



# PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Six Central Mississippi Correctional Facility Employees Receive Employee Recognition/Service Awards**

Pearl – Commissioner Robert L. Johnson presented the Mississippi Department of Corrections’ (MDOC) employee recognition awards to six employees at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) in Pearl, Mississippi Thursday, April 4. CMCF is the central receiving point for the processing of offenders sentenced to the supervision of MDOC.

“I wish to personally salute each of the service award recipients and also to extend my deep appreciation to all of our loyal, dedicated men and women here at CMCF for a job well done,” said Commissioner Robert L. Johnson. “I am most appreciative of the hard work that you do each and every day. The quality of your efforts is reflected in the quality operation of the prison. Through your daily loyal support, MDOC provides a valuable service that is a fundamental mission to the citizens of this state – public safety. I challenge each of you to continue your good work.”

### **Central Mississippi Correctional Facility employees receiving recognition awards for December 2001 included:**

Rhonda Gunter Pearl, MS	Administrative Assistant V Superintendent’s Office	Employee of the Month
Barbara Hunt Carthage, MS	Correctional Officer I CMCF – II	Correctional Officer of the Month
Christie Scott Madison, MS	Correctional Law Library Technician - CMCF	Extra Effort Award
Guzel Dempsey Jackson, MS	Correctional Officer II CMCF I – R & C	Extra Effort Award
Panessa Johnson Brandon, MS	Correctional Records Tech. CMCF – Records Office	Extra Effort Award
Belita May Carthage, MS	Correctional Officer I CMCF II – A Building	Extra Effort Award

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Commissioner Johnson, joined by CMCF Superintendent Lawrence Kelly, presented each employee with lapel pins and certificates. Additionally, the Staff Employee of the Month and the Correctional Officer of the Month received plaques in appreciation for their dedicated service to the prison.

CMCF began its operation in 1987. It was originally designed to serve jointly as a women's prison and as a central receiving point to classify all new offenders sentenced to the supervision of MDOC. "With the rapid growth of Mississippi's prison population during the 80's and 90's, the role of our facility has changed significantly," said Superintendent Kelly. "During 2001, our Reception and Classification center processed over 7,250 offenders into the prison system and today CMCF employs over 650 personnel to operate the 3,049-bed facility."

**Rhonda Gunter**, Administrative Assistant of Pearl, was presented the Employee of the Month Award. Gunter, a three-year veteran with the prison system, was nominated and commended for her outstanding administrative skills by CMCF Superintendent Lawrence Kelly. "Gunter has a unique ability to manage multiple tasks simultaneously," said Kelly. "She operates extremely well under pressure and easily shifts between handling calls from inmates' family members to reading and replying to correspondence." Gunter was commended for her untiring dedication to her job and her willingness to help others whenever she is called upon. Superintendent Kelly added, "She is one of those remarkable individuals whose job performance is excellent and who never complains despite the enormity of the assignment."

**Barbara Hunt**, Correctional Officer I of Carthage, received the Correctional Employee of the Month award. Nominated by CMCF II Deputy Warden Rufus Burks, Officer Hunt, a two-year veteran with the prison system was characterized as an extremely professional employee. "Officer Hunt possesses all of the ideals of a truly dedicated correctional officer," said Deputy Warden Burks. "First and foremost, she is a team player." Burks added, "Officer Hunt goes beyond the call of duty, and if the need occurs for a correctional officer to pull a double shift, she willingly accepts without hesitation to help prison administration in the time of need because she feels it's her call to duty." Officer Hunt was commended for her dedication, for her professional manner exhibited through her fair and impartial treatment of offenders, and for her willingness to strive to be the best in all that she undertakes.

