



Members of the Eastern Connecticut State University club Fashion Forward put on a fashion show in honor of late student Alyssiah Wiley Wednesday while Alyssiah's mother, Corrinna, Martin gives a standing ovation. Rebecca Ingoglia | For the Chronicle

# ECSU domestic violence event honors slain student's memory

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WILLIMANTIC—Basketball players, fashion models and legislators all united around one main goal Thursday at Eastern Connecticut State University — silencing domestic violence.

The first Alyssiah Wiley End Relationship Violence Basketball Tournament was held Wednesday afternoon at ECSU.

But this was way more than just a hoops event.

While the tournament was held in the Geissler Gymnasium, events and activities related to Wiley and domes-

tic violence prevention were held in the Student Center.

Wiley, of West Haven, was an Eastern sophomore in 2013. When her relationship with boyfriend, Jermaine Richards, turned violent, she attempted to end it.

Instead, Richards ended her life and left her remains less than 2 miles from his Bridgeport home. In March 2018, Richards was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 60 years in prison.

This basketball tournament was the first event of its kind and organizers hope it can



Fashion Forward members hug Martin at the event, which raised awareness of domestic violence in honor of Wiley, who was slain by an abusive boyfriend. Rebecca Ingoglia | For the Chronicle

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become an annual event. Wiley's mother, Corrinna Martin, spoke to tournament attendants about her daughter, her personal struggles since her death and ways to prevent domestic violence. Martin said events like these take the sting away from her daughter's death. "We need events like this," Martin said. "To be able to have such an outpouring of support speaks volumes to where we are as a society." Martin said proactive work can have a notable impact on preventing and reducing domestic violence.

She is working to introduce domestic violence legislation, specifically the creation of a violent offender registry.

Meanwhile, between rounds of the tournament, Eastern's Fashion Forward Club held a fashion show in Wiley's honor.

Wiley loved fashion and was known for her keen fashion sense.

The club showed outfits featuring shades of purple — the color of royalty, but also the color associated with the domestic violence cause.

On the catwalk, models danced to female empowerment songs like Beyoncé's "Run the World (Girls)" and "Flawless," Aretha Franklin's "Respect" and Alicia Key's "Girl on Fire."

Organizer and professor Brenda Westberry said this event drew support from



Above, Alyssiah Wiley's family enjoys the fashion show, below, put on by Eastern Connecticut State University's Fashion Forward club in honor of the murdered student on Wednesday. Pictured are Alyssiah's aunt Shayla Streater, cousins Amayah Smith, 7, and Auriyah Benyehudah, 12, mother Corrinna Martin and stepfather John Rich. Rebecca Ingoglia | For the Chronicle



members inside and outside the Eastern community.

Others involved with Wiley's case and domestic violence prevention in general attended, such as prosecutor Ann Lawlor, Willimantic Police Chief Roberto Rosado

and Windham County State's Attorney Anne Mahoney.

State Rep. Robyn Porter, D- New Haven, also spoke at the start of the event.

Several Eastern, local and regional organizations that work on domestic vio-

lence had tables at the event, including the Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern Connecticut and the United Services Domestic Violence Program.

Students participated in raffles, giveaways and games centered around domestic violence prevention.

Finally, students could have their hair, makeup or nails done, another of Wiley's favorite past times.

"Everybody here is relaxed and engaged and talking and that's what we want to do," Mahoney said. "We have the messages now, we just need people to be able to grasp them."

Follow Claire Galvin on Twitter - @CGalvinTC.