



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
BRUCE RAUNER

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Governor Rauner Announces Recipients of 2015 Order of Lincoln Award

SPRINGFIELD -- As Illinois celebrates the 206th birthday of Abraham Lincoln, Governor Bruce Rauner today announced this year's recipients of the Order of Lincoln, which is the state's highest honor for professional achievement and public service.

"This year's recipients of the Order of Lincoln have helped make Illinois and the world a better place," Gov. Rauner said. "The work they have accomplished is admirable, and it is our privilege to honor them. Mr. Lincoln would be proud."

This year's recipients are:

Arthur H. Bunn, CEO of Bunn-O-Matic Corporation

Bunn is a civic and philanthropic leader in Springfield; and a member of one of Illinois' pioneer families, whose great-great-grandfather opened a grocery store in Springfield 170 years ago, with Abraham Lincoln as one of his first customers.

Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme

Cousin heads the world's largest humanitarian organization, serving 97 million beneficiaries in 80 countries. "My mission is simple," she has said, "to end hunger in my lifetime."

J. Roland Folsie, surgeon and founding chairman of the Department of Surgery at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine

Dr. Folsie served on SIU-School of Medicine's faculty for more than 30 years, and the Folsie Endowed Chair of Surgery has been established in his honor.

Sara Vaughn Gabbard, nationally recognized Lincoln Scholar and Executive Director of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana

Gabbard, a native of Lincoln, is entrusted with a prized collection of Lincoln artifacts, and has devoted her professional career to increasing the nation's knowledge of Abraham Lincoln and the times in which he lived.

Gary Slutkin, Founder and Executive Director of Cure Violence

Dr. Slutkin's innovative program has worked to reduce shootings and killings, and Cure Violence now has 52 program sites in 23 U.S. cities and eight nations of the world. He is a professor of epidemiology and international health at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health, where he seeks to treat violence as he would seek to reverse epidemic disease outbreaks.

W. Russell Withers, Jr., Broadcaster – Posthumous Honor

The award will also be presented posthumously to one of the last of a vanishing breed of broadcasting pioneers, the Founder of Withers Broadcasting Companies which operates six television stations and thirty radio stations in Illinois and across the Midwest. Prior to his death, Mr. Withers provided leadership to a wide range of civic, professional and charitable organizations including his chairmanship over many years of the Illinois Broadcasters Foundation.

The Order of Lincoln will be presented at the 51st Annual Convocation of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois in the chambers of the Illinois House of Representatives in Springfield on Saturday, May 9, 2015. The Order of Lincoln was established by the Governor of Illinois in 1965, and the Lincoln Academy of Illinois -- an independent, non-partisan organization -- was created to administer the award and to choose the annual award recipients.

Following the award presentation on May 9, 2015 a gala reception and dinner in honor of the 2015 recipients will be held at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield. Funds raised at the dinner will be used to provide Abraham Lincoln Civic Engagement Scholarships to one student from each of the 56 four-year colleges and universities in Illinois and one student representing the state's community colleges. The students are chosen by their college presidents on the basis of academic achievement and community service.

The ceremony and short interviews with the honorees will be converted into a PBS documentary to be shown on all PBS stations across Illinois later in the year.