



## ABRAHAM LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL FOUNDATION

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### **ABRAHAM LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL FOUNDATION EXPANDS BOARD, ANNOUNCES INITIAL GRANTS, AND ISSUES CALL FOR NEW PROPOSALS**

#### **Actor Stephen Lang to Read Lincoln's Words at Opening Event**

(WASHINGTON, D. C., FEBRUARY 10, 2011)—The 10-member Board of Directors of the new Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation (ALBF) officially announced today its expanded membership and broadened mission. The ALBF is the official successor organization of the Congressionally-created Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, and its new roster of Board members includes veterans of the original Commission, Lincoln scholars, and history enthusiasts from around the country, all sharing a commitment to supporting the further study of America's 16<sup>th</sup> president.

The Foundation concurrently released news today of its first-ever round of sponsorships. These initial grants will be directed to commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of major 2011 Lincoln-related events in Washington, D.C., and helping to guarantee continued public access to an endangered Lincoln historic site in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Finally, the Foundation issued a national call for new proposals for funding and sponsorship aimed at keeping Abraham Lincoln a major focus of the nation's forthcoming observances of the Civil War Sesquicentennial.

Following a Foundation board meeting, these announcements were made at an opening reception for the ALBF this evening, at Washington's Willard InterContinental Hotel, where Lincoln stayed for the 11 days before his inauguration in 1861. The event was highlighted by a performance of Lincoln speeches by acclaimed actor Stephen Lang. The events coincide with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lincoln's inaugural journey to Washington.

The Foundation is committed to initiating and supporting innovative, historically sound, and publicly engaging national, state, and community efforts to commemorate the memory and sustain the ideals of Abraham Lincoln, particularly during the upcoming five-year observances of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War. Building on the former Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission's original focus on early education, professional scholarship, online access, publications, and public programs, the Foundation will offer support, sponsorship, expertise, and encouragement to non-profit initiatives devoted to sharing knowledge, preserving historic sites and artifacts, and engaging diverse audiences publicly and through the worldwide web on such Lincoln-focused subjects as leadership, innovation, freedom, equality, and opportunity.

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Commented Harold Holzer, newly elected chairman of the Foundation: “The relevance of Lincoln’s ideals, ideas, and accomplishments did not fade with the official bicentennial of his birth in 2009. Now that North and South—the regions he fought to preserve as one inseparable Union—are engaged in commemorating the Civil War sesquicentennial, the Foundation will work to keep Lincoln very much at the center of all observances. And it will encourage integrity and reality in Civil War commemoration, working to make sure 21<sup>st</sup>-century Americans do not forget the struggles for freedom that Lincoln led in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Abraham Lincoln remains the one former president who continues to inspire all modern presidents, and the writer-orator who sanctified American doctrine on democracy, freedom, and opportunity. My colleagues and I will consider support for any organization that creates programming to educate, enlighten, and involve broad public audiences on these ever-compelling subjects. Our goal is to encourage efforts to use the sometimes painful lessons of the American past to inform the vast possibilities of the American future.”

Holzer served from 2001-2010 as co-chairman (with Senator Dick Durbin and then-Congressman Ray La Hood) of the original Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, which sunset in August 2010.

The other members of the new ALBF Board are: historian Orville Vernon Burton (Vice Chairman), attorney and historian Thomas Campbell (Treasurer), attorney and former mayor Charles Scholz (Secretary), historian Darrel Bigham, publisher and community leader David Lawrence Jr., historian Edna Greene Medford, pioneering news anchor Antonio Mora, historian and philanthropist Jean Powers Soman, and historian and retired jurist Frank J. Williams. (For full biographies see attachment.)

The ALBF held its quarterly meeting this afternoon at the Willard, then announced its official mission and a call for new proposals at a welcoming reception at the historic hotel. Stephen Lang, co-star of *Gettysburg* (as General George E. Pickett), *Gods and Generals* (“Stonewall” Jackson), and the 2009 blockbuster *Avatar*, performed Lincoln’s February 11, 1861 Farewell Address to Springfield as well as the President-elect’s welcome address to the citizens of Washington on his arrival for his inauguration 150 years ago this month. Mr. Lang has long been devoted to Civil War history and preservation, and has given voice to many of the war’s battles and leaders, including its Medal of Honor winners, in stage programs across the country. Most recently, he has narrated historian Gabor Boritt’s audio guide to the Gettysburg battlefield. The New York-born stage and screen actor is currently filming the Steven Spielberg-produced TV drama *Terra Nova*.

