



# THE LINCOLN FORUM BULLETIN

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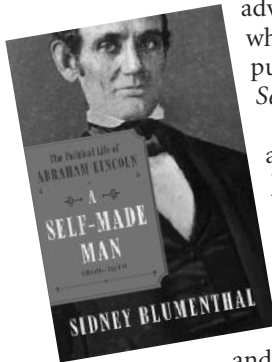
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## FORUM XXI TO FEATURE NEW BOOKS, OLD FAVORITES EXPLORING LINCOLN'S LIFE AND LEGACY

New voices and old favorites will gather to shed light on Abraham Lincoln's extraordinary life and enduring legacy when the Forum convenes at Gettysburg for its 21<sup>st</sup> annual symposium November 16-18. Expect a special focus on two highly controversial 19<sup>th</sup> Century issues that continue to roil the body politic today, more than a century-and-half after Lincoln's death: immigration and voting rights.

Among the speakers the Forum will present for the first time are former presidential advisor, Clinton administration chronicler, and political correspondent Sidney Blumenthal, whose forthcoming series of books, *The Political Life of Abraham Lincoln*, is certain to arouse public attention. Blumenthal will be focusing on his new, eagerly anticipated first volume, *A Self-Made Man*.



Another debut speaker is Richard Brookhiser, National Humanities Medal-winning author and finalist for the 2015 Lincoln Prize for his *Founders' Son: A Life of Abraham Lincoln*. Joining the group of first-time lecturers is the co-author of the new *The American War: A History of the Civil War Era*, UCLA historian Joan Waugh. Professor Waugh will set the stage for Forum XXI with a look at the surrenders of Lincoln's top general, Ulysses S. Grant.

Commented Frank J. Williams, founding Chairman of the Lincoln Forum: "In conceiving a theme for our coming-of-age Forum—for we will be marking our 21<sup>st</sup> birthday—we decided to focus on the essential truths every 21-year-old must confront: both the past and the future. Let us remember that a century and a half ago this year, America was forced to

face a bloody past that had cost 750,000 lives to reunite the country, and an uncertain future that included the challenges of sectional reconciliation and racial justice too long postponed. Worst of all, Abraham Lincoln was dead—and his successor unable to muster anything near his statecraft and political genius.

"How did Lincoln continue to inspire the task before us?" Judge Williams continued. "How did his loss affect our efforts to bind up the nation's wounds? These and other very pertinent questions will be much on our minds as we assemble for another Lincoln Forum symposium, to be marked, as always, by both the brilliant scholarship and the great camaraderie that have characterized our symposia from the very beginning, and remain our goal each new year."

Among the all-time Forum favorites returning for the 2016 symposium will be historian Ronald C. White, Jr., author of the brand-new Grant biography, *American Ulysses*; and Dr. James I. "Bud" Robertson, Jr., whose forthcoming, aptly titled book—*After the Civil War: The Heroes, Villains, Soldiers, and Civilians who Changed America*—will be the theme of the annual banquet on November 18, with Professor Robertson as keynote.

Expect to hear fresh topics from a host of other Forum veterans and popular favorites, whose subjects will range from Lincoln's origins to Lincoln's influence, from the end of military conflict to the beginning of reunion, and with it, the slow decline of the fractured, desolated Lincoln family.

The speakers will include Lincoln Prize-winning U. S. Naval Academy Professor Emeritus Craig L. Symonds (author, most recently, of *The U. S. Navy: A Concise History*); paired again (by popular demand) with Mississippi State University's John F. Marszalek, director of the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library (and editor of the new collection, *The Best Writings of Ulysses S. Grant*). Symonds and Marszalek will assume the perspectives of the two generals they have portrayed so vividly in biographies—Joseph Johnston and William T. Sherman, respectively—to explore the curious case of their two North Carolina surrenders in May 1865.

Acclaimed Mary Lincoln biographer Catherine Clinton of the University of Texas at San Antonio (*Tara Revisited: Women, War, and the Plantation Legend*) returns, this time to offer her expertise on the subject of what became of the Lincoln family.



Sidney Blumenthal (Ralph Alswang)

continued on page 11



## MESSAGE from the CHAIR

# THE STILL MAN

Why does Abraham Lincoln possess us so? Author, lawyer, politician, philosopher, father, husband, and the best president in America's long history, he was the man who made himself remarkable in a remarkable time. And the Lincoln Forum, now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year, has itself become remarkable, in great part, because of Lincoln and those who gather every year in Gettysburg to explore his life, times, and legacy at our annual symposium.

Last year's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Forum was a wonderful commemoration of the president we honor and the "end" of civil war. This year's Forum promises to be just as thought-provoking as we move into the Reconstruction years. Once again we have asked leading scholars to speak about their latest scholarship, and explore subjects that are still relevant today: How do wars conclude? How do we wage peace? How should we treat new immigrants from overseas—as well as longtime Americans of color who have been oppressed through centuries? And how do heroes survive in American memory—if they ever can? We will explore all of these subjects—and more—when we convene for Lincoln Forum XXI this fall. At age 20 we had a celebration! At age 21 we officially come of age—and we hope that you will be on hand to join us for lectures, panels, small-group sessions, tours, and all of the lunches and dinners that have become so special.

