



For Immediate Release

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John Ronan Architects Selected to Design Home for Poetry Foundation

CHICAGO — The Poetry Foundation board of trustees has selected John Ronan Architects to design its planned home for poetry in Chicago. The board made the unanimous decision at its September 19 meeting.

Eighteen firms applied to design the project. Chicago-based John Ronan Architects was chosen from a group of three finalists including Rafael Viñoly Architects, of London and New York, and Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, of New York. Founded in 1997, Ronan's firm recently completed the widely heralded Gary Comer Youth Center, home of the South Shore Drill Team, in Chicago.

"John Ronan is the perfect and exciting choice to guide the Poetry Foundation to its permanent home," said John Barr, president of the Foundation. "The project confirms the Poetry Foundation's commitment to the City of Chicago and is a testament to Chicago's historic and ongoing role in the national literary culture." The firm's youthful energy, fresh imagination, responsiveness to client concerns, and success designing mixed-use projects appealed to the selection committee, according to Barr.

"I am honored to be chosen to assist the Poetry Foundation in their vision of a home for poetry," Ronan stated. "The project is unlimited in its potential because there exists no model for what the Poetry Foundation is trying to create. I look forward to the challenge."

Located on the southwest corner of Dearborn and Superior Streets in downtown Chicago, the new building is expected to encompass 25,000 square feet and include offices for the Poetry Foundation headquarters, editorial offices for *Poetry* magazine, a library and archives containing 30,000 volumes now housed at the Newberry Library, a public reading room with access to the collection, a visitors' center, a garden or similar outdoor space, and multipurpose space designed to support the newly created Harriet Monroe Poetry Institute as well as the Foundation's roster of public programming events such as readings, lectures, and panel discussions. The Foundation expects the project to be designed in an environmentally responsible manner.

“The building will be a destination for visitors wishing to read, listen to, research, or simply enjoy the pleasures of poetry,” said Ethel Kaplan, chair of the board of trustees. “It will be designed from the ground up to honor the art form we serve.” Work is expected to commence immediately, with an expectation that final design plans will be ready next summer. The project is scheduled for completion in 2010.

About the Poetry Foundation

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine and one of the largest literary organizations in the world, exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative literary prizes and programs. For more information, please visit www.poetryfoundation.org.