

# *Legacy of a Civil Rights Icon - Hank Thomas*

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## **Miss. Senate honors Freedom Rider Hank Thomas**

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JACKSON, Miss. — An activist who challenged segregated interstate travel a half century ago says he still hopes for racial reconciliation for Mississippi.

Hank Thomas, now a businessman in Georgia, was honored in the Senate Wednesday for his role in the Freedom Rides in 1961. That year, more than 400 blacks and whites traveled on the buses into the South.

Thomas has said he was on a bus that was firebombed near Anniston, Ala., and the Ku Klux Klan held the door shut before a fuel tank exploded, prompting the mob to scatter. When activists arrived in Mississippi, they were sent to jail.

As part of the riders' reunion this summer in Jackson, Thomas has made several trips to the state. He told lawmakers he's come to discuss racial reconciliation.