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2017 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize recipients announced

The 2017 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize will be awarded to two recipients this year: James B. Conroy, author of *Lincoln's White House: The People's House in Wartime* (Rowman and Littlefield), and Douglas R. Egerton, author of *Thunder at the Gates: The Black Civil War Regiments That Redeemed America* (Basic Books).

Both Conroy and Egerton will be recognized during an event hosted by Gettysburg College and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History at the Union League Club in New York City on Wednesday, April 19. The authors, who will split a \$50,000 prize, will each receive a bronze replica of Augustus Saint-Gaudens' life-size bust "Lincoln the Man."

"These are two wonderful books, both telling deeply human stories," said Gilder Lehrman Institute President James G. Basker. "From the White House to the battlefield, the presidency to the enlisted ranks, both books reveal the lived experience of people—the highs and lows of courage and misery, the heroic and mundane—during our nation's defining crisis. General readers and students of history both will find these books irresistible, and emotionally moving.

Basker is one of the six Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize Board members who decided this year's winners. In addition to Richard Gilder and Lewis Lehrman, principals of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in New York and co-creators of the Gilder Lehrman Collection, other board members include Gettysburg College President Janet Morgan Riggs and Trustees Emeriti David LeVan and H. Scott Higgins.

"We were pleased to see so many distinguished works of scholarship about Lincoln and the Civil War era this year," Riggs said. "Conroy's and Egerton's work stood out for the thoroughness of their research in areas about which we previously knew little—the day-to-day occurrences of the Lincoln White House and the lives of soldiers who served in black regiments. These works will engage the public and expand their understanding of Lincoln and the Civil War."

The laureates were recommended to the board by a three-person jury: Michael Burlingame, Chancellor Naomi B. Lynn Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies at the University of Illinois Springfield; Earl J. Hess, Stewart W. McClelland Chair in History at Lincoln Memorial University; and Martha

Hodes, Professor of History at New York University, 2016 Lincoln Prize recipient, and chair of the Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize jury.

“Conroy has written the first book focusing on the executive mansion and its denizens during the Lincoln administration,” wrote the jury, while also noting that Conroy has taken full advantage of previously unpublished primary sources. “Conroy skillfully avails himself of these and other primary sources to offer a vivid, highly readable account of how life was lived in the White House. A gifted prose stylist, Conroy fills that lacuna in the literature admirably.”

“Egerton brings the stories of three black regiments together, exploring their origins, their wartime service, and the post-war lives of their soldiers and officers,” wrote the panel. “This is a deeply and impeccably researched work, drawing on (to name just some of the sources) manuscript collections of personal papers, the black and white press, regimental records, draft records, records of the Department of the South, medical records, pension files, wartime letters and journals, memoirs, and photographs. Egerton’s is a brisk and personable narrative history that will reach a wide audience, with its vivid portraits of lives both on and off the battlefield.”

The jury also recommended four other works from 136 submissions: D. H. Dilbeck, *A More Civil War: How the Union Waged a Just War* (University of North Carolina Press); Chandra Manning, *Troubled Refuge: Struggling for Freedom in the Civil War* (Alfred A. Knopf); Charles B. Strozier, *Your Friend Forever, A. Lincoln: The Enduring Friendship of Abraham Lincoln and Joshua Speed* (Columbia University Press); and Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, eds., *Herndon on Lincoln: Letters* (University of Illinois Press).

Wilson and Davis have also been selected to receive a Special Achievement Award.

About the Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize

The Lincoln Prize is awarded annually by Gettysburg College and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History to a work that enhances the general public’s understanding of the Civil War era.

The Prize was co-founded in 1990 by businessmen and philanthropists Richard Gilder and Lewis Lehrman, co-chairmen of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in New York and co-creators of the Gilder Lehrman Collection.

Founded in 1994, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History is the nation’s leading K-12 American history organization. The Institute’s mission is to promote the knowledge and understanding of American history through educational programs and interactive resources for teachers, students, and the general public. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History is supported through the generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations. The Institute’s programs have been recognized by awards from the White House, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Organization of American Historians.

Founded in 1832, Gettysburg College is a highly selective four-year residential college of liberal arts and sciences with a strong academic tradition. Alumni include Rhodes Scholars, a Nobel laureate, and other distinguished scholars. The college enrolls 2,600 undergraduate students and is located on a 200-acre campus adjacent to the Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania.