FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ECU Welcomes Civil Rights Leader as Voyages of Discovery Lecturer

GREENVILLE, N.C. (Nov. 4, 2014) — East Carolina University soon will welcome to campus Julian Bond, civil rights activist and professor emeritus of the Corcoran Department of History at the University of Virginia, who will deliver the Lawrence F. Brewster Lecture in History as part of the 2014-15 Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series.

Bond will discuss “Crossing the Color Line: From Rhythm ‘N Blues to Rock ‘N Roll,” at 7 p.m. Tuesday, November 18, in ECU’s Wright Auditorium, followed by a question and answer session. During his presentation, Bond will discuss the civil rights movement through a history of American music, using images and bits of music to trace the melding of jazz, blues, country and pop into rock and roll. He will examine this transformation through the influences of race, demographics, war, immigration and technology.

Currently serving as Distinguished Professor in Residence in the Department of Government at the American University in Washington, D.C., Bond is also known as an activist in the civil rights, economic justice and peace movements. In 1960, he helped organize the Atlanta University Center Committee on Appeal for Human Rights, which directed several years of non-violent protests, and by 1962, won integration of Atlanta’s movie theaters, lunch counters and parks.

Continuing in his quest for equality for all, Bond served for two decades in the Georgia House and Georgia Senate, drafting more than 60 bills that became law. In 1968, Bond became the first black person to be nominated for the vice presidency of the United States. Bond served as president of the Atlanta branch of the NAACP for 11 years. In 1998 he was elected chair of the NAACP national board and served for 11 terms before stepping down in 2010.

Among his many honors and accomplishments, Bond has received the American Civil Liberties Union Bill of Rights Awards from Massachusetts and Georgia, Time magazine has named Bond one of America’s “Top 200 Leaders,” and he holds 25 honorary degrees.

Bond’s lecture marks a homecoming of sorts to the ECU campus. On September 24, 1970, Bond spoke at ECU’s Wright Auditorium before a large audience eager to hear about an array of topics ranging from the political resurrection of President Richard Nixon, historical insights of Frederick Douglass, challenges facing Black Americans, the Vietnam War and Bond’s own political future.

In addition, Bond’s lecture is being presented in honor of a group of Greenville physicians (Dr. Andrew Best, Dr. Fred Irons, Dr. Malene Irons, Dr. Ray Minges and Dr. Earl Trevathan) who where instrumental in bringing about social progress in the Greenville and ECU community.
“These physicians led the movement to desegregate Pitt County Memorial Hospital, now Vidant, in the early 1960s,” said Dr. John A. Tucker, director of the Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series.

Tucker said Best, the first African-American physician in Pitt County, also was instrumental in contributing to the desegregation of East Carolina College when he proposed to ECC President Leo W. Jenkins that Laura Marie Elliot (maiden name Leary) be enrolled as the first, full-time African-American student at East Carolina. Elliott was admitted, and in 1966, she graduated with a degree in business administration.

“It is an honor for East Carolina to welcome Bond, an icon in the history of American social change, back to campus,” stated Tucker.

Co-sponsors of Bond’s lecture include the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences Department of History, ECU’s Chancellor’s Office, Office of the Provost, Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Health Sciences.

One complimentary ticket to the lecture is available to ECU students with a valid ECU ID through the ECU Central Ticket Office located in Mendenhall Student Center. Tickets for ECU faculty, staff and the general public are $10 and are available by calling the ECU Central Ticket Office at 252-328-4788 or 1-800-ECU-ARTS. Individuals requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should call 252-737-1016 (voice/TTY) at least 48 hours prior to the event.

Financial underwriting for the Voyages series is made possible by the Harriot College’s Dean’s Advancement Council, various university organizations, and many friends and supporters. To make a contribution to the series, contact Major Gifts Officer Jennifer Tripp at 252-737-4201, or via email at trippj@ecu.edu. For additional information about the Voyages series and its speakers, visit www.ecu.edu/voyages. More information about Harriot College is available at www.ecu.edu/cas.

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