



FAIR HOUSING NEWS

A newsletter about fair housing, community development, & neighborhood quality of life



EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY

LATE WINTER GREETINGS!

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NATIONAL NEWS

Oregon Man Pleads Guilty in Swatting and Bomb Threats Scheme That Targeted Jewish Hospitals in New York City and Long Island.

In federal court in Brooklyn, Domagoj Patkovic has pleaded guilty to conspiring to make threats concerning explosives and conveying false information concerning explosives. The proceeding was held before U.S. District Judge Ramon E. Reyes. When sentenced, Patkovic faces up to 15 years in prison. Patkovic was charged in August 2024. “As he admitted today, the defendant intentionally targeted Jewish hospitals and care centers in our District with bomb threats. In doing so, he needlessly endangered patients and staff and diverted critical law enforcement

resources from their core mission of keeping our community safe,” stated U.S. Attorney Durham. “We will prosecute dangerous bomb threats and swatting schemes to the fullest extent of the law.” Swatting is a criminal harassment act of deceiving an emergency service into sending a police or emergency service response team to another person's address. According to prosecutors, Patkovic was part of a crew of troublemakers who began making anonymous threatening calls to Jewish hospitals and facilities on Long Island among other targets throughout the country in May 2021 - and live streamed the hoaxes on social media and electronic devices. As set forth in the indictment and in court filings, the defendant himself made threats in at least six separate calls to hospitals (when he told hospital staffer he wanted to kill all Jews, using an Antisemitic slur, according to prosecutors) and on a call with local law enforcement who had responded to a 911 notification from one of the hospitals. On several occasions, local police responded to the scene and conducted bomb sweeps. On at least one occasion in September 2021, the hoax bomb threat resulted in a partial evacuation and lockdown of an entire hospital on Long Island. No explosive devices were ultimately found. [Read the February 19, 2025 DOJ article.](#)



After Neo-Nazis Targeted a Majority-Black Town. Locals Launched an Armed Watch.

On February 7th, a U haul van full of neo-Nazis gathered in the predominantly Black Cincinnati suburb of Lincoln Heights, which boasts a modest population of 3,144 people. They wore masks and carried guns as they called residents racist slurs. The group of white supremacists also waved flags with red swastikas on a highway overpass. The town originated as a self-governing Black community for laborers blocked from Cincinnati and surrounding towns because of their race, and is the oldest north of the Mason-Dixon Line. The neo-Nazis also marched that same day in Evendale, a nearby village. Two weeks

after that disturbing incident, someone - presumably another white supremacist - spread racist pamphlets from the Ku Klux Klan all over Lincoln Heights. Disappointed by local law enforcement officials who did not protect them, Black residents have now taken things into their own hands. Lincoln Heights' police department was disbanded in 2014; the area is served by the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. Following the February 7th demonstration, residents - alongside Hamilton County Commissioner Alicia Reece - questioned why police made no arrests or citations after the neo-Nazis intimidated residents and threatened racist violence. Evendale police also released body-camera footage showing officers being cordial with the masked group. As a result, the Lincoln Heights Safety and Watch Program was formed. Black men now are carrying rifles to guard the roads that lead directly into Lincoln Heights, questioning anyone trying to enter. Ohio is an open-carry state and folks are taking advantage of that, according to spokesperson Daronce Daniels, a spokesman for Program, which coordinates the guards who serves as guards for Lincoln Heights. The program directs members to report suspicious activity to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. "An American individual protecting his homeland with a firearm - I thought that was the most American thing that we [could] do," he said. Daniels said the Lincoln Heights guards will continue patrolling their village for the foreseeable future. They feel they are still under threat. The Village of Lincoln Heights and members of the Lincoln Heights Missionary Baptist Church have initiated a public boycott of Evendale after their frustration with the Evendale Police Department (EPD) and Evendale leaders regarding the neo-Nazi demonstration that occurred February 7th. [Read the February 27, 2025 Washington Post article.](#) [Read the February 25, 2025 NBC News article.](#) [Read the February 27, 2025 Cincinnati Herald article.](#)

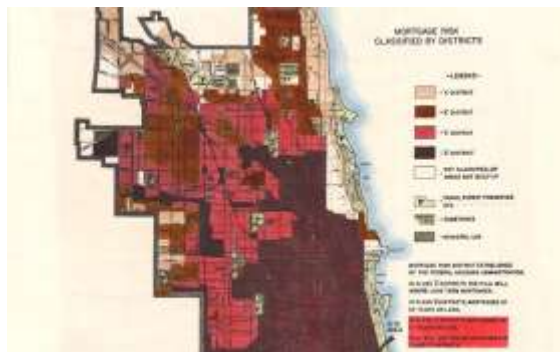
102-Year-Old Holocaust Survivor is Vogue Germany's Cover Star.

