



## A Message from Secretary of State Jesse White

On the cusp of the new decade, we are reminded of the excitement and promise we felt toward the end of the last decade when one of Illinois' own became our nation's top leader, as well as the disappointment and disillusionment we experienced when our state's top leader was removed from office. The rise of former Illinois legislator Barack Obama to the presidency contrasted with the fall of our former Governor will forever be imprinted on the political history of this state — and this nation. This 2009-2010 *Illinois Blue Book* documents both of these dramatic events and will perhaps go down as one of the most historically significant in the book's 110-year history.

This edition pays tribute to one of our most beloved and revered leaders of all time — Abraham Lincoln. Illinois celebrated Lincoln's Birthday Bicentennial on Feb. 12, 2009, and throughout the year with special events across the state, especially in Springfield, where Lincoln practiced law and walked the halls of the Old State Capitol as a state legislator. As part of the bicentennial celebration, the Office of the Secretary of State sponsored an essay contest for students in the vein of Lincoln's famous *Gettysburg Address*. The winning essays are featured on pages 5-11, along with photos of the students and other special events commemorating this historical milestone.

As in previous *Blue Books*, this edition also includes biographies of our elected officials and legislators, information on constitutional offices and state departments, the judicial branch and the education system, and an up-to-date Chronology of Illinois History. The title pages take a historic look back at previous *Blue Books*, one from as early as 1917-1918.

Taking into account the prevalence of the Internet as well as economic and environmental considerations, we have streamlined this 54th edition of the *Illinois Book Book* while retaining its reputation as one of the most comprehensive sources on Illinois government. I hope you find it a useful resource as well as a historical reference for decades to come.

*Jesse White*

JESSE WHITE  
Illinois Secretary of State