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40 YEARS AND COUNTING

BY TIM DURR



The year was 1975. Gerald Ford was president, the average income per year was \$14,100, the average cost of a new house was \$39,300, a first-class stamp cost 10 cents, and a loaf of bread cost 33 cents. Microsoft was founded, and Motorola obtained a patent for the first portable mobile phone. Some of the most popular television shows were “Sanford and Son”, “All in the Family”, “Laverne & Shirley”, and “Happy Days”, and popular songs were “You’re No Good” by Linda Ronstadt, “Shining Star” by Earth, Wind & Fire, “Love Will Keep Us Together” by The Captain & Tennille, and “Get Down Tonight” and “That’s The Way (I Like It)” by KC and the Sunshine Band.

In addition, 1975 was the year the Golden State Warriors last won an NBA championship before defeating the Cleveland Cavaliers to become this year’s champions. It also was the year a young James Blackwell began his career with Mississippi State Hospital’s (MSH) Police Department. Blackwell received a pin at MSH’s Department Directors Meeting June 10 honoring him for 40 years of continuous service to the hospital.

“I started on June 16, 1975,” said Blackwell as he reflected on his 40 years at MSH. “I owe a debt of gratitude to former MSH Police Chief Dave Gayden who thought enough of me to give me the opportunity to work for him. When I started, I did not know that I would eventually replace him as Chief.”

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MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

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VISION
Mental wellness in every life, in every home,
and in every community.

MISSION
To help the individuals we serve achieve mental wellness by encouraging hope, promoting safety and supporting recovery while utilizing resources efficiently.

- OUR GOALS**
1. Accelerate the implementation of person-centered and recovery-oriented treatment and care.
 2. Improve clinical, physical, and environmental safety and quality for patients and residents.
 3. Minimize waste of resources and cost.

CORE VALUES
Respect – Relationships - Accountability -
Teamwork - Diversity

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Before coming to MSH, Blackwell, a Raleigh, Miss. native, served in the United States Army as a Military Police Officer. During that time, he was stationed at military bases throughout the United States and in Europe. Blackwell has a wealth of law enforcement training, including graduating from the Advanced Military Police Academy, as well as the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers' Training Academy (MLEOTA). In addition, he has studied at Jones County Junior College, Hinds Community College, Jackson State University and Mississippi College.

Blackwell started his career as a MSH police officer, was named Police Chief in 1981, and Police Director in 1991. He said he has had many memorable moments over the past 40 years at MSH, but the most exciting moment is when he married fellow MSH employee Lilly Lee (now Lilly Blackwell) on Nov. 6, 1980. Mrs. Blackwell currently has 51 years of service at MSH, and works as an Administrative Assistant in the hospital's Psychology Department. She is scheduled to retire June 30.

Blackwell said other exciting memories include the filming of scenes from three movies on the MSH campus.

"Scenes from 'A Time to Kill', 'The Ponder Heart', and 'The Beast Within' were filmed at the hospital," he said. "Our department provided security and traffic control. It was exciting to see the production process and to see some big-name stars. We even received a letter from the production company of 'A Time to Kill' thanking us for the great job we did."

Blackwell said over the years, the police department has undergone various changes in order to improve police operations and provide better service to patients, residents and staff. One of the changes is that all MSH Police officers must successfully complete the training academy (MLEOTA), and all new officers must complete a 3-day per week physical training program to prepare them to enter the academy. He said the department has two physical training instructors, two certified range officers, and two officers on the Rankin County Special Response Team.

Blackwell has developed a positive working relationship with surrounding law enforcement agencies, and MSH has hosted several training exercises involving local sheriff departments, local municipal police departments and even the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Fed-



eral Bureau of Investigations (FBI). Blackwell was also instrumental in getting MSH involved in the Law Enforcement Officers Special Olympics Torch Run.

Blackwell said he particularly loves the patients and residents.

“I always try to treat a person like I want to be treated, and I’ve always given patients a lot of respect,” he said. “I tell my officers to always try to find out patients’ names and address them by their names instead of saying ‘hey you.’”

Blackwell said there was one patient he and his wife took special interest in. He called him “Fats” but other employees called him “Pops”.

“Me and ‘Fats’ became big buddies, and Lilly and I sort of adopted him,” Blackwell said. “He was brought to the hospital when he was 17. He spent more than 50 years at the hospital, and to my knowledge, no one ever returned to visit him. We bought him clothes, escorted him to off campus events like Pearl Day, and Lilly cooked him meals on holidays and other special occasions.”