A 102-year-old Holocaust survivor whose family was murdered at Auschwitz is the cover star for the July/August edition of *Vogue Germany*. Margot Friedländer, née Bendheim, was born in Berlin and spent the early part of the war with her mother and younger brother Ralph after her parents separated. The mother and son were both murdered at Auschwitz. But before leaving, she left behind a message for her daughter that read: "Try to make your life." Friedländer, then just 21 years old, went into hiding but was ultimately betrayed and was sent to Theresienstadt camp in the then-Nazi occupied Czechoslovakia in 1944. Friedländer met her future husband, Adolf, while in the Nazi concentration camp, and married him soon after liberation. The pair emigrated to the US in 1946 and lived in New York. In 2010, following her husband's death aged 88, Friedländer moved back to Berlin. Ever since, she has been campaigning as a Holocaust educator and earned numerous awards, including the Federal Cross of Merit First Class. Friedländer was "appalled" by the growth of right-wing populism and the rise of Antisemitic attacks. When addressing the issue of society becoming more polarized, she said: "Look not toward what separates us. Look towards what bring us together. Be People. Be sensible." Grateful for the opportunity to pass on her message, she said: "You will carry my story onward. That this never comes to happen again." [Read the June 20, 2024 CNN.com article.](#)



Civil and Human Rights Organizations Sue Trump Administration Over Executive Orders Banning Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Erasing Transgender People.

The Legal Defense Fund (LDF) and Lambda Legal have filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of the National Urban League, the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago challenging three anti-equity executive orders from President Trump related to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and transgender people. LDF and Lambda Legal claim these orders will severely limit the organizations' ability to provide critical social and health services such as HIV treatment, fair housing, equal employment opportunities, affordable credit, civil rights protections, and many others. This would harm countless people across the US, including people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and people living with HIV. The lawsuit claims that the administration is violating the organizations' rights to free speech and due process and is engaging in intentional discrimination by issuing and enforcing the anti-equity orders. The three executive orders being challenged would end equity-related grants and forbid federally-funded entities from engaging in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs, and from recognizing the existence of transgender people. These orders reverse decades of civil rights progress and pose an existential threat to the organizations that advocate for the civil rights of transgender people, and provide them shelter, services, and support. The lawsuit, *National Urban League v. Trump*, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, claims that the executive orders violate the plaintiffs' First Amendment right to free speech by censoring and chilling their views on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The plaintiffs also claim that the executive orders are so vague that the organizations do not know what is and is not prohibited, in violation of their Fifth Amendment due process rights. Also, the executive orders discriminate against people of color, women, and LGBTQ+ people, with particular animus towards Black people and transgender individuals, in violation of the Fifth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection. You can read the [full complaint](#). [Read the February 19, 2025 NFHA article](#).



MORTGAGE LENDING NEWS

CFPB Takes Action Against Draper & Kramer Mortgage for Discriminatory Mortgage Lending Practices Including Redlined Neighborhoods in Chicago and Boston. The [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau \(CFPB\)](#) has taken action against

