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## **Christopher B. Epps** **COMMISSIONER**



Christopher B. Epps was appointed Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) by former Governor Ronnie Musgrove on August 30, 2002. He was reappointed to the post on January 13, 2004 by Governor Haley R. Barbour.

Commissioner Epps started his career with the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) in 1982 as a correctional officer at the Mississippi State Penitentiary. His extensive corrections experience with the MDOC includes: Chief of Staff, Deputy Commissioner of Institutions, Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections, Director of Offender Services, Deputy Superintendent, Chief of Security, Corrections Case Management Supervisor, Director of Treatment Services and Corrections Case Manager. Additionally, he has served as Disciplinary Hearing Officer/Investigator and Director of Records for the agency.

Commissioner Epps has held various leadership positions throughout his career in corrections and in the military. Having served in the armed forces since 1984, Commissioner Epps received an honorable discharge from the Mississippi Army National Guard after attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. The commissioner is a member of the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA), serving on the Correctional Industries, Research & Technology, Re-entry & Community Corrections, Racial Disparity and the Program & Training Committees. He serves as an Auditor with the American Correctional Association (ACA), and in 2008 was elected to a 2-year term as Treasurer of the ACA. He was elected in 2006 to serve on the ACA Nominating Committee, and in June 2004, he was elected to the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections of the American Correctional Association for the term of 2004 – 2008. In 2007 he was appointed to the Executive Committee for the Commission. He also is a long standing member of the Southern States Correctional Association (SSCA), currently serving as President-Elect of the Association, and in 2009 he was appointed to the Correctional Peace Officers (CPO) Foundation National Board of Directors. Additionally, he serves on the Board for Alcohol Services, Mississippi Prison Industries, the Mississippi Drug Court Advisory Committee, and is a former mentor with Big Brother/Big Sister of Mississippi. Other appointments consist of serving on the Council of Advisors for the College of Public Service at Jackson State University; and appointments by Governor Haley Barbour to the State Workforce Investment Board, and the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS) as Mississippi's representative. He is Chairman of the Mississippi Wireless Communications Commission (WCC) and is a member of the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). Former Chairman of the Victim Services Committee for ASCA, the Commissioner has also served ACA as the Chairman of Workforce Development and as Chairman of the Adults Standards Committee.

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Commissioner Epps' list of accomplishments and awards are numerous and include being named "Humanitarian of the Year" in 2007 by the Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections (MAPC) as well as "Professional of the Year" in 2000 and 2004; the 2007 Distinguished Alumni Award from the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; one of the "50 Most Influential African Americans in Mississippi" by BlackMississippi.com and 2004 recipient of "The Distinguished Public Service Award" by the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), Department of Criminal Justice, for his contributions to the criminal justice system. Additional honors include: an Army Commendations Medal; Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; National Defense Service Medal; NCO Professional Development Ribbon; Army Service Ribbon; Mississippi Medal of Efficiency; Mississippi War Medal; and the Mississippi Longevity Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. Commissioner Epps was awarded the honorary title "Kentucky Colonel" in 2007 by Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher. In May 2009, Commissioner Epps was presented Mississippi House of Representatives Concurrent Resolution 114 commending the Commissioner on his dedication and outstanding service to the Mississippi Department of Corrections and upon being the longest serving Commissioner in the history of the agency.

Commissioner Epps' correctional/civilian affiliations include the American Correctional Association (ACA), Association of State Corrections Administrators (ASCA), North American Association of Wardens and Superintendents (NAAWS), Southern States Correctional Association (SSCA), and Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections (MAPC), the Correctional Peace Officer Foundation (CPO), the National Guard Association of Mississippi and the National Guard Association of the United States.

A native of Tchula, Mississippi, Commissioner Epps is a graduate of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia with a Master of Arts degree in Guidance and Counseling. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from Mississippi Valley State University.

Commissioner Epps is married to Catherlean Sanders Epps and they have two sons, Chris and Tracey.