



THE LITTLE GIANT

A NEWSLETTER of the STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS ASSOCIATION

Volume XVI, Number 1, May 2004

SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 2004

*Commemoration of the
143rd Anniversary
of the death of
Senator Stephen A. Douglas*

5:00 p.m.
**Ceremonies at the
Douglas Tomb
State Historic Site**
636 East 35th Street

Comments by Brooks Davis,
*Chairman of the Board,
Stephen A. Douglas Association*

Wreath laying by the
Lincoln-Douglas Society of Freeport
to honor
the memories of
Senator Stephen A. Douglas,
Senator Paul Simon,
and Mr. Richard Sokup

6:30 p.m.
**Annual Dinner of the
Stephen A. Douglas Association**

Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
Brio Room
350 North Orleans Street

**(Cocktails at 6:30 p.m.,
Dinner at 7:00 p.m.)**

AN ADDRESS BY
ILLINOIS STATE HISTORIAN
THOMAS F. SCHWARTZ ON
**"Douglas and Lincoln in the
Race of Politics and Life"**

\$30 per person
Parking fee: \$8

Please return the enclosed
Reservation form, with remittance
by June 1, or contact David Richert
by phone or e-mail (drichert@ajs.org).

THOMAS F. SCHWARTZ TO ADDRESS ANNUAL DINNER ON JUNE 5

By Barbara Hughett

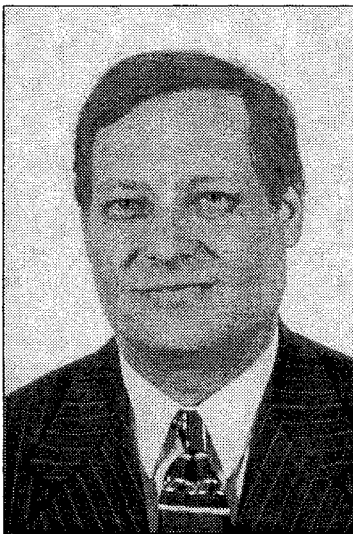
"Douglas and Lincoln in the Race of Politics and Life" will be the topic of Dr. Thomas F. Schwartz when he addresses the annual dinner of the Stephen A. Douglas Association on Saturday, June 5. Douglas biographer Robert W. Johannsen was not exaggerating when he stated that the story of Abraham Lincoln could not be told or understood without some knowledge of the role played by Stephen A. Douglas.

Most Americans have heard something about the famous "Lincoln-Douglas Debates" of 1858, when the two politicians formally debated in seven Illinois cities when they were vying for a seat in the United States Senate. Senator Douglas won that election; but two years later, when they were competing for a bigger prize—the presidency—it was Lincoln who triumphed over his longtime rival.

When the cannons fired upon Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, Lincoln had been in office a little more than a month. Without hesitation, Senator Douglas rallied behind President Lincoln, professing his total loyalty to the Union cause. Even though he was ailing, he tirelessly toured the South with lectures aimed at keeping the southern states in the Union. Less than two months later, Douglas was dead.

Schwartz has commented on the irony that "Douglas, who had been the

most prominent politician in Illinois, indeed, throughout the nation in the 1850s, never lived to see his reputation eclipsed by Abraham Lincoln." If things had worked out differently, perhaps we would be saying the "Douglas-Lincoln Debates," instead of the "Lincoln-Douglas Debates."



Thomas F. Schwartz

After examining the surviving sum books of Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, Schwartz concludes that it is clear both men were ambitious and driven—even early in their lives; that, in many ways, their public lives were acts of self-invention. One needs only to look at the similarities: Both migrated to Illinois to begin anew. Each struggled to find a career path.

Yet, there were some differences too. While Douglas briefly served as an Illinois Supreme Court justice, he had only a rudimentary

knowledge of the law. Politics was Douglas's lifeblood. Lincoln loved politics, but he also loved the law. It was the practice of law, and not political office, that paid the bills in the Lincoln's household.

When the two faced one another in 1858, the contest was a stark study in contrasts as each consciously created a public image for voters. In 1860, campaign biographies further defined Douglas and Lincoln for the larger national voting audience. Dr. Schwartz, in his talk, will explore how Douglas and Lincoln shaped their public images to advance their private ambitions and in so

(continued on page 2)

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THE STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS ASSOCIATION

c/o David Richert, Treasurer
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Chicago, Illinois 60645

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Association programs
and
ceremonies at the
Stephen A. Douglas
State Historic Site
are supported by the
Illinois Historic
Preservation
Agency,
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DR. THOMAS F. SCHWARTZ

(continued from page 1)

doing, largely created themselves much of the modern image we have of them.

Thomas F. Schwartz, a native of Downers Grove, Illinois, attended the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he earned A.B., A.M., and Ph.D. degrees in history. He became curator of the Henry Horner Lincoln Collection at the Illinois State Historical Library in 1985 and is an acknowledged authority on the Sixteenth President and his times. Schwartz is the author of more than ninety articles, reviews, chapters in books, and electronic reference entries, and is the editor of *"For a Vast Future Also": Essays From the Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* (Fordham University Press, 1999).