Draper & Kramer Mortgage Corporation (Draper) for discriminatory mortgage lending activities that

discouraged homebuyers from applying to Draper for homes in majority-Black and Hispanic neighborhoods in the greater Chicago and Boston areas. The CFPB alleges that Draper located all its offices in majority-white neighborhoods, concentrated its marketing in majority-white neighborhoods, and avoided marketing to majority-Black and Hispanic areas. This resulted in disproportionately low numbers of mortgage loan applications and mortgage loan originations from majority-Black and Hispanic neighborhoods in Chicago and Boston compared to other lenders. If entered by the court, the proposed order announced today would ban Draper from engaging in residential mortgage lending activities for five years, and require Draper to pay a \$1.5 million civil money penalty into the CFPB's victims relief fund. The CFPB alleges that, from 2019-2021, Draper engaged in redlining majority-Black and Hispanic neighborhoods in the greater Chicago and Boston areas, resulting in it significantly underperforming its peers in lending activity to these areas. Draper discouraged mortgage

applicants from making or pursuing an application for credit on the basis of race, color, and national origin, violating the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and Regulation B. If entered by the court, the order would require Draper to: (1) Cease residential mortgage lending activities for five years: For that period, Draper cannot perform any residential mortgage lending activities, nor receive any compensation for any residential mortgage lending, and (2) Pay a \$1.5 million civil penalty to the CFPB's [victims relief fund](#). [Read today's proposed order](#).



Chicago Non-Profit Transforming Vacant Land Stripped by Redlining & Other Discrimination. Chicago's Emerald South is working to reverse the negative effects of historic redlining by revitalizing and transforming 205 acres of vacant land. The nonprofit Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative (ESEDC)'s Terra Firma initiative, begun in 2021, is a \$50 million land care initiative to beautify, maintain, and activate vacant land in the community. ESEDC began in 2017 with a \$250,000 grant from the Chicago Community Trust and funding from the Polk Bros. Foundation. The goal was to create ways for local businesses and residents to benefit from the tourists expected to come once the Obama Presidential Center is built in Jackson Park. The project focuses on revitalizing neighborhoods across what the organization calls the Mid South Side: from Bronzeville to the north, down to South Chicago, to the south. According to housing policy experts, many of these areas were shaped by discriminatory housing practices. According to the Cook County Assessor, there are over 30,000 vacant lots in Cook County, both city- and privately-owned. The vast majority, 93%, are in communities of color, while only 7% are in majority-white neighborhoods. On Chicago's South Side, vacant lots account for 67% of the total, compared to just 4% on the North Side. Emerald South is still in phase one of its plan, having cleaned and beautified over 100 acres. That land is marked by its signature split-rail fencing, a symbol of what's to come. [Read the February 19, 2025 ABC7-TV article](#). [Read the 2018 Chicago Tribune article](#).

HUD & DOJ ENFORCEMENT

Justice Department Finds that Idaho Violates Federal Civil Rights Law by Unnecessarily Segregating People with Physical Disabilities. The US Department of Justice (DOJ) has announced its [finding](#) that Idaho unnecessarily segregates adults with physical disabilities in nursing facilities, in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the US Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* DOJ's findings, detailed in a [letter to Idaho Governor Brad Little](#), follow an investigation into the state's service system for people with physical disabilities. The ADA and the *Olmstead* decision require state and local governments to ensure the services they provide to people with disabilities are available in the most integrated setting appropriate to individuals' needs. Community-based services can include assistance with daily activities, like showering or bed-wheelchair transfer. Without community-based services, persons with physical disabilities have little choice but to enter nursing facilities - and will remain there for years or decades. Each year of nursing facility care costs on average per person, much more than what Idaho spends serving adults with physical disabilities at home.



According to the DOJ's findings, 65% of Idahoans in nursing facilities have expressed a desire to live in the community, but 82% did not have an active discharge plan as of October 2024. In Idaho, about 19% of nursing home residents are younger than 65, and about 14% have low care needs. DOJ's investigation found that most Idaho Medicaid-funded nursing facility residents could live successfully

at home with services Idaho offers. But Idaho limits access to services to transition out of nursing facilities and to live in the community. As a result, very few Idahoans with physical disabilities can access Idaho's services to leave nursing facilities and remain at home. In-home nursing services can help people with disabilities with medication management, bathing, housekeeping, and more intensive care like managing medical devices. The DOJ letter says Idaho could remedy the ADA violations by expanding community-based services and allocating more resources to existing programs. By doing so, the state could not only improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities, but also save money on Medicaid expenditures, the report says. [Read the January 16, 2025 DOJ press release.](#) [Read the January 19, 2025 Idaho Capital Sun article.](#)



