

“Unfiltered Lens” Photo Exhibit At LC Showcases Civil Rights, Vietnam Era Photographer

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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GODFREY - A photo exhibit at Lewis & Clark Community College in Godfrey showcases 100 photographs taken by award-winning photographer Robert J. Ellison, who captured several important moments from the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam

War. “Unfiltered Lens” will run until Aug. 31 in the Hatheway Cultural Center Gallery on the Lewis & Clark campus.

A commemoration event with local historians and more will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 26 in the Ann Whitney Olin Theatre on campus. The exhibit hours are on weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 to 2 p.m., with the commemoration event immediately following. Both the commemoration event and exhibit are free and open to the public.

Lacy McDonald, genealogy & local history library manager for the Hayner Public Library District, joined Jared Hennings, student activities coordinator for Lewis & Clark Community College, to discuss the photo exhibit on [an episode of Our Daily Show! on Riverbender.com](#).

“We chose 100 photographs that were taken by Robert J. Ellison from 1963 to 1968 that cover the Civil Rights Movement - we have five events, marches from that, and then the rest of it is the Vietnam War,” McDonald said. “There were 4,000 photographs that the

Wisconsin Veterans Museum sent us to choose from and we had to narrow it down to this hundred.”



Ellison, who was killed at age 23 after his plane was shot down in Vietnam, graduated from Alton's Western Military Academy. McDonald said his mother donated these photographs to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, but the 4,000 pictures were out of order and none were labeled. McDonald did extensive research to figure out the correct order and stories behind the photos.

Hennings said Ellison's mother was a graduate of Monticello College, which was the precursor to Lewis & Clark. Historical community ties like this made Ellison's photo exhibit "a good, beneficial fit - not only for the college, but for the community as well," Hennings said.

He added that Ellison's unique photography style makes you feel like a part of the photographs.

"When you look at the faces and you look at the images, you're just right up close - it almost seems that you're a part of the picture," Hennings said. "The photographs really just kind of jump out at you."

The full interview with McDonald and Hennings can be watched at the top of this story or on [Riverbender.com/video](https://riverbender.com/video).