



PRESS RELEASE

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Corrections Officials Report Death of State Inmate Earnest Lee Hargon at the Mississippi State Penitentiary

Jackson – On August 28,2007, the Mississippi Department of Corrections reported the death of offender Earnest Lee Hargon (MDOC #116388), age 46. Offender Hargon entered the Mississippi Department of Corrections on December 5, 2005, upon being sentenced to death from Yazoo County.

At approximately 8:53 p.m., offender Hargon was engaged in routine cleaning of the tier when offender Jessie Wilson broke out of his cell and attacked Hargon with a home made knife (shank), stabbing him multiple times. Upon officers witnessing the incident, additional security and emergency medical personnel were immediately called and Hargon was transported for medical care. Hargon was pronounced dead at 9:22 p.m. Both offenders were housed at Unit 32 at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman.

Offender Wilson (MDOC #K0605) was originally sentenced out of Leake County for grand larceny in 2000 and Harrison County for aggravated assault in 2003. These convictions earned him a combined eight years of incarceration. Since his incarceration, Wilson has received 98 disciplinary actions for infractions classified as either serious or major, 64 were for violent acts. Of these disciplinary actions, three were for stabbing correctional officers and six have resulted in additional convictions in Sunflower County for an additional fifteen years of incarceration.

At the time of the stabbing, Commissioner Christopher Epps was at Unit 32 at the Mississippi State Penitentiary for an inspection of the ongoing security enhancements. These enhancements include the encasement of air vents, addition of solid steel doors, reinforcement of exercise pens and installation of Icon control systems for in-cell plumbing. Commissioner Epps stated “While we regret this tragedy, this incident will not deter us from the ongoing improvements at Unit 32.”

The death is being investigated by the Correctional Investigation Division.

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