Justice Department Agreement with DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Orlando at SeaWorld Resolves Allegations of Discriminatory Policy Against Hosting Arabs. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) agreement with AWH Orlando Property LLC, the owner of the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Orlando at SeaWorld in Florida (DoubleTree) resolves allegations that the DoubleTree discriminated against people of Arab descent in violation of Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title II). Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin in places of public

accommodation, including hotels. The lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida alleges that the DoubleTree had a discriminatory policy against hosting guests of Arab descent by unilaterally canceling a conference that was to be held by the Arab America Foundation, a non-profit educational and cultural organization, in November 2023, a week before the conference was scheduled to begin and almost a month after the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. The settlement, which still be approved by the court, requires in addition to other efforts the DoubleTree to: (1) Issue a statement to the Arab America Foundation that all guests and groups are welcome to the hotel, including Arab and Arab American guests and groups; (2) Retain a qualified compliance officer to oversee compliance with the consent decree for two years; (3) Notify employees and executives of the DoubleTree's obligations under Title II and the consent decree, including its commitment to ensuring equal access to the hotel, regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin; (4) Establish a written anti-discrimination policy, which includes a system of accepting, investigating, and responding to guest complaints of discrimination; and (5) Conduct outreach to Arab or Arab American groups to share promotional materials about the hotel and indicate that it is open to all members of the public. [Read the January 16, 2025 DOJ release.](#) [Read the January 17, 2025 CBS News article.](#)

Justice Department (DOJ) Issues Report Highlighting Critical Enforcement Work Over the Past Four Years; But Trump Administration DOJ Then Cancels New Civil Rights Work.

The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division has issued its [2021-2024 Civil Rights Division Highlights Report](#), outlining various accomplishments of the division and its partners in enforcing the nation's civil rights laws and the Constitution from 2021-2024. The report reflects upon some of the civil rights work across the division's 11 sections to bring to justice those who harmed, threatened and/or intimidated people because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, English proficiency, or disability status. This work has included challenging discriminatory voting laws and abortion restrictions, to investigating police departments and prison conditions, fighting redlining, and working to combat hate and protect people with disabilities and LGBTQ people. More info about the Civil Rights Division can be found at www.justice.gov/crt. To report a possible civil rights violation, visit www.civilrights.justice.gov/.



Unfortunately, on January 22, 2025, the Trump Administration Justice Department "has ordered an immediate halt to all new civil rights cases or investigations - and signaled that it might back out of Biden-era agreements with police departments that engaged in discrimination or violence, according to two internal memos sent to staff on Wednesday. The actions, while expected, represent an abrupt about-face for a department that had for the past four years aggressively investigated high-profile instances of violence and systemic discrimination in local law enforcement and government agencies." [Read the January 16, 2025 DOJ press release.](#) [Read the January 17, 2025 Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights article.](#) [Read the January 22, 2025 New York Times article.](#)



FAIR HOUSING RESOURCES

A Black Family's Home was Too Close to a White School. So D.C. Took it in 1931. A documentary *Diminished Returns: The Black Wealth Gap in Washington, D.C.* has been released highlighting several Black families in an analysis of the huge wealth gap between Black and White Washington. The film was written and directed by Dr. Sabiyha Prince and executive produced by Temi F. Bennett.

The Black Julien family - direct descendants of George and Martha Washington's enslaved maid - had 0.38 acres of land and a house on Broad Branch Road in Northwest Washington. In the spot where it once stood is now a basketball court. It was taken from the family by the federal government's D.C. Commission in 1931. Because they were Black. "The Presence of this house, with its colored occupants, so close to a white school is a source of possible friction that is thought desirable to remove," Assistant Engineer Commissioner H.L. Robb explained in the *Evening Star*. They were not evicted because the new School needed the space: the new all-White Lafayette School was nearly constructed when the family was told to leave, and it was made clear why. This was the end of Chevy Chase as a thriving Black neighborhood. These forced evictions and continuing housing discrimination have left the District's White households with 81 times the median savings and assets as its Black households, a 2016 report showed. The film makes the argument for giving reparations to families such as the Juliens in D.C. to right this wrong. [Read the February 28, 2025 Washington Post article.](#) [Read the December 4, 2024 Washington Informer article.](#)

Interested In Fair Housing? Community Development? Insurance? Foreclosure Prevention? Check Out the [GBCHRB's YouTube Channel!](#)

You can watch interviews about insurance, discrimination, affordable housing, Fair Housing laws, disability issues, mortgage lending, and related issues. Or listen to one or more of our 15-minute fair housing radio shows: <http://www.gbchr.org/2rad9899.htm>.



