



# Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

## Legislation Text

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A Resolution honoring the life of Jimmy Allen Ruth, bus driver for The Freedom Riders.

WHEREAS, Jimmy Allen Ruth passed away at the age of 83 in early June in Bartlett, Tennessee. He is remembered for his friendly disposition, amazing memory, and for his service as a bus driver for a group of Nashville Freedom Riders in the early 1960s; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Chester County High School in 1956, Ruth began driving passenger buses and trucks; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, as a bus driver for Trailways, Ruth volunteered to drive a group of Freedom Riders from Fisk University in Nashville to Jackson, Mississippi. All other Trailways drivers had turned down the job, except for the 23-year-old Ruth; and

WHEREAS, this group of Freedom Riders were taking over for another group during the height of the movement. The prior group had encountered extreme violence during their ride through Alabama and had been beaten by a mob near Birmingham; and

WHEREAS, Ruth understood the risks involved in driving the Nashville Freedom Riders to Mississippi. According to his family, he was "willing to aid in the cause for freedom and justice at all cost" - he stated that "if they were going to die, I was going to die with them"; and

WHEREAS, Ruth's passengers on this fateful journey included Diane Nash, John Lewis, and C.T. Vivian; and

WHEREAS, Ruth considered what he did a small gesture at the time, and later learned how significant his contribution he made to the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the early 1960s; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Rides Movement helped to bring about the end of segregated transportation in the South; and

WHEREAS, some of Ruth's bus-driving memorabilia is currently on display at the Tennessee State Museum; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council go on record as expressing gratitude to Jimmy Allen Ruth for his role in the Freedom Rides Movement, as well as his contributions to Nashville and Tennessee.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. The Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as honoring the life of Jimmy Allen Ruth, who bravely drove the bus of Nashville Freedom Riders through Mississippi in order to fight for civil rights and justice at all costs.

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.