Lincoln remains, as Emily Dickinson called him, "The Still Man," who looms larger and larger as our most modern, melancholic, and politically vibrant president. While we have a multitude of books devoted to Lincoln, his language, his roots, his tumultuous marriage, his politics and his presidency – nothing achieves a fuller understanding of him than the presentations at our annual symposium. 📖

Frank J. Williams  
Chairman

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## A NEW LOOK—A NEW IMAGE—FOR THE LINCOLN FORUM

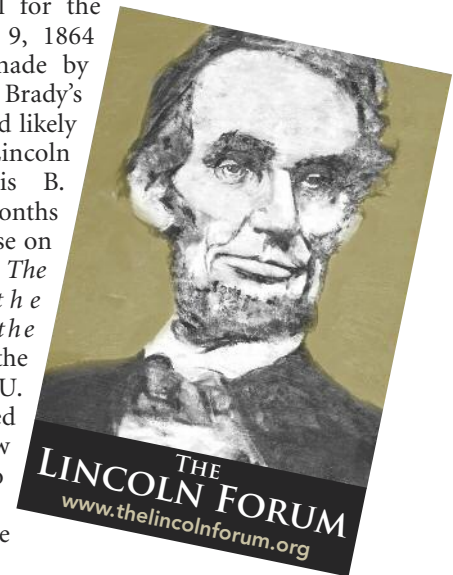
No—your eyes are not deceiving you. After 20 years, The Lincoln Forum has a new "brand identity:" a new full-color look, a new logo, a new page-one banner atop this *Bulletin*, and an all-new website. The Forum enters its 21<sup>st</sup> year refreshed and reinvigorated—but devoted now, as always, to its original mission: "To enhance the understanding and preserve the memory of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War."



The logo image is the work of Gettysburg's Lincoln artist in residence—and veteran member of the Forum Board of Advisors—Wendy Allen. She not only donated her artwork and proposed our new typeface, but helped guide the creation of the website home-page title wall. As symposium attendees know, Wendy also created the annual award for excellence by Lincoln and Civil War institutions, an honor already known to our members as "The Wendy Allen Award."

Wendy Allen's "Lincoln Forum Lincoln" is another of her vivid, impressionistic reinterpretations of beloved Lincoln

photographs. The model for the painting is the February 9, 1864 photograph of Lincoln made by Anthony Berger at Mathew Brady's gallery in Washington—and likely posed there by an earlier Lincoln artist-in-residence, Francis B. Carpenter, who spent six months working at the White House on his monumental painting, *The First Reading of the Emancipation Before the Cabinet*. Several years ago, the image was adopted by the U. S. Treasury for the revised five-dollar bill. Thus the new Forum image harkens to the past, represents the present, and looks to the future.



Expect to see the portrait on our brochures, letterhead, posters, banners, and merchandise. And check out the user-friendly new website at [www.thelincolnforum.org](http://www.thelincolnforum.org), created and managed by Alfred Notarianni. 📖

# WORDS TO LIVE BY: THE EVER-RELEVANT MR. LINCOLN

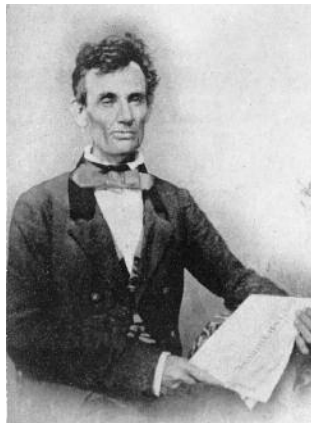
Modern presidential campaigns seldom inspire the kind of elevated rhetoric of which Abraham Lincoln was capable (though, in truth, Lincoln could be tough as nails in the heat of his many political contests). What is extraordinary is how timely Lincoln's words again seem in the midst of the frenzy of anger that has characterized the 2016 White House race to date. Following are some undying words of wisdom—all from the pen of Mr. Lincoln—all meant only for their own time, and all miraculous timely and timeless in ours.

*At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide. I hope I am over wary; but if I am not, there is, even now, something of ill-omen amongst us. I mean the increasing disregard for law which pervades the country; the growing disposition to substitute the wild and furious passions, in lieu of the sober judgment of the Courts; and the worse than savage mobs, for the executive ministers of justice.*

Speech before the Young Men's Lyceum, Springfield, January 27, 1838

*The spirit of national concession—that spirit which first gave us the constitution, and which has thrice saved the Union—we shall have strangled and cast from us forever. And what shall we have in lieu of it? The South flushed with triumph and tempted to excesses; the North, betrayed, as they believe, brooding on wrong and burning for revenge. One side will provoke; the other will resent... But restore the compromise, and what then? We thereby restore the national faith, the national confidence, the national feeling of brotherhood. We thereby reinstate the spirit of concession and compromise—that spirit which has never failed us in past perils, and which may be safely trusted for all the future."*

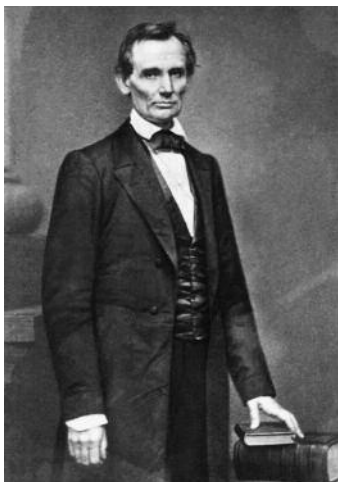
Speech at Peoria, October 16, 1854



*Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the Government nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.*

Speech at Cooper Union, New York, February 27, 1860

*We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of*



*memory, stretching from every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.*

First Inaugural Address, Washington, March 4, 1861

*This is a People's contest. On the side of the Union, it is a struggle for maintaining in the world, that form, and substance of government, whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders—to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all—to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life. Yielding to partial, and temporary departures, from necessity, this is the leading object of the government for whose existence we contend.*

Message to Special Session of Congress, July 4, 1861

*[W]e cannot escape history... The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation... We—even we here—hold the power, and bear the responsibility... We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best, hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless.*

