

**For Immediate Release:**  
September 1, 2015

**For More Information Contact:**  
Rachel Farrer

**Jesse White Urges Student Readers to Enter “Letters About Literature” Competition**

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White is urging students in grades 4 through 12 to enter the 2016 “Letters About Literature” contest — a national reading and writing competition sponsored by the Illinois Center for the Book.

“Letters About Literature” invites students to read a book, poem or play of their choice and write a letter to the author about how the work changed their life or view of the world. Students can enter on their own or through their schools, libraries or other youth organizations.

“Every year thousands of students in Illinois enjoy participating in this inspiring competition,” said White. “Illinois has had more entries than any other state for eight years in a row. Anyone who has read past letters can see how literature inspires and touches the lives of our young people. I encourage all our students to take part in Letters About Literature, and I hope their participation leads to a lifetime of reading.”

There are three levels of participation: Level I for grades 4-6, Level II for grades 7-8 and Level III for grades 9-12. One Illinois winner will be selected for each level and receive a \$200 cash award. Teachers of the winning students will receive a \$100 cash award to purchase materials for their school library. Winners and teachers will be invited to an awards ceremony in Springfield. The state winners’ letters will be forwarded for national judging. In last year’s competition, Illinois Level III winner, Aidan Kingwell, a student at Fenwick High School in Oak Park was selected as the Level III national winner.

The deadline to enter the competition is **Friday, December 4, 2015, for Level III, and Monday, January 11, 2016, for Levels I and II.** State winners will be announced in April 2016. For more information about the competition, contact Bonnie Matheis at 217-558-2065 or [bmatheis@ilsos.net](mailto:bmatheis@ilsos.net). Information also is available at <http://illinoiscenterforthebook.org>.

###