

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Kathryn Harris

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
IHPA Legacy Oral History project

Interview # HP-A-L-2016-039

Kathryn Harris, the former Director of Library Services at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *IHPA Legacy* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Aug 3, 16, 23, 31 & Sep 6, 2016

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:52 + 0:54 + 1:22 + 2:00 + 2:03 / 1.87 + 0.9 + 1.37 + 2.0 + 2.05 = 8.19 hrs.

Session 1: Early years with IL State Historical Library, 1984-1991

Session 2: IL State Historical Library during its move to the Howlett Bldg., 1993-95

Session 3: Selection as director of Library, and planning for new Library & Museum

Session 4: Opening of new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and the Museum

Session 5: Staff challenges and changes in the years since opening of ALPLM

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on January 3, 2017.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Kathryn Harris, *IHPA Legacy*, HP-A-L-2016-039

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Kathryn Harris was born on December 5th, 1947 in Carbondale, Illinois. Her early life and family history is preserved in an interview in the ALPL Oral History Family Memories project. This interview concentrates on Harris's long tenure with the Illinois State Historical Library since 1984, through her retirement as Library Services Director from the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in early 2015.

In 1984 Kathryn moved from the Illinois State Library, which was part of the Secretary of State's office, to the Illinois State Historical Library, which was under the governor's office. The Historical Library was located underneath the Old State Capitol in Springfield. She discusses the role of the Historical Library in detail, as well as the temporary movement of most of the books and materials to the Howlett Building in 1993 in order to upgrade the building's climate control. In 1995 the Library installed moveable shelving, and it was in that timeframe that conversations about building a new library (and later museum) began in order to better house and display the many Abraham Lincoln artifacts that were part of the Historical Library's collection. Harris became the Library's director in early 1996. He talks at length about the planning for the Presidential Library, for which groundbreaking occurred on February 12th, 2001. The new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library opened in October, 2004 and the Museum opened on April 19, 2005. Kathryn also discusses staff and management challenges that occurred at the library and museum from their opening until her retirement in early 2015.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Illinois State Historical Library; Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum; Old State Capitol; Tom Schwartz; Susan Mogerman; Richard Norton Smith; Eileen Mackevich; Amy Martin; Dawn DeFraties; Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Advisory Board; Bob Rogers; Rick Beard; Julie Cellini; George Ryan; Lura Lynn Ryan; Robert Newtonson; Steve Neal (journalist)

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