



**Black  
History  
Month  
2021**

**The Freedom Riders – American Heroes**  
**IN THEIR OWN WORDS**

February 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM

Sponsors include:

*Easton Democratic Town Committee; Easton Republican Town Committee; Weston Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Committee; Easton Public Library; ER9 Social Justice Group; The James Baldwin Project; Easton Diversity & Inclusion Task Force (EDIT); Redding League of Women Voters; Mark Twain Library; Redding Democratic Town Committee; Redding Civic League*

**A Virtual Conversation with Freedom Riders**  
**Joan Browning and Dion Diamond**

*Moderated by Nancy Doniger and Rep. Anne Hughes, 135<sup>th</sup> District of Easton, Weston, Redding*

Register [HERE](#).

Submit questions to the Freedom Riders [here](#).

**Topics include:**

- Taking a stand for justice
- Creating an inclusive and equitable America
- Celebrating and embracing diversity
- The impact of taking actions against injustice

The Freedom Rides spanned from May through November 1961 with over 400 Black and white Americans risking their lives to end segregation on interstate transportation. The first Freedom Ride began on May 4, 1961, when seven Black and six white riders left Washington, D.C. on two public buses bound for the Deep South. The riders were testing whether the southern states would enforce the Supreme Court's ruling that declared segregation on interstate bus and rail stations unconstitutional. The violence against the Freedom Riders garnered national and international attention putting pressure on the Kennedy administration to take federal action. In the fall of 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued regulations prohibiting segregation in interstate transit terminals.

### **The initial ride led to countless Americans joining the Civil Rights movement.**

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#### **Joan Browning**

Joan Browning was a student at Georgia State College for Women, but was asked to leave in 1961 because she attended an African American church. At the age of nineteen, she rode the Central Georgia Railroad as part of a Freedom Ride from Atlanta to Albany on December 10, 1961. When she arrived in Albany, she was arrested immediately. Thirty years later, she completed her B.A. degree at an historically African American university in West Virginia.



#### **Dion Diamond**

Dion Diamond was on the second freedom ride. One of the first Freedom Ride buses was burnt down in Anniston, Alabama. He was on the Greyhound bus which arrived in Jackson, Mississippi shortly after another bus carrying another group of Freedom Riders showed up. They were arrested as soon as the bus arrived in Jackson and were sent to the Mississippi State Prison. As a Howard University student in 1960, he became involved with the Non-Violent Action Group in Washington D.C. to break Jim Crow in the suburbs.