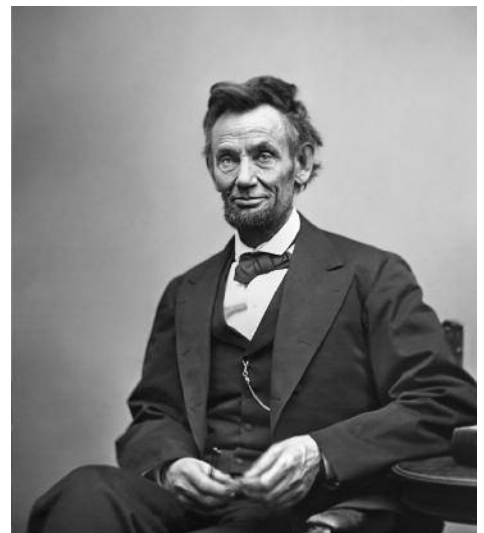
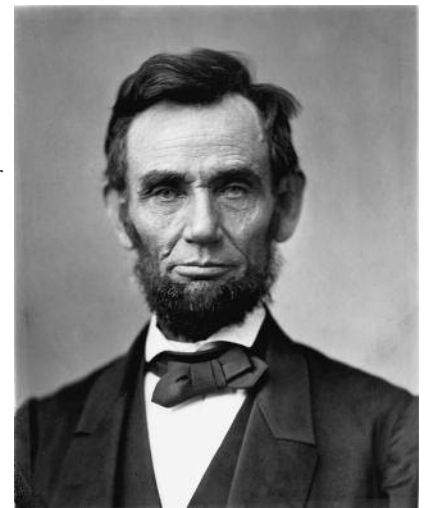
Annual Message to Congress, December 1, 1862

*It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.*

Speech at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863

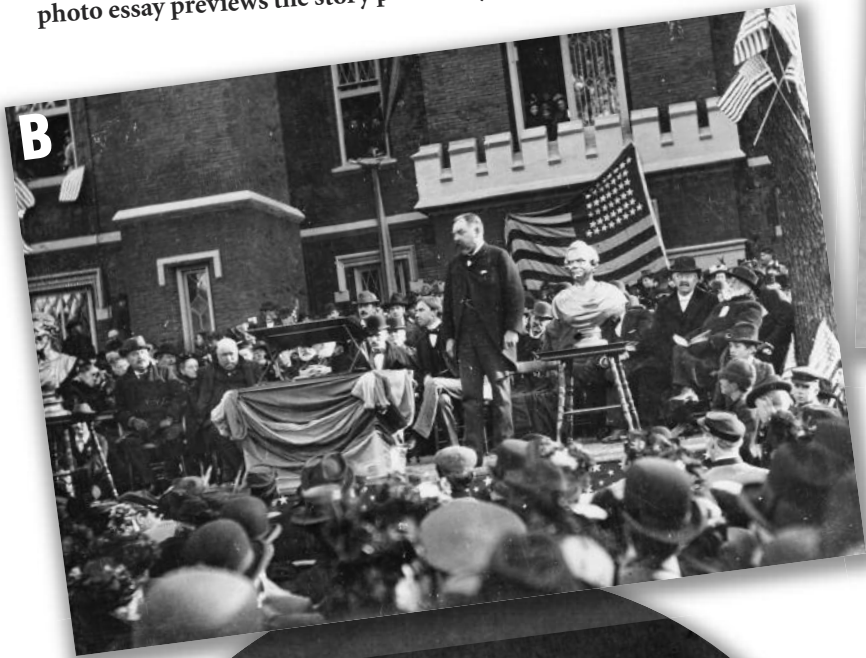
*With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow; and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.*

Second Inaugural Address, Washington, March 4, 1865



## DID THE LINCOLN FAMILY

The star-crossed Lincoln family—destined for glory as well as tragedy, honor as well as ridicule—not surprisingly faced diminished and rocky times after the President's death in April 1865. Although Abraham Lincoln left no will, his family inherited more than \$100,000 on his death—a relative fortune by mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century standards. On the other hand, according to prevailing laws, the wife of the commander-in-chief was entitled to no widow's pension—a disparity Mary Lincoln labored mightily to correct. Worse for Mary, her beloved youngest son Tad died in 1871 at age 18. Surviving son Robert, her eldest, caused her to be tried for insanity in a Chicago courtroom, opening a bitter breach between them. Mary died in 1882 and Robert, the onetime "Prince of Rails," went on to serve as a Cabinet secretary and ambassador to Great Britain. His own surviving children and grandchildren eventually faded into self-imposed obscurity. Mary Lincoln scholar Catherine Clinton will discuss the family's fate in detail at Forum XXI. Meanwhile this photo essay previews the story pictorially—and dramatically. 📖



# LONG ENDURE?

- A Tad as a teenager, during his time in Germany
- B Robert speaks at the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Galesburg Lincoln-Douglas debate, October 7, 1896.
- C Robert's daughter Mary Harlan Lincoln, on vacation at her maternal grandparents' home in Iowa.
- D The late president's grandson and namesake—Abraham Lincoln II—on his deathbed in London, 1889.
- E Robert's much-married second daughter, Jessie Lincoln Beckwith Johnson Randolph.
- F Mary Harlan Lincoln (Isham) with her only child, Lincoln Isham, who married but had no children of his own.
- G Jessie's daughter Mary Lincoln Beckwith, posing at Hildene, the family's Manchester, VT estate, beneath a painting of her grandfather. She never married.
- H Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith at an undated Civil War banquet. Married often, Beckwith had no acknowledged children, and as far as we know, was the last of the Lincolns when he died in 1985.



