



The

RESOURCE

A publication of the Mississippi Department of Corrections



*'It's not just about
keeping people
locked up.
It's about
changing
people's lives.'*

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall



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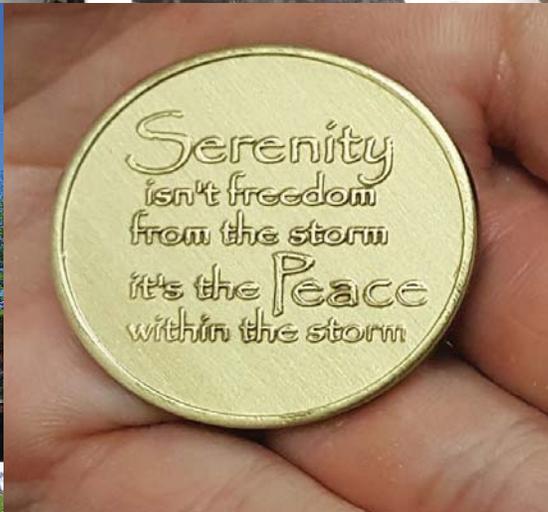
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MDOC MISSION STATEMENT

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



Commissioner's Message

Dear MDOC Employees:

As your commissioner, I am fully committed to progressively moving the Mississippi Department of Corrections forward. Therefore, implementing positive reforms that will forever change the perception of corrections in Mississippi is a priority of my administration.

My utmost concern, however, is your well-being. Your safety and security must come first. We are actively recruiting to address staff shortages. But we will not lower our standards. We are a professional agency. For your safety as well as the inmates', I expect zero tolerance for contraband and any other illicit conduct. All facilities in the system will undergo unannounced shakedowns.



I will waste no opportunity to let lawmakers know that you deserve higher wages. With better pay, we can not only attract more applicants but also reduce turnover.

Also, I am a big proponent of staff wellness. You can expect to hear more from me on that subject. I am ultimately your chief advocate for bringing greater awareness of the importance of the job you do both behind the wall and in the community.

I am equally committed to ensuring that we are fiscally responsible with taxpayers' dollars. Our budget for fiscal 2018, which runs from July 1 until June 30, 2018, is less than the previous budget. As a result, we are expected to have a deficit. Nevertheless, we will do the best we can to maximize and provide the best level of services within the confines of the budget approved by lawmakers.

As such, we are continually assessing our options. Our decisions must focus on enhancing public safety while being accountable, innovative and fiscally responsible to the citizens of Mississippi.

My expectations are high. You also can expect me to lead with understanding, fairness and urgency. Most of the offenders in our care, custody, and control are returning to the community. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to make sure that their rehabilitation and re-entry are as meaningful as possible.

Thank you for your dedication and professionalism.

Pelicia E. Hall

Senate confirms Hall

Commissioner: Changing image of agency priority

JACKSON – Gov. Phil Bryant announced on March 6 the appointment of Pelicia E. Hall as commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections. Hall replaced Marshall Fisher, who was appointed commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Hall had served as interim commissioner since late January. She previously served as Fisher's chief of staff.

Hall has oversight of more than 2,200 employees, three state prisons, three private prisons, 15 regional facilities, 10 community work centers, three technical violation centers and four restitution centers on a budget of \$334 million.

"Pelicia's previous experience within the Department of Corrections has made it clear that she is the perfect choice to lead the agency," Gov. Bryant said. "I know she will continue her outstanding service to the people of Mississippi, and I am delighted she has agreed to accept this appointment."

Hall, a Wayne County native, pledges to change the public's perception the Department of Corrections.

"I am honored to accept the appointment as commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections, and I am committed to implementing positive reforms



Sen. Derrick Simmons congratulates Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall following her Senate Committee confirmation hearing on March 23.

that will forever change the perception of our state's corrections system," Hall said in her acceptance remarks.

"Criminal justice reform is at the forefront of our nation, and it is imperative that we focus on rehabilitation of those incarcerated in our system to turn those persons into productive citizens while continuing our mission to provide public safety.

"In keeping with this mission, I have instituted 'Operation Zero Tolerance.' Elimination of contraband and extortion rings in our facilities is a must, and any person

caught violating the law in this regard, whether it be an inmate, staff, visitor, or outside vendor, will be caught and recommended for criminal prosecution without hesitation. I thank Gov. Phil Bryant for the opportunity to serve the state in this capacity, and I will continue to work to move the agency progressively forward," Hall said.

The Senate Corrections Committee unanimously approved her confirmation after a 30-minute hearing on March 23.

See Hall, page 63



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, center, answers questions before the Senate Corrections Committee.



MDOC In the Community

Students hear from top officials

STARKVILLE — Some Mississippi State University students learned firsthand about potential job opportunities at the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

MDOC officials were guest speakers of Dr. Stacy Haynes at Haynes' Senior Capstone in Criminology class on April 13.

Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, Alberta Reynolds, of Personnel Services, and Janet Brown, of Human Resources, spoke to the students.

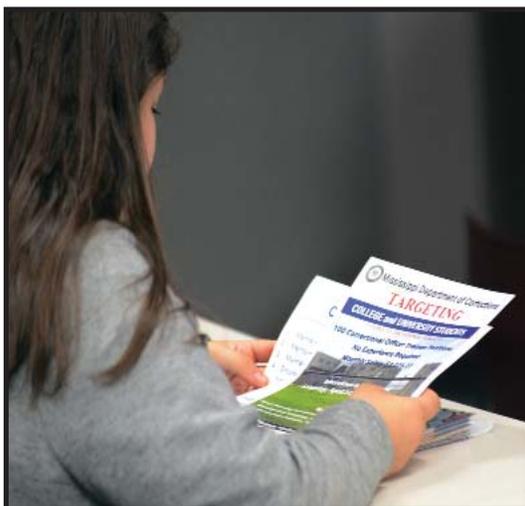
Gutherz talked about her career and the job opportunities available at the agency. Gutherz oversees Community Corrections, which includes supervision of offenders on parole, probation, house arrest, and Earned Release Supervision.

While attending Delta State University, Gutherz interned at the state penitentiary at Parchman.

"My career has been extremely fulfilling," Gutherz said of her experience.



Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz talks to students about her career at MDOC.



A student in Dr. Stacy Haynes' Senior Capstone in Criminology class looks over MDOC material.



Alberta Reynolds, left, of Personnel, and Janet Brown, of Human Resources, discuss their careers.

Inmates assist in storm recovery

The Mississippi Department of Corrections provided inmate labor to assist local officials with storm recovery.

Inmates with the Leflore County Technical Violation Center in Greenwood assisted with the clean-up in Durant from severe weather on April 30.

A dozen inmates worked one day and nine helped another day.



Agents describe careers for college students

Probation and parole agents spoke to the corrections class on the Mississippi State University Meridian campus last fall about how rewarding, and sometimes challenging, it is to work with offenders.

The agents discussed working with the circuit court system, alcohol and drug treatment facilities, the offenders' families and employers.

They also discussed how their efforts are designed to better the chances of offenders successfully completing their terms of supervision.



Agents speaking to the class at MSU included, Keith Reed, standing, who was joined by, seated from left, Agent Melody Linza, 10th District Drug Court Agent Detrick Robinson and Program Coordinator Ada Spencer, all from Lauderdale County.



Community Corrections Associate Director Nathan Blevins, left, and Probation and Parole Associate Supervisor Marcus McClure speak to Columbus High School students along with ex-offenders Freddie Sparks, bottom left, and William Edmondson.

High school students in mentoring program learn about choices

The Probation /Parole Office was pleased to be a part of the Columbus High School Mentoring Program on Feb. 21, 2017.

Speakers included MDOC's CCAD Nathan Blevins and PPAS Marcus McClure. They were joined by two ex-offenders, Freddie Sparks and William Edmondson. Sparks and Edmondson have been good examples since being released. They have become hardworking, productive, outgoing, and respectable members of society.

Sparks and Edmondson spoke in hopes that they may be able to encourage the male students to get a great education, become productive men in their communities and make a positive difference.

The offenders talked to the young men about the choices they make and the people they associate with, as well as the places they go.

Many members of the class said they walked away with a different outlook on life after hearing these men speak about their former lives behind bars.



Warden Epps attends Job/Career Fair

Central Mississippi Correctional Facility Warden Dean Epps was a guest at West Bolivar Consolidated School District, which held its districtwide College/Career Fair on Feb. 9-10. Students were told about different job opportunities at MDOC. They received pens, pencils, candy, hand sanitizers, pens, highlighters, calendars, note pads, and small pendant handcuffs from the Correctional Peace Officer Foundation as courtesy gifts.



New Horizon holds job fair

MDOC personnel services representative Reginald Johnson, left, assists Josiah Cole, 23, with information regarding the corrections officer position during a job fair sponsored by New Horizon Church International on June 14.

'Since I was little, I've always thought about being an officer.'

Josiah Cole



MDOC Police Week

Polygraphers Kevin May and Milton Williams named 'Top Cops'

JACKSON – Two veteran law officers instrumental in improving the Mississippi Department of Corrections' workforce and strengthening investigative results were honored among this year's Top Cop Award recipients.

Kevin May and Milton Williams Sr. are MDOC's first full-time polygraph examiners.

"Their job is one of the most important for the agency and includes aiding in criminal and administrative investigations and helping to weed out candidates who are not good fits for the agency," Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said. "But Officers May and Williams also have exemplary track records, are dedicated to law enforcement, and have a relentless pursuit for justice."

May and Williams have tested most of the more than 1,000 applicants who have been polygraphed since October 2015, when the agency began using the polygraph in pre-employment screening.

They said polygraph testing has proven its worth in that it has highlighted people who had the wrong intent in seeking employment with the agency. For example, Williams said gang members recruit people to come work for the agency. Then, May said, there are those who fudge on their resume.

"It's just another tool to assist law enforcement," May said of the polygraph. "We need to know about a person before MDOC hires and invests in that person."

Both Williams and May said fear of having to take a polygraph can be a deterrent.

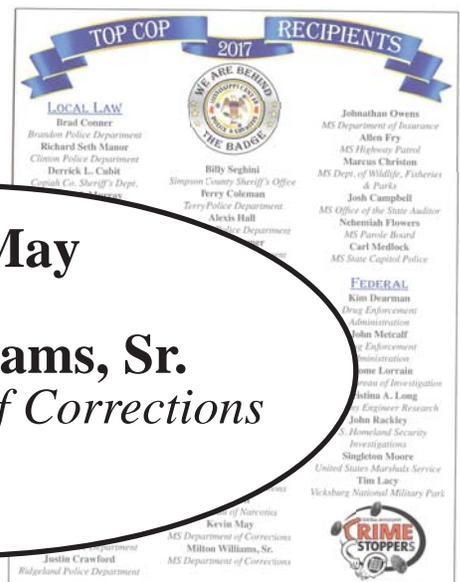
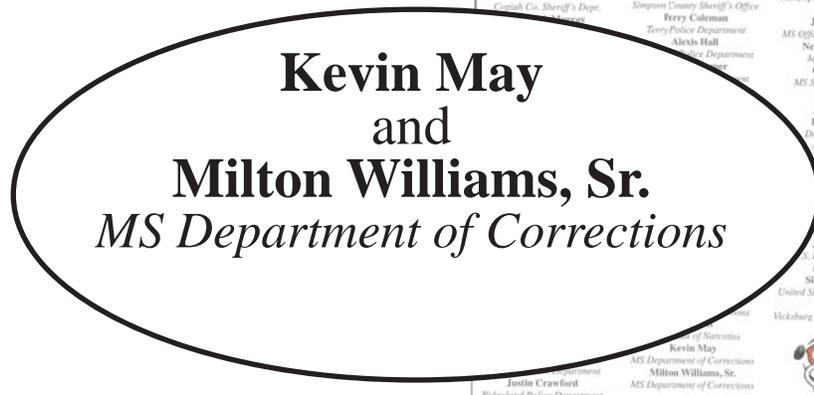
Nicknamed the "Truth seekers," May and Williams have about 50 years of law enforcement experience between them.

May and Williams received the Top Cop Award during the annual program on May 18 at the Mississippi Trade Mart.



Milton Williams Sr., left, and Kevin May were named "Top Cops" in May during a program held at the Mississippi Trade Mart. They were congratulated by MDOC Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall.

"MDOC appreciates the opportunity to recognize these two law enforcement officers for their service to the agency and the state," Hall said.





Victims honored

JACKSON – Contributing to a state compensation fund, attending parole board meetings, and sending out notifications are some of the ways the Mississippi Department of Corrections assists victims of offenders incarcerated or on supervision.

“Many victims may not know that we offer a variety of services,” Corrections Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said. “In observance of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, I encourage them to take advantage of our services. But they must register in order to benefit.”

MDOC joined other state agencies and advocates on April 6 in recognizing National Crime Victims’ Rights Week during a ceremony at the Walter Sillers Building in Jackson.

Participants also included the Attorney General Bureau of Victim Assistance, the Mississippi Coalition for Survivors of Homicide, and the Mississippi Coalition against Domestic Violence.

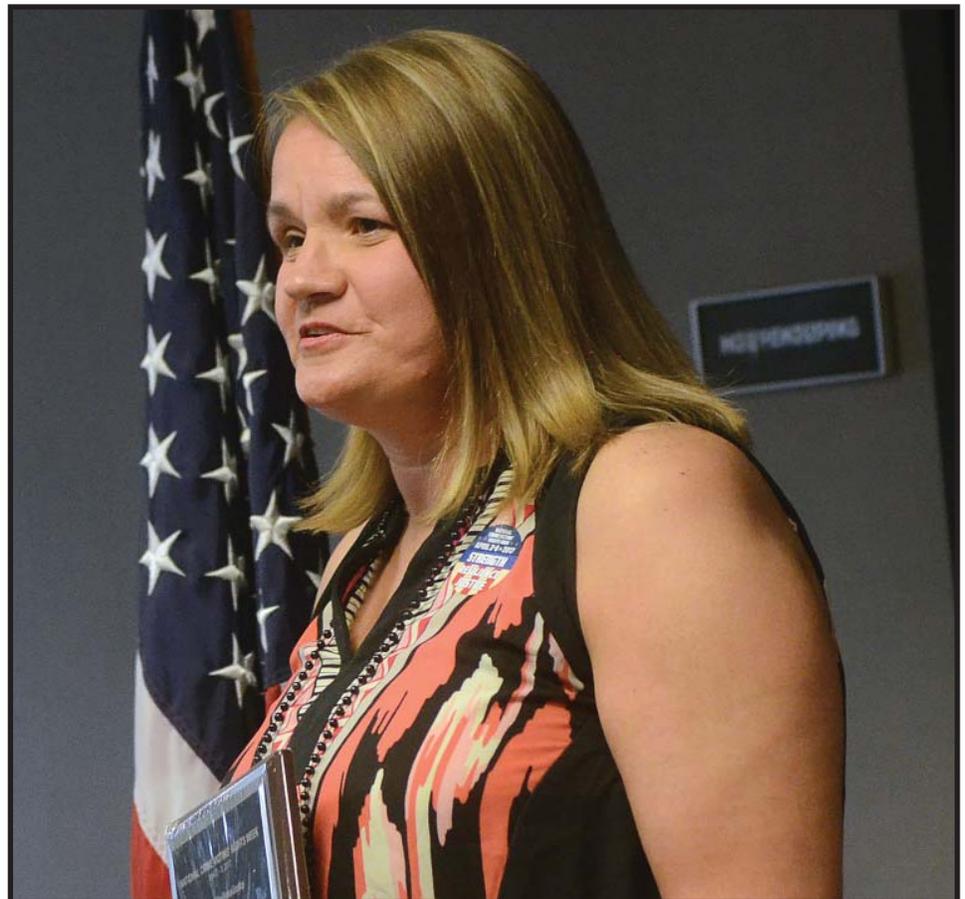
“While the Department of Corrections is charged with the security, care, custody, and control of inmates, victims matter to the agency,” Hall said. “Therefore, the agency must balance victims’ rights with inmates’ rights.”

