



THE
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
of Cincinnati
and
Hamilton County

800 Vine Street
Cincinnati, Ohio
45202-2071

Contact
Phyllis Hegner
Phone•369•4571
or
Richard Helmes
Phone•369•6959

Fax 513•369•4565

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

February 5, 2004

West End Branch Essay Contest Open to West End Students or Residents in Grades 6–8

Children in grades 6–8 who go to school or live in the West End are invited to write an essay about what the Public Library means to them. It's all part of the *Third Annual Mary E. Finley Memorial Essay and Speech Contest*, sponsored by the West End Branch Library and retired librarian George Ferguson.

The contest originated as a way for Ferguson to honor the memory of Mary E. Finley, a librarian who had influenced George as a youngster growing up in the West End. Mrs. Finley was one of the first African American librarians hired by the Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, retiring in 1972 after 44 years of service. She passed away in 2000. "She strongly encouraged African Americans to learn to use the library and to make certain their children were avid readers," said Mr. Ferguson. "I became a librarian in large part because of the strong encouragement I received from Mrs. Finley, who was a remarkable lady."

The winning essay will receive \$100, courtesy of Mr. Ferguson. "I hope the contest will encourage young people to learn and realize that 'knowledge is power,'" he said. "I was one of the many people who came under Mrs. Finley's influence and succeeded in life because of her interest in helping young people such as myself WANT to learn," he continued.

Entries must be submitted by April 3 and will be judged at an awards program at the branch on Saturday, April 24, 1:00 p.m. For more information contact the branch at (513) 369-6026.

♥ **Information about events at the Main Library and 41 branch libraries is available on the Internet site: www.CincinnatiLibrary.org.**