# LINCOLN FORUM



James Swanson



Elizabeth R. Varon



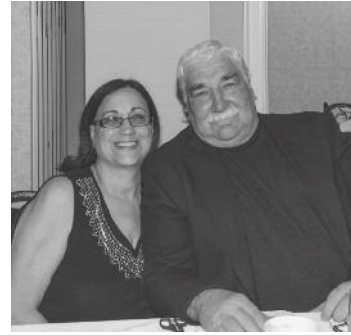
Frank J. & Virginia Williams



Michelle Krowl, Karen Hawbecker & John Elliff



Richard Wightman Fox, Martha Hodes & Elizabeth R. Varon



Betty Anselmo & Jerry Desko



Jeanne & John Marszalek



Brian Clinch & Darla Moe



"Dining in the White House" with the Chief & Chef



Frank J. Williams, Panel Moderator "Why Was Lincoln Murdered?" with Edward Steers, Jr., Terry Alford, Martha Hodes, John McKee Barr & Joan Chaconas



Ski Schanher, Bill Grandstaff



Dennis Perreault, Kathryn Hansen & Joe Card



Harold & Edith Holzer



John Welch & Tommy Kirk



Tom Horrocks, Kathryn Harris & Dana Shoaf



Jan & Pat Shier



John Bodnar & Paul Ellis-Graham



Eileen & David Patch

# XX MEMORIES



Sandra & Jack Davis & Dana B. Shoaf



Kim Brace, Jon F. Willen, Mel Maurer & Dick Crews



George Buss



Bob Lenz & Frank J. Williams



Fred Priebe, Henry F. Ballone, George Buss, Maynard Bauer & Melvin F. Maurer



United States Army Chorus



Dan Pritchett, Ted Quill & Tim Branscum



Mona & George Buss



Sarah Bellino & Kathryn Hansen



James B. Conroy



Civil War Dance Session



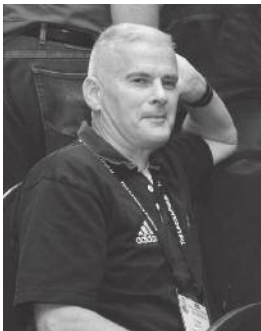
Mike Conrad & Melissa Williams



Tom Mackie & Tom Horrocks



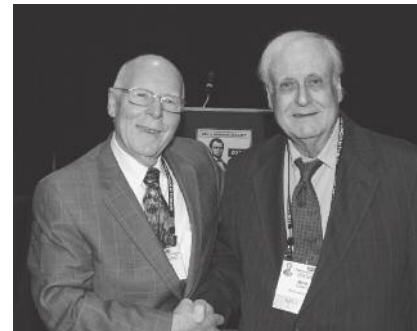
Harold Holzer, Panel Moderator "A King's Cure" in Film and Fact: Lincoln, Spielberg and the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment" with Michael Vorenberg, Edna Greene Medford & Richard Wightman Fox



Paul Barker



Wendy Allen, Edna Greene Medford & Edith Holzer



Henry F. Ballone & Bob Maher



Maynard & Betty Bauer

# THE LINCOLN FORUM 2015 TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

By: Ruth Squillace

The Lincoln Forum, which celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> year this past November, expanded its commitment to educators by offering four all-expenses paid teacher scholarships to the 2015 Lincoln Forum Symposium. Applications from across the nation proved to be diverse and compelling. With the assistance of fellow Lincoln Forum Board members, Ron Keller, Associate Professor of History and Political Science at Lincoln College in Lincoln, Illinois; Ken Childs, Esq., of Columbia, South Carolina; and Ruth Squillace, Coordinator of the Lincoln Forum Teacher Scholarship Initiative and high school Social Studies teacher in Long Island, New York, the selection committee continued to acknowledge the achievements of innovative and accomplished teachers. The four scholarship recipients were Valencia Abbott, Kathryn Hansen, Lois MacMillan, and Dennis Perreault.



Ruth Squillace, Frank J. Williams, Kathryn Hansen, Harold Holzer, Lois MacMillan, Dennis Perreault & Valencia Abbott ((Henry F. Ballone))

Valencia Abbott is an educator at Rockingham Early College High School in Wentworth, North Carolina, where she was named the 2015-16 Teacher of the Year. She is currently enrolled at Duke University for the Academically/Intellectually Gifted Licensure Program. She holds a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in African American Studies, a Master's in Liberal Studies, and she received her undergraduate degree in Political Science Pre-Law. At a time when testing mandates have top billing in America's classrooms, she endeavors to be more than one who teaches facts, names, and dates for the purpose of a test – but to provide contextualization for her students, so that they may have a deeper understanding of history and its leaders, like Abraham Lincoln. As Abbott explained after the symposium, “It is just awe-inspiring to know that when the majority of teachers are not appreciated for the educational advancement and studies that it takes to be a public school teacher, that here, at the Lincoln Forum, the recognition was motivation to continue to reach for the best as a teacher in order to bring out the best in students.” A highlight of her experience as a teacher scholar was attending a breakout session with Edna Greene Medford. “Sharing the same ‘train of thought’ on the interpretation of the Emancipation Proclamation as a distinguished Howard University History Professor was validation that I am teaching ‘on the right track.’”

