



THE
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
of Cincinnati
and
Hamilton County

800 Vine Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202-2071
www.CincinnatiLibrary.org

Phyllis Hegner
Community Relations Manager
Phone (513) 369-4571
Phyllis.Hegner@CincinnatiLibrary.org

Emily Mueller
Media Communications Specialist
Phone (513) 369-6959
Emily.Mueller@CincinnatiLibrary.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Press Release

September 16, 2009

What Does the Library Mean to You?

West End Branch Library's 9th Annual Mary E. Finley Essay & Speech Contest

The West End Branch Library (805 Ezzard Charles Drive) invites students in grades 6 to 12 who go to school or live in the West End to write an essay about what the Public Library means to them. It's all part of the 9th Annual Mary E. Finley Essay and Speech Contest, sponsored by retired librarian George Ferguson, Steve Rousseau, and the Friends of the Public Library.



Mary E. Finley was one of the first African American librarians hired by the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, retiring in 1972 after 44 years of service.

The contest originated as a way for George Ferguson to honor the memory of Mary E. Finley, a librarian who had influenced him 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 and 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. She was a remarkable lady."

A laptop computer will be the first place prize; second, third, and fourth place winners will receive cash prizes. "I hope the contest will encourage young people to learn and realize that 'knowledge is power.' 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."

Essays must be submitted in written form to the West End Branch Library by 6:00 p.m., Saturday, October 3, 2009. Finalists will be called by Wednesday, October 7. The Awards Program will be on Saturday, October 10, at 2:00 p.m. at the West End Branch Library. Ten finalists will be chosen to read their speech on October 10, and the four winners will be chosen after all finalists have presented their speeches.

9th Annual Mary E. Finley Essay & Speech Contest Guidelines

- You must be enrolled in the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade.
- You must attend school OR live in the West End.
- You must have a Library card in good standing, or apply for a card.
- Your essay/speech should be around five minutes in length. Essay topics can include:
 - What the Library means to me
 - What I've learned at the Library
 - How a librarian has helped me
- Your essay must be an original work.
- Your name, age, and phone number must be present on your essay.
- Essays must be submitted in written format to the West End Branch Library (805 Ezzard Charles Drive) by 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 3, 2009.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, call the West End Branch Library at (513) 369-6026.