



BECK CULTURAL EXCHANGE CENTER (BECK)

African American History & Culture

1927 Dandridge Avenue | Knoxville, Tennessee 37915

Email: KBullard@BeckCenter.net | Website: www.BeckCenter.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contact: Kwanbe Bullard | KBullard@Beckcenter.net | 865.524.8461

“In Remembrance of the Day of Emancipation in the state of Tennessee, August 8, 1863, the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, announces its 8th Annual Eighth of August Jubilee line-up open to the public with events beginning Friday August 5 and concluding Monday August 8.”

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE – Beck announces its line-up of commemoration events for its 8th Annual Eighth of August Jubilee: **Friday, August 5 at 7:00 pm** a **free concert** will be held on **Beck lawn** featuring Evelyn Jack & The Summer Soul Whitty Band; **Saturday, August 6 at 11:00 am** Beck will lead the **Emancipation Celebration** during the parade of the 37th Annual **Lonsdale Homecoming**; **Sunday, August 7, at 7:30 am** at **Freedmen’s Mission Historic Cemetery adjacent to Knoxville College** Beck will host its **8th Annual Libation Ceremony**, a special tribute to enslaved descendants freed August 8, 1863 with special guest Ned Arter, great-great grandson of Sam Johnson who was emancipated August 8, 1863 and considered the father of Emancipation Day celebrations; **Monday, August 8** Beck will return downtown to the **Historic Tennessee Theatre** for its premier Red-Carpet ticketed movie event with the screening of **After Selma** by Emmy-winning filmmaker Loki Mulholland featuring Jo Ann Bland, the youngest person arrested during the height of the Civil Rights Movement beginning with a **VIP Reception at 4:00 pm followed by general admission at 6 pm**. Gold Sponsors for this event include AARP Tennessee and The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement. Knox County School staff districtwide will receive Professional Development for this event.

On a march from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, the state capital in 1965, 600 people assembled at a church, prayed and began a peaceful demonstration before being brutally attacked and beaten by police officers at the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The day would come to be known as Bloody Sunday and was considered a turning point that led directly to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The film *After Selma* recognizes that the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday galvanized a nation and forced the country to create the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Now, everyone could vote. What has happened since and what tactics are being used today to suppress voting rights? The fight for the right to vote continues.

An exclusive VIP reception opens at 4:00 pm with a meet & greet of special guests, Loki Mulholland and Jo Ann Bland along with live entertainment by saxophonist Casey McClintock, former Artistic Director of Knoxville Opera, Maestro Brian Salesky and heavy hors d’oeuvre by Allow Me Caterers. Following the reception, doors open to the general public at 6:00 pm with a program and screening to begin at 6:30 pm and will feature vocalist Michael Rodgers accompanied by AP Hardaway. Early-bird tickets are \$50 for VIP and \$10 for general admission. After July 31, 2022 ticket prices are \$60 for VIP and \$15 for general admission.

Tickets can be purchased at Beck (Tuesday – Friday 10A – 5PM & Saturday 10A -3P & you can [RESERVE TICKETS](#) online at Beck with no fees) or at the Historic Tennessee Theatre with no

fees. Tickets can be purchased online at Ticketmaster (Fees Apply)
<https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/1B005CEE8079123E?brand=tennesseethr>

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2022 EIGHTH OF AUGUST JUBILEE EVENTS

FRIDAY AUGUST 5 | 7P

EIGHTH OF AUGUST JUBILEE AT BECK – EVELYN JACK & THE SUMMER SOUL WHITTY BAND CONCERT

1927 DANDRIDGE AVENUE

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (BRING LAWN CHAIRS)

ARTISTS INCLUDE: EVELYN JACK (SOLOIST), JEFF PEGUES (DRUMS), AP HARDAWAY (BASS), RICHARD GALLAHER (GUITAR), AND BRANDON “WHITTY” WHITTACKER (KEYBOARD)

SATURDAY AUGUST 6 | 11A

EIGHTH OF AUGUST EMANCIPATION PARADE LEADING THE LONSDALE HOMECOMING PARADE

LONSDALE COMMUNITY – TEXAS AVENUE

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

SPECIAL GUESTS INCLUDE: NED ARTER, GREAT-GREAT GRANDSON OF SAM JOHNSON WHO WAS EMANCIPATED AUGUST 8, 1863 AND CONSIDERED THE FATHER OF EMANCIPATION DAY CELEBRATIONS & ELDERS OF THE COMMUNITY INCLUDING MS. LOIS LAFLORE

