

James Wells, 77, Participant in a Civil Rights Sit-In, Dies

By The Associated Press

July 10, 2018

James Wells, a member of a South Carolina civil rights protest group known as the Friendship Nine whose sit-in at a whites-only lunch counter in 1961 was a key moment in the civil rights movement, died on Sunday at his home in Rock Hill, S.C. He was 77.

His death was confirmed by the Robinson Funeral Home in Rock Hill.

Mr. Wells spent a month in jail in 1961 after he and eight other black men were charged with trespassing at the lunch counter.

The men, who were attending the now-defunct Friendship Junior College in Rock Hill, chose to spend a month in jail rather than paying a \$100 fine as part of what was called the “jail, no bail” movement. Their time on a chain gang in York County encouraged protesters to stay in jail to fight segregation, Jim Crow laws and other forms of racism.

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