Blackwell said sometimes staff would have to call him in order to persuade Fats to cooperate.

“They would call me in the middle of the night saying ‘Pops won’t take his insulin shots,’” Blackwell said. “As soon as I would walk in the door, he would begin rolling his sleeve up so that he could receive his shot.”

When Fats died in 2004, Blackwell and his wife coordinated his funeral and burial at MSH’s Rose Hill Cemetery.

“We even took up donations and bought him a headstone,” Blackwell said. “He had always told me he wanted to be buried at the hospital, which he considered to be his home.”



Blackwell said since 1975, mental health treatment has improved tremendously.

“It’s been very educational to see how the treatment of mental illness has advanced since I’ve been at the hospital,” he said. “With the advancement in medicines, many people have been provided the opportunity to return to society and become productive citizens – whereas years ago they may have had to be institutionalized long-term.”

Blackwell said during the past 40 years he has reported directly to 10 different supervisors, which included three hospital directors, five assistant directors, the director of Risk Management, and the director of Safety and Investigative Services.

“To have had so many bosses must mean that I am a survivor,” he said.

He said the 40 years have gone by really fast, and at this point in his life, he has no immediate plans to retire.

“I don’t know of any other place where I could have gone to work and enjoyed it more than I enjoy working at Mississippi State Hospital,” Blackwell said. “I love what I do.”

SHADOW OAK CAMPGROUND UNDERGOES A TRANSFORMATION

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN



Shadow Oak Campground, which had drifted into an unkempt state over a period of years, is all spiffed up and humming with activity again.

On any given day, you might see eager anglers fishing from the rebuilt pier. The clubhouse is open again. Day camps are being held on the grounds. Other activities are in the planning stages.

A re-opening ceremony was held on June 1 for the campground that originally opened on the west edge of Mississippi State Hospital's campus in 1986.

"A lot went into this project," said Stacey Davis, MSH Therapeutic Recreation Services Director.

Weeds and trees had overtaken the grounds, the pier was falling apart and the clubhouse and cabins needed work, as well.

"You know how things can go down

when they're left unattended," Davis said. "That's what had happened out there. It had become a wooded area, and it just wasn't being used."

Now, the campground is springing back to life.

Davis cited in particular the efforts of Larry Hardy, who took on the job of campground coordinator, Tommy Bodker of the Physical Plant and Lewis Steen of the Maintenance Department.

"Mr. Hardy led the effort out there," Davis said. "He basically did most of it himself. He had help, but he did a lot of it. Mr. Bodker supplied the lumber, and it took a lot of lumber to fix that pier."

Ricky Dorsett, Karl Calender and DeWayne Green worked on the pier over a period of many months.

Hardy said he only deserved "a little bit" of credit for the project, that he

had a lot of help.

"It'd take a long time to tell you all we did," Hardy said. "We remodeled the pier. We remodeled the clubhouse. It was in very bad shape. Stuff was being stored in there. The hailstorm (of 2013) had knocked out a lot of windows. It was a mess in there.

"We worked on the cabins, cleaned those up. And we did a whole lot of brush-clearing. We started on that about a year ago. Right now, we're in the process of re-doing the walkway from the pavilion to the bathhouse and one of the cabins.

"It might take another year to get (the campground) the way I want it."

Davis said the inspiration for the project came from a chance meeting about 10 months ago with Bobby Stephens, the former recreation director at the hospital.

"He asked me how the campground



was doing, and I said, ‘Not well,’ Davis recalled. “He said to me, ‘Work on it, I know you can do it.’”

The original idea for Shadow Oak came from former MSH Director James C. Stubbs, who wanted to promote camping and other outdoor activities as a form of recreation therapy. Mississippi Federation of Women’s Clubs and its president at the time, Gladys Jackson, spearheaded a fund-raising effort, starting in 1984.

The proposed location for the campground, adjoining the small lake on the west side of the campus, was described in an MFWC newsletter as “beautiful, natural wooded, peaceful setting where the patients may enjoy outdoor activities, picnics, and outings on a daily schedule as well as the camping experience.”

The full cost, including a pavilion, bathhouse, site work and utilities and two 20-bed cabins, was estimated at \$57,860.00. No state funds were appropriated. MFWC asked its membership to donate \$8,200 for the construction of one of the cabins, to be called the MFWC Cottage for Women.

Ground was broken in 1984. The nature trail was cut in 1985. And



on April 4, 1986, the two cabins and bathhouse were completed and Shadow Oak Campground officially opened with a dedication ceremony honoring the efforts of MFWC, which had raised more than \$10,000 to that point.