**Christie Scott**, of Madison, received the Extra Effort award. Scott, a two-year veteran with CMCF serves as a Correctional Law Library Technician at the prison. Nominated by Gia McLeod, Director of the Inmate Legal Assistance Program (ILAP), Scott was commended for her dedication to the legal assistance program. "Scott has worked to educate herself with the background of the legal issues to assist inmates in my absence," said McLeod. "She has exhibited a willingness to learn more about the law and its application to the Inmate Legal Assistance Program and has taken on the duties in an assisting capacity on a day to day basis." Scott was commended for her desire to grow, learn and to assist the ILAP Director. She was commended for her leadership abilities, for her report with co-workers, and for being well liked and respected by inmates and staff alike.

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**Guzel Dempsey**, Correctional Officer II of Jackson, was presented CMCF's Extra Effort Award. Nominated by Correctional Services Aide II Natasha Cavett, Officer Dempsey a three-year veteran at CMCF was characterized as being totally dedicated to his profession. "It takes a special kind of person to pursue a career in corrections," said Cavett. "Officer Dempsey exemplifies all of the qualities of a true correctional officer. He is always on the job, he is caring, yet firm, and he is well liked and respected by co-workers and inmates alike."

**Panessa Johnson**, Correctional Records Technician of Brandon, and a four-year veteran with the prison system was presented CMCF's Extra Effort Award. Cheryl Britt, Chief Correctional Records Officer who nominated Johnson to receive the staff recognition award, described her as being both a dependable and a highly professional employee whose call to duty is always her first order of business. "Johnson's personal demeanor is a valuable asset to CMCF's Records Department," said Britt. "Our department works in close association with Circuit Clerk offices across the state on a daily basis and Panessa Johnson's willingness to help on records matters including processing court order releases greatly enhance this working relationship." Johnson was commended for her professional manner in communicating with other agencies and the general public and was complimented on her spirit of cooperation, her enthusiasm, and her work performance.

**Belita May**, Correctional Officer I of Carthage, was presented MDOC's Extra Effort Award in recognition of her outstanding service at CMCF. May, who joined CMCF's ranks in February 2000, was nominated for her special employee recognition by Correctional Supervisor Sharon Paige. Officer May is currently assigned to CMCF II, Building-A as a first watch security officer. "May is not only professional and dependable, she is a highly dedicated officer," said Paige. "She has been assigned to many difficult posts throughout her employ at CMCF, and she has established an outstanding record with each new security position." Correctional Supervisor Paige added, "Officer May is a very vigilant security officer which is crucial to maintaining a safe prison environment. She is consistent in dealing with inmates and staff alike." May was commended for having a pleasant attitude and for fostering a close working relationship with her co-workers. She was saluted for her loyalty to her job and her willingness to help others whenever called upon.

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**In addition, 12 employees were recognized for their years of service to MDOC. CMCF employees that reached a milestone in service years during March include:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Hometown</b>	<b>Years of Service</b>
David Brooks	Jackson	5 years
Robin Bufkin	Pearl	5 years
Tonja Burks	Forest	5 years
Vickie Burton	Mendenhall	5 years
Carroll Morris	Jackson	5 years
Spencer Figures	Jackson	5 years
Donald Johnson	Jackson	5 years
Paul Johnson	Jackson	5 years
Delorise Kingdom	Jackson	5 years
Milton Lollar	Raymond	5 years
George Michael	Richland	5 years
Melvin Smith	Pearl	5 years
Roland Spann	Jackson	5 years
Eddie Sumrell	Mendenhall	5 years
Lewis Wood	Pelahatchie	5 years
Vonnie Armstrong	Jackson	10 years
Jeanette Dean	Jackson	10 years
Janice Shinnie	Pearl	10 years
Rachel Thornton	Florence	10 years
Almo Wynn	Jackson	10 years
Ollie Bass	Crystal Springs	15 years
Gwendolyn McClinton	Jackson	15 years
Michelle Taylor	Pearl	15 years
David Wooten	Jackson	15 years

Media Note: If you would like a digital photograph of the service award recipients, e-mail [kcrocker@mdoc.state.ms.us](mailto:kcrocker@mdoc.state.ms.us) or phone him at (601) 359-5616.