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Former IWU President Receives Lincoln Honor

March 1, 2007

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. - Former Illinois Wesleyan University President Robert S. Eckley has received the highest honor from the Abraham Lincoln Association (ALA). Eckley was awarded the Logan Hay Medal in February at the association's annual banquet in Springfield, Ill.

"It was a total surprise," said Eckley, who has been a member of the ALA for the past 20 years, "and it was quite an honor."

The Logan Hay Medal recognizes individuals who have made noteworthy contributions to preserving and promoting the memory of Abraham Lincoln. Established in 1967, the medal has been awarded only 11 times. Other noted recipients include 1967 winner Illinois Gov. Otto Kerner for his efforts to restore the Old State Capitol, and 2000 winner scholar Cullom Davis for his work with The Lincoln Legal Papers.

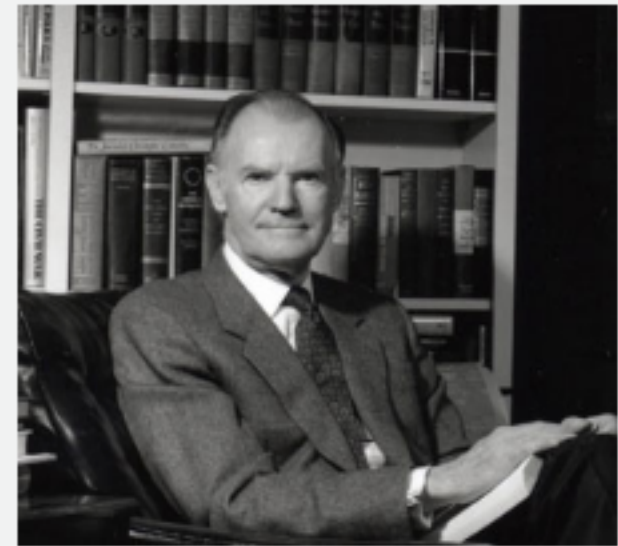
It was Davis who presented the medal to Eckley at the ALA annual banquet held in honor of Lincoln's birthday on February 12. During the event, Davis honored Eckley for having an "uncommon wisdom, a steady hand and a quiet leadership."

Eckley served as president of the ALA from 2002 to 2004. He and his wife Nell are active with the association, and he helped restart an ALA endowment fund. "The association is important for its encouragement of scholastic work," said Eckley, who currently heads the ALA endowment committee. "An endowment will help sponsor a variety of research on Lincoln."

According to Eckley, President Lincoln has been an influence on his life since childhood. The native of Illinois grew up hearing stories about his grandmother meeting the famed Civil War leader. "Supposedly, my great-grandfather hosted a political rally for Lincoln at his farm near Mahomet, Illinois," said Eckley, whose own interest was stirred with his research and writings on Bloomington attorney and Lincoln friend Leonard Swett. He is currently finishing a book on Swett.

The ALA formed in 1908 to celebrate the 100th birthday of Lincoln. Logan Hay was the association's third president, who saw such scholars as Paul Angle, Benjamin Thomas and Harry Pratt publish noted Lincoln works during his leadership in the 1920s. The association meets each year on Lincoln's birthday for an annual symposium to discuss the latest scholarship on the life and times of Abraham Lincoln. For more information on the ALA, go to www.abrahamlincolnassociation.org.

Eckley, who served as president of Illinois Wesleyan from 1968 to 1986, is currently an emeritus member of the Illinois Wesleyan board of trustees. He was awarded an honorary Illinois Wesleyan degree of humane letters in 1988.



Robert S. Eckley