



The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

One Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield, Illinois 62701

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 8337
Champaign, IL 61826

Telephone: 217-493-0047
www.LincolnAcademyIllinois.org

*Honoring the great citizens of today
Celebrating the great citizens for tomorrow*

October 6, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Leanne Barnhart (217) 493-0047

Student Laureates to be honored October 18 in Chicago by The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

CHICAGO – The top students representing Illinois' colleges and universities will be honored during special ceremony hosted by The Lincoln Academy of Illinois at 2 p.m. Saturday, October 18 at the David Rubinstein Forum on the campus of the University of Chicago, 1201 E. 60th Street.

The 51st annual Lincoln Academy Student Laureate program will recognize excellence in curricular and extracurricular activities by seniors from each of the state's four-year, degree-granting colleges and universities.

The program will include welcoming remarks by Todd Shapiro, the Academy Chancellor. Each Student Laureate will receive the Abraham Lincoln Civic Engagement Award, a Lincoln medallion, a challenge coin, and a \$1,000 check from The Lincoln Academy. Student Laureates are selected by their individual schools. Those to be honored as Class of 2025 Student Laureates include:

Institution, Student Laureate, Home Town

Augustana College, Ian Max Empen, Rock Island, IL
Aurora University, Diane Elaine Fuentes, Aurora, IL
Benedictine University, Daleigh Ann Johnson-Pawlak, Lemont, IL
Blackburn College, Peyton Dahler, Carlinville, IL
Bradley University, Joseph Kenneth Traskaski, Vernon Hills, IL
Chicago State University, Allison Bolden, Chicago, IL
Columbia College Chicago, Jenna Rose Davis, New Lenox, IL
Concordia University Chicago, Lillian Frances Seifferlein, Landisville, PA
DePaul University, Natasha Jean Johannes, St. Louis Park, MN
Dominican University, Jocelyn Ramirez, Chicago, IL
Eastern Illinois University, Alexander Morris Wilcoxon, Greenview, IL

East-West University, Yaquelin Martinez, Evanston, IL
 Elmhurst University, Mateo Gomez Bedoya, Addison, IL
 Eureka College, Kateland Diana Dearing Williams, Queek Creek, AZ
 Governors State University, Jonathan LaSean Cooper, Hazel Crest, IL
 Greenville University, Norah Rae Swinigan Atkins, Lake St. Louis, MO
 Illinois College, Emily Guest, Nashville, IL
 Illinois Institute of Technology, Genna Gaitan, Brighton, MI
 Illinois State University, Kruz Barrera, Blue Island, IL
 Illinois Wesleyan University, Valeria Suarez, Puerto Ordaz, Bolivar, Venezuela
 Judson University, Hana Marie Cunningham, Terre Haute, IN
 Knox College, Zoe Araceli Pav, St. Petersburg, FL
 Lake Forest College, Emilia Guilhermina de Paula Fonseca, Contaguases Minas Gerais, Brazil
 Lewis University, Aletheia Johnson, Somonauk, IL
 Loyola University Chicago, Amelie Malone, Harvey, IL
 McKendree University, MaryAnn Romagna, Eagle, WI
 Millikin University, Alexander Joshua Lee Farkasch, Lockport, IL
 Monmouth College, Turner William Plumer, Canton, IL
 National Louis University, Kayla L. Shavers, Chicago, IL
 North Central College, Nmesoma E. Onyejekwe, Fastac Town, Lagos, Nigeria
 North Park University, Sofia Grivot Volkmann, Porto Alegre, Brazil
 Northeastern Illinois University, Cassaundra Garcia, Cicero, IL
 Northern Illinois University, Joseph C. La Barbera, Berkeley, IL
 Northwestern University, Christopher Axline, Naples, FL
 Olivet Nazarene University, Grace Elizabeth Amburgey, Canal Winchester, OH
 Parkland College, Rebekah Grace Maxwell, Gifford, IL
 Principia College, Juan Francisco Alessio, Balcarce, Argentina
 Quincy University, Alexis Nicole Stufflebeam, Farmington, IL
 Rockford University, Kaden Finnestad, Rockford, IL
 Roosevelt University, Aviana Joy Holst, DeWitt, IA
 St. Xavier University, Chaylan Palmer, South Holland, IL
 School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Aalika Bharti, Mumbai, India
 Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Marsden Lee Fisher, Yorkville, IL
 Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Baymuhammet Baltayev, Turkenabat, Turkmenistan
 Trinity Christian College, Mia Joy Musick, Fisher, IL
 University of Chicago, Daniel Brett Kind, Winter Park, FL
 University of Illinois Chicago, Aparna Ramakrishnan, Lisle, IL
 University of Illinois Springfield, Abigail Leigh Hemmer, Springfield, IL
 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Ashley Denise Oliver, Hoffman Estates, IL
 University of St. Francis, Gianna Marie Barbaro, Orland Park, IL
 VanderCook College of Music, Brandon Rogelio Zavaleta, Wauwatosa, WI
 Western Illinois University, Julietta Nora Morini, Glen Carbon, IL
 Wheaton College, Olivia Madlin Wiebe, Davie, FL

In addition to honoring the state's Student Laureates, Illinois is unique in the United States in selecting present or former citizens who have made outstanding contributions toward the progress and betterment of humanity to be honored as Laureates of the Lincoln Academy and receive the "Order of Lincoln" from the Governor, a process that has been in place since 1964.

Proceeds from the spring Laureate Convocation are used to support the Student Laureate program each fall. For more information visit www.LincolnAcademyIllinois.org or The Lincoln Academy's social media sites.