

# Proclamation

**WHEREAS**, Jim Crow laws mandated racial segregation in all public facilities including public transportation in the Southern United States as well as in some other states beginning in the 1870s and lasting until the 1964 Civil Rights Act; and

**WHEREAS**, Irene Morgan was an African American woman who was arrested in Virginia in 1944 when she refused to give up her seat in the "white section" of an interstate bus that operated under federal law and regulations; and

**WHEREAS**, Irene Morgan appealed her conviction to the United States Supreme Court; and

**WHEREAS**, in the landmark 1946 ruling, *Morgan v. Virginia*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 7-1 that segregation on interstate travel was unconstitutional; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1947, Civil Rights activists Bayard Rustin and George Houser organized the Journey of Reconciliation to test the *Morgan v. Virginia* ruling; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 9, 1947, an interracial group of eight white and eight Black men commenced the Journey of Reconciliation on buses leaving Washington D.C. on a planned two-week route through the Upper South, including planned stops in Durham, Chapel Hill, and Greensboro; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 12, 1947, the riders arrived in Chapel Hill and were greeted by Reverend Charles M. Jones and later met with students and other clergy; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 13, 1947, in Chapel Hill, a mob attacked one rider, James Peck, and four riders, Andrew Johnson, James Felmet, Bayard Rustin, and Igal Roodenko, were arrested for disorderly conduct for refusing to move from the front of the bus; and

**WHEREAS**, after bond was posted, Reverend Jones drove the riders to his home while pursued by a car of angry white men with sticks; and

**WHEREAS**, the riders fled from Chapel Hill to Greensboro by car as a result of local threats of violence; and

**WHEREAS**, in May 1947, those members who had been arrested in Chapel Hill went on trial and were sentenced to 30 days on the chain gang; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 21, 1949, Rustin and two white members surrendered at the courthouse in Hillsborough and were sent to segregated chain gangs; and

**WHEREAS**, Bayard Rustin's published writings about the Journey of Reconciliation inspired Rosa Parks's nonviolent protest in 1955 and the Freedom Rides of 1960-61; and

**WHEREAS**, April 2022 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Journey of Reconciliation.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, as we continue to reckon with our past and look ahead to a shared future, the Chapel Hill Town Council does hereby proclaim Wednesday, April 13, 2022, as:

## JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

in the Town of Chapel Hill and urge all residents to participate in local events commemorating the Journey of Reconciliation and to learn more by visiting [chapelhillhistory.org](http://chapelhillhistory.org).

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THE TOWN OF  
CHAPEL HILL, ON THIS THE SIXTH DAY OF APRIL IN THE YEAR  
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-TWO.



*Gam Hemm*