For Kathryn Hansen, an English and American Literature teacher from Northside High School in Jacksonville, North Carolina, she expressed being “overwhelmed by the support I received from past and current scholarship recipients, and even those from other professions.” Speaking to the “Forum Family,” she shared that “the most lasting benefits, and the ones I am most grateful for, are the friendships and connections I made among a group of people I enjoy and admire.” Ms. Hansen graduated with her Bachelor's of Arts in English, with a minor in History from the University of Michigan. This spring, Ms. Hansen will begin a Masters in History program, with a concentration in American History. Early in her teaching career, she found it difficult to teach history without consulting literature or the writings of a time period. Conversely, her experience also demonstrated that teaching literature without simultaneously possessing a strong command of historical context, is equally challenging. Thus, her pedagogical approach is to marry the two: integrating great American writers and speakers into her American Literature class. Stimulus to continue this academic work was found in Forum programming. “William Davis' lecture on Grant and Lee inspired me to include selections from Grant's memoirs in my American Literature class. I also found James L. Swanson's comparison of the Lincoln and Kennedy assassinations to be so intriguing that I plan to include *Manhunt* in my course as well, because I am certain that my students will find it equally fascinating.”

Lois MacMillan is in her 26<sup>th</sup> year in education and teaches United States History at South Middle School in Grants Pass, Oregon. In 2006, she was her state's Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Teacher of the Year. Since then, she has become a Master Teacher for Gilder Lehrman. She facilitates teacher workshops on literacy strategies and she coordinates summer teacher seminars, including last summer's *Age of Lincoln* with Richard Carwadine. In 2013, with guidance from Professor Matthew Pinsker, she created a teaching website, *Global Lincoln*. Of her experiences with our organization, Ms. MacMillan stated, “The scholarship presented in the two days of the Lincoln Forum provided the opportunity for understanding the delicacy, density, and duality of ending the American Civil War... You can't teach what you don't know and that is where the Lincoln Forum's scholarship program for teachers has such an impact! It steers away from educational pedagogy that the classroom teacher is required to endure and focuses on genuine historical erudition. Furthermore, listening to the greatest of Lincoln scholars who are on the pursuit of historical analysis allows a Lincoln Forum teacher to be on the precipice of cutting edge historical scholarship... The second colossal takeaway was the munificence of all participants and presenters. Meeting the Lincoln Forum *family* from introduction at ‘first-timers cocktail hour,’ to chatting with seasoned attendees, filled my intellectual soul.”

Dennis Perreault, a seasoned Social Studies teacher in Litchfield, New Hampshire and Vice Chair of the New Hampshire Department of Education's Professional Standards Board expressed, “The 2015 Lincoln Forum was one of the best conferences I have ever attended.” Prior to teaching, Mr. Perreault practiced law for eleven years in both private and corporate practice. Quite impressively, he developed a course based entirely on selected writings contained within the *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. As part of that class, he held a cross-curricular celebration of the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth, a celebration of **continued on page 10**

# THE LINCOLN FORUM 2015 STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

## By Tom Horrocks

Emma Benun, a senior at Lincoln High School in Lincoln, Rhode Island, Austin Justice, a senior at Boyd County High School in Ashland, Kentucky, and Asmithaa Vinukonda, a fourth grade student at the Brunson Elementary School for the Highly Academically Gifted in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, were awarded scholarships by The Lincoln Forum to attend its annual symposium on November 16-18, 2015. The winners were chosen by a selection committee comprised of Lincoln Forum members Tom Mackie, Paul Ellis-Graham, and Tom Horrocks, serving as chair.

Ms. Benun, the second scholarship winner from Lincoln High School in Lincoln, Rhode Island, found the experience of attending her first Lincoln Forum “incredibly educational” as well as “welcoming and friendly.” She was especially struck by the quality of the presentations and the genuine interest attendees took in her views on Lincoln and the Civil War and in her future academic plans. Accompanied by her mother, Ms. Benun took advantage of her time in Gettysburg to tour the historic battlefield.

Austin Justice also used his free time during the Forum to explore the Gettysburg battlefield with his father. Like Emma Benun, Mr. Justice found the Forum experience truly remarkable. As he stated afterwards, it was not only “welcoming” but “academically & personally enthralling.” Impressed by the scholarly discourse along with the open and friendly atmosphere of the Forum proceedings, he urges students with a genuine passion for the past “to get involved with the Forum.”

At nine years old, Asmithaa Vinukonda is the youngest Lincoln Forum scholarship winner since the program was established four years ago. While she was unable to stay for the duration of the meeting due to a rigorous examination schedule, she did attend the opening banquet and part of the first day sessions. Accompanied by her proud parents, Ms. Vinukonda was excited to hear and meet several leading Lincoln and Civil War scholars. For her, the experience of attending the Lincoln Forum was “an inspiration for me to learn more about President Lincoln and Civil War history.”

This is the fourth year of The Lincoln Forum’s Student Scholarship program. The program recognizes outstanding elementary and high school students who have demonstrated

academic excellence as well as an avid interest in the life and career of Abraham Lincoln and in the Civil War. The scholarships enable the winners to attend Lincoln Forum meetings by covering registration, travel, and accommodation expenses. The year 2015 was the first in which three student scholarships were awarded. The Lincoln Forum would like to increase this number on an annual basis so that deserving students like Emma Benun, Austin Justice, and Asmithaa Vinukonda can take part in The Lincoln Forum experience. Lincoln Forum members can help make this happen. Please consider making a financial gift to The Lincoln Forum to strengthen this worthy program.



**Frank J. Williams, Austin R. Justice, Harold Holzer, Asmithaa Vinukonda & Tom Horrocks (Henry F. Ballone)**

The deadline for this year’s Lincoln Forum Student Scholarship program is July 31, 2016. Winners will attend The Lincoln Forum, which will be held in Gettysburg, on November 16-18, 2016. 📌

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## JAMES CONROY, “JACK” DAVIS NAMED MOST POPULAR SPEAKERS AT LINCOLN FORUM XX

First-time speaker James Conroy, who lectured with humor and conviction on the Hampton Roads Peace Conference—and frequent attraction William C. “Jack” Davis, who eloquently compared the characters and command styles of Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee—were named the first- and second-most popular speakers at Lincoln Forum XX, with their audience ratings separated by only a tenth of a percentage point (9.8 for Conroy, 9.7 for Davis). The third-highest approval rating went to Terry Alford (9.1) for his discussion of Lincoln’s assassin, John Wilkes Booth.

