

## Kennesaw State University welcomes Tony Award-winner Kenny Leon

*Broadway, film and television director to teach master classes in acting*

**KENNESAW, Ga. (Aug. 2, 2017)** — Tony Award-winning Broadway, film and television director Kenny Leon will teach two master classes to students in the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies at Kennesaw State University, and will share his extensive professional experience with up-and-coming actors, designers, directors, writers and technicians.

“Kenny approached us about how he could work with our students in meaningful and impactful ways,” said Patty Poulter, dean of the College of the Arts. “He is incredibly enthusiastic and eager to work with our students, and it is very exciting to have him at Kennesaw State University.”

A sought-after motivational speaker, Leon has conducted acting and theater workshops at universities and corporations in this country and abroad.

“I want to bridge that gap between the academic world and the professional world. There should be a healthy synergy between the academic world and the professional/artistic world. So, I am all for that,” said Leon.

“When I have a master class with students who are serious about being in this business, it’s better to give than receive. I am rewarded by giving,” Leon said. “I have a chance to do that with some students who call Atlanta home and students who are making a commitment to the profession. You make the profession better by sharing with young folks what you know to be true. So, I am hoping that it can mean something to them.”

Leon won a Tony for directing the 2014 revival of “A Raisin in the Sun” on Broadway, starring Denzel Washington. He is currently directing “Holler If Ya Hear Me.” The new musical, created using the music of Tupac Shakur, is a joint production of Spelman College and Leon’s True Colors Theatre Company in Atlanta.

“I am going to use this time to be as honest as I can about the realities of the business and of the craft. Only two years ago I did the ‘Wiz Live’ and I have done the TV movie ‘Steel Magnolias.’ I’ve done a lot of things: regional theater, Broadway, television,” Leon said. “I want to share my experiences with these wonderful students to get them ready. They are sitting where I was sitting 25 to 35 years ago. I am hoping that I can bring something meaningful to their professional trajectory.”

Accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre, the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies offers a Bachelor of Arts with four concentrations: acting, performance studies, musical theater and design/technology. Students perform in plays, musicals, poetry performances, adaptations of classic literature, storytelling, improvisational comedy and new works. Currently, 230 students are in the major.

“We are so pleased to have an artist with the extraordinary achievements of Kenny Leon to work with our students,” said Rick Lombardo, chair of the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies. “Kenny is a remarkable teacher and director, and our students will have a very special experience working with him.”

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*A leader in innovative teaching and learning, Kennesaw State University offers more than 150 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees to its more than 35,000 students. With 13 colleges on two metro Atlanta campuses, Kennesaw State is a member of the University System of Georgia and the third-largest university in the state. The university's vibrant campus culture, diverse population, strong global ties and entrepreneurial spirit draw students from throughout the region and from 92 countries across the globe. A Carnegie-designated doctoral institution, it is one of the 50 largest public institutions in the country. For more information, visit [kennesaw.edu](http://kennesaw.edu).*

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