ECU Welcomes Civil Rights Activist, Time Magazine’s ‘Top 200 Leaders,’
as Voyages of Discovery Lecturer

GREENVILLE, N.C. (Jan. 13, 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 2013-14 Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series.

Bond will discuss “Civil Rights, Then and Now,” at 7 p.m. Tuesday, January 28, in ECU’s Wright Auditorium. A question and answer session will immediately follow the presentation.

“Bond’s lecture honors the work of a group of Greenville physicians – Dr. Andrew Best, Dr. Fred Irons, Dr. Malene Irons, Dr. Ray Minges and Dr. Earl Trevathan – for their contributions to the social health of our campus and community,” said Dr. John A. Tucker, director of the Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series. “These physicians led the movement to desegregate Pitt County Memorial Hospital, now Vidant, in the early 1960s.”

Tucker said Best, the first African-American physician in Pitt County, 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 did indeed play that historic role, and in 1966, she graduated with a degree in business administration.

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 has hosted “America’s Black Forum,” the oldest black-owned show in television syndication, and NBC's “Saturday Night Live;” has narrated numerous documentaries, including
the award-winning “Eyes on the Prize” series; and he has filled the role of commentator on NBC’s “Today Show.” In addition, Bond is the author of “Viewpoint,” a nationally syndicated newspaper column, and has published a collection of essays under the title “A Time to Speak, A Time to Act.” Other poems and articles authored by Bond have appeared in several publications, including Nation, Life and the New York Times.

In addition to honoring Greenville’s physicians who where instrumental in bringing about social progress in the community, 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.

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

This season’s Brewster Lecture is co-sponsored by the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences Department of History, ECU’s Division of Health Sciences, Student Affairs and the Office of the Provost. One complimentary ticket for Bond’s 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 may be obtained 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, or for additional information, contact Tucker at 252-328-1028, or via email at tuckerjo@ecu.edu. You may also wish to visit the series’ web site at http://www.ecu.edu/voyages.

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