



LCCC Showcases Award-Winning Work Of Legendary Photographer Robert J. Ellison

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GODFREY – Lewis and Clark Community College will showcase the award-winning work of Photographer Robert J. Ellison – focusing on his coverage of the Civil Rights movement and Vietnam War – during a public photo exhibition and commemorative event in August.

Both the exhibit and event, co-sponsored by The Hayner Public Library District, are free and open to the public.

The photo exhibition, which will mimic a journey through time in 100 photographs captured by the young photographer, who was killed in action at age 23 when a plane he was on was hit by enemy gunfire in Vietnam in March 1968.

It will run from Aug. 14-31 in L&C's Hatheway Gallery. Gallery hours are from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday.

As the only surviving son of a soldier killed in World War II, Ellison, a graduate of Alton's Western Military Academy and son of a Monticello College alumna, was exempt from military service in Vietnam. Nevertheless, he bravely served on the front lines as a civilian photographer for Newsweek and Time, bringing captive images from overseas to the American public.

The commemorative event will honor Ellison's work and serve as a retrospective of his life and the places and events he captured, featuring a panel of guest speakers guided by emcee Art Holliday from KSDK, from 2-4 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 26, in the Hatheway Cultural Center's Ann Whitney Olin Theatre, 5800 Godfrey Road, Godfrey, Illinois. The exhibit will be open for extended hours that day, so visitors can stop in after the event.

Speakers will include Webster University History Professor John Chappell, who specializes in 20th century U.S. history, Western Military Academy graduate (and Ellison's former classmate) Bill Kaune, Monticello College Alumna Linda Nevlin, and Judge Luther Simmons, a local expert on the history of civil rights.

"Ellison felt compelled to record the story of American soldiers honestly," said Ralph "Bo" Jackson, whose dream has been to bring this exhibition to life in the Riverbend community.

Jackson said Ellison was one of 200,000 people who heard Martin Luther King, Jr. give his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C., and was so moved that it

spurred him to take an active role in the Civil Rights movement. His images follow several marches and other events throughout the 1960s, capturing the essence and energy of the times, and were published by Ebony magazine.

In 1968, Ebony hailed him as "the young white photographer who lived free of prejudice, full of understanding and respectful of the rights of men."

Ellison was born on July 6, 1944, in Ames, Iowa, the son of Albert Jackson "Jack" Ellison, a lieutenant in the 11th Airborne J Division, and his wife, Miriam Ellison (later Miriam Eaton).

His great-grandfather founded the Western Military Academy in Alton, Illinois, where Robert Ellison would eventually attend high school. Nearly everyone of age, including two of his aunts, served in the military during World War II. In early 1945, 23-year-old Lieutenant Jack Ellison was killed at Luzon, Philippines. Robert, six months old at the time, never met his father.

To learn more about this event, visit <https://www.lc.edu/community-visitors/campus-attractions/art-exhibitions/unfiltered-lens.html>.

Lewis and Clark Community College has been a military-friendly school for more than a decade, and strives to bring educational and engaging events to the Riverbend community through Key Direction 3 of its strategic plan. To learn more, visit <https://www.lc.edu/college-information/mission-vision-and-values/strategic-plan.html>.

