

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Hollywood Actor to Speak At Scottsboro Boys-CEOTA Gala**

**Decatur, AL (November 13, 2019)** Thom Gossom, Jr., known for his roles on TV and the Big Screen will be in Decatur on November 14<sup>th</sup> speaking at the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala of CEOTA (Celebrating Early Old Town with Art), the group developing the multi-million Scottsboro Boys-CEOTA Museum in Decatur.

Gossom, is an internationally known actor, speaker, author, and communication consultant. You've seen him in top grossing television series such as In the Heat of the Night, NYPD Blue, and CSI. Recent appearances include the Oprah Winfrey Network's, Love is..., and BET's, The Quad. He has written Walk-On My Reluctant Journey to Integration at Auburn University, and The Slice of Life short story collection. The documentary, Quiet Courage: The James Curtis Owens Story, is also written, directed and produced by him. He has shattered barriers during his lifetime and guest will be encouraged and enriched by his exciting speech. (Speaker's photo at [www.sbcmuseum.org](http://www.sbcmuseum.org)).

The primary goal of the museum is to house, display and demonstrate the CEOTA collection and to depict Decatur's role in the historic trial of the Scottsboro Boys, reflecting the civil rights struggles and victories during that era.

The Scottsboro Boys were nine African American young men, ages 13 to 20, falsely accused in Alabama of raping two white women on a train in 1931. The landmark set of legal cases from this incident dealt with racism and the right to a fair trial. It is commonly cited as an example of a gross miscarriage of justice in the United States legal system. The Scottsboro Boys spent the two years between their first trials and the second round, that begin in March 1933 in Decatur, in the deplorable conditions of Depression-Era Alabama prisons. The story of the Scottsboro Boys lives on through the efforts of artists, historians and scholars. "This commitment is what feeds CEOTA's passion to perpetuate the awareness of the story" according to Frances D. Tate, CEOTA founder.

The invitation only event starts with a reception from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm followed by dinner and the presentation.

### **CEOTA Advisory Board**

**Frances D. Tate**- Artist and Founder

**John Allison** – County Archivist, Morgan County, Alabama, since 2006.

**Peggy Allen Towns** –Local historian, lecturer and published author. Dorothy B. Gordon – Well-known community activist.

**David Breland** - Director of Historic Resources and Events for the City of Decatur and Director of the Old State Bank since January 2013.

**Danielle Gibson** - President/CEO of the Decatur Morgan County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

**Wylheme H. Ragland** - retired United Methodist Clergy, benefactor, free-lance writer, and historian.

**Gerald G. Ginwright**- Founder and Managing Member of Mainstream Financial Group.