



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Celebrating Courage: Honoring the Life of John L. Hairston & The London Lions

Public Invited to Weekend Celebration of Local Educator

[Walnut Cove, NC, August 1st, 2018 --] In 1968, John L. Hairston led the integration of the Stokes County School System and continued on as the principal of London School until his retirement in 1983. Fifty years later, the *Celebrating Courage Weekend* honors Hairston's legacy and the influence it has on the environmental movement that blossomed out of the Southeastern Stokes County Community. An original short documentary, also called "Celebrating Courage," features local voices sharing how John L. Hairston raised a community of leaders, the ripple effects his grace had on the area, and how he can inspire our environmental advocacy today.

A 1951 alumni of NC A&T State University, John L. Hairston gave up opportunities to earn a higher wage in New Jersey to instead focus on his role as an educator in his home of Stokes County. In 1968, a peaceful march led by local students helped to integrate the public schools, a local restaurant, the movie theater and the laundromat. The story of John L. Hairston's leadership is detailed in Henry Wiencek's 1999 award-winning book, "The Hairstons: An American Family in Black and White" in a chapter entitled "The Liberation of Walnut Cove." Wiencek compares Hairston to the fictional character George Bailey in "It's a Wonderful Life."

Hairston would be 100 on Monday, August 13th, 2018. He passed away on August 19th, 1993.

The Celebrating Courage Weekend includes a series of community activities that are free and open to the public on Saturday, August 11th and Sunday, August 12th in both the Walnut Cove and Pine Hall Communities. Saturday afternoon will include storytelling and singing workshops, followed by a fish fry fundraiser, the "Celebrating Courage" documentary film premiere and a community sing-a-long. Sunday will include a church service focused on John L. Hairston, a free community luncheon, followed by a second screening of the original documentary film "Celebrating Courage."

The event is in collaboration with the Stokes County Historical Society, the Stokes County Arts Council, Residents for Coal Ash Cleanup, and Appalachian Voices.



Overview of Weekend Celebration

Saturday, August 11th, 2018

2-4 PM: Holy Spirit Story and Song Workshop

Led by Marie Garlock and Tracey Edwards

Accompanying Music will be led by Bishop Rikki D. Price, Musical Director

[London Elementary School](#)

[609 School St, Walnut Cove, NC](#)

5:30 - 8 PM: Fish Fry Fundraiser, “Celebrating Courage” Documentary Premiere and Gospel Sing-A-Long

Music will be led by Bishop Rikki D. Price, Musical Director

Fish Fry Fundraiser - proceeds will go towards additional programming and park development sponsored by The Lilies Project

[Pine Hall Community Campus](#)

[3853 US 311, Pine Hall, NC](#)

Sunday, August 12th, 2018

All Events: [Rising Star Baptist Church](#)

[915 Windmill St, Walnut Cove, NC](#)

11 AM: Church Service led by Rev. Gregory Hairston

1 PM: Free Community Luncheon

2-4 PM: “Celebrating Courage” Documentary Premiere

[Link to More Information about the Weekend](#)

| [Link to a Biography of John L. Hairston](#)

About The Lilies Project

Walnut Cove, NC is the site of a National Creative Placemaking Fund Project. Caroline Armijo’s *The Lilies Project* proposed using public art and public programming to address coal ash impacting her home community. Walnut Cove is adjacent to Duke Energy’s Belews Creek Power Station, which houses 20 million tons of coal ash. Armijo, mixed-media artist, will partner with scientists from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University to create a series of sculptures that repurpose this hazardous waste material safely and that will become the centerpiece of a new public park. This project will also serve as a local pilot for environmental policy that can provide safer alternative for how coal ash is managed in the region.

The Lilies Project is funded by ArtPlace America and fiscally sponsored by the Stokes County Arts Council, a 501c3. The statements made are not a reflection of the beliefs of the Stokes County Arts Council.

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