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Alum's Book Chronicles Tiger Experience in the '70s

Actor, author, athlete and Auburn alumnus Thom Gossom, Jr., will read from his memoir, *Walk-On*, on Thursday, Nov. 6, 2008 from 6 - 7 p.m. at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art in Auburn, Alabama. A reception will follow the reading, and both the reading and the reception are free and open to the public.

Walk-On is a coming of age memoir set in the culturally changing Alabama of the 1970's. The memoir chronicles Gossom's barrier shattering journey to become the first black athlete to graduate from Auburn University. It is a story of overcoming adversity, gaining success, losing it, regaining it and in doing so making history. The author will sign copies and *Walk On* will be available for purchase at the Museum.

Gossom lettered as a wide receiver from 1972-1974. During his four football seasons at Auburn, Gossom not only walked on, he started three years for Coach Ralph "Shug" Jordan. He was Auburn's second black scholarship football player to complete his eligibility (James Owens came before him) and the first black athlete to graduate.

However, Gossom is quick to point out that this book is not solely about issues of race.

"Everyone who went to school in the '60s and '70s lived through a historical time," Gossom said. "This is a human interest story. The book is based on my personal experiences during a time of great change."

Gossom is a Birmingham native and 1975 mass communication graduate from Auburn. He is the unusual combination of talented actor and accomplished athlete. His television credits include: "West Wing," "Boston Legal," "Close to Home," "Jack and Bobby" and "My Wife and Kids." His film credits include: "Fight Club," "The Chamber," "Jeepers Creepers II," and "XXX State of the Union."

This event is sponsored by The College of Liberal Arts, The Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities, The Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, and the Auburn Alumni Association.