

2026 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize Recipient Announced

\$50,000 award to be presented to historian in April

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, March 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History](https://www.einpresswire.com/news/2026-03-11/the-gilder-lehrman-institute-of-american-history-announced-2026-gilder-lehrman-lincoln-prize-recipient) announced today that Richard Carwardine, author of *Righteous Strife: How Warring Religious Nationalists Forged Lincoln's Union* (Knopf), will receive the [2026 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize](https://www.gilderlehrman.org/awards/lincoln-prize).

Carwardine will be recognized during an award ceremony to be held in New York on April 16, 2026. The award includes a \$50,000 prize and a bronze replica of Augustus Saint-Gaudens's life-sized bust Lincoln the Man.

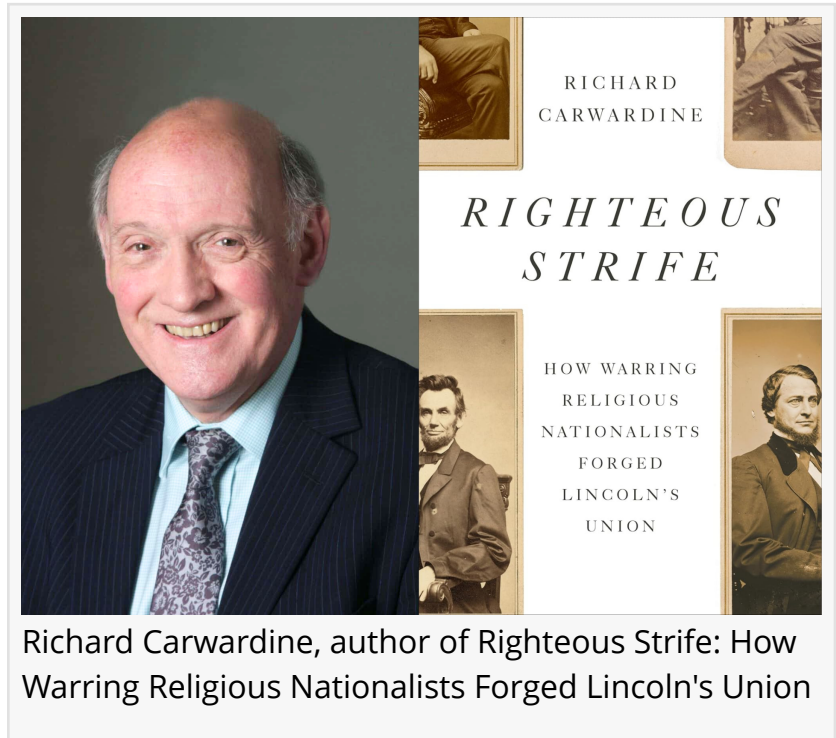
In *Righteous Strife*, Carwardine reinterprets the American Civil War by examining how competing forms of religious nationalism shaped the conflict and Abraham Lincoln's leadership.

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Richard Carwardine

Richard Carwardine is a Welsh historian and leading scholar of American history. Educated at the University of Oxford, he taught at the University of Sheffield before returning to Oxford as Rhodes Professor of American History and later serving as president of Corpus Christi College Oxford. This is the second time Carwardine has been awarded the Lincoln Prize; his book *Lincoln* won the award in 2004. He is a fellow of the British Academy and the Royal Historical Society, and in 2019 he was appointed a Companion of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George for services to the study of American history.



Richard Carwardine, author of *Righteous Strife: How Warring Religious Nationalists Forged Lincoln's Union*

“Naturally, I am thrilled by the immeasurable honor of receiving the 2026 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize,” said Carwardine. “My book has been a long time in the making and owes much to the outstanding work and generous collegiality of so many other Civil War historians. Its purpose is to show that, as president, Abraham Lincoln found himself at the heart of a struggle for national existence where faith bled into politics and politics equally bled into faith. In the ‘righteous strife’ between the Union’s antislavery and conservative religious nationalists, Lincoln became a fully engaged participant, rethinking his pre-war faith and embracing a view of God’s purposes that he so eloquently framed in his Second Inaugural Address.”

James G. Basker, president and CEO of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, said, “This brilliant book enables us to see how religion and politics combined to stir passions on both sides in the Civil War, while also shaping Lincoln’s efforts to reunite and heal the nation. It goes to the heart of the American story.”

Basker is one of five Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize board members who selected this year’s laureate. In addition to Lewis E. Lehrman, a co-founder of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and co-creator of the Gilder Lehrman Collection with the late Richard Gilder, other board members include Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Trustees Thomas D. Lehrman, Robert H. Niehaus, and Linda Pace, and Gettysburg College Trustee Gordon Beittenmiller.

Thomas Lehrman observed, “In *Righteous Strife* Carwardine reveals how American religious freedom and genuine convictions of faith influenced the Civil War and Lincoln’s thought, culminating in his immortal Second Inaugural Address: ‘With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in.’ Historians and the general public alike will draw deep insights and inspiration from this remarkable work for generations to come.”

Selected from ninety nominations, *Righteous Strife* was one of seven finalists recommended by a jury chaired by Amy Murrell Taylor, T. Marshall Hahn Jr. Professor of History at the University of Kentucky. Jurors also included Robert K. D. Colby of the University of Mississippi and Andrew F. Lang of Mississippi State University.

In their report to the board, the jury wrote, “Tracing the competing religious impulses that infused the quest to preserve the republic, Carwardine reveals the Civil War North’s profound drive to crush the sin of slavery from threatening what many saw as God’s favored nation. . . . In scouring a staggering array of primary sources, Carwardine proves his case, showing how preserving the Union and destroying slavery became intertwined in what many believed to be the demands of divine Providence.”

The six other finalists are Douglas R. Egerton, *A Man on Fire: The Worlds of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (Oxford University Press); Judith Giesberg, *Last Seen: The Enduring Search* by Formerly

Enslaved People to Find Their Lost Families (Simon & Schuster); Robert Gudmestad, *The Devil's Own Purgatory: The United States Mississippi River Squadron in the Civil War* (Louisiana State University Press); Jonathan S. Jones, *Opium Slavery: Civil War Veterans and America's First Opioid Crisis* (University of North Carolina Press); Anne E. Marshall, *Cassius Marcellus Clay: The Life of an Antislavery Slaveholder and the Paradox of American Reform* (University of North Carolina Press); and Michael Vorenberg, *Lincoln's Peace: The Struggle to End the American Civil War* (Knopf).

About the Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize

The Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize is awarded annually to a work that enhances the general public's understanding of Abraham Lincoln, the American Civil War soldier, or the American Civil War era. The \$50,000 prize was established in 1990 by philanthropists Lewis E. Lehrman and the late Richard Gilder, in partnership with Gettysburg College and the late Gabor Boritt, founding director of the Civil War Institute and longtime professor at Gettysburg College.

About the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History was founded in 1994 by Lewis E. Lehrman and the late Richard Gilder, visionaries and lifelong supporters of American history education. The Institute is the leading nonprofit and nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of American history through educational programs and resources. It serves K-12 teachers and students, honors scholars, and welcomes and informs the general public. At the core of the Institute is the Gilder Lehrman Collection, one of the great archives in American history, with more than 87,000 primary source documents. Learn more at gilderlehrman.org and follow the Gilder Lehrman Institute on Facebook, Instagram, Bluesky, and X.

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