



PRESS RELEASE

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Musgrove Proclaims May 6 – 12 as Employee Correctional Week

Governor Ronnie Musgrove has declared May 6 – 12, 2001, as the first Correctional Employee Week for the state of Mississippi. National Correctional Officer Week is an annual event that recognizes the millions of people who work in the field of corrections and are responsible for maintaining the public's safety by ensuring the safe and secure incarceration of inmates.

As part of Correctional Employee Week, the Mississippi Department of Corrections Community Services Division has selected employees that have gone above and beyond the call of duty and represent the thousands of Mississippians who work for the state's correctional system. In Region I, Area Supervisor Clay Baker is that person.

Baker started his career in corrections almost 25 years ago when he was appointed by Gov. Cliff Finch to work for the Mississippi Probation and Parole Board. After just 6 months as a parole officer, Baker began working for the newly created Department of Corrections in 1976. Baker worked under the first MDOC Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC), Ellis McDougal.

After working his way through the Probation and Parole Division of MDOC, Baker is currently an Area Supervisor in region 1A, and has been in this position for four years. His region covers Cleveland, Miss., to the Tennessee state line, and the Miss. River to Oxford, Miss. Baker is responsible for supervising and auditing 24 probation and parole officers.

During his tenure with MDOC, Baker has experienced many changes in the Community Services division. "The most significant change to me is how big we've grown in 25 years," Baker said. "I've seen tremendous progress. When I started out you just got a ream of paper and 4-5 pencils. Now we've got computers, offices and even an automobile to drive."

Baker is married to Jane Land Baker, who has taught English at Northwest Community College for 23½ years. Baker has two daughters, Martha West and Lacy Bailey, and one son, James Clay Baker, Jr., who is also a teacher at Northwest Community College and teaches history.

Free time is something Baker certainly does seem to have a lot of. Not only does he enjoy spending time with his two grandsons and granddaughter, but Baker also enjoys gardening, fishing and hunting. "I grew up on a farm, so I do all of those outdoor things," he said.

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But don't look for Baker outdoors on Sunday mornings – he's also a Methodist minister! Baker has been an ordained minister for 14 years and currently serves as the minister of Oakland United Methodist Church. When asked about the comparison between his two jobs, Baker said, "I've reached people through MDOC that I could never reach as a preacher. It just makes you feel good to hear some of the success stories of people who have completed their probation and gotten on with their lives."

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Media Note: The Mississippi Department of Corrections has a digital photo of Clay Baker is available to media organizations that would like a copy. If you are interested, e-mail Claire Papizan, MDOC Communications Specialist, at cpapizan@mdoc.state.ms.us or call 601.359.5689.