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May 14, 2025

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**Student Writers Honored at My Favorite Book Awards Ceremony at Oklahoma State Capitol**

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK – Last week, the Oklahoma Center for the Book, housed within the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL), and the Friends of the Oklahoma Center for the Book (FOCB) celebrated young voices and the power of reading. On May 7, during the 2025 My Favorite Book awards ceremony, nine students read aloud letters they had written to an author whose work significantly impacted them.

The annual contest invites students across Oklahoma to write personal letters to authors, living or dead. This year's honorees were selected from hundreds of entries submitted by students in grades 4 through 12, reflecting heartfelt connections to books that inspired courage, empathy, and hope. Made possible by the FOCB, it's a wonderful program that highlights the direct impact of books on Oklahoma's students and recognizes the amazing teachers and librarians who connect those students with life-changing stories.

"The ceremony can be very emotional," said ODL director, state librarian and archivist Natalie Currie, "with students sharing deeply personal and sometimes tragic experiences of parental loss, illness, or bullying, and how these books provided comfort and understanding. My Favorite Book proves, yet again, how vital libraries—and the trained professionals who connect readers with just the right book—are in our state."

The contest featured three levels for student participation: Level 1 for grades 4-6, Level 2 for grades 7-8, and Level 3 for grades 9-12. Outstanding literary appreciation and strong communication skills were recognized with cash prizes awarded to the first, second, and third place winners in each level, who received \$500, \$250, and \$100 respectively. Each first-place winner also had the honor of selecting a public or school library to receive a generous \$1,000 cash prize.

Now in its 16th year, My Favorite Book originated as a derivative of the Library of Congress' Letters About Literature, a national reading and writing initiative that concluded in 2019. Due to strong continued support and interest, the Oklahoma Center for the Book rebranded this popular project as My Favorite Book. The

Oklahoma Center for the Book also organizes events such as Read Across Oklahoma for early childhood literacy and the Oklahoma Book Awards, which honors Oklahoma authors and books written about the state. For more information about the My Favorite Book contest and to read this year's winning letters, visit [oklahoma.gov/libraries/my-fav-book](http://oklahoma.gov/libraries/my-fav-book).

## Meet the Winners

### DIVISION I

- First Place Winner - **Madison Glasco**  
Washington Middle School, Washington, OK  
Letter to Wendy Mass for *Every Soul a Star*
- Second Place Winner - **James Hensley**  
Owasso Public Schools, Owasso, OK  
Letter to Nadria Givens for *Mommy, What is Lupus?*
- Third Place Winner - **Nolan Boatright**  
Byng Elementary School, Byng, OK  
Letter to Kirsty Applebaum for *Lifeling*

### DIVISION II

- First Place Winner - **Lakely Gomez**  
Cimarron Middle School, Edmond, OK  
Letter to Jacqueline Woodson for *Each Kindness*
- Second Place Winner - **Juliet Foster**  
Mingo Valley Christian, Tulsa, OK  
Letter to S.E. Hinton for *The Outsiders*
- Third Place Winner - **Gwen Sams**  
Epic Charter School, Chelsea, OK  
Letter to Peg Kehret for *Cages*

### DIVISION III

- First Place Winner - **Maggie Ling**  
Norman High School, Norman, OK  
Letter to Michelle Zauner for *Crying in H Mart*
- Second Place Winner - **Ashley Chancellor**  
Epic Charter Schools, Moore, OK  
Letter to Sally M. Walker for *Written In Bone*
- Third Place Winner - **Abby Mount**  
Stratford High School, Stratford, OK  
Letter to Jordan Sonnenblick for *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie*

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### **About the Oklahoma Department of Libraries**

The [Oklahoma Department of Libraries](#) is the official State Library of Oklahoma. It serves the information and records management needs of state government, assists with public library development, coordinates library and information technology projects for the state, and serves the general public through its specialized collections.

### **About the Oklahoma Center for the Book**

The Oklahoma Center for the Book (OCB), a state affiliate of the National Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, was established in 1986 as the fourth state center in the nation. Created by the Oklahoma Department of Libraries in response to a national call for state participation, OCB promotes the importance of books and reading, celebrates Oklahoma authors past and present, preserves the state's literary heritage, and encourages reading for pleasure among Oklahomans of all ages. OCB also partners with the nonprofit Friends of the Oklahoma Center for the Book to host a variety of literary events across the state.