SUNDAY AUGUST 7 | 7.3A

ANNUAL LIBATION CEREMONY – TRIBUTE TO THOSE ENSLAVED EMANCIPATED IN TENNESSEE

FREEDMEN’S MISSION HISTORIC CEMETERY ADJACENT TO KNOXVILLE COLLEGE

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

SPECIAL GUESTS INCLUDE: MINISTER ALAN JONES, CEREMONIAL LEADER & NED ARTER, GREAT-GREAT GRANDSON OF SAM JOHNSON WHO WAS EMANCIPATED AUGUST 8, 1863 AND CONSIDERED THE FATHER OF EMANCIPATION DAY CELEBRATIONS

MONDAY AUGUST 8 | FILM: AFTER SELMA | 4.3P (VIP RECEPTION) 6P (GENERAL ADMISSION)

EIGHTH OF AUGUST RED-CARPET

HISTORIC TENNESSEE THEATRE

604 SOUTH GAY STREET

TICKETED EVENT & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: VIP \$50 & GENERAL ADMISSION \$10; AFTER JULY 31, VIP \$60 & GENERAL ADMISSION \$15.

PURCHASE TICKETS: TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED AT BECK (TUESDAY – FRIDAY 10A – 5PM & SATURDAY 10A -3P & YOU CAN [RESERVE TICKETS](#) ONLINE AT BECK WITH NO FEES) OR AT THE HISTORIC TENNESSEE THEATRE WITH NO FEES. TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED ONLINE AT TICKETMASTER (FEES APPLY)

[HTTPS://WWW.TICKETMASTER.COM/EVENT/1B005CEE8079123E?BRAND=TENNESSEETHTR](https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/1B005CEE8079123E?BRAND=TENNESSEETHTR)

ABOUT AFTER SELMA

The march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday galvanized a nation and forced the country to create the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Now, everyone could vote. What has happened since and what tactics are being used today to suppress voting rights? The fight for the right to vote continues.

ABOUT LOKI MULHOLLAND

Loki Mulholland is an Emmy-winning filmmaker, author, activist and son of civil rights icon, Joan Trumpauer Mulholland. Loki's work has received over 40 Telly Awards and his films on race and social justice issues have won 20 Best Documentary awards. His first book, "She Stood For Freedom" was nominated for the 2017 Amelia Bloomer Award. His film, "The Uncomfortable Truth" has been viewed over half-a-million times on Amazon. Loki is a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated and speaks all over the country on issues of race and social justice. Loki is the founder and Executive Director of the Joan Trumpauer Mulholland Foundation which was created to end racism through education.

ABOUT JO ANN BLAND

During her lifetime, Jo Ann Bland has been both a witness and a participant in some of our nation's most consequential civil rights battles. Born and raised in Selma, Alabama, she has seen first-hand how racism and segregation created a deadly divide between people--neighbors, co-workers, classmates--and she decided early on that she would always try to lift her voice to decry injustice wherever she saw it.

In the early 1960's, she joined her grandmother at Dallas County Voters League meetings led by the great Amelia Boynton. She began her own activism, with SNCC (The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee), at the age of 8 along with other children and teens in her neighborhood. They all wanted to do their part to make the goals of the Civil Rights Movement, equal justice and equal treatment, a reality for themselves and their families.

By the time she was 11 years old, she had been arrested 13 times that are documented. She was an active participant in Bloody Sunday, marching alongside more than 600 peaceful activists only to get brutally beaten, tear-gassed and hit by policemen on horses with billy clubs. As a teenager, Bland was one of seven Black students to integrate A. G. Parish High School.

Her early involvement in the struggle against "Jim Crow", our American Apartheid, has been the foundation and fuel for her lifelong civil and human rights work.

Ms. Bland served in the US Army and returned to Selma to co-found and lead the National Voting Rights Museum, lead a tour company, Journeys for the Soul, that welcomes visitors from around the world, and is the founder of Foot Soldiers Park & Education Center (footsoldierspark.org). As she guides groups through Selma now, on the trail of the foot soldiers of 1965, they see clearly the connections between our history and our current reality.

