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Panel Discussion of Robert S. Eckley's Book, *Lincoln's Forgotten Friend Leonard Swett*

March 14, 2013

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—The final book written by the late Illinois Wesleyan University President Robert S. Eckley, will be discussed by a panel of esteemed Abraham Lincoln scholars on Tuesday, March 26 at 7 p.m. at IWU's Hansen Student Center (300 Beecher St., Bloomington).

Lincoln's Forgotten Friend, Leonard Swett (Southern Illinois University, 2012), in which Eckley provides the first biography of Abraham Lincoln's fellow attorney on the eighth judicial circuit in Illinois, describes Lincoln's personal relationships and their contributions to his career.

Guest panelists will include: Robert Lenz, president of the Abraham Lincoln Association; William G. Shepherd, attorney and member of the Board of Directors of the Abraham Lincoln Association; Guy Fraker, author of *Lincoln's Ladder to the Presidency: The Eighth Judicial Circuit*; and Illinois Wesleyan's R. Forrest Colwell Professor of American Literature Robert Bray, who is the author of *Reading with Lincoln*. Lenz will be the moderator and there will be a question and answer session. As part of the event, there will be a special guest Lincoln impersonator, George Buss.

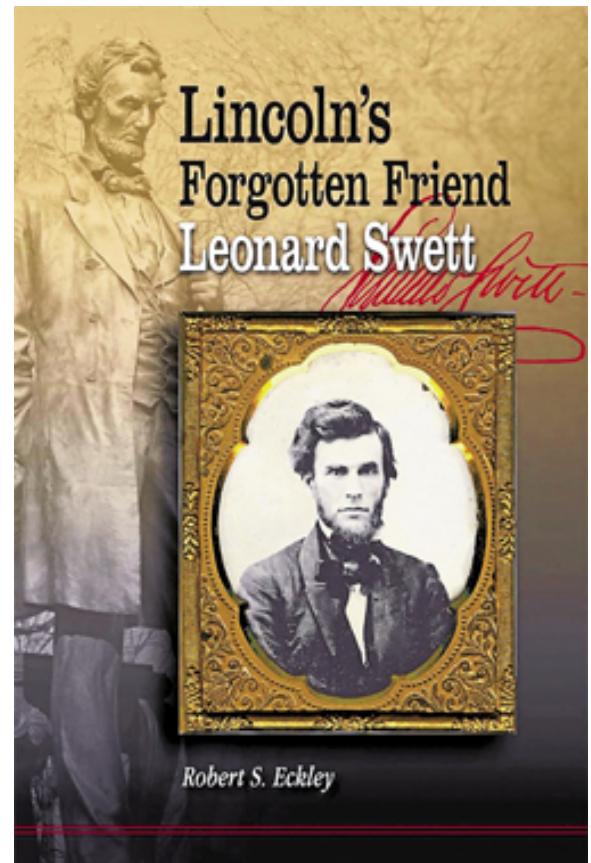
The March 26 event, hosted by IWU President Richard F. Wilson, is free and open to the public with free parking available. A dessert reception with the Eckley family and guest panelists will follow the discussion.

In describing *Lincoln's Forgotten Friend Leonard Swett*, a summary on Amazon.com reads:

"In 1849, while traveling as an attorney on the Eighth Judicial Circuit in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln befriended Leonard Swett (1825-89), a fellow attorney 16 years his junior. Despite this age difference, the two men built an enduring friendship that continued until Lincoln's assassination in 1865. Until now, no historian has explored Swett's life ...Robert S. Eckley provides the first biography of Swett...Eckley chronicles Swett's early life and the part he played in Lincoln's political campaigns, including his role as an essential member of the team behind Lincoln's two nominations and elections for the presidency.

"*With Lincoln's Forgotten Friend*, Eckley removes Swett from the shadows of history and sheds new light on Lincoln's personal relationships and their valuable contributions to his career."

President Emeritus Eckley, an economist and the longest serving president of the University, died in April of 2012. The author of five books, Eckley was a noted scholar of President Abraham Lincoln. In 2007, he was honored with the Logan Hay Medal from the Abraham Lincoln Association, the highest medal the organization conveys. He also served as president of the organization from 2002-2004.



Eckley attended Bradley University, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1942 and served in the Coast Guard Reserve as an engineering officer from 1943 to 46. He earned an M.B.A. from the University of Minnesota in 1943 and a master's degree and doctorate in economics from Harvard University in 1948 and 1949, respectively.

Among his numerous honors and awards, Eckley received the Phi Kappa Phi Alumni Award from Bradley University in 1966, the Distinguished Alumni Award from Bradley in 1972 and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Illinois Wesleyan in 1988.

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