

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Paul Burns (502) 574-1683 [Office]

Louisville Free Public Library now accepting student submissions for annual Cotter Cup poetry writing contest

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (February 5, 2024) – In 1913, renowned Louisville poet, educator, and community leader Joseph S. Cotter, Sr. started an annual storytelling contest for children at the Western Library – the first public library in the US created for Black people and staffed entirely by Black professionals. The ‘storytelling bee,’ as it was often called, was a way to encourage young children to read and learn through the art of storytelling. A perfect marriage of books, literacy, and libraries, the Cotter Storytelling Contest was held annually from 1913 to 1939 and awarded cash prizes to the winners. The names of the winners were even engraved onto a silver loving cup that became known as the ‘Cotter Cup.’

Today, Joseph Cotter’s legacy lives on at the Western Library through the continuation of his storytelling contest, now called the Cotter Cup Storytelling Contest. The Louisville Free Public Library, in partnership with the UofL Writing Center, brought the Cotter Cup Storytelling Contest back to Western in 2021. Open to all Louisville students, grades K-12, the contest now focuses on storytelling through poetry.

Participation in the contest is free and prizes will be awarded to the winners in three age groups. To be eligible, students must register and submit their wholly original poem online at www.LFPL.org/CotterCup no later than March 14 (one entry per student). Computer access and assistance is also available at any Louisville Free Public Library location.

For students looking for additional help with their writing, Western Library will host tutors from the UofL Writing Center every Wednesday, 3 to 6 p.m., January through April. Tutors will be available on a first-come, first-served basis to help students improve their writing skills on school assignments, creative writing projects, and their Cotter Cup entries.

Learn more at www.LFPL.org/CotterCup or call (502) 574-1779.