On November 19, 1993, Governor Jim Edgar named Schwartz to fill the post of State Historian, making him, at 38, the youngest person to ever serve in that position. With John Rhodehamel of the Henry Huntington Library in California, Schwartz co-curated the nationally-acclaimed exhibition, *"The Last Best Hope of Earth": Abraham Lincoln and the Promise of America*, which featured materials from the Henry Horner Lincoln Collection, the Collections at the Huntington, and the Louise and Barry Taper Collection. The exhibition attracted over 600,000 visitors in a two-city tour of Los Angeles and Chicago.

Tom Schwartz has served as a historical consultant for numerous documentaries and has appeared on the *Today Show*, as well as programs on the History Channel and C-SPAN. He is senior editor of the prestigious *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, serves on a number of boards of historical and cultural associations, and is secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Association.

Schwartz is chief historian for exhibits and content in the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois. He is on the advisory board for the state and federal Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial commissions, planning events for the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth in 2009.

He is married to Cathy Irwin Schwartz, Director of Nursing Education and Professional Practice at Memorial Medical Center in Springfield. They have two children, Jacquelyn Ann and James Henry.

JOHN Y. SIMON HONORED WITH SPECIAL LINCOLN PRIZE

By Barbara Hughett

Professor John Y. Simon, the featured speaker at last year's Douglas Association annual dinner, was recently honored with a special \$20,000 Lincoln Prize, administered by the Lincoln and Soldiers Institute at Gettysburg College and funded by philanthropists Richard Gilder and Lewis Lehrman. Simon, professor of history at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, was cited for his extraordinary achievement in editing 26 volumes—to date—of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*. He is currently at work on volumes 27 and 28 in the collection, published by Southern Illinois University Press.

Dr. Simon also serves as executive director of the Ulysses S. Grant Association and is widely acknowledged as the dean of American documentary editors. The *Grant Papers* is recognized as a model of excellence in the field.

A native of Highland Park, Illinois, he earned his bachelor's degree at Swarthmore College and his masters and doctorate at Harvard. During his undergraduate summers, he worked as a stock boy in the bookshop of Douglas Association co-founder Ralph G. Newman. John Y. Simon also delivered the address at the very first annual meeting (a luncheon) of the Stephen A. Douglas Association in 1975.



**RICHARD F. SOKUP
1939-2004**

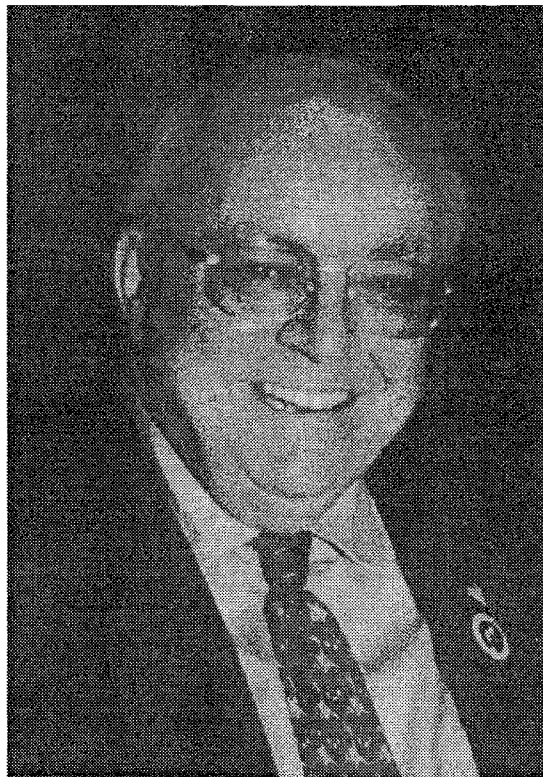
By George Buss

Longtime Stephen A. Douglas interpreter and Stephen A. Douglas Association board member Richard F. Sokup passed from our presence on January 16, 2004, after a brief illness. His first performances as the Little Giant occurred during the centennial celebration of the famous debates between Abraham Lincoln and Douglas of 1858. He portrayed Senator Douglas in Freeport and at Knox College in Galesburg that year. Over the next half-century, "Senator" would become the moniker by which both friends and acquaintances alike would address him.

A graduate of Knox College, Rich was in the insurance business in Freeport for many years. History was his avocation and he engaged in it enthusiastically. He was in many historical associations. He was a charter member of the Lincoln Forum and had been elected to its board of advisors last November. He was president of the board of the Lincoln-Douglas Society of Freeport, Friends Forever Humane Society (Freeport), and also served as a board member of the Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin.

Rich Sokup wrote the script for *A Conversation with President Lincoln and Judge Douglas*, which he performed flawlessly nearly four hundred times over the past fifteen years. I was privileged to play Lincoln to his Douglas.

We portrayed Douglas and Lincoln at the Harold Washington Library in 1993, at the request of Brooks Davis and the Stephen A. Douglas Association.



tion. A brother, Robert, of Denver, and a nephew and two nieces survive him. The Douglas Association extends its deepest condolences to the Sokup family.

