

DAVID DENNIS SR.

“David Dennis, Sr. has always been a hero of mine.” —Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

David J. Dennis, Sr. was on the first freedom bus ride from Montgomery, Alabama to Jackson, Mississippi in 1961. He is a civil rights activist who worked as co-director of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), as director of Mississippi’s Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and as one of the organizers of the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964.

In the 1960s, David, Sr. interrupted his collegiate experience during his freshman year at Dillard University in New Orleans to work in the civil rights movement in the South, particularly Mississippi and Louisiana, where he was arrested over 30 times in relation to his activities to register disenfranchised voters. David worked closely with Mickey Schwerner and James Chaney who were murdered along with Andrew Goodman as Freedom Summer began; he spoke in Mississippi at the funeral for James Chaney, delivering a eulogy that will long be remembered.

Returning to Dillard University in 1965, David graduated in 1968. Continuing his education, he left for law school at the University of Michigan, where he graduated in 1971. Later, David became active with the Algebra Project, a nonprofit organization that aims to improve the mathematics education for minority children. He is also currently active with Dave Dennis Connections, where he speaks about his experiences in the movement.

David is the recipient of The Andrew Goodman Foundation Freedom Summer Visionary Award, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Award, The NAES Disturber of the Peace Award, and The Annual Civil Rights and Social Justice Award.