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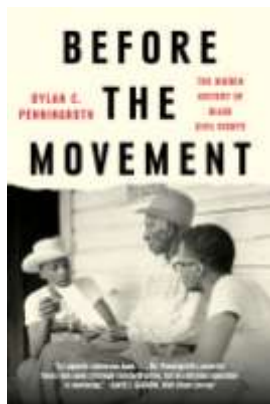
What Do You Think of This Newsletter? Is it good? Bad? How can we improve it? What issues should we cover more? Less? Any good ideas? Tips? Good jokes?!

Positive or negative, we want to hear from you! We appreciate constructive criticism! Send comments to <mailto:wkladky@gbchr.org>.

CALENDAR

The Just Economy Conference 2025 will be on March 26-27, 2025 at the Washington Hilton (1919 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20009). [Register](#). Hill Day will be held on March 25. The Just Economy Conference is the national event for community, business, foundation, policy and government leaders who want a nation that not only promises but delivers opportunities for all Americans to build wealth and live well. National and local luminaries, visionaries, and changemakers gather to network, share ideas, learn, and ask questions to chart out a better future.

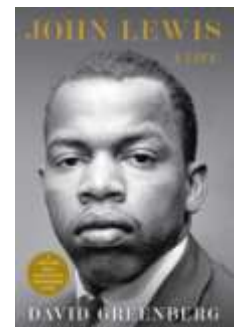
Along with keynote speakers and conversations on the main stage, the conference includes a wide range of conversational sessions and workshops, including Community organizing and advocacy, Fair housing, Fair lending, Access to capital and credit, Workforce and community development, civil and human rights, and others. Earlybird Pricing: General Admission- \$700, Nonprofit \$450, NCRC Organization Member \$250, Just Economy Club Member \$350, Student/Intern \$85, and Retired \$85.



HAVE YOU READ?

***Before the Movement: The Hidden History of Black Civil Rights* by Dylan C. Penningroth.** (WW Norton, 2025. 496 pages, \$24.99, paperback). In *Before the Movement*, acclaimed historian Dylan C. Penningroth revises the conventional story. Drawing on long-forgotten sources found in the basements of county courthouses across the nation, Penningroth shows that African Americans, far from being ignorant about law until the middle of the twentieth century, have thought about, talked about, and used it going as far back as even the era of slavery. They dealt constantly with the laws of property, contract, inheritance, marriage and divorce, of associations (like churches and businesses and activist groups), and more. By exercising these “rights of everyday use,” they made Black rights usual. And in innumerable subtle ways, they helped shape the law itself. Free Black people participated extensively in credit, debt and contracts in the decades before the Civil War. According to Penningroth, by 1860, there were over 16,000 free Black property owners in the South who held property worth nearly \$8.8 billion in today’s dollars. Freedom meant that they could ask local judges to protect their rights, and they went to court in cases involving farms, cows and myriad other types of property. Black homeownership rose from 43,000 families in 1870 to over 500,000 families in 1910 (about 1 in 4 Black families nationwide). Black farmers owned more than 15 million acres and \$208 billion in farm property (in today’s dollars). Lynchings also rose sharply in these years, and not coincidentally. [Read the September 26, 2023 Washington Post article.](#)

***John Lewis: A Life*, by David Greenberg** (Simon & Schuster, 2024. \$35.00 hardcover. 704 pages). David Greenberg’s “authoritative...definitive biography” (David J. Garrow, Pulitzer Prize-winning author) follows Lewis’ life through documents from numerous archives, interviews with 275 people who knew him, and rare footage of Lewis speaking from his hospital bed after Selma. The author relates his history beyond the civil rights era, highlighting his leadership in the Voter Education Project, where he helped enroll millions of African American voters across the South. The book also covers Lewis’ ascent in politics, first locally in Atlanta and then as a respected member of Congress. As part of the Democratic leadership, Lewis was admired on both sides of the aisle for his unwavering dedication to nonviolent integration and justice.



