

Librarian Names Poet Laureate

Dr. Billington appointed Joseph Brodsky on May 10 to be the nation's next poet laureate consultant in poetry to the Library, effective Sept. 1.

A poet of international stature, Brodsky succeeds Robert Penn Warren (1986-87), Richard Wilbur (1987-88), Howard Nemerov (1988-90), and incumbent Mark Strand (1990-91) in the prestigious post, established by Congress in 1985 to honor the nation's top poets.

A U. S. citizen, Brodsky has lived in the United States since 1972, when he was exiled from the Soviet Union. He teaches at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass.

In 1981, he was one of the first recipients of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Award. His essay collection, *Less Than One*, was awarded the 1986 National Book Award for criticism. Winner of the 1987 Nobel Prize for Literature, he is one of five Americans to win the award during the last 30 years.

Born in Leningrad in 1940, Brodsky left school at age 15 and supported himself as a laborer, mill-worker, and merchant seaman while writing poetry. He taught himself English by translating English metaphysical poetry word by word. As his poetry and translations began to be read in Soviet underground (*samizdat*) poetry circles, his lyric talent and his independent spirit drew the ire of Soviet authorities. Citing his "social parasitism" and "decadent poetry," the Brezhnev regime sentenced him to hard labor at an Arctic work camp near Archangelsk.
