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"Jail, No Bail" Documentary Scheduled for Feb. 1 Premiere Showing at Winthrop

Winthrop University

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"Jail, No Bail" Documentary Scheduled for Feb. 1 Premiere Showing at Winthrop

Quick Facts

- After the showing of the ETV documentary, several members of the Friendship 9 will discuss the event and take audience questions.
- The "Jail, No Bail" strategy had a revolutionary effect; it revitalized the flagging sit-in movement and altered the entire civil rights movement.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - This month is the 50th anniversary of the "Jail, No Bail" movement which began in Rock Hill, S.C. and helped spark major societal changes for African-Americans in this country. A documentary about the event will premiere on Feb. 1 at Winthrop University.

During that era, whites and African-Americans did not often mingle. There were separate hospitals, parks, restaurants, beaches, schools and even special seating sections in movie theatres. For the 10 percent of the country's African-American population, the separateness affected daily life, and they pushed for equality.

There were a **few uncoordinated lunchroom sit-ins** in the late 1950s, but the sit-ins didn't come to the mass media's attention until the historic February 1960 Greensboro, N.C., sit-in.

Quickly, an organized sit-in movement spread to Winston Salem, Raleigh, Charlotte and Rock Hill. The media grew tired of covering sit-ins and although movements continued unabated, their impact was waning while the cost to protesters was mounting. The cost in Rock Hill alone was \$17,000 in bail and fines spent in Rock Hill over the 11 months following Greensboro.

With the help of **CORE organizer Tom Gaither**, several students at Friendship College in Rock Hill decided to try a new strategy. Instead of being bailed out of jail and paying a fine, students from the two-year Baptist college for African-Americans would force the system to convict and jail them for the crime of asking for human dignity.

This had a **revolutionary effect**; it revitalized the flagging sit-in movement and altered the entire civil rights movement. Additionally, it shifted the financial burden of enforcing segregation onto the power structure rather than the victims. The governments had to pay for trials and jail as opposed to protesters paying fines.

The **Rock Hill sit-in** occurred on Jan. 31, 1961. On Feb. 1, 2011 -- exactly 50 years and one day later -- there will be a public premiere of the **ETV produced documentary on the Jail, No Bail movement** in Rock Hill and the group of nine men who went to jail for their beliefs -- a group which came to be known as the **Friendship 9**.

The documentary will be shown at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 1 at Dina's Place, the theater in the DiGiorgio Campus Center. After the showing of the documentary, several members of the **Friendship 9** will take their place at the front of the theater to discuss the event and take audience questions.

For more information, contact **Scott Huffmon**, associate professor of political science, at 803/323-4669 or e-mail him at huffmons@winthrop.edu.

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