



ETIC Brings Till Story to Ohio Students

Benjamin Saulsberry, ETIC's Public Engagement and Museum Education Director, virtually visited ninth-grade students at Wooster High School in Wooster, Ohio, on September 6th. Benjamin had spoken to Brian Questel's Civil Rights and Intolerance class previously in 2023 after Mr. Questel had visited the Interpretive Center and gone on a tour of the Tallahatchie County Courthouse that Benjamin had led that July. The two had a conversation to arrange for Benjamin visiting his class, and it had gone over well so the teacher requested that Benjamin do so again this year, before beginning a unit on Emmett Till and the civil rights movement. Benjamin gave a short overview of the Till tragedy and the trial that followed, giving plenty of space for questions.

"It's very seldom I lecture," he said. "If I'm talking, more than likely there's going to be some space for Q&A. I think it's really important to create spaces for folks to be heard while they're listening and while they're learning. And it gives me an opportunity to learn too."

The resulting conversation was so animated that it influenced Mr. Questel's lesson plans in response. Students had such a positive reaction that they requested Benjamin visit again, which he did on October 2nd. This follow-up visit had less of a set agenda and gave students a forum to ask questions, not only about Till but about today's social climate, connecting the past to today, and the experience of growing up in Mississippi.



Wooster High School
Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

“Young people’s ability to see this as history but not relegated to history has been an ongoing theme,” Benjamin said in his encounters with students, here and generally. “I’m pretty confident part of that is because they do see themselves in this story [of Emmett Till]. It’s hard not to compare yourself to a teenager when you’re a teenager.”

In addition to students’ critical thinking, Benjamin also noted students’ sophistication and thoughtfulness. “It is extremely seldom that young folks can’t handle the material. I think quite often we find ourselves trying to find ways to filter or even water down history, and I think young people are actually far more emotionally stable and equipped to deal with some of this history.”

"The nearly 800-mile difference between a small, majority white high school in Wooster, Ohio, and Sumner, Mississippi, disappeared during the 45-minute question and answer period when my students had the opportunity to explore the Mississippi Delta with Mr. Saulsberry," Mr. Questel said. "It was a remarkable experience for my students, which was easy to see the following day when our class time was spent in reflection on the prior day’s conversation."

If you would like to arrange for ETIC staff to conduct a visit virtually or in person, please [contact us](#).

Patrick Weems Interviews Ronald Collins at University of Mississippi School of Law

ETIC Executive Director Patrick Weems interviewed Ronald K.L. Collins on October 9th at the University of Mississippi's School of Law. In February of this year, Collins, a former Harold S. Shefelman Scholar at the University of Washington School of Law, published *[Tragedy on Trial: The Story of the Infamous Emmett Till Murder Trial](#)*.

This conversation happened shortly after the two wrote [an article](#) in the *Mississippi Free Press*. In it, they discuss how William Bradford Huie's 1956 *Look* magazine piece shaped attitudes around the Till story for generations. They note that Huie's article, however, included a number of inconsistencies only recently proven to be deliberate thanks to the publicizing of the Whitten Papers. "This egregious affront to history calls into question the importance of who tells the story about our history and, ultimately, who determines what becomes history," Weems and Collins write.



Left to right: Dean Joshua Tucker, Ronald Collins, Patrick Weems, and Dean William Berry.
Photo credit: Susan Collins

Approximately 100 law students listened to the conversation about Collins' book. Prior to the start of the pandemic, Collins and his wife took a tour with Distant Horizons of various civil rights sites, including a visit to the Tallahatchie County Courthouse led by ETIC's Public Engagement and Museum Education Director Benjamin Saulsberry. Collins was so fascinated that he began researching the Till trial in earnest and discovered there was a story to write. Relying on copies of the trial transcript and material in newspapers and the Black press, Collins reconstructed the trial, including key testimony from Mamie Till-Mobley, Willie Reed, and Mose Wright.

They also discussed how William Bradford Huie was regarded as a hero for his work even while he distorted the truth to protect other parties of Emmett Till's murder. They concluded by looking at the more recent gestures at restorative justice with the signing into law of the Emmett Till Antilynching Act in 2022 and the establishment of the Till National Monument in 2023.

"Our recent event with Ronald K.L. Collins at the University of Mississippi School of Law was a profound moment of reflection on the enduring legacy of the Milam and Bryant trial," said Weems. "Collins' insights from *Tragedy on Trial* illuminated how the culture of white supremacy deeply influenced the trial's outcome, while also celebrating the incredible courage of witnesses like Mose Wright, Willie Reed, and the Black press. The discussion served as a powerful reminder of the ongoing work needed to confront our history and strive for justice today."

You can purchase [*Tragedy on Trial* from Amazon.](#)

More News

Till National Monument Hiring Full-Time Positions in Sumner, MS

The Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley National Monument is hiring two full-time positions for the office in Sumner, Mississippi. They are for an [Administrative Support Assistant](#) and a [Maintenance Work Leader](#). Applications for both positions close on October 11th.

NAAM in Seattle Hosts Reception for Till Exhibit and Civil Rights Guests

On September 24th, a reception was hosted by the Northwest African American Museum in Seattle, where the traveling exhibit on Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley is currently on display. Attendees included staff from The Children's Museum and ETIC as well guests connected to civil rights. The exhibit partners were also recognized for their receipt of the History in Progress Award from the American Association for State and Local History.



Members of the Maddox Foundation, based in Hernando, MS, attended the reception in Seattle. The Maddox Foundation was a key funder of the *Let the World See* exhibit.

Donate to the Emmett Till Interpretive Center



Our Contact Information

{{Organization Name}}

{{Organization Address}}

{{Organization Phone}}

{{Organization Website}}

{{Unsubscribe}}