As of April 1, MDOC’s Division of Victim Services (DVS) had 9,468 registered victims who receive information, including notification of any changes in a prisoner’s status, such as releases, deaths or escapes. They also receive advocacy support and assistance with complaints, and can request an offender dialogue. A Victim Services representative can accompany them to parole board meetings.

Mail-in applications for DVS are available at local district attorney offices. Victims also can call (866) 522-4087 toll free or submit a request online at www.mdoc.ms.gov/Victim-Services/Pages/default.aspx.

Victims registered with DVS, which is a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant recipient, are automatically registered with the Office of Mississippi Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (SAVIN) Program.

SAVIN provides automated notifications through VINE (Victim Information



Barshae Bingham, a domestic abuse survivor, accepts the Amy Clayton Victim Volunteer Award during a ceremony on April 6 to honor crime victims and advocates.

and Notification Everyday) via email, telephone calls, and text messaging, and is TTY capable.

Registrants receive real-time status updates, including where offenders are housed. As of June 30, there were 12,337 active registrations.

Victims must register with DVS to receive services from both SAVIN and DVS. If services are needed only from SAVIN, they can register anonymously at www.vinelink.com.

If direct assistance is needed, they should contact the Office of MS SAVIN by calling (601) 359-5759 during standard business hours.

A VINE operator also is available after hours at (888) 967-7284 English/Spanish. TTY assistance: (866) 847-1298.

The department contributes annually to the Crime Victim Compensation Fund. As of June 2016, the last fiscal year for which data is available, the amount was \$653,052.

The fund, administered through the state Attorney General’s Office, reimburses eligible crime victims or next-of-kin for expenses not otherwise covered.

For more information about the Crime Victim Compensation Program, call (800) 829-6766 or visit www.ago.state.ms.us/divisions/victim-compensation/.



Attorney General Jim Hood, left, talks with Starkville Police Sgt. William Durr after Durr receives the Distinguished Service Award at the Mississippi Crime Victims' Rights Week Awards Ceremony on April 6 at the Walter Sillers Building in Jackson.



Deborah Warren, victim advocate of violent crimes for the Jones County District Attorney's Office, accepts the Amy Clayton Justice Achievement Award.

How to register for Victim Services

Direct victims/survivors of crime may register for services after the offender is in MDOC custody. To complete the on-line victim notification request form, visit www.mdoc.ms.gov

A printable version is available for mail-in. You may contact a victim advocate by phone or e-mail:

Pearlene Harmon (601) 359-3752
pharmon@mdoc.state.ms.us

Renattida Lofton (601) 359-5751
rlofton@mdoc.state.ms.us

Office of Mississippi SAVIN and VINE Services (automated notifications)

All registrants will receive automated notifications as part of the services provided to direct victims/survivors of crime. Individuals may also register anonymously.

Visit www.vinelink.com to search and register for participating county offenders and all state-custody offenders (incarcerated and under community-based supervision). Contact the director of SAVIN, Gwendolynn Santos, by phone at (601) 359-5759 or e-mail at gsantos@mdoc.state.ms.us



Above: Dilworth Ricks, left, then-MDOC Director of Victims Services, joins Deborah Warren, a victims advocate, and MDOC Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall during the Victims Rights awards ceremony. At right: Wendy Mahoney, left, presents Wendie Hawkins with the Image Resilience Survivor Award.



Correctional Peace Officers support MDOC officers, families

Mississippi Department of Corrections officials attended the Project 28 Conference for the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation in San Francisco, Calif., where MDOC officials were recognized for the department's support of projects by the Foundation.

The Foundation is a national, non-profit charitable organization created in 1984. Its primary function is to preserve and support the surviving families of correctional officers who lost their lives in pursuit of their chosen profession of protecting the public from those in the nation's prisons and jails.

The purpose of the Foundation is to operate and maintain a general fund for the perpetuation of the memory of correctional peace officers killed in the line of duty; to provide for their spouses, children or other beneficiaries; and to promote and project a positive image of the Corrections profession, both internally and externally.

Among the recipients, Officer Jamar Clark received assistance after his home caught fire.

The father of Officer Christopher Davis received assistance after Davis died at a hospital.



South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI) Warden Marshal Turner is shown with people who received awards during the Project 28 Conference. From left, Case Manager Stacey Taylor, who won a valentine basket; Pre-Release Director Lisa Herndon, another valentine basket winner; and CSA Natassia Estes, whose fiance passed away, all received Correctional Peace Officers Foundation assistance.



Pictured from left, the husband of the late SMCI Deputy Warden D.W. Seabrook received assistance. Officer Oscar Lewis was helped after his house flooded from tornadoes; Jessica and Jordan Duran received assistance after Jessica's mother, SMCI Sgt. Iris Smith, died in a vehicle accident; and SMCI Wardens Marshal Turner, left, and Andrew Mills accepted a Lifetime Sponsorship Award.



The Bolivar County Regional Correctional Facility celebrated Correctional Officer's Week in May.

Bolivar correctional facility says 'Thank You'

CLEVELAND – The Bolivar County Regional Correctional Facility said “thank you” to its correctional officers in observance of Correctional Officer’s Week, May 8-12.

During a luncheon, certificates were given to four STAR Correctional Officers who went above and beyond the call of duty within their work capacity.

Correctional staff also purchased T-shirts and wore them the day of the luncheon.

The week’s agenda were as follows:

- May 8 – Coffee and donuts
- May 9 – Cupcakes and ice cream
- May 10 – Cookout and luncheon
- May 11 – Hourly gift giveaways throughout the day
- May 12 – Ceremony and balloon release for correctional officers killed in the line of duty in Mississippi

Then-President Ronald Regan was the first president to formally recognize the great work of those in the correctional officer profession and the very difficult, and at times dangerous, nature of corrections

work. On May 5, 1984, he issued Proclamation 5187-National Correctional Officers’ Week.

President Reagan called “upon officials of State and local governments and the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and ac-

tivities,” to recognize “the contributions of correctional officers to our nation.”

Correctional officers are “essential to the day-to-day operations of these institutions; without them it would be impossible to achieve the foremost institutional goals of security and control,” Reagan said.





The Mississippi Department of Corrections was one of several law enforcement agencies that participated in a candlelight vigil, sponsored by the Attorney General and the Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police, on May 7. The annual event at the memorial between the Walter Sillers and Gartin Justice Buildings on High Street in Jackson honors fallen law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty at the state and local levels.

Remembering their sacrifice, service

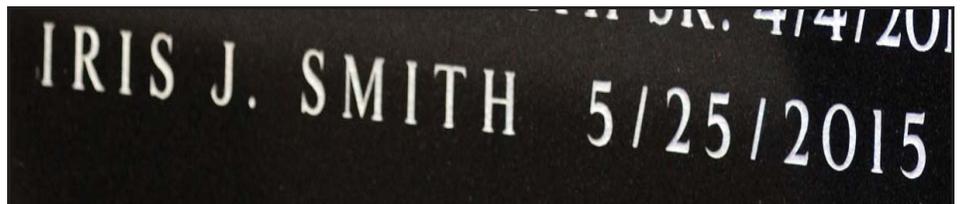
JACKSON - Iris J. Smith of the Mississippi Department of Corrections was among hundreds of officers recognized during an annual candlelight vigil ceremony in May to honor law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty.

Fellow law enforcement officers, family members, friends, public officials, and others gathered at the Mississippi State-wide Fallen Officers Memorial between the Walter Sillers and Gartin Justice Buildings on High Street in Jackson. This year's event was the seventh.

The Mississippi Attorney General partnered with the Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police to host the annual candlelight vigil to coincide with observances across the state and country the week of May 15.

Smith's name is among those engraved on the wall. She was killed in an automobile collision in Hattiesburg on Memorial Day (May 25) in 2015 while helping to escort an inmate to the Forrest General Hospital.

Smith's name also appears with those of five other MDOC officers at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. The others are Sgt. Chester Tullos, shot, May 18, 1933, Hattiesburg; Sgt. James A. Meek, shot, Sept. 12, 1972, Parchman; Correctional Officer Argentra Cotton, stabbed, July 18, 1989; Parchman; Correctional Officer Sidney Harrison, accident, May 18, 1995, Tutwiler; and K-9



Officer Arthur Lyles, heart attack, Feb. 13, 1999.

MDOC Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said she appreciates the activities held during May.

"I am always humbled by the sacrifice you make daily to ensure that we effectively carry out our public safety mission," Hall said to staff in a statewide message. "Together we can progressively move MDOC forward for the present and our future."



The Mississippi Highway Patrol Honor Guard provided a 21-gun salute formation during the candlelight vigil honoring fallen law enforcement officers in May.



MDOC Shakedowns

Zero Tolerance for contraband

JACKSON - Since early March, a dozen facilities, including state, private and regional, have received unexpected visits from a large showing of Mississippi Department of Corrections' officers.

And the officers have rarely left empty-handed, removing shanks, drugs, cell-phones, chargers, tobacco, large amount of canteen, and assorted or nuisance contraband, including cash, free world shoes, pills, wooden bats, and jewelry.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall kicked off Operation Zero Tolerance on March 2 at Wilkinson County Correctional Facility, where a large number of shanks were among the items found.

"Our mission is to enhance public safety by providing secure facilities and ensuring that our staff have a safe work environment," Hall said. "Excessive amounts of contraband are unacceptable. Neither staff nor inmates should have to fear being assaulted or exploited. Whether you are staff or inmate, if you are caught with contraband, you will be dealt with accordingly."

By June 30, 14 shakedowns had occurred at 13 facilities, including back-to-back searches at South Mississippi Correctional Institution in Leakesville.

Searching inmates is not the only part of Operation Zero Tolerance. Several employees also have been arrested.

A correctional officer at the Washington County facility was arrested and charged with misdemeanor possession of contraband after several illegal items, including an open bottle of vodka, were found inside her car.

Four people were arrested at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. Three were caught with tobacco and the fourth person had alcohol.

Some shakedowns have stood out for varying amount of contraband. For example, on June 6, MDOC officers made one of the largest contraband busts this year at Bolivar County Regional Correctional Facility in Cleveland.

"Pending an investigation and the findings provided to MDOC, I have requested that this facility be placed on lockdown,"



At left: A bag of crystal meth was found during a shakedown at the Carroll-Montgomery County Regional Correctional Facility. Below: Contraband from Wilkinson County Correctional Facility included metal plates and a variety of shanks. Other confiscated items included drugs, lighters, cell phones, and soda bottles.



Hall said immediately following the shakedown.

"Finding such a large amount of contraband, especially after the facility recently did its own shakedown, is disturbing. I expect all facilities in the MDOC system to have zero tolerance for contraband. Oth-

erwise, neither staff nor inmates are safe," Hall said.

One unique discovery at Bolivar was a cellphone charger hidden inside a salt and pepper shaker.

See Shakedowns, page 19

Operation Zero Tolerance



Contraband taken from Hinds County Restitution Center on March 31 included \$600. Offenders can only have \$20 at one time in \$1 or \$5 bills or coins.

Shakedown locations*

Wilkinson County Correctional Facility
East Mississippi Correctional Facility
Marshall County Correctional Facility
Yazoo County Regional Correctional Facility
Holmes-Humphreys County Regional Correctional Facility
Carroll-Montgomery County Regional Correctional Facility
Hinds County Restitution Center
South Mississippi Correctional Institution
George-Greene County Regional Correctional Facility
Stone County Regional Correctional Facility
Washington County Regional Correctional Facility
Bolivar County Regional Correctional Facility
Winston-Choctaw County Regional Correctional Facility

*Number as of June 30



Ramen noodles were among contraband items seized at the Bolivar County Regional Correctional Facility.



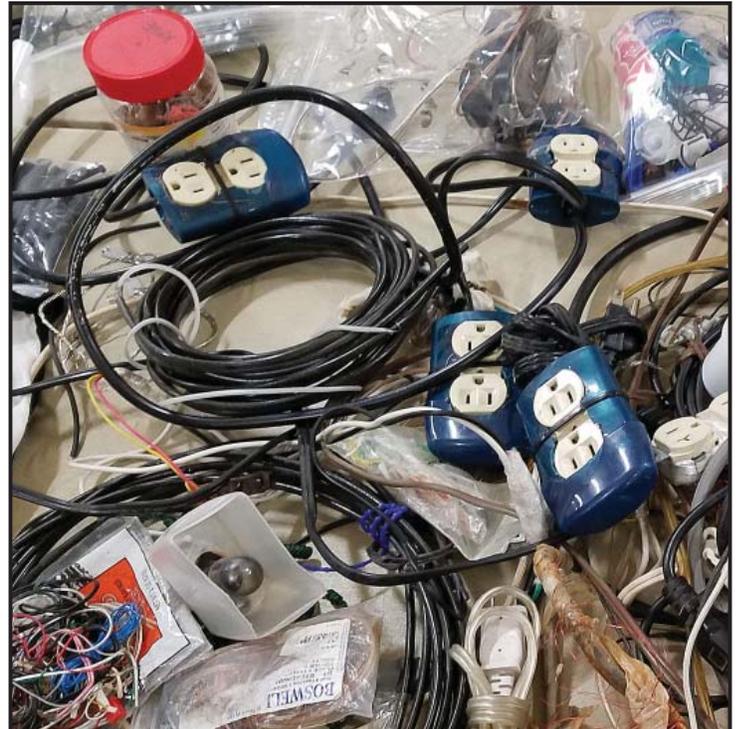
A variety of contraband items were found when MDOC officers searched Carroll-Montgomery County Regional Correctional Facility on March 29. Contraband items included cell phones and cell phone accessories, cigarette lighters, and various nuisance contraband. Bibles have also been used to conceal contraband.



Contraband at East Mississippi Correctional Facility in Meridian.



Contraband at Winston-Choctaw County Correctional Facility.



A wide variety of electrical contraband was found at the South Mississippi Correctional Institution.

Shakedowns From page 17

At the Yazoo facility, officers found homemade alcoholic beverage. Crystal meth was found in the body cavity of one inmate.

One offender at the Hinds County Restitution Center had \$600 – too much cash for a restitution center. Offenders can have only \$20 at one time and that amount must be in \$1 or \$5 bills or coins.

Among the familiar sights has been the use of the Bible to store contraband.

Large amounts of canteen items seized during the shakedowns indicate that offenders could be using the items for illegal means

or personal gains, officers said. At East Mississippi Correctional Facility, one inmate was found with 400 packages of Ramen noodles in his cell.

Drugs found have included marijuana, cocaine, spice, and crystal methamphetamine.

“Getting rid of all contraband in a prison system with nearly 19,000 inmates may seem impossible,” Hall said. “However, stemming the flow definitely is possible. I think we have been decreasing the amount, and will continue to do so with these shakedowns.”



Above left are contraband items seized during a shakedown at Washington County Regional Correctional Facility on May 18. A correctional officer was charged with possession of contraband. Above right: Items taken from inmates.



At left are contraband items seized at Bolivar County Regional Correctional Facility on June 6. The confiscation included 47 cell phones, 83 cell phone chargers, and 27 sets of headphones. Also seized in the shakedown were 54 packages of tobacco, four shanks, two knives, pills, tennis shoes, marijuana, cigarettes, and cigars.



