

ASPIRE

HOPE

SAFETY

RECOVERY

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Larry Hardy, Campground Coordinator, Clinical Service. Hardy, from Mendenhall, has been employed at MSH for 27 years.



Sherri Proctor, Mental Health Technician, Direct Care. Proctor, from Brandon, has been employed at MSH for 17 years.



Justin Scott, Vocational Training Instructor, Support Services. Scott, from Brandon, has worked at MSH for eight years.

HARDY, PROCTOR AND SCOTT NAMED 2015 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

The speech CJ Stewart delivered at Mississippi State Hospital's Employee of the Year Program was entitled "Showing Your Scars: Life Lessons That Stay With You."

Stewart, seriously injured while serving in the U.S. Army, has dedicated his life to sharing his experiences with others. He challenged those in the audience at the Auditorium on Building 38 to find their own mission in life, to create their own legacy and to become who they are meant to be.

"Who you are is more important than what you do," he said.

Stewart emphasized being "transcendent," being part of something bigger than yourself, in the way that soldiers are part of a bigger unit bound by a common cause.

In a very real sense, MSH's 2015 Employees of the Year – Larry Hardy, Sherri Proctor and Justin Scott – exemplify Stewart's message.

MSH's mission -- to help the individuals we serve achieve mental wellness by encouraging hope, promoting safety,



and supporting recovery while utilizing resources efficiently – is their chosen cause.

“We all need to understand that being a good person means doing things for someone else,” said Scott, who started working at MSH in the Pantry about eight years ago and is now a Vocational Training Instructor in Inventory Control. “When you treat other people the way you would want to be treated and you work hard at what you do, you can work your way up.”

Scott was named Employee of the Year for Support Services, Proctor for Direct Care and Hardy for Clinical Service. They were selected from among the 36 Employees of the Month honored during the year as part of the Friends of Mississippi State Hospital’s Employee Recognition Program.

“You are all here for two reasons,” said James Chastain, MSH Director. “One, you are dedicated, determined and disciplined staff who

work hard every day to serve the patients and residents of Mississippi State Hospital.

“And two, somebody took notice of all that hard work. I’d like to thank the individuals who noticed the effort and excellent work and nominated these individuals for the Employee of the Month awards. Those nominations are the lifeblood of this system.”

In acknowledgment of the work ethic it takes to earn Employee of the Year honors, Chastain quoted from Hall of Fame football coach Vince Lombardi: “The man on top of the mountain didn’t fall there.”

“I’m proud to work with each one of you,” Chastain said, “and I’m grateful that you choose to work at Mississippi State Hospital.”

Hardy, of Mendenhall, serves as Campground Coordinator and has been employed at the hospital for 27 years.

“I like being with the patients,” said Hardy, who started out working in the Rec Hall. “I like being flexible in what I do. There’s never a dull day here.”

Hardy worked long hours in the recent renovation of the campground, a project that included the rebuilding of the pier, a popular fishing spot for patients and residents.

He said it was well worth the effort: “It’s very rewarding seeing patients having a good time out there.”

“Mr. Hardy is a valued team member who is always willing to go the extra mile for the good of the patients,” said Recreation Services Supervisor Stacey Davis, who nominated Hardy for Employee of the Month. “He is always consistent and shows continued dedication toward the hospital’s success. He always demonstrates a passion for his work. His efficiency, attention to detail and organizational skills are key components to this model employee.”



Proctor, of Brandon, is a Mental Health Technician. She has worked at MSH for 17 years.

She said she was “very surprised” to hear her name called as an Employee of the Year.

