

2023-2024

# FIELD TRIPS & SERVICE

A vehicle for learning from our community

PHOTO CREDIT: FRANK WILLIAMS

## Message from the Directors

BY AARON D. COBB & LYNN STALLINGS

A generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation titled "From Civil Rights to Civic Virtue: Forming Character through Community," has enabled the Civil Rights & Civic Virtue Society to host opportunities to serve our community and to visit local Civil Rights museums and historic sites. AUM's Experiential Education and Engagement Center has co-hosted many of these events.

This booklet features brief descriptions of the field trips and service projects in 2023-2024. Both types of experiences are vital to our goals for CRCVS: active exploration of our history through trips to the area's rich resources and hands-on service to our communities. We are hopeful that experiences such as walking through the Equal Justice Initiative's new Freedom Sculpture Park are transformational for our AUM CRCVS community.



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## EJI Legacy Museum, Memorial for Peace and Justice, and Freedom Monument Park

August 2, 2023 | November 3, 2023 | March 1, 2024 | April 5, 2024 | June 26, 2024

In spring 2024, the Equal Justice Initiative opened the Freedom Monument Park and our first group visited in April. Our Summer Seminar group visited in June. The CRCVS organized three additional trips and supported three trips so that individual faculty could take their classes to visit EJI sites. In total, 194 students, faculty, and staff visited the Legacy Museum, 153 of whom were students. AUM junior Madalyn Barfield commented, "Visiting the EJI Legacy Museum was both a powerful and educative experience for me. The first exhibit taught me more about the geographical path, history, and intensity of the African people who were enslaved than I have from any other source." For more, visit <https://eji.org/>.

**"The National Monument to Freedom also provides a powerful opportunity for Black Americans to find their names—the names chosen by their foreparents and passed down to millions of Black families."**

BRYAN STEVENSON  
EJI FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR







"Through non-violence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overthrows injustice. The redemptive community supercedes systems of gross social immorality."

JAMES LAWSON

## Freedom Rides Museum

July 31, 2023 | October 20, 2023

The Freedom Rides Museum is housed in what was Montgomery's Greyhound Bus Station (1951-1995), the site where Freedom Riders were violently attacked in May 1961. Opened as the Freedom Rides Museum in 2011, the museum was recognized in 2012 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. CVCS organized two trips to the Freedom Rides Museum during fall 2023, which included 24 participants.

The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized the Freedom Rides for the purpose of testing the 1960 Supreme Court decision *Boynton v. Virginia*, which stated that segregation of interstate transportation facilities was unconstitutional.

The 13 original Freedom Riders included seven black and six white riders, who left Washington, D.C. on May 4, 1961 for the destination of New Orleans, Louisiana. Stops became violent in South Carolina where John Lewis and two other riders were attacked as they entered the white-only waiting area. Violence also met the Freedom Riders in

Anniston, Birmingham, and Montgomery, Alabama before their arrest in Jackson, Mississippi.

The publicity of the violence and arrests resulted in new Freedom Riders recruits and continued freedom rides for several months until new Interstate Commerce Commission regulations decreed all interstate travel must be integrated by November 1961.

Most Riders were under 30 years old, and many had received training on nonviolent tactics by Rev. James Lawson in Nashville. Other notable Freedom Riders include James Bevel, Stokely Carmichael, Bernard Lafayette, Diane Nash, Fred Shuttlesworth, C.T. Vivian, and James Zwerg.

The Freedom Rides Museum is a property of the Alabama Historical Commission.



PHOTO CREDIT: LYNN STALLINGS





## Rosa Parks Museum

July 31, 2023 | October 20, 2023 | June 24, 2024

The Rosa Parks Museum is located at the site of Mrs. Parks's December 1, 1955 arrest. On three CRCVS trips to the Rosa Parks Museum in 2023-2024, 61 students, faculty, and staff learned more about her story, including 35 students, 22 faculty, and 4 staff. In January 2024, the museum unveiled a number of renovations, including a re-shooting of the video in what is called the “bus room” and upgrades to digital technology throughout the museum.

As visitors to the museum, we witnessed Mrs. Parks's arrest by watching the new video through the windows of a 1955 Montgomery City bus. We listened to recordings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as he encouraged Montgomery's black bus riders to boycott. We learned about the role Montgomery's churches and carpools played in sustaining the bus boycott for over a year.

Rosa Louise McCauley was born in Tuskegee on February 4, 1913. She was returning home from her work as a seamstress at the Montgomery Fair department store on the day she refused to give up her seat and was arrested.

Parks is a Civil Rights heroine and exemplar whose story is often oversimplified. Before her arrest, Mrs. Parks had served as secretary of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She moved to Detroit in 1957 because she struggled to find work in Montgomery after the bus boycott. She continued to work as an activist throughout her life.



PHOTO CREDIT: ASSOCIATED PRESS

“At the time I was arrested I had no idea it would turn into this. It was just a day like any other day. The only thing that made it significant was that the masses of the people joined in.”

ROSA PARKS





“There never was a moment in American history more honorable and more inspiring than the pilgrimage of clergymen and laymen of every race and faith pouring into Selma to face danger at the side of its embattled Negroes.”

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## 59th Anniversary of Selma March March 3, 2024



In collaboration with the campus chapter of the NAACP, the CRCVS co-sponsored a trip to Selma for the 59th Anniversary of the Bloody Sunday Bridge Crossing. On March 7, 1965, John Lewis, then 25, was among the leaders of 600 marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, who faced brutal attacks by state troopers as they crossed the bridge. The televised, footage of the violence mobilized many an in the nation to the cause of civil rights and voting rights.

