

# DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Knoxville poet Marilyn Kallet is an avid supporter of many Humanities TN projects--from the Southern Festival of Books to *Chapter 16*, in addition to Humanities TN itself. The author of 18 books, Kallet will retire next summer after 37 years as a beloved creative-writing professor at the University of Tennessee--a change that will no doubt be a loss to her students but a gift to her readers, who can look forward to more work from this [passionate and humane writer](#).

## *Dr. Marilyn Kallet*

### ***What do you do professionally?***

I am Nancy Moore Goslee Professor of English at the University of Tennessee, where I have taught creative writing for 37 years.

### ***What do you do for fun?***

I love good food, good wine. That's one reason I teach poetry workshops in Southwest France each spring, for VCCA abroad.

### ***Who/what inspires you?***

Everything. I am first and foremost a poet of love and blues, but I also write poems of witness. My newest book of poems, *How Our Bodies Learned*, includes poems about the terror attacks in Paris, November 15, 2015; I was there at the time to give a poetry reading. The book also holds anti-bullet poems. After the December 2015 school shooting at San Bernardino, I pledged to write an anti-bullet poem every day. A handful of these made it into this new volume.

### ***How did you first become aware of Humanities Tennessee?***

I was on the board of the Tennessee Arts Commission a few decades ago, and learned about Humanities Tennessee from them.

### ***What made you want to become a donor?***

The arts are all the more important now.

### ***What is your favorite Humanities Tennessee program and why?***

*Chapter 16* has been good to my work over the years. As a Tennessee writer, I am fervently grateful for the encouragement. The Southern Festival of Books is also at the top of my list!

### ***Why/in what ways are the humanities important in your life?***

The humanities help to make us human. I have published 18 books, seven of them poetry. My daughter Heather Gross is an accomplished musician. We all need the arts to express who we are and want to me.

### ***What might someone be surprised to know about you?***

In Sixth Grade, our school asked us what we wanted to be when we grew up. I said I wanted to be a writer, a teacher, and a police woman decoy. I think it was probably the hormones speaking!

*We thank you for your support!*