

Christopher B. Epps
COMMISSIONER



Commissioner Christopher B. Epps is the longest serving Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

He was first appointed by then Democratic Gov. Ronnie Musgrove on Aug. 30, 2002, and reappointed on Jan. 13, 2004, by then Republican Gov. Haley Barbour, who served two terms.

On Jan. 9, 2012, Republican Gov. Phil Bryant reappointed him.

Commissioner Epps is a nationally recognized leader in Corrections. He is in high demand also as a motivator and has been featured in such nationally recognized publications as *The New York Times* and *Time* magazine.

In January 2013, he was sworn in as President of the American Correctional Association (ACA).

In June 2012, he testified before the United States Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights.

Through his leadership, Mississippi has become a model for corrections reform.

Commissioner Epps started his career with the Department of Corrections in 1982 as a correctional officer at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman.

He has since served extensively with the agency, holding several positions, including 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, Corrections Case Manager, Disciplinary Hearing Officer/Investigator and Director of Records.

Commissioner Epps has held numerous leadership positions in Corrections and in the military.

Before being elected President of the American Correctional Association (ACA) in May 2010, he had served as Auditor. He also had been elected to the Commission on Accreditation in 2004 and as Treasurer in 2008, a position that placed him on the ACA Executive Committee.

In addition to his leadership with ACA, he is Vice-President of the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) and was ASCA Treasurer.

Commissioner Epps received an honorable discharge from the Mississippi National Guard in March 2008, when he retired as a lieutenant colonel, having served in the armed forces since 1984.

In addition to the ACA and the ASCA, Commissioner Epps' correctional/civilian affiliations include the North American Association of Wardens and Superintendents (NAAWS), the Southern States Correctional Association (SSCA), the Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections (MAPC), and the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation (CPOF).

He is past president of the SSCA and former chairman of the Mississippi Wireless Communications Commission. He serves on the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation National Board of Directors, the Mississippi Prison Industries, the Mississippi Drug Court Advisory Committee, the Mississippi Analysis and Information Center, the Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition, the Council of Advisors for the College of Public Service at Jackson State University, the State Workforce Investment Board, and the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision. He formerly served as a member of the Board of Directors of Alcohol Services and as a mentor with Big Brother/Big Sister of Mississippi.

Commissioner Epps' list of accomplishments and awards also are as numerous. In December 2012, he was honored as the nation's Outstanding Corrections Commissioner for 2011 with the Michael Francke Award from the ASCA. Further honors include: Humanitarian of the Year in 2007 by the MAPC, 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 The Distinguished Public Service Award by the University of Southern Mississippi, Department of Criminal Justice, in 2004. In 2007, then-Kentucky Gov. Ernie Fletcher awarded him the honorary title "Kentucky Colonel."

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 has received three separate Mississippi House of Representatives and Senate commendations: House Concurrent Resolution 114 recognizing him for dedicated and outstanding service to the MDOC and recognition for being the longest serving commissioner in the history of the agency, 2009; House Concurrent Resolution 143 upon his national acclaim and respect of his peers as evidenced by his election as the 102nd President of the ACA, 2011; and Senate Concurrent Resolution 551 saluting him during Black History Month as the longest serving Mississippi Department of Corrections commissioner and as the recipient of the Michael Francke Award, 2012.

A native of Tchula, Mississippi, Commissioner Epps earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Mississippi Valley State University and a master's degree in guidance counseling from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

He currently is a deacon at the Hanging Moss Road Church of Christ in Jackson, Mississippi. He is married to Catherlean Sanders Epps, and they have two sons, Chris and Tracey.