



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS



PRESS RELEASE

Date: May 7, 2009
Contact: Tara Booth

Phone: (601) 359-5701
Fax: (601) 359-5738

MDOC NAMES MELINDA WHITED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Jackson – Today, the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) presented the agency's eighth annual Employee of the Year award to Ms. Melinda Whited of the Community Corrections Division of MDOC. Whited, who has been employed with MDOC since 2003, is a Field Officer III in Region One which encompasses 33 counties in Northern Mississippi. She received the award at the Commissioner's Annual Statewide Meeting which honored more than a hundred MDOC employees.

Hired in May 2003, Whited began her career as a Correctional Field Worker in the Tishomingo Probation and Parole Office. While attending the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers' Training Academy, she received awards for the highest academic average and the highest physical training average of her graduating class. Her passion and commitment to the field of corrections has had a remarkable impact on other MDOC staff.

"Today is a celebration of the exceptional hard work and achievements of some of our best staff," said MDOC Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections Lora Cole. "Field Officer Whited and the other nominees are of such high calibre and we gladly recognize their outstanding achievements."

Mississippi State Senator Willie Simmons was the featured speaker at the event, which included Mr. Jim Gondles, Executive Director of the American Correctional Association, Mr. John Miller of Mississippi Prison Industries Corporation (MPIC) as well as MPIC board members, legislators, corrections employees, parole board members and family and friends of the five nominees of the Employee of the Year award.

MDOC initiated the employee recognition awards program in 2001 and hosted the first Employee of the Year event in 2002 to honor employees who received employee awards during the previous year. Senator Simmons said, "I am proud to have served as an MDOC employee prior to becoming a state senator. I am honored to stand with you and commend you for the service you provide to the taxpayers of our state."

"MDOC is only as strong and effective as its employees. These 5 honorees are worthy of this year's nominations as they have earned the recognition by distinguishing themselves among their peers and setting the right examples, making an impact on others with proven, tested judgment and capabilities," said MDOC Commissioner Christopher Epps during Thursday's ceremony. "Our mission of providing and promoting public safety is not an easy task. This is achieved by using sound correctional principles and standards. The honorees have successfully put into action those principles and those standards."

Commissioner Epps and the MDOC executive staff recognized MDOC employees in calendar year 2008 for their daily dedication and hard work in maintaining public safety through offender care, custody, control and treatment. Employees were selected from the Mississippi State Penitentiary, Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, South Mississippi Correctional Institution, the Community Corrections Division and Central Office as the Employee of the Year nominees.

The five nominees for the MDOC Employee of the Year were:
Victor Cavett, Purchasing Agent, Central Office
Kenneth Johnson, Lieutenant, Central Mississippi Correctional Facility
Sherm L. Mack, Sergeant, Mississippi State Penitentiary
Jacqueline Miller, Lieutenant, South Mississippi Correctional Institution
Melinda L. Whited, Field Officer III, Community Corrections, Region I

##

Media Note: For photos of the event, please contact Kent Crocker at 601.359.5689 or kcrocker@mdoc.state.ms.us.