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**MORE THAN 100 DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, FRIENDS AND FAMILY CELEBRATE
JOBS NOT JAIL COMMENCEMENT
14 Graduate from the DeKalb County Solicitor-General's 12-Month Jail Diversion Program**

(Decatur, GA) – DeKalb County Solicitor-General Sherry Boston today conferred diplomas on 14 men and women graduating from the Solicitor-General's Jobs Not Jail diversion program before more than 100 distinguished guests, friends and family at a commencement ceremony in the DeKalb County State Courthouse.

The Jobs Not Jail Program -- coordinated by the DeKalb County Office of the Solicitor-General in partnership with the Magistrate Court of DeKalb County -- gives misdemeanor offenders -- with little to no criminal history, between the ages of 17 and 24 -- a second chance after being arrested for a variety of charges including prostitution, disorderly conduct, shoplifting and trespassing. Participants spend one year undergoing counseling and completing varied education, job training and community service requisites in order to have the opportunity to see their criminal case dismissed and expunged. The goal is to break the cycle of recidivism and help particular individuals complete their education, find jobs, and become assets to the community. The Solicitor-General's Office works with a multi-disciplinary team to assess, guide and mentor program participants, who pay a \$150 assessment fee to participate.

"This commencement makes manifest a chief goal of this program: That we in law enforcement can help guide people to becoming productive and contributing members of our community and, in doing so, reduce crime and recidivism," said Solicitor-General Sherry Boston. "I congratulate these individuals who have chosen to redirect their path and encourage them to visit us with their own success story."

DeKalb County Magistrate Court Chief Judge Berryl Anderson said, "As the presiding judge when this class began their journey through the program, I am proud of their efforts and determination to reshape their lives."

Former Georgia Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond told the graduates, "Forget about yesterday. It's about today and tomorrow. Take advantage of your second chance."

The Solicitor-General would like to thank DeKalb County Magistrate Court Chief Judge Berryl Anderson, Judge Rhathelia Stroud, the Honorable Michael Thurmond, former Georgia Labor Commissioner, DeKalb County District Attorney Robert James; David Price, founder of the Basix Knowledge Academy; Michael Morrison, of Counseling Solutions of Atlanta; Edwina Knox-Betty of M and E Counseling and Consulting; and Scott Duncan for their participation and making this program possible.

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