Not in My Backyard: How Citizen Activists Nationalized Local Politics in the Fight to Save Green Springs by Brian Balogh (Yale University Press, 2024. \$35.00 hardcover. 385 pages). This

interesting book details how a woman-led citizens' group beat a Southern political machine by enlisting federal bureaucrats and judges to protect their neighborhood from unchecked economic development. It is also one story of the beginning of NIMBYism and local political activism. It illuminates the economic tradeoffs of protecting the environment, the changing nature of local control, and the surprising power of history to advance public policy. Political neophyte Rae Ely began a campaign in 1970 to stop a prison and later a strip mine, in Green Springs. The local political machine

supported the proposed projects, promising jobs for impoverished Louisa County, Virginia. But Ely and her allies prevailed by applying some of the tactics of the Civil Rights movement - the appeal to federal agencies and courts to circumvent local control - and by using new historical interpretations to create the first rural National Historic Landmark District. When these middle-class white women spoke out in defense of their community, they expanded the space for political participation in ways that would have lasting consequences. NIMBY tactics are now used by neighborhood groups across the nation, even if they have been applied in ways she never intended: to resist any form of development. Green Springs, in fact, reflects an atypical approach to NIMBYism. Ely could only turn to the federal government because the projects she sought to stop received federal funds. In most cases, the political power that NIMBY groups wield is overwhelmingly dependent on the turn toward local control - which was a change in urban policy that developed in reaction to urban renewal (often federally funded).



REST IN PEACE

L. Clifford Davis, Civil Rights Lawyer & Judge, 100. Davis was a civil rights lawyer in the 1950s who helped integrate Texas public schools that had resisted the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning the principle of “separate but equal.” He recalled assisting Thurgood Marshall, then the chief of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, with the legal work supporting *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ended with a unanimous 1954 US Supreme Court decision in which the justices ruled that segregated public schools were unconstitutional. In 1955, Davis was the lead attorney in a lawsuit, *Jackson v. Rawdon*, seeking the admission of several Black students to public schools in Mansfield, a Fort Worth suburb that was then a farming community. A federal appeals court judge ordered that the schools integrate. Despite that ruling, and despite the US Supreme Court’s earlier decision in *Brown*, segregationists in the district fiercely opposed the mandate. As the new school year began in 1956, mobs tried to prevent Black students from entering the local high school. A Black student was hung in effigy from a noose downtown. Other effigies were hung at the school entrance and from a flagpole. Gov. Allan Shivers, a Democrat who had denounced the *Brown* decision, dispatched the Texas Rangers. At one point, according to an account in the *New York Times*, an Episcopal minister attempted to quell the mob, remarking that it was difficult to “put the Bible’s ‘love thy neighbor’ together with this crowd.” “This ain’t a ‘love thy neighbor’ crowd!” one of the White resisters yelled back. In 1959, Davis filed *Flax, et al. v. Potts*, another federal civil rights suit,

which led to the desegregation of the Fort Worth Independent School District. He was lead attorney on many noteworthy cases over his career, including the race discrimination class action suit against General Dynamics, In the 1960s he became one of the first Black lawyers to join the Tarrant County Bar Association and in 1983, he was first appointed and then elected to the Texas Criminal District Court No. 2 district court bench, becoming one of the first Black state district judges in Tarrant County, where he served on the bench until 1988. Davis received numerous awards from other social organizations. [Read the February 21, 2025 Washington Post article.](#) [Read the obituary by the L. Clifford Davis Legal Association.](#)

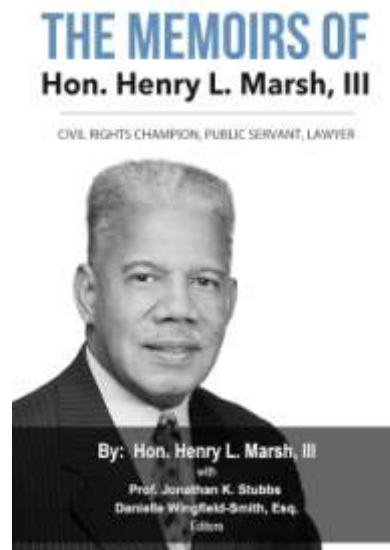
Thomas Gaither, Who Chose Jail After Civil Rights Sit-ins, 86. As the Civil Rights Movement was in danger of losing momentum, in 1961 a 22-year-old organizer, Thomas Gaither, introduced a new tactic.

