



A MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY OF STATE JESSE WHITE

It is my privilege to present this 2017-2018 edition of the *Illinois Blue Book*. In commemoration of the Bicentennial anniversary of our state, the 57th edition contains special features on the history of Illinois, as well as information on the history of the *Blue Book* itself. As always, it continues the tradition of providing up-to-date information about state officials, government agencies and local government, and interesting Illinois facts and history.

Since its entrance into the Union on Dec. 3, 1818, Illinois has played a critical role in the history of the United States. As the population grew, so did Illinois' contributions to the nation. During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln and Generals Ulysses S. Grant and John Logan were influential in the fight for the North. Following the Civil War, rapid expansion and industrialization took place. Immigrants sought work and the opportunity to enjoy freedom in America. Illinoisans never shirked their duty of contribution to the many wars that faced our nation throughout its history. In World War II, approximately 1 million Illinois men and 13,000 women served in the U.S. Armed Forces. During the latter half of the 20th century, Illinois continued to grow in population, and today it is the fifth-largest state in the nation with a population of nearly 13 million. In the 21st century, Illinois would foster the political aspirations of the nation's first African-American President, Barack Obama (2009-2017).

It is my honor and privilege to serve as your Illinois Secretary of State. Gathering the vast amount of information obtained in the *Illinois Blue Book* is a significant undertaking. Thank you to those who contributed to this edition allowing the 2017-2018 *Blue Book* to continue to carry a legacy of being one of the most reliable and respected sources of Illinois government and history.

Jesse White

JESSE WHITE
Illinois Secretary of State
