

## **Nashville Hosts Screening and Discussion of PBS Documentary – American Experience: Freedom Riders**

On May 11, the Nashville office hosted a pre-screening and panel discussion of the powerful documentary "American Experience: Freedom Riders," which tells the story of more than 400 black and white Americans who risked their lives—many endured savage beatings and imprisonment—to travel together on buses as they journeyed through the deep South 50 years ago this year. Determined to test and challenge segregated travel facilities, the Freedom Riders were greeted with mob violence and bitter racism.

The Baker Donelson panel discussion was moderated by Shareholder Charles Grant and included Freedom Rider Matthew Walker, Fisk University Professor Dr. Reavis Mitchell and John Seigenthaler, who was the assistant to U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy in the early 1960s. Mr. Seigenthaler was sent by Kennedy to negotiate security for the Freedom Riders in Alabama, but when they arrived in Montgomery, Alabama, their police escort was missing and they found themselves at the mercy of the angry white mob that awaited them. While rushing to help one of the riders who was being chased by the mob, Mr. Seigenthaler was hit in the head with a pipe and knocked unconscious, left for dead.

*Charles K. Grant is a shareholder in the Nashville office of Baker Donelson. He is a member of the Labor & Employment group.*