

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Maiben Beard, 334/844-4903 (maiben.beard@auburn.edu)

LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE WINNERS ANNOUNCED

AUBURN, Ala.--The Alabama Center for the Book has announced the state winners of the 2008 Letters About Literature contest.

Sponsored nationally by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress and Target Stores, and in Alabama by the Alabama Center for the Book and the Alabama Humanities Foundation, this year's contest drew 625 entries from more than 30 schools and two dozen communities around the state. Florence High School 9th-grader Shejuti Paul was a finalist in the national competition, the first student from Alabama to reach that level.

Letters About Literature is a national reading-writing contest in which readers in grades four through twelve write a personal letter to an author, living or dead, from any genre—fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic—explaining how that author's work changed the student's way of thinking about the world or themselves. Letters are judged first at the state level. First-place winners from state competitions across the country are submitted to the national contest.

State winners were recognized in a ceremony at the Alabama Book Festival, April 19, 2008, at Old Alabama Town in Montgomery. Each winning student received books and a certificate from the Alabama Center for the Book. The first-place winner in each level received a gift card from Target Stores.

The 2008 Alabama Letters About Literature winners are the following:

Level I, grades 4-6:

Erin McKee, Leon Sheffield Magnet School, Decatur (first place); **Katelyn Riant**, Leon Sheffield Magnet School (second place); **Jasmyne Moss**, Leon Sheffield Magnet School (third place); **Tomi Adediji**, The Montgomery Academy, Montgomery (honorable mention); **Summer Bell**, Leon Sheffield Magnet School (honorable mention); **Yancy Brawley**, McBride Elementary School, Muscle Shoals (honorable mention).

Level II, grades 7-8:

Darsey Wegrzyn, Providence Classical School, Huntsville (first place); **Jacquelynn Myrick**, Baldwin Arts and Academic Magnet School, Montgomery (second place); **Mindy Perez**, Baldwin Arts and Academic Magnet School (third place); **Hannah Sellers**, Cherokee High School, Cherokee (honorable mention).

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Level III, grades 9-12:

Shejuti Paul, Florence High School, Florence (first place); **Elizabeth Locker**, Florence High School (second place); **Mary Locker**, Florence High School (third place); **Andy Husted**, Florence High School (honorable mention); **Sarah Beth Findley**, Daphne High School, Daphne (honorable mention).

The Alabama Center for the Book is a state affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Housed at the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities in the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University, the Center sponsors programs around the state on books and reading. For more information, please visit www.alabamabookcenter.org or contact the Alabama Center for the Book at 334-844-4946.

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