As always, the Wyndham Hotel service and food (“great,” “wonderful”) earned 9+ ratings, while attendees reported traveling from as close as Gettysburg itself to as far away as California (2,767 miles). By wide majorities, most attendees approved the panel discussions, field trips, and other activities, and gave sterling marks to lecturers Elizabeth Varon, Michael Vorenberg, Richard Wightman Fox, and James Swanson.

Attendee comments were heartening: “I can not express my gratitude to the Lincoln Forum. Thank you so much!” “Excellent job...you make us feel like we have come home.” “The Forum gets better every year. Keep up the great work. All of these members have become family.” “As always, the Lincoln Forum is a highlight of the year. Not only do you learn something new, but you get to see old friends.”

“My first Forum was excellent. Informative and stimulating. I will definitely be attending next year.” “Appreciate the care that Virginia Williams takes to welcome others.” “I am a first- [time attendee and loved it. Felt included.” “Thank—first-time and enjoyed and learned. Friendliness of all participants and presenters. Loved book sale and vendors.” “In 11 years I have spent 33 days at the Lincoln Forum. I can’t think of a better way to have spent a month of my life.” “Another great year. My thanks to all who made it possible.”

As always, Forum leadership is pledged to continue its work to make the Forum a perfect “10.” 📌

# RICHARD NELSON CURRENT AWARDS, 2015: A SINGLE, MEMORABLE NIGHT WITH THREE SURPRISES

## Davis, Steers, and Holzer all honored at Forum XX Banquet

Prolific historian and biographer William C. (“Jack”) Davis, premier Lincoln assassination scholar Edward Steers Jr., and founding vice chair and Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer each won prestigious Richard Nelson Current Awards at the 20<sup>th</sup> annual symposium of the Lincoln Forum at Gettysburg. The annual award, named for the dean of Lincoln scholars, who died at age 100 in 2012, is the 1,100-member national organization’s highest honor—and at Forum XX, the awards came as a surprise, to the audience as well as the honorees.

The presentations were made at the closing banquet of the Forum’s latest three-day symposium at the Wyndham Gettysburg. The founding chairman, former Rhode Island Chief Justice Frank J. Williams, announced the award for Davis. Vice Chairman Harold Holzer made the presentation to Steers. Then Judge Williams announced a surprise special Current Award to Holzer, who a decade earlier had presented a similar honorary Current Award to the Chairman. All the awards come in the form of the statuette, *Freedom River*, by Decatur, Illinois sculptor John McClarey, himself a former Current Award honoree. More than 300 enrollees and scholar-presenters attended the banquet.

## William C. Davis

In his presentation comments, Williams called Jack Davis “a major historian whose life and work have been characterized by insightfulness, intelligence, humor, and loyalty.” Davis, who recently retired as a professor of history at Virginia Tech, is the author of some 60 books, including the 1999 volume Williams cited as “my particular favorite,” *Lincoln’s Men: How President Lincoln Became Father to an Army and a Nation*. Davis’s *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* is widely acknowledged as the definitive biography of the Confederate president, and his *A Government of Our Own: The Making of the Confederacy* is regarded as the most important history of the Confederate States of America. Davis’s many other books include studies of John C. Breckinridge, the Alamo, and a shelf of volumes on Civil War photography. His most recent book is the acclaimed dual biography, *Crucible of Command: Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee—the War They Fought and the Peace They Forged*. Davis was a featured speaker at Lincoln Forum XX, winning a standing ovation for a talk, based on his new book, about the personalities of the Civil War’s two most important military commanders.

## Edward Steers Jr.

In the citation to Steers, Holzer asserted that the 2015 sesquicentennial of the Lincoln assassination presented “the perfect moment to honor the meticulous and authoritative scholar who is not afraid to make his case with assurance, and not reluctant to subject his work to the test of time.” Steers is the author of *Blood on the Moon: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln*, still the reigning study of the conspiracy after 14 years in print. His other works include *His Name is Still Mudd: The Case Against Dr. Samuel Alexander Mudd* and the recent *Lincoln Legends: Myths, Hoaxes and Confabulations*. Steers, who was trained as a molecular biologist, has also edited two essential reference works, *The Trial* and *The Lincoln Assassination: The Evidence*, and appeared widely on network television in his role as national authority on the Lincoln murder. Holzer noted that in all his efforts, Steers had “brought a forensic approach to his work” and “served as a beacon for new generations of assassination scholars and students.”

## Harold Holzer

Holzer, who earned an honorary Current Award, has served alongside Judge Williams for the entire history of the Forum. He is also the author, coauthor, or editor of 51 books on Lincoln and the Civil War, serving as co-editor of all five books of essays produced by the Forum itself. His most recent work, *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, won the 2015 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize and five additional book prizes.