The Foundation also announced that it had committed in its initial round of funding to co-sponsor and provide financial support for two planned Washington-based activities and one Lincoln-related historic site in Pennsylvania.

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- An all-day 150<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the National Peace Conference at the Willard (February 1861), the last major effort to reverse secession and civil war. Funding for “The Peace Convention at 150: A Call to Compromise” at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel, Washington, will help support an all-day scholarly symposium, the creation and installation of a commemorative plaque, and performance of Lincoln’s speeches by actor Stephen Lang. The project was initiated and is organized by the Lincoln at the Crossroads Alliance. (Local Contact: Maria Elena Schacknies, meschackjnies@latcra.org)
- Conditional support and co-sponsorship of a 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lincoln’s First Inauguration (March 4, 1861), scheduled for Saturday, March 5, 2011, with a ceremony and re-enactment at the U. S. Capitol Visitors Center in Washington, and a luncheon program and historians’ remarks at the Willard Hotel. The event was initiated and will be organized by the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia. (Local Contact: John Eliff, jteliff@aol.com)
- Support to help staff and maintain for one year the Historic Gettysburg Railroad Station, the landmark depot still standing along the tracks where Lincoln arrived on November 18, 1863 to deliver his most famous speech. Scheduled to be acquired by the National Park Service, the building became a visitor destination in 2007, but was threatened with a shutdown pending NPS takeover. (Local Contact: Tina Grim, Civil War Institute, Gettysburg College, tgrim@gettysburg.edu)

Beginning today, the ALBF website ([www.abrahamlincoln200.org](http://www.abrahamlincoln200.org)), a re-activated and revised version (in progress) of the Commission’s original site, will post online all requirements and details for the submission of future proposals. The Foundation is committed to continuing to work to upgrade the website in the months to come.

Tomorrow, February 11, Foundation board members will participate in the organization’s first endorsed and sponsored activity: The Willard Hotel symposium commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Peace Convention, which took place at the hotel in February 1861. The convention was the last, albeit unsuccessful effort to find a compromise that its organizers hoped would stem the secession crisis and prevent outright civil war.

Among the speakers at the February 11 conference are Virginia Tech history professors James I. (Bud) Robertson and William C. (Jack) Davis, both acclaimed Civil War scholars, along with historians (and members of the ALBF Board) Frank J. Williams, Edna Greene Medford, and Harold Holzer. Stephen Lang will perform Lincoln’s First Inaugural Address. The symposium will be followed by the unveiling of a plaque on the Willard façade commemorating the doomed Peace Convention and marking its sesquicentennial.

(Fact Sheet on the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation and biographies of its Directors are attached.)

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## ABRAHAM LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL FOUNDATION

### FACT SHEET

#### MISSION

The newly reconstituted Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation is the official successor organization of the U. S. Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (ALBC), which was created by Congress and the President of the United States to plan the commemoration of Abraham Lincoln's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2009.\*

The Foundation is newly committed to initiating and supporting innovative and historically meaningful national, state, and local programs that commemorate the memory and sustain the ideals and historic impact of America's sixteenth president, particularly during the current, five-year observances of the Civil War sesquicentennial. Building on the ALBC's original focus on early education, professional scholarship, online access, publications, public programs, and community-based programming, the Foundation will offer support, sponsorship, expertise, and encouragement to non-profit initiatives devoted to sharing knowledge, preserving historic sites and artifacts, and engaging diverse audiences on the subjects of leadership, freedom, equality, and opportunity.

#### HISTORY

During its nine years of active existence, the ALBC created a foundation to raise private funding to support its events, publications, educational outreach, and website activities. Former U. S. Congressmen Bill Gray and the late Jack Kemp served as the original chairmen of the Foundation, and steered it toward future independence. In the period immediately preceding and following the sunset of the ALBC in the summer of 2010, historians Jean Soman of Florida and Orville Vernon Burton of South Carolina, respectively, served as interim chairs of the Foundation.

In 2009 and 2010, the Foundation officially reconstituted itself, electing an expanded Board and a new chairman, historian Harold Holzer of New York. The Foundation officially announced its existence and mission on February 10, 2011, at an official introductory event at the Willard in Washington, the hotel where Abraham Lincoln and his family resided in the ten days immediately preceding his inauguration as President exactly 150 years earlier in 1861.

