

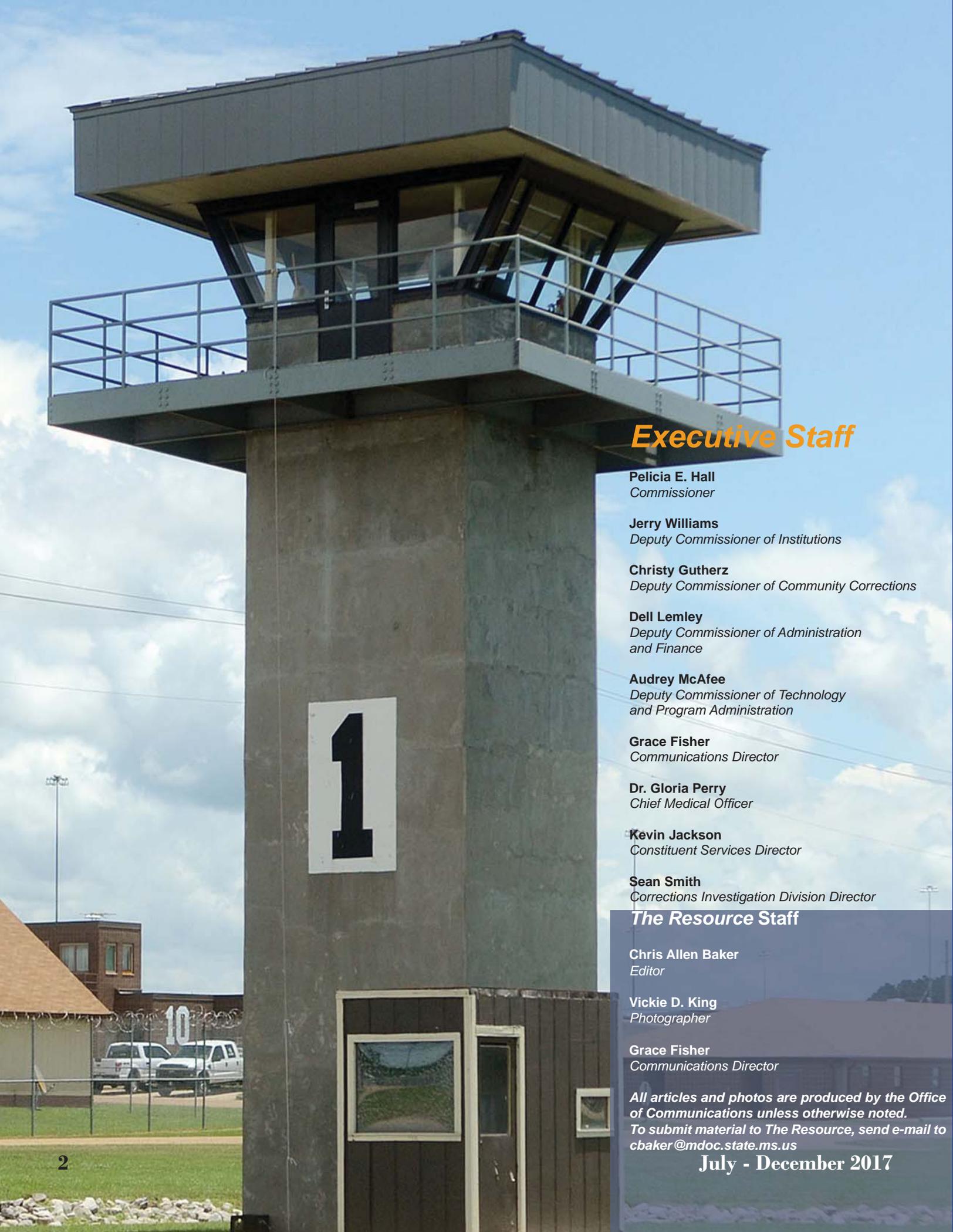


The

RESOURCE

A publication of the Mississippi Department of Corrections





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July - December 2017

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Distinguished Employees of the Year for 2016 were honored during an appreciation luncheon on Dec. 20.

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Commissioner's Message

It is very important that we recognize you, our employees, for your service. Therefore, the department resumed the tenure awards with the Commissioner's Assemblies and our Employee of Year Program. Eight employees have been honored for outstanding job performance. You will find out who they are in this edition and why they were chosen.

I ask you, our employees, to continue to work for me as I work for you. If we understand the why of what we do, we will be motivated even more to make a difference.

The several challenges we face, namely understaffing and inadequate wages, may seem daunting. But we should stay focused on our mission to enhance public safety by providing secure facilities and effective post-release for those under our supervision and ensuring a safe and professional

work environment for staff while being accountable, innovative and fiscally responsible to the citizens of Mississippi.

Every chance I get I am letting lawmakers know of the need to reinvest in MDOC the \$40 million by which we have reduced expenditures since fiscal 2014. Contrary to a popular perception, the reduction in prison population does not totally eliminate the cost associated with incarceration. We could use some of the funds to reinvest in staff and programs.

The \$2,075-per-month salary is not attractive as other jobs that pay more and are far less dangerous. Therefore, I will continue to ask for a realignment. As I am advocating for you, I also need your commitment to be accountable.

We also could use reinvested funds to improve upon the programs we offer to those under our care, custody and control.



I am pleased that that we have had numerous announcements this year in the name of rehabilitation. We have expanded pre-release at all three state prisons and those programs now offer job resource fairs. There's Thinking for a Change classes in both Community Corrections and Institutions. We also have expanded the 1A program at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

I could name plenty other activities the department or you, the employees, have hosted to show those under our supervision that we want them to succeed while they are with us and when they return to their communities. Working together I know we can move the Mississippi Department of Corrections progressively forward. I thank you for all that you do for this agency.

Pelicia E. Hall



MDOC

Employee Appreciation Luncheon

'Your dedication is our inspiration'

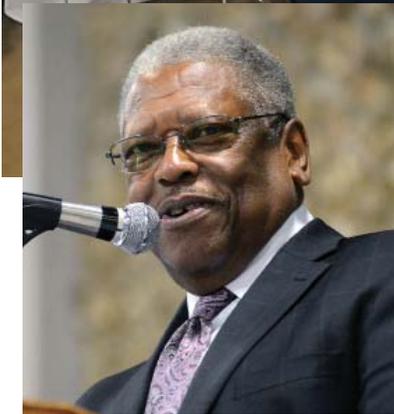
Employees who distinguished themselves on the job in 2016 were honored at the Mississippi Trade Mart on Dec. 20. Two nominees were chosen from each of the three state prisons, each of the three Community Corrections regions and the Central Office for a total of 14 employees.

From that group, the distinguished employee for each location was announced during the appreciation luncheon. In addition to the Distinguished Employee of the Year being revealed, Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall also announced whom she had selected to receive the Commissioner's Award.

Winners received a glass trophy, gift card, basket, personalized notepad, and grill.

Gov. Phil Bryant gave remarks, and Sen. Willie Simmons, a longtime MDOC ally and former employee, was the keynote speaker.

Planning for the luncheon began weeks earlier with a committee, made up largely of Central Office personnel.



The Resource



Distinguished Employees of the Year

Jessie J. Horton Farm Manager II

Mississippi State Penitentiary

Jessie J. Horton has served as farm manager with Mississippi Prison Agriculture Enterprises (MPAE) since Sept. 1, after starting as correctional director of farm operation on Jan. 5, 2015.

Through overseeing the row crops grown at the penitentiary and maintaining equipment, Horton has helped save or earn MDOC more than \$2.07 million in cumulative revenue through working tirelessly putting in 12-14 hour days.

Under Horton's leadership, MPAE had its most productive and profitable years in 2016 and 2017 combining for earning an estimated \$2 million through harvests. Repairs made to bins at the feed mill allowed grain to be stored onsite, saving approximately \$15,000 annually in storage fees.

Horton has gone above and beyond in assisting MSP groundskeepers when needed and helping other institutions.

When blueberry crops were ready for harvest at South Mississippi Correctional Institution during a lockdown, Horton and three staff members volunteered to harvest approximately 60,000 pounds, saving MDOC \$53,400. He and two staff members traveled to Walnut Grove Correctional Facility to perform landscaping duties, saving about \$5,000.

Horton trains inmates in farming practices, helping them develop a life skill.

He epitomizes the idea of "doing more with less" by providing quality service with minimal expense and creating maximum results, saving taxpayers thousands while producing millions in revenue for MDOC.



Carrie C. Langham

Correctional Officer IV

Central Mississippi Correctional Facility

Carrie C. Langham, a correctional officer IV, began her employment with MDOC on May 4, 2015.

Langham has shown a sincere commitment to meeting the goals of the Youthful Offender Unit and MDOC. She works hard and is observed rarely sitting down during a 12-hour shift, looking for opportunities for extra work. She displays high levels of enthusiasm, volunteers to help other shifts and stays on task despite frequent distractions.

Langham has demonstrated fairness and consistent treatment of incarcerated residents. She works well with co-workers with whom she demonstrates and encourages them to be better employees.

She has worked under high pressure situations and attains excellent results. During an altercation between several offenders, she responded immediately to help control the situation. In her efforts, she fell but immediately got up, remained focused, and continued with the mission of controlling the fighting offenders and protecting others not involved.

She has never called in sick or arrived late for duty. She is willing to work longer than her shift hours and come in on days off, if needed. She will often sacrifice her personal time and work excessive hours while meeting deadlines with excellent results. Her personal motto is "Do the right thing the right way the first time."



Distinguished Employees of the Year

Katherine Blount

Associate Warden

South Mississippi Correctional Institution

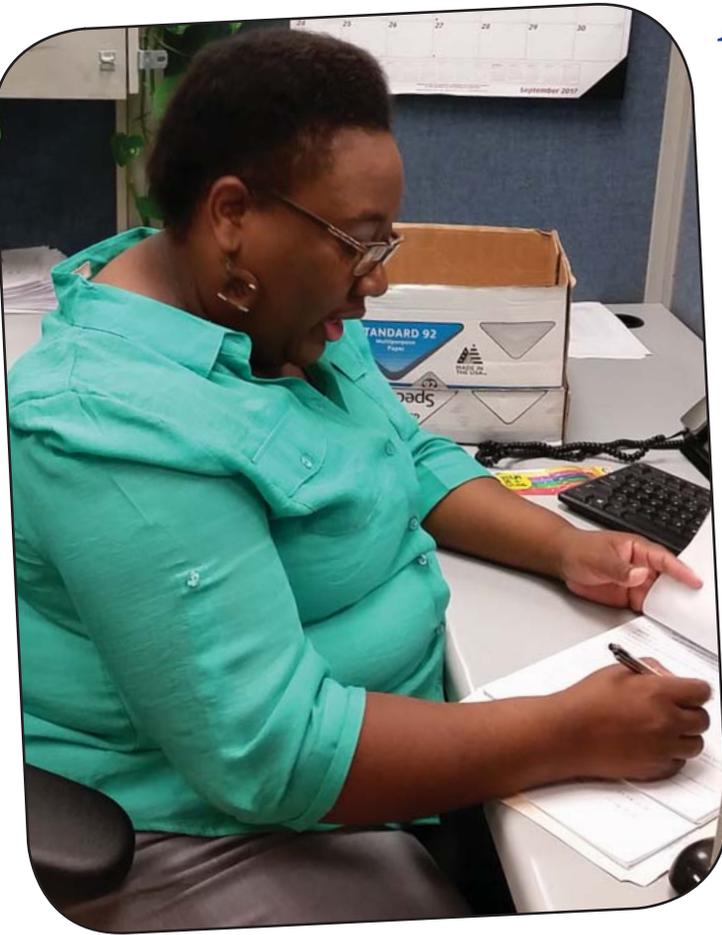
Katherine Blount, an associate warden, joined the MDOC in April 2005. She worked efficiently and patiently as a correctional officer for more than three years before being promoted to a case manager position where she worked for seven years.

She became associate warden in May 2015 and was assigned some of the deputy warden's duties in Area II while the deputy warden was on medical leave. At the same time, Blount's son was hospitalized in a fight for his life. True to character, Blount worked day and night while adjusting her time to ensure her duties were performed.

Blount fulfilled duties as staff duty officer which required her attention 24-7 in addressing facility operations, staffing, or unusual occurrences during her watch, after hours and/or on weekends.

Blount performs her duties with a smile, never makes excuses, and attempts to offer solutions. Her team of 12 case managers has served offenders in general population, close custody, medium custody, and maximum security unit.

Blount earned the Staff Employee of the Month Award three times - February 2011, February 2014, and May 2016. She received an Extra Effort Award in May 2013 and September 2015.



James D. Bonds

Probation-Parole Agent I

Community Corrections, Region 1

James D. Bonds joined MDOC on May 2, 2016, and established a reputation for having a strong work ethic and producing results.

In summer 2016, Bonds was assigned the task of cleaning up a warrant caseload in Lafayette County. He located an offender who had absconded for approximately two years. Bonds reached out to contacts, followed every lead, gathered information from social media to acquire a recent picture and identified friends of the subject.

Within a matter of days, Bonds, assisted by sheriff deputies, apprehended an arsonist.

Bonds has a way of finding offenders who do not report or move away, some living hundreds of miles from approved addresses. He has talked offenders into surrendering, avoiding lengthy searches.

Bonds accepted a specialized caseload of electronic-monitored parolees and house arrest offenders for two counties. He keeps his focus on the agency's mission of public safety being the first priority.

He doesn't mind having an offender request a face-to-face meeting to discuss issues the offender is having at home. Bonds was nominated for employee of the month for July 2016.



Distinguished Employees of the Year

Beverly B. Porter

Special Projects Officer II

Community Corrections, Region 2

Beverly Porter, a special projects officer II, has been with MDOC since January 2013, starting as a correctional service agent II for Region II, Area 3.

Porter carries out the duties of both positions.

Some of her duties include processing GSVR/Violation Reports into OffenderTrak for all of Region 2 and assisting with the failed caseload cleanup.

Porter handles overdue discharges, PSI, new hire processing; completing DNA reports, EDC reports, the Area III CCAD report, jail violators reports, Justice X-Change reports, OffenderTrak movements, employee files, pre-arrest briefings and other items.

Porter was a legal assistant in a law firm prior to coming to MDOC. She understands the importance of completing tasks in a timely, efficient, and accurate manner. She gives her best effort on a daily basis.



Submitted Photo

Barbara L. Gill

Probation-Parole Agent III

Community Corrections, Region 3

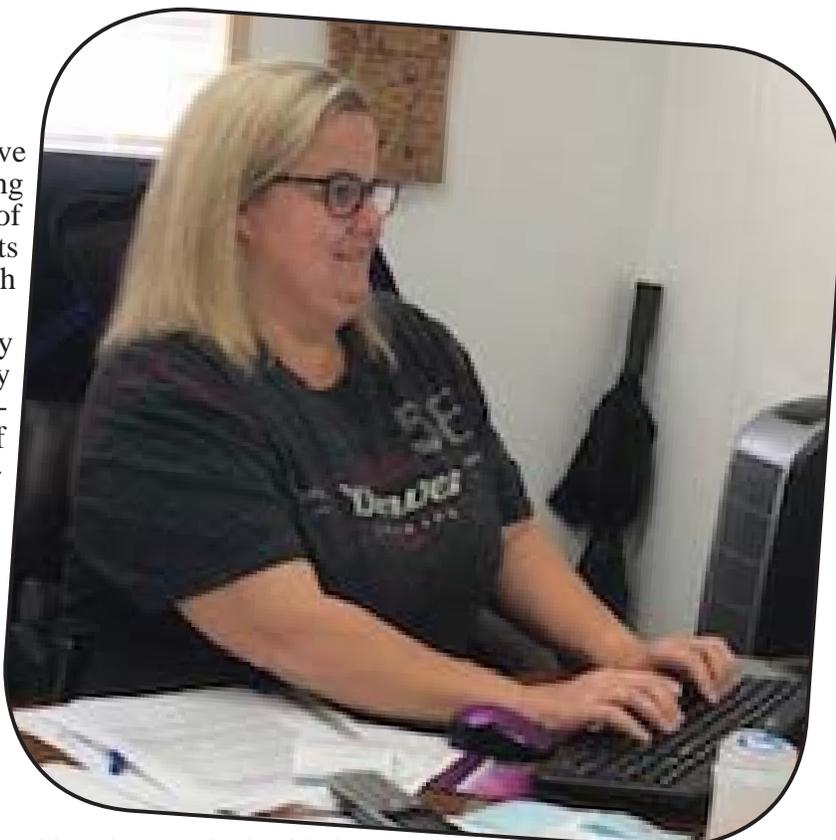
Barbara Gill is one of the MDOC's most effective agents. She supervises two full caseloads, including Interstate Compact, which involves a large number of incarcerated residents. She submits monthly reports without error with average collection rates for both caseloads in excess of 90 percent.

