



THE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Press Release

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**What Does the Library Mean to You?
Sixth Annual Mary E. Finley Memorial Essay Contest
at West End Branch Library**

Children in grades 6–12 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 *Sixth Annual Mary E. Finley Memorial Essay and Speech Contest*, sponsored by the West End Branch Library and retired librarian George Ferguson.

Essay topics can include:

- What the Library means to me
- What I've learned at the library
- How a librarian has helped me



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."

There are first, second and third place prizes of \$100, \$75, and \$50 respectively. "I hope the contest will encourage young people to learn and realize that 'knowledge is power,'" continued Mr. Ferguson. "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."

Essay must be submitted, in written form, to the West End Branch **by 6:00 p.m. on Friday April 6, 2007**. Finalists will be called by Tuesday April 17. The Awards Program will be on Saturday, April 21 at 1:00 p.m. at the West End Branch Library. Ten finalists will be chosen who will read their speech on April 21 and the three winners will be chosen after all finalists have presented their speeches.

Essay Contest Guidelines:

- o You must be enrolled in grades 6-12.

- o You must attend school OR live in the West End.
- o You must have a Library card in good standing, or apply for a card.
- o Your essay/speech should be around five minutes in length.
- o Your essay must be an original work.
- o Your name, age, and phone number must be present on your essay.
- o Essay must be submitted in written format to the West End Branch Library by 6:00 p.m. on Friday, April 6, 2007.
- o Information: (513) 369-6026.

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