

## **Presidents, Their Books and Their Readers**

**Date:** January 11, 2021 at 6:30pm

Click [here](#) to watch the recording of this program

A free virtual lecture was presented on Zoom by **presidential writings expert, Craig Fehrman**. In this illustrated lecture, Fehrman opened a rich new window into presidential biographies by analyzing American presidents through the lens of the works they have written.

### **Program Description**

Most Americans are familiar with Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and the Emancipation Proclamation, yet few can name his published collection of speeches, *Political Debates between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas*, that helped him win the presidency. Touching on Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, the first presidential book to influence a campaign; John Adams's *Autobiography*, the first score-settling presidential memoir; never-before-published letters from Andrew Jackson, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan, Fehrman will cast fresh light on the private drives and self-doubts that fueled our nation's leaders. His stories and telling details create an unprecedented and surprisingly human take on our presidents, including George Washington and the notes for a biographer that he wrote in secret and then tried to have burned! Drawing on his personal experiences, Fehrman will also describe what it was like, as a researcher, finding brand new documents in Kennedy's handwriting at the JFK Library. Turning to his audience, he will inquire whether it knows the history of history lovers such as themselves.

### **About Craig Fehrman**

Craig Fehrman is an author, journalist, and historian who has written for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, among others. In 2020, he authored two notable books: *The Best Presidential Writing from 1789 to the Present* and *Author in Chief - The Untold Story of Our Presidents and The Books They Wrote*, which Thomas Mallon in the *Wall Street Journal* described as "one of the best books on the American presidency to appear in recent years." Fehrman did his graduate studies at Yale University. Currently, he lives in Indiana with his wife and children and is an adjunct professor at Indiana University.

**Fehrman's books are available for checkout at the Gunn Memorial Library.**



President John F. Kennedy signing *Profiles in Courage*.



Craig Fehrman