



news release

Contact: Diane Steinert, Communications Coordinator
330-677-4549 or dsteinert@WesternReservePublicMedia.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“May 4th Voices” to Premiere on Western Reserve PBS on Friday, May 3, at 10 p.m.

*Video production showcases play based on
Kent State Shootings Oral History Project; sneak preview
to be held at The Kent Stage on Thursday, May 2, at 7 p.m.*

NORTHEAST OHIO — April 19, 2013 — A video production of “May 4th Voices,” a play that brings together first-person narratives about the May 4, 1970, shootings at Kent State University, will premiere on Western Reserve PBS (WNEO 45.1/WEOA 49.1) on Friday, May 3, at 10 p.m. The play, written by David Hassler and directed by Katherine Burke, is based on the Kent State Shootings Oral History Project, which includes more than 115 interviews with National Guardsmen, students, townspeople and politicians. The interviews capture the sense of trauma, confusion and fear felt by people who witnessed or were involved with the May 4 shootings at KSU.

The public is invited to a free sneak preview of the production, to be held on Thursday, May 2, at 7 p.m. at The Kent Stage, 175 E. Main St., Kent.

First performed in 2010 in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the shootings, the “May 4th Voices” play is composed of verbatim excerpts from the Kent State Shootings Oral History Project, except for the voice of the narrator, Maj Ragain, who recites excerpts from his prose poem “May 4, 1970 / A Memory.” Ragain was a graduate student on campus that day and now teaches creative writing at KSU and in the Kent community.

Hassler, director of KSU’s Wick Poetry Center, said that the video production “is exciting because 15 Kent State students were giving voice to those from a generation ago. It was a rich learning experience for these

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students to actually embody these voices speaking from so many different vantage points.” The 90-minute production was funded by a grant from the Ohio Humanities Council and by Kent State University’s College of Arts & Sciences, History Department, Wick Poetry Center and School of Theatre and Dance. Additional support was provided by Western Reserve PBS, The Kent Stage, Kent State University Press and Kent Historical Society.

In tandem with the video production’s premiere, The Kent State University Press will release the book “May 4th Voices: Kent State, 1970: A Play” and a companion teacher’s resource book. The DVD of the film will be available in June from The Kent State University Press.

“May 4th Voices” will also air on Western Reserve Public Media’s Fusion channel (WNEO 45.2/WEO 49.2) on Saturday, May 4, at 10 p.m. and Monday, May 6, at 8 p.m. For more information, visit WesternReservePBS.org/schedule.htm or call the station at 1-800-554-4549.

About Western Reserve Public Media

Western Reserve Public Media (formerly PBS 45 & 49) is owned and operated by Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc., a private, nonprofit corporation and consortium of Kent State University, The University of Akron and Youngstown State University. A trusted community resource, Western Reserve Public Media uses the power of commercial-free television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire. It serves the largest population (5.13 million people) of Ohio’s eight PBS member stations.

Western Reserve PBS (WNEO 45.1/WEO 49.1), a service of the organization, is the only broadcast television service that reaches all of Northeast Ohio. It is available to 5.13 million people in the Cleveland and Youngstown designated market areas. In an average month, more than 1 million people tune in. The organization also operates three standard definition channels: Fusion (WNEO 45.2/WEO 49.2), MHz Worldview (WNEO 45.3/WEO 49.3) and V-me (WNEO 45.4/WEO 49.4).

About David Hassler

David Hassler is an award-winning author and poet, and is director of the Wick Poetry Center at Kent State University. His poetry collection “Red Kimono, Yellow Barn” was awarded Ohio Poet of the Year 2006. His nonfiction works include the play “May 4th Voices,” based on the Kent State Shootings Oral History Project; “Growing Season: The Life of a Migrant Community”; and “A Place to Grow: Voices and Images of Urban Gardeners.” He is also coeditor of “Learning by Heart: Contemporary American Poetry About School” and “After the Bell: Contemporary American Prose About School.”