When we arrived in Selma, we met with other college students from all over Alabama for the Next Generation Powering Democracy rally at which AUM student Keturah Stone spoke and represented AUM well.



After the rally, we marched to Selma’s Edmund Pettus Bridge and crossed with other students as we chanted about voting rights. Vice President Kamala Harris and U.S. Representative Terri Sewell were among the featured speakers at the event.







"We wanted confrontation, nonviolent confrontation, to see if it would work... Not just for Birmingham—for the nation. We were trying to launch a systematic wholehearted battle against segregation, which would set the pace for the nation."

REVEREND FRED SHUTTLESWORTH

## Birmingham's Civil Rights District

June 11, 2024 | June 25, 2024

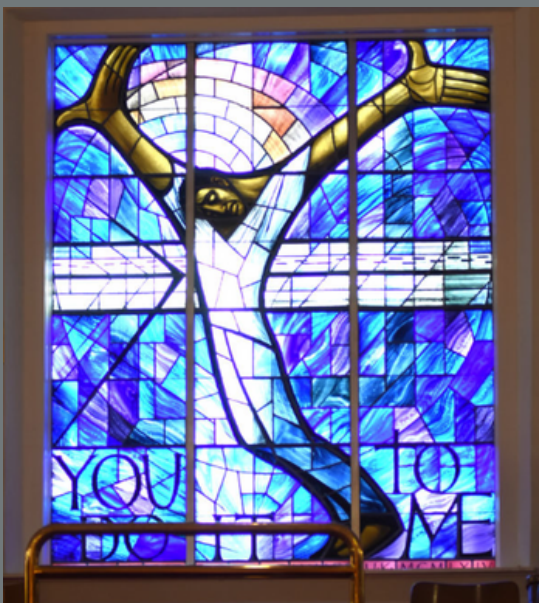


In preparation for 2024 Summer seminar, several members of Leadership Community of Practice visited Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, and Kelly Ingram Park. The Summer Seminar participants, including several of the speakers, visited two weeks later.

This area was a hub for the Children's March and also the site where firehouses and dogs were turned on children by Birmingham's police and firemen. The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI) overlooks the corner where that attack took place. BCRI is a cultural and educational research center that explains the significance of Birmingham's role in the civil rights movement. It

The 16th Street Baptist Church was the site of the church bombing that killed 14-year-olds Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and 11-year-old Cynthia Wesley. Addie's sister Sarah was seriously injured and lost her right eye. A less known fact is that two young black males were also killed in the unrest that day: 13-year-old Virgil Ware and 16-year-old Johnnie Robinson.

The blue stained glass in the background of the photo above and to the left is known as the Wales Window and was designed by Welsh artist John Petts and was a gift from the people of Wales. His depiction of a black Jesus shows his left hand offering forgiveness and his right hand pushing away hatred and injustice. At the bottom is an excerpt of Matthew 25:40, "You do it to me."







# Shady Street Park and Trailhead

October 27, 2023 | November 17, 2023 | February 23, 2024 | March 29, 2024 | April 19, 2024

Since 2020, AUM's students have visited Shady Street Park and Trailhead almost monthly for service opportunities and to learn more about the city. This project of Montgomery's Office of Economic and Community Development (OECD) has the goal of reclaiming land that had been a thriving Black community before the construction of I-65 bisected it in the 1960s.



Our partnership with OECD began with the physical work of clearing the three blocks of invasive species and trash. AUM volunteers have planted, weeded, built and installed Eastern Bluebird houses. Students have recorded oral histories of former residents of the neighborhood. A graphic design student developed their logo (at right). Two graphic design faculty members included major projects with Shady Street as their client. One class designed wayfinding signs for the park and the other designed swag (t-shirts, caps). Prof. Nikhail Godhke said, "Working on apparel design for Shady Street project was immensely beneficial for my graphic design students as they gained real world client experience working with the city."

"The Shady Street trips are the best! Faculty and staff always join us and we have a lot of fun out there. It's also fascinating to learn about the history of the area. The parking area and the history information sign mark an area where a school used to be located and that's cool to me!"

TAYLOR MCGILL  
JUNIOR, SPEECH  
COMMUNICATIONS







## Mercy House/Mission About People

April 12, 2024 | June 28, 2024

"There are just things that need to be done. This is a hard community with not that much help."

REV. KEN AUSTIN

Rev. Ken Austin, pastor of New Walk of Life Church, spoke to our campus community on October 25, 2023 about the needs in West Montgomery. This area of West Montgomery was impacted by the construction of interstate I-65 in the 1960s and has not recovered. Rev. Austin's church serves the area through Mercy House and other initiatives that are grouped under the umbrella of Mission About People. Mercy House provides a food pantry, showers, washing machines, and a clothes closet for the community. Additional services include adult education, counseling, and tutoring and after school programs for young people. One facility is being developed as a hub of services for people who are homeless.

In April, an AUM group including students, faculty, and staff toured all of the facilities of MAP, including, including the Mercy House, the MAP Youth Navigation Center, Manna House, MAP Center for Excellence, and Pathway House. After that visit, the CRCVS leadership team decided that to include

service to MAP as part of the Summer Seminar.

Our team of 30 split into two groups: half unloaded food delivered by the Heart of Alabama Food Bank at Mercy House and then repackaged it for families and half went to the Youth Navigation Center to work with students in the Summer Enrichment Program. We also met most of the MAP staff and heard from each of them about their programs.

Our day was very rewarding, even if the outdoor service was little hot. We intend to continue to serve in MAP programs.





