



Eastern Connecticut State University

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

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“They Call Me Lizzie”

Willimantic, Conn. – Actor Stephanie Jackson of Farmington, will portray Elizabeth Keckly, an enslaved woman who persevered to become dressmaker to President Abraham Lincoln’s wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, in a one-person theatrical performance, “They Call Me Lizzie.” The performance will take place from 3 to 4 p.m. on Feb. 18 in the Betty R. Tipton Room of Eastern Connecticut State University’s Student Center. The event is part of Eastern’s University Hour Series. The public is invited. Admission is free.

Elizabeth Keckly’s story is one of bravery, ingenuity and resilience. Keckly was born Virginia. At the age of five she began fulfilling her duties as a slave to plantation owners Armistead and Mary Burwell. Keckly’s mother, who was the household seamstress, taught her daughter to sew at a young age. These sewing lessons laid the framework for Keckly’s much sought after, hand-crafted garments.

As Keckly grew older, her garment business brought her to Washington, DC., where she became known as an outstanding designer and creator of fine dresses. Keckly’s patrons included Varina Davis, wife of Jefferson Davis; Mary Anne Randolph Custis Lee, wife of Robert E. Lee; and Mary Todd Lincoln. Keckly lived in the White House with the Lincoln’s for four years, becoming personal confidant to Mary Todd Lincoln.

Jackson is an alumna of the University of Connecticut. She originated the role of Elizabeth Keckly in 2006 for the East Haddam Stage Company. She has previously created roles in such diverse productions as Tiwana Lewis's social issues theatre piece, "Slice of Life," and portrayed the ancient African leader Yaa Asantewaa for the University of Connecticut's theater department. In addition to acting, Jackson is an assistant special education teacher at Connecticut's Oak Hill School for the Blind.

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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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