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The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation Announces Gary Sinise Will Receive the 2021 Lincoln Leadership Prize

Actor and humanitarian will be honored for his tireless efforts on behalf of military families

CHICAGO, (January 14, 2021) – The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation (ALPLF), the organization solely focused on fundraising to support the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois, announced today that it will award its prestigious Lincoln Leadership Prize to award-winning actor and philanthropist Gary Sinise.

Mr. Sinise is being recognized for his commitment to helping and supporting veterans, active-duty military, first responders, their families and those in need. The Prize will be awarded on April 13, 2021 in a virtual ceremony.

Established in 2006, The Lincoln Leadership Prize is presented annually to outstanding individuals for a lifetime of service in the spirit of the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. Previous recipients of the ALPLF include: Philanthropist David Rubenstein; 43rd President of the United States George W. Bush; Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair; Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson; Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin; Civil Rights Activists The Little Rock Nine; Filmmaker Steven Spielberg; 42nd President of the United States Bill Clinton; former Polish President Lech Walesa; Journalist Tim Russert; Astronaut James Lovell, Jr.; Archbishop Desmond Tutu; and Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

Sinise, an Emmy, Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild award-winning actor, and Founder of the Gary Sinise Foundation, has been singularly devoted to veterans and military families and



considers it his life's work. While it may seem his connection to the troops is due to his iconic role as Lt. Dan in *Forrest Gump*, Sinise's connection to and appreciation of the military precedes his iconic, Oscar-nominated portrayal. His autobiography, The New York Times Best Seller *Grateful American: A Journey from Self to Service*, chronicles his journey from rebellious teenager to discovering his love of acting and his close to forty years of helping and supporting those who serve.

In 2020, Gary Sinise and his Foundation entered into its 10th year, establishing itself as one of today's leading nonprofit organizations raising awareness and supporting those who serve. The Foundation's programs and initiatives tackle a variety of needs, including building mortgage free specially adapted smart homes for severely wounded veterans through its *R.I.S.E (Restoring Independence, Supporting Empowerment) program*, traveling WWII veterans to the National WWII Museum in New Orleans through *Soaring Valor*, performing and lifting the spirits of those serving our country through his *Lt Dan Band* concerts, traveling the kids of our fallen military heroes to Disney World for 5 days of fun, hope, and healing through *Snowball Express*, and more. When the pandemic hit early in 2020, the Foundation quickly established its *Emergency COVID 19 Combat Service* initiative, which expanded its outreach to include healthcare workers on the frontline. Also, in 2020, the Foundation launched its Florida chapter – the first of many future satellite locations and began expanding its *Mental Health* initiative helping those suffering with PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, and addiction/recovery.

"I am deeply grateful to be honored among the distinguished individuals who have received the Lincoln Leadership Prize," said Sinise. "I support the important work that the Foundation, Library, and Museum are doing, and am pleased to play a small role in helping to raise awareness of their shared mission."

"President Lincoln cared deeply about the troops, and there are few people today who care more – and do more – for our men and women in uniform and their families than Gary Sinise," said Sergio ("Satch") Pecori, chairman of the ALPLF Board of Directors. "While we, of course, can't speak for President Lincoln, we believe he would be most supportive of this choice."

"The lessons and leadership example of President Lincoln have never been more important to our country, and our responsibility is to do all we can to ensure those lessons are understood and shared," said Erin Carlson Mast, the ALPLF's new President and CEO. "This year, for the first time, we are holding our signature fundraising event virtually. I hope all who recognize President Lincoln's and appreciate Mr. Sinise's contributions to our country will join us."

The Lincoln Leadership Prize ceremony serves as the primary fundraiser for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation for the benefit of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, which is not a part of the federal system of presidential libraries. For more information



about the Lincoln Leadership Prize, please visit www.alplm.org. For tickets and/or table sponsorship information please call Courtney Galassini cgalassini@PJHCHICAGO.COM.

About the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation supports the collections and the educational and cultural programming of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum; fosters Lincoln scholarship through the acquisition and publication of documentary materials relating to Lincoln and his era; and promotes a greater appreciation of history through exhibits, conferences, publications, online services, and other activities designed to promote historical literacy.

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