Gill looks out for the agency across the state by helping any agent in any capacity needed, especially assisting with the training of new agents and trainees. She provides insight on the proper completion of court documents necessary for revocation proceedings and relays some of the nuances of working with judges in the district.

Gill helps to educate offenders, giving them every opportunity to not only complete their current term of supervision but also to have the tools for a successful life.

Gill volunteered to become an instructor in Thinking for A Change, a Cognitive Behavioral program designed to reduce recidivism. She reached out to teach the program to hundreds of offenders at South Mississippi Correctional Institution when an illness prevented another instructor from teaching the class. She also worked with her husband, Program Coordinator Steven Gill, to start multiple classes in the Gulfport office.

She assists a police department's street crimes unit in providing information to help remove potentially violent offenders from the streets. She also helps in the training of new agents in handling the workload in the district. She is the go-to person for special projects in the area.



Submitted Photo

Distinguished Employees of the Year

Jeworski K. Mallet

Records Director

Central Office

Jeworski K. Mallet has served as records director for four years. Known as “Jay” to many people, Mallet has been an MDOC employee for more than 16 years.

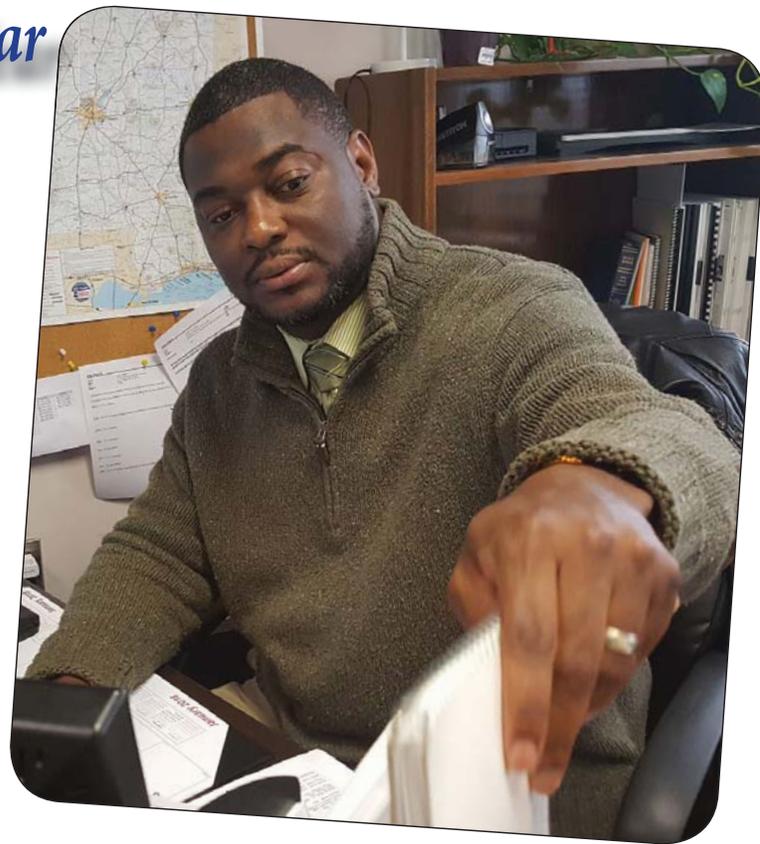
Mallet is a master of MDOC. He reads and studies policies, then formulates his decisions and actions of what the agency dictates.

The Records Division contains dozens of employees. Responsibilities include reviewing and loading records, auditing records, calculating time based on state laws which are ever changing, discharging offenders, testifying in court, preparing PIN packs and other duties as assigned.

Mallet tackled this mission as he has done all others. He settled in and learned all of the functions of records from step one to completion. What he didn't know, Mallet researched and learned from the legal to the practical applications of the law and the division's functions.

In 2016, Mallet made it his personal mission to research and resolve tough cases that could not be resolved without additional time and research being completed. He has been instrumental in resolving hundreds of cases that were not closed due to oddities in sentencing, overlapping of cause numbers and other factors.

Mallet often accompanies the executive team to judicial and legislative functions. He brings a wealth of knowledge



regarding records and how new laws impact resident count releases from incarceration. He understands parole practices and the impact of different legislative proposals.

Audrey McAfee

Deputy Commissioner

Commissioner's Award

Audrey McAfee has 30-plus years with the MDOC including experience as an IT professional and correctional business analyst. She was appointed deputy commissioner in 2017.

She has directed management of the information systems since 2002 and oversees Inmate Treatment and Programs and Records. She has served in several positions including director of policy and planning, lead programmer analyst, research statistician, and accounting clerk.

McAfee provides timely analyses and makes recommendations to meet legislative changes and to implement new or modified programs. She translates requirements into action plans and provides the leadership to ensure needs are addressed efficiently and effectively.

She is on the front line of prison

The Resource



Deputy Commissioner Audrey McAfee, left, receives a special Commissioner's Award from Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall for her service and contributions.

operations in the state, and has played an instrumental role in criminal justice reform achieved under legislation enacted in 2014.

McAfee earned a Master of Business Administration degree from Belhaven University and a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Tougaloo College. She has certificates from the State of Mississippi IT Course Work. She is the agency representative on the Mississippi Wireless Communication Commission.

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Scenes from the luncheon





MDOC Re-Entry

Pre-release program expands statewide

LEAKESVILLE – Incarcerated residents are getting better prepared to return to their communities as a result of the Mississippi Department of Corrections expanding its pre-release program.

The program is available at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman and the South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI) in Leakesville. It began this year at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County.

Residents who are within six to 12 months of release are eligible for pre-release services that focus on life skills, financial management, job skills and employability skills. Participants are assisted with finding employment before release. They leave prison with connections to employers. They also are taught through Thinking for a Change, a cognitive behavioral program, how to make better decisions.

SMCI held its first pre-release graduation Aug. 31. Fifty-three residents were awarded certificates upon completion of the program that began Feb. 6 at the Greene County prison.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said she was inspired by the ceremony which included inmates performing two skits illustrating real-life scenarios residents face finding employment and receiving redemption.

“When I took this appointment in March, one of the things that I said I wanted to do is work on providing not just rehabilitation and re-entry, but meaningful rehabilitation and re-entry,” Commissioner Hall told **The Resource**



Incarcerated men at South Mississippi Correctional Institution perform a skit during a graduation program on Aug. 31. The skit focused on the idea of breaking the chains of the past to move forward.

Submitted Photo

graduating participants. “What I have seen today coincides with that. I hope that you take what you have learned from this program back out into the community, my community, your communities.”

Resident Deonta Glover, 33, said he aims to do just that – take what he has learned about how to deal with anger management issues when he is released.

“There are lot of steps that I learned about anger management and dealing with personalities,” said Glover, convicted of possession of stolen property and being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm in Harrison County. “I feel good about returning to the community and giving back any way I can.”

Like Glover, fellow graduate William Edmonson said the program has helped him to change his thoughts. “It has taught me how to be a better man, a better father and a better family member,” said Edmonson, convicted of forgery in Lowndes County.

Expanding the pre-release program is essential to the agency’s mission to provide effective post-release supervision while being accountable, innovative and fiscally responsible, Commissioner Hall said. “As more people are being released under major criminal justice reform, we must make sure they are prepared for success and not failure,” she said.

See PRE-RELEASE, page 80

Resource Fairs provide connections

JACKSON – For the first time, incarcerated residents have been able to talk face to face with representatives from businesses and organizations they likely will need after their release from prison through the MDOC’s Pre-Release program.

The Resource Fair became reality on Oct. 12 for approximately 100 residents at South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI), where a four-hour affair was held in the Leakesville prison. Returning citizens browsed among tables set up for 16 participants, including Trustmark Bank, Ingalls Shipbuilding, Mar-Jac Poultry, Pine Belt Mental Health, WIN Job Center, and Jones County Junior College.

The Resource Fair expanded to Mississippi State Penitentiary on Nov. 16. For two hours, 60 residents met with representatives from 10 groups including the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, the WIN Job Center, Families First for Mississippi, Tranzformation Reentry, and Region I Community Mental Health Center. Some of MDOC’s probation and parole agents were on hand at both fairs.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said the fair is consistent with the



Master Sgt. Steven Pugh of the Mississippi Highway Patrol, right, discusses options on obtaining a driver’s license with incarcerated resident Aaron Nettles for when he is released from the South Mississippi Correctional Institution during a Resource Fair on Oct. 12.

agency’s renewed efforts to provide meaningful rehabilitation to reduce recidivism.

“This is another example of our efforts to help returning citizens have a better chance at success upon release,” Commissioner Hall said. “Through this and many other programs, we will continue to find ways to help returning citizens prepare for reintegration into society. Providing programs like this goes a

long way toward helping offenders hopefully lead productive lives and reduce their chances of returning to the prison system.”

At SMCI, Pre-Release Program Director Lisa L. Herndon modeled the fair after a program at the federal prison in Yazoo County. Herndon plans to hold a fair every six months.

“We are providing this information to these offenders in hopes of giving them

options on what can be done to assist them when they are released from prison,” Herndon said. “Hopefully, they will take this information and see that they have other ways of taking care of their needs instead of breaking the law.”

In designing the fair, Herndon said she tries to put herself in a returning citizen’s shoes. “I try to imagine if I were about to be released, what kind of information would I need. What would I need to know in starting my life again in society,” Herndon said.

“Many residents have been in prison a long time and they will need to know how to create a resume, where to look for employment, setting up a bank account, getting a driver’s license or state I.D. or mental health services. The world is a lot different than when many of them went into prison,” Herndon said.

William Duncan, a banker and community re-investment coordinator for Trustmark Bank, participated in the first fair at SMCI.

See FAIR, page 80



Incarcerated residents ask questions of the Mississippi Department of Human Services during a resource fair held at Mississippi State Penitentiary on Nov. 16.

'Thinking for a Change' gains momentum

JACKSON — Terri Holifield and Shirley Warren say attending Thinking for a Change classes has made a difference in their lives.

Each shared with 12 other fellow graduates what the program has meant to them during graduation on Oct. 27 at the Flowood Community Work Center in Flowood.

"I learned self-control and thinking before I react," Holifield said. "I was angry, frustrated. (The class) gave me a chance to grow before returning to society."

Warren voiced similar sentiments. "At first, I didn't want to attend the class, but it was a condition of my release," she said. "Now, I am glad I did, and I am thankful to MDOC for offering it. Through this program, I



Holifield

learned to be silent and think before I speak and think about other persons' point of view. It helped me to learn how to deal with stress and other people in a positive way. It has made me a better person, and I think every inmate should go through it."

The Mississippi Department of Corrections is offering Thinking for a Change classes in the pre-release programs at the Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP) at Parchman, Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF), and South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI); SMCI Alcohol and Drug program; Recidivism and Reduction Program (RRP); and Community Corrections' community work centers' curriculum.

"We are hoping that offering Thinking for a Change in more areas will make a difference in our recidivism rate," Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said.

More graduations were held later in the year in other locations, including Jackson and Gulfport.



Shirley Warren speaks of being grateful for the Thinking for A Change program at the Flowood Restitution Center in Rankin County during a graduation program on Oct. 27.



Probation/Parole Agent Angela Harper shares a hug with Melissa Blaylock Hammond, right, following Blaylock's graduation from the Thinking for a Change program in Hinds County.

On Dec. 6, 41 returning citizens assigned to the Hinds County Probation and Parole Office and the Hinds County Restitution Center were awarded certificates during a ceremony at the Sparkman Auditorium at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum.

Mellisa Blaylock Hammond of

Jackson, who was one of the Hinds' graduates, said the program was the difference in giving her a new direction after incarceration. She has completed five years of probation.

"It changed my life for the better. It helped me to see how I was hanging out with the wrong people and to think before I act."

Melissa Hammond

"It changed my life for the better," Hammond said. "It helped me to see how I was hanging out with the wrong people and to think before I act. Now, I have a new job, a new husband. I'm getting my kids back and I have a great support system so I am ready to close that chapter in my life."

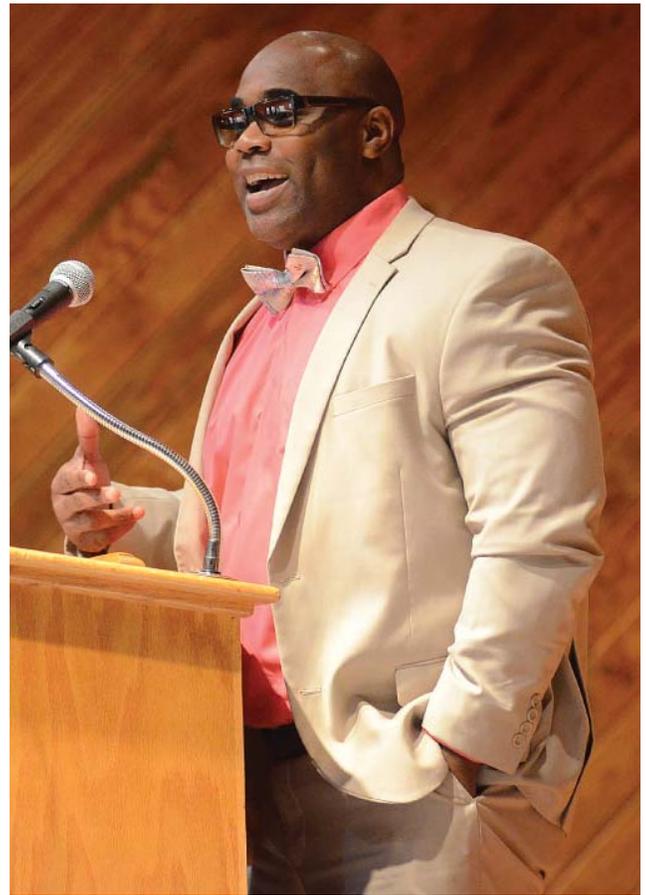
Shedrick Rodgers, a former program coordinator for the Hinds' Thinking for a Change program, was guest speaker for the graduation. Rodgers is now a school administrator and counselor.

In Gulfport, the Harrison County Probation and Parole Office celebrated the graduation of its third class for the year on Dec. 19. Five participants received certificates

Continued on next page



Leronious Tennort of Hinds County proudly shows off his Thinking for a Change graduation certificate.



Shedrick Rodgers shares insights as the guest speaker for the graduation ceremony for the Thinking for a Change program in Hinds County on Dec. 6. Rodgers is a former program coordinator for the program and now serves as a school administrator and counselor.



Probation/Parole Agent Angela Harper calms a nervous Anthony Spires during a graduation ceremony for the Hinds County Thinking for a Change program at Sparkman Auditorium at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum in Jackson. Spires was one of 41 graduates to complete requirements as a returning citizen to his community.

Continued from previous page

during the ceremony at the office.

Second Circuit District Judge Christopher Schmidt, was guest speaker.

The office's first T4C class graduated May 26 at the Harrison County Courthouse. Four graduates completed the 13-week program, which consists of 25 lessons.

In addition to Rankin, Hinds and Harrison counties, probation and parole offices in the following other counties also are using the program: Lincoln, Pike, Madison, Jackson, Lee, Union, Leflore and Alcorn.



The Harrison County Probation and Parole Office celebrates the graduation of individuals in its Thinking For a Change program in 2017. Participating in the celebrations were, from left front: Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, Michael Hester, Detria Vogle, Tracy Purser, PPA Barbara Gill, PPA Steven Gill, Judge Christopher Schmidt. Back: CCAD David Sullivan, Jaiquon Johnson. and PPAS Clinton Simon. Submitted Photo



Andy Shurden, pictured above, a mortgage specialist who was released in 2009 after serving a sentence for a drug conviction, addresses the graduates of the Noxubee transitional program. (INSET) Parolees greet a receiving line of officials congratulating them during the graduation program held on Aug. 3.

Program helps individuals without approved addresses

MACON – Returning citizens who can be paroled but lack an approved residence can now live temporarily at one of four Mississippi Department of Corrections Community Work Centers.

