



# PRESS RELEASE

MS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS \*723 N. PRESIDENT ST. \*JACKSON, MS 39202 \*(601)359-5600 \*(FAX: 5738)

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Contact: Claire Papizan  
Phone: (601) 359-5689  
Fax: (601) 359-5738

## MDOC Holds Graduation Ceremony

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Jackson – The Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) held a graduation ceremony today for 25 new correctional officer cadets at the Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP) in Parchman, Mississippi. These 25 new cadets help MDOC fill much needed correctional officer positions at MSP; currently there are approximately 130 vacancies.

Christopher B. Epps, Deputy Commissioner of Institutions at MDOC, was the featured speaker. In his message to the graduating class, Epps encouraged the new correctional officers to “reach for the top because the bottom is crowded.” Epps said, “You can make a career in corrections, so please strive and reach for the top.”

These new cadets will begin working as full-time correctional officers at MSP next week. Cadets have to complete eight weeks of training at the MDOC Training Academy, which includes classes in hostage negotiations, firearms training and self-defense. As part of the training program, cadets also have to spend a minimum of one week of on-the-job training with a supervisor.

Of the 25 cadet graduates, nine were recognized for academic and skills achievements. The Top Gun Award is awarded to the cadet with 100% accuracy in the firing range; the recipient from this class is Robert Williams, of Cleveland, Miss. In addition, academic awards are given to the cadets with the first and second highest grade point average, and all cadets with a 95% or higher grade point average. The cadets with the highest grade point average of 98% are Roshallie Puckett, of Isola, Miss.; Christie Simpson, of Shaw, Miss.; and Demetria Thompson, of Mound Bayou, Miss. The cadet with the second highest grade point average of 96% is Erica Shannon, of Mound Bayou, Miss. Four cadets received honor graduate awards (95% or higher) and they are:

Gerri Anderson, of Mound Bayou, Miss.  
Muhammad Anderson, of Shelby, Miss.  
Lorie Brooks, of Clarksdale, Miss.  
Lanaffriah Parker, of Winstonville, of Miss.

MDOC is searching for new correctional officer applicants to work at all three of the facilities. Anyone interested in receiving more information about becoming an MDOC correctional officer can contact Jesse Smith, MDOC Recruitment Director, 723 N. President Street, Jackson, MS, 39202. Or, e-mail Smith at [jsmith@mdoc.state.ms.us](mailto:jsmith@mdoc.state.ms.us) .

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