## Current Award Laureates

Davis, Steers, and Holzer joined a distinguished roster of previous winners: Gabor Boritt (1996); Brian Lamb (1997); John Hope Franklin (1998); Senator Paul Simon (1999); David Herbert Donald (2000); Garry Wills (2001); James M. McPherson and Richard Nelson Current (honorary award) (2002); Sam Waterston (2003); John Y. Simon (2004); John McClarey and Frank J. Williams (honorary award) (2005); Doris Kearns Goodwin (2006); Jeff Shaara (2007); Ken Burns (2008); Hon. Sandra Day O’Connor (2009); Mark E. Neely, Jr. (2010); Ed Bearss (2011); Eric Foner (2012); Tony Kushner (2013); and James Getty (2014). ■

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## THE LINCOLN FORUM 2015 TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

*continued from page 8* the sesquicentennial of *The Gettysburg Address*, a contest focused on Lincoln’s *Second Inaugural Address*, as well as a day of remembrance on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lincoln’s death. As a scholarship recipient, Mr. Perreault said, “I have already used information from the Forum to create a lesson based on the art and images of the Lincoln death scene in the Petersen House. A great deal of the information and images I used for this instruction is discussed in the excellent book, ‘*The Lincoln Assassination*’ by Harold Holzer, Frank Williams, and Craig Symonds.”

As a Lifetime Member, he plans on attending the Lincoln Forum for many years to come.

The Lincoln Forum continues to develop opportunities and resources for educators. Please consider making a tax-deductible financial gift to the Forum to support scholarship opportunities. If you or a friend/colleague is interested in applying for a Lincoln Forum Teacher Scholarship, please refer to The Lincoln Forum website at [www.thelincolnforum.org](http://www.thelincolnforum.org). Applications should be directed to Ruth Squillace, Coordinator, by June 30, 2016. ■

# FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES HAVE NEW FORUM WELCOME GROUP

By Ron Robinson

During the 2014 Lincoln Forum Symposium a discussion was held among several volunteers to pursue the development of a "First Time Attendee's" program for the 2015 Symposium. The goal was to warmly welcome and assist first time attendees (FTA's), introduce them to each other and to long-time members of The Lincoln Forum family. Another goal was to provide introductions to the Board of Advisors and in general make their first attendance at the Symposium pleasant and enjoyable. Over the course of the year between symposiums work was done to develop the program by an informal committee. By fall of 2015 the program was completed by a formal committee and approved by the Executive Committee of the Board of Advisors.

At the 2015 Symposium the FTA Committee welcomed 20 new attendees plus teacher and scholarship winners who were attending their first Lincoln Forum Symposium. The 20 FTA's represented 11 states. The professions represented varied from teachers, to retirees, to individuals in the field of Lincoln and Civil War studies.

A week before the Symposium all FTA's received an email and a copy of the FTA program to officially welcome them before arrival. In Gettysburg the FTA's were greeted at registration by members of the FTA Committee and introductions made to others who were gathering informally in the registration area. At registration the FTA received a

green ribbon for attachment to the registration badge so others could readily identify them.

In the late afternoon after registration an informal reception and welcome hosted by the FTA Committee was held in the Presidential suite of the Wyndham hotel. The welcome was provided by Frank Williams, Harold Holzer and other members of the Board of Advisors. At the cash bar reception before the opening dinner, members of the Committee met the FTA's and provided introductions to other registrants and assisted in locating them at various tables for dinner.

At the opening dinner following the cash bar Chairman Williams asked the FTA's to stand as a group and be recognized. Throughout the Symposium both FTA's and regular attendees were complimentary of the program. Several positive comments were received on the evaluation form filled out at the end of the Symposium.

The FTA Committee has begun planning for the 2016 Symposium. The program will be similar to the inaugural program. An addition for 2016 will be a brief questionnaire for FTA's to be filled out at registration that will help in planning future Symposiums.

Members of the FTA Committee for 2016 are Virginia and Bob Douglas, Sara and Skip Bellino, Rebecca Morris, Tee Tee Chevery, Jim Santagata, Virginia Williams, and Ron Robinson Chairman. Soon to be added will be an FTA from a recent Symposium.....and of course other volunteers are welcome. For further information about the program please email Ron at ronrob41@geusnet.com. 📧

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## FORUM XXI TO FEATURE NEW BOOKS, OLD FAVORITES EXPLORING LINCOLN'S LIFE AND LEGACY

continued from page 1

Forum Chairman Williams and Vice Chairman Harold Holzer will return with new lectures as well. Williams (*Lincoln as Hero*) will lecture this year on "Reconstruction and Lincoln," and also lead a panel discussion on "Voting Rights for Freedmen: What Went Right and What Went Wrong?" to include Howard University Professor Edna Greene Medford, Professor Joan Waugh, and Le Moyne College history professor Douglas R. Egerton, author of the recent book *The Wars of Reconstruction: The Brief, Violent History of America's Most Progressive Era*.



**Richard Brookhiser**  
(Henry F. Ballone)

Holzer, winner of the 2015 Lincoln Prize for *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, will speak about "Lincoln and The Uncivil Wars On Immigration." Holzer will also moderate a panel discussion on "Who Inspired Lincoln," an exploration of the heroes and ideas that animated and motivated the future president, with panelists Ronald White, Sidney Blumenthal, and Richard Brookhiser.

The 2016 Forum will also feature breakout sessions with participating historians, a group book-signing, three dinners, two breakfasts, and two lunches, attendance by teacher

and student scholars, plus the presentation of the Forum's two coveted annual awards: The Richard Nelson Current Award of Achievement, and the Wendy Allen Award for Institutional Excellence. Lincoln enactor George Buss returns in full character to offer highlights from Lincoln's first and final public addresses. Professor Edna Greene Medford and author Guy C. Fraker will be among the session moderators.

Historic-site tours this year will take visitors to the George Spangler Farm on the Gettysburg battlefield (one of the most intact surviving hospital sites that served the wounded during the Battle of Gettysburg), and to the recently opened Gettysburg Heritage Center. Once again, Chairman Williams and the Wyndham's Executive Chef Claude Rodier will offer cooking lessons from "the Chief and the Chef."



