# **Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation to Fund New Round of Programs Nationwide; Prof. James McPherson, 2014 Keynoter at Annual Symposium, Wins First ALBF Award (February 20, 2014)**

(New York, February 20)—In its latest round of grants, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation (ALBF) has authorized funding to support programs and projects in some of the key cities associated with the 16th President’s life and accomplishments: Springfield, Illinois, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D. C. Rounding out the list of new grant recipients is an education-based, community freedom celebration in Philadelphia.

All the awards were approved January 26 at a Board Meeting of the Foundation, which followed its annual co-sponsorship of a public Lincoln symposium at HistoryMiami in Florida. This year’s program at HistoryMiami, attended by 300 participants, featured a keynote address by historian James M. McPherson, followed by a panel discussion on Lincoln and the Constitution, moderated by ALBF Chairman Harold Holzer and featuring ALBF board members Thomas Campbell and Frank J. Williams, along with Florida School of Law Professors Ediberto Román and Noah Weisbord. At the HistoryMiami event, Professor McPherson, the nation’s leading Civil War historian, was presented with the first Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation Award of achievement for his signal contributions to the public understanding of Lincoln, the war for the union, and the battle for freedom. The award is in the form of a mounted bas-relief bronze plaque of Lincoln, based on an 1863 photograph, and created especially for the Foundation by Winchester, Virginia sculptor Michael Strawderman.

The Foundation’s latest grants are: $25,000 to support continued research by the Lincoln Papers Project in Springfield, Illinois, an effort to collect and publish online Abraham Lincoln’s complete writings and incoming correspondence; $2,500 to help fund a summer 2014 lecture series and curriculum workshop for Illinois K-12 teachers on Lincoln, slavery, and emancipation at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, also in Springfield; $10,000 to support the long-needed rehabilitation and restoration of the century-old Gettysburg Address Memorial at the Soldiers’ National Cemetery near the spot where Lincoln gave his most famous speech in 1863; $5,000 to help underwrite a web-based course in anti-slavery legislation at President Lincoln’s Cottage at the Soldiers’ Home in Washington; and $1,000 to the Images of the Motherland Interactive Theatre in Philadelphia to support its latest Emancipation Proclamation Jubilee Weekend.

Honoree James McPherson, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his 1988 work, Battle Cry of Freedom, spoke to the symposium on the subject of “1864”—focusing on the political and military perils that shook the country 150 years ago, including Lincoln’s renewed efforts to end the rebellion and secure a second term as president. The “constitution” panel included explorations of Lincoln’s controversial actions to suspend the writ of habeas corpus, impose a military blockade on southern ports, call out the militia without Congressional authorization, and conduct military arrests and tribunals while the rebellion raged. Both parts of the program were followed by audience question-and-answer sessions.

Commented Chairman Holzer: “It is altogether fitting and proper that in this last full year of the Civil War sesquicentennial, the Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation continues to look to the future as well as to honor past accomplishments. In offering support for vital research, teacher education, adult education, and community celebration and participation, we hope to spur interest in Lincoln well into the 21st Century. and in celebrating Jim McPherson we acknowledge his enormous contributions to spurring public interest in this subject—in short, for sounding a ‘Battle Cry’ that has helped spur a golden age in Civil War and Lincoln scholarship. We are particularly honored to honor this iconic scholar with an award befitting both the recipient and the great American about whom he has written so brilliantly—in short a wonderful work of art in its own right.”

Sculptor Michael Strawderman has been producing bas-relief sculpture since 1989. Self-taught, his early work as a foundry artist allowed him several years to hone his sculpting skills in clay and wax. His commissions include more than 50 portraits of Medal of Honor recipients who served in the U. S. Air Force—including Eddie Rickenbacker and James Doolittle. This suite of portraits is displayed at the Airmen’s Heritage Park at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio.

This year’s HistoryMiami event was followed by a public reception sponsored through the extraordinary generosity of ALBF Board Member Jean Soman and her husband William, who also underwrote additional aspects of the program. The Foundation is planning another public symposium at HistoryMiami in 2015.

Members of the ALBF Board are Mr. Holzer (Chairman) of New York, Orville Vernon Burton (vice chairman) of South Carolina, Charles Scholz (secretary) of Illinois, Thomas Campbell (treasurer) of Illinois, Darrel Bigham of Indiana , David Lawrence of Florida, Edna Greene Medford of Maryland, Antonio Mora of Florida, Jean Powers Soman of Florida, and Hon. Frank J. Williams of Rhode Island.