Award-winning poet Dana Gioia will present in Pollak on Saturday, Nov. 8

BY BRITTANEY CARPENTER – POSTED ON NOVEMBER 5, 2014

Thanks to the sponsorship of the Patrons of the Library at Cal State Fullerton, Dana Gioia, award-winning poet and former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, will speak at CSUF on Saturday.

Gioia’s speaking engagement is meant primarily to raise funds for the library to use to purchase books and sponsor lectures, said Carolyn Eckert, a member and event planner for the Patrons, which serves as a support group for the library.

The poet earned his undergraduate degree in business from Stanford University before moving to Harvard University where he earned his master’s degree in comparative literature.

Gioia’s professional experience extends past his poetry and into the realm of both marketing and international delegation. He was marketing executive for General Foods for 15 years and chief of the United States’ cultural delegation to UNESCO, the United Nations agency which promotes peace, security and international collaboration in education, science and culture.

Outside of his other experiences, Gioia’s has received multiple awards for his work, including the American Book Award in 2002 for Interrogations at Noon, and a finalist nomination for the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1991 for Can Poetry Matter?

Currently a professor at USC, Gioia was chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts until 2009. During his tenure at the endowment, he increased awareness of the potential community benefits that stem from writing.

One of the endowment initiatives under his leadership was titled "Operation Homecoming," which gave returning soldiers and their spouses the opportunity to write about their experiences. The short-story package was labeled in 2006 as one of the top ten non-fiction books by the Washington Post.

Howard Seller, chair of the activities committee for the patrons, said one of the strengths of Gioia’s poetry lies in the fact that it appeals to a wide audience.

“He, for a long time, has said that he does not believe poetry should just belong to a subculture, his feeling is that poetry really ought to be for the general public,” Seller said.

That feeling, Seller said, is an intentional move on Gioia’s part to make his work accessible to a wide range of readers.

“His poems are very accessible,” Seller said. “They’re poems that you can listen to and usually follow fairly clearly, without having to sit and ponder them, and try and figure out what they mean so he’s a very accessible poet, and I think that’s his intention.”

Gioia’s lecture is free and open to the public. It will take place Saturday at 2 p.m. in the Rotary Club of Fullerton, Pollak Library North Room 130.
About Brittaney Carpenter

Brittaney Carpenter writes for the Daily Titan and is enrolled in the COMM 471 class for Fall 2014.

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