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I am profoundly honored and stunned to be nominated to be a West Virginia History Hero. I never considered myself worthy enough to be a member of such a prestigious class of people. Throughout my life I have had a love for history and genealogy. Through studying history and genealogy you can connect the lessons of the past with the opportunity of the future. I love the discovery who people are, when they lived, their occupation, their lifestyle and how one group of people is related to another.

I was born with a disability, cerebral palsy, which gives me the time flexibility to be able to do genealogy research. I have been able to go to the courthouse and library, retrieve obituaries and have hundreds of these posted on the Marshall County Genealogy Website. I routinely spend countless hours exploring courthouses, obituaries, cemeteries, and web sites to expand the horizons of my genealogy research. Studying different writing styles has taught me how to write and publish six original obituaries when the situation required it. It is my hope that this act gives ease and comfort to the families during a difficult time.

By obtaining a copies of the death certificates, going to the cemetery, and meeting with a monument company, I was able to purchase headstones for relatives who died years ago.

As a Committee Assistant (Part-time) with the West Virginia House of Delegates. I have researched biographical information of persons to receive a prestigious award from the Governor's Office, namely Distinguished Mountaineer, 35th Star, and Distinguished West Virginian. In addition, I traced the Chairs of the Committee on Education, so that an appropriate plaque could be placed in the Committee Room.

In front of churches, schools, community service clubs, I have had the unique honor to portray one of the most notable figures in American history, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln. As Mr. Lincoln, I have performed the Gettysburg Address, Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln, the Oath of Office, Farewell Address to Springfield, Illinois, Proclamation of West Virginia Statehood, and the letter to Mrs. Bixby. On February 12, 1992, I was privileged to address the West Virginia State Senate as President Lincoln. At the invitation and compassion of the Honorable Mary M. Poling, Chairwoman of the Committee on Education, West Virginia House of Delegates, I portrayed President Lincoln before the Committee on March 1, 2007. I have the honor of presenting President Lincoln, annually to the American Legion Mountaineer Boys' State. The state police bring me in a cruiser, lights and sirens going, the band plays "Hail to the Chief", the master of ceremonies, says "Ladies and Gentlemen, The president of the United States, is here". Mr. Lincoln speaks before 370 young man, parents and families from across the state of West Virginia, at Jackson's Mill State 4-H Conference Center, Weston.

I have lived my life to be community service and served as District Governor of the former West Virginia Civitan club 2002 to 2004. On July 12, 2004, Sheriff Thomas F. Burgoyne appointed me as a Special Deputy Sheriff in Ohio County, the Oath of was administered Judge Arthur M. Recht.

I have had a fantastic life where I could expand my knowledge and love for the Lord, and in fields of politics, history, and genealogy. President Lincoln remarked in his Farewell Address to Springfield, Illinois "To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything...." That is an excellent description of my love for the state of West Virginia.

Respectfully,

James Edward Dague