



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Six MDOC Mississippi State Penitentiary Employees Receive Outstanding Employee Recognition Awards

Parchman – Six employees at the Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP) at Parchman, Mississippi today were presented Employee Service awards by Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) Commissioner Robert L. Johnson. The employees were praised for their loyalty and dedication to corrections: “We are indebted to you for your untiring efforts at the Mississippi State Penitentiary,” said Commissioner Johnson.

The awards presentation was part of an employee service program instituted by the agency in July 2001 to recognize exemplary employees within the MDOC. The MSP employs nearly half of the state’s 3,716 statewide correctional workforce.

Mississippi State Penitentiary employees receiving awards for October 2001 included:

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| Deloris Smith | Correctional Officer IV, Unit 31, Area III | Correctional Officer of the Month |
| Arleatha Williams | Personnel Officer III, Administration | Staff Employee of the Month |
| Verlena Flagg | Pre-Release Counselor, Unit 25, Pre-Release | Extra Effort Award |
| Gloria Hodges | Correctional Officer IV, Unit 32/Clinic, Area IV | Extra Effort Award |
| Sandra Simon | Correctional Case Manager, Units 24C and 27, Area III | Extra Effort Award |
| Carl Burchfield | Division Director I, MSP Central Warehouse | Award of Excellence |

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The 2:00 p.m. special awards presentation ceremony was held in MSP's Administration Building conference room. Superintendent Emmitt Sparkman announced the names of the award recipients as Corrections Commissioner Robert L. Johnson presented each employee with lapel pins and certificates. Additionally, plaques were presented to the Correctional Officer of the Month and to the recipient of the Award of Excellence.

"The Mississippi State Penitentiary plays a key role in the overall mission of MDOC," said prison Superintendent Emmitt Sparkman. He noted that MSP was the State's largest public prison and had, by far, the most difficult role in the state prison system of providing custody, care, and supervision for the most dangerous element of the prison population. MSP's daily population averages over 5200 inmates. Commissioner Johnson expanded on Superintendent Sparkman's comments at the awards presentation by adding, "We are extremely proud of the nearly 1800 highly dedicated employees at MSP who literally work around the clock in the name of public safety. It is only proper and fitting that we recognize those who daily place their lives on the line to assure a safer society for all. Each officer is to be commended. I am extremely proud to join with Superintendent Sparkman in presenting these service awards to this outstanding group of employees."

Deloris Smith, Correctional Officer IV, was nominated by Lieutenant Donnie Cox to receive the Correctional Officer of the Month award. Sergeant Smith's nomination was based upon her professional demeanor and her untiring dedication to her job. "She's an extremely professional and a highly motivated officer," said Lieutenant Cox. "Her attentiveness to potential problems among the inmate population at Unit 31 makes her the perfect officer for providing care and supervision to the special needs offenders assigned to the unit." Officer Smith was praised for her interpersonal management skills and her cooperative attitude towards staff and the general public. She was commended for being firm and fair in her treatment of the special needs offenders under her supervision.

Arleatha Williams, Personnel Officer III, was recommended by Linda Seaton, Personnel Officer IV to receive the Staff Employee of the Month service award. A 14-year veteran with MDOC, Ms. Williams was commended her outstanding service. "I've watched with admiration Ms. Williams' professional growth through the years," said Linda Seaton. "She always displays a high degree of professionalism when interacting with co-workers, staff, applicants or the general public." Ms. Williams was commended for her calm approach in dealing with personnel problems, particularly in her ability to allay employees' concerns in the work place. Ms. Williams was praised for the significant contribution she had made through the years to the MSP Personnel Department. She was described as a highly dedicated individual whose positive attitude was infectious and who was a delight to work with and to supervise.

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Verlena Flagg, Pre-Release Counselor at Unit 25 was recommended to receive MDOC's Extra Effort Award by Branch Director Barbara Lee. "Ms Flagg embraces all of the qualities of an ideal employee," said Barbara Lee. "She strongly displays a conscientious effort in resolving the concerns of pre-release offenders with whom she works and she is very successful in fulfilling her role in this effort." Pre-Release Counselor Flagg was commended for having taken on added responsibilities over the past year and a half by volunteering to assist in providing counseling services to HIV offenders at Unit 28. Through this added effort, Ms. Flagg extended the outreach of the prison's pre-release program by providing a three and a half hour workshop twice a month to eligible HIV offenders. Branch Director Lee added, "Ms. Flagg is not a shy person. She accepts challenges and she is always willing to assist when called upon to help. Her actions speak louder than her words. We are most fortunate to have a person with Ms. Flagg's dedication and ability to provide pre-release counseling services to offenders at MSP."

Gloria Hodges, Correctional Officer IV at Unit 32 Clinic, was nominated by Warden Gene Crocker to receive MDOC's Extra Effort Award. "Sergeant Hodges is a very dedicated officer," said Warden Crocker. "She is a team player and has a unique ability to interact effectively with her peers." Sergeant Hodges was commended for her work on the Mississippi State Penitentiary's recent United Way fund drive effort. She was praised for her strong commitment in Area IV's participation in the charity drive. As a result of her strong commitment in the fundraiser, Sergeant Hodges collected \$2472 in contributions and pledges from employees in Area IV.

Sandra Simon, Correctional Case Manager at Area III, recipient of MDOC's Extra Effort service award, was nominated by Area III Associate Warden Stanley Flagg. "Correctional Case Manager Simon has played a vital role at Area III over the past several months," said Associate Warden Flagg. "During this period case managers in Area III have had to carry larger case loads due to a shortage of case managers. Case Manager Simon had the difficult task of providing case management assistance to offenders assigned to Units 24C and 27." Ms. Simon was praised for her outstanding efforts during this difficult period and also for working in close cooperation with Unit 27 security staff during which time she assumed the added responsibility as chairperson for their unit management team.

Carl Burchfield, Division Director over the Mississippi State Penitentiary's Central Warehouse, was nominated to receive the Mississippi State Penitentiary's Award of Excellence by Lieutenant John Rodgers. "The Burchfield family's name is synonymous with Parchman," said Lieutenant Rogers. "Mr. Burchfield has continued the highly respected tradition of his family through the contribution of his time to the Parchman community. His annual *Halloween Haunted House* for the children of Parchman is an anticipated event not only by the kids but many adults as well." Mr. Burchfield was praised for his acts of kindness and for his service to the prison community. The Award of Excellence is presented to employees who show their dedication to the betterment of society by their actions or deeds.

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A Memorial Award was presented in memory of Sergeant Calvin Lee, a 14-year veteran with the Mississippi State Penitentiary who died suddenly on November 17, 2001. Receiving the memorial plaque on behalf of the Lee family was Ms. Georgia Moore, a close friend of the family. Mississippi State Penitentiary Superintendent Emmitt Sparkman characterized Sergeant Lee as a truly dedicated employee who was highly respected by those who worked closely with him

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MEDIA NOTE: If you would like a digital photograph of the service award recipients, contact Bill Greenleaf at (601) 359-5646 or e-mail him at: bgreenleaf@mdoc.stste.ms.us