ANDERSON - The Foothills Writers Guild honored six writers on Jan. 20 as it marked the completion of the organization’s 40th year. Three living writers and the families of three who are deceased were each presented an inaugural Gold Quill Award at a ceremony at Anderson University. Anderson Mayor Terence Roberts, himself the son of an English teacher, gave brief remarks about the impact of the guild on individual writers, the arts community and the economy of Anderson.

Four women, known as the Pegasus Poets, formed the nucleus of the present-day guild. This tight-knit circle of girlfriends who shared and critiqued their work, led to the foundation of the Anderson Writers Guild in March 1974. The members of the Pegasus Poets were Jean Brabham McKinney, Eunice Pracht and Dr. Frances Mims, all deceased, and Gayle Edwards. Mrs. Edwards, a retired T.L. Hanna High School English teacher, continues to make her home in Anderson. Mrs. McKinney’s son Lance and granddaughter Abby accepted her award, and Mrs. Pracht’s son Chris accepted hers. Mrs. Edwards, a close friend of Dr. Mims, accepted on behalf of the Mims family.

Gold Quills were also presented to Juanita Garrison and Lawrence Webb, writers, active members and multi-term past presidents of the Foothills Writers Guild. Garrison is the author of books on manners and cooking and is the gardening columnist for the Independent Mail. Webb, a retired professor at Anderson University, is an inspirational writer whose latest book is “Once for a Shining Hour: Reflections for Christmas.”

The Gold Quill Award recognizes a current or former member who has distinguished himself or herself by demonstrating excellence in writing and in guild leadership. Going forward, a panel of current members will meet each summer to determine one new inductee to be so honored for that year.
“I’m happy that the Foothills Writers Guild is flourishing forty years after its start,” said guild President Jay Wright. “Many businesses have come and gone in that time; but as Mayor Roberts pointed out, we have had a significant impact on the economy as well as the arts community in Anderson. The celebration was especially enlightening for those of us who knew little or nothing about some of those being honored. It was good to hear both the contributions side and the human side of these important Andersonians. In addition to being good writers, they were all educators, leaders and mentors to aspiring writers. By the end of the ceremonies, everyone there surely agreed on one thing: the standard for receiving a Gold Quill Award has been set very high.”

The Foothills Writers Guild meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Anderson University classroom building on the athletic campus. Writers of all genres of fiction, nonfiction, poetry and songs are welcome to join. For more information, visit www.foothillswritersguild.com or call 864.231.6666.

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