“It is a big honor and I do appreciate it,” Proctor said. “I love my job. I en-

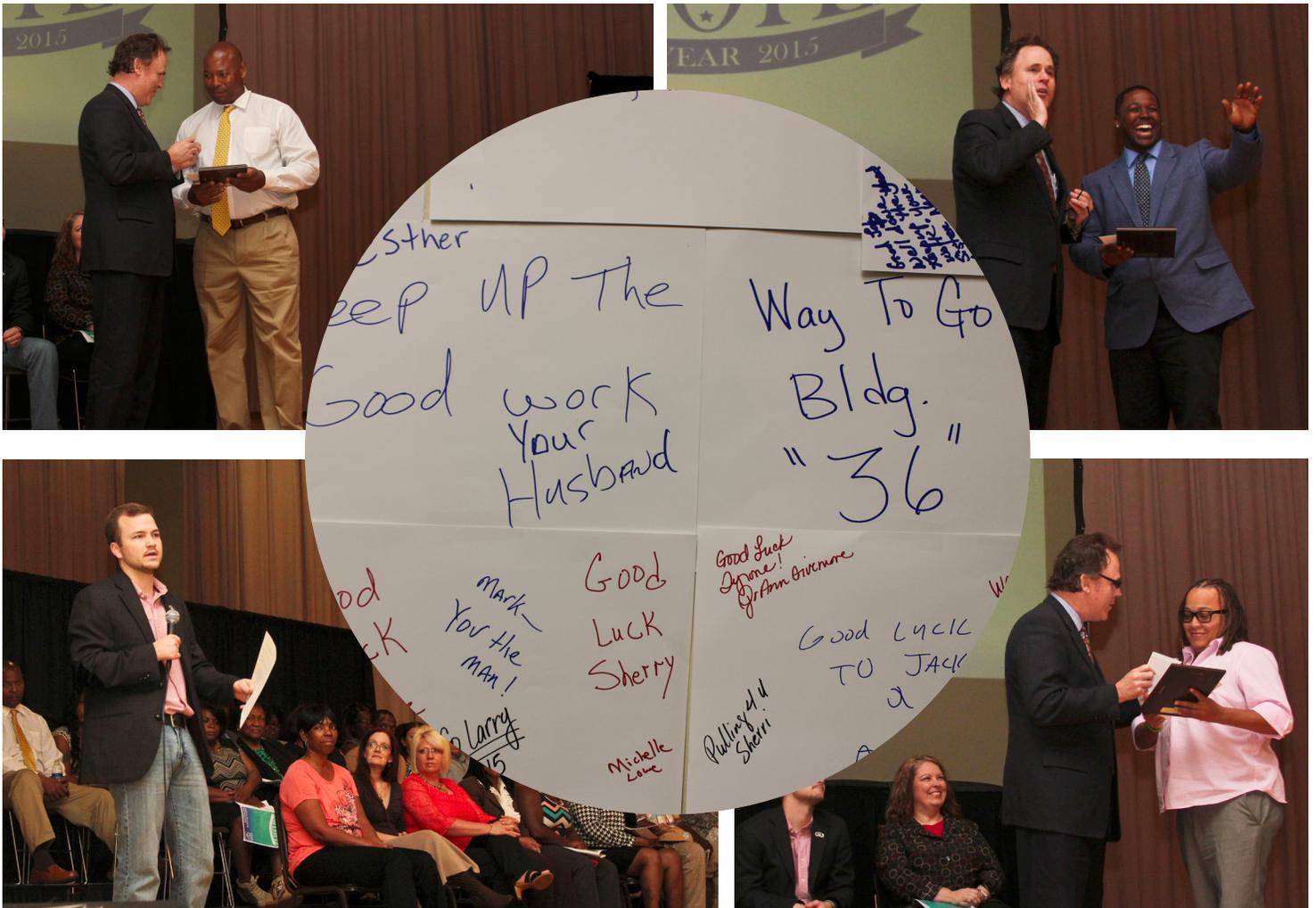
joy the population of women I work with, the clients. They are a special group.”

Proctor was nominated as an Employee of the Month by Social Work Supervisor Gerthania McGee.

“Ms. Proctor has a very good rapport with our patients,” McGee

said. “They respect her because they know that she cares. ... She is always willing to do what needs to be done in providing the best care for our patients.”

Scott, of Brandon, has worked in several different areas at MSH and said he has enjoyed the challenge of learning new skills and working



Esther
 Keep UP The
 Good work
 Your
 Husband
 Way To Go
 Bldg.
 "36"
 Good Luck
 Sherry
 Michelle
 Love
 Good Luck
 Dr Ann Givernone
 Good Luck
 TO JACK
 a
 Pulling up
 Sherry
 Mark -
 You the
 MAN!
 Larry
 15

with new people.

“It was a big thrill (to win Employee of the Year),” he said. “I had no idea whatsoever that I might get it.”

“Justin goes above and beyond his duties by following the MSH Ethics Code and by demonstrating MSH’s core values,” said Kenneth Dixon, a longtime employee in Inventory Control who nominated Scott for an Employee of the Month award. “Justin treats everyone in a professional manner at all times when in the workplace. ...

“Justin has a positive attitude while on the job and an outstanding customer service approach. This is why he is deserving.”

SIX YEARS AGO, CJ Stewart was a soldier, part of a unit, serving and protecting his country.

“I wanted to fight evil,” he said. “There is nothing I loved more than that time with those guys.”

Stewart was deployed to Afghanistan as a combat medic with the 101st Airborne Division in June of 2010 when an enemy-fired rocket exploded near him. Over the next 18 months, he underwent 40 surgeries, 18 blood transfusions and thousands of hours of occupational therapy.

As Stewart reflected on his life during treatment at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C., he hatched the idea for the CJ Stewart Foundation, which would become his mission.

He started Down Range, an outdoor and adventure camp for teenagers in Clinton that, according to its web-

site, “challenges participants to overcome adversity through physical obstacles, outdoor leadership and team building activities.”

Stewart is currently pursuing a master’s degree in Marriage and Family Counseling at Mississippi College in Clinton. He is married to Danielle Stewart, his former Occupational Therapist from his time at Walter Reed, and they live on the property of Down Range with their two golden labs, Scout and Trigger.

Though he is no longer fighting evil on the frontlines, Stewart is still, through Down Range, a part of something bigger than himself, reaching out to touch the lives of others.

“Wherever you’re at, whatever you’re doing,” he said, “find a way to make it transcendent.”



Honored guests and award winners at the Employee of the Year Program: (from left to right) MSH Director James Chastain, keynote speaker CJ Stewart, Friends Board