The transitional housing at Wilkinson, Noxubee, Madison, and Flowood Community Work Centers also is available for people on house arrest and earned release supervision (ERS) who have violated the terms of their release, but the violations are not a new arrest or charge.

Programs, including cognitive behavioral therapy and life skills, are being offered at Noxubee, which is for males, and Flowood, which houses females. Also, Mississippi State University is working with MDOC to assist residents at Noxubee, where the pilot program graduated 24 offenders on Aug. 3.

People in the three- to -six-month-long program also provide free labor alongside state inmates at county work sites to establish a work ethic.

Converting portions of the community work centers was a means to get ahead of an issue talked about for some time now, Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said.

“We are glad to learn that since we converted parts of the work centers earlier this year to provide transitional beds, the need isn’t as great as reported,” Commissioner Hall said. “We have found that we do not have hundreds of people being held in prison because they don’t have a place to go.”

MDOC is working with the state Parole Board to identify eligible people for the transitional centers. So far, most of the eligible offenders are those on ERS and house arrest. People convicted of sex crimes and with significant medical and psychological conditions are not eligible.

Though the transitional program is in its early stages, the early results have been promising, Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz said.

“Every one of those offenders at Noxubee had an address when they graduated, and families coming to visit them saw positive change in them,” Gutherz said.

During the graduation, Gutherz reminded the graduates of how far they had come.

“On that first day, we had some unhappy men come in

See NOXUBEE, page 78

Prison-to-College Pipeline changes lives

JACKSON – About 50 more people, including 42 women at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility and seven men at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, became graduates of a program that allows residents to earn credits toward a college education.

The Prison-to-College Pipeline program is one of several the Mississippi Department of Corrections has to help residents both during and after incarceration. It comes from a partnership the department has with the University of Mississippi, Millsaps College, Mississippi College, Jackson State University, and the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said partnerships like these are important in helping MDOC provide meaningful rehabilitation. “We are currently looking at how we can expand upon partnerships such as these,” she said.

CMCF resident Nikki Holland credits the Pipeline program with giving her an opportunity for success when she pursues plans to open an upholstery business after her release. She graduated Sept. 5.

“Being incarcerated does not define who we are,” Holland said. “Through this program, I already have a college transcript that I can take with me to continue my education.”

Holland, 45, who is serving nine years for possession of a controlled substance and prescription forgery in Harrison County, said she has learned the value of responsibility for her life, and enjoyed the interaction with instructors who challenged them.

“The state looks at us in wanting us to do better and they are giving us the tools to make that happen,” Holland said. “We are anxious to do whatever it takes for an education. We are eager to learn and want to do better.”

Participating students must have a high school diploma or GED diploma. They help to design the courses, based on their interest.



Dr. Otis Pickett congratulates a student on her accomplishment in completing course work in the Prison-to-College Pipeline program.

The women in the most recent graduation earned a cumulative nine hours in credit through coursework in American History, Professional Communication, and American Literature.

Dr. Otis Pickett and Dr. Patrick Alexander started the program at Parchman in 2014, with 17 male students initially graduating.

With the graduation on Aug. 17, 68 men have completed a course through the program. Of those, 20 have earned English credits from Ole Miss, and several have earned history credits from Mississippi College.

The program expanded to CMCF in 2016 starting with 18 female students. With the latest graduation on Aug. 10, a total of 71 females had completed the program.

Pickett said the program exceeded his expectations in its first three years having served more than 100 residents between the two prisons.

“To have the opportunity to address a social justice issue through my profession and as part of my teaching role is a unique opportunity, and one that I am incredibly proud of,” Pickett said. “We wanted to do something about recidivism. We’ve been able to display that incarcerated individuals are not only deserving of an opportunity for a college education, they are among the best students we have taught.”

See PIPELINE, page 81



New Way graduates look to future

JACKSON – About two dozen people have completed transitional and employment training programs overseen by New Way Mississippi Inc.

They were recognized in a ceremony Nov. 9 at the Jackson State University E-Center.

There were 18 participants in the transitional program and 13 in the employment training program. The graduates are among 93 persons who have benefitted from New Way's programs in 2017. Their next steps include seeking employment and a permanent residence.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said the programs are a credit to a partnership between MDOC and New Way.

"We are trying to give offenders the best chance for success after their release and to reduce the recidivism rate. I congratulate the graduates on their accomplishment and wish them the best in their endeavors."

Carlos Thompson, who served time for a theft conviction, said the post-release programs have helped him adjust to life after prison.

"Their programs taught me a lot about how I should conduct myself appropriately and going about getting a job. I learned a lot about being a man and taking care of my responsibilities," Thompson said.

New Way President and CEO Larry Perry said the transitional programs offer persons on parole or earned release supervision a place to live, if they cannot make other arrangements, and make educational programs available to prepare them for re-integration to society.

"This is the beginning of something great for these graduates, and it has been rewarding to see them move forward," Perry said. "It is also an example of how dedicated the Mississippi Department of Corrections is to community relations."

The transitional program is four-to-six weeks and the employment training is eight-weeks.

"I loved the fact that the programs are faith-based and there is so much love and support from the staff to help us succeed. I like the way it is set up and helps us go back to the basics to create a new found



Stacy Brackin, left front, listens to presenters during the graduation for participants in the New Way programs in Jackson on Nov. 19.



Wesley Storz, one of the New Way graduates, makes a few comments about New Way Mississippi.

ation for life," Stacy Brackin said.

Robert Laspee plans to continue working with New Way.

"I like how the programs allow the time needed to adapt to civilian life and gives us the tools we need to move on past incarceration," Laspee said.

As the keynote speaker, Deputy Commissioner for Community Corrections Christy Gutherz told the graduates to take pride in turning their lives around and to strive to be their best going forward.

"In our society, we hear a lot about equality but we still have many labels placed on

us," Gutherz said. "Don't allow yourself to be labeled as ex-offenders or ex-felons. You have the opportunity to sell yourself as a person. You have learned that actions have consequences but today is a milestone toward your future as productive citizens."

Wesley Storz, convicted of embezzlement, expressed interest in ministry or restaurant management. He encouraged fellow graduates to follow their own path and, while owning their mistakes, don't settle for less than what they deserve.

See NEW WAY, page 81



MDOC Graduations

More than 100 officers take oaths

PEARL – The following pages capture five Correctional Officer Basic Academy Graduations at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. From June until December, 110 officers took the oath of office and received advice from speakers including a city prosecutor, district attorney, sheriff, circuit court judge, and federal compliance coordinator.



Corrections as a family tradition continues at MDOC

PEARL – Supervising incarcerated persons for the Mississippi Department of Corrections continues to be a family affair for some.

Consider the Blunt sisters among the latest examples.

On Sept. 1, Bianca and Brianna Blunt, both of Jackson, took their oath among 19 members of Class 2017-6M at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

“It was a great experience and very challenging, and I am just glad we finally made it,” said Brianna, on graduation day. “The instructors were great. They would not let us go until they knew we were ready. We really came together as a team in the last two weeks.”

The Blunt sisters said they are looking forward to their law enforcement career after enduring the military-style regiment of the 10-week long training program at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman.

Bianca was assistant class leader and Brianna received the Highest Honor Award.

“It’s almost hard to believe we finally made. My favorite part was the 5 a.m. workouts each morning,” Bianca said.

Working in corrections also is a family affair for Londynn Jones, but not necessarily solely for the MDOC. Both of his parents had worked in corrections when he graduated a month earlier than the Blunt sisters.

“I worked at a prison in Tutwiler, and I just had a passion for it,” Jones said. “I have known since an early age that I had a passion for criminal justice and this was a great way to be a part of it and gain experience.”



Sisters Brianna, left, and Bianca Blunt celebrated their graduation on Sept. 1 in class 2017-6M.



Londynn Jones receives his certificate and congratulations from Deputy Commissioner for Institutions Jerry Williams, right, during the Class 5M graduation with Superintendent Ron King, center, who also administered the oath of office.

Class of 2017-4M

'Preparing Today for Our Tomorrow'

July 21 - Guest speaker: Boty McDonald, prosecutor for City of Ridgeland

George Anderson
Mitchell Baldwin
Rikeedra Booker
Tafili Carter
Bobby Conner

Shannon Doyle
Krystil Ferguson
Richelle Green
Napoleon Green
Yolanda Hayes

Antoinette Kimble
Cannedra Kyles
Manda Moore
Leundria Newson
Shatandra Robertson
Kawanie Thomas

Bobby Conner, class leader
Tafili Carter, assistant
class Leader

Honor Awards
Rikeedra Booker, highest
Shannon Doyle, second highest

Top Gun Awards
Krystil Ferguson, shotgun
Tafili Carter, handgun
Mitchell Baldwin, rifle







Class of 2017-5M 'Live With Honor, Serve With Pride'

Aug. 4 - Guest speaker: Michael Guest, district attorney for Rankin and Madison counties

Marcus Adams
Allen Anderson
Aneisha Ates
Jesmaine Clark
Chris Davis
Ashila Holmes

Janos Horvath
Londynn Jones
Halima Marion
Willie McGee
Krista Patrick
Shane Savannah

Sharika Smith
Bridney Tyler
Qualimazaria Willis
Wanda Wilson
Shaquille Young

Halima Marion, class leader
Marcus Adams, assistant class leader

Honor Awards
Qualimazaria Willis, highest
Janos Horvath, second highest

Top Gun Awards
Marcus Adams, rifle
Halima Marion, Glock handgun
Krista Patrick, shotgun
July - December 2017



Class of 2017-6M

'You're Capable of Handling More Than You're Entitled to Face'

Sept. 1 - Guest speaker: Warren County Sheriff Martin Pace



Briana Blunt
Bianca Blunt
Shanetra Burnett
Roy Correll
Jerrenski Dawkins
Clergerie Franklin
Joe Green
Richard Hewett
Ammon Jackson
Shaquella Jones
Tolernisha Jones
Brandon McLain
Raegan Moore
Yernita Parham
Robert Small
Briunna Tate
Lazarius Thomas
Austin Williams
Detra Wilson

Lazarius Thomas, class leader
Bianca Blunt, assistant
class leader

Honor Awards
Briana Blunt, highest
Ammon Jackson, second highest

Top Gun Awards
Richard Hewett, rifle, handgun
Brandon McLain, shotgun





The Resource

Graduations / 25

Class of 2017-7M

“We Strive Through Adversity to Become the Best”

Oct. 20 - Guest speaker: Adams County Circuit Court Judge Lillie Blackmon-Sanders

Forest Albert-Craig

Kierra Birch

William Bolian

Devin Booker

Troy Brooks

Jamie Brown

John Carpenter

Toneise Chatman

Shomari Davis

Brittany Elston

Corey Flower

Zakiaya Frison

Tina Gaither

Lasonja Kye

Cedric Lacey

Andre Lark

Dustin Mahaffey

De'Angelo Martin

Terry Melvin

Chartaviaunca Odom

Jamesha Spencer

Edward Taylor

Darrian Walls

Donald Webster

Shirlena Wiggins

Taylor Young

Theobia Pruitt

Vickey Reed

Arielle Shaw

Cedric Lacey, class Leader
De'Angelo Martin, assistant
class leader

Honor Awards
Tina Gaither, highest
Chartaviaunca Odom, second
highest

Top Gun Awards
Troy Brooks, rifle
Jamie Brown, shotgun
Dustin Mahaffey, handgun

26 / Graduations



July - December 2017



Class of 2017-8M

“Lead, Follow, or Get Out of The Way”

Dec. 8 - Guest speaker: Synarus Green, federal compliance coordinator, Hinds County Detention Center

Yvette Allen
Cleveland Allison
Felicia Applon
Alexis Bass
Alisha Davis
Taquilla Evans
Montanna Flanagan
D’Raey Fogg
Temenshia Ford
Devontay Gary

Fanell Gary
Yunika Gill
Christian Harris
Akasha Higgins
Jamika Hunter
Myles James
Mary Johnson
James McCarthy
Madison Odom
Quantiesha Porter

Tyler Pruitt
Retha Simmons
Kimberly Smith
Markeesha Trotter
Nelson Trotter
Nelson Tyler
Candie Walton
Amber Williams
Marcus Williams

Myles James, class leader
D’Raey Fogg, assistant
class leader

Honor Awards
Akasha Higgins and Tyler Pruitt,
highest; Quantiesha Porter,
second highest

Top Gun Awards
D’Raey Fogg, rifle
Marcus Williams, handgun
Alexis Bass, shotgun





23 Agents graduate 4th Probation-Parole Academy

PARCHMAN – The fourth Probation and Parole Academy introduced new agents for the MDOC during a graduation ceremony at the Mississippi State Penitentiary on Oct. 11, 2017.

Regional directors and training staff members congratulated the 23 graduates who finished three weeks of training. Combined with the graduation held in April, the more recent class brought the number of new agents to 49 for 2017.

The academy curriculum covers a wide variety of training for the services that agents provide.

Topics include, but are not limited to, types of supervision, ethics and professionalism, sex offender training, house arrest, electronic monitoring, writing and submitting reports, investigations procedures, agency policies, drug testing, fee collections, revocation procedures, court document preparation, contraband control and shakedown training, HIV/AIDS and blood pathogens, search and seizure, constitutional law and arrest procedures, mental health and first aid, physical and firearms training.



Probation/Parole Agent Stacey Walker, right, receives congratulations from Tina Ladner, branch director for electric monitoring, and Region 1 Community Corrections Director Ken Valentine during the graduation program for the 2017 fall academy training class.



The fall 2017 graduation of the fourth Probation and Parole Academy held on Oct. 11. The new agents include: Jocelyn Beverly, David Brown, Michelle Foster, Paul Freeman, Tereda Hairston, Daniel Hawn, Ebony Hayes, Wesley Hughes, Daniel Johnson, Latoya Judson, Lindsey Kidd, Wendy King, Darin Lofton, Felisha McClendon, Johnnie McGee, Jerry Owensby, Thomas Speaks, Jeremy Thornton, Stacey Walker, David Wallis, Shea Wilkerson, Arthur Young, and Candace Stewart.

Staff receives ‘Thinking for a Change’ training

JACKSON – Thirty-one MDOC employees were among 35 people completing training sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections in August. The four-day training session, a first in the state, was designed to prepare facilitators to take the “Thinking for A Change” (T4C) program back to their locations.

“One of the components I like is the role playing because it is something they can connect with,” said Lisa Herndon, pre-release director at South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI), who is teaching what she learned during training in Jackson.

A PEER report released in June lists T4C as a high quality program in the state’s inventory, stating that “Thinking for a Change ... ranks highest in cost-effectiveness.” The resource is an integrated cognitive behavioral change program.

The session was hosted by Kmodity Corp., of Denver, Colo.. Four participants came from the



Jessica Baldwin, left, pre-release counselor at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, discusses thinking strategies with trainer Will Cash.

U.S. Probation and Parole system and 31 participants came from the MDOC areas including pre-release, alcohol and drug, education, com-

munity work centers, probation and parole agents.

The program incorporates research from cognitive restructuring theory, social skills development, and the learning and use of problem-solving skills.

One of the primary goals is helping residents have a better chance at success after release and reducing the recidivism rate.

“If we can change their thinking, we can change their actions,” Herndon said.

See T4C, page 80



Community Corrections Emergency Response Team duties include catching escapees, conducting shakedowns, and responding to emergencies. Members trained in October at the Regional Counterdrug Training Academy (RCTA).

Submitted Photo



Probation and Parole Agents Brandon Oakes, left, and Kylie Hall Johnson celebrate completion of the Southern Regional Public Safety Institute (SRPSI) at Camp Shelby on Dec. 14. Oakes and Johnson completed the 11-week program testing their physical and mental agility.

Submitted Photo



Commissioner Assemblies

Commissioner makes first stop at Parchman

PARCHMAN – Employees were the focus of four Commissioner’s Assemblies, with the first one held at the Mississippi Penitentiary at Parchman on Oct. 18.

Employees with five, ten, 15, 20, 25, 30 and above years tenure were honored. Three other assemblies followed for the other two state prisons and Central Office.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall spoke to employees in the Spiritual Life Center about her vision for the agency.

“It is my pleasure to stand before you. I am very thankful to Gov. (Phil) Bryant that he was progressive and had the foresight to make this appointment,” Commissioner Hall said, noting she is the first female in state history to be appointed to lead the MDOC.

