

A Resolution to Commemorate the UCLA Freedom Riders

WHEREAS, from the 1880s until the 1960s, several states imposed racial segregation in education, health care, marriage, transportation, and most other public and private realms with Jim Crow Laws, thereby cultivating a system of racial apartheid and disenfranchisement¹; and

WHEREAS, in 1954, with its “Brown v. Board of Education” ruling, the United States Supreme Court invalidated its 1896 “Plessy v. Ferguson” decision that had established a “separate but equal” paradigm for American society and perpetuated a practice of state-sponsored segregation²; and

WHEREAS, university students established the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1942 to challenge racial segregation and emphasize active but non-violent tactics on which the Freedom Rides were modeled³; and

WHEREAS, from May to November 1961, more than 400 black and white activists defied Jim Crow Laws by boarding buses nationwide and riding across state lines into the south⁴; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Riders endured both violence and threats of imprisonment in order to challenge the racial status quo; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Riders utilized non-violent methods to draw international attention to the issue of civil rights equality and laid a rich foundation of social activism which continues to inspire our campus community; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Riders were therefore one of countless groups who transformed American consciousness and conscience with respect to civil rights all during the decade of the 1960s when the landmark Civil Rights Act was passed; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Riders fought segregation, which directly benefitted the UCLA campus, the surrounding communities in Los Angeles, and the United States; and

WHEREAS, within the scope of the UCLA community alone, the ripple effects of their actions continue to be felt and seen through the numerous community outreach and retention projects, the integration of the previously all-white student apartment complexes, and the introduction of ethnic studies courses on campus; and

¹ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/issues/jim-crow-laws>

² <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/brown-v-board-of-education-of-topeka>

³ <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/congress-of-racial-equality>

⁴ http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_freedom_rides/

WHEREAS, the actions of the Freedom Riders served as a stimulus for institutional changes in the Undergraduate Students Association Council including the creation and implementation of the Commissions and the General Representative positions⁵;

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that with sincere appreciation, the Undergraduate Students Association Council recognizes the Freedom Riders' courage, resilience and commitment to furthering a more socially just society and the lasting impact of their activism on the history of our student government and campus community; and

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Undergraduate Students Association Council commends the University of California, Los Angeles for honoring the Freedom Riders at Royce Hall on February 6th, 2015; and

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Undergraduate Students Association Council will continue to work for diversity, equity and inclusion on UCLA's campus and beyond.

⁵ https://www.usac.ucla.edu/documents/docs/historical_roster.htm