

BTN To Air Documentary On Selma Trip



In July 2022, five Black Ohio State student-athletes were invited to go on a trip to Selma, Alabama, joined by 95 other student-athletes from the Big Ten. Those in attendance spent three days learning about the history of civil rights activism in the area, and how they can take the lessons of the past and apply them to their future.

Tuesday the Big Ten Network will air an hour-long documentary about their experiences as part of its Big Life Series.

“It made me angry, just to think that that’s what people of my race and color had to go through just to get basic things like the right to vote,” Ohio State women’s track and field runner Jaydan Wood told BSB of her experience in September. “Just to be treated that way because of our darker skin complexion. But then it brought me joy to know that what they did wasn’t in vain, to see the change that we have in today’s society.”

Wood was joined by men’s gymnast Donovan Hewitt, men’s basketball center Zed Key, women’s soccer defender Nina LeFlore and cheerleader Brooke Shields as representatives from Ohio State. All 14 Big Ten schools sent athletes to the event.

Among the experiences taken in by the athletes were speeches from civil rights activists and a tour of The Legacy Museum, a long, narrow gallery laid out like a timeline that chronicles the history of Black Americans from the first slave ships all the way through modern day.

A walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma on a day described by Hewitt as “hot and humid” was also a feature. The bridge was the site of “Bloody Sunday” on March 7, 1965, when Civil Rights activists were attacked by local law enforcement during the beginning of a 54-mile march in peaceful protest from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.

“I remember starting to complain a little bit (about the heat), but as we were complaining, they were showing us videos of (the civil rights activists) walking miles and miles on end from literally Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, Alabama,” Hewitt said. “Which we drove, and it took us an hour to drive. That’s like a day trip, and it was hot back then too. They were doing it in dress shoes and dress pants.”

The BTN documentary airs at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday. BSB’s full feature on the experiences of OSU’s athletes in Selma can be found in its Oct. 1, 2022 edition, available online for subscribers.