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Jesse White Announces Winners of 12th Annual Illinois Emerging Writers Competition

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White announced that poets from St. Joseph, Harrisburg and Des Plaines are this year's winners of the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award in the twelfth annual Illinois Emerging Writers Competition.

Jeanne Genis of St. Joseph was awarded first place for her poem "Finch (For Brigit in Illinois)." Whittney Jones of Harrisburg received second place for her poem "The Price of Coal." Rochelle Zappia of Des Plaines is the third place winner for her poem "Don't Ever Let Them Sing." The winners read their poems and received their awards during a ceremony at the Illinois State Library.

"I created the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition to promote creative writing and provide an opportunity for recognizing new literary talent in the state," White said. "Illinois has a long and rich literary heritage, and these poets are adding to the tradition established by legendary poet Gwendolyn Brooks. Great poems have the ability to enrich and enhance our lives, and I'm pleased to congratulate this year's talented winners."

The competition is named for the late Pulitzer Prize-winning Illinois Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks, and is co-sponsored by the Illinois Center for the Book and Kevin Stein, Illinois Poet Laureate.

The winning poems are available to read at http://cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/center_for_the_book/. Also, the winning poems will be submitted for possible publication in "Ninth Letter," "RHINO" and "Quiddity" magazines and "Poetic License Press" publications.

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