

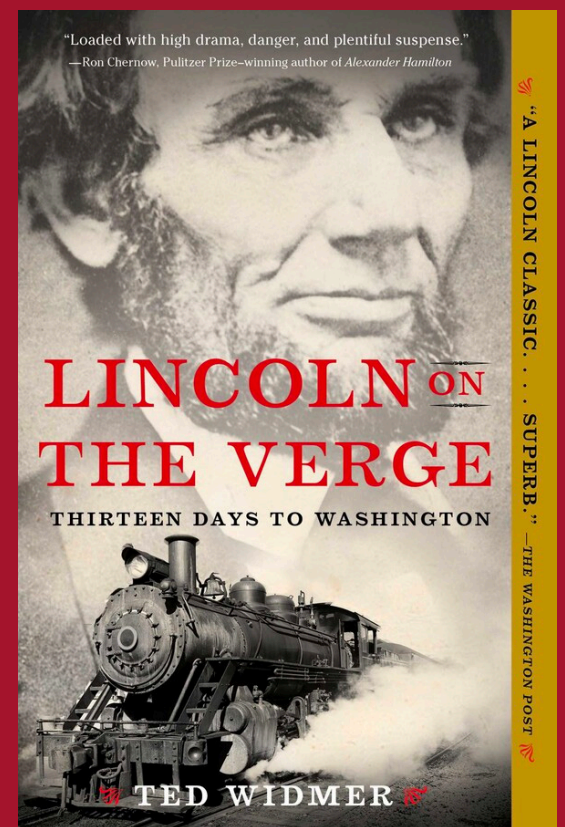
GRAND  
CHALLENGES  
FORUM  
2021-2022

# THE PRESIDENTS' DAY LECTURE

## “Lincoln on the Verge”

Dr. Widmer's GCF talk will focus on his recent, award-winning book, *Lincoln On The Verge: Thirteen Days to Washington*. As the divided nation plunged into the deepest crisis of its history, Lincoln boarded a train in Springfield headed to Washington and his inauguration – an inauguration which his Southerner enemies vowed to prevent by any means. These thirteen days of travel reveal how Lincoln as the President-elect forged a bond with the American people through his rhetoric, while facing adversity and assassination attempts on his way to take his oath of office, finally emerging as a statesman on the verge of greatness.

**Dr. Edward Widmer**  
Honors Professor, CUNY



Friday, March 4 | 1-2 p.m. | CEMO Hall 100D



**Dr. Edward (Ted) Widmer** is a nationally acclaimed presidential historian, librarian, and professor in the Macaulay Honors College of the City University of New York (CUNY). He served as a speechwriter in the Clinton White House. He is developing a new Humanities Lab at Macaulay. His latest book is *Lincoln on the Verge: Thirteen Days to Washington*.

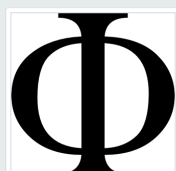
Prof. Widmer obtained an A.B. in the history and literature of France and the United States, an A.M. in history, and a Ph.D. in the history of American civilization from Harvard University. At Harvard, he was an editor at the *Harvard Lampoon*. Widmer was appointed lecturer on history and literature at Harvard University from 1993 until 1997. From 1997 to 2001, he worked in the White House as a special assistant to President Bill Clinton, foreign policy speech writer and Senior Advisor for Special Projects, which involved advising on history and scholarship related issues. He later conducted extensive interviews with Clinton while the former president was writing his autobiography.

He was the first director of the C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience from 2001 to 2006 and an associate professor of history at Washington College from 2001. While there he created the George Washington Book Prize, an annual award given to the best book on the founding fathers.

In 2006 he was appointed Director and Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, where he led efforts to digitize the library's holdings, and raised funds to save Haitian libraries in the wake of the 2010 earthquake. From 2012 to 2013, Widmer was a senior advisor to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Between 2010 and 2015, he helped to create and often contributed to *The New York Times* "Disunion," a digital history of the Civil War. In October, 2016, Widmer was appointed Director of the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress.

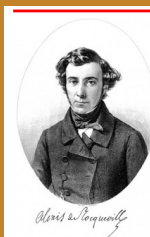
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