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May 11, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Six Illinoisans from history added to Lincoln Academy Hall of Fame

SPRINGFIELD – Six Illinoisans who made a significant impact on the history of the state and nation have been inducted into the The Lincoln Academy of Illinois Hall of Fame. Those inducted are Judge David Davis, Enrico Fermi, William Le Baron Jenney, Mary “Mother” Jones, Major General John A. Logan, and Emmet Till.

“These six people helped to shape the world as we know it today,” said Lincoln Academy Chancellor Frank Clark. “We proudly place their names beside other Illinoisans who have inspired and humbled us with their place in history.”

The Hall of Fame was created in 1992 to recognize early contributions to our state’s heritage prior to the establishment of The Lincoln Academy of Illinois in 1964. Since that year The Lincoln Academy has awarded the “Order of Lincoln” to present or former Illinois citizens who have made outstanding contributions toward the progress and betterment of humanity. The Lincoln Academy also annually recognizes an outstanding senior from each of the state’s four-year degree-granting colleges and universities, and one student from the community colleges in Illinois, by naming them Student Laureates of The Lincoln Academy of Illinois.

David Davis was a long-time resident of Bloomington who was a U.S. Supreme Court Justice and close ally of Abraham Lincoln. Davis was the presiding Eighth Illinois Judicial Circuit judge for 14 years, during which time he became a close personal friend of Lincoln, later serving as administrator of the president’s estate after the assassination. Davis followed his friend into the Republican Party and was instrumental in securing Lincoln’s presidential nomination at the 1860 Republican National Convention. Following the election, Davis relocated to Washington with Lincoln, who appointed him to the U.S. Supreme Court on December 10, 1862 where Davis served for 14 years. Davis won election to the U.S. Senate in 1876 and retired after a single term to his Bloomington home.

Enrico Fermi was a Nobel-Prize-winning physicist who created the first sustained nuclear reaction. Born in Italy, Fermi’s Italian university work included the discovery of plutonium, for which he won the 1938 Nobel Prize for Physics. He used his trip to Stockholm to receive the prize as his opportunity to escape Italian fascism and moved to the United States. Fermi was increasingly drawn into the U.S. government’s atomic research program and became one of the founders of the

Manhattan Project. On December 2, 1942 at the University of Chicago, a Fermi-led team produced the world's first sustained nuclear reaction. The nuclear element Fermium is named for him.

William Le Baron Jenney was a renowned architect often credited with inventing the skyscraper. Following education and work in Europe, Jenney became a civil engineer and served on the staffs of Generals Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman during the Civil War. Jenney opened an architectural practice in Chicago in 1866, laid out the West Chicago park system, and worked with Frederick Law Olmstead to design the community of Riverside. Jenney designed numerous homes throughout Illinois but is best known for his development of tall buildings in Chicago. Using a system of iron columns, especially on the outside of the structures, Jenney's concepts essentially created the skyscraper.

Mary "Mother" Jones was one of the most prominent labor leaders of the early 20th century. Jones was born in Ireland, immigrated to Canada with her family, and moved to the United States in 1860, where she eventually settled in Chicago. She co-owned a seamstress business until it was destroyed by the 1871 Chicago Fire, and in the following years, Jones began to move into labor activist circles and participated in several major labor protests, including the 1877 Pittsburgh Railroad Strike and the 1886 Haymarket Riot. She became involved in various labor movements throughout the country, met Eugene V. Debs and helped found the Social Democratic Party with him, and started writing for workers' rights newspapers, where she adopted the name Mother Jones. Jones was an organizer for the United Mine Workers for 30 years and organized the 1898 United Miners' Strike in Virden which led to seven killed and 30 wounded miners. She is buried with the victims of Virden at the United Miners' Cemetery in Mount Olive.

Major General John A. Logan was one of the Union's best generals in the Civil War and a prominent state and national politician. Logan served in the Mexican War and was afterwards elected as a prosecuting attorney, then state representative, from southern Illinois. Logan was elected to Congress in 1858 and when the Civil War began, he organized the 31st Illinois regiment, served under Ulysses S. Grant, and earned a promotion to brigadier general after suffering severe wounds at Fort Donelson. Logan officially resigned from Congress to fully commit himself to military service, earning promotion again to major general and serving as one of Grant's ablest commanders during the Vicksburg campaign and then with equal effectiveness under William Tecumseh Sherman in Georgia, earning the new nickname, "Blackjack Logan," for his dark complexion and facial hair. After a brief 1864 stay in southern Illinois to campaign for Lincoln, Logan returned to command under Sherman in the Carolinas for the remainder of the war. Logan became an advocate of veteran Civil War soldiers, helped found the Grand Army of the Republic, and announced the first formal Memorial Day in 1868. Logan would later serve again in Congress and the U.S. Senate and was James G. Blaine's vice presidential running mate for the Republican Party in 1884.

Emmett Till was one of the youngest and most widely-covered victims of racial lynching. In 1955, after finishing seventh grade in Chicago, Till traveled to Money, Mississippi to visit relatives. Till was there in a grocery with a group of other teenage African American boys to buy candy and was accused of whistling at a white woman. The woman's husband and his half-brother later abducted Till from his uncle's house, severely beat him, shot him to death, and dumped Till's body into the Tallahatchie River. Till's body was recovered several days later, and the ensuing funeral and trial received wide national attention. The brutality of the case and Till's age spurred massive outrage and

helped inspire the Civil Rights Movement.

Previous Lincoln Academy Hall of Fame inductees include Robert Sengstacke Abbott, Jane Addams, John Peter Altgeld, Philip Danforth Armour, Black Hawk, Shadrach Bond, Myra Colby Bradwell, Williams Jennings Bryan, Frances Xavier Cabrini, George Rogers Clark, Edward Coles, Daniel Pope Cook, Richard J. Daley, Clarence Darrow, Charles Gates Dawes, John Deere, Walter Elias Disney, Stephen A. Douglas, Ninian Edwards, Eugene Field, Marshall Field, Lucy Louisa Coues Flower, Melville Weston Fuller, Harold "Red" Grange, Ulysses S. Grant, William Rainey Harper, Ernest Hemingway, Henry Horner, John Jones, Keokuk, Kenesaw Mountain Landis, Victor Freemont Lawson, Abraham Lincoln, Vachel Lindsay, Elijah Parish Lovejoy, Edgar Lee Masters, Cyrus Hall McCormick, Joseph Medill, Ralph Metcalfe, Robert Andrews Millikan, Harriet Monroe, George William Mundelein, Walter Loomis Newberry, Archange Chevallier Ouilmette, James Cleveland "Jesse" Owens, Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable, George Mortimer Pullman, Julius Rosenwald, Carl Sandburg, Louis Henri Sullivan, Lorado Zadoc Taft, Christian Theodore Thomas, Harriet Elizabeth Vittum, Aaron Montgomery Ward, Ida Bell Wells-Barnett, Frances E. Willard, Daniel Hale Williams, Frank Lloyd Wright, William Wrigley, Jr., and Florenz Ziegfeld

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