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51 inmates graduate from MSP Reentry Academy

PARCHMAN – In a powerful display of resilience, transformation, and hope, 51 incarcerated individuals graduated from MSP’s Unit 25 Reentry Academy Thursday, marking a significant milestone in their journey toward reentering society with purpose and preparedness.

The graduation ceremony, held on July 31 in Unit 30’s chapel, was a moving celebration of perseverance and possibility. The Statewide Reentry Academy has graduated approximately 800 graduates in the last two years. The program aims to equip incarcerated individuals with the tools, mindset, and support necessary to successfully reintegrate into their communities, rebuild their lives, and reduce recidivism.

Keynote speaker Stacy Dodd, a former inmate turned mentor and motivational speaker, shared his journey from incarceration to reintegration. His powerful message encouraged graduates to stay committed to their growth and reminded them that their past does not define their future.

“I once sat where you sit today,” Dodd said. “But with discipline, vision, and the right support, I now stand here as proof that transformation is not only possible—it’s real.”

During the ceremony, Warden Patricia Doty delivered heartfelt and affirming remarks, publicly praising the graduates and staff alike for their remarkable growth and commitment throughout the academy. She reflected on the transformation she witnessed firsthand:

“I’ve watched these men shift from uncertainty to strength,” said Warden Doty. “They came in unsure, some even broken. But over time, with consistent guidance, tough conversations, and moments of encouragement, they began to believe in themselves. I stayed firm with them, but I also nurtured them. Today, I am so proud of who they’ve become. I am sending you a different man home.”

The ceremony was made possible through the dedicated leadership and collaboration of Warden Doty, Deputy Commissioner Kelley Christopher, and the Unit 25 Team (Correctional Team Lead Chiquita Jones, Case Manager Linda Collins, Academic Teacher Kimberly Meeks). Their unwavering commitment to rehabilitation and education played a pivotal role in the success of the Reentry Academy and its students.

“The Statewide Prison Reentry Academy reflects the core of what our correctional system should stand for: restoration, readiness, and a second chance,” said Deputy Commissioner Christopher. “These 51 men have taken a bold step toward rewriting their stories—and we are here to support them every step of the way.” The 2025 Parchman graduates will soon join a growing group of returning citizens who are determined to break cycles, contribute positively to their communities, and live lives of dignity and direction.