‘I appreciate all of you who choose to work in this profession We’re not just DOC employees. We are corrections professionals.’
- Commissioner Hall

“Trends are changing around the country with females taking up these kinds of positions in law enforcement agencies. I’m one of 11 female commissioners across the country and part of an elite group, but I am very thankful to serve in this position and just know that I am fully committed to changing the direction of the MDOC,” Commissioner Hall said.

Much of her address centered on her support for the employees.

“For those of you who were hon-



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall addresses employees at Mississippi State Penitentiary on Oct. 18 kicking off a series of four Commissioner Assemblies at each institution and Central Office in fall 2017.

ored today for your tenure awards, this tells me you are dedicated to this agency. As you know, as people who work in corrections, you don’t do it because you’re going to get rich. You do it because you want to be part of the solution and not the problem,” Commissioner Hall said.

“I appreciate all of you who choose to work in this profession because it is very important that we change our criminal justice system and that we change the way we treat and rehabilitate the individuals in our custody.”

Commissioner Hall emphasized being professional in everything

each employee does every day.

“I always tell people that I mentor to protect your reputation. It’s all that you have. Once you lose the trust and respect of the people you work for, it’s really hard to get back,” Commissioner Hall said.

“We’re not just DOC employees. We are corrections professionals. I say that to every correctional officer class that comes through. If you think like that, you’ll act like that. We can play and have a good time, but we get the business done too. It needs to be a fun place to work but also a professional place to work.”

Tenure Awards: MSP

Featured are employees from Community Corrections, Region 1.



Five years tenure, from left: Byron Talford, Deputy Commissioner for Community Corrections (DCCC) Christy Gutherz, Elizabeth Loden, and Peggy Cadden



Ten years tenure, from left: Mickey Parrott, Alicia Perkins, and DCCC Christy Gutherz



Fifteen years tenure, from left: Tasha Davis, Beverly Corder, Bonita Clark, DCCC Christy Gutherz, and Eppie Murray



Twenty-five years tenure, Delois Craddieth, left, and DCCC Christy Gutherz

Featured are employees from Institutions.



Five years tenure, from left: Patrice Hampton, Shirley Reddicks, Superintendent Marshal Turner, Deputy Commissioner for Institutions (DCI) Jerry Williams, Ke-neisha Cox, Kim-berly Williams, and Lakaris Anderson



Ten years tenure, from left: Yulanda Bell, Regina King, Markisha Fipps, Superintendent Marshal Turner, DCI Jerry Williams, La-toya Jones, and Sandra Brewer



Fifteen years tenure, seated from left: Alea-tha Frank, Fannie Durr, and Diane Washington. Standing: Richard Pen-nington, Viesta Lewis, Michelle Horn, Superin-tendent Marshal Turner, DCI Jerry Williams, Latoya Jones, Debis Roy, Aletha Reed, and Derrick Sanders

Featured are employees from Institutions.



Twenty years tenure, from left: Raynaredo Black, Superintendent Marshal Turner, Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, Verlana Flagg, Gwendolyn Young, and Deputy Commissioner for Institutions Jerry Williams

Twenty-five years tenure, from left: Kenny Scott, Linda Franklin, Lawandra Pointer, Superintendent Marshal Turner, Commissioner Pelicia E Hall, DCI Jerry Williams, Jewell Morris, James Harris, and Merrell Hampton



Thirty years tenure, from left: David Collins, Superintendent Marshal Turner, Arleatha Williams, Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, Michael Weeks, and DCI Jerry Williams



Weeks continues service to agency for 30 years

PARCHMAN – For 30 years, Michael Weeks, pictured left, has been working at MDOC and currently serves as Branch Director 1 over the Recreation Department at the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

Through three decades, Weeks said co-workers have asked him “How much longer will you be here?” or “What are you waiting on to leave?”

The years have flown by. “It’s not easy to leave,” Weeks said. “I never thought about leaving.”

Well, don’t expect him to make 35 years, he said. “I won’t be here for the fall next year,” he said.

“Let me tell you. It goes by fast. You do 20, you can do 25. Next thing you know, you’ve done 30,” Weeks said.



Marvin Bowen is congratulated by Superintendent Marshal Turner as Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall looks on. Bowen was recognized for having served for 15 years.

Verlena Flagg shows off her MDOC pin as she was recognized for 15 years of service.



Betty Melchor, left, is congratulated by Commissioner Hall and Deputy Commissioner for Institutions Jerry Williams for her tenure. Aletha Reed, right, celebrates her tenure award for 15 years of service.



Tenure Awards: CMCF

PEARL – Employees at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility were recognized during a Commissioner’s Assembly on Oct. 30. *Featured are employees from Community Corrections.*



Joseph Willis, pictured at left, Valerie Buie, above left, and Vanessa Lee take the podium to speak about their 25 years each with the agency during the Commissioner’s Assembly.



Five years tenure, from left, Deputy Commissioner for Community Corrections Christy Guthertz, Margaret Briggs, and DCI Jerry Williams



Twenty-five years tenure, DCI Jerry Williams, Vanessa Lee, DCCC Christy Guthertz and Superintendent Ron King

Featured are employees from Community Corrections.



Twenty years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, Linda Williams Ford, Marlow Stewart, and DCCC Christy Gutherz

Twenty-five years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams Valerie Buie, and DCCC Christy Gutherz



Featured are employees from Institutions.



Five years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, Robin Ingram, Nicole Moore, and Superintendent Ron King

Ten years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, Sibley Christian, Wandra "Faye" Jefferson, and Superintendent Ron King



Featured are employees from Institutions.



Ten years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, Doyle Cole, and Superintendent Ron King



Fifteen years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, Retha Sneed, and Superintendent Ron King



Fifteen years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, Katrina Reid, LeTunya Coleman, Belita May, Earnestine Fortune, Tonja Burks, and Superintendent Ron King



Twenty years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, Barbara Owens, and Superintendent Ron King

Featured are employees from Institutions.



Twenty years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, Dy'Shawne Evans, Jacqueline Brown, Vickie Burton and Superintendent Ron King

Twenty-five years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, Cynthia Booker, and Superintendent Ron King



Doyle Cole, right, is congratulated by Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance Dell Lemley, left, and DCI Jerry Williams for 10 years of service.



Tonja Burks is congratulated by DCCC Christy Guthertz, left, for 15 years of service.



Linda Minor is congratulated by DCCC Christy Guthertz, left, for 15 years of service.

Tenure Awards: SMCI

Changing direction for a better future

LEAKESVILLE – Employees at South Mississippi Correctional Institution in Leakesville were recognized on Oct. 31 for their tenure.

Reiterating remarks she made at the Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP), Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said her resolve to change the image of the agency remains strong and asked for the employees' support.

"I am fully committed to changing the direction of the Department of Corrections," Commissioner Hall said. "Work with me as I try to bring about change."

Commissioner Hall touched on several points including finances and wages, professionalism, staffing, and a legislative agenda among other subjects that were also covered at the assembly at MSP.

"It is very important to understand what our agency's budget looks like. We were unfortunate that the Legislature cut our budget by \$21 million. This means that in this fiscal year we have to be very creative in how we manage our employees and our facilities," Commissioner Hall said.

'I am fully committed to changing the direction of the Department of Corrections.'

Commissioner Hall

"We are going back in the next legislative session to ask for the restoration of that \$21 million. It is very important that we have that to fully take care of the individuals housed and fully take care of our contractual obligations and expand our rehabilitation pro-

The Resource



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall bumps elbows with Chaplain Kenneth Powell in celebration of his tenure of service with the MDOC during the Commissioner's Assembly on Oct. 31 at South Mississippi Correctional Institution. Following up with additional congratulations, from right center, Deputy Commissioner for Institutions Jerry Williams, Deputy Commissioner for Community Corrections Christy Gutherz, and Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance Dell Lemley.

grams."

Staffing challenges are also a hallmark of the Commissioner Hall's priorities.

"We're going to ask the legislature to keep our (PINs). There are a lot of (PINs) we have not been able to fill, a lot of vacancies. You all know, working behind the wall, we're understaffed. We need more people. Corrections is one of those agencies where it is hard to get people to come to work," Commissioner Hall said.

"In order to do that, we have to raise the pay for correctional staff. Mississippi has one of the lowest paid correctional staff. We were successful in getting a realignment in pay but it wasn't enough. In a \$24,000 entry level job, I shudder to think if I had to take care of myself on that salary,"

Commissioner Hall said.

"I applaud all of you who do come in. I think it is a slap in the face to people who do such a dangerous and thankless job. We are going to be a champion and ask for better wages and better working conditions," Commissioner Hall said.

Taking care of the existing personnel is a top concern as employee safety was another major point which Commissioner Hall counted among her priorities.

"We just recently at SMCI had to close a unit because of staffing concerns. I heard from my advisory council we had one or two individuals who were manning a large population of offenders and was creating

Continued to next page

Assemblies / 41

Featured are employees from Community Corrections.



Five years tenure, from left front, Yolanda Colbert, Nexus Cole, Jerald Tatum, DCC Christy Guthertz, Jimmy Reynolds, Karen Vance, Patrick Culley. Back row: Richard Odoms, Alan Sutton, Jeffrey Brawner, Eugene Tuggle, and Kennedy Greathree



Ten years tenure, from left front, Steven Gill, DCC Christy Guthertz, and Barbara Gill (Gill's wife). Back: Lafayette Nelson, Ricardo Polk, and Ronald Dunston

Continued from previous page

a dangerous situation for our staff. Safety first is always important," Commissioner Hall said.

"Staffing is critical and we are definitely going to look at that. We will have to shift some offenders around to different locations, but I am not going to put you in harm's way just for the sake of keeping a unit open. Those are continuing discussions we are going to have," Commissioner Hall said.

A staff wellness plan and infrastructure improvements, fighting contraband; and continued re-entry and rehabilitation for the offenders are part of the Commissioner's priorities, combined with professional service.

Featured are employees from Community Corrections.



Fifteen years tenure,
from left front, Lato-
nya Thompson, Rebecca
Dearmon, DCC Christy
Gutherz, Angneta Garner,
and Nathan Blevins.
Back row: Jason Carney,
David Sullivan, and Chris
Swindle

Twenty years tenure,
from left front: Judy Clawson,
DCC Christy Gutherz, and
Stephen Higginbotham.
Back row: Otis Bailey, Na-
than Blevins, Plez Hill, and
Kristen Campbell



Thirty-five years tenure,
from left, Nathan Blevins,
DCC Christy Gutherz, and
Robert Minor

Featured are employees from Institutions



Five years tenure, from left front: Superintendent Jacquelyne Banks, Pamela Garretson, Sadie Baldwin, Laurie Halford, and Alesia Lewis. Back row: Kenneth Powell, James Cooksey, and Mark Davis



Ten years tenure, from left, Superintendent Jacquelyne Banks, Donna Webb, Stacy Taylor, and Anthony Beasley

Featured are employees from Institutions.



Fifteen years tenure, from left front: Superintendent Jacquelyne Banks, Shelly Anderson, Rongelia Powe, Misty Cszasz, James Williams, and Timothy Barnes. Back row: Monnicah Pugh, Patrick Lucovich, and Kellie Wilkins



Twenty years tenure, from left front: Superintendent Jacquelyne Banks, Ginger Baldwin, Regina Reed, and Brenda Gibson. Back row: Denzel Walley, Adrian Keys, and Penny Bufkin

Minor: Find purpose in your life

LEAKESVILLE – Probation and Parole Agent Robert Minor stood out for his tenure and his message at the Commissioner’s Assembly at South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI). He encouraged his fellow employees to make a difference.

“There are many days in my life when I wanted to say to heck with all this,” Minor said. “But I decided I had the courage to continue on because it was not about me. It was about the good that I could do to help somebody else.”

He could have been a person behind bars from his days of youth, Minor said.

“But God had a plan for me,” Minor said. “God has a plan for all of us. But we must find what is our purpose in life and try to do that purpose to the best of our ability, and say with God’s help, ‘I can do all things. He is the one that strengthens me.’ So each and every morning I decided who can I help today and to help change their lives and be



Robert Minor makes his way to the head table during the Commissioner’s Assembly at the South Mississippi Correctional Institution to comment about having served 35 years in the MDOC.

that instrument and be that servant that can make a difference. So you, today, it ought to be your desire

to be able to make a difference in somebody’s life regardless of their circumstances or their situations.”



Brenda Gibson celebrates 20 years of service during the Commissioner’s Assembly at the South Mississippi Correctional Institution.



Donna Jones reacts to a gift for battling cancer.

Tenure Awards: Central Office

JACKSON – Employees at the Central Office were recognized during a Commissioner’s Assembly on Nov. 2 in the Sparkman Auditorium at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum.



Deputy Commissioner Audrey McAfee, pictured at left, tells employees about her 30-plus years with the agency while accepting her tenure award. (ABOVE) Ramona Jordan receives her certificate from DCI Jerry Williams as DCC Christy Guthertz looks on.



Five years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, DCC Christy Guthertz, Willean Hathorn, Grace Fisher, and Princess Barnett, Deputy Commissioner Audrey McAfee, and Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance Dell Lemley

Ten years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, DCCC Christy Gutherz, John Hunt, Johnetta Jackson, Te'Aira McCollum, Sherry Camel, Tjuana Carter, Lashetta Wilder, Lenetha Harris, Pat Sanders-Ford, DC Audrey McAfee, and DCAF Dell Lemley



Fifteen years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, DCCC Christy Gutherz, Marilyn Philpot, Jeworski Mallett, DC Audrey McAfee, and DCAF Dell Lemley



Twenty years tenure from left, DCI Jerry Williams, Jerry Horton, Ramona Jordan, DCCC Christy Gutherz, Sean Smith, Patricia Dean-Wilson, Kevin Jackson, DC Audrey McAfee, and DCAF Dell Lemley



Thirty years tenure, from left, DCI Jerry Williams, DCCC Christy Guthertz, Michelle Taylor, Alfreda Dodd, DC Audrey McAfee, and DCAF Dell Lemley



DCI Jerry Williams, DCCC Christy Guthertz, DC Audrey McAfee, all standing from left, congratulated John Hunt for his 10 years of service to the agency.



Sean Smith, left, director of the Corrections Investigation Division, offers a high five to DCI Jerry Williams upon Smith's recognition of 20 years of service to the agency.



Personnel Changes

Matheney promoted to oversee facilities

JACKSON – Community Corrections Division Director II Everett Matheney stays busy as warden over residential facilities.

Matheney was promoted in August after serving as commander of the Washington County Community Work Center.

Matheney oversees the running of all Community Work Centers, Restitution Centers, and Technical Violation Centers, plus maintenance for all the facilities and administrative support.

Matheney said the interaction with people within and outside the system is part of what he enjoys most about his position.

“I interact with a lot of people – offenders, staff, and the public. It is a joy to be able to be a positive influence in the lives of so many people. I also like growing with the new direction the agency is going,” Matheney said.



Matheney

To date, Matheney has more than 30 years with the department. He began his career as a correctional officer in 1984 at the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

Prior to the promotion, Matheney was involved in several training seminars pertaining to the supervision of correctional staff and offenders.

In 2002, Matheney was promoted to correctional supervisor and transferred to Alcorn County Community Work Center in Corinth. While there, he was promoted to commander and later transferred to the Washington County CWC in Greenville. He served in Greenville from 2005 to 2017.

Matheney is well known throughout the state not only as a top commander but also as a leader in assisting other commanders and staff in preparing their facilities for ACA audits and PREA audits.

Matheney was a police officer with the Rosedale Police Department before joining the MDOC.

Blevins named Region 3 CCD

JACKSON – Nathan Blevins assumed the reins as the new Community Corrections Director for Region 3 on July 1.

Blevins was promoted in October 2016 from associate director in the same region. He accepted the new responsibilities without missing a beat.

As the CCD, Blevins oversees supervision of returning citizens released to their communities in 31 counties, which include the southernmost parts of the state. Four associate directors report to him.



Blevins

Valentine moves to lead Region 1

JACKSON – Community Corrections Director Ken Valentine has moved from Region 3 to Region 1 to cover North Mississippi.

Valentine has served for 33.5 years since arriving from Florida. Valentine started his MDOC career at the Mississippi State Penitentiary as a case manager.

Valentine’s employment began before the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case of *Gates v. Collier*, so he had experience in criminal justice prior to reforms and has seen vast improvements and changes.



Valentine



Rick McCarty enjoys a retirement luncheon with MDOC leadership; Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall reads proclamation; McCarty accepts a gift from former Corrections Commissioner Marshall Fisher.

McCarty retires as deputy commissioner for finance

JACKSON – After nearly 30 years of handling the Mississippi Department of Corrections’ finances, Rick McCarty retired in October 2017.

