

**For Immediate Release:**  
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**For More Information Contact:**

**Jesse White Awarded Winners of 16th Annual Illinois Emerging Writers Competition**

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White awarded poets from Seneca, Deerfield and Naperville as this year's winners of the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award in the 16th annual Illinois Emerging Writers Competition.

Phyllis Natenek of Seneca was awarded first place for her poem "Gray Legions." Jerrold M. Levy of Deerfield received second place for his poem "Pandemica." Joanne Hsu of Naperville was the third-place winner for her poem "Philately."

"I created the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition to promote creative writing and provide an opportunity to recognize new literary talent throughout 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 am pleased to celebrate this year's talented winners."

The competition is named for the late Pulitzer Prize-winning Illinois Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks and is part of the Illinois Center for The Book program at the State Library. Kevin Stein, Illinois Poet Laureate 2003-2017, continued as a principal partner and served as the final judge of the competition.

The winning poems are available to read at [http://cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/center\\_for\\_the\\_book/](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" journals.

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