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Lawrence University

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# Panel of Lawrence Scholars Examine Constitutional Issues Faced by President Lincoln

January 8, 2013



Jerald Podair

A three-member panel of scholars will discuss constitutional issues presented by the Civil War Thursday, Jan. 10 at 4:30 p.m. in Lawrence University's Wriston Art Center auditorium. The program will include a question-and-answer session with the audience.

The presentation is in conjunction with the 1,000-square-foot traveling exhibit "Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War" that is on display in Lawrence's Seeley G. Mudd Library until Feb. 8. Both the panel presentation and the exhibition are free and open to the public.



Arnold Shober

Participating in the discussion will be Lawrence faculty members Jerald Podair, professor of history and Robert S. French Professor of American Studies, and Arnold Shober, associate professor of government. Joining them will be 1981 Lawrence graduate James Cornelius, curator of the Lincoln Collection at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum in Springfield, Ill.



James Cornelius '81

The panel will examine a variety of topics, among them:

- What the words "all men are created equal" meant in the Declaration of Independence, what they meant to Jefferson Davis and his fellow Confederates and how did Lincoln interpret the word "equal?"
- Was secession constitutional?
- How did Lincoln and Jefferson Davis reflect clashing understandings of the nature of the "more perfect Union" established by the Constitution?
- Did the Constitution form an unbreakable "contract" with the American people or a revocable "compact" between sovereign states?

- How did the stresses of civil war erode civil liberties in the United States?
- How did Lincoln balance national security and personal freedom during the Civil War, especially with regard to Northern critics of the war?
- Was Lincoln an extraconstitutional “tyrant,” as his political enemies argued?