



Eastern Connecticut State University

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

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Eastern Set to Celebrate National African American History Month

Willimantic, Conn. – Eastern Connecticut State University is observing National African American History Month in February with more than a dozen events, including documentaries, story-telling, book displays and discussions, theatrical presentations, poetry readings, game shows, and much more. The public is invited. Admission is free to most events.

Eastern will begin its celebration early on Jan. 21 with the broadcast of “*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Look Back*,” a 12-part television series produced by Eastern Public Relations Officer Dwight Bachman. Beginning at midnight on Jan. 21, one of the segments will air every even hour throughout the day on Eastern’s cable channel 22.

On Jan. 22, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Student Center Theatre, the university will present “*Tony Brown’s Essay on Martin Luther King*,” a film tribute to King. A discussion on the documentary will follow in the Intercultural Center, located in the Arthur L. Johnson Unity Wing of the Student Center.

On Feb. 2, Step Afrika, the first professional African American Step Production Company, will perform a traditional celebration of culture through dance. The performance begins at 8 p.m. in the Betty R. Tipton Room of the Student Center.

On Feb. 4, Eastern's Campus Activities Board will show "*Do It: A Hip Hop Documentary*," at 8 p.m. in the Student Center Theatre,

On Feb. 5 at 7 p.m., Eastern's West Indian Society and Intercultural Center staff will present West Indian and African American storytelling and food tasting in the Intercultural Center.

Beginning on Feb. 7, and running throughout the month, the J. Eugene Smith Library will display an exhibit of African American writers on the second floor of the library.

On Feb. 12 at 7 p.m. in Shafer Auditorium, located in Shafer Hall at the corner of Windham and Valley Streets, Actor Mel Johnson, Jr. will present "Frederick Douglass: In the Shadow of Slavery." Tickets are \$10 for the general public. Admission is free for all students, as well as Eastern faculty and staff.

On Feb. 13, Johnson will present two encore performances of "Frederick Douglass: In the Shadow of Slavery" in Shafer Auditorium. The first performance will be a matinee at 11 a.m. Tickets are \$12 for the general public, \$10 for Eastern faculty and staff, and \$5 for middle and high school students. Admission is free for Eastern students. The second performance takes place at 3 p.m. and is part of Eastern's regular University Hour Series. Admission is free.

On Feb. 20, at 7 p. m. in the Student Center Theatre, Eastern students and faculty will present the drama production "*Our Voices*," a series of theatre monologues from prominent African American leaders throughout history.

On Feb. 22, from 5 to 10 p. m., the Intercultural Center will host a dinner and discussion of Toni Morrison's acclaimed novel, "*The Bluest Eye*," followed by a trip to the Hartford Stage to see the theatrical adaptation of the book. Persons interested in reserving a seat should call (860) 465-4421. Seating is limited and will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

On Feb. 24, cash prizes will be given to the winners on an African American History Game Show. The quiz program takes place at 7 p.m. in the Betty R. Tipton Room of the Student Center.

At 3 p.m. on Feb. 27, Bennie McMorris, vice president of student affairs at Hampton University, will discuss what it means to be young and gifted, based on Lorraine Hansberry's book, *"Young, Gifted, and Black."* The forum begins at 3 p.m. in the Student Center Theatre.

On Feb. 27, Eastern will present three individuals -- an Eastern student; an Eastern faculty or staff member; and a member of the community, with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Distinguished Service Awards during a ceremony at 6 p.m. in the Paul E. Johnson, Sr. Community Conference Room of the J. Eugene Smith Library. The award recognizes members of the campus and community whose actions demonstrate distinguished service in promoting King's ideals.

On Feb. 29, Def Poet Bassey Ikpi will perform during Eastern's fourth annual Def Poetry Jam, a spoken word showcase from HBO's hit series. The show begins at 8 p.m. in the Student Center Theatre.

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Eastern Connecticut State University is part of the Connecticut State University (CSU) system and is the state's public liberal arts university. ECSU serves more than 5,000 students each year on its Willimantic campus.

It is the policy of Eastern Connecticut State University to ensure equal access to its events. If you are an individual with a disability and will need accommodations for this event, please contact the Office of University Relations at (860) 465-5735.

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