

News Release

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“Lincoln Lives” Series Features “Mrs. Lincoln”

Who knows a great man better than his wife? Learn about the Lincolns’ lives and losses through the perspective of Mary Todd Lincoln, portrayed by Laura F. Keyes of Rockton, IL. The one-woman show, “Mrs. Lincoln,” is at 6 p.m. on Sept. 15, in the Community Room of the Main Library, 401 19th Street, Rock Island. The program is free and open to the public.

Miss Keyes will portray Mary Todd Lincoln on her husband’s final day in office, Friday, April 14, 1865. The short 45-minute play is set in the late afternoon, just a few short hours before the Lincolns left the White House to attend the ill-fated play “Our American Cousin” at Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C.. Miss Keyes, a Master’s Degree in Library Studies graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, meticulously researched the one-woman show.

Keyes also portrayed Mary Todd Lincoln in August 2008 at the Winneshiek Playhouse in Freeport, IL. Held in conjunction with the Sesquicentennial of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, this previous role was set in the summer of 1875, when a court of law declared Mary Lincoln insane and confined her to Bellevue Asylum in Batavia, Illinois.

Keyes has appeared in more than 30 plays since 1999. Past stage roles have included Mary Todd Lincoln in *Mrs. Lincoln*, Elizabeth in *Frankenstein*, Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*, Gwendolyn in *The Odd Couple*, Cecily in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Titania in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

The program is funded by a gift from the Friends of the Rock Island Public Library. All of the above events are free and open to the public. Libraries offer plenty of print, online, visual and audio resources, many of which are free with a library card. For money-saving entertainment, enlightenment and enrichment for all ages, visit the Rock Island Main, 30/31 and Southwest Branch libraries, or check the Rock Island Library online at www.ripl.lib.il.us for details about library cards, services and free events for the family.

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Photo credit: Photography by Andrioli

Interview with the actress

<http://awesometalks.wordpress.com/2009/01/26/an-awesometalk-with-laura-frances-keyes-mary-todd-lincoln-performer/>