Whereas, The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) began a Freedom Ride through the Deep South in 1961, which was met by great opposition and violence in the cities of Birmingham and Anniston, Alabama, including the burning of its buses; and

Whereas, The CORE bus riders ended their Freedom Ride after the violence in Alabama, and Nashville student leaders expressed a desire to continue the efforts; and

Whereas, The Nashville Freedom Riders were a racially mixed group of individuals from the community and colleges in the City, including twenty-three student Riders from Tennessee A & I State University, and

Whereas, Freedom Riders from Tennessee A & I State University were arrested and convicted in Jackson, Mississippi for “breach of the peace” and received sentences of from 30 to 59 days imprisonment; and

Whereas, On July 1, 1961, the Tennessee A & I State University Fourteen — Catherine Burks, Charles Butler, Allen Cason, Jr., William Harbour, Larry Hunter, Pauline Knight, Frederick Leonard, Lester McKinnie, William Mitchell, Ernest Patton, Jr., Etta Simpson, Mary Jean Smith, Frances Wilson, and Clarence Wright — all were expelled from the University; and

Whereas, In October 1961, Pauline E. Knight, et al v. State Board of Education for the State of Tennessee, et al was filed in Federal District Court, Middle District of Tennessee Nashville Division resulting in the court ordered reinstatement of the dismissed Tennessee A & I University Fourteen; and

Whereas, It is fitting that the City of Nashville should recognize the pivotal role of the Tennessee A & I State University Fourteen — and all members and participants in the Nashville Student Movement of the 1960s — in breaking the “bars of segregation” in the South.

Now, therefore I, Karl F. Dean, Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, do hereby recognize and commemorate the heroic deeds in 1961 of the Tennessee A & I State University Fourteen Freedom Riders.

I have hereunto set my hand on this 19th day of September, 2008.

Karl F. Dean
Mayor