



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

For Immediate Release:
December 2, 2004

For More Information Contact:
Randy Nehrt

WHITE CONGRATULATES JEAN WILKINS ON RETIREMENT AS STATE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

SPRINGFIELD—Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White today congratulated Jean Wilkins of Pleasant Plains on her pending retirement as Director of the Illinois State Library. Wilkins' retirement takes effect December 17th.

"Jean Wilkins has been a wonderful friend and an outstanding public servant," White said. "Illinois' network of libraries is among the finest in the nation thanks to Jean and her tireless commitment. On behalf of all of the citizens of Illinois, I thank Jean for keeping our libraries strong and vibrant, I congratulate her on her well-deserved retirement and I wish her all the best in her future endeavors."

White said Wilkins' leadership at the State Library is best demonstrated by some of the programs she helped implement. Illinois libraries were made more user friendly and efficient through the creation of Find-it! Illinois, a statewide digital library bringing Illinois information into one convenient web site for Internet users, and the Statewide Illinois Library Catalog (SILC), a new shared catalog combining all library holdings in Illinois into a single, searchable entity. The implementation of Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) group services in Illinois gives Illinois libraries predictable pricing to help them manage budgets more effectively and the aggressive pursuit of grants available outside of state government, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services allow Illinois libraries to provide more services for their patrons.

"I am very grateful to Secretary White for allowing me to serve as State Library Director these past six years," said Wilkins. "During that time I believe we have greatly improved the quality of Illinois libraries and services available to patrons. We have strengthened our network of 4,000 libraries and increased their ability to cooperate and work together to fulfill the needs of citizens. We have responded to ever-changing technological challenges and provided libraries with new technological tools and resources. I am confident our libraries will continue to grow and prosper because of the hard work and dedication of the entire Illinois library community."

Wilkins is a native of Anna-Jonesboro, Illinois. She joined the Illinois State Library in 1980 and obtained her Master of Library and Information Sciences degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign in 1985. Prior to becoming a librarian Wilkins was a teacher in Illinois, Nebraska and Colorado. She serves on the board of directors of the Illinois Library Computer Systems Organization and the Illinois Century Network, and is a member of the library Vision and Leadership Team. She and her husband Joe have two children, Mary and Charles.

###