In the next sit-in, at the lunch counter of a McCrory's dime store in Rock Hill, Black students led by Gaither were dragged off counter stools by police officers. But this time, instead of paying a \$100 trespassing fine as earlier protesters did, they chose to serve 30-day sentences on the county chain gang. Their "jail no bail" tactic dramatized their moral commitment and changed the direction of the civil rights movement. Within days, protesters in other cities followed suit, their imprisoning drawing more attention and protests. As a field secretary by the Congress of Racial Equality, which used nonviolent direct action to fight segregation, Gaither organized in Kentucky, California, and Arizona. He helped train the protesters, eight students from Friendship Junior College. He and the students were known as the Friendship Nine after choosing to serve jail sentences. Gaither and fellow CORE organizer Gordon Carey developed the idea for the first Freedom Ride: an integrated group of activists who would take a bus trip from Washington through the Deep South. The idea was to dramatize the refusal of Southern states to comply with US Supreme Court rulings that segregated interstate buses and terminals were unconstitutional. In May 1961, CORE national director James Farmer led the first Freedom Ride, with 13 white and Black passengers, including the future congressman and civil rights advocate John Lewis. In Alabama, the CORE activists were arrested and beaten by white mobs led by the Ku Klux Klan. The commercial buses they rode in were firebombed. The police abetted the violence, and hospitals refused to treat bloodied victims. National publicity drew hundreds more activists, who made dozens of Freedom Rides. The violence shocked the nation, no less because of the complicity of the Southern authorities in allowing it to happen in defense of Jim Crow laws. Gaither was scouting the route and contacting local supporters to house the riders and was staying at the home of the civil rights leader the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy in Montgomery, Alabama, on May 20 when riders arriving at the Greyhound station were beaten with baseball bats and iron pipes. The next night, more than 1,500 people went to Abernathy's church to hear the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speak as a rock-throwing white mob surrounded the building. Dr. King called on Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy to send federal protection. [Read the January 24, 2025 New York Times obituary.](#) [Listen to a 2011 Library of Congress Oral History Interview with Thomas Gaither.](#)



Henry Marsh, Civil Rights Lawyer and First Black Mayor of Richmond, 91. Marsh became prominent as a young lawyer during the civil rights movement and helped mount the legal challenge to "Massive Resistance," the concerted effort to subvert the integration of public school as mandated by the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Marsh entered politics and won a seat

on the Richmond City Council in 1966. At the time, Richmond's mayor was selected by a city council of nine members elected at large. Following the city's controversial annexation of White suburbs and a court challenge under the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Richmond began a ward system that in 1977 produced the first Black majority on the city council. Marsh then was selected as mayor. As mayor during 1977-1982, Marsh worked to improve the city's housing; helped spearhead a partnership with the White business community to revitalize the city's downtown; pushed to bring African Americans into key municipal positions and into civil service; and helped transform the city from a bastion of White power to one that really represented more equitably the population.



In 1991 he was elected to the state senate, serving until 2014. He was among those who pushed the legislature to reckon with Virginia's role in slavery and segregation. In 2007, the General Assembly passed a resolution stating "profound regret" for Virginia's slaveholding past. As a member of a leading Black law firm in Richmond, with partners including the civil rights lawyers Oliver W. Hill, Sr. and Samuel Tucker, Marsh helped argue cases related to voting rights, school desegregation, and discrimination in employment. "We were constantly fighting against race prejudice," he recalled. "For instance, in the case of Franklin v. Giles County, a local official fired all of the black public school teachers. We sued and got the (that) decision overruled." The firm also worked on a variety of other fronts, ranging from housing and voting rights to employment issues. Marsh's memoir *The Memoirs of Hon. Henry L. Marsh, III: Civil Rights Champion, Public Servant, Lawyer* was published in 2018 by GrantHouse Publishers (232 pages). It was edited by Jonathan K. Stubbs and

Danielle Wingfield-Smith. [Read the January 28, 2025 Washington Post obituary.](#) [Read the January 25, 2025 VPM article.](#) [Read the March 22, 2018 Richmond Free Press article.](#)