Above: Items found at Holmes County Regional Correctional Facility. Right: Items taken from Marshall County Correctional Facility.





MDOC *Graduations*

New officers join the ranks

The following pages capture five Correctional Officer Basic Academy Graduations at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility from January until June. Seventy-one officers took the oath of office and received advice from a federal judge, a parole board member, and MDOC officials.



Class of 2016-10M

'Learn to Suffer Without Complaining'

Jan. 26 - Guest speaker: U.S. District Judge Keith Starrett

Aneisha Adams
Chenequia Coleman
Myesha Doss
Darius Heidelberg
Ronnie James
Charles Townsend

Tiara Allen-Davis
Devonte Davis
Stephen Gines
Quaneiqua Henry
Markisha Mitchell
Terrence Williams

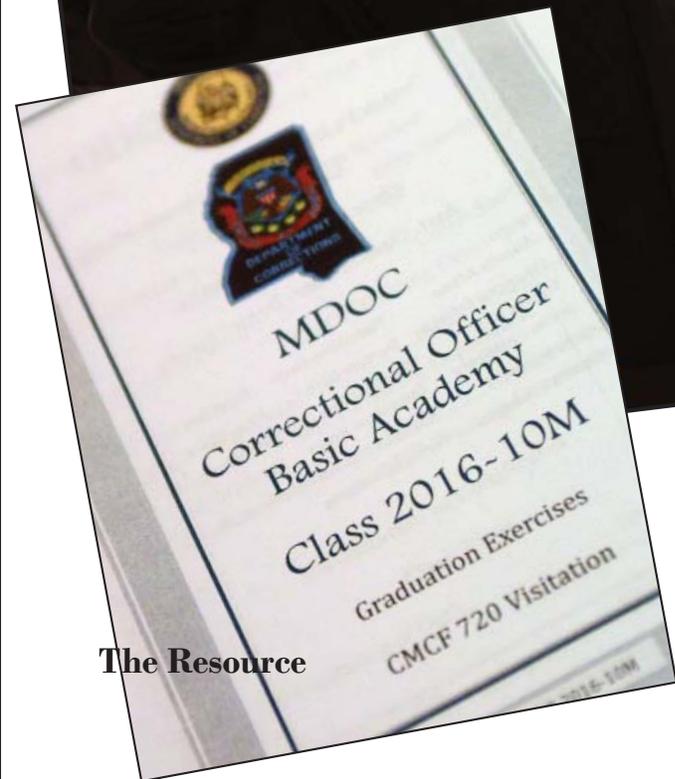
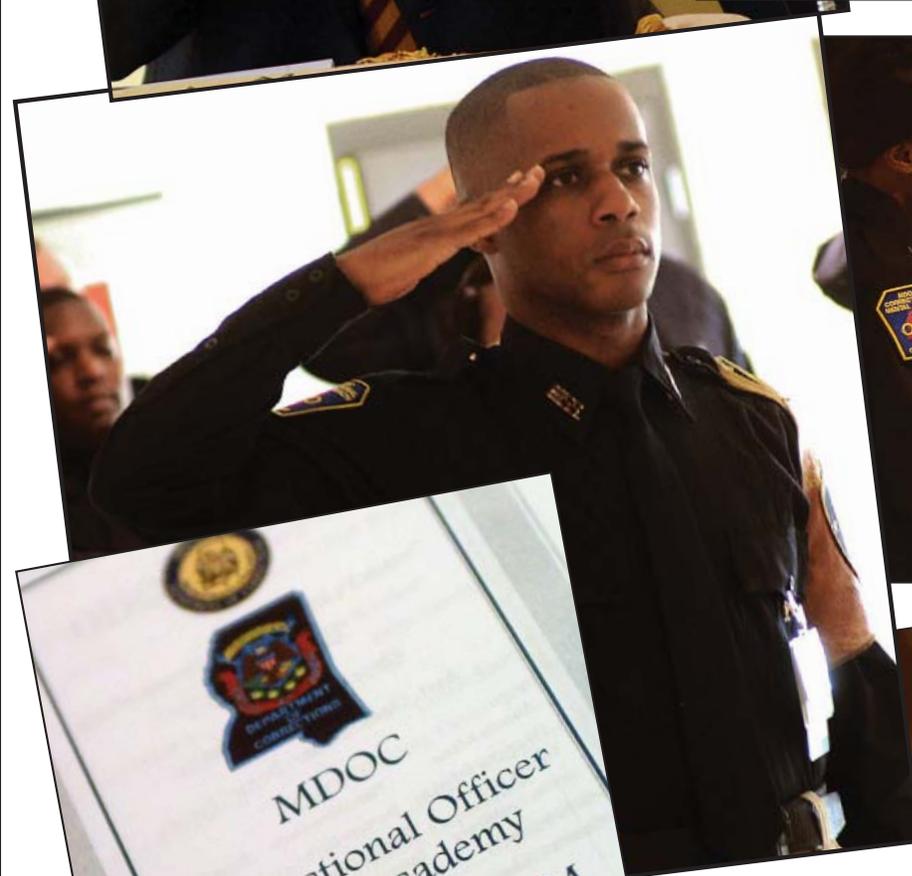
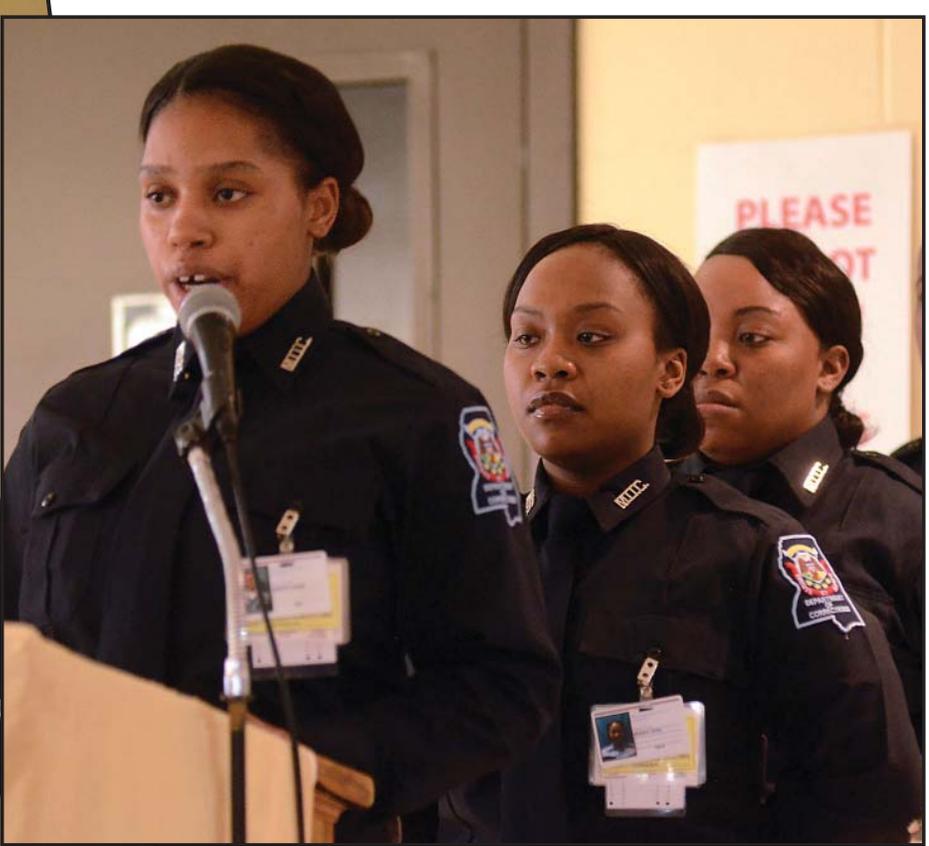
Elijah Brooks
Kiara Dixon
Candace Graham
Kinyata Hubbert
Ashley Rush

Billy Smith - Class Leader
Daniel Nunez - Assistant Class
Leader

Honor Awards
Highest: Myesha Doss
Second Highest: Kiara Dixon

Top Gun Awards
Tiara Davis, rifle; Charles
Townsend, handgun; and Ter-
rence Williams, shotgun





Class of 2016-11M

'If You Trip, We All Fall, One Mission, One Goal'

Feb. 17 - Guest speaker: Thomas Tuggle, Director, Mississippi Law Enforcement Officer Training Academy

Janerica Henderson
Shandrekia Robinson
Victoria Thompson
Kimberly Monroe
Matthew J. Pellerin

Trey Evans
William Lathan
Iesha Martin
Alfred Moss
Linton Byrd

Destiney Clay
Beverly Harris
Chaley Pittman
Christopher Taylor
Christopher Fortenberry

Anthony Lee - Class Leader
Kashaun Steele
Assistant Class Leader

Honor Awards
Highest: Shandrekia Robinson
Second Highest: William Lathan
and Iesha Martin

Top Gun Awards
Trey Evans, shotgun and hand-
gun; Lathan Williams, rifle







Class of 2017-1M

‘Never Place Limitations On Yourself! Not Mentally, Not Physically, Not At All’

April 7 - Guest speaker: Dr. Patricia Dean-Wilson, Director, MDOC Bureau of Loss Prevention

Benitez Carter
Anton Ellis
Jeremy Kiser

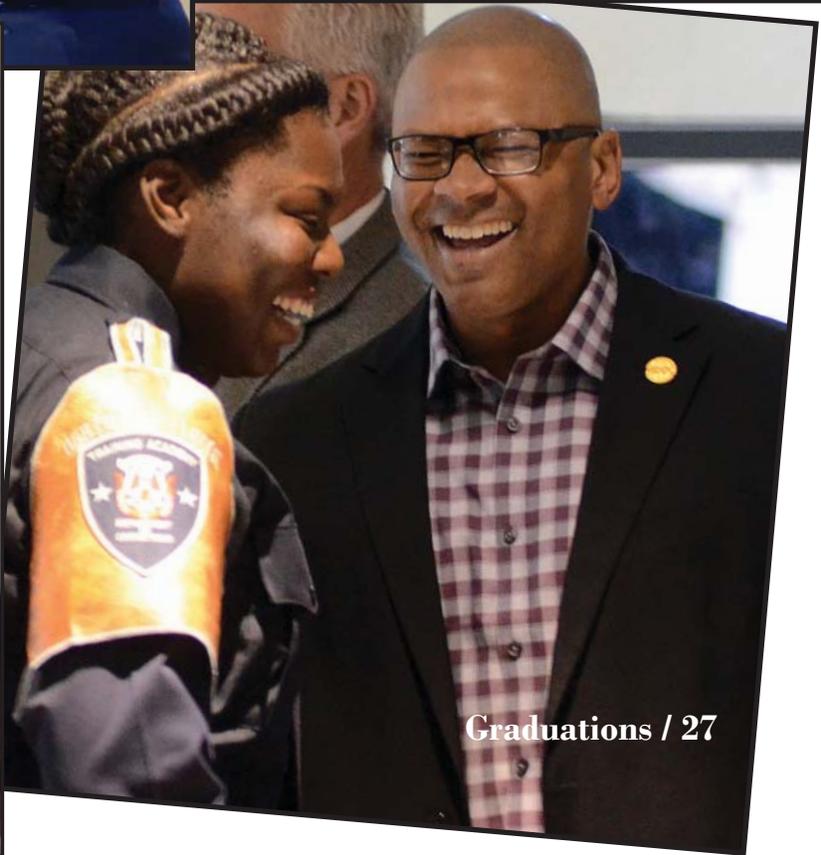
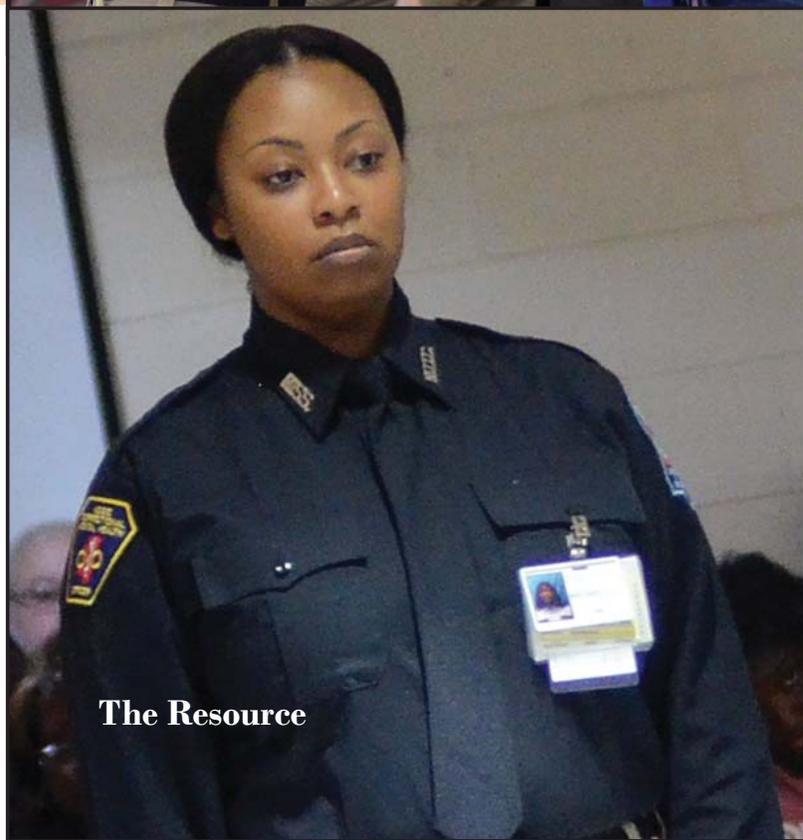
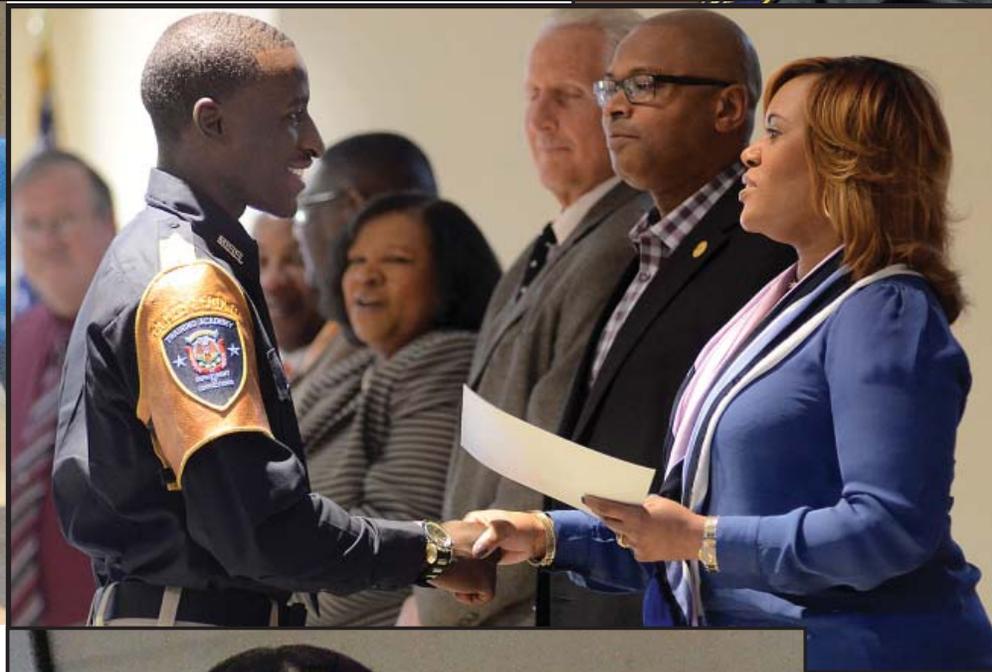
Samantha Coleman
Benjamin Jennings
Lasheika McBride

Kelsey Ray
Desirea Johnson
Kristy Shack

Curtis Franklin - Class Leader
Desiree Haralson - Assistant
Class Leader

Honor Awards
Highest: Desiree Haralson
Second Highest: Jeremy Kiser

Top Gun Awards
Curtis Franklin - shotgun, hand
gun and rifle





“One Voice, One Sound, Union Makes Strength, Failure is Never an Option”

Class of 2017-2M

May 5 - Guest speaker: Nehemiah Flowers Jr., Mississippi State Parole Board Member

Eileen Barrett
Tabaris Evans
Brian Henderson
Jeffery Lee
Keshun Smith

Idiara Trim
Allison Thomas
Kia Porter
Alisha Pitchford

LaBrittaney Jennings
Mary McCray
Eddie Norris
Jefferey Smith

Tra Keyes - Class Leader
**Jennifer Byrd - Assistant
 Class Leader**

Honor Awards
Highest: Tra Keyes
**Second Highest: Brian Henderson,
 Alisha Pitchford**

Top Gun Awards
**Tabaris Evans - rifle; Brian Henderson -
 shotgun and hand gun**



Class of 2017-3M

“We Sweat, We Strive, We Focus, We Achieve”

June 10 - Guest speaker: Marshal Turner, Warden, Area II at South Mississippi Correctional Institution

Solia Cotten
Kameron Varns
Tenisha Thigpen

Tonisha Coach
Kirk Reeves

Latonya Gadison
Kamarcus Gardener

Phillip Chatmon - Class Leader
Garnell Moses - Assistant
Class Leader

Honor Awards
Highest: Solia Cotten
Second Highest: Garnell Moses,
Kameron Varns

Top Gun Awards
Kamarcus Gardner - shotgun and
hand gun; Kirk Reeves - rifle





26 Agents graduate third Probation-Parole Academy

The third Probation and Parole Academy concluded April 29 at Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg.