McCarty served as deputy commissioner of Administration and Finance since January 1999. Before the appointment, he was the fiscal comptroller for the agency. He had worked for MDOC since June 1989.

At a send-off reception, MDOC staffers joked and praised him for his detailed, lengthy answers and described him as a good colleague, boss, and MDOC family member.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall thanked McCarty for his 28 years of service and presented him with a discharge certificate laced with humor. “We are definitely going to miss you, Rick,” Commissioner Hall said, praising McCarty for his service and leadership.

McCarty’s wife, Cissy, who is a retired MDOC employee and whom he met in his early days at Parchman and married, accompanied him at the gathering.

Former Corrections Commissioner Marshall Fisher, who headed the department until Gov. Phil Bryant named him Department of Public Safety commissioner earlier in 2017, also attended to thank McCarty for his service.

Lemley takes reins as chief financial officer

JACKSON – Dell Lemley has 25 years of experience working for the Mississippi Department of Corrections and serves as the Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Finance.

“I enjoy the family atmosphere and meeting the challenges that come with helping to run a state agency,” Lemley said. “It is an honor to serve and look after the financial well-being of MDOC.”



Lemley

Lemley began his career in April 1993 as an Accounting/Auditor I at the Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP). He enjoyed many years of working in the finance department at MSP before transferring to the Central Office in 2007. He has worked in numerous capacities before his current position, including director of fiscal affairs and chief fiscal officer.

Lemley, a native of Greenwood, is a graduate of Delta State University with a Bachelor’s of Business Administration degree in accounting. He is a member of the American Correctional Association and Southern States Correctional Association for which he has served on the Finance and Vendor Committees.

He has also served for many years as chairman of the Employee Relief Fund Golf Tournament.

Herndon guides SMCI Pre-release program

LEAKESVILLE – After working two jobs in her hometown with not much room for advancement, Lisa Herndon applied for a correctional officer position at South Mississippi Correctional Institution in 1993 and has never looked back.

It didn't take Herndon long to work her way up in security to correctional supervisor because of her personality traits in leadership. She can interact with people on many levels and remain objective, and she understands teamwork.

"The best advice I was given when I started working at SMCI was to be firm, fair and consistent because at the end of the day the inmates are still human beings," Herndon said. "I was told never to forget that no matter how I felt about a situation, I knew that I had to always think with my head and not with my heart. It can be a stressful job mentally and physically. I actually resigned and my husband and I moved to North Carolina for a business venture."

After four years away, Herndon couldn't forget her home roots and her passion for working in corrections. When she and her family moved back to Mississippi, Herndon returned to SMCI and moved into administrative roles. She served as a case manager, then an alcohol and drug coordinator. She is now the director of the Pre-Release Program at SMCI.

"I have worked in corrections for a total of 21 years now," Herndon said. "I have worn many hats at this



Lisa Herndon shows her pride in working at South Mississippi Correctional Institution where she works as the director of the Pre-Release Program.

facility but this position has been the most rewarding."

Herndon makes sure residents have the necessary tools to be successful upon returning to society.

"Our curriculum consist of educational programs, employment skills, life skills, staying drug free and just overall personal development. The impact of learning these skills, while incarcerated, helps contribute to offenders making positive choices that will prevent them from committing new crimes," she said.

Since July 2017 through December 2017, 59 individuals graduated and returned to the community.

Of these people, 15 were disabled or released out of state; three returned to incarceration, and 41 found gainful employment.

See **HERNDON**, next page

Other personnel changes between July and December 2017 include but are not limited to:

Retirements

July
Brenda Sims, Area II deputy warden

September
Gloria Jones, correctional officer
William Reid, correctional officer
Earnest Lee, superintendent

October
Charles Tossy, correctional supervisor

Promotions

July
Shawna Smith, CSA II, Community Corrections, Region 3

August
Everett Matheney, community corrections division director II

September
Jewel Morris, associate warden
Marshal Turner, superintendent

October
Nolan Davis, officer director II
Georgia Shelby, SMCI warden

December
Gerrard Poole, bureau director II maintenance

Hires

September
Matthew Riley, Statewide Re-Entry Coordinator

Veterans receive 'thanks' for service

JACKSON – The Mississippi Department of Corrections saluted its veterans among the 2,106 employees in connection to Veterans Day on Nov. 11.

Veterans representing all branches of service can be found in many positions throughout the agency.

Here are just a few:

Vincent Noland, probation and parole agent, U.S. Air Force

Timothy J. Morris, warden at the Mississippi State Penitentiary's Unit 29, Army National Guard

Joseph Chillis, probation and parole agent, U.S. Marine Corp.

Nakisha Sanders, pre-release counselor at South Mississippi Correctional Institution, Mississippi Army National Guard

Steven A. Fairley, probation and parole agent, Mississippi National Guard

Detrick Munford, commander, Mississippi State Penitentiary, U.S. Army Reserves

Patrick Lucovich, records technician, U.S. Navy

In their own words, MDOC personnel shared their thoughts about military service and the holiday:

Vincent Noland said, "Vet-



MDOC staff who served in the armed forces visit the veterans monument near the Old Capitol in remembrance of the service of all employees who have served. They include, from left: **Bertrice Cornist**, administrative assistant for Institutions, U.S. Navy; **Tony Compton**, then director of private and regional prisons, U.S. Army; **Jerry Lee Doss**, senior program analyst, U.S. Navy, U.S. Army National Guard 155th Cavalry; and **Porfirio Grimaldo**, CID investigator, U.S. Army.

eran's Day means a lot to me from my previous family members and friends who have risked it all for freedom for everyone. It reminds me of all the long nights from my family while in all foreign countries."

Timothy J. Morris said he "joined the military because of my older brother. Also, because I wanted to serve my country and protect the very things that we sometimes take for granted and to ensure that those who awake each day in this land of freedom is able to continually to feel free and safe."

Nakisha Sanders said, "Veteran's Day to me is a day of reflection to honor the bravery and sacrifice of living veterans who served honorably during war and peace. I spend the day watching the Veterans Day parade held in Hattiesburg."

Detrick Munford said, "Veterans Day is a day that is set aside to honor the past and present soldier that has fought for our freedom. I joined the military because I wanted to be just like my daddy."

Herndon

—from previous page

"It's too early in the program to give statistics," Herndon cautions, "but I'm hearing nothing but positive feedback from the students. Most of them realize that it's going to be a continuous process once they are released because some have burned bridges and they will be returning home with unresolved issues with their family and friends."

Spiritual faith plays an important role in Herndon's work.

"I want these men to leave this program knowing that some of their family, friends and most of their community have already counted them out, but God has counted them in."

Herndon is quick to praise staff and supervisor

The Resource

LaShetta Wilder. "I am so blessed to have such a wonderful, supportive people to work with and work for," she said.

Herndon said she enjoys working for the department. "I have nothing but good things to say about MDOC," she said. "(Supervisors and colleagues) have always treated me well and been good to me."

When Herndon is not working, her activities include facilitating Celebrate Recovery, a 12-step program.

The youngest of six children, she was born and raised in Leakesville and has been married for 36 years. She has one daughter and five grandchildren, all girls.



MDOC Memorials

Claude 'C.N.' Brumfield

Veteran Probation and Parole Agent Claude "C.N." Brumfield, 64, died on Aug. 4. Brumfield had worked for MDOC since December 2001.

Brumfield began his career in law enforcement in 1992 and served the cities of Columbia and Lumberton in addition to MDOC.

A longtime resident of Marion County, Brumfield, 64, was loved and respected by many people. He graduated from Dexter High School where he played track and football.



He attended Goss Baptist Church in Columbia.

Brumfield is remembered by family and friends as having a great sense of humor. He loved karaoke, working in his yard, and riding his motorcycle. He always started his day with a cup of coffee, and his favorite food was his wife's pork sinigang.

He is survived by his wife of eight years, Hilda Brumfield; three sons, Chris Brumfield (Courtney), Daniel Brumfield, Cameron Brumfield; one step-daughter, Gabie Lara; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild; two brothers; and one sister.

Services were held Aug. 9 at Hathorn Funeral Home in Columbia. Burial was held in Woodlawn Cemetery.

MDOC employee Viruth Phongam served as a pallbearer and Brumfield's MDOC co-workers were honorary pallbearers.

Tyshawna Shanenise Nellum

Correctional Officer Trainee Tyshawna Shanenise Nellum died on Aug. 19.

Nellum, 25, of Greenwood, began her employment at the Mississippi State Penitentiary on October 7, 2016, and was assigned to Area II.

Nellum died from injuries received in an automobile accident after leaving work on Aug. 19 between Schlater and Greenwood in Leflore County. Nellum had just finished her shift when her 2015 Chevrolet Impala suffered a flat tire.

The vehicle, stopped in the roadway, was struck by a 2002 Lincoln Navigator about two miles south of Mississippi 442 and U.S. 49 East, according to the Mississippi Highway Patrol. Nellum was sitting inside. The accident was reported at 11:30 p.m.

After the impact, Nellum's vehicle went into a field and overturned in a ditch. She was taken to Greenwood-Leflore Hospital, where she was pro-



nounced dead.

"She loved her job," said Warden Sonja Staniel, who oversees the area where Nellum worked. "She kept a smile on her face. She was dedicated. She was eager to learn and wasn't afraid to ask questions. She had gone back to school to further her education."

Services were held Aug. 26 at Providence Missionary Baptist Church, also in Greenwood.

Renata Cameron

A&D Counselor Renata Cameron died on Dec. 21 after a battle with cancer. She was assigned to the Simpson County Technical Violation Center.

She had worked at the center for the two years prior to her death.

"I found Ms Cameron to be very passionate about her work and a faithful and dedicated employee," said Commander Otis Bailey.



MDOC celebrates Wellness



SUBMITTED PHOTO

More than 50 employees gather at the Central Office at the Shape Up at the Capital event to support Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall's vision for a healthy MDOC workforce. Employees donated blood at the Oct. 20 event, participated in several wellness activities and simply had fun. A staff wellness program is developing at the department. Additionally, wellness-oriented fairs have been held at the prison institutions.

Employees surveyed on health issues, wellness plan design is underway

JACKSON – The Mississippi Department of Corrections is looking at every available option in the effort of helping employees improve their health and providing resources to encourage living a healthy lifestyle.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall has pledged to help MDOC employees improve their health in any way possible.

“I read a report that our mortality rate for people who work in corrections is 59 years versus other law enforcement who is 75 years of age. The lifespan of people who work in corrections is so much shorter and we have to do something different in how we address those issues,” Commissioner Hall said.

“I have appointed Dr. Patricia Dean-Wilson to work with me on developing a full staff wellness plan. It is very important to take care of the people who work for us.”

A survey was conducted in which employees were asked to answer general questions about their health habits so the leadership could understand their needs while developing a

wellness plan.

“One of the things our research has shown about our staff is that they develop PTSD, high rates of suicide, bad coping habits, excessive drinking, smoking, overeating, and anger management issues,” Commissioner Hall said. “We want to be mentally and physically healthy. We are going to roll out something at all of our institutions. For example, something like meditation, you would be amazed at what a few minutes each day can do for your health. I really believe in it and I think it is important.”

State employees also can use discounts at places like Downtown Fitness by Baptist Health Systems. Just provide proof of state employment using a badge, identification, or business card. For information, call 601-487-6462.

At the University of Mississippi Medical Center, state employee discounts are available at multiple facilities throughout the Jackson area. Provide proof of employment to participate in the programs. For more information, visit ummcwellness.com.

Keeping the fight real against Breast Cancer

JACKSON – The Mississippi Department of Corrections supported Breast Cancer Awareness with many activities in October 2017 and sold T-shirts as part of that spirit.

A Breast Cancer Awareness Walk- A-Thon was held on October 28 at Mississippi State Penitentiary. The route took walkers from Gate 1 to the training building and back to Gate 1.

The Bolivar County Probation Office went pink on October 6. A pink bag was provided to the first probationer, parolee, ERS, PRS, or ISP individual to sign in. The bags included a pink vase, pink cup, Breast Cancer Awareness ink pen, key chain, and sunglasses.

A Breast Cancer Awareness ink pin was given to another probationer's son. A pink baby gift set was purchased for a parolee that recently had a baby girl. Additional Breast Cancer Awareness materials were kept stocked until the end of the month.

Employees at SMCI got in on the action by wearing pink.

In the Alcorn County Community Corrections office, Sharon Terry handed out brochures of breast cancer facts as well as a self-exam card that teaches how to do a self-exam and hangs on the shower head as a monthly reminder.

Each incarcerated person who received this information had his or her name put into a bucket for a chance to win a gift at the end of the month.

MDOC personnel participated in the Making Strides Breast Cancer Walk on Oct. 28, starting at Thalia Mara Hall in Jackson.

A week earlier than the formal observance, the importance of Breast Cancer Awareness was promoted at the annual conference of the Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections in September.



Employees at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness with a signature banner and a variety of other activities. Participants include, from left: Margaret Briggs, Linda Minor, Cyntheia Norwood, and Edna Lawrence.

Submitted Photo



Residents at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County add decorations commemorating Breast Cancer Awareness during the month of October while tending to the grounds.



Turnout is strong for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk at Thalia Mara Hall in Jackson. Many MDOC personnel participated in the Oct. 28 walk.



Belinda Scott, MDOC executive administrative assistant, celebrates the day's events with her granddaughter, Damien Burkett. Scott is a breast cancer survivor.



MDOC employee Chanel Delandro of Constituents Services, right, enjoys the day with her mother, Chanel, and daughter, Cadence.



MDOC staff attending the walk and Breast Cancer Awareness celebration include, from left front: Corrie Cockrell, Belinda Scott and her son, Devionne Sharp, Christy Gutherz, Johnnie Ellis, and Kendra Michael. Back row: Kevin May II, Kevin May, Don Rhodes, Janet Brown, Chanel Delandro, Courtney Cockrell, and Carolyn Evers Cockrell.



Breast Cancer Awareness supporters sport a commemorative T-shirt for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk at Thalia Mara Hall in Jackson.

2017 MAPC Fall Conference

Scenes from the Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections 34th Annual Conference
Sept. 20-22, Gold Strike Casino, Robinsonville

TUNICA – The 34th annual training conference of the Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections included training, competitions, fellowshiping, and business sessions.

The conference covered topics including the History of Probation and Parole as well as Probation and Parole Today; Deprivation of Rights Under Color of Law, Human Trafficking, Changes in Mental Illness Legislation, Benefits of Working Together, Security Threat Group's in 21st Century Corrections.

On a more festive but serious note, a Breast Cancer Awareness exhibit was on hand, among several vendor booths.

Lighter tone events included a walk-a-thon, pistol shooting contest, silent auction, glow theme party and dinner, and Harlem Nights theme dinner.

The 2016-2017 MAPC President Melanie Townsend-Blackmon handed the reins over to her successor, Marshal Turner, who was among a new slate of leaders for the association.



Members of the Gentry High School Choir from Indianola provides entertainment for the opening session of the conference.



Tina Ladner puts up her “dukes” against cancer among the vendor tables. She is standing behind art work featuring Wonder Woman, which was designed by her son.



Scenes from MAPC Fall Conference



John Waller applauds programs presented at the 34th annual MAPC fall conference. Waller later won second place in the male division of the 5K walk during the event.



MAPC 2018 President Marshal Turner is sworn in by 2017 MAPC President Melanie Townsend-Blackmon. *Submitted Photo*



Kevin May won first place in the pistol shooting contest.



Margaret Briggs won first place in the women's 5K run.



Shawiyah Boyd won first place overall in the 5K run. *Submitted Photos*

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Tony P. Harris

2nd Vice-President
Tjuana Carter

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Janise Wortham

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- Tasha Davis, chairperson
- vacant, vice-chairperson
- vacant, 2nd vice-chairperson

Region III

- Lavetti Johnson, chairperson
- Blendean Washington, vice-chairperson
- Jacqueline Morton, 2nd vice-chairperson

Region IV

- Johnetta Jackson, chairperson
- Vivian Frazer, vice-chairperson
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MDOC In the Community

Service project honors Moody

WOODVILLE – A community service project of Wilkinson County Correctional Facility (WCCF) successfully pushed for recognition of civil rights pioneer Anne Moody.

Wilkinson County Chancery Clerk Thomas Tolliver presented Wilkinson County Correctional Facility Warden Jody Bradley with a resolution on Dec. 12 honoring Moody (1940-2015).

