



# MEJDI TOURS

## Guide & Speaker Bios

**Dr. Todd Allen** is the Vice President for Diversity Affairs and a Professor of Communications at Messiah University. He is the Founder of the Common Ground Project, a community-based nonprofit dedicated to teaching and preserving the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Todd is a frequent lecturer on commemorative practices and public memory related to the Civil Rights Movement and is also a diversity and inclusive excellence trainer.

Other speakers & movement veterans (**or similar**, based on dates/availability):

- **Charleston** - Rev. DeMett Jenkins, granddaughter of businessman, preacher and civil rights activist Esau Jenkins and Director of Education and Faith-Based Engagement for the International African American Museum currently being constructed at Gadsden's Wharf.
- **Charleston** - Bernard Powers, professor emeritus of history at the College of Charleston and Director of the Center for the Study of Slavery, speaker at last year's [Charleston Forum](#)
- **Atlanta** - [Rutha Harris](#), one of the original SNCC Freedom Singers
- **Atlanta** - Charles Person, an African-American civil rights activist who participated in the 1961 Freedom Rides.
- **Montgomery** - Sophia Wallace, local mom, business owner, & master of "soul food"
- **Montgomery** - a representative from the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#)
- **Selma** - [Joanne Bland](#), the co-founder and former director of the National Voting Rights Museum in Selma, who was a highly active participant in the Civil Rights Movement and was the youngest person to have been jailed during any civil rights demonstration during that period.
- **Selma** - additional civil rights movement [speaker](#) to join for lunch (TBD based on availability)
- **Birmingham** - Either Rev. Dr. Carolyn McKinstry, who was a young girl/member of 16th Street Baptist Church at the time of the bombing and was friends with the girls killed. Or, [Ms. Lisa McNair](#), who was born after the bombing but whose sister, Denise, was one of the girls killed.
- **Memphis** - [TM Garret](#), former Neo-Nazi and KKK leader turned human rights activist and founder of C.H.A.N.G.E, a Memphis-based non-profit organization which engages in community anti-racism and anti-violence campaigns and founder of The Memphis Peace Conference.