REMEMBERING RICH SOKUP

(The following are the remarks delivered by George Buss at the memorial service for Rich in Freeport on January 20, 2004)

"I want all of you to know of the calls and e-mails, which have been received from areas of the country that hold friends of Rich's. They speak in the same

intonations of those who live here locally of the painful loss that exists in their beings. These are writers of history and the body politic; academic, insurance, and financial experts; and men and women with a keen eye for the Renaissance man, who has left our presence.

"I have been doing some reading over the past several days since that summons arrived at our house on Friday last. What words can I offer in the memory of our friend? On May 19, 1849, Abraham Lincoln wrote a letter to his friend, Gillespie. This is what Abraham Lincoln said in his letter. He said: 'The better part of one's life consists in his friendships.' Abraham Lincoln wrote this and all of us today bear witness to these words written 155 years ago. Rich Sokup counted us as his friends. We know this because he told us in the countless letters, notes, calls, and visits we have had with him over the years.

"But, in a larger sense, we are better people because we count the love and friendship of Rich Sokup as the better part of our lives. You are the final testament to that life, which we celebrate here today. Our 'Little Giant' lives in us.

"Let us strive on to continue the work that Rich was about, which makes Freeport a better place because he lived here. I offer the prayer for Rich, as the press in Cincinnati did for Stephen Douglas so many years ago: 'Pray his memory will ever remain warm and green in the affections of the people.' Peace to Rich Sokup."



**NEW PRESIDENT OF
LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY
OF FREEPORT IS NAMED**

Dr. Edward Finch, author and nationally recognized lecturer on naval history, has been named to succeed the late Rich Sokup as president of the Lincoln-Douglas Society of Freeport. Dr. Finch is chairman of the English department at Freeport High School and holds degrees from Eureka College, Bradley University, and Illinois State University.

"The prospects are gloomy, but I do not yet despair of the Union. We can never acknowledge the right of a State to secede and cut us off from the Ocean and the world, without our consent. But in view of the impending civil war with our brethren in nearly one half of the States of the Union, I will not consider the question of force & war until all efforts at peaceful adjustment have been made & have failed. The fact can no longer be disguised that many of the Republican Leaders desire war and Disunion under the pretext of saving the Union... I am for the Union and hence I am ready to make any reasonable sacrifice to save it."

Abraham Lincoln

December 25, 1860
(in a letter to Charles H. Lamphier)

SENATOR PAUL SIMON 1928-2003

By Barbara Hughett

Over the past year since our last annual dinner, we have lost another good friend of American history and progressive government—former Illinois Senator Paul Simon, who died on December 9, 2003, from complications that occurred following heart surgery. Senator Simon had been scheduled to speak for us at this year's annual dinner.

Paul Simon was a bespeckled, slightly ruffled man, usually seen with his trademark bow tie and possessing an uncontestable reputation for honesty. He was a politician who began disclosing his personal finances in the 1950s! Simon blended fiscal conservatism and social liberalism.

The son of a Lutheran minister and raised during the Great Depression, he saw the great needs that faced the country and how government responded



with New Deal programs. "Government is not the enemy," he said during his brief run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1988. "Government is simply a tool that can be used wisely or unwisely. We can do better, my friends!"

In his long public career, he served as state senator, lieutenant governor, congressman, and United States senator. He wrote thirteen books, including the only book written about Abraham Lincoln's career in the Illinois legislature, *Lincoln's Preparation for Greatness: The Illinois Legislative Years*. After he retired from the Senate, Simon founded the Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University.

More than 3,500 people turned out for his memorial service, featuring a 60-piece orchestra, at the Southern Illinois University sports arena in Carbondale. Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy told the crowds the key to Paul Simon's success in politics was that "he couldn't have cared less about the games of politics."

DOUGLAS ASSOCIATION HONORS BROOKS DAVIS WITH ITS FIRST BROOKS AND BETSEY DAVIS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

President George Buss presented Brooks Davis, chairman of the board of the Stephen A. Douglas Association, with the association's first Brooks and Betsey Douglas Achievement Award—named in honor of Brooks and his late wife, Betsey—at the 2003 annual dinner last June. The award will be presented periodically to individuals whose efforts move the Douglas Association forward in its mission to "commemorate and educate the public on the life and times of Stephen A. Douglas."

The symbol selected for each recipient is the work of sculptor Lily Tolpo, of Mossbach, Illinois, titled *Lincoln and Douglas in Debate*. Lily is a charter member of the Douglas Association. The original life-size statue is present on the original site of the Second Joint Debate in Freeport, Illinois.

In presenting the first award to Brooks, President Buss cited Brooks's untiring efforts to bring visitors to the Douglas tomb at 35th and the tracks, as well as serving at the organization's



helm relentlessly. Incidentally, it was Brooks's invitation that brought Rich Sokup and George to the association in 1993 for the very first time! It was at that annual dinner that historian Harold Holzer discussed that program he had done on C-SPAN's *Booknotes* with Brian Lamb, when Harold was interviewed

about his new book, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates: The First Unexpurgated Text*. It was this meeting that began Lamb's interest in Lincoln and Douglas and inspired him to televise all the reenactments of the Great Debates in the summer of 1994.