



## Happy Birthday to Law Day and Mr. Lincoln

This year's 50th anniversary of Law Day, and the Great Emancipator's 200th birthday in 2009, perfectly complement the ISBA's civic education efforts in support of the image of our profession and to increase diversity.

Two important goals of the ISBA this year have been to continue to improve the image of our profession and to increase diversity in our profession. Both of these goals are materially assisted by the participation of lawyers and judges in civic education programs. The ISBA's ongoing efforts in that regard, assisted by the Illinois Supreme Court, its Commission on Professionalism, and the Illinois Judges' Association, will be complemented by upcoming Law Day programs in May celebrating the 50th anniversary of Law Day in the U.S. and by the events planned for the 2009 celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

### Diversity and civic education

The ISBA Task Force on Diversity, chaired by Lynn Grayson and empanelled to promote greater diversity in the legal profession and within the ISBA, is busy organizing opportunities for lawyers and judges to visit classrooms.

The mission of the Task Force's Diversity Pipeline Project subcommittee – chaired by Alice Noble-Allgire, Andy Fox, Tracy Prosser, and Venu Gupta – is to support improved educational opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds and encourage efforts by those students to enter the legal profession.

In addition, the Standing Committee on Law Related Education for the Public (chaired by Tom Carlisle) has expanded its scope to support the ISBA initiative aimed at getting lawyers and judges into the classroom year-round to support the ISBA's campaign to improve the image of the profession through civic education, as well as to further the educational "pipeline" goals of the Task Force on Diversity.

The Standing Committee on LRE

has been charged with responsibility for coordinating with the Diversity Task Force to gather information on existing educational programs as a first step to encouraging lawyers and judges to volunteer a morning or afternoon a year to participate in such programs.

The committee has already created a list of volunteer opportunities for Illinois lawyers and judges wishing to visit classrooms, such as the Constitutional Rights Foundation's "Lawyers in the Classroom" project. The group is working to develop a Web-based list of lawyer volunteers that teachers can use as a source. An extensive collection of resources for use by both teachers and lawyers can be found at <http://www.isba.org/Sections/lawrelateded.asp>.

### Lincoln bicentennial committee

The ISBA recently formed a Special Committee on the Lincoln Bicentennial, chaired by Thomas S. Johnson. The committee is in the process of planning the ISBA's celebration of the 200th anniversary of the February 1809 birth of Abraham Lincoln, the most revered lawyer in the history of our state and nation.

The ISBA's contribution to the Lincoln bicentennial will focus on Lincoln's career as a lawyer. It will feature a wide range of activities, many of them also directed to students in high school, college, and law school, such as a Lincoln-themed mock trial program and moot court competition. This fall we also began working with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library to co-sponsor a lecture series about Lincoln the lawyer. In addition to the programs planned for the public, we will be tying the Lincoln bicenten-

nial to various publications and special programs for our members. The ISBA is also working to commission a large bronze bust of Lincoln by a distinguished Illinois sculptor to stand on a stone pedestal in the historic Illinois Supreme Court building in Springfield

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as a gift to the people of Illinois from the lawyers of Illinois. The presentation of the bust not only coincides with the Lincoln bicentennial but also with the 100th anniversary of the Illinois Supreme Court.

The ISBA will be establishing a Lincoln fund within the Illinois Bar Foundation to which tax-deductible contributions may be made in support of the Abraham Lincoln Project. The activities planned provide a perfect complement to ISBA's other civic education efforts. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting endeavor.

The 50th anniversary of Law Day is just a few weeks away, and Lincoln's 200th birthday will soon be upon us. I urge you to consider giving just a few hours of your time to further diversity, and improve the image of our profession, by volunteering to visit a classroom. Lincoln would be proud, and it would be the best way possible to celebrate two historic events. ■