

## Judy Frieze Wright: Freedom Rider

In 1961, Judith Frieze, a recent graduate of Smith College, joined African American and white volunteers on a Freedom Ride to Jackson, Mississippi. Their purpose was to test *Boynton v. Virginia*, a Supreme Court case ordering the integration of restaurants and waiting rooms in bus terminals serving interstate bus routes. Frieze was arrested and held in jail for six weeks for her act of conscience, as were many Freedom Riders. After her release, *The Boston Globe* ran a series of articles, written in Frieze's voice by a reporter who had interviewed her. Below are a few excerpts from those articles, taken from JWA's social justice education project *Living the Legacy*.



**Judy Wright Intake Image.** Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, item#2-55-5-49-1-1-1ph, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, June 21, 1961. Courtesy of Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

**Note:** *The themes at the top of each section were added by the Jewish Women's Archive. Some of the text in the original articles was printed in bold type, and has been reproduced that way below.*

### **PURPOSE:**

All of a sudden I was tired of talking. I had reached the point when I wanted to do something about this. I felt like the only way that I could make my principles meaningful was by involving myself.

**It seemed necessary to close that gap between what I was saying and what I was doing.**

**I wrote to CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) and volunteered to participate in a Freedom Ride.**

*Boston Globe*, July 30, 1961

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**PREPARATION:**

**We were not supposed to strike back if we were attacked.**

The men were told to form a ring around the women, and we were instructed to try and protect Mr. Schwartzchild. [The only white male Freedom Rider in their group.]

The crowd is most likely to be angry with a white man, Wyatt said. Secondly, they would vent their feelings against the Negro man. We white girls were the least likely to be attacked.

*Boston Globe*, July 31, 1961

**THE "CRIME":**

**"Then you are all under arrest," he said.** A wave of relief spread over me.

**I had looked forward to, and yet feared, this moment. At last it had come and I was glad.**

The police officers took our names and we were taken to city jail. We had our moment of triumph, however, for we integrated the patrol wagon on the way—our whole group traveled together.

*Boston Globe*, July 31, 1961

**ON REFLECTION:**

[On July 23, 1961, Judith Frieze was bonded out of prison due to ill health. In the last of the *Boston Globe* articles, she reflects on her experience.] Now that I have the time to think about my past month, I have thied ta [sic] analyze the lessons I have learned.

There has never been any question as to whether the ordeal was worth it. I believed in a cause—integration—and I have done something about my belief. I have tried to make my beliefs meaningful; I have not merely talked about them.

I endured my prison sentence, and found it almost bearable because I was fighting for a cause in which I believed. And others were fighting with me.

*Boston Globe*, August 6, 1961

Text taken from JWA's *Living the Legacy* Social Justice Education Project: [Civil Rights Unit 2, Lesson 3 - Civil Disobedience: Freedom Rides](#)