Among the graduates were new Agent Tiffany Farmer and returning Agent David Murphy.

New agents also include former police officers Larry Mims, who has a sister with the department, and Glenn Dixon, who has a brother with the department.



Agent Larry Mims, left, is featured with his sister, Sherlaine Mims, as she receives congratulations from Region 3 Community Corrections Director Ken Valentine, Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, Deputy Commissioner Christy Gutherz, and Region 2 Community Corrections Director Todd King. **BELOW:** Commissioner Hall and staff welcomes the probation and parole officers.



Warden Staniel, Lewis graduate from certification program

MDOC Warden Sonja Staniel and Stacy Lewis were among the graduates of the ASCP/ESCP ceremonies on June 6 at the Mississippi Agriculture Museum Sparkman Auditorium.

Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann delivered the keynote address. He told graduates to continue their leadership roles outside the workplace and to work toward “the most economical way to offer your service.”

The Administrative Services Certification Program (ASCP) and Executive Services Certification Program (ESCP) are offered under the Mississippi State Personnel Board.

Graduates also got advice from state Personnel Board Executive Director Kelly Hardwick.

“You are the backbone of state government,” Hardwick said. “The quality of a leader is in the standards they set for themselves. And now that you’ve put forth this effort to better yourselves, you have no reason to fear challenges.”

Staniel received an ESCP certificate. Lewis is an ASCP graduate.



Warden Sonja Staniel celebrates her graduation and completion of the Executive Services Certification Program.



Stacy Lewis is a graduate of the Administrative Services Certification Program.



Johnson completes basic academy training

Agent Daniel Johnson completed the Southern Regional Public Safety Institute at Camp Shelby. He was one of eight officers to graduate from the 11-week basic law enforcement academy on June 15.

He joined the Mississippi Department of Corrections after his father, Bobby Johnson, who supervised offenders on house arrest, retired two years ago.

Like his father, the younger Johnson also is working in Community Corrections.

“This was my way of following in his footsteps,” Johnson said of his decision to work for MDOC. He started in January.

Johnson came to the agency with prior law enforcement experience which includes time at the Mississippi Department of Transportation and the city of Sandersville.

On Guard: Marcus Edwards

Courtesy: Maggie Wade, WLBT-3

PEARL -- The sound of prison doors slamming shut on your freedom would send chills through most of us. But for many of the inmates housed across Mississippi, being locked up is not enough to keep or discourage them from plotting escapes or worse, to harm those who stand in their way.

We were given special access inside the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility for this 3 On Your Side Exclusive: On Guard.

Jemarcus Curry has 10 years added to his sentence for drug charges out of Warren County after assaulting two officers. Deputy Warden Georgia Shelby was punched in the face. She talked about the attack in an MDOC video.

"I wasn't gonna let that one particular inmate take my career," said Shelby.

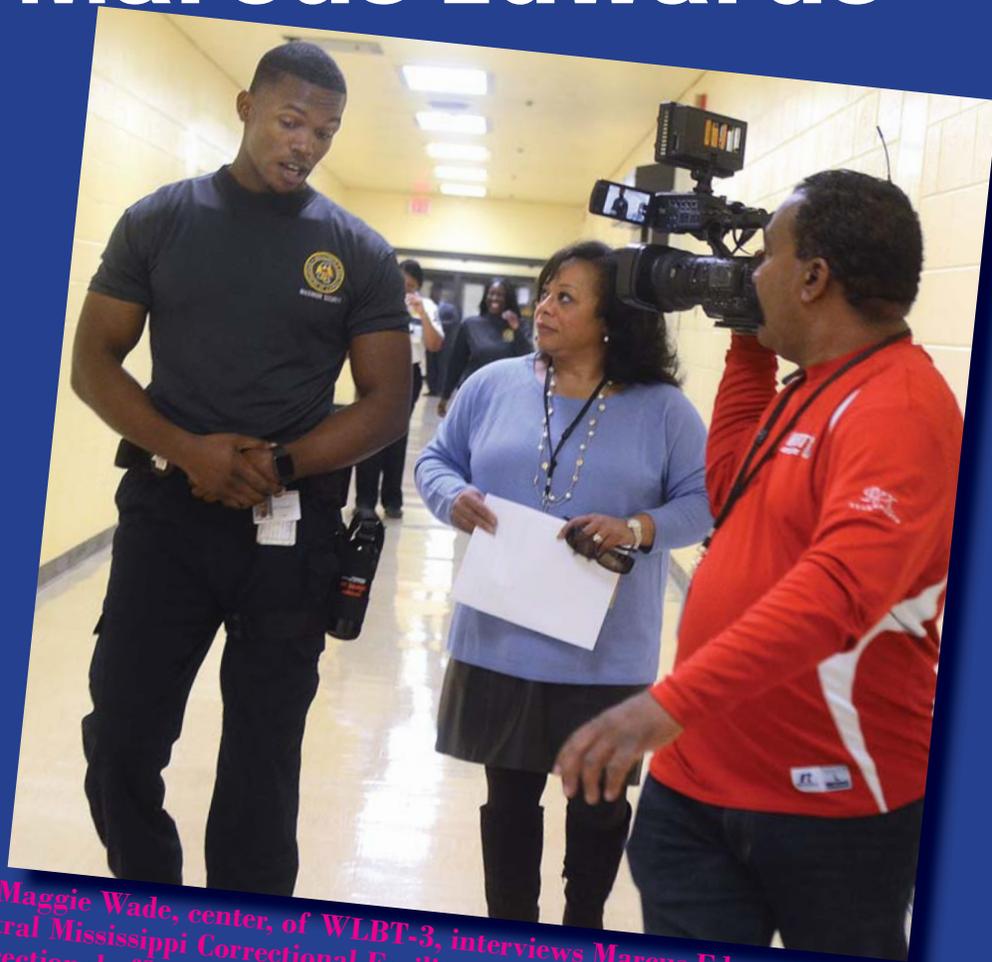
Twenty-six-year-old Marcus Edwards is a Jackson native. He has been an officer with MDOC for three and a half years at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl. He works in maximum security. He handles all types of inmates, including those sentenced to spend the rest of their lives behind bars.



Marcus Edwards

"It's a prison, you know we house offenders who can't go to any other facility in the state of Mississippi," Edwards said. "So it's safe to say we have some of the worst offenders in the state of Mississippi."

CMCF is like a campus. This is the first time a news crew has been given this kind of access inside the prison. The in-



Maggie Wade, center, of WLBT-3, interviews Marcus Edwards at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl about his work as a correctional officer. She is joined by photojournalist, Jerome DeLoach.

mate population is the size of a small town with more than three thousand prisoners. Shelby says it is not uncommon for officers to deal with at least one or two aggressive inmates each day at this facility.

"An offender might be waiting one or two years for an opportunity just for you to make that one error and that one error could cost you your life," added Edwards.

Every day correctional officers come to work they must now be prepared to possibly be in a fight for their lives. Edwards said they don't take anything for granted.

"From the moment you clock in, to the moment you clock out, it's an opportunity for danger to happen to you," Edwards told us. "The inmates have plenty of time to plot against you, to watch your demeanor, to watch your habits and pick up on them."

Edwards also says the public should understand they are the first line of

defense. To inmates, they represent what is standing between them and getting past the bars and these doors to get back on the streets.

"You have offenders walking around that might have a shank on them or a sharp instrument that you will never know, but you follow procedures, procedures protect us," said Edwards.

Corrections officers rely on their training, procedures, and smarts to stay one step ahead of the prison population.

"I try to treat offenders, you know, as humans because they are and you know," explained Edwards. "But some people you can't help, some people have evil intentions and you have to be aware of that."

In 2015, 50 officers were assaulted in the three state prisons. In 2016, there were 55.

This story aired initially on March 1, 2017.

'Attaboy' recognition

Loden wins top alumnus award

The University of Mississippi honored Probation/Parole agent Elizabeth Popernik Loden, who is pursuing an advanced degree in her profession.

Loden received a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice degree in 2011.

Loden has been an agent with the Mississippi Department of Corrections since 2012.

The Thomas A. Crowe Alumnus Award was presented to Loden during a networking reception sponsored by the Ole Miss Alumni Association on Feb. 22.

The award honors an Applied Sciences alumnus whose professional, leadership, and service achievements are considered meritorious was honored at the event.

In the nomination speech, Dean Velmer Burton said, "Elizabeth has successfully balanced academics and employment while working part-time while attending the University of Mississippi."

Burton also noted that Loden "is a dedicated criminal justice professional who does outstanding work and makes a difference in the lives of others."

After accepting the award, Loden said, "Thank you to the School of Applied Sciences and those who nominated me. It is an honor."

Loden is a resident of Oxford and works



Dean Velmer Burton, School of Applied Sciences at the University of Mississippi, presents Elizabeth Popernik Loden with Thomas A. Crowe Alumnus Award.

in Lafayette County in MDOC's Region I Area II.

Loden is currently working on her master's degree in criminal justice.

In their own words: Crime victim offers 'thank you'

Dear MDOC,

My husband Barry and I want to thank each of your officers and investigators who have been involved with the investigation of the suspect involved with the break-in of my home in Walthall County on April 27.

I arrived home around 5 p.m. that day to discover that my front door had been kicked in and that we had been robbed. They took quite a bit of jewelry, guns, and other items while we were at work.

I know about all of the hard work and man hours that have been involved with the search for the individual that we received a tip about.

I have been praying that no one would be injured. I know that this person will eventually be caught.

I understand with the chase and search



for him in Amite County that officers from Amite, Pike, Walthall, and MDOC searched and worked very hard.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Barry and I met with investigators identifying some of our missing items. God has truly blessed us!

We cannot complain about the items that were not recovered. We thought we would not get any of our items back and we

have been overwhelmed. This is due to all that has taken place in a short time thanks to many, many officers.

I am truly overwhelmed and humbled. I pray that this individual and any accomplices are captured soon. We are also praying for the safety of all involved.

May God bless you all.

Loran Gerald

*Loran Gerald
Certified Training Professional
Workforce Training Coordinator
Southwest Mississippi
Community College*

Editor's note: The case remains open as local authorities continue to investigate.

Site screenings held for diabetes

The Diabetes Care Group performed an on-site screening for staff members at the MDOC Central Office on April 5.

Of those screened, six employees were identified as diabetic, or prediabetic. They were eligible to be seen in DCG clinics for free and would be contacted to set up appointments.

“I believe with this screening, MDOC has shown they value their staff members and want the best for their employees,” said Clint McDaniel, director of clinical outreach.

DCG is a benefit that already exists on the state health plan. If a staff member or family members on their plan has an A1c of 7 or greater, they are eligible to be seen at no cost and no deductible.



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall gets her finger pricked by Clint McDaniel, director of clinical outreach for Diabetes Care Group, for a screen test while MIS computer technician Terry Banks waits his turn.

Personnel update

Promotions, new hires and retirements between January and June 2017 include but are not limited to:

Promotions

JANUARY

- **Chrystal Galloway**, Disciplinary/Compliance Director
- **Cheryl Hall**, Personnel Director, for Central Mississippi Correctional Facility

FEBRUARY

- **Audrey McAfee**, Deputy Administrator

APRIL

- **Tasha Davis**, Probation/Parole Supervisor, Region 1, Area I
- **Temillia Phillips-Smith**, Probation/Parole Agent Supervisor, Region 1, Area III

New Hires

JANUARY

- **Vickie D. King**, spokesperson

JUNE

- **Courtney Cockrell**, attorney
- **Chris Allen Baker**, spokesperson

Retirements

JANUARY

Marilyn Kindle
Shevlyn Dale
Hattie Jones
Bruce Harris
Matilda Brown
Michael Roach
Linda Smith
Victoria Gwin

Levain Matthews
Annie Henry
Betty Booth

FEBRUARY

Dorothy Jackson
Mitchell Ollie

MARCH

Mary Craft Cotton

Gwendolyn Drummer
Rhonda Jenkins

APRIL

Annette White
Troy Dale
Nathan Harris
Clarissa Johnson
Mary Johnson
Patricia L. Jones

Larry Lewellyn
Ruby Murry

JUNE

Vernita Dampier
Dilworth Ricks
Lee McTeer
Sonny Edwards
Jimmy Slawson



MDOC Memorials



Chandra Bonner

Probation and Parole Agent Chandra Bonner, 46, died on April 24.

She had worked for the MDOC since 1995.

“She basically was a role model for those she came in contact with,” said her sister, Jasmine Dodd. “She had great wisdom for them.”

Bonner started out as a correctional officer at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman.

In 2007, she began working at the Greenwood Restitution Center as a probation and parole agent.

In addition to working at MDOC, she also had worked at Wal-Mart.

Colleagues said Bonner was well respected and made a difference in the many lives she touched in Greenwood. They further describe her as humorous, conscientious, loyal, thorough, dedicated and dependable.

Bonner twice received the Extra Effort Award (September 2009 and August 2012) for showing exemplary work attendance and contributing significantly to the workforce morale and productivity among other things.

Bonner, a mother of one daughter and one of seven children, graduated from Mississippi Valley State University with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice.

Glenn ‘Duane’ Bracey

Glenn “Duane” Bracey had a strong work ethic and liked helping people. Bracey, 53, was a computer analyst for the Mississippi Department of Corrections when he died April 10 at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson. He answered calls for the help desk in Management Information Systems (MIS).

“I have nothing but good things to say about Glenn. He was always willing to work until your issue was resolved and was a good person to be around,” said Deputy Administrator Audrey McAfee, who was Bracey’s immediate supervisor.

