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WKNO Presents Little Known Chapter in Mid-South

Civil Rights History

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You have to be black like me to know what black is all about - it was pure hell in Fayette County. If I talked to you for a million years, I could not tell you all of what happened.

- Maggie Mae Horton

In 1959, the black citizens of Fayette County, Tenn., began a civil rights movement dedicated to securing their basic rights of citizenship. The brave people in this small rural community faced brutal resistance from whites who retaliated against black activists by refusing to provide them goods and services and by evicting black sharecroppers who registered to vote from farms owned by whites. The plight of these black activists received national attention and they were supported in their fight for civil rights by various sympathetic college students and organizations from around the nation.

WKNO, in collaboration with the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change at the University of Memphis, presents *Freedom's Front Line: Fayette County, Tennessee*. This new half-hour documentary premieres Thursday, Oct. 16, at 8 p.m. on WKNO/Channel 10. The film highlights the struggle, courage and persistence of a number of black activists who started the voter registration drives in Fayette County in 1959 and who sustained a civil rights movement in Fayette County for more than a decade.



John and Viola McFerren leading protestors to Fayette County, TN Courthouse, March 1965. Photographer: Art Shay, LIFE® Magazine.

"The Fayette County Movement demonstrates that profound changes in communities can

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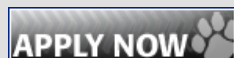
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be created when individual responsibility and community activism are effectively combined," said Daphene McFerren, director of Hooks Institute. "At great risk to themselves and their families, movement activists challenged the Jim Crow practices that prevented African-Americans from exercising basic constitutional rights, like the right to vote. This movement is a solid example of how ordinary people took extraordinary action to change their community and in the process changed themselves and their nation."

Freedom's Front Line: Fayette County, Tennessee captures the vision for liberty and equality that was born out of Fayette County. This documentary was created by a team consisting of Robert Hamburger (producer), Mark Lipman and David Vallert (directors), Daphene R. McFerren (production consultant), New Jersey City University and the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change.

The broadcast of *Freedom's Front Line: Fayette County, Tennessee* is sponsored by the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change, Lane College and the NAACP.

WKNO is a non-profit, private foundation serving the Mid-South for more than 50 years. An important community resource, WKNO uses the power of non-commercial public broadcasting to provide the Mid-South with quality educational and cultural programs that inform, entertain, and inspire.

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