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## FOUNDATION BOARD

**Harold Holzer**, Rye, NY, Chairman, former co-chair (with Senator Dick Durbin and Rep. Ray La Hood) of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission; author, co-author, or editor of 37 books and more than 450 articles about Lincoln and political culture of the Civil War; among other honors, awarded the National Humanities Medal by President of the U. S. in 2008; senior vice president for external affairs, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

**Dr. Darrel Bigham**, Evansville, IN, is professor of history emeritus and Director of Historic Southern Indiana emeritus at the University of Southern Indiana; former member of the ALBC (chair, education committee) and Lincoln States Bicentennial Task Force; scholar of Civil War, race, ethnicity, and urban development in the Midwest; has served as founder and president of Vanderburgh Co. Historical Society.

**Dr. Orville Vernon Burton**, Ninety Six, SC, former interim ALBF chairman, currently Vice Chairman; award-winning author and teacher; emeritus University Distinguished Teacher/Scholar and Professor of History, African-American Studies, and Sociology, University of Illinois; currently Professor of History and Director, Clemson University Cyberinstitute; also president elect, Southern Historical Association.

**Thomas Campbell**, Chicago, IL, senior counsel at Chicago office of Baker & McKenzie law firm; noted litigator and appeals lawyer specializing in antitrust actions, mergers, and defending businesses before Federal Trade Commission and other authorities; historian of Chicago abolitionist movement; author of book on antebellum Chicago; lecturer and writer on antitrust legal issues and developments; serves as Treasurer of ALBF.

**David Lawrence Jr.**, Coral Gables, FL, retired publisher of the *Miami Herald*, is President of the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation, and University Scholar for Early Childhood Development and Readiness at the University of Florida; member, governor's children's cabinet, board of several childhood development organizations; former publisher of *Detroit Free Press*, and editor of *Charlotte Observer*.

**Dr. Edna Greene Medford**, Bowie, MD, professor of history and chair of the history department at Howard University in Washington; former advisor to the Lincoln Presidential Library; leading authority on African-American and U.S. 19<sup>th</sup>-century history; pioneer leader of the African Burial Grounds project, advisor to the ALBC, author of several books and well-known lecturer, winner "Order of Lincoln," 2009.

**Antonio Mora**, Miami, FL, evening and late-night news anchor for CBS4 in Miami; appeared previously on ABC'S *Good Morning America* and *World News Tonight*, and CBS affiliate in Chicago, the first Hispanic-American to hold main anchor post there; earlier news posts in Los Angeles and on Univision, Telemundo, and ESPN; graduate of Harvard Law School, his many honors include two Peabody awards and several Emmys.

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*Charles Scholz*, Quincy, IL, ALBF Secretary, is the former mayor of Quincy (1993-2005) and currently practices law in his hometown with the firm of Scholz & Scholz LLP; previously served as Illinois Assistant Attorney General, and as downstate political director for late U. S. Senator Paul Simon; chaired the Lincoln Bicentennial at Quincy (a Lincoln-Douglas debate site); previously served on the ALBC advisory board.

*Jean Powers Soman*, Pinecrest, FL, author/editor; direct descendant of Jewish Union Col. Marcus Spiegel, has researched and written on his life; also researching great-grandfather Samuel Alschuler, photographer of Lincoln; served on ALBC advisory board and was Interim Chair of ALBF; fellow of Historical Museum of South Florida, member of EZRA consortium of American Jewish Archives, advisory board of Jewish Museum of Florida.

*Hon. Frank J. Williams*, Hope Valley, RI, former member of the ALBC, founding chairman of The Lincoln Forum, former President of the Abraham Lincoln Association and the Lincoln Group of Boston; currently serves as President of the Ulysses S. Grant Association; leading Lincoln collector, lecturer, editor, writer, author of more than a dozen books on Lincoln; retired Chief Justice of Rhode Island Supreme Court.

## **APPLYING FOR SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT**

The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation has issued a call for further requests for support, sponsorship, and endorsement, and announced that it would consider such proposals at its regularly scheduled quarterly meetings.

Accredited not-for-profit organizations and societies are encouraged to seek support and sponsorship from the ALBF for relevant projects and events. All requests that meet the spirit of the Foundation mission will be seriously and respectfully considered. For further information, check “How to Apply for Support” on [www.abrahamlincoln200.org](http://www.abrahamlincoln200.org), or contact Harold Holzer, chairman, at [haroldholzer@haroldholzer.com](mailto:haroldholzer@haroldholzer.com).

\* The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission sunset on April 30, 2010. For its final report, along with the initial online reports from the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation, visit: [www.abrahamlincoln200.org](http://www.abrahamlincoln200.org)