

We shall not be moved: 50th Anniversary of Edwards v. South Carolina

Written by Staff Writer

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Columbia, S.C. - Columbia SC 63 kicks off a year of civil rights programming with *We Shall Not Be Moved: A Commemoration of Student Activism in Columbia and the 50th Anniversary of *Edwards v. South Carolina**

on March 3. The day's events include a church service at Zion Baptist Church and a reunion and roundtable discussion with participants of the movement, including U.S. Rep. James Clyburn, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

Though its role has never been widely recognized, Columbia played a significant role in shaping the American Civil Rights Movement, and student activism was the driving force behind the movement. Inspired by the "Greensboro Four," young Black South Carolinians bucked tradition and engaged in a determined campaign of civil disobedience in protest of segregation. A month after Greensboro, students at Columbia's Allen University and Benedict College held lunch counter sit-ins at local businesses along Main Street. Two significant cases emerged from these

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protests, *Bouie v. City of Columbia* and *Barr v. City of Columbia*, which made it illegal to charge individuals with trespassing without prior warning and explanation.

On March 2, 1961, a statewide coalition of African American high school and college students met at Zion Baptist Church and marched to the South Carolina State House grounds. Carrying protest signs and singing "freedom songs," they challenged segregation and racial discrimination in the state. 187 participants were arrested and charged with "disturbing the peace." Those arrested later filed a lawsuit, *Edwards v. South Carolina*.

On February 25, 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that their arrests violated "constitutionally protected rights of free speech, free assembly, and freedom to petition for redress for their grievances." Their courageous efforts legalized nonviolent protest on public grounds and sharpened the movement for social justice nationwide.

We Shall Not Be Moved will gather members of the movement, many of whom participated in the Edwards march, for a day of celebration and commemoration. The day's events include:

- Commemorative Church Service - Zion Baptist Church, 801 Washington Street, 10:45 am - *Free and open to the public*
- Reunion and Roundtable Discussion with Movement Participants - Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, 3 - 5 pm - *This event is free, but seating is limited. Tickets can be reserved at NotBeMoved.eventbrite.com or calling 803.252.7742 ext. 15.*

The roundtable panel will include U.S. Rep. James Clyburn, who participated in the Edwards march, and James Edwards, who the case is named after. After the discussion, attendees are invited to join the panelists for a reception in their honor.

To raise awareness and understanding of a truly pivotal chapter in American history, Columbia, South Carolina has joined several other Southeastern cities to commemorate 50 years since the height of the Civil Rights Movement. Comprising a diverse coalition of community leaders, educators, students, residents and others, Columbia SC 63 will explore remarkable accounts of strength, determination and sacrifice that define how and why "Our Story Matters" – historically

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and for the future – to South Carolina and to our nation. Columbia SC 63 is a partnership of the City of Columbia, Historic Columbia Foundation and the Columbia Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau. For more information about activities and events associated with this initiative please visit www.ColumbiaSC63.com.