Gladys Jackson lit the first campfire at the ceremony attended by about 400.

Ten years later, in 1996, when the pavilion, clubhouse, three cabins and the pier were completed, there was an anniversary ceremony.

Nineteen years after that, there was another ceremony, celebrating the 2015 transformation.

“If you saw what it looked like before,” Davis said, “you won’t believe what we have out there today.”

JEANE DILLON - DIRECTOR OF NURSING

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Jeane Dillon “discovered” Mississippi State Hospital about 10 years ago when she escorted a group of nursing students doing clinicals on the campus.

“I was so impressed,” she recalls. “I liked the people we met, and they made us feel so welcome.”

She applied for a nursing position and was hired to work on Building 23, Oak Circle Center. Ten years later, she’s Director of Nursing on that same building.

Dillon, who has more than 30 years experience in health care, was a charge nurse on B-23 for four years before assuming her new duties on May 28.

“I like the atmosphere here,” she said.

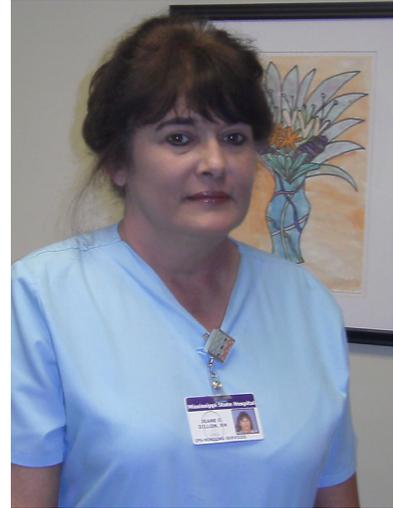
“The campus is beautiful. The people enjoy what they do and work hard at it. I’ve always been impressed with every aspect of this place.”

She left MSH briefly in 2010 and credits Billy Walton, the previous DON on B-23 who is now a nurse practitioner in Male Receiving, with convincing her to return.

“Billy was Building 23,” Dillon said. “He made it a great place to work.”

Dillon was born in Lexington and received her nursing degree from Hinds Community College.

She now lives on a farm in Attala County, where a herd of cattle, some horses and a 2-year-old granddaughter keep her busy.



Jeane Dillon

TAISHA TRAVIS - DIRECTOR OF NURSING

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Taisha Travis, promoted to Director of Nursing on Buildings 31 and 48 in May, says she takes “great joy in the service I’m able to provide to others.”

Travis has worked almost 14 years over two stints at Mississippi State Hospital. The Pelahatchie native, who now lives in Brandon, started as a nurse in 1997, left for a time to work at University of Mississippi Medical Center, then returned in 2007.

“What I like about working at Mississippi State Hospital is that, in the (Jaquith) nursing home, we transform lives through our commitment to core values,” Travis said.

“The voice of our residents and their families always comes first. I believe

that relationships matter. We have to build strong relationships with our residents and their families.”

Travis said when she was a young girl she had an uncle who was ill and she helped her grandmother and mother take care of him. When she heard friends talking about health care as a career, it occurred to her that nursing might be a good fit.

It appears she was right.

“I take a lot of pride in providing service to our residents and their families,” she said.

Travis likes to shop but says her favorite activity is just spending time with family. She is married with two kids and also has a nephew that she



Taisha Travis

“adores.”

“I always want to make sure that my family is well,” Travis said. “If they’re OK, I’m OK.”

DARYL MAGEE - DIRECTOR OF NURSING

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Daryl Magee, who started April 6 as Director of Nursing on Buildings 87 and 46, brings more than 30 years of diverse health care experience to Mississippi State Hospital.

Magee first worked in a hospital setting as a part-time stock boy when he was 16 years old. He most recently worked for Baptist Health Systems (his second stint there) and at a Hattiesburg nursing home prior to that. He also served 20 years in the Air Force, retiring in 2012.

Magee said in his relatively short time at MSH he has come to appreciate the work environment.

“People are laid-back here; everybody’s been easy to get along with,” he said. “The pace is different from where I’ve worked before. It’s still busy but less hectic.”

Magee, a McComb native, got his associate degree in nursing at Southwest Mississippi Community College in Summit and his bachelor’s degree at the University of Southern Mississippi.

“I like what we do,” Magee said of nursing. “Taking care of patients is an important job. At the nursing home, for some of these folks, we’re all they’ve got. The people who work here understand that.”

