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Famed civil rights attorney Morris Dees to speak October 10 in Springfield

*Southern Poverty Law Center founder to appear as part of state
NAACP convention*

Springfield, IL — Famed civil rights attorney Morris Dees, founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center, will speak to the Illinois NAACP State Conference Friday, October 10 at 7 p.m. at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center in Springfield. The appearance is sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation and is part of the 100th anniversary commemoration of the 1908 Springfield Race Riot.

Tickets for non-conference participants are \$10 each and may be reserved at www.presidentlincoln.org or by calling (217) 558-8934.

Dees will address how our commitment to justice for all will determine our nation's success in the next century as America becomes more diverse and economic disparity widens. He will also talk about why he became an attorney, the founding of the SPLC, as well as some of the Center's prominent cases.

Dees devotes his time to suing violent white supremacist groups and developing ideas for *Teaching Tolerance*, the Center's tolerance education project. The Center has distributed more than 20 million *Teaching Tolerance* magazines free of charge to schools and educators. A documentary produced with in connection with the project, *A Time for Justice*, won an Academy Award for Best Short Documentary in 1995.

Dees has received numerous awards in conjunction with his work at the Center. Trial Lawyers for Public Justice named him Trial Lawyer of the Year; he received the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Award and the Friend of Education Award from the National Education Association; and in 2006 the *National Law Journal* listed Dees among the 100 most influential lawyers in America.

Several other events and exhibits commemorating the 1908 Race Riot are featured at the Presidential Library. The exhibits "Something so Horrible" and "In 1908..." continue through October in the Library atrium. A progressive reception featuring artist exhibitions at the Presidential Library, Illinois State Museum and the University of Illinois at Springfield will be held the evening of September 19. And book discussions and

signings with authors Roberta Senechal (September 11) and Paula Giddings (October 23) will further the dialogue concerning race relations in the United States.

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