Sally’s post is about an all-day celebration yesterday day to unveil a historic marker in Chapel Hill. The marker honored 16 Freedom Riders who came to Chapel Hill in 1947 via Greyhound and Trailways as part of campaign to enforce *Irene* *Morgan vs. Virginia*, the 1946 Supreme Court decision that banned segregated seating on interstate travel as an unconstitutional restriction of the commerce clause. This was what, eleven years before Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus? (The difference was Ms. Parks was on a Birmingham city bus; interstate travel was not involved.)

Several hundred people, about evenly Black and white, attended a roving event in rainy Chapel Hill. There was incredible theater, poetry, an essay contest, reflections from people here now and here then, music, marching and food. The galvanizing story is about how eight Black men and eight white men boarded buses in the upper South in 1947, sat together and challenged Jim Crow. It turned out that they met the most violence and legal persecution in liberal Chapel Hill. Bayard Rustin was one of the 16. He and three others were sentenced to the chain gang following their arrests in Chapel Hill. Rustin later co-wrote “You Don’t Have to Ride Jim Crow” with co-rider George Hauser, now 92, who attended yesterday’s commemoration. Rustin’s published account of his experience on a NC chain gang led to its eventual abolishment. Today the N&O <<http://www.newsobserver.com/news/story/1423949.html>>

has a beautiful photo of the unveiling with a story on the event.

Yesterday was a miracle day and I am in awe of Yonni Chapman who spearheaded all of this – from the NAACP’S campaign to get the historic marker, to organizing a commemoration event that blended good history with good politics. This was not an event for people to celebrate “how far we’ve come.” You did not have the option of coming away thinking racism is mostly done with and today’s anti-racist struggle unnecessary.

Yonni is battling a life threatening blood disease. He’s a good friend. I haven’t told him about this blog – a lot of people don’t know about it – because what’s my disease next to his? Stupid, I know, but I felt weird about it. But I want him and “my readers” (ha) to know how I feel about what he’s done. How does someone who lives with anemia like I’ve *never* felt do so much, so well? I just don’t know. Yonni, thank you. Yes, Sally, yesterday was a day to be alive for.