

# KALAMAZOO ABRAHAM LINCOLN INSTITUTE

## Annual Report, November 5, 2021

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Since the last annual report to the Kalamazoo Abraham Lincoln Institute (KLI) Board of Directors on September 18, 2020, one member, Director Ted Vliek, has retired and two new members have joined the board: Directors Fred Colgren and James Spurr. Past Director Vliek has transitioned to the KLI's Advisory Committee and remains committed to the programs and goals of the organization.

Following several virtual meetings held during the peak months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the board returned to in-person meetings in 2021. During this period of challenge, the KLI's fund balance exceeded \$100,000 and the statue committee headed by newly appointed chair, Director Gary Swain, was reactivated with an eye to advancing the issuance of RFQs to identify qualified prospective artists.

Plans for a special-event fundraiser at the Zhang Legacy Collections Center continued to be placed on hold due to the Center's policy restricting public use of the facility during the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans shifted to the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association facility as an alternate venue and these plans now target February 12, 2022, as the date for the special-event fundraiser featuring a presentation by Director Dr. Tom George on who hosted Mr. Lincoln for tea during his stay in Kalamazoo—an article now published in the "Michigan Historical Review." This same presentation of original research was given by Director George at the 23rd annual Conference on Illinois History held on October 8, 2021 at the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois. The day before, KLI President, Cameron S. Brown, presented a paper titled "Lincoln's Winning Smile" at the same conference. As ambassadors of the KLI, both presenters provided conference attendees an opportunity to learn about the KLI and Abraham Lincoln's Kalamazoo connection.

The corporation's bylaws were twice amended during this time period—once to reflect the change in the corporation's name, and the other to allow for greater flexibility in the election of officers. Copies of the updated bylaws have been distributed to board members by email.

As part of the board's ongoing commitment to developing educational resources that build on Kalamazoo's Lincoln legacy, an Ad-hoc Education Committee was organized that produced a draft curriculum framework for teaching area students about Lincoln's Kalamazoo visit—all tied to Michigan's core curriculum requirements. The initial response from area educators has been positive. The project remains a work in progress. The draft proposal is downloadable from the home page of the KLI website.

The KLI's fundraising collaboration with the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War-Department of Michigan proved to be fruitful with funds raised from both the state and national organizations as well as individual camps and members. The special SUVCW-Dept of MI committee assigned to assist us is ongoing and will continue efforts to raise funds through 2022.

Some miscellaneous points of interest include the following: Printing Services of Portage, Michigan was hired to reprint a quantity of 1,000 Capital Campaign Brochures with the corporation's new name. All collateral materials were reprinted accordingly. The KLI exhibited at the June 2021 Kalamazoo Art Hop, and receipt of notification of the KLI's tax-exempt status under the "Institute" name was received dated September 10, 2021.

Planning for the February 12, 2022, special event at the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association and the pending issuance of RFQs will highlight the KLI's activities well into the 2022 year and move the Kalamazoo Abraham Lincoln Institute closer to fulfilling its multifaceted mission. The opportunities to enlarge upon Kalamazoo's unique Lincoln legacy continue to excite and motivate a board of committed citizens who have given their time building on a gift of history!

—Submitted by Cameron S. Brown, President