



# Supreme Court of Illinois

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## **JOSEPH SMITH PROGRAM PRESENTED IN UTAH, CULMINATES YEAR-LONG SERIES OF EVENTS**

Dramatic re-enactments of the extradition hearings of the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith were presented recently before sold-out crowds at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City and at Brigham Young University in Provo.

The Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum worked in conjunction with the S.J. Quinney College of Law at The University of Utah and the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University to present the original theatrical production and panel discussion to over 2,100 attendees at both universities.

The program, titled "Habeas Corpus in the Courts: Individual Liberties from Joseph Smith to Abraham Lincoln to Guantanamo", addressed court protection of individual liberties. Utah Governor Gary Herbert, several members of the Utah Supreme Court, federal court judges and Utah state legislators were among those who attended the event in Salt Lake City.

"The Historic Preservation Commission has done extraordinary work since its inception to bring cultural and educational events to the public," Chief Justice Rita B. Garman said. "We thank everyone who has given of themselves to make this educational series on Joseph Smith a resounding success." Chief Justice Garman, along with Justice Anne M. Burke, serves as Supreme Court liaisons to the Historic Preservation Commission.

"We are grateful for the very warm hospitality that was extended to us by those we met during our time in Utah," Justice Burke said. "The outpouring of enthusiasm demonstrates that these endeavors fill a cultural and educational void. The Commission looks forward to presenting additional programs."

The Utah programs culminated a year-long series of events regarding Joseph Smith's legal challenges. In April 2013, the program made its debut in Springfield with a roundtable discussion in the Senate Hearing Room in the Illinois Capitol Building.

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## **Joseph Smith Program Presented in Utah Add One**

That discussion initiated the series by bringing together judges, lawyers, and historians in two separate panels to address court protection of individual liberties, particularly religious freedom in the United States. Gery Chico, chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education and senior partner at the Chicago law firm of Chico & Nunes, served as moderator for the discussions in both Illinois and Utah.

In September 2013, a lecture and plenary session on Joseph Smith's legal troubles was featured during a tour of Nauvoo Ill., a town founded by Smith. Dramatic re-enactments of the Joseph Smith trial were held in Springfield on September 24, 2013; in Chicago on October 14, 2013; and on March 25-26, 2014 in Utah.

The Theatre School at DePaul University provided the production and actors for the re-enactments in Illinois and Utah. The production crew included Jeffrey Walker, Dean Corrin, Sandy Shinner, Shane Kelley, Stephen Pebbles, and Meredith Matthews. Cast members include Nicholas Harazin, Clayton Stamper, Ed Porter, and Michael Kingston.

The Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission was created by the Legislature in 2007 to assist and advise the Illinois Supreme Court in collecting and preserving documents, artifacts and the rich history relating to the Illinois judiciary, as well as performing an educational function.

Over the past few years, the Commission has partnered with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, a division of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, to present several cultural and educational events, including a dramatization of the commitment trial of Mary Todd Lincoln; discussions on court protection of individual liberties and the use of habeas corpus in Guantanamo Bay cases and Mormon prophet Joseph Smith court cases; and a re-enactment of the trial of Mary Surratt, the first woman executed by the federal government. She was charged with conspiracy to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln.

The Commission has also served in an advisory capacity in the current rehabilitation of the Illinois Supreme Court Building, which opened in 1908.

The Commission also seeks to accomplish much of its work in partnership with historical and cultural institutions; bar associations, universities, law schools, and federal, state, and local agencies. Nine members comprise the governing body. The Supreme Court, the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate President each appoint two members; and the Director of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts serves as *ex officio*. Former Illinois Governor James R. Thompson serves as chairman of the Commission.

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