He is a big fan of Alabama football and NASCAR driver Jeff Gordon.

“And I love to go fishing whenever I can,” he said.

Magee now lives in Clinton. He is married and has two children and four grandchildren.



Daryl Magee

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HUNTER GRADUATES FROM CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

BY TIM DURR

Congratulations to Diana Hunter, Personnel Director at Mississippi State Hospital, for graduating from the Mississippi State Personnel Board's Certified Public Manager Program (CPM) and earning the Certificate in Supervisory Management.

The nationally accredited Certified Public Manager Program combines classroom training and experiential learning to develop leadership and supervisory skills in managers of state agencies. Participants must complete six levels of course work, successfully complete real-world projects, and pass multiple written examinations in order to complete the certification program.

"I am grateful for the privilege to participate in the Certified Supervisory Manager and Certified Public Manager training programs which afforded me the opportunity to enhance my leadership skills and continue my professional development," Hunter said.

Hunter has worked at MSH for 22 years



Diana Hunter

BOYKIN GRADUATES FROM ESCP

BY TIM DURR

Congratulations to Donna Boykin, Executive Administrative Assistant to MSH Director James Chastain, for completing the Mississippi State Personnel Board's Executive Services Certification Program (ESCP). Boykin is also a graduate of the Administrative Services Certification Program (ASCP).

The State Personnel Board created ASCP as a training program for administrative assistants who work in state government. There are three levels, each consisting of three days of classwork with several electives, book report, cross training activity, and follow up reporting. These classes are designed to teach participants about state government. ESCP was developed to further educate the executive level of ASCP graduates. There are three levels consisting of three days of classwork with several electives, a book report, an activity report, and a power point presentation. These classes are designed to teach participants more about themselves and their abilities.

"I am happy to have reached this point," said Boykin during the graduation ceremony held June 4 at the Old Capitol Museum in Downtown Jackson. "It's been a long journey, but it was well worth the effort. I learned a lot about state government and how it works, and this program really helps you to become a better person."

Boykin has worked at MSH for 28 years.



MSH Director James Chastain was on hand to congratulate Donna Boykin as she graduated from the Mississippi State Personnel Board's Executive Services Certification Program.

HARRISON, BARRY NAMED CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR OF BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH FROM MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

George Harrison has been named Chairperson of the Board of Mental Health and J. Richard Barry has been named Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Mental Health effective July 1, 2015.

Harrison of Coffeeville attended Northwest Mississippi Community College and served as a Production Manager for 41 years at Lennox International in Grenada. He previously served on the Governor's Council for Developmental Disabilities and the BMR Advisory Council. Harrison was appointed to represent the First Congressional District and is a family member of a consumer.

Barry of Meridian is partner in the law firm of Hammack, Barry, Thaggard and May, LLP in Meridian. He received his law degree from the University of Mississippi. He is a member of the American Bar Association, Mississippi Bar Association, Lauderdale County Bar Association and the American Health Lawyers Association. Barry was appointed to serve as the Third Congressional District representative.



George Harrison



Richard Barry

WARNER, BULLOCK GRADUATE FROM SEDI

BY TIM DURR

Mississippi State Hospital Service Outcome Director Karen Warner and Jaquith Nursing Director Bill Bullock recently graduated from the State Executive Development Institute (SEDI). SEDI is an annual executive style workshop offered by the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and Community Development at Mississippi State University.

SEDI is designed to prepare mid to upper level state and local government executives to be more effective leaders. During the week-long intensive course, a broad range of topics are delivered by state and local officials, nationally recognized leaders and Mississippi State's teaching and research faculty. The SEDI curriculum includes management theory, organizational development concepts and techniques, administrative and applied management techniques, and a variety of other related and timely topics.



Karen Warner



Bill Bullock

THANKS MHTS FOR ALL YOU DO

BY TIM DURR



Wednesday, June 24 was a special day for Mental Health Technicians at Mississippi State Hospital (MSH). The 1st Annual MHT Appreciation Day was held to thank MHTs for their hard work and dedication.

“We wanted to show our Mental Health Technicians how much we appreciate them,” said Audrey Washington, Nurse Administrator. “They are a very important piece of the puzzle that involves taking care of our patients. They are the people who are out there on the front line, and if something is going wrong with the patients, they will be the first to know.”