**Ron White**  
(Henry F. Ballone)



**Joan Waugh**  
(Henry F. Ballone)

Sign up now. Space is limited to the first 300 enrollees and with a roster full of in-demand favorite sons and daughters and a roster of exciting new visitors, Forum XXI is expected to prove especially popular.

This year's bonus: the day after the Forum, Saturday November 19, will be Gettysburg Remembrance Day, complete with parade, cemetery speaker, and a Fortenbaugh Lecture by the 2016 Lincoln Prize winner (and breakout session guest at Forum XX, Professor Martha Hodes (*Mourning Lincoln*). 📧

## IN MEMORIAM: JERRY DESKO

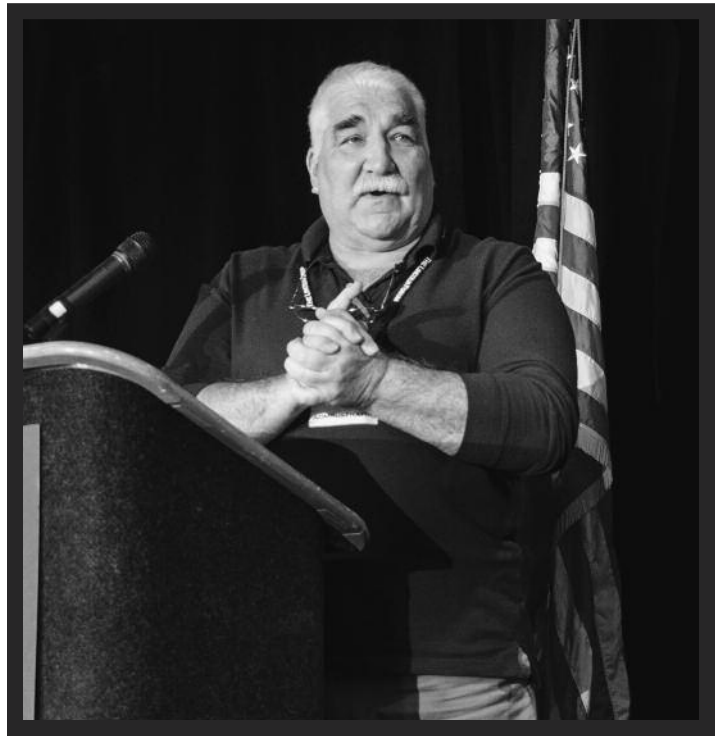
With much sorrow, the organization must report that, after another year of hard work and ever-present collegiality, the Lincoln Forum's tireless co-administrator, Gerald John "Jerry" Desko died suddenly at his home near Gettysburg. The leadership and membership of the organization expressed its heartfelt condolences to Jerry's widow Kathi, and their son Jerry Jr. We continue to miss him as we search for ways to fill the void he has left. For Bulletin readers who missed the official obituary as it appeared in both Gettysburg and Binghamton, NY papers, the Forum reprints it in part below.

"Gerald John Desko, Orrtanna, PA, born 9 April, 1954 at Ideal Hospital in Endicott, NY, the third son of the late John and Margaret (Shelepak) Desko, died at home 19 December 2015, of congestive heart failure. He was a 1972 graduate of Endicott High School and in 1976, the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, in Syracuse, NY. While attending the College's summer session in Warrensburg, NY he met his wife of 37 years, Kathleen Lucci Desko, who survives him. Jerry was a retired New York State Environmental Conservation Officer who served for over 27 years, the last five years as a lieutenant. During his tenure he was a well-regarded instructor of Fish Identification, Firearms, Impaired Driver Recognition, and Impaired Boater Recognition. He loved his time on the job, whether checking hunters in the field, boat patrol on Lake Ontario or Lake Champlain, snowmobile patrol, or search and rescue. Growing tomatoes and other vegetables and especially garlic, was important to him. An NRA member, he loved to fish and hunt and to spend a week with family at Fair Haven Beach State Park in New York in the summer. In the last five years he was fortunate enough to take four tours in Europe, the greatest highlight of them all standing on Omaha Beach in Normandy, France, where he felt truly in awe of what the Allied soldiers had done there."

Of course Jerry was also an important part of the Forum for the past few years, working alongside Betty Anselmo in the

unheralded but crucial undertaking of preparing materials for symposium attendees. The task required patience, strength, humor, and friendliness, and Jerry had all those qualities in abundance.

Those who encountered Jerry alongside Betty and Virginia Williams as they signed up for recent Forum symposia will never forget his friendly greetings, his willingness to guide and welcome arrivals, and his presence at every symposium session. He will be greatly missed by his grieving Forum friends. 📌



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## NEW ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR: PAT DOUGAL



The Forum is pleased to announce that longtime member and newly relocated Pennsylvania resident Patricia ("Pat") Dougal has assumed the role of Assistant Administrator, working alongside Betty Anselmo.

Baltimore native Pat, a graduate of the University of Maryland, served 20 years in the Navy Nurse Corps, where her tours included a stint on a hospital ship during the Vietnam War. Since retiring with the rank of Commander, Pat has been a health services consultant and a docent at Robert Todd Lincoln's "Hildene," where she first met Frank and Virginia Williams—who immediately recruited her as a Forum member.

Symposium attendees will recognize the tall, elegant Pat as the woman who wears the ivory, Civil War period gown on closing night. Now Pat is rolling up her sleeves to work the Gettysburg ground game for the Forum. She and her husband Bob live in Fayetteville, PA.

The leadership asks you to welcome Pat to the administrative team. 📌

The Lincoln Forum Bulletin welcomes contributions from members and historians—articles and photos alike. Send to editor Harold Holzer at [hh433@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:hh433@hunter.cuny.edu). The editor particularly thanks the contributors to the current issue.

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