

Office of the President

Distinguished Awards Celebration 2007

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**Distinguished Alumnus Award****Ted Kooser**

To Ted Kooser for unparalleled excellence and outstanding national leadership in the literary arts

Ted Kooser ('62 English and speech) has elevated Iowa State University's prominence in the literary arts more than any other graduate in the university's history. Kooser, an Ames, Iowa, native who now lives in Garlan Nebraska, has written 11 books of poetry, two nonfiction books, and 11 special edition works since 1969.

Kooser is best known for his poetry. In 2004 he was appointed United States Poet Laureate, a position that serves as consultant in poetry to the Library

Congress. In 2005 he received the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for his highly acclaimed book, *Delights and Shadows*. His poems have been published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Nation*, *The American Poetry Review*, and many other national publications. His poems are also used in secondary school and college texts and classes throughout the nation.

He has received numerous other honors and awards for his poetry and other writings, including two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships, two Pushcart Prizes, the Stanley Kunitz Prize, the James Boatwright Award, the Richard Hugo Prize, and awards from the Society of Midland Authors, Friends of American Writers, *ForeWord* magazine, Barnes & Noble, and the Nebraska Arts Council.

Kooser received his MA from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, in 1968, and worked for many years as insurance executive in Nebraska. He retired as vice president of Lincoln Benefit Life in 1999. He joined the faculty at the University of Nebraska and is now a professor of English there. He was editor and publisher for Windflower Press, which specialized in the publication of contemporary poetry. Kooser published several anthologies through Windflower Press, including *The Windflower Home Almanac of Poetry*, which was listed by the *Library Journal* as one of the best books from small presses for 1980. He has read his poetry before the Academy of American Poets in New York, and presented readings and conducted writing workshops at several major universities across the nation. His latest nonfiction book, *The Poetry Home Repair Manual*, encourages and gives writing tips to beginning poets.

As U.S. Poet Laureate, Kooser was an active and passionate proponent of the arts. With the sponsorship of the Library of Congress and the Poetry Foundation, he founded a national newspaper column, "American Life in Poetry," which has an estimated 2.5 million readers. During his tenure, he made 200 appearances and was interviewed approximately 100 times.

Kooser holds honorary doctorates from the University of Nebraska and South Dakota State University. He and his wife, Kathleen Rutledge, have one son, Jeffrey, and one granddaughter, Margaret.

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