The Appreciation Day began at 7:30 a.m. with a breakfast for C-Shift MHTs, and continued with a cookout for A-Shift MHTs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and a cookout for B-Shift

MHTs from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

“Mental Health Technicians are the heart and soul of this hospital,” said MSH Director James Chastain as he greeted C-Shift employees at the breakfast. “We appreciate all that they do, and we like to take an opportunity as often as we can to thank them for their dedicated service and contribution. There are a lot of employers in this area that would love to have our MHTs working for them, and we are very fortunate that they choose to work at Mississippi State Hospital.”

MHTs Jasmine Moore and Madalyn Hayes from Building 63 said the Appreciation Day was a great gesture.

“I think that this was a good, creative idea to make the workers feel appreciated,” Moore said.

“It was very nice of them to show us some appreciation,” Hayes said. “You don’t get this type of recognition from every place of employment, so this was very nice.”

Steven Werth from Building 203 Ward 3 expressed his appreciation for having a day set aside to honor MHTs.

“I think this has been a long time coming, and on behalf of the MHTs, I thank you very much for doing this for us,” Werth said. “We really appreciate the recognition, and it lets us know that we are thought of as valuable members of Mississippi State Hospital as we continue to provide service for our patients.”

Washington said the first-time event was a huge success.

“The MHT staff seemed to enjoy it immensely,” she said. “I only heard good things about the Appreciation Day, and we plan to make this an annual event.”

Washington said she thanks everyone who played a part in making the event a success, including those who donated food, money or their time.

“I also thank Mr. Chastain for coming out to greet the MHT staff, and I thank Laura Allen from the Service Outcome Division for sponsoring the breakfast,” she said.

Washington said she also thanks those persons who donated items for and/or worked at a garage sale that was held to raise funds for the Appreciation Day.



CONGRATULATIONS JUNE EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



Krystal Parker of Jackson was named MSH's June Employee of the Month for Direct Care. Parker is a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for Jaquith Nursing Home's Jefferson Inn (Building 33). She has worked at Jaquith for nearly six years.

"Words cannot describe the great contributions and work ethics of this employee," said Angela Applewhite, LPN for Jefferson Inn who nominated Parker for Employee of the Month. "She's a very honest, self-motivated and diligent worker."

Applewhite praised Parker's professional relationship with the residents.

"She goes above and beyond for the residents," Applewhite said. "They're treated with the utmost respect, receive proper care, and appreciate the trustworthy relationship they have with Ms. Parker."

For example, Applewhite said Parker ensures that residents are well groomed daily, as well as prior to any events or appointments they have to attend.

"If a resident feels down, they make it their business to express their feelings and concerns to Ms. Parker," Applewhite said. "She also receives compliments from family members who express their appreciation for her taking care of their loved ones and making sure they are clean and looking nice when they visit."



Heather Vaughn of Brandon was named MSH's June Employee of the Month for Clinical Service. Vaughn is a registered nurse for Jaquith Nursing Home's Jaquith Inn (Building 78). She has been employed at Jaquith for three years.

"Ms. Vaughn presents herself to residents, residents' families, visitors and coworkers in a most respectful manner at all times," said Lisa Dees, RN, who nominated Vaughn for Employee of the Month. "Ms. Vaughn can be trusted to complete tasks, and she is very knowledgeable regarding resident care."

Dees said Vaughn is very helpful in assisting others, and exhibits a positive attitude.

"She is a very positive person, and this causes others around her to be positive as well," Dees said.

She said Vaughn is concerned about others' welfare.

"Not only does she care about herself, but she cares about others as well," Dees said.



Irene Moorehead of Terry was named MSH's June Employee of the Month for Support Services. Moorehead is a Housekeeper on MSH's Forensics Unit, Building 43. She has been employed at the hospital for nearly 11 years.

Moorehead was nominated for Employee of the Month by Charlotte Steele, Service Administrator for Buildings 43, 87 and 46.

"I nominated Ms. Irene on behalf of the staff on three buildings," Steele said. "For the past 6 to 8 months, one building has been without a second housekeeper and another building has been without a second housekeeper intermittently. Ms. Irene has voluntarily, and with a smile, filled in on those two buildings as well as taking care of her home building, 43. Not only does Ms. Irene do whatever she is asked, she makes suggestions about additional duties to improve the situation."

"Ms. Irene is always happy to fill in for others when they have to be out for family or health reasons," Steele said. "Her attendance is excellent, and she does an excellent job of cleaning."

Steele said Moorehead is often used to train others.

"She has trained housekeepers new to the hospital or new to a building," Steele said. "When buildings are hiring new staff, everyone says, 'Please let Ms. Irene train the new person.' When she fills in on another building, after she leaves, building staff can't stop talking about her skills and energy."