The resolution officially recognized Moody's achievements authorized a portion of Highway 24 to be named, "Anne Moody Highway." The resolution, unanimously supported by the Wilkinson County Board of Supervisors, was requested by the Anne Moody History Project (AMHP), a community service project of WCCF.

Moody, 74, was a civil rights pioneer and the author of the book *Coming of Age in Mississippi*. She was born and reared in Wilkinson County, spending her early years in Centreville, and later, Woodville, before attending college. She was living in Gloster at the time of her death.

The resolution was sent to Mississippi State Rep. Angela Cockerham who introduced House Bill 1153 authorizing the name change on the state level. The bill was approved by the Legislature and Gov. Phil Bryant. The name was applied to the segment of Mississippi Highway 24 in Wilkinson County beginning at its intersection with U.S. Highway 61 in Woodville and ex-



Derrick Young, left, displays a portrait of Civil Rights pioneer Anne Moody. Young drew the portrait on canvas using pencil and charcoal. It was donated to a local African-American museum as part of a community service project by Wilkinson County Correctional Facility. He is pictured with Emma Taplin, quality assurance manager, who serves on the Anne Moody History Project. Submitted Photo

tending east to the Amite County line in Centreville.

Derrick Young, who is incarcerated at WCCF, completed a portrait of Moody. Young drew the portrait on canvas using pencil and charcoal. It was donated to a local African-American museum as part of a community service project by WCCF.

Taplin and other staff said they were amazed by Young's art work and the striking resemblance to the actual photograph of Moody. "He did a great job," Taplin said. "His work actually looks better than the photo," said another staff member.

"Everything about it was nice and beautifully done," said Warehouse Manager Ruby Dixon, who also serves on the AMHP committee. "It was unbelievable. He said he could do it and then he did it."

Taplin said the AMHP committee is considering a possible exhibit of art work related to Anne Moody history. Taplin said efforts were underway to have the work on display in the community and in several museums.

Spirit of giving brightens children's lives

JACKSON – The employees of the Mississippi Department of Corrections and residents they supervise extended the spirit of giving to dozens of children, families, and the elderly during the holiday season.

“The Mississippi Department of Corrections is fortunate to have the opportunity to share the holiday season with others,” Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said. “I am proud of the efforts of our employees and offenders who have participated in the spirit of giving. We are reminded that we must not forget the many lives that are touched by our work each day.”

Staff from Region II Area III delivered 16 new bikes on Dec. 22 to the Berean Children's Home in Lincoln County. Every child at the home received a bike for Christmas and many of them have never had a new bike.

On the coast, for the second consecutive year, the honorary elves of the Gulfport Field Office assisted Santa in collecting toys for children at the Women's Shelter for Domestic Violence. Agents Kirby Shavers and Antoine Taylor delivered the car full of gifts and food.



MDOC staff place presents at Willow Creek Retirement Center in Byram during the holidays. The honorary elves included, from left, Johnetta Jackson, Sherry Camel, and Jeremy Williams.

Agents and returning citizens supervised on house arrest or electronic monitoring from the Harrison County office donated gift cards to a shelter served by Youth Court. Agents Maria Lopez and Randall Lundy presented \$350 worth of gift cards to the Youth Court.

Monroe County agents donated toys to 150 to 200 children of incarcerated people and other residents over a two week span during a drive that Agent Alicia M. Perkins and stepfather Randy Perkins, a retired MDOC employee, started in December 2006.

Agents deliver ham, turkey to mission

GULFPORT – Agents from the Gulfport Field office delivered 35 hams and turkeys to the Gulf Coast Rescue Mission in Biloxi on Nov. 22. The agents and people supervised by the office donated the items as part of the third year for the drive.

The Mission was chosen because it strives to feed up to 700 needy people for the holidays, said Agent Troy Carpenter. “We are very proud of our offenders for having stepped up to help out their community no matter their circumstance in life,” Carpenter said.

MAPC donates collected food items to Stewpot Ministries

JACKSON – The Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections (MAPC) Region IV collected nine boxes of food items for Stewpot Ministries in Jackson. The items included 350 canned goods and 85 dried goods, such as bean, rice, pasta, oatmeal and peanut butter.

The annual Holiday Food Drive began Oct. 16 and ended Nov. 16.

Personnel also delivered socks, throws, gloves, lotion, puzzles/coloring books, crayons/coloring pencils and food items to the Willow Creek Retirement Center in Byram during the holidays.



Sherry Camel, left, and Johnetta Jackson were among MAPC members participating in a food drive.

Submitted Photo



MDOC personnel show their support for the schools in the Houston, Texas, area last year following the flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey. Sending supplies were, from left: Steve Saucier, Lyndon Romeo, Troy Carpenter, Laskia Williams, Barbara B. Gill, Antoine Taylor, Kirby Shaver, Clinton Simon, and kneeling Steven Gill.

All photos on this page were submitted.

Agents gather donations for Harvey flood victims in Texas

JACKSON – A husband and wife team from the Mississippi Department of Corrections delivered donated school supplies on Oct. 16 to three third-grade classrooms affected by Hurricane Harvey in Houston, Texas.

The items, including book bags, crayons, notebooks and pencils, had been collected since September through the Gulfport and Biloxi Probation and Parole offices.

Donors included MDOC employees, local businesses Food Giant and Academy Sports, local attorney George Blair, and people on house arrest, parole and probation.

“People helped us when Hurricane Katrina hit,” said Probation and Parole Agent Barbara B. Gill, who was accompanied by her husband, Steve Gill, on the trip.

“We appreciate this opportunity to give back. This was a group effort of the MDOC employees,” Barbara Gill said.

The idea to donate to the classrooms came from a Facebook post about Adopt a Classroom.org, a website of a nonprofit organization that helps teachers in need of classroom supplies, Barbara Gill said.

“I applaud and commend our employees’ efforts to give back,” Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said. “I also appreciate that the offenders voluntarily donated.”



Steve Gill, a program coordinator, and wife Barbara B. Gill, probation and parole agent, led a donation drive for students in Texas schools affected by the flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey.



Davis speaks to students about drugs

Probation and Parole Agent Melvin Davis was guest speaker on Nov. 30 at Gilmer McLaurin Elementary School in Natchez for a Drug Awareness Program. Davis was a police officer for the Natchez Police Department for more than three years before joining MDOC in May 2016. Agent Melvin Davis is pictured with McLaurin Elementary School Counselor Pamela Robinson.

The Gills met a liaison and Pastor Keith Goodman at World Harvest Outreach Seventh-day Adventist Church, the designated distribution center for Houston and outlining areas, before visiting Carter G. Woodson Elementary and Alcott Elementary School.

Hurricane Harvey inflicted \$125 billion in damage, primarily from catastrophic rainfall-triggered flooding in the Houston metropolitan area. In a four-day period, many areas received more than 40 inches of rain.



MDOC On Location

Commissioner: Stay sober, free

JACKSON – As the head of the state prison system, Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall told the graduates of the Hinds County Circuit Drug Court on Dec. 13 that she would much rather see them being rehabilitated in the community than incarcerated.

She urged the 21 men and women sitting before her to stay sober and to not jeopardize their freedom.

“I want you to think about what the rest of your story looks like, to think about what your story could have looked like had it not been for drug court,” Commissioner Hall said, speaking to the largest graduating class thus far for Hinds County Circuit Court. “Think what it could be like to be one of my visitors, where your every move is dictated by someone who’s in charge of the prison system; what you put on every day; what you smell like every day; what you eat; what you drink; who do you talk to; who you can’t talk to; who you see; who you can’t see; when you can see them; what time you go to bed; what time you get up; what kind of work you can do.”

Commissioner Hall said she is a proponent of meaningful rehabilitation and research shows drug court, which is an alternative to incarceration, works. Addiction is a disease and incarceration doesn’t address the problem, she said.

When a person goes to prison, he or she is not going alone, she said. Families and friends go with them.

“There is a void left in your community because you are no longer



Senior Hinds County Circuit Court Judge Tomie Green, center right, congratulates Drug Court Graduate Michael Carr after Carr received his medal on Dec. 13, 2017, at the Hinds County Courthouse in Jackson. Rep. Alyce Griffin Clarke, center left, who is credited with bringing drug courts to Mississippi, and Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, right, also congratulated Carr.

there,” she said. “There is void in your family because you are no longer there. So families are broken and destroyed. Communities are affected. Citizens are victimized because of the crimes that you have committed.”

Commissioner Hall told the graduates, she wants them to be successful. She commended family members for their support. The graduates “are going to need you more and more as each day goes by,” she said, citing that the road to recovery is long and continuous.

Each graduate expressed appreciation to those who helped them complete the program, including family members, Circuit Judge Winston Kidd, who presides over drug court, senior Circuit Judge Tomie Green, who referred many to the program, and the alcohol and drug team members who worked with them. Rep. Alyce Griffin Clarke, credited with bringing drug court to Mississippi, was among those present.



Corrections Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall presents graduate Bridget Greer with a medal at the 40th Hinds County Circuit Drug Court Graduation on Dec. 13 at the Hinds County Courthouse.

Commissioner attends safety summit in D.C.

JACKSON – Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall attended a two-day meeting in Washington, D.C., that examined crime, corrections, and behavioral health trends.

The Summit on Public Safety met Nov. 13-14 and addressed public safety challenges, reducing recidivism, and finding savings from cost-effective policies.

Attendees included corrections leaders, key state lawmakers, and behavioral health officials.

“I think it is important that we learn from each other,” Commissioner Hall said.

“The Mississippi Department of Corrections is looking for ways to provide meaningful rehabilitation in the most cost-effective way possible in order to reduce recidivism.”

“With a decline in our prison population since the passage of House Bill 585 three years ago, we need to start reinvesting in our prison system so we don’t find ourselves back where we started,” Commissioner Hall concluded.



Graduate Danny Harris draws laughter as he gives his statement of appreciation. Harris thanked Judge Winston Kidd, pictured with him, and others associated with the Hinds County Drug Court administration.



Hinds County Circuit Drug Court Graduate Jamaal Maxon speaks with Probation and Parole Agent Brian Thurmond.



MDOC Programs

Dads' Day launches special visitation

Editor's Note: The following story was printed with permission from WTOK-Meridian.

MERIDIAN – A new program uniting incarcerated fathers with their children gave inmate Kevin Brown and his son a chance to celebrate the son's first birthday at East Mississippi Correctional Facility in Meridian.

A "Day with My Dad" was held from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. on July 29 when 15 offenders were allowed to interact with their children through a variety of activities.

Brown, 25, said he would relish spending time with his 2-year-old daughter and son whose birthday was Aug. 9.

"My children are growing up so fast. They are beginning to be able to speak in whole sentences and I am just looking forward to being able to talk with them," Brown said. "This is a wonderful opportunity and something to look forward to."

Each inmate was allowed one adult visitor and their children, in most cases one or two. In addition to face-painting, watching movies and enjoying refreshments, the inmates played games and puzzles, read to their children and had the children read back to them.

Warden Frank Shaw said a successful first outing would allow the program to continue. "It is a great opportunity for our offenders who follow all of the rules and do what they are supposed to do," Shaw said. "Our plans, if it works, include



PHOTO COURTESY/WTOK-MERIDIAN

Incarcerated fathers at East Mississippi Correctional Facility in Meridian were treated to a special visitation program that launched on July 29. The fathers were allowed to visit with their children in a more interactive way, playing games and other activities. The concept has expanded to other correctional facilities in the Mississippi Department of Corrections system.

doing this more often with other offenders who meet the criteria."

Markeshia Wells, EMCF's lead case manager, said the program is modeled after one she learned about in a correctional facility in Cleveland, Texas.

"It is a great chance to help strengthen the bond between the offenders and their children," Wells said. "Some of them haven't seen their children in years and when they get out, hopefully this will help them be a better parent."

Other than having no disciplinary issues in the past year, selected inmates also had to participate in classes and have a job at the prison, Wells said.

Adult visitors joining the chil-

dren included spouses, ex-spouses, grandparents, and parents of the offenders. "Additionally, we verified the paternity of all of the children who participated," Wells said.

The children ranged in ages 18 and under, with most being under 10 years of age. A total of 21 children were expected.

Brown, whose release date is in 2021, said the opportunity to see his children has given him a more optimistic view on life.

"I felt a little overwhelmed at first when they told me, but now I am excited," Brown said. "My children are growing and developing, changing physically and mentally, and I am inspired to have a positive mindset."

Mom's Day re-unites parents, children

PEARL – Incarcerated mothers and grandmothers at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County spent the last Saturday of the year in a special way – visiting with their children.

About 50 incarcerated women and 100 children visited for three hours. The numbers was comparable to the first Mom's Day on Sept. 30.

Only females incarcerated for a year with children up to 18 years of age and with no infractions could participate. Mothers who were involved in the first event and who remained trouble free also took part in the Dec. 30 special visitation.

"This new program is another example of this administration's focus on rehabilitation," Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said. "It is important for mothers to maintain a physical connection with their children so that when they are released, the foundation for support is already there. I also appreciate staff for finding ways to provide incentives for incarcerated persons who follow the rules."

The program was extended to grandmothers because "we have so many offenders serving so many years that they are grandmothers now," said Warden Dean Epps, whose area hosted the program.

Some mothers and grandmothers saw their children or grandchildren for the first time in months, if not years.

Amaryhana Crain and her 8-year-old daughter had an emotional reunion the first Mom's Day. Crain, who is in prison for embezzlement and having a controlled substance within a facility, had not seen her daughter since 2015.

"When she first came in, she hugged me," Crain said. "She cried. It was a good experience." Crain's mother brought her daughter for the special visit. They watched her sing.

"She has grown up a lot," Crain noted, as she watched her daughter from across the room. "She's gotten taller."

Both events featured many of the same activities, such as face-painting, reading, movies and board games. A female choir performed a mini concert. Also, refreshments were served.



CMCF's program for mothers is patterned after a similar one for fathers at East Mississippi Correctional Facility in Meridian, where the latest one was held on July 30. (See page 67 about EMCF's event.)

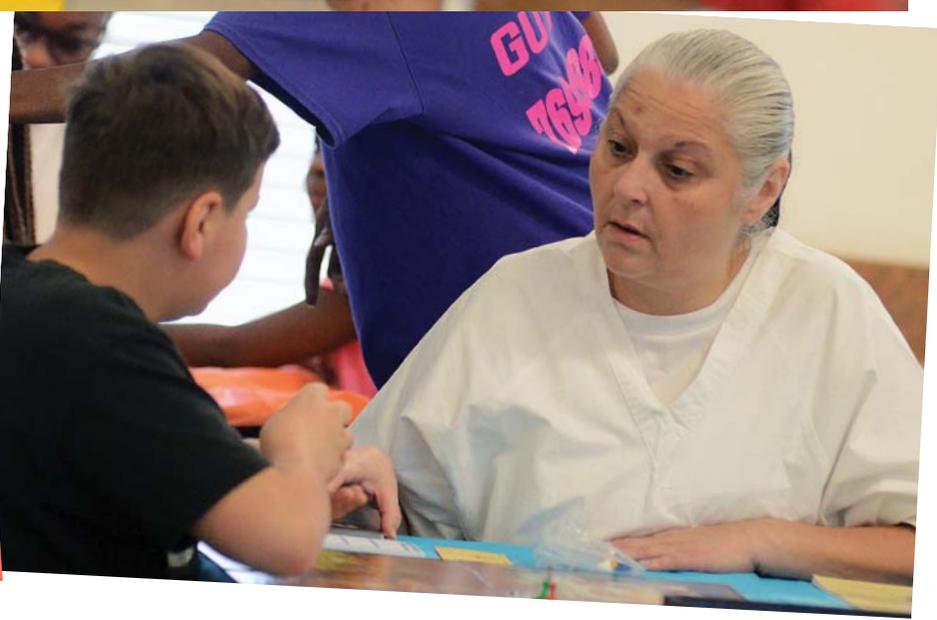
"After seeing how well the men's program was received," we wanted to provide the same opportunity for our female residents," said Commissioner Hall. "This type of program also helps to strengthen family connections so that incarcerated people will have a better chance at success when they are released."

CMCF Superintendent Ron King said there are plans to expand the program in 2018.

"The new program presents a unique opportunity for our female offenders to spend quality time with their children," King said. "The setting is a much more relaxed environment and allows interaction outside of the standard more structured visitation sessions. We hope that this will continue and even strengthen the relationship between the offenders and their children."



