

Gov. Pritzker Announces 2020 Recipients of the Order of Lincoln

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Governor JB Pritzker announced the 2020 recipients of the Order of Lincoln, which is the state's highest honor for professional achievement and public service. This year's Lincoln Laureates are Scott Altman, Paul Collins, Robert Fraley, Donald McHenry, Joanne Smith, and Mavis Staples.

“With their achievements in science, medicine, public service, the arts, agriculture and athletics, these distinguished Illinoisans have made our state proud,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “They have worked tirelessly to improve the lives of the people of Illinois and I’m so proud to award them with our state’s highest honor.”

On Saturday, April 18, 2020, The Lincoln Academy of Illinois will host its 56th annual Convocation on the campus of Illinois State University. President and Mrs. Larry and Marlene Dietz are the co-chairs of the 2020 Convocation Civic Committee.

At the convocation, members of the Academy will honor the six outstanding Illinoisans with the Order of Lincoln at a formal ceremony and gala reception. These Laureates will join a cohort of 354 distinguished Illinois citizens so honored over the past 56 years.

Scott Altman, a former NASA astronaut, is a veteran of four space shuttle missions, spending more than 51 days in space. Originally from Pekin, Ill., Altman is a United States Navy Captain, engineer, and test pilot. Commissioned as a Navy ensign, he earned a master's degree in aeronautical engineering from the United States Naval postgraduate school. After a distinguished career as a naval pilot and test pilot, he was selected for the NASA astronaut program. Logging more than 7,000 flight hours in more than 40 types of aircrafts during his career, he retired from NASA in 2010 and joined ASRC Federal Engineering, Aerospace and Mission Systems (EAMS) and is currently the Senior Vice President for Civil Programs. Altman was inducted in the Astronaut Hall of Fame in 2018.

Paul (Doug) Collins is an American basketball executive, former player, coach, and television analyst, originally from Benton, Ill. He was the first overall pick of the 1973 NBA draft and a four-time NBA All-Star. He represented the United States at the 1972 Summer Olympics. He coached the Chicago Bulls, Detroit Pistons, Washington Wizards, and Philadelphia 76ers. Both the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame and NBA Hall of Fame have inducted Collins. He has served as an analyst for various NBA-related broadcast shows on CBS, NBC, TNT, and TBS. The basketball court at Illinois State University bears his name.

Dr. Robert (Robb) Fraley is the former executive vice president and chief technology officer at Monsanto Company. A World Food Prize Laureate, he is recognized as the father of agricultural biotechnology for developing the first genetically modified crops as a solution for farmers battling damaging pests and weeds. Raised on a farm outside Hoopeston, Ill., Fraley decided early on that he wanted to use science to develop better technology for farmers. He earned a Ph.D. in microbiology and biochemistry the University of Illinois and authored more than 100 ag-related publications and patent applications throughout his career. He has become a leading voice for innovation in agriculture, passionately working to reset the public conversation about science.

Donald F. McHenry grew up in East St. Louis, Ill. and served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1979 to 1981. He was also a Cabinet member for President Jimmy Carter. Prior to these roles, he was the United States Deputy Representative to the United Nations Security Council. McHenry was a distinguished professor in the practice of diplomacy at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University from 1981 to 2014. He also taught at Southern Illinois University, Howard, American University and Georgetown University.

Joanne C. Smith, MD, is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab (formerly Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago or RIC). The Shirley Ryan AbilityLab is the global leader in physical medicine and rehabilitation for adults and children with the most severe, complex conditions. She has led the organization in its mission to provide the best patient outcomes through the highest-quality clinical care, translational research, scientific discovery and education. Today she is leading the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab into its novel vision for the future: to be the global source of science-driven breakthroughs in Human Ability.

Mavis Staples is an American rhythm and blues and gospel singer, actress, and civil rights activist. For more than 60 years, the Chicago native has found success recording as a solo artist and member of her family's band, The Staple Singers. Close friends of Martin Luther King, Jr., The Staple Singers were the spiritual and musical voices of the civil rights movement. Staples was recognized as a 2016 Kennedy Center Honoree and inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame.

“The Lincoln Academy is honored to award the Order of Lincoln to these six remarkable individuals,” **said Frank Clark, chancellor of the Academy.** “Abraham Lincoln exemplified what is great about our state, and the achievements and contributions of these honorees continue to illustrate the vibrancy and richness of Illinois.”

For attendance and further information, contact Executive Director Julie Kellner at 217-785-5030 or visit www.thelincolnacademyofillinois.org. Connect with The Lincoln Academy of Illinois on Facebook and LinkedIn.