A much sought-after speaker with a compelling personal story of civil rights activism, Ms. Bland has presented at conferences and workshops from the Smithsonian in **Washington, DC to and at venues in nearly every state in the nation.**

ABOUT THE EIGHTH OF AUGUST

On August 8th, 1863, Andrew Johnson, Tennessee Military Governor who would later become the 17th President of the United States, emancipated the Black men, women and children whom he had enslaved during his residency in Greeneville, Tennessee. 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 during the week of August 8 to commemorate Emancipation in the State of Tennessee including our modified programming during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our events include:

- The Annual Libation Ceremony at Freedmen’s Mission Historic Cemetery Adjacent to Knoxville College, the graveside of those formerly enslaved and 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. Black families, schools, churches and businesses were uprooted and displaced by these federal projects. The demolition began in 1959 under the provisions of the Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 with the purpose entitled, "Slum Clearance and Community Development and Redevelopment." The federal government provided grants to local public agencies to provide the means to eliminate blight, slums and substandard housing in urban communities throughout the country.

Knoxville, like many cities throughout the country, was grappling with strict segregation, civil rights, and at the same time urban renewal.

There were three urban renewal projects in Knoxville that disproportionately affected the Black community. The first project was the Riverfront-Willow (known to residents as The Bottom), the next was Mountain View and the final project was Morningside. In Knoxville like many cities, Urban Renewal was dubbed Urban Removal. While it certainly destroyed shacks, and flooded neighborhoods, it also demolished stately homes Black businesses and communities. Much of the heritage of the Black community was erased from the map by the time the destruction of urban renewal ended in 1974. Absent of the establishment of Beck, these places and the people may never have existed.

For nearly 50 years, Beck has amassed a rare collection of more than 50,000 artifacts covering more than 230 years of Black history and culture and has remained the storehouse of great antiquity. Among this unique collection are approximately 5,000 documents, photos, materials and audiovisual recordings related to Knoxville's urban renewal program, all of which help tell the story of the ramifications of urban renewal on the largely African American population it affected.

Beck recognizes that providing access to this rich history and culture will enrich Knoxville's cultural memory and deepen its residents' understanding of and connection to the past. Beck understands the importance of presenting a more complete story of the past. Beck seeks to change the perception of Knoxville's African American history so that it is seen not as something marginal or unconnected, but rather central to the understanding of who we are as a community, as a nation, and as human beings. In so doing, the result will be a transformation that enhances the public reckoning of history and connects it to the present.

ABOUT THE BECK CULTURAL CORRIDOR

Beck is committed to preserving and promoting the history of Knoxville that was destroyed by urban renewal. While the physical reminders of historic buildings and monuments may have been razed, Beck is creating a vibrant cultural corridor of historical markers and monuments to educate the public on what was once here.

The Beck Cultural Corridor is a project that recognizes African American related historical and cultural monuments in public spaces including the first Urban Renewal area known as The Bottom, now the site of the development of the baseball stadium complex. Working with the community and the project developers, Beck is seeking to ensure the preservation of Black history and culture

by establishing an innovative, educational and engaging cultural museum as part of the stadium complex, located in the heart of Knoxville's historic Black neighborhood. Further, Beck is committed to identifying street and building naming opportunities, memorial tributes throughout the complex, historically significant statues, murals, exhibitions, and virtual technology on the site.

ABOUT THE DELANEY MUSEUM AT BECK

The Delaney Museum at Beck is devoted to telling the story of one of the greatest modern painters of the twentieth century, Beauford Delaney. The only remaining ancestral home of the Delaney family will be dedicated to sharing the storyline of our native son Beauford, his younger brother and fellow renowned artist Joseph, and the Delaney family.

The Delaney Museum is an internationally significant historical site, anchored by Beauford Delaney's only remaining ancestral home acquired by his elder brother Samuel Delaney in 1948. The Museum will help restore public memory of life in Knoxville throughout the ages by reframing history through the lens of the Delaney family.

In 2015, Beck acquired the Delaney family home built in 1910 and situated on the adjoining property of the Beck Center. Beck hosted a groundbreaking ceremony Monday, August 30, 2021, announcing the start of construction for the Delaney Museum at Beck, an international museum celebrating the history of the Delaney family.

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 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. Funds from the Beck Estate were used to establish the Beck Cultural Exchange Center.