A Day with Mom



'I Am Clean' reflects second chances

PEARL – Second chances and the challenges for persons returning to society after incarceration were illustrated through a play written and performed by incarcerated persons at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

"I Am Clean" was the creation of Tara Lyle, who is serving a life sentence at CMCF. She also directed and starred as the play's main character. The play runs between 45 minutes to an hour with 15 cast members. It has been presented multiple times with plans to continue into early 2018.

This is the third play Lyle has written during her time at CMCF and includes two characters held over from previous works. Lyle plans to produce another play in 2018.

"This play is about the labels that are put on people when they re-enter society after having been in prison," Lyle said. "People tend to judge those returning to society and not give them a chance. This play also shows what love and acceptance can do for a person, giving them the strength and support they need to start a new life outside prison."

Lyle said writing is a big part of how she copes with being in prison and expressing the thoughts and feelings not only for herself, but also other incarcerated people.

"My plays are a composite of different stories by inmates that I have come to know. The 'I Am Clean' play took me about a month to write," Lyle said.

The play reflects the story of title character "Marie Jordan" who receives parole after being incarcerated following a history of drug use. She comes home to her mom and looks to start a new life.

Part of that new life includes interviewing for a new job. However, even while attending church, other people criticize and make remarks concerning her prison stay.



Jackleen Johnson, standing, plays the role of "Lydia Jordan" who is the mother of "Maria Jordan" played by Tara Lyle, seated. Lyle wrote and directed a play "I Am Clean" performed by inmates at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in November. Lyle, who had previously written two plays, produced this one about second chances.



"Maria" (Tara Lyle) reacts to being turned down for a job, left, after having been incarcerated. At left, Maria celebrates reconciliation with the employer and a happy ending.

Marie also encounters an old friend from her past who is still involved in questionable activities. She resists returning to her association with that life.

In a job interview, the employer learns that Marie had been incarcerated and declines to hire her, offering comments similar to what

persons may encounter in the real world.

However, by the end of the play, Marie and the employer reconcile and the play concludes favorably for her.

In addition to the play, the CMCF Praise Team also performed several songs associated with the play.

Finding Sobriety in A&D Program

JACKSON — A clean and sober life after prison is the goal of classes for incarcerated persons who participate in the Alcohol and Drug programs at the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

The department has revamped the programs to include a therapeutic approach modeled after the Betty Ford treatment program and to require all counselors to obtain professional certification.

“I am extremely proud of the Alcohol and Drug programs and the direction that MDOC is moving by recognizing addiction as a medical condition,” said Dr. Alyssa Killebrew, clinical Alcohol & Drug director for the MDOC. “With the programs now under medical supervision, treatment is now more clinical than educational.”

In July, Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall and Dr. Gloria Perry, MDOC chief medical officer, supported statewide A&D staff training by the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. Also, the programs use updated Living in Balance on Demand Curriculum, Killebrew said.

During ceremonies, graduates recite the Serenity Prayer and Addicts Prayer and the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and make statements about attitude and acceptance. They also sing, recite poems or offer testimonies. A guest speaker can be from either inside or outside the prison system.

Pastor Gary Adams spoke about perseverance during a graduation on Sept. 18. “I am excited about what you have done to make it to this point,” he said. “You have done the coursework that has brought you here. The question now becomes about where you go from here. There are no vices that can lock you down and keep you in this place. God has a purpose for you or else you would be in a grave, not wearing stripes.”

Lydia Estrella, who graduated Sept. 18, said participating in the

The Resource



Amy Clark celebrates her completion of a alcohol and drug rehabilitation program at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County during a graduation in November.



Members of a graduating class of the alcohol and drug rehabilitation program gather to recite the Lord’s Prayer, Serenity Prayer, and the 12 Steps pledge during a ceremony at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

A&D program renewed her spirit.

“Through this program, I can see light at the end of the tunnel,” she said.

Estrella has been serving a six-year sentence for possession of a controlled substance and possession of heroin in Madison County.

SMCI vocational students graduate

LEAKESVILLE – A class of residents at South Mississippi Correctional Institution took another step forward in their preparation for life after release.

The SMCI Vocational School held a graduation ceremony on Oct. 12 when 34 incarcerated men completed six courses including welding, plumbing, auto body, auto mechanics, electrical and GED.

David Allen Covington said he is looking forward to putting his skills to work after his release.

“This was a great opportunity and I appreciate MDOC making it possible for me. It was an opportunity for me to better myself in every manner of life,” Covington said. “The program has great people teaching about the world we will be returning to someday. The program also gives us structure in our lives.”

Covington, a Meridian native who was convicted of multiple counts of burglary of vehicle in Kemper and Lauderdale counties, said he plans to pursue a career in electrical work. “I have two years left and this is a great start on being ready for my release,” he said.

Among the graduates, nine members earned their General Education Diplomas; two studied welding; 10 studied electrical work; six studied plumbing;

six studied mechanical skills; and one studied auto body work.

Education Director Sarah James said offering the vocational training is critical to the returning citizens being re-integrated to society after their release.

“If we don’t empower them with the educational tools to succeed in life, we would likely keep seeing them return to prison,” James said. “Through these programs we are giving them a chance to have a better life and not repeat the mistakes that brought them here in the first place.”

James said in addition to being incarcerated, there are many challenges incarcerated persons face in trying to earn their education. “I am very proud of their accomplishments because you have to remember they are not in an environment that is very conducive to learning,” James said. “There are so many distractions that can lure them away from studying. They have to remain focused on their goal of learning their chosen trade or GED.”

Ricky Tanner, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, served as the guest speaker for the graduation.

“We all have raw materials in us to do good things or bad. What is important is what we do next in our lives. No one is perfect,” Tanner told the graduates. “As long as there is life, there is hope. Don’t give up.”



Above: Incarcerated residents at South Mississippi Correctional Institution receive certificates of completion during an Oct. 12 ceremony in the facility’s chapel. At right: Ricky Tanner, a volunteer pastor, serves as guest speaker for the event.



Community Work Days launched statewide

JACKSON – Individuals who commit minor to intermediate offenses, including not paying supervision fees or not reporting on time, while under the supervision of the MDOC, are being required to do community service.

Community Service Day activities were launched across the state in November and set for Saturdays for persons on probation, parole, house arrest or earned release supervision in each of the three Community Corrections regions.

For example, persons supervised in Hinds County cleaned up around the Probation and Parole Office building in downtown Jackson. In Gulfport, 30 supervised people set up two computer labs and a math lab for the Harrison County School District. They also cleaned up after basketball tournaments.

People who report to the Monroe County Probation and Parole Office pick up trash twice a month on road sides, wash cars and work at the local dog pound. The Lee County Probation and Parole Office and the Tupelo Public Works Department have an agreement to allow supervised individuals work alongside municipal court ordered people in various clean-up projects.

“Oftentimes, offenders may not need to be brought back before the court or locked up again,” Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said. “But they need to be held accountable without costing taxpayers, and what better way than to have our communities benefit through their service. MDOC’s ultimate goal is to keep offenders out of prison without jeopardizing public safety.”

Individuals who commit new crimes are not eligible. They are brought back before the court and are likely returned to incarceration, including prison, or a technical violation center.

“We have had problems for a long time with offenders not meeting their obligations after their release and this is a way to hold them accountable while also providing



A worker (left) under MDOC supervision, picks up roadside trash in Calhoun County while Lee County supervised workers (above) perform janitorial services and a supervised worker (below) sweeps a parking area in Hinds County.

All photos on this page were submitted.



a service to the community,” said Cecil Lott, acting associate director of Community Corrections in Region II. “We have wanted to do this for a while, and we now have the staff to make it happen.”

Lott said plans included helping other agencies with projects such as cleaning city parks and facilities.

Supervised individuals who do not participate will face additional sanctions and could find themselves back in court. “We can add additional restrictions, called graduated sanctions, and if they continue to be a problem, they could be called back before a judge and face revocation,” Lott said.

Probation and parole agents are empowered by the criminal justice reform act, commonly referred to as House Bill 585, to use graduated sanctions when people do not comply with the terms of their supervision.

“The public deserves to have these fines and restitutions paid by the offenders who need to understand there are consequences for not following the rules,” Lott said.

Soldier On receives spotlight

Fox News coverage

Fox News featured the Soldier On program in July 2017:

A unique program is trying to ensure veterans who've served time in prison don't face a tough battle for a job when they're released.

Soldier On, a nonprofit organization based in Massachusetts, runs an incarcerated veterans program focused on training and preparing inmates for life after prison. The program is in its third year in Mississippi.

The [MDOC] implemented the concept at one of its facilities in 2016, and so far the initiative has helped at least 56 former inmates and veterans get back on their feet after spending time behind bars.

"Programs like this are going to save the state money because we'll have fewer people in prison and more rehabilitated people getting on the right track and improving their lives, their family and their community," Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said.

The initiative is based on a program started in 2014 in New York. Soldier On administers programs assisting veterans in other states. The inmate veterans program in Mississippi was started with the help of Voice of Calvary Ministries, which assists homeless veterans and families.

Phil Reed, president and CEO of VOVM says the core of the initiative is centered around Moral Reconciliation Therapy.

"It really is a well put together program that works with the veterans," Reed told Fox News. "[It makes them think about] what kind of choices did you make to get you here and what are you going to do differently starting today and especially when you get out so you don't make the choice to come back?"

B.R. Hawkins, the grants manager for Soldier On in Mississippi,



Henry Payton is one of many inmates who is a member of the Soldier On program at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County.

said the program is supported by federal grants from the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Labor at no cost to state taxpayers. The goal is to reduce the chances of an inmate returning to prison.

"We work with them in getting stable housing before they come out," Hawkins told Fox News.

Hawkins said she and her team personally follow up with each former inmate. She notes many employers may have an issue with hiring a convicted felon, but she's found employers willing to give those released a new shot at life.

Eligible participants are placed in a special 'pod' located at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County. The inmates take part in daily classes at the prison.

One of those former inmates is Otis Banks, who served in the National Guard before being convicted of armed robbery and kidnapping. He served 15 years in prison after his conviction.

"I didn't have to do what I did, but we all make bad choices at times," we have to live with those choices," Banks said, reflecting on his past.

Now that he's out of prison for nearly a year, he has a car, an apartment and a good paying job. Banks describes himself as a devout Christian and said he feels he has a new lease on life after his experience.

"It was hard for me to acquire my social security card or a driver's license or an ID and you understand that you need that to even find a job," Banks said. "It was so many people that was going out of their way to make sure that I had these items. The program is truly a blessing."

Banks said the other inmates in the program value their experiences because it offers them another shot at life beyond prison walls. Although some of his former prison mates will never be released, Banks said a sense of camaraderie still existed within the special wing they were assigned to.

According to a spokesperson for MDOC, the program will continue to be administered at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. Hawkins said she hopes to have 60 veterans enrolled in the classes in Mississippi by the end of the year.

Incarcerated veterans find relief through chiropractor's services

PEARL – A nationally recognized chiropractor shared his rehabilitation program of using chiropractic techniques and nutritional supplements with incarcerated veterans at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

Dr. Steven Zodkoy of Freehold, N.J., a board-certified chiropractor, nutritionist, and kinesiologist, works with military personnel and veterans to help them overcome the effects of post-traumatic stress disorders and related conditions.

As a guest of the Soldier On program in August, Zodkoy explained that his program is not about the incarcerated veterans denying the events that happened in their lives. "It's all about looking at and doing things in a different way," he said.

Zodkoy said he specializes in treating patients who have been deemed "untreatable" through a standard course of treatment.

"When you have emotional trauma or stress, your body tries to react to it and hold on and sometimes that causes physical problems. It causes a lot of problems in your life that often translate to anger, anxiety and many other emotions that affect other people around you," he said. "We go in and address the trauma and specifically relieve that stress so the patient feels better and can move on with their life."

Zodkoy demonstrated his technique on an incarcerated veteran who said he had trouble lifting his arm past a certain point. He asked the incarcerated veteran to think of something that causes stress. Through a series of touching pressure points and massages, he helped the incarcerated veteran lift his arm higher than he could before the demonstration.

Asking a series of questions and touching pressure points in the body, Zodkoy demonstrated the ability to relieve physical discomfort through



Dr. Steven Zodkoy of Freehold, N.J. visits the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility on Aug. 1 to offer ways of relieving post-traumatic stress disorders and related conditions, demonstrating techniques on veteran members of the Soldier On program.

addressing psychological issues.

Zodkoy said his program has helped patients "re-set their brain patterns."

He has used his program, called "neural emotional technique," for about 25 years and about 12 years with military personnel and most recently for five years with veterans with a proven track record of success.

Plans include having a local chi-

ropractor work with the Soldier On members at CMCF on a weekly basis to administer the program.

State Parole Board member Betty Lou Jones, who attended the presentation, supports Zodkoy's program.

"Soldier On is designed to meet the needs of a certain group such as veterans. This program can be channeled to help their families and help the state as a whole. That is our purpose," Jones said.

Born in prison

Author shares story of addiction, recovery

PEARL – Female residents at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) on July 14 heard first-hand the inspirational story of a woman born to a heroin-addicted mother inside a prison, deep in the Appalachia Mountains in West Virginia.

Deborah Jiang-Stein, author of *Prison Baby* and a motivational speaker, was also a guest speaker at the Flowood Community Work Center.

Jiang-Stein, whose story has received national attention, lived with her mother in prison for a year before being moved to foster care and was eventually adopted. Like her mother, Jiang-Stein began using drugs and alcohol at age 12 before making changes that brought her 20 years of continued sobriety.

“The real story is what I did with my life,” Jiang-Stein told the residents. “I know what it means to use drugs and alcohol because I felt bad inside. I sought help and quit. That is where the victory is. Your story is not where you are sitting now but who you teach and how you tell your story.”

Jiang-Stein, a resident of Minneapolis, Minn., uses her life experiences to advocate for education and literacy and to offer tips for resilience and recovery as evidence that anyone can transform to live a productive life regardless of the odds.

Jiang-Stein was named a national finalist in 2017 by LOREAL’s Women of Worth award program and included CMCF inmates in her presentation video.



Jiang-Stein, right, talks with Amy Clark, a returning citizen who was 37 weeks pregnant during her incarceration at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

Tina Ladner, MDOC director of electronic monitoring, met Jiang-Stein two years ago at a conference in Connecticut and was inspired by her story.

“Her story was about her journey through life as her mother was incarcer-

ated when she was born and that really pulled me in,” Ladner said. “I stayed in touch with her and worked on making arrangements for her to visit Mississippi.”

The idea of telling her story was first suggested 10 years ago but Jiang-Stein said it was not the right time.

She does not know who her father is, but Jiang-Stein learned that she had a brother whom their mother never told about her birth.

“At first publishers suggested that it be written as a memoir but I decided that I wasn’t ready so I walked away from it,” Jiang-Stein said.

“I began meeting more of my biological family and I learned more about my mom. I realized that I had a duty to tell my story,” she added.

At first, Jiang-Stein said she was afraid of telling her story but she gathered the courage to come forward.

“Very few people would think there would be a baby born in prison or that there would be nurseries in prisons, but there are. Prisons have them,” Jiang-Stein said. “Education is the key to everything. I realized that I have been given a gift in my story to share with others.”

She continues to travel the country visiting prisons and incarcerated people.



Deborah Jiang-Stein, an author who was born in prison, speaks with residents at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility on July 14 about sharing their stories.

1A Transition provides new hope

PEARL – Finally seeing some light at the end of the tunnel.

That's how an incarcerated woman described her journey to graduating the 1A program at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

Thirteen female residents made it to the 1A Transition Day. They completed six months of classes preparing them to 'transition' from prison to the real world.

"The 1-A program is an excellent program. Most inmates should get the opportunity to attend," LouAnn White penned in a class newsletter.

"The program builds your self-esteem and accomplishes something positive. Getting to interact with people who care about your success, while also getting out of The Zone, makes you feel like you're almost not in prison for a few hours every day," White said.

Participants receive life lessons on getting and keeping a job, character redevelopment, anger management and problem solving.

The program is divided into two phases. Phase I offers character development, parenting skills, building self-esteem, recidivism

prevention and inner growth. Phase II centers around celebrating recovery, healing through art therapy and moving beyond criminal thinking.

"It's really just using a lot of common sense and a common sense approach to staying out of here," remarked a resident, as she read over a brochure detailing places to live and employment opportunities.

