Why is it important to promote Lincoln’s Legacy in Idaho?

“Abraham Lincoln was the greatest president of the United States of America and was influential in creating Idaho the greatest state in the Union.” David thinks it is important for every child to learn about the history of former presidents. Especially since Idaho is over 2,000 miles away from our Nation’s Capitol, Washington D.C. He believes the process of learning and appreciating history gives us context in participating in society to solve the nation’s most pressing problems.

David Leroy’s Credentials

- In 1971, he joined the law firm of Rothblatt, Rothblatt, Seijas & Peskin of New York City.
- Returned to Idaho in 1973 as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for Ada County.
- Elected Idaho’s Attorney General in 1978. While Attorney General he appeared before the U.S. Supreme Court in three major cases involving salmon and steelhead fishing, the Carey Act reclamation, and Idaho’s corporate takeover statute. He also authored and successfully lobbied Idaho’s nation-leading insanity defense elimination bill, the first of its kind to be passed into law in the United States.
- Presidential appointment as United States Nuclear Waste Negotiator serving from 1990—1993 creating and administering a new independent federal agency with the responsibility of designing a voluntary program, in interaction with the nation’s 50 state Governors and 565 federally recognized Indian tribes, to site temporary and permanent facilities for the storage of spent nuclear fuel.

Since 1988, David Leroy has continued to practice law in his law firm Leroy Law Offices with an emphasis in government and administrative law issues, criminal defense and family law trials, hearings, litigation, and counsel at state, federal, and local levels. He continues to promote Lincoln’s legacy in Idaho through his work with many different organizations and sharing his knowledge of Abraham Lincoln with others.

ADA COUNTY MAKING HISTORY AWARD

The Ada County Making History Award honors people whose activities today are creating our future history. Ada County is pleased to present its Making History Award to David H. Leroy a well known attorney, politician, and history buff for his efforts to promote and educate future generations of Idahoans on the legacy of President Abraham Lincoln.

David H. Leroy
The Ada County Board of County Commissioners is pleased to present its Making History Award to David H. Leroy for his contributions in honoring the history of President Abraham Lincoln and Lincoln’s connection to Idaho.
On April 14, 1865 Lincoln was visited by William Wallace who was the first Governor of Idaho Territory. Wallace was supposed to go to Ford’s Theatre that night with the Lincoln’s; however, he did not because his wife was ill. What would have happened if William Wallace attended the play that fateful night at Ford’s Theatre? Would history have been changed?

Fred Dubois who was an Idaho Territory Delegate and a U.S. Senator representing the State of Idaho lived across the street from the Lincoln’s in Springfield, Illinois when Dubois’s dad was Illinois State Auditor. During Dubois’s time as an Idaho Territory Delegate he was influential in supporting Idaho’s application for statehood and opposed efforts to split the territory among neighboring regions.

Promoter of Lincoln’s Legacy in Idaho

David has a varied leadership background as he has been chairman on a number of political campaigns and has served on a number of committees.

One committee with an historical focus he served on is the Idaho Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission was a part of a national effort to commemorate Abraham Lincoln’s 200th birthday in 2009. Idaho was one of 24 states to take part in the Commission, which established Lincoln Bicentennial programs and events.

Abraham Lincoln was significant to the State of Idaho because Lincoln signed the act creating the Idaho Territory on March 4, 1863.

David continues to promote Lincoln’s legacy in Idaho by serving as the Historian of the Ada County Lincoln Day Association. The Ada County Lincoln Day Association celebrates the memory and legacy of Abraham Lincoln with an annual event that takes place around Presidents’ Day. In 2012, David and his wife Nancy donated their collection of Abraham Lincoln memorabilia to the Idaho State Historical Society. The collection is quite significant and helps create one of the largest Abraham Lincoln exhibits in the western United States.

What sparked your interest in Abraham Lincoln?

“I have always been interested in presidents, lawyers, and lawyers who were presidents.” In 1978, as a young attorney running for Idaho Attorney General he needed something to say for the numerous Lincoln Day banquets held throughout the state. While doing research for his speech he discovered a number of intimate connections between Abraham Lincoln and Idaho.

For example, when Lincoln gave the Cooper Union address in New York on February 27, 1860 he had Mason Braymon stand at the back of the room. If Lincoln wasn’t being heard in the back of the room Braymon was to put a hat on the top of a cane and lift it up. Braymon did this and the speech was a resounding success. President Ulysses S. Grant later appointed Mason Braymon as the seventh Governor of the Idaho Territory.

David Leroy was born in Seattle, Washington and grew up in Lewiston Idaho. He earned a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from the University of Idaho and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Idaho’s College of Law. He also holds a Master of Laws in Trial Practice and Procedure from New York University’s School of Law. David has had a distinguished career in politics and law. He has served as Idaho’s Attorney General and Lieutenant Governor. David has been an enthusiastic promoter and supporter of history. He has a strong interest in Abraham Lincoln’s role in Idaho.