



## BECK CULTURAL EXCHANGE CENTER (BECK)

*African American History & Culture*

1927 Dandridge Avenue | Knoxville, Tennessee 37915

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **YouTube Trailer of “The Evers”**

<https://youtu.be/KiCFqgno5Q>

#### **YouTube Trailer of “Knoxville’s Red Summer: The Riot of 1919”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qS8tviNiqjM&feature=youtu.be>

*“IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE DAY OF EMANCIPATION, AUGUST 8, 1863, THE BECK CULTURAL EXCHANGE CENTER, ANNOUNCES ITS FIFTH ANNUAL EIGHTH OF AUGUST JUBILEE WITH EVENTS BEGINNING ON THURSDAY AUGUST 8 AND ALL ARE INVITED.”*

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE – Beck announces its list of commemoration events for its Fifth Annual Eighth of August Jubilee beginning Thursday, August 8 with its Annual Libation Ceremony at 8.30am. This special tribute will be held at Freedmen’s Mission Historic Cemetery adjacent to Knoxville College. The Libation Ceremony is open to the public and is a one-hour memorial tribute to original slaves, freed August 8, 1863, that are buried in this historic cemetery. Mr. Ned Arter, Great-Great Grandson of former slave Samuel Johnson who was emancipated on August 8, 1863, will be our special guest. At the historic Tennessee Theatre at 4pm, Beck will host its Annual Red-Carpet VIP Reception. The 2019 Eighth of August Red-Carpet Jubilee theme is Racism, Justice & The Right to Vote: The Fight for Freedom 1919. In Knoxville, a century ago, the Knoxville Branch NAACP was formed, the national guard was called in during the race riots in the heat of a red summer, and women went to the polls to vote for the first time. This year, the Red-Carpet Jubilee will be a special presentation of history and culture and the VIP reception will include a private screening of “Knoxville’s Red Summer: The Riot of 1919” produced by East Tennessee PBS. The film will feature never seen before footage of Knoxville immediately following the riots. Following the VIP Reception, at 6.30pm in the theater, Beck will host its Annual Red-Carpet Jubilee Feature Documentary and special arts and culture presentation. This year’s feature documentary will be “The Evers,” by award-winning producer Loki Mulholland. The film is the family’s story of Medgar Evers, Civil Rights Activist and NAACP Field Secretary. Joining Mulholland will be Reena Evers, daughter of Medgar Evers. The entire evening will be filled with historical narratives, art, music, dance and will include our special Annual Heritage Award presentation. Tickets are on sale now. Limited VIP Tickets are \$60 and General Admission Tickets are \$15. Each ticket purchased includes a complimentary copy of Robert J. Booker’s book “The Heat of a Red Summer” valued at \$15. Tickets can be purchased at the Tennessee Theatre Ticket office (*fees apply*), or online at <https://www.tennesseetheatre.com/event/794936/beck-cultural-exchange-center-red-carpet-jubilee/> (*fees apply*) or at the Beck. (Groups are encouraged to contact Beck for group tickets.)

\* Knox County School educators attending this event will receive up to three hours unscheduled in-service credit.

## **2019 EIGHTH OF AUGUST JUBILEE EVENTS**

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 8 | 8.30-9.30AM**

***ANNUAL LIBATION CEREMONY – TRIBUTE TO EMANCIPATED SLAVES IN TENNESSEE***

FREEDMEN'S MISSION HISTORIC CEMETERY ADJACENT TO KNOXVILLE COLLEGE

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**THURSDAY AUGUST 8 | VIP RECEPTION 4-5.30PM**

**ANNUAL EIGHTH OF AUGUST RED-CARPET VIP JUBILEE & RECEPTION**

HISTORIC TENNESSEE THEATRE

***SPECIAL VIP PRESENTATION***

***"KNOXVILLE'S RED SUMMER: THE RIOT OF 1919" PRODUCED BY EAST TENNESSEE PBS***

LIMITED VIP TICKET \$60

*INCLUDES COMPLIMENTARY COPY OF ROBERT J. BOOKER'S BOOK "THE HEAT OF THE RED SUMMER"*

**THURSDAY AUGUST 8 | GENERAL ADMISSION 6.3PM**

**ANNUAL EIGHTH OF AUGUST RED-CARPET JUBILEE & SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

HISTORIC TENNESSEE THEATRE

***PREMIER DOCUMENTARY***

***"THE EVERS"***

*FEATURING THE FILM'S PRODUCER LOKI MULHOLLAND ALONG WITH SPECIAL GUEST*

*REENA EVERS, DAUGHTER OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST MEDGAR EVERS*

GENERAL ADMISSION TICKET \$15

*INCLUDES COMPLIMENTARY COPY OF ROBERT J. BOOKER'S BOOK "THE HEAT OF THE RED SUMMER"*

**SATURDAY AUGUST 10**

**ANNUAL EIGHTH OF AUGUST JUBILEE AT BECK**

BECK CULTURAL EXCHANGE CENTER

***CONCERT AT THE BECK***

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

### **ABOUT THE SPECIAL VIP RED-CARPET SHOWING**

**KNOXVILLE'S RED SUMMER: THE RIOT OF 1919**

Presented by East Tennessee PBS and Black in Appalachia

On the 100th anniversary, this film chronicles the unrest that occurred in Knoxville following the murder of Bertie Lindsey and the attempted lynching of the accused, Maurice Mays.

