the Poet's or Anthologist's Work; and Appeal to Children.

A collection of poetry books of all winners of the Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children, past and future, is sustained and preserved at the University of Minnesota Children's Literature Research Collections (CLRC) / Kerlan Collection at the Andersen Library.

For more information about the NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children, including past winners, see [www.ncte.org/awards/poetry](http://www.ncte.org/awards/poetry).

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