

**Attachment 1 – Confidential Information – made public on
December 6, 2012**

Appointment of Fourth City of Toronto Poet Laureate

Date:	October 22, 2012
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

CONFIDENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. Council appoint George Elliott Clarke to the position of City of Toronto Poet Laureate for a term beginning December 2012 until November 2015, or until a successor is appointed.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

George Elliott Clarke is a renowned poet, playwright and literary critic known for his lyrical style. His work explores and chronicles the experience and history of the Black Canadian community creating a cultural geography that Clarke refers to as "Africadia".

Clarke lives in Toronto and began teaching Canadian and African diasporic literature in 1999 at University of Toronto where he is currently completing a second volume of essays on African-Canadian literature.

George Elliott Clarke was born in Windsor, Nova Scotia in 1960, a seventh-generation Canadian of African-American and Mi'kmaq Amerindian heritage. He earned a B.A. honours in English from the University of Waterloo (1984), an M.A. in English from Dalhousie University (1989) and a Ph.D. in English from Queen's University (1993).

As a writer Clarke has published in a variety of genres: verse collections, *Saltwater Spirituals and Deeper Blues* (1983), and *Lush Dreams, Blue Exile* (1994), a verse-novel, *Whylah Falls* (1990 & 2000), two verse plays, *Whylah Falls: The Play* (1999 & 2000), and *Beatrice Chancy* (1999). His opera *Beatrice Chancy*, with music by James Rolfe, has had four stage productions and a broadcast on CBC television. This powerful opera about slavery in the Nova Scotia of the early 1800s won great reviews and enthusiastic audiences. He wrote the screenplay for the feature film, *One Heart Broken Into Song* (Dir. Clement Virgo, 1999). The verse play, *Whylah Falls*, was staged in Venice in Italian (2002). Clarke continues to publish poetry with *Provençal Songs* (1993 & 1997), *Gold Indigoes* (2000), *Blue* (2001) and *Illuminated Verse* (2005).

Clarke has been instrumental in promoting the work of writers of African descent, especially those of Nova Scotia. In 2002 he published, *Odysseys Home: Mapping African-Canadian Literature*.

AWARDS: Honours include the Portia White Prize for Artistic Achievement (1998), Governor-General's Award for Poetry (2001), the National Magazine Gold Medal for Poetry (2001), the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award (2004), the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Fellowship Prize (2005), the Dartmouth Book Award for Fiction (2006), the Eric Hoffer Book Award for Poetry (2009), appointment to the Order of Nova Scotia (2006), appointment to the Order of Canada at the rank of Officer (2008), and eight honorary doctorates.