

ECSU to host activist/filmmaker for visit

EASTERN CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY

WILLIMANTIC — Keith Beauchamp, producer of the documentary “The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till,” will speak at Eastern Connecticut State University on Tuesday and Wednesday.

On Tuesday, Beauchamp will speak at noon in Room 301 of the Science Building at Eastern on the topic “pursuing change through passion and perseverance.”

On Wednesday, at 3 p.m., in the Student Center Theatre, he will deliver the keynote address during Eastern’s presentation of its annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Service Awards.

While visiting family in Money, Miss., in 1955 14-year-old Till, an African American from Chicago, was brutally murdered for allegedly flirting with a white woman. His assailants — the white woman’s husband and her brother — took Till to the bank of the Tallahatchie River, ordered him to take off his clothes, beat him nearly to death, gouged out his eye, shot him in the head and then threw his body, tied to a cotton-gin fan with barbed wire, into the river.

Beauchamp identified with Till’s tragic death, after an undercover police officer assaulted him after dancing with a white classmate at a



Filmmaker Keith Beauchamp. Contributed photo

party when he was a young boy, too, when a friend told him the Emmett Till story when he was just 10 years old.

It was at this young age that Beauchamp also saw a “Jet” magazine that contained a picture of Till’s dead body

Beauchamp felt compelled to fight racism by pursuing his dream of becoming a filmmaker.

He moved to New York City and found work at Big Baby Films, a company founded by childhood friends that focused on music video production.

In 1999, Beauchamp founded Till Freedom Come Productions, a company devoted to socially significant projects that taught and entertained.

He has traveled extensively between New York, Chicago and Mississippi to investigate the historic murder.

Through his journey, he tracked and spoke with wit-

nesses who had never before spoken about the case.

He befriended Till’s mother Mamie Till Mobley — who took Beauchamp under her wing and worked with such influential figures as Muhammad Ali and the Rev. Al Sharpton, all the while persistently lobbying both the State of Mississippi and the federal government to reopen the Emmett Till murder investigation.

On May 10, 2004, the U.S. Department of Justice reopened the 50-year-old murder case, citing Beauchamp’s documentary “The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till” as both a major factor in their decision and the starting point for their investigation.

In May 2005, Emmett’s body was exhumed, and in

Keith Beauchamp has been featured on ‘60 Minutes’ ...

2006, the FBI turned over their evidence to the appropriate district attorney in Mississippi.

Sadly, in February 2007, a Mississippi grand jury decided to not indict the remaining suspects in the case.

That same year, Beauchamp begin his collaboration with the FBI’s new civil rights

“Cold Case” initiative, producing documentaries on other unsolved civil rights murders in hopes of helping federal agents with their investigations that could lead to bringing remaining perpetrators to justice.

Beauchamp has been featured on “60 Minutes,” “ABC World News Tonight’s ‘Person of the Week,’” “Court TV,” “MSNBC-TV,” “Good Morning America,” “CNN,” “BBC,” and in hundreds of publications around the world including “The New York Times,” “Washington Post,” “USA Today,” “Associated Press,” and the “Chicago Sun Times.”

Beauchamp’s past works include TV One’s “Murder in Black and White,” hosted by Sharpton and “Wanted Justice: Johnnie Mae Chappell,” for the History Channel.

Beauchamp is currently the executive producer and host of Investigation Discovery’s crime reality series, “The Injustice Files” and the producer of the upcoming feature film “Till.”

He is also a frequent lecturer at colleges and universities around the country.

Eastern Connecticut State University is the state of Connecticut’s public liberal arts university, serving more than 5,300 students annually at its Willimantic campus and satellite locations.