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Margaree Seawright Crosby, Dorris Wright and Elaine Means reflected on that moment in history when they, along with Jackson and four others, were arrested and then filed suit in federal court, leading two months later to the integration of Greenville's public library.

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The Rev. Jesse Jackson beseeched participants to learn from the past and look to the future Sunday during a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the historic sit-in that spawned the integration of the Greenville library.

"There's a joy in the accomplishments, a kind of glory in the accomplishments, but there are challenges in the unfinished business," said Jackson, who returned to his hometown to participate in the anniversary activities at the Hughes Main Library.

"We can see patterns of discrimination in home foreclosures, student loan defaults, unemployment, poverty, access to capital," he said. "We are free but not equal."

Jackson was joined by three others of the "Greenville Eight," the students who refused to leave the whites-only public library on North Main Street on July 16, 1960.

Margaree Seawright Crosby, Dorris Wright and Elaine Means reflected on that moment in history when they, along with Jackson and four others, were arrested and then filed suit in federal court, leading two months later to the integration of Greenville's public library.

"We sat down for justice, and we won," Crosby said.

Jackson called the sit-in a "bold action for justice and dignity" enacted by young men and women inspired by "political innocence and personal humiliation."

"We persevered, and now America is better for it," he said.

Crosby, Wright, Means and Jackson said they came together for the event to keep history from being locked away in the very books they fought for the right to read.

"They need to see where we have come from and what we have done," Crosby said. "They need to know what's going on and how we got to this point. It didn't just happen."

Wright said that as she arrived at the library for the event, she was impressed at how Greenville has grown and changed over the years.

"I'd never seen so many people and so many different colors of people -- children, young adults, men, women," she said. "I think that (sit-in) was the impetus, that it was something unforeseen but still something that I think contributed."

Jackson, too, remarked on the metamorphosis of the city in the last half century. He spent some time Saturday night walking the downtown streets that once were not the welcoming place they are today.

"After 50 years it's hard to imagine that we came down this street (Main Street) in a paddy wagon," Jackson said. "The jail was around the corner. The library was at the top of the hill."

As he walked, chatting with residents along the way, Jackson said he is amazed at the degree of socialization that takes place with a certain ease now.





"Ridiculous codes," he said, made socializing between whites and blacks illegal 50 years ago.

"So we learned to survive apart," Jackson said. "Now we have a bigger challenge -- learning how to live together."

Staff writer Julie Howle contributed to this report.

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