

Ron J. Keller

525 Tremont St., Lincoln, IL 62656 · 217-732-5476 · RonJKeller123@gmail.com

Career Experience

Executive Director & Curator, Lincoln Heritage Museum, Lincoln College. Aug. 2000-Aug-2015; Apr. 2023- present. Responsibilities and successes include:

- Under my direction, LHM named “one of 30 best university-based museums in the world”
- Led project design, fabrication, and installation of new museum build in 2014
- Recognized as college’s ambassador for Abraham Lincoln scholarship to region & nation
- Developed museum educational and exhibit programming for school groups and adult visitors
- Wrote and received thousands of dollars in grant funding; led annual fundraising event
- Created and managed annual budgets for the museum, as well as led vision planning
- Curated and conserved an extremely rare and valuable collection of Abraham Lincoln artifacts
- Managed all museum operations (marketing, exhibit design, event planning, visitation, hiring)

Assistant Professor of History/ College Archivist/ Curator of Special Collections/ Curator of Paul Findley Congressional Museum, Illinois College, Jacksonville, IL. Jan.- Apr. 2023.

- Served as Illinois College history content expert and researcher for internal & external requests
- Maintained and preserved vast historical collections, records, and artifacts of college archives
- Engaged students and staff with original historical research and scholarship
- Co-led college public history major program providing students with experiential learning
- Developed educational exhibits and led visitor experiences in the Archives and the Findley Museum
- Connected the larger community to the Archives and assisted in community event planning
- Wrote grants for archival conservation and public accessibility of collections

Associate Professor of History & Political Science, Lincoln College, Lincoln, IL. Aug. 2000-Dec. 2022.

- Taught the following college courses: POS 101—American Govt; POS 102—State and Local Govt; HIS 101 & 102—Western Civilization; HIS 121 & 122—U.S. History survey; HIS 129—African American Experience; HIS 301—Studies in Leadership; PHL 303 –Contemporary Political Ideologies
- Advised students including registration of classes, monitoring of progress, maintenance of students records, communication and contact of students, registering of classes
- **Served as Social Sciences Dept Chair (2019-2020): evaluated faculty, mentored new faculty, maintained budget, addressed student-faculty grievances, administered college policy**

Managing Director, Abraham Lincoln Center for Character Development, Aug. 2016-present.
Developing character building programming and resources for schools, businesses, and civic groups.

Adjunct History Professor, Lincoln Christian University, Lincoln, IL, intensive week course, 2015-2022.

Adjunct History Instructor, Richland Community College, Decatur, IL. Jan.-Aug. 2000. Taught dual credit courses.

Social Studies Teacher, Oakland (IL) CUSD #5, grades 7-12. Aug. 1994-Aug. 2000.

Education

Master of History, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL, graduated Aug. 1998. Specialization in American and European political history.

Bachelor of Arts, Social Science with Teacher Certification, Eastern Illinois University, graduated Dec. 1991. Earned Pi Sigma Alpha political science honors.

Associate of Science, Olney Central College, graduated May 1989. Earned Phi Theta Kappa honors.

Additional coursework beyond Master's from University of Virginia & Virginia Commonwealth.

Scholarship Accomplishments

Book Author, *Lincoln in the Illinois Legislature*, SIU Press, April 2019. Nominated for award for the best book on Abraham Lincoln scholarship by the Lincoln Group of New York, April 2019.

Screenplay Writer, Co-Executive Producer, and Co-Director, *Our Cause Is Just: The Hawes Family in the Civil War*, video documentary, LCTV production, 2021. **Winner of "Best of Illinois History" Award from the Illinois State Historical Society, April 2022.**

Textbook Contributor, "We the People" (McGraw Hill, 14th ed, 2021).

Independent Reporter, articles of historical nature for *Lincoln Daily News*, Oct and Dec. 2016.

Author, "Presidents & First Ladies in the Movies," *White House History* journal, fall 2015 edition.

Author, "Lincoln In His Shop," *White House History* journal, spring 2015 edition.

Associate Author, with Paul Beaver and Phil Bertoni, *Abraham Lincoln in Logan County, 1834-1860*, (locally published, 2010).

Book Co-Author, with Tara Hennessy, *A Respect For the Office: Letters of the Presidents* (published, 2010).

Chapter Author, "That Which Congress So Nobly Began," in Harold Holzer and Sara Gabbard ed. *Lincoln and Freedom* (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 2007).

Contributing Author, article entries on race, slavery, and Abraham Lincoln, in *Oxford Encyclopedia of African-American History, 1895-Present*, 2008.

Co-Writer, Co-Producer, & Historical Consultant, for award-winning original documentary *From Surveyor to President: A. Lincoln in Logan County*, 2003.

Major Presentations

Presenter, "Lincoln Fathers a City: Abraham Lincoln in Lincoln, IL," Looking for Lincoln Conversations, (Looking For Lincoln Heritage Coalition, Springfield, IL) Feb. 16, 2022.

Presenter, "Lincoln in the Illinois Legislature and Beyond," Lehigh Valley Heritage Museum, Allentown PA, Oct. 13, 2021.

Presenter, "Seeking the Better Angels of Our Nature: Using Abraham Lincoln's Example in Instilling Character", UIS Lincoln Studies Center, January 14, 2021

Panelist, "Lincoln's Last Train Ride Home," Looking For Lincoln Conversations, April 21, 2021.

Featured Speaker and Panelist, “Worthy of Esteem? Abraham Lincoln in the Illinois Legislature,” Abraham Lincoln Association Annual Symposium, Springfield, IL, Feb. 12, 2019.