Bracey had served MDOC since Nov. 3, 2008. He twice received the Extra Effort Award, once in August 2012 and again May 2013. A native of Brookhaven, Bracey was an



honor graduate of Loyd Star High School. He received an associate’s degree from Southwest Community College and a degree in computer science from Copiah-Lincoln Community College. He attended Jackson First Assembly of God. He was an avid knife collector and loved his dogs, Flash, Si and Dandy.

Bracey is survived by wife Cynthia Blackwell Bracey of Richland; her mother, Diane Keene Harris of Brookhaven; father and stepmother, Glenn and Pat Bracey of Brookhaven; son, Justin (Ashley) Piner of Richland; daughter, Keelie Piner of Richland; two grandchildren; sister, Donna (David) Smith of Brookhaven; brother, Kevin (Felicia) Bracey of Brookhaven; several nieces and nephews; and a host of friends.

Larry Terry

Personal and career families were one in the same for Sgt. Larry Terry.

Terry, who worked 14 years for the Mississippi Department of Corrections, died June 4 at age 58, two days shy of his birthday, at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

Terry was assigned to the vocational school for a short time before moving to the auto shop as a special projects officer at the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

“Officer Terry was an officer that would tell you the truth no matter how you felt afterward,” said Sequcia Wren, a security officer. “He was well respected by his co-workers and inmates. “His favorite saying was ‘Stay in your lane.’ He will be greatly missed at MSP.”

Terry’s daughter and brother also are MDOC employees and work at MSP. They are Lt. Kenji Terry in Area I Unit 29 and

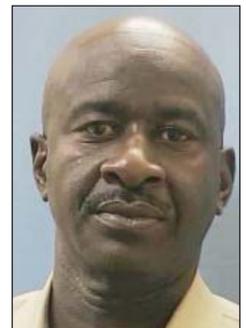
Acting Transportation Director Lester Williams.

“He was a great dad and grandfather,” Lt. Terry said. “He was loyal to his family and work. He inspired me and was a big part of my career choice to work at MDOC. He was very protective and dedicated. He will be truly missed.”

Randy Seger, branch director II at the auto shop, spoke of Terry’s dedication and faith.

“Sgt. Terry loved his God, family and his job. He strongly believed in security, custody and control of offenders. He would go out of his way to help any staff member,” Seger said. “When it came to his job, he always dressed properly, was very thorough and did his job to the best of his ability.”

In addition to Lt. Terry and Williams, Terry also is survived by daughter, Raven Terry; son, Andrea Brown; brothers, the Rev. Willie Frank Peacock, Michael Williams, and Lorenzo Terry; sister, Joyce Ann Peacock; and six grandchildren.



Remembering Retirees

Darlene Fair Correctional Officer IV, died April 17. She had worked 19.5 years for MDOC, before retiring Jan. 31. Her employment period and death fall within the time frame covered in this edition.



MDOC Retirements

The 'Go-To' team bids farewell

'Mr. Sonny' and 'Mr. Jimmy' retire after 37 combined years

For years, they were the go-to team for maintenance at the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

When a facility was up for accreditation, MDOC could count on Sonny Edwards to be there to tell supervisors what needed to be done.

When repairs were needed at a facility, MDOC could count on Jimmy Slawson to be there with a team of offenders to tell them what to do.

With nearly four decades of service between them, "Mr Sonny" and "Mr. Jimmy" as they are affectionately called, are no longer telling employees or inmates what to do.

Both retired in June, Edwards after 22 years and Slawson after 15 years.

See EDWARDS and SLAWSON, page 39



Sonny Edwards, standing, and Jimmy Slawson retired from MDOC in June after a combined 37 years with the agency.



Edwards and Slawson ——— From page 17

Albert “Sonny” Edwards had served as a state employee since November 1995 and was an employee of MDOC from July 1, 1997, until June 30.

He held titles as facilities maintenance supervisor, facilities maintenance superintendent, branch director, and division director. At the time of his retirement, Edwards was serving as division director II for Community Corrections.

Edwards was nominated for Employee of the Year in 2005; Employee of the Month in September 2001, December 2003, and March 2005, and June 2008. He also received several Extra Effort Awards.

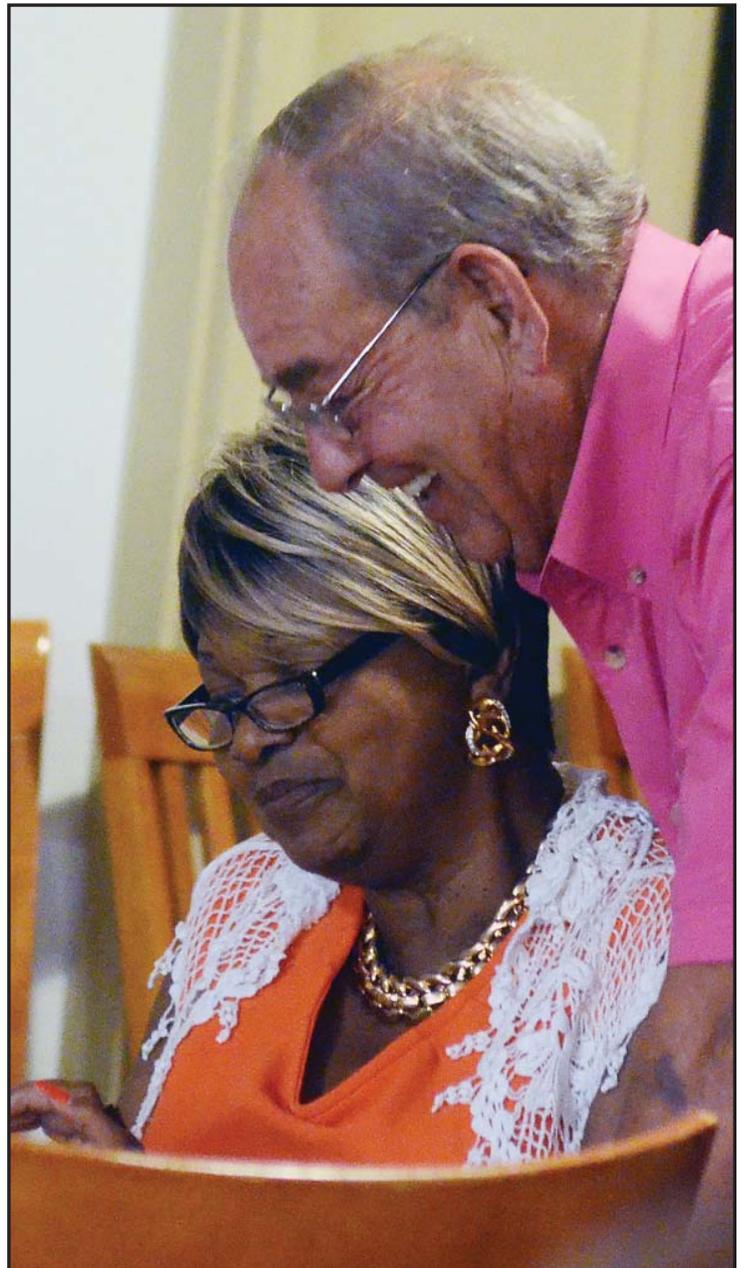
James “Jimmy” Slawson had served as an MDOC employee since July 8, 2002..

During his tenure and at the time of his retirement, Slawson held the title of facilities maintenance supervisor for Community Corrections.

At left: Sonny Edwards shares a moment with Deputy Commissioner for Community Corrections Christy Guthers during his retirement reception.



ABOVE: Commander Frank Stockett, left, of the Noxubee County Community Work Center, congratulates Sonny Edwards on his retirement. BELOW: Barbara Allen, former commander of the Leflore Community Work Center, congratulates Jimmy Slawson. At RIGHT: Allen visits with Edwards.





White enters new chapter in her life

Annette White completed 27 years of state service in April and was honored with a reception at the Central Office.

White served the state since October 1990 and worked for MDOC from August 1, 1995, until April 28. She retired as Personnel Officer IV.

She also held job titles as secretary, personnel technician and personnel officer during her tenure.

White was recognized for her work multiple times with awards, including nominations for Employee of the Year in July 2009 and March 2010.

She was named Employee of the Month in November 2006.

White received an award for 20 years of state service in July 2010.

She received Extra Effort Awards in June 2005, July 2008, December 2012, and August 2013.



Annette White, left, receives a "cake of money" from Personnel Director Juanita Barbour during a reception held in recognition of her retirement in April.

McTeer completes MDOC service

On Feb. 14, 1994, Louis “Lee” McTeer began a relationship that lasted for more than 20 years.

That relationship with the Mississippi Department of Corrections ended June 30, with McTeer’s retirement.

McTeer started out as a probation and parole agent, then called a field officer, and moved through all three levels to become an associate director and then director by October 2003 in Region 1 Community Corrections.

“As Deputy Commissioner (Christy) Gutherz said, Lee has seen a lot of ups and downs with our agency since then,” said then-Region 3 Community Corrections Director Ken Valentine in giving a timeline of McTeer’s career during a retirement gathering on June 22 at Kepler’s restaurant in Greenville.

McTeer had been a special employee for MDOC in that he was honored as a Staff Employee of the Month and Employee of the Year and received many Extra Effort Awards and the Commissioner’s Coin.

Valentine reminded the audience why Lee had been nominated as Employee of the Year in 2002. “His colleagues had nothing but accolades for his work ethics, his ability to integrate in any setting and his openness in confronting any issue that may arise,” Valentine said.

McTeer was instrumental in the accreditation of residential facilities. His friendliness, quick wit, ready smile, and willingness to work whenever needed made him a hit as a supervisor and co-worker.

“The executive staff could not have



Louis “Lee” McTeer accepts a framed collection of his credentials and state insignia from Deputy Commissioner for Community Corrections Christy Gutherz during his retirement reception in June.

made it without Lee all these years,” said Gutherz as she conveyed well wishes from Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall and Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, who was once McTeer’s supervisor. “He established himself as the go-to guy, not just in Region 1 but in Community Corrections.”

McTeer’s popularity was evident by the nearly 100 current and former employees who came out to celebrate his retirement with him. Many recalled his favorite one-

on-one sayings, including “between you, me and the fencepost” or “old man” or his drawn out “dangggggggggggggg.”

Commander Frank Stockett and Community Corrections Associate Director Scott Pannell said they won’t forget the things McTeer taught them.

“He has just been a great boss,” said Stockett, echoing what other speakers said. “He taught me to pick my fights.”



McTeer speaks to MDOC co-workers during his retirement reception held in June. Pictured above right: McTeer receives a certificate from David Sullivan, community corrections assistant director in George County.

Ricks honored for 27-year service



Director of Constituent Services Kevin Jackson congratulates Dilworth Ricks on her retirement after 27 years of service to MDOC. At right: Ricks' husband, Alfonso, shares cake with her in celebration of retirement. Below: Members of the Communications Division join Ricks' husband and former co-worker Pam Robinson also congratulate Ricks as she enters a new chapter in her life.

Dilworth Ricks started her career supervising offenders and ended it serving as an advocate for victims at the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

Ricks was employed from September 1, 1990, until June 30, 2017.

She started as a correctional officer at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman and became a correctional case manager before entering the administrative ranks. At the time of retirement, she was Victims Services director.

Ricks was passionate, dedicated and conscientious. She also was loyal and humble.

Honors received during her service included an Extra Effort Award in April 2002 and Employee of the Month in March 2013.



Dampier retires after 23 years of service

Vernita Dampier's career with the Mississippi Department of Corrections ended after 23 years.

Dampier served from October 10, 1994, until June 30. During her career, she held positions including senior analyst in Operations Management, Corrections Records technician and data control clerk. When she retired, she was assigned to the agency's records division at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.



Vernita Dampier, second from right, retires after 23 years of service to the Mississippi Department of Corrections where she was assigned to the records division at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. At left: Dampier takes a peek at one of her gifts during a retirement reception in her honor. Below: Dampier is supported by members of her family for the occasion.





Offender Programs

‘Thinking for a Change’ program gives offenders a fresh start

JACKSON – Offenders who want to reduce their risk of returning to prison completed a three-month program designed to help them do just that.

They graduated the “Thinking for A Change” Program on June 29. A total of 42 offenders from the Hinds County Probation and Parole Office and the Hinds County Restitution Center received certificates.

De’Keither Stamps, Ward 4 councilman in Jackson, was the guest speaker.

“Programs like these are vitally important in helping the Mississippi Department of Corrections fulfill its mission to provide effective post-release supervision for offenders,” Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said.

“I am committed to meaningful rehabilitation by offering more programs like this. Having more cognitive behavioral therapy in our treatment and rehabilitation programs will help offenders to make better choices.”

Offenders were taught in a classroom setting one to two hours per week. They received lessons in social skills and cognitive behavior skills and included active listening, responding to anger, apologizing, giving feedback, using new thinking, paying attention to one’s thinking, recognizing risks, problem solving, and making a plan.

During the program, 85 percent of the participants found jobs and enrolled in educational programs, according to coordinators.



James Reed, left, accepts his certificate from Program Coordinator Kimbia Gillum and Director of Constituent Services Kevin Jackson.



Left, Nakia Butler, accepts her graduation certificate from Director of Constituent Services Kevin Jackson.

1A Transition provides new hope

PEARL – Finally seeing some light at the end of the tunnel - that's how a female inmate describe the journey to graduation day of the 1A program at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

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

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

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 an inmate, as she read over a brochure detailing places to live and employment opportunities.

Participants must meet certain criteria and sign contracts. They cannot have any rule violation reports (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 also are invited on 1A Transition Day to address offender's questions, doubts and hopes about housing, finding employment, etc.



Stephanie Smith-Jefferson, assistant director counselor/consultant of Crossroads Counseling Center, addresses the participants of the 1A Transition Program at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl.

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.

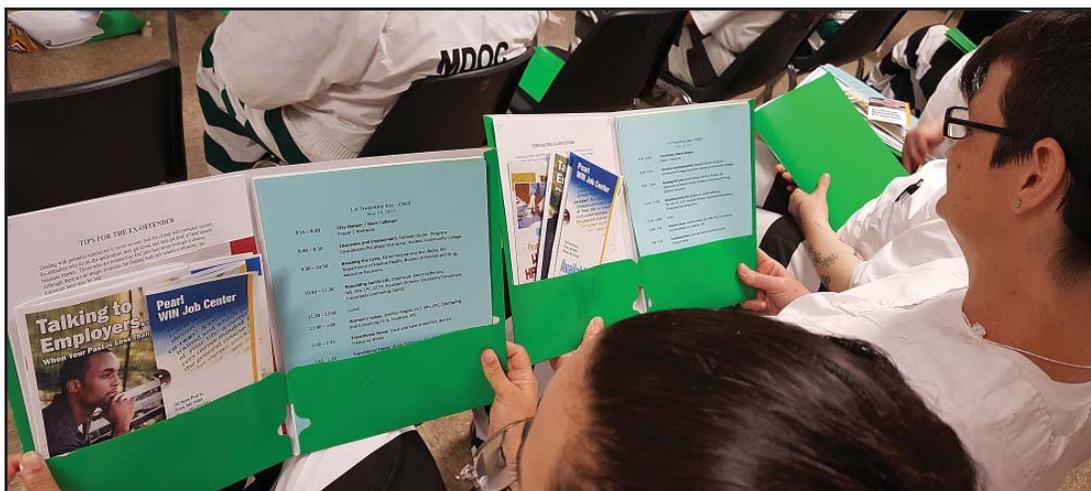
"I had just moved to Mississippi from Kentucky, and was living in the area when I felt a need to help women who were hurting, who were in addiction, in poverty and who had great needs," Callahan said.

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

"There really is light at the end of a tun-

nel," Callahan said, referencing the comment from the panel. "We offer these classes to make a difference in these women's lives," 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, she said.

