

The Lincoln Bicentennial, 2009

By Act of Congress and Proclamation by the President — a grateful nation prepared to observe the 200th anniversary of the birth of its most revered president.

The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial in 2009 was a year-long, nation-wide celebration with events and projects scheduled across America, many of them in Illinois — the Land of Lincoln.

Lincoln's birthday week in Illinois began on Saturday evening, February 7, 2009, with the Bicentennial Ceremonies of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois, at which a special Bicentennial Edition of The Order of Lincoln — the state's highest award — was conferred upon:

distinguished citizens of the world who have in lasting and significant ways preserved the memory of Abraham Lincoln — contributing to Lincoln's defining influence on the American Spirit.

Some of the Bicentennial Laureates were recognized for a single accomplishment — such as a powerful work of art or a particularly significant production or publication — and others were recognized for a lifetime of work to preserve and enhance the memory of Abraham Lincoln.

Among those honored were scholars, authors, artists, actors, composers, historians, teachers, collectors, curators and others who have honored Lincoln's memory. Although the names of many of them were readily familiar, the Academy also hopes to recognize some of the unsung heroes of the Lincoln canon.

The nomination process for the Bicentennial Edition of the Order of Lincoln was completed, and a panel of judges selected the Bicentennial Laureates from among nearly 100 nominees, for approval by the Academy at its meeting in April of 2008.

The Bicentennial Ceremonies of The Lincoln Academy were held in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois, on Saturday evening, February 7, 2009. The Bicentennial Laureates were also the guests of honor earlier that day at a luncheon in the historic Governor's Mansion near Lincoln's home in Springfield.

By honoring those who have honored Lincoln, The Academy hoped to encourage a new generation of Americans to carry on the important work of preserving and enhancing the memory of Abraham Lincoln — in response to Vachel Lindsay's timeless admonition,

Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all.