Participants must meet requirements and sign contracts. They cannot have any rules violations (RVRs) before entering the program and must remain RVR free for its duration. Also, they cannot have more than four unexcused absences and must participate in group sessions.

In addition to volunteers and certified mental health staff, guest speakers are invited on 1-A Transition Day to address participants' questions, doubts and hopes about housing, finding employment, etc.

Mary Callahan, volunteer coordinator for the Women's Special Treatment Program at CMCF, helped to plan the program that has evolved into the 1A Program.

"I had just moved to Mississippi

from Kentucky, and was living in the area when I felt a need to help women who were hurting, who were in addiction, in poverty and who had great needs," Callahan said.

In 2009 Callahan, other volunteers and licensed mental health professionals began teaching classes to incarcerated women in order to prepare them to return to their communities.

"There really is light at the end of a tunnel," Callahan said, referencing a participant's comment. "We offer these classes to make a difference in these women's lives," she said, reiterating not only a "commitment to their stability and well-being" during their time behind bars, but also as they head back into their communities and to their families.

"The 1-A Program has taught me how to speak my mind. It has taught me to have boundaries. I know more now about recovery and my inner-self than I learned in rehab," wrote participant Shekila McAlister in the newsletter. "I am no longer enslaved to anyone or anything. I'm set free."

Budgeting 101 taught to alcohol and drug class

LEAKESVILLE – How will citizens returning to society open a bank account, apply for loans and be able to manage their finances after their release?

These and other questions were answered during the Alcohol and Drug Budgeting 101 class in July at South Mississippi Correctional Institution.

Mike Hatten, health services administrator, talked to a group of about 20 residents about budgeting their money after release.

"We talked about living within their means because financial stress



Submitted Photo

is usually a trigger to recidivism," Hatten said. Using financial software, spreadsheets or a simple envelope system were among the strategies covered.

"They were very receptive to the information," said Hatten, who has also taught economics at Pearl River Community College for eight years.



MDOC Tours

Students see prison up close

PEARL – Students across the state have had opportunities to experience “reality checks” regarding the consequences of breaking the law and where they could find themselves with a felony conviction.

Supt. Ron King, who supervises the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County, averages about one tour each month to school groups in the Jackson metro area and some from other areas of the state.

Students visit both general population housing units and maximum security cell block housing as well as the Youthful Offender Unit and the Soldier On veterans unit.

“We provide students an opportunity to interact with [selected] offenders participating in work and program activities designed to improve their likelihood of staying out of prison and assist with their adjust-



Superintendent Ron King talks with cadets of the JROTC program from Northeast Lauderdale High School on Dec. 12, about prison life at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County while touring the Youthful Offender Unit at the facility.



ment while incarcerated. Offenders, some of whom were incarcerated in their teens, explain how their mistakes and way of life landed them in prison,” King said.

Two different types of tours are available, one for general classes and others for alternative programs.

“The tours are educational and eye-opening to the young participating students. They seem shocked when they hear of the crimes and length of time being served by the offenders who share how easy it could happen to them,” King said.

Community returns thanks

Staff makes visits better

Dear MDOC,

I just want to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone involved in the inmate visitation procedures on Sundays.

Everyone has been professional and courteous. The personnel in the main visiting area have been very patient and helpful in answering any question I have.

From the guards who search the vehicles, the personnel in the processing of visits, the lady managing the canteen, the guards who perform body searches, the bus driver and the correctional officers in the unit I visit have all made this difficult time in my life an easier process.

Thanks to all of you.

Joy Horn



CMCF tour was impressive for cadets

Dear MDOC,

I would like to express our appreciation for letting my cadets visit the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. The cadets and staff were very impressed with the visit. The cadets got an eye-opener about decision making.

My assistant principal is talking about setting up visit for the entire ninth-grade class. Once again thank you and your staff, Have a Merry Christmas and a Happier New Year.

*Kent Malone
Naval Science Instructor
Northeast Lauderdale
High School
U.S. Navy (retired)*

MSP tour was educational, Wells was knowledgeable

Marshal Turner, Superintendent
Mississippi State Penitentiary

Dear Mr. Turner,

On Dec. 21, 2017, our church went on a tour of the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

The tour was facilitated by Ms. Raynette Wells. She did an excellent job. Ms. Wells was very knowledgeable about the facilities and she made the tour fun as well as educational.

Because of the experience we had, we are planning to do the tour again with a larger group.

Thank you so much for the experience we had and the knowledge that was gained.

*Elder Lamar Moore
Lily of the Valley
Church of God in Christ*





"We all really appreciate you'll for teaching us how to think wisely & how to respond to different type of situations. We were very fortunate to have carings facilitators like you'll. From the 2nd class we wish you'll the best & thank you'll for everything. !!

"Regards" ☺

Class #2

By: Mr. Roosevelt Porter
Mr. Sammy Wofford



Editor's Note: This thank you card was sent to Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall in reference to the programs provided to incarcerated individuals.

NOXUBEE

from page 15

here and give us some mean looks because they didn't know why they were here. After we explained the process, we said "With your cooperation and participation, this will all work out," Guthertz said. "Here you sit, 24 strong, on graduation day, looking extremely dapper in your new sets of clothes instead of the issues we give. Remember how this feels. Those pants are not green and white. Relish what you look like."

One of the Noxubee graduates said he learned about being responsible and setting goals.

"I can happily say I will be able to be honest with myself and enjoy life. I learned how to control my emotions. And this program has molded me and inspired me to become the person I am today," he said.

Nathan Swords, also a graduate, said being in the program helped him. Aside from finding a job, his family is his primary focus for the next chapter in his life, he said. "I definitely learned a lot, and it has been difficult being locked up. I came out a lot better man than when I went in."

Guthertz said the Noxubee program, which started May 2, received strong support from the community as it was being planned and implemented.

"The county officials didn't hesitate to work with MDOC to help get the program started, due in part to a great working relationship established at the work center," Guthertz said.



Members of the graduating class in the transitional program at Noxubee Community Work Center participate in a commencement ceremony in August honoring their achievement.

State Parole Board member Betty Lou Jones, who attended the Noxubee graduation, told the graduates there are two types of parolees, ones who want to get out and others who want to stay out.

"You have accomplished something you probably thought you never would have accomplished," she said. "This is just the beginning... We expect you to be productive citizens, and we expect you to tell others about what you accomplished."

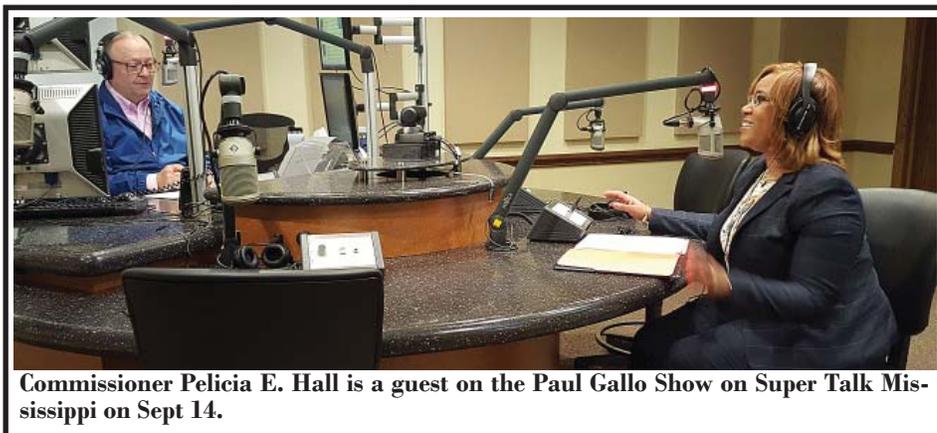


MDOC Highlights

MDOC staff receiving instructor certification for Mental Health First Aid includes, from left: Agent Christiane Williams, Hinds County Probation/Parole; Cynthia Franklin, SMCI, Mental Health Specialist; Willlean Turner-Hathorn, Training Community Corrections; Kimberly Johnson, CMC Training; Youlanda Nelson, Office Director II (Training Director); Capt. James Miller, CMC Training; Lorinda Carter, SMCI Training. Not pictured: Alyssa Killebrew, A&D Clinical Director. Submitted Photo



Personnel from Hinds County probation parole attended the National Drug Court Conference in Washington, D.C., on July 11 and spoke with congressmen and staff about supporting drug courts and re-entry programs. Kimbia Gillum (second from left), program coordinator; and Angela Harper (third from left), Hinds County probation parole agent, visited U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson's office.



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall is a guest on the Paul Gallo Show on Super Talk Mississippi on Sept 14.

Soldier On is in spotlight

WASHINGTON – The Soldier On Incarcerated Veterans Program was in the spotlight on Aug. 18 during the National Association of State Workforce Agencies 2017 Veterans Conference.

Central Mississippi Correctional Facility Superintendent Ron King joined a panel discussion in Washington, D.C. that also included Grants Manager in Mississippi B.R. Hawkins.



King

“I explained the relationship between the Soldier On Program and the (prison), and the impact it has had so far,” King said.

“I was glad to participate because it is nice for Mississippi to be on the forefront of helping incarcerated veterans. I think it is good to set the tone for other states to do a similar type program.”

“This is a great opportunity for the inmates to get off on the right path when they are released,” Duncan said. “So many things have changed in banking. We provided information to help them set up accounts and be financially literate. An important key for their success will be understanding their credit and hopefully they will not fall into bad situations that would lead them back to prison.”

Kimberly Taylor, program coordinator in the probation and parole office covering Greene, George, and Jackson counties, said there are a lot of details returning citizens need to know after release.

“This is a great opportunity for them to have this information ahead of time because they will be going into a different world than what they previously knew,” Taylor said.

The idea has been successful at MSP where Mirinda Frierson, acting pre-release director, said plans are to have more fairs. “I do not want the goal of our (inmates) to be to get out of prison. I want their goals to be to stay out of prison,” she said.

Participants in the pre-release program are a year to six months from being released. In addition to job readiness, the curriculum also includes adult basic education, Thinking for A Change, re-entry and life skills classes.



William Duncan, banker and community re-investment coordinator, discusses options with a resident at SMCI during a resource fair on Oct. 12.

The four-day session, held from Aug. 1-5, was the first time for this training session to be held in Mississippi.

Will Cash, principal with Kmodity Corp., was one of three session leaders and said the session was a positive experience.

“Training is just one component of the skill building process and rolling out a practice across an entire department is a challenge. For the full implementation to be successful, it takes a lot of logistics and planning. I give kudos to MDOC for making it happen because this was

a huge collaborative effort,” Cash said. “Everyone was really engaged in the process.”

The program’s 25 lessons build upon each other and a typical delivery cycle may take 30 sessions between one and two hours each twice per week for returning citizens. The program includes adult and youth residents, males and females in groups of eight to 12 and delivered by trained facilitators. The session was designed to prepare facilitators to take the program back to their locations.

Commissioner Hall challenged graduates to be a success story by not returning to prison. In addition to her, residents also heard words of encouragement from speaker William McMickle and guest Kendale Lumpkins, an author and a motivational speaker and minister.

“We can finally say this chapter of our lives is almost over,” said McMickle, 48, convicted of cocaine possession and delivery of a controlled substance in Harrison County. “We can say we did it. But remember; it doesn’t end here. There’s a continuous process. We can leave here and go back into the world and attempt to fix our mistakes.”

But he said, they should focus on “new beginnings.” “I say to you have a plan because people don’t plan to fail,” McMickle said. “They simply fail to plan. And know where you are going because if you don’t know where you are going, any road can take you there.”

Lumpkin told the graduates the fact that people had

already counted them out should be a motivation for them to succeed. “Don’t let anybody make you feel less than who you are,” he said.

The graduation coincided with the release of a report from the Mississippi PEER Committee staff’s Performance Accountability Office identifying MDOC’s prison programs shown to work. The report is designed to help leaders know where to best allocate funds to get the best results.

Commissioner Hall said she intends to use the report as a guide as she continues to improve upon how well the department is preparing people for release.

“My administration will continue to be pro-active in addressing re-entry concerns,” she said, noting that the department already has made changes in its alcohol and treatment programs.



Deputy Commissioner for Corrections Christy Gutherz, left, and Larry Perry, center, president and CEO of New Way, congratulate graduate Robert Laspee, right, on his completion of New Way's program.

"It is an honor and privilege to stand before you today as New Way and MDOC has had a relationship for several years. In our society, we hear a lot

about equality but we still have many labels placed on us," Gutherz said. "Don't allow yourself to be labeled as ex-offenders or ex-felons. You have the opportunity to sell yourself as a person. You have learned that actions have consequences but today is a milestone toward your future as productive citizens."

Wesley Storz, convicted of embezzlement, expressed interest in ministry or restaurant management, having served in the military and earned two master's degrees. Storz encouraged fellow graduates to follow their own path and, while owning their mistakes, don't settle for less than what they deserve.

"We have been given an opportunity, something not everyone gets. We have been given a new way of doing things. We have been given a roof over our heads, food for our stomachs, faith-filled people to help us begin to put our lives back together, and most importantly, an opportunity at gainful employment without the prejudice that so often goes along with people of our background," Storz said.

"We all need to dare to be different. Being different means not being afraid to challenge the norm; being willing to take a chance; asking why; making your own track and not just following the path; being able to do things in a new way and being the person you were meant to be," Storz said.

PIPELINE

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Dr. Stephanie Rolph, an American History professor from Millsaps College, said during the ceremony that the experience changed the lives of the instructors as much as the students.

"The students came to class prepared and were happy to see us. We spent some important time together and we learned a lot," Rolph said. "We see you, we respect you and when we walk out of here, we will be thinking of you."

'It was a wonderful experience. Dr. Kucia helped me improve my communication skills...'

Aretha Haggins

Dr. Robert Lockett, an American History professor from Jackson State who team-taught with Rolph, echoed Rolph in praising the students for their efforts. "You were the best students I ever taught. I will talk about this class to others who will listen, and I will remember you beyond these walls."

Returning citizen Aretha Haggins, 48, said she will remember the program for what it did for her. She encourages other residents to participate.

"It was a wonderful experience. (Instructor) Dr. (Mignon) Kucia helped me to improve my communication skills and how to speak professionally in

front of others," said Haggins, who is serving eight years for shoplifting in Rankin County. "I'm looking forward to enrolling at Jackson State University after I leave and move on with my life."

Carol Andersen, assistant director for program for the Mississippi Humanities Council, said the Humanities appreciates being a part of the program and has been impressed with how MDOC "has been open and allowed courses to be offered."

"The Council was amazed with the work done at Parchman because this was not a typical program. We came to feel that we should take it to a broader scale," Andersen said. "Humanities are for everyone, and we take that belief seriously."

Andersen said the program is a win-win for the participants and society. "For the inmates, it sustains their communication skills, and if they are released, it will help them re-integrate into society through their transition. It also helps them in reflection upon their past and current situations," she said.

Pickett said he is looking forward to reaching more inmates inside the prisons. "I am thankful for Parchman and Central Mississippi Correctional Facility who have allowed us to come in, offer courses and to teach students," Pickett said.

"My greatest thanks go to the students whose hard work in the most difficult of conditions proves what the human spirit is capable of," Pickett said.

MDOC MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance public safety
by providing secure facilities
and effective post-release supervision
for offenders and ensuring
a safe and professional
work environment for staff
while bringing accountability,
innovation, and fiscal responsibility
to the citizens of Mississippi.

Faces and Places of MDOC





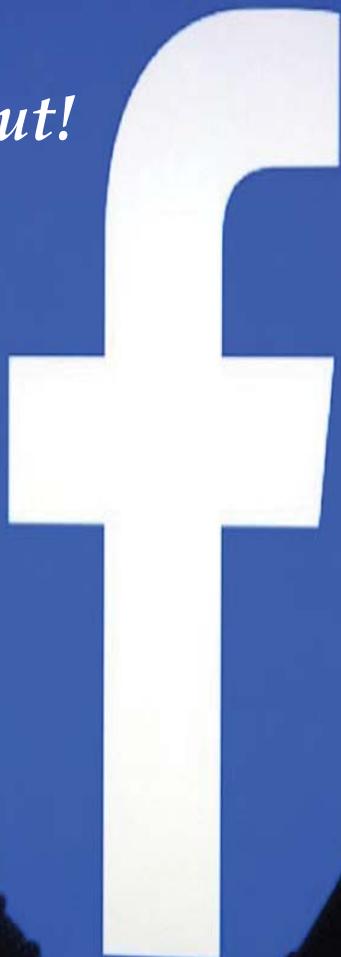
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