Thanks to a partnership with the Tennessee Archive of Moving Image and Sound, Knoxville's Red Summer includes news reel footage of the city, post-riot, not seen by the public since 1919."

### **ABOUT THE RED-CARPET GENERAL ADMISSION SPECIAL DOCUMENTARY FILM**

**THE EVERS**

Producer, Loki Mulholland

On June 12, 1963, an assassin's bullet ended the life of Medgar Evers only to make him an icon of the Civil Rights Movement. From the Emmy-winning director of "The Uncomfortable Truth" comes the incredible true story of one family's unbreakable love and their tragic sacrifice in the name of freedom for everyone. "The Evers" is a powerful testament of love, faith and family in the quest for a better world.

## **ABOUT THE EIGHTH OF AUGUST**

State Rep. Rick Staples (D-Knoxville) recently filed bill HB1544 to make the Eighth of August a state holiday. Legislators will consider this bill when the lawmakers return to their regular, called session in January 2020.

Andrew Johnson, Tennessee Military Governor, who would later become the 17th president of the United States, freed his personal slaves in Greeneville, Tennessee on August 8, 1863.

This date, August 8, became known as Emancipation Day. The first recorded celebration of the Eighth of August as Emancipation Day was in Greeneville, Tennessee in 1871. The best explanation of the origins of the celebration can be found in an August 8, 1921 article in the Knoxville Journal and Tribune. *"Today will be observed as a holiday by the negro residents and practically all places of business conducted by negroes will be closed for part of the day at least, according to promoters of the exercises. Local speakers will address the audiences. In most states January 1 is observed as Emancipation Day, but in Tennessee and a few other states, August 8 has been designated as the date for Emancipation Day exercises. This custom originated because negroes owned by Andrew Johnson, at Greeneville, were set free on August 8, and Sam Johnson, one of the former slaves of Andrew Johnson, worked for a long time and was successful in having August 8 set aside for Emancipation Day observed in this section."*

Eventually the Eighth of August was celebrated in at least seven states and 55 communities. It is still celebrated in Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri. Three of the people freed on the Eighth of August are laid to rest in the Freedmen's Mission Historic Cemetery that is adjacent to Knoxville College.

In 1937, the *Knoxville Flashlight-Herald*, an African American weekly, sponsored the "Bronze Mayor Contest" in an effort to provide the local African American community "elected" leadership. The poll favored Dr. James H. Presnell and he became the "Bronze Mayor" and the "official" spokesman for Knoxville's African American population. July 22, 1939, Mayor Presnell signed a proclamation urging all employers in the City to release as many colored citizens as is practicable, in order that they may participate in the activities and the celebration on Tuesday, August 8, 1939 in Chilhowee Park.

During this period of legal segregation in Knoxville, Chilhowee Park was only open to African Americans one day a year, August 8, and this continued until 1948.

The Beck Cultural Exchange Center hosted its First Annual Eighth of August Jubilee, August 8, 2015 in Chilhowee Park. Since that time, Beck has continued to host annual events on August 8 and on the second Saturday in August to commemorate Emancipation in the State of Tennessee. Events include:

- The Annual Libation Ceremony at Freedmen's Mission Historic Cemetery Adjacent to Knoxville College, the graveside of those former slaves emancipated on August 8, 1863
- The Annual Red-Carpet Jubilee Event
- Annual Eighth of August Jubilee Festival

## **ABOUT BECK**

Beck is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that was established in 1975 as a result of Knoxville's Urban Renewal projects. The Urban Renewal projects began in 1959 under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949. The projects relocated and displaced many black families and businesses. Much of the heritage of the black community was erased from the map. Except for one or two structures in the city and the historic buildings at Knoxville College, edifices that once stood as monuments to the struggles of early leaders no longer exist. Absent of the establishment of Beck, these places and the people may never have existed.

Beck is the only organization in the region dedicated to local and regional African American history and culture. Beck is the storehouse of African American history and culture and is designated by the state as a primary repository of black history and culture in East Tennessee. The House of Representatives of the Ninety-Third General Assembly of the State of Tennessee adopted House Resolution No. 83 on May 11, 1983 recognizing the important role that Beck plays in the research and preservation of the achievements of blacks in Tennessee.

## **BECK VISION**

To be the desired place that people go to learn, discover and experience the rich legacy of African Americans inside a vibrant Cultural Corridor.

## **BECK MISSION**

To be the place where African American history and culture are preserved, nurtured, taught, & continued.

## **JAMES AND ETHEL BECK**

Beck is named in honor of James Garfield (1881-1969) and Ethel Benson (1897-1970) Beck. James and Ethel were two of the most glamorous and influential members of the black community in Knoxville during the period of the 1920s-1960s and were the last people to live in the Beck mansion.

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