Session Presenter, “Seeking the Better Angels: Using Abraham Lincoln to Instill Character,” Conference on Illinois History, Springfield, IL, Oct. 4, 2018.

Conference Presenter, “Abraham Lincoln and his Virtues,” Illinois State Bar Association “Lincoln’s Legacy on the Law” Conference, Lincoln, IL, Sept. 15, 2017.

Convention Presenter, “Abraham Lincoln in Popular Culture,” Illinois Association of County Clerks and Records Annual Convention, Hilton Inn, Springfield, IL, Jan. 24, 2012.

Featured Presenter, “Abraham Lincoln and the Legacy of Race and Slavery,” through the Illinois Humanities Council Road Scholars Speakers Bureau, at dozens of venues statewide, 2002-2009.

Featured Presenter, “How We View Our History: Changing Image of the 16th President,” through the Illinois Humanities Council Road Scholars Speakers Bureau, at dozens of venues statewide, 2008-2009.

Conference Presenter, “Approaches to Teaching Abraham Lincoln and His Times,” History Teachers Conference, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL, Oct. 22, 2009

Featured Panelist, “Lincoln, Race and Slavery,” DuSable Museum of African-American History, Chicago, IL, Jun. 20, 2009.

Lead Presenter, Facilitator, & Program Coordinator, ISBE approved seminars for teachers at Lincoln College, entitled, “Abraham Lincoln: His Life, Leadership, and Legacy,” Jun. 15-18, 2009; and for “Abraham Lincoln & Illinois in a Nation of Slavery,” Jun. 19-21, 2007 and Jun. 18-20, 2006.

Featured Presenter, “Rum and Rails: Electioneering in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” through the Road Scholars Speakers Bureau, Washington, IL, Oct. 5, 2008.

Keynote Speaker, “Slave Hound to Slave Liberator: Lincoln and Abolitionism,” at Gilder- Lehrman Institute “Free at Last” Exhibition, Eureka College, Mar. 20, 2007.

Awards, Honors, and Recognition

Order of Lincoln Award—Special Bicentennial Edition, *highest honor given to an Illinois resident*, presented by The Lincoln Academy—Governor Pat Quinn, chairman, Feb. 7, 2009.

Best of Illinois History Award, presented by Illinois State Historical Society for “outstanding contribution to the field of Illinois history, for “Our Cause Is Just” video documentary, April 2022.

Excellence in Teaching Award “Who Teaches With Heart and Passion,” awarded by the Sigma Alpha Pi Chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success, April 2020.

Presidential Meritorious Service Award, presented by Lincoln College President David Gerlach to a college employee who has gone “above and beyond the call of duty,” December 13, 2019.

Olney Central College Alumni Award, awarded annually to an OCC alum who has distinguished oneself in his or her chosen field, presented by President Ranes, May 13, 2011.

Outstanding Student Commitment Award, bestowed by LC President David Gerlach, April 28, 2016.

Award of Excellence, for assisting to renovate a national historic registry site, awarded by Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Lincoln, IL, May 20, 2012.

Citizen of the Month, named by *The Courier* (Lincoln, IL), Feb. 19, 2011.

Who's Who Among Executives and Professionals, Honors Edition, 2009.

Special Recognition of Service Award, given by Logan County Looking For Lincoln for commitment to historic preservation, Feb. 8, 2009.

Most Inspirational Teacher, in recognition of teaching excellence, conferred by Western Illinois University, 2007.

Road Scholar, Illinois Humanities Council Speakers Bureau, contracted through the IHC to provide scholarly programs and presentations across the state, 2007-2009.

Named as "A successful young leader making a difference in the community," in *The Courier* (Lincoln, IL) editorial, Feb. 10, 2007.

Who's Who Among America's Teachers, multi-year inductee: 2004, 2005, and 2006.

Additional Experience

Incident Responder/Volunteer, Logan County EMA, credentialed & certified by FEMA and Department of Homeland Security in Disaster Response & Incident Management. Apr. 2017-present. .

Alderman (Ward 3), elected to Lincoln City Council. April 2017-April 2021.

Census2020 Complete Count Coordinator, City of Lincoln, Illinois. Appointed by Mayor Seth Goodman and Lincoln City Council. 2019-2021.

Commissioner, City of Lincoln Historic Preservation Commission, appointed by Mayor Keith Snyder and the Lincoln, Illinois City Council. 2012-2014 (chairman 2012-2013).

Commissioner, City of Lincoln Planning Commission, appointed by Mayor Elizabeth A. Davis and the Lincoln Illinois City Council, reappointed by Mayor Keith Snyder. 2005-2014.

Other Professional Experiences

Political Analyst, WEEK-TV Channel 25, Peoria, IL, provided occasional expert analysis of current news stories, including several elections, COVID-19, and immigration crisis, 2020-2021.

Honorary Bodyguard, commemoration of the Lincoln funeral, Springfield, IL, May 4-5, 2015.

Historical Consultant, CITV Channel 5, Lincoln, IL, provided periodic live in-studio and on-location commentary on Abraham Lincoln history and heritage, 2009-2010.

Political Analyst, WICS-TV Channel 20, Springfield, IL, provided live in-studio and on-location political analysis of 2008 election, Aug. 2008; and on IL gubernatorial election, Jul. 2009.

References

Donna Bradley, former Lincoln College VP of Academic Affairs, 314-229-7803, donnaobradley@gmail.com

Karin Wright, former Lincoln College Social Sciences Chair, 309-533-4747, karinwrightio@gmail.com

Eric Grunder, former Lincoln College Professor of Sciences, 217-810-1014, ericgrunder5@gmail.com