"The 1A 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 inmate Shekila McAlister in the newsletter. "I am no longer enslaved to anyone or anything. I'm set free."



Taggart to graduating inmates: 'Don't Stay Down'

PEARL – Attorney and author Andy Taggart used sports analogies to encourage inmates graduating the Vocational School on March 30 at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) in Pearl.

Describing a pivotal scene from the movie "Rocky" in which supporters and his girlfriend yell "Get up!" and his opponents are saying "Stay down!" Taggart said, "That's the way it is in life you all. You might have people on this side saying 'Stay down. I am going to tell you I'm saying 'Get up!' Come on out. Sprint out the box when you come out. Exercise the powerful brain that you have brought in and made stronger than it was when you got here. Your community misses you."

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall commended Taggart, the guest speaker, for his remarks. Like him, she told the 24 graduating inmate students that she was encouraged by their decision to make a change in their life. "Like Mr. Taggart said, there has been a void in your family's life. They are looking forward to you coming back."

She said she is committed to rehabilitation and commended the vocational school staff for the difference they are making. "And I commend these graduates for taking the next step. Be committed to this change."

The inmate students received certificates in educational and vocational programs, including upholstery and family dynamics.



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, right, and Andy Taggart, speaker, congratulate an inmate on her graduation from a vocational school at CMCF.

Speaker to inmates: Renew your mind

FLOWOOD – A renewed mind will help keep you sober and out of prison, guest speaker Fredrick Burns told graduates of the long-term Alcohol & Drug Program at Flowood Community Work Center on March 23.

"You can pray all you want to, but when you get up off your knees and have not changed your mind about the situation or that thing that put you in the situation in the beginning, nothing is going to change," Burns said. "If you don't change your mindset, those 12 steps won't mean a thing."

Burns, a father, minister and leader of outreach at Jackson Revival Center Church, told the graduates that they will be tested, once they leave prison. But, he said, no matter what they go through or face in life "if you don't have the power to change your mind, nothing will change."

Twelve female offenders completed the 12-month program. They worked in the community during the day and attended classes at night. Random drug tests were

administered and offenders had to remain drug free.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall and Deputy Commissioner Christy Guthertz were on hand to recognize offenders' achievements and to encourage them to keep moving forward.

Guthertz reminded the women to use their support group. "You can't do anything alone," she said.

Hall said she did not want to see them back. "We want you to be success stories," Hall said. "I do believe in rehabilitation. I do believe in second chances."

Renee Stewart, in prison for embezzlement in Forrest County, said completing the long-term program was helpful. She also has participated in short-term A&D, but said she "didn't take it seriously."

Stewart had an addiction for 17 years, and said she believes insecurity led her to drugs, including methamphetamines. "It



Frederick Burns served as the guest speaker for the A&D program at Flowood.

took that one time," she said, explaining how she became addicted. "I did anything, stealing, lying to my family."

Soldier On receives grant for computer program

PEARL – Incarcerated veterans at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) in Pearl now have access to computer-based educational programs in a program designed to enhance job skills for life after release.

The G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery Foundation (GVMF) in Meridian in May awarded a \$20,000 grant spread over three-years to Soldier On, a national non-profit addressing the needs of homeless and incarcerated veterans.

The funds were received in June and in October, five computer work stations were turned on for 41 inmates in the Soldier On incarcerated veterans program.

Soldier On Director for Veterans Employment B.R. Hawkins said the computers are on secured networks and inmates cannot explore outside destinations on the Internet. Inmates spend a minimum of one hour per day with the computers.

The computer lab will be used for occupational, educational and skills training for those veteran offenders preparing for release.

“We believe that offenders who receive general education and vocational training are significantly less likely to return to prison after release, and are more likely to find employment than peers who do not receive such opportunities,” Hawkins said.

The foundation continues Congressman Montgomery’s legacy by recognizing civilian and military leaders making significant contributions to leadership development, education, excellence in scholarship and supports a variety of military and veteran projects and needs.

“We are delighted to partner with Soldier On and recognize its leadership in its important mission of helping America’s veterans reclaim their place in the community while bringing meaning and dignity back to their lives, said Foundation President and Executive Director Brad Crawford.

The Soldier On program addresses some of the most persistent problems among incarcerated veterans including recidivism, homelessness, substance abuse, anger management, physical and mental health.

Soldier On also helps veterans to achieve self-respect and trust so they can successfully reintegrate into the community through a variety of programs including group discussions, videos, guest speakers, one-on-one counseling, hands-on work-

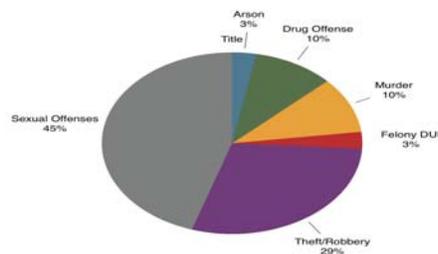


The Montgomery Computer Lab features five terminals and is used for occupational, educational and skills training for those veteran offenders preparing for release. Participants include from left, Soldier On Teacher/Trainer Kennon Keyes, Offender Kep LaFoon, Offender William Jackson, and Offender Joe Coleman.

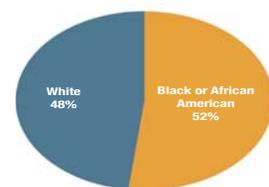
Branches of Service

CURRENT POPULATION	ARMY	MARINE CORPS	NAVY	AIR FORCE	COAST GUARD	NATIONAL GUARD
34	14	5	7	4	1	3

Charges



Race



shops and lectures, and education.

The importance of the role that the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) plays in support of the incarcerated veterans program cannot be stressed enough, according to Soldier On CEO/President Jack Downing of Pittsfield, Mass.

“Superintendent Ron King, and MDOC’s Director of Treatment and Programs Pat Owen with MDOC’s Director of Education Shaniece Mabry have guided us in setting the parameters and selecting programs to be used in the lab to best serve our veterans,” Downing said.

Creative writing class expands inmates' knowledge

JACKSON — Nearly 40 student inmates, including 11 in long-term segregation, this spring completed a course designed to improve writing skills while creating a greater awareness of certain literary works.

The Creative Writing Class in Unit 29A B-Zone at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman was the first time ever such a program was conducted in the unit. It has been available to general population offenders since 2014 when Louis Bourgeois introduced the Prison Writes Initiative to a state-operated prison in the Mississippi system. In addition to MSP, the program also includes classes at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) in Rankin County.

As the case at other locations, the class at Unit 29 was a hit, prison officials said. Correctional Supervisor Ed Thigpen, Jr., who oversees Unit 29A Building, said the inmates want to know when the next class would be held.

“Mr. Bourgeois taught the class with a lot of passion, which made a lasting effect on each offender that was a part of the class,” Thigpen said. “Needless to say, I also had the privilege to sit in on each class and witness the determination of each offender trying to hear and understand Mr. Bourgeois as he taught. They were so focused until it reminded me of being a student in high school and college. A lot of the long-term segregation offenders are asking when the next class starts and are really looking forward to participating again.”

The 11 student inmates were required to do memoir and poetry writing after completing intense reading and critical analysis of such writers as Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, William Saroyan, Jane Austen, Sylvia Path, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Bourgeois.

“The program served to enhance the offenders’ reading and writing skills covering the course of the class, which began in January of 2017, Bourgeois said. Graduation Day was June 7.

A week earlier, four students at the Youthful Offender Unit (Y.O.U.) and 12



female student inmates at CMCF also were awarded certificates of completion. Lissie Massengal, a teacher assistant at Belhaven University, was the instructor for both classes.

Inmate Regina Gilmer, 46, among those getting a certificate, said, “I learned to dig deep inside my spirit and pull out a lot of things I didn’t even know about. It’s helped me to see myself from other angles.”

Massengal said she enjoyed coming to the prison and teaching.

“Some people may think it is a little intimidating teaching in a prison but it’s just a classroom and I’m a teacher,” she said during the ceremony at the Y.O.U. “I had a lot of fun teaching and I hope they had a lot of fun learning.”

Y.O.U. Warden Leandra Parker commended the four students for sticking with the program. “Even when things were tough, y’all still hung in there,” Parker said. “You gave Ms. Massengale your very best and that pays off in the end.”

The four students read three non-fiction essays and a poem that provided snippets of their lives. They spent two semesters learning basic writing and the art of writ-

Louis Bourgeois

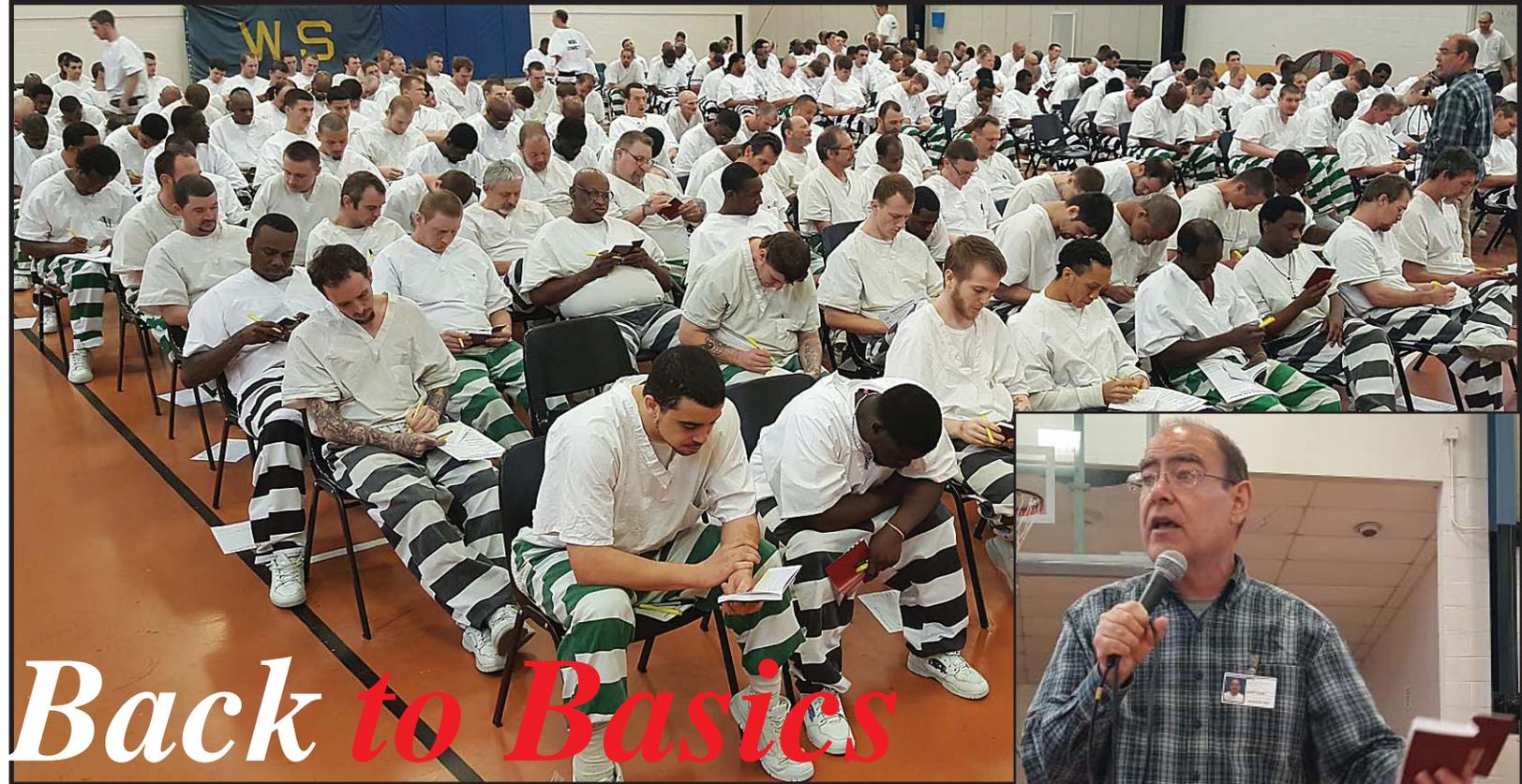
ing from published writers in poetry and fiction before writing their own stories.

Among the audience listeners were Carol Andersen, assistant director of the Mississippi Humanities Council. Andersen said the Council has been supporting Bourgeois’ work for about five years now.

“We believe that the humanities — literature, philosophy, etc. — are useful to these young men in understanding their own circumstances, their own lives,” Andersen said. “The stories that they can tell through their writings are useful to those of us outside prison walls to better understand these young men as individuals, not as inmates.”

Andersen said it is good for Humanities and Corrections to connect.

“The more cognizant we are of what we all are doing, the better we will be as a society,” she said.



Carver Brown, interventionist/Pine Grove Treatment Center Alumni director

Back to Basics

PARCHMAN – The 280-plus inmates groused about the chilly conditions inside the Unit 30 gym at the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

They seemed excited to have ink pens handed out to them, happy to see familiar faces and just be somewhere else besides their cellblocks. As they settled onto chairs, nondescript, little red Big Books and neon yellow highlighters were passed out to them, also. The collective murmur of so many filled the cavernous facility.

And then, he started to speak. This guy with the thick glasses and busy eyebrows.

He chatted with them, not at them. He had them. He seemed real, his stories truthful, funny and touching. In some instances, his words were striking close to home. Heads nodded in agreement.

Carver Brown, an interventionist and Pine Grove Treatment Center Alumni director, cussed a little bit, too, making him all the more real to the inmates as he traveled in time, peeling back scabbed over layers of personal addiction like easing off nasty bandages, giving them a peek at his once open wounds, now healed in his mind and in his heart.

More heads begin to nod in agreement because he told them he had a plan, and that plan was to share with them what had worked for him.

Brown was here to host Back to Basics, a workshop in which participants are taken through the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

He raised the little red book he was holding. The men would complete all 12

steps of AA in four one-hour session in one day.

The concept derives from the old 1940s AA program in which participants complete the steps in four sessions. Hence, the name Back to Basics.

Brown asked the inmates if they had been through the AA program and found the steps difficult and confusing. Many raised their hands.

“There is a way to get better, no matter what the problem is. We all have problems, am I right? Brown asked. “And a lot of our problems started with not being able to stay sober. We only thought all that

drinking and drugging made us feel better when actually we were just numb. And that was better than feeling our pain. Am I right? If you’re with me, I’ll show you how to find a power greater than yourself to solve your problem.”

And they sat up a little more, pulled out their new pens and highlighters, and opened the little red Big Books handed out to them, and began their first one-hour session.



Being a father in prison

PARCHMAN – Fathers enrolled in the Adult Education Program at the Mississippi State Penitentiary participated in a Fatherhood Initiative Celebration at Unit 30 Adult Education School on June 15.

Fathers gave testimonies on what it takes to be a strong, supportive, and loving dad while being incarcerated. Other inmates share their ideas on promoting family bonding from a distance.

Offenders spoke briefly and cohesively about how it feels to be a reflection of their own dad, not wanting their children to be a reflection of themselves.

Some talked about growing up with absentee fathers, resulting in them turning to a life of crime.

“The bonding was critical, because it was crime all the time. I did not take the road less traveled by but kept going on the broader road of crime,” one father said.

He added, “I kept going with no end in mind, committing crimes. That’s why I am standing in this place today. For me now, as I connect back to my family, I am doing my best to stay positive and talk with my children about how not to pattern their lives after me, but instead, be a better person by making better choices. As a matter of fact,

I really don’t know my dad other than his birthday, name and criminal behaviors.”

Another offender said that setting the proper example of an incarcerated father is vital to bonding from a distance.

“Therefore, as a dad, we must prepare and reconstruct ourselves to become productive individuals by being spiritually inclined and focused on programs that are offered” within the MDOC Educational Department.

Dr. Jim Burke gave words of encourage-

ment, noting that forgiveness is in order for all the world to see.

The final speaker of the day spoke about keeping the family bond strong: Spend time with kids during visits; listen to them talk and let them talk; encourage your kids to stay in school and get a good education; write letters to your kids; let your family know that you are a better person and have changed. The Faith-Based Initiative Band and Roger Nolan Davis supported the event.



Inmate shares his fatherhood story

Inmate Willie Gilbert, an Adult Education student, wrote a message to offenders during the Father Day celebration at Mississippi State Penitentiary.

As a man and father in prison, I have seen how my crime has affected the victims on both sides. Both families are without a child, and my children are without a father. I did not have a father as a child to teach me what direction to follow, and I will not blame him for my poor choices in life. Dad, I do love and forgive you.

The path that I took was selfish, and many [people] suffered from my crime. But I have arrived to the point in my life of an understanding: love is unselfish. This true love comes from my experiencing God. In His love, He has forgiven this soul, and it is my prayer that all the victims of my crime will forgive this once foolish person who has become what a true man is: one who puts God first, family second, others third, and himself last.

I loved others in the “free world,” but



Gilbert

that love was only to a certain extent. This truth is saddening as I write these words from behind prison walls. It is my prayer that all the victims involved will forgive me. Unforgiveness leads to bitterness that will steal the light from any star.

Also, I had to forgive myself. Not forgiv-

ing one’s self leads to a bitter and miserable person, and he is of no good to himself nor others. Hurt people hurt people, but healed people helps people.

I learned through the pain of my failures to become a man of wisdom. In this wisdom, I share how I overcame my foolishness with my children and grandchildren.

I love them to the deepest depths of my soul, and I share this wisdom with them to keep them from walking in my shoes. I give this gift of wisdom so they may be outstanding citizens of society where their freedom allows them to fellowship with each other in person, and not from behind steel bars.

If only I could turn back the hands of time. If I could, I would, but I cannot. All I can do is take it day by day, and continue to walk in the newness of this new man’s state of mind.

Editor’s Note: Inmate Willie Gilbert is serving a life sentence for homicide murder in Lee County. He has been in prison since Aug. 31, 2004.



MDOC Tours



Hall, Kinkade tour Marshall County facility

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall and House Corrections Committee Chairman Bill Kinkade visited Marshall County Correctional Facility in Holly Springs on Feb. 27.

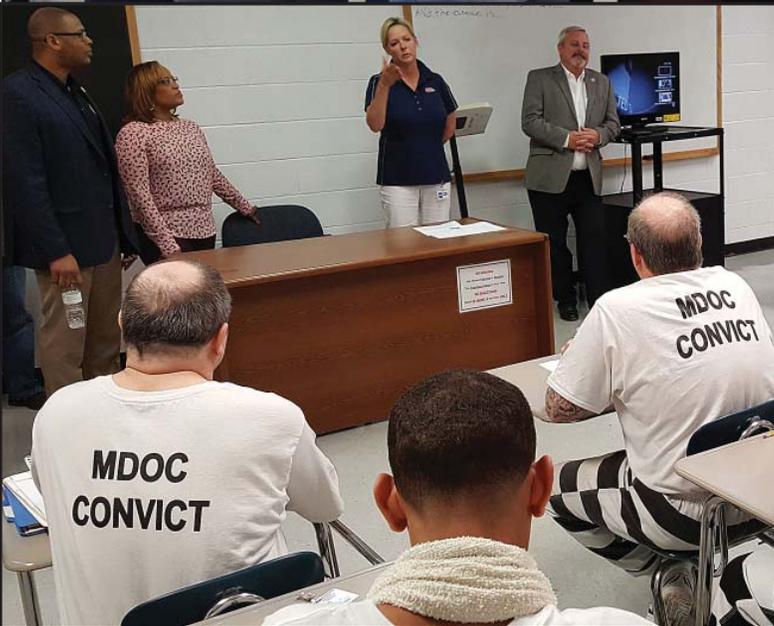
Accompanying them were other MDOC officials, including Deputy Commissioner Jerry Williams, who oversees prisons, and Management and Training

Corp. (MTC) officials, including Marjorie Brown, vice president of Corrections Region IV, and Marshall's then-Warden Timothy Outlaw.

MTC manages the private prison for the state.

The tour included stops at classrooms where inmates are learning about the behavior that led them to prison.







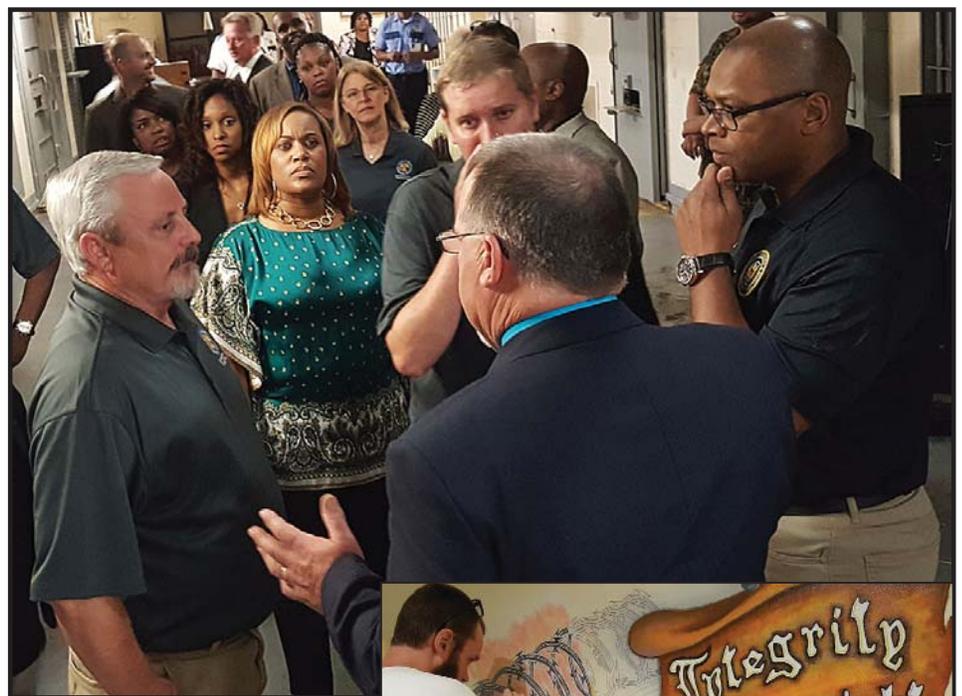
Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, right, speaks to a class of offenders during a tour of the South Mississippi Correctional Institution in Greene County on June 20.

Commissioner, lawmakers tour SMCI

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, members of the executive staff, and several state House Corrections Committee members, including Chairman Bill Kinkade and Vice Chairman Carl Mickens, toured South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI) in Greene County on June 20.

Other lawmakers were Reps. Charles Young, Roun S. McNeal, who represents Greene County, Patricia H. Willis, Ashley Henley, Doug McLeod and John G. Faulkner.

The lawmakers' stops included vocational and classroom areas, allowing them to see first-hand the various programs MDOC offers.

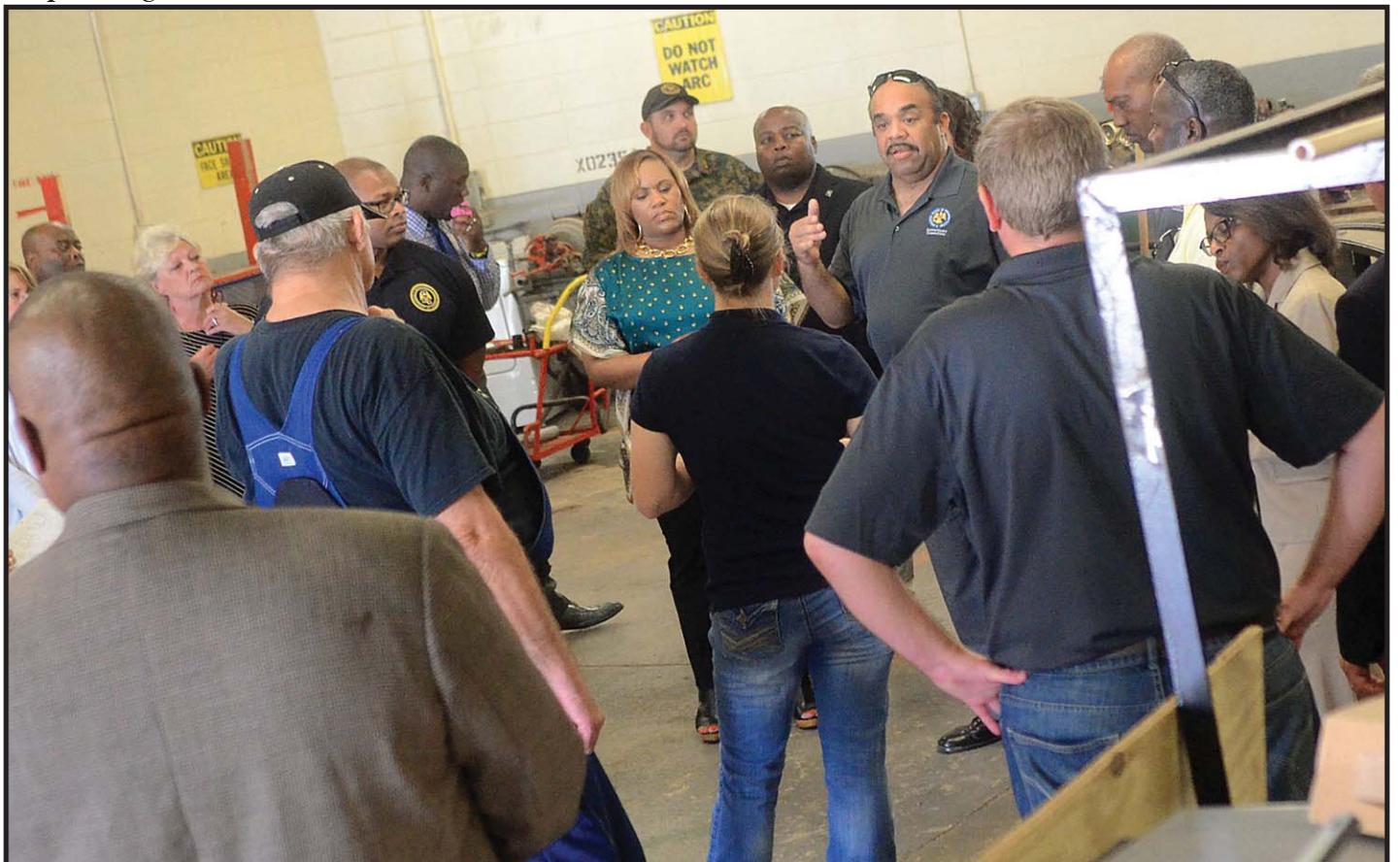


Warden Andrew Mills discusses inmate programs as lawmakers and MDOC leaders tour South Mississippi Correctional Institution.





Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, second from right, checks the fabric of an offender's work with Rep. Patricia H. Willis during a tour of the South Mississippi Correctional Institution in Greene County on June 20. Below: Rep. Charles Young asks Vocational Director at SMCI Sarah James a question during a tour of the facility's shop among vocational areas.





Touring MPIC operations were, from left, Senate Corrections Vice-Chairman Lydia Chassaniol, Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall; and House Corrections Vice-Chairman Carl Mickens. Back: Senate Corrections Chairman Sampson Jackson II, Legislative Assistant Felisha Brown and House Corrections Chairman Bill Kinkade.



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall (pictured at right with Criminal Investigation Division Director Sean Smith) and other MDOC staffers, Mississippi Prison Industries Corp. officials, and lawmakers with the Corrections Committees, including chairmen from both chambers, toured MPIC facilities at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County on Feb. 13.



Gov. Bryant tours MPIC at CMCF

Gov. Phil Bryant visited Mississippi Prison Industries Corporation's operations at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility on April 26.

Stops on the tour included the Johnson & Johnson Clean Room and the Metal Fabrication shop.

Like Gov. Bryant, Corrections Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said she is happy to see inmates at work, "being equipped with transferrable skills for employment purposes."

Pictured at right: Gov. Phil Bryant and Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall talk with Kennan Keyes, then-shop manager, for Mississippi Prison Industries.



Ed Stephens, production manager for the Southern Region for Mississippi Prison Industries, talks with Gov. Bryant and Commissioner Hall.



MIDOC On Location

Commissioner to students:

Do you have what it takes?

RAYMOND - Do you have what it takes to lead and be successful?

That is a question Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall challenged Hinds Community College students on March 30 to ask themselves as she shared with them how she has come to be one of about a dozen state female corrections leaders in the country.

Hall was guest speaker for a program in observance of Women's History Month on the Raymond campus.

Women deserve to have a seat at the table just as men do, she said. She cited that women lead other major departments, such as finance and administration, education, health, mental health and transportation, in Mississippi.

A woman leads the community college board. There also are women serving in state-wide elected offices, in the Legislature and on the two highest court levels in the state, Hall pointed out.

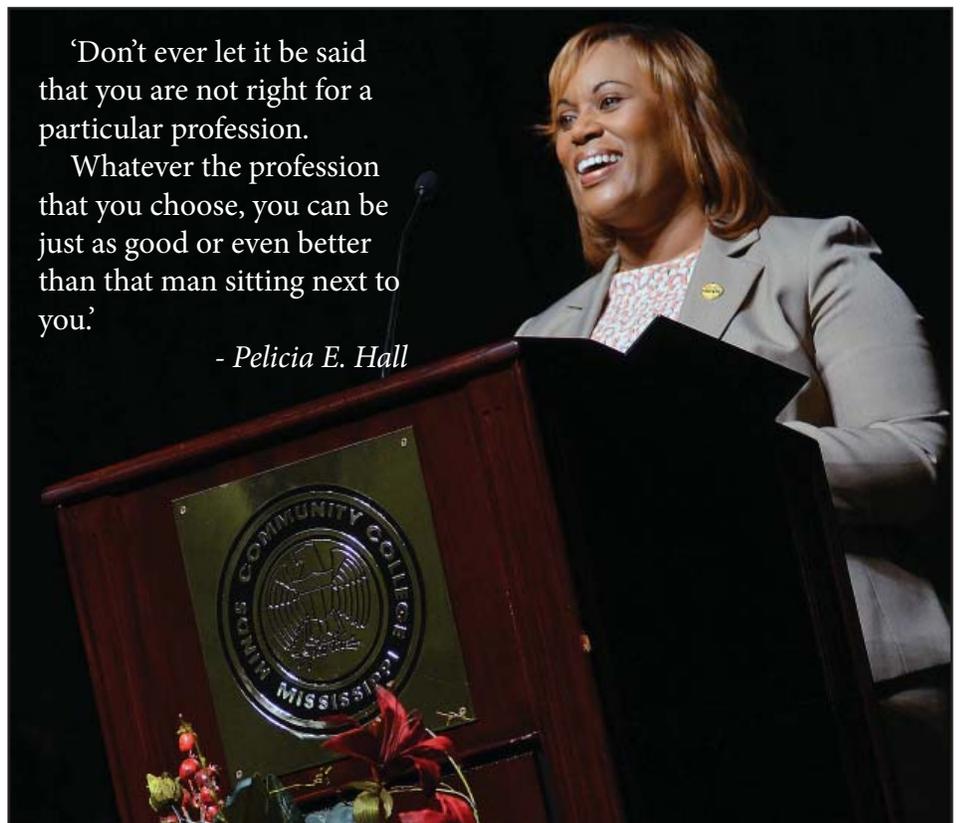
"Don't ever let it be said that you are not right for a particular profession," she said. "Whatever the profession that you choose, you can be just as good as or even better than that man sitting next to you."

Since childhood, Hall said she has wanted to be a lawyer, and every decision she made was designed to help her achieve that goal. She has been a lawyer for 16 years now.

She told students to believe in themselves and equip themselves "with what is necessary to take it to the next level."

Keeping a good reputation and not accepting a "D" performance as passing also were included in her tips.

"People think that slogan 'Striving for excellence' is a cliché, but it shouldn't be," Hall said. "My staff understands that subpar performance is never an option. Always put your best foot forward."



'Don't ever let it be said that you are not right for a particular profession.

Whatever the profession that you choose, you can be just as good or even better than that man sitting next to you.'

- Pelicia E. Hall



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall speaks to students at Hinds Community College on March 30 about making career choices.



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, right, discusses women and leadership with Alcorn State University sophomore Consuela Jones, left, and Ole Miss sophomore Taia McAfee at the Capitol in May.



Commissioner Hall, right, and Katie Blount were among seven panelists participating in a discussion for female college students across Mississippi.



“At the Top of Her Game: A Panel Discussion by State Agency Heads,” part of the Mississippi NEW Leadership Day, featured female state agency heads. Above from left, the panel included State Superintendent of Education Carrey Wright; State Personnel Board Executive Director Pat Robertson; Department of Finance and Administration Director Laura Jackson; Department of Mental Health Director Diana Mikula; State Department of Archives and History Director Katie Blount; Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall; and State Health Officer Dr. Mary Currier.



2017 MAPC mini-conference

Scenes from the Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections 34th Annual Training Conference
April 20 at Harlow's Casino, Resort & Spa in Greenville



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall offers comments about the corrections profession in Mississippi during the 2017 Mini-Conference of the Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections.



Pictured at top left, MDOC Constituent Services Director Kevin Jackson introduces Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall. At right, Tina Ladner, director of electronic monitoring, snaps a photo of Commissioner Hall speaking. Immediately above: The Gentry High School Choir in Indianola performs for the assembly.



MDOC Legislation

Agency faces money shortage in Fiscal 2018

The Mississippi Department of Corrections will not have enough money to pay all of its bills, if it is funded as the Legislative Budget Office (LBO) recommends.

That is the message then-Commissioner Marshall Fisher started and successor, Commissioner Pelicia Hall continued relaying to lawmakers before the 2017 Legislature ended in late March.

Lawmakers, however, ultimately adopted the LBO's recommendation, though MDOC was among a few select agencies spared deep cuts when the state budget was crafted. The department requested \$356,415,098; the LBO's recommendation was \$21.5 million less at \$334,858,304, an amount that left deficits in medical and private prison programs.

Fisher told House and Senate Appropriation members that MDOC considered the LBO's recommendation "a threat to public safety." He spoke before separate legislative panels about Corrections before Gov. Phil Bryant named him Public Safety commissioner in late January to replace Albert Santa Cruz, who retired Jan. 31.

"We are already understaffed," Fisher said. "We have people working double shifts more times than not. You have officer fatigue. You have posts minimally manned."

Commissioner Hall reiterated the agency's critical understaffing as she sought funding approval. The agency proposed to reduce the funding gap by \$10 million through several changes including: Delaying \$5 million worth of major improvement projects - including repairs to prevent escapes, heat outage at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, and water and sewer problems at South Mississippi Correctional Institution; closing two of the 15 regional jails; postponing vehicle purchases in a system that already has about 200 vehicles with 150,000 or more mileage; and reducing the rate MDOC would pay counties above contractual obligations.

After receiving the 2018 budget, Hall



Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall, center, works reviews budget details with state lawmakers during the 2017 legislative session, assisted by Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance Ricky McCarty.

said the department would continue to be as proactive as it has been in the last two years in implementing measures to reduce expenditures. "We acknowledge the agency will suffer a deficit," she said. "However, the MDOC will do its best to maximize and provide the best level of service within the confines of the \$334,858,304 lawmakers have appropriated."

MDOC's priorities for the budget year that began July 1, 2017, include hiring and retaining employees, revamping the alcohol and drug and mental health programs; and adding more transitional beds.

"Like lawmakers, we have some difficult decisions to make. Likely, we will have to reduce farm expenditures, possibly close some facilities, and not be able to purchase vehicles. We will continually assess our options to reduce the gap between what we requested and what we were funded. As always, our decisions will focus on enhancing public safety while being accountable, innovative, and fiscally responsible to the citizens of Mississippi," Hall said.

By the numbers

Senate Bill 2868 for FY 2015

General fund	\$346,063,329
Special Fund	\$23,974,023
Total	\$370,037,352

Senate Bill 2855 for FY 2016

General fund	\$333,063,329
Special fund	\$28,697,981
Total	\$361,761,310

Senate Bill 2877 for FY 2017

General fund	\$326,079,680
Special fund	\$31,332,451
Total	\$357,412,131

Senate Bill 2965 for FY 2018

General fund	\$309,935,445
Special fund	\$24,922,859
Total	\$334,858,304

MDOC-related bills become laws

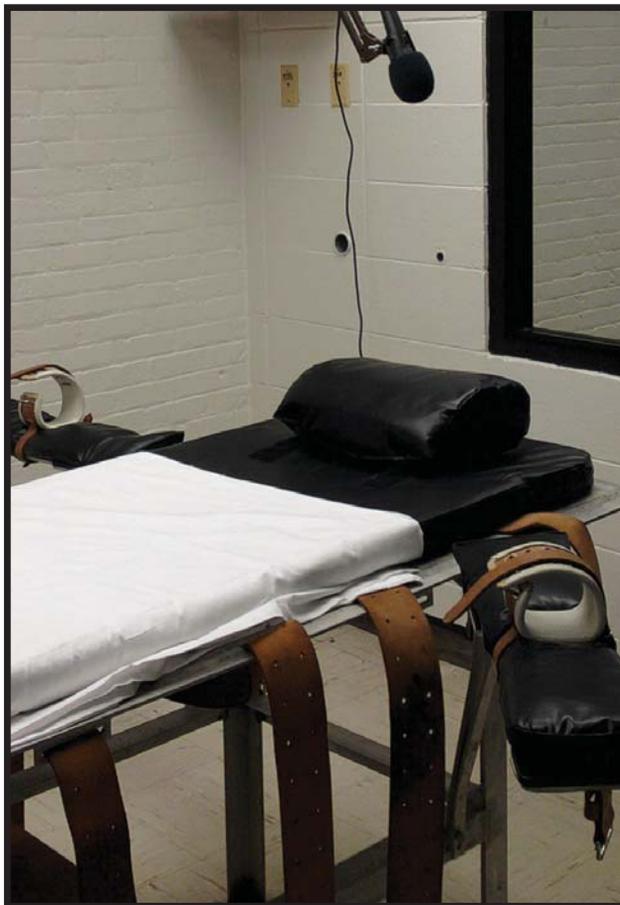
Other pieces of legislation of interest to the Mississippi Department of Corrections became law after passage during the 2017 session of the Mississippi Legislature. The legislation included:

Travel

House Bill 938 revises the transportation policy. From July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018, state agencies are prohibited from purchasing, leasing, or acquiring any motor vehicle.

State agencies are required to use a trip optimizer type system developed and administered by the Department of Finance and Administration in computing the optimum method and cost for travel where the travel will exceed 100 miles per day.

For a full reading, visit billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2017/html/HB/0900-0999/HB0938SG.htm



Death Penalty

House Bill 638 revises the methods by which the death penalty may be carried out, makes confidential all members of the execution team, a supplier of lethal injection chemicals, and the identities of witnesses and exempts the information from disclosure under the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983.

The state has not had an execution since 2012. As of June 30, there were 47 inmates, including one female, on death row.

For a full reading of the bill, visit billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2017/pdf/history/HB/HB0638.xml.

Lethal injection at Mississippi State Penitentiary has been a method of execution since 1984.

Calendar / Things to know

- Marshall County Correctional Facility and Stone County Regional Correctional Facility each passed the ACA Reaccreditation Audit in March, and Issaquena County Regional Correctional Facility passed the audit in May
- Mississippi Trial & Appellate Judges Spring Conference, April 26-28, Beau Rivage, Biloxi
- South Central Region American Correctional Chaplains Association Annual Conference, May 15-17, Natchez
- Opioid Town Hall Meeting, May 23, Brandon Civic Center, Brandon
- Military commander-turned-author Angela Odom to speak to incarcerated veterans on May 23 on the topics of mentorship and service to others at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl.
- Results First Mississippi's First Issue Brief on adult prison-based intervention programs, released in June, and found at http://www.peer.ms.gov/Reports/reports/MDOC_fullreport3.pdf
- Southern States Correctional Association Conference, July 16-19, Norfolk, Va.
- Corrections & Criminal Justice Oversight Task Force holds its first meeting under Commissioner Hall on July 26 at MDOC's Central Office
- American Correctional Association's 42nd Congress of Corrections, Sept. 18-22, St. Louis, Mo.
- Suicide Prevention Symposium, Sept. 19, in Jackson



Odom

Members of the Commissioner's Advisory Council include:

Institutions

- Sgt. Tonja M. Burks of Central Mississippi Correctional Facility
- Sgt. Damien Bartee of South Mississippi Correctional Institution
- Officer Robert Dudley of the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman

Community Corrections

- Region 1, Carver A. Randle
- Region 2, Darin Lofton
- Region 3, Kenny Rush
- Residential, Shanell Reed



MDOC Highlights

Tell Me Rally ministers to offenders

WOODVILLE — Wilkinson County Correctional Facility (WCCF) recently hosted its first-ever Tell Me Rally where representatives of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) provided ministry and donated 600 pounds of catfish for the prison staff and offenders.

“It was a herculean effort by these volunteers to prepare and deliver to all offenders — and the staff on duty — a meal of fresh Mississippi catfish, hush puppies and fries,” said Warden Jody Bradley. “This is a classic example of what can be accomplished by a team effort.”

The Rev. Don Gann, MBCB’s Director of Men’s Ministry/Disaster Relief, and WCCF Chaplain Roscoe Barnes III, organized the two-day event which started on April 3. The Rev. Dr. Jim Futral, MBCB Executive Director, was the guest speaker.

“There is no way to fully enumerate the blessings that were ours in the two-day event,” Futral said after the rally. “For the enjoyable time we had to spend with Warden Bradley to the help and care and guidance provided by Chaplain Barnes to the many visits, conversations, and spiritual encounters that were shared with the



Left: Rev. Dr. Jim Futral, of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, talks to offenders. Right: Volunteers ministering included, from left, Ken Rhodes, John Henry, Barri Shirley, and offender Brandon Murray.

men at the facility, we were every one of us blessed.”

The rally was part of MBCB’s “Tell Someone 2017 Campaign.” Its purpose is to help people share their personal stories of faith. It encourages them to “Tell someone what Jesus has done for you,” Gann

said. Similar rallies, excluding the meal, are planned at other facilities.

The volunteers hand delivered the meals and enjoyed this ministry opportunity, Gann said. “Everywhere they went, the offenders were heard saying, ‘Thank you’ and ‘God bless you.’”

Chaplains host gathering at Flowood

Several chaplains, volunteers and Mississippi state officials attended the Mississippi Department of Corrections State Chaplain Meeting in April, hosted by the Flowood Restitution Center.

From left front, participants included: Director of Treatment Pat Owen, Deputy Commissioner for Community Corrections Christy Guthertz, Washington County Regional Chaplain Regina Leavy, and Kemper/Neshoba County Regional Chaplain Darryl Rush.

Back row: Flowood Chaplain Gwen McClinton, Chaplain Eugene Wigelsworth, and Director of Men’s Ministry for Mississippi Baptist convention Reverend Don Gann.



Photo by Flowood Deputy Warden Lisa Spinks-O’Hara.



Harrison Co. Probation, Parole officers receive training in Colorado

The members of the Harrison County Probation and Parole team traveled to Aurora, Colo., in February for a chance to learn to facilitate for the “Thinking for a Change” program.

“We all learned a lot. We had three very wonderful coaches. They taught the three parts of Thinking for a change: social skills, cognitive self-change, and problem solving,” said Barbara B. Gill, probation and parole agent. “Teaching this class can help offenders change their thinking and learn how to act in situations.”

The Harrison County Probation and Parole agent team included, from left, Jacqueline Wright, Hillery Atkins, Kimbia Gilum, and Angela Harper. Back: Barbara Gill and Karen Vance.

Forum explores issues surrounding state’s prisons

State Sen. Willie Simmons, D-Cleveland, joined other panelists in March at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg for a forum exploring the conditions in the state’s prisons and efforts to reduce crime and recidivism.

“Justice in the Mississippi State Penitentiary: Past Reflections, Present Challenges and Future Directions,” was the focus of the first of a two-day event. Alan Thompson, a USM associate professor of criminal justice, moderated the forum. Other forum panelists included Leonard Vincent, general counsel for the Mississippi Department of Corrections; Dilworth Ricks, MDOC Victim Services director; and photographer R. Kim Rushing, author of “Parchman.” The family of former Parchman Superintendent Marvin Wiggins also attended.

Rushing said he was the first outside photographer in Parch-

man’s history allowed long-term access to inmates and to photograph them in their cells and living quarters.

Students and other volunteers gathered in the Cook Library Art Gallery for a reading and book signing by Rushing. Readings included inmate letters and excerpts from Louis Bourgeois’s “Unit 30: New Writing from Parchman Farm,” a recent collection of prison writing from Vox’s Prison Writes Initiative as well as a synopsis of victims’ letters presented by Ricks.

After the readings, volunteers packaged the books donated to Big House Books over the previous month to mail to inmates in the Mississippi penitentiary system.

The event concluded with the exhibition on display at USM’s Cook Library on the history of Parchman.

Hall

From page 7

During the hearing, Hall told senators that hiring and retaining quality staff, providing meaningful rehabilitation for inmates and reducing contraband are among her goals for MDOC.

Hall shared her vision for the agency and responded to questions. While senators were all business, there were moments of laughter, one courtesy of Sen. Hob Bryan.

After hearing Hall tell how a smuggled cellphone could bring \$3,000, Bryan pulled out his phone and asked “How much could I get?”

“Some time,” responded Sen. Willie Simmons.

The full Senate confirmed her appointment with Senate Nomination 55.

Hall is former lead counsel for the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics. She has 15 years of legal experience in the government and private sectors in a wide variety of disciplines. She has litigated cases in federal and state courts and served as both a special assistant United States attorney and as a special assistant attorney general with the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General. The MDOC was one of the agencies she represented during her nearly three years as a state attorney.

Hall assumed the state position after six years with the private Jackson law firm of Page, Kruger & Holland, where she litigated cases involving personal injury claims, employment discrimination, contract disputes, products liability, premises liability, insurance coverage and general tort litigation.

She learned about both civil and criminal matters as a law clerk for the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Mississippi and Hinds County Circuit Court. Hall clerked two years for Circuit Judge Tomie Green.

A graduate of Mississippi College School of Law, Hall was the recipient of the American Jurisprudence Award in Real Estate Finance & Development. She earned her bachelor of arts degree from Alcorn State University, where she graduated cum laude in political science.

Hall is admitted to practice in Mississippi and before the United States Court of Appeals and the United States District Court.

She is a member of the Mississippi Bar Association, National Bar Association, Magnolia Bar Association, Capital Area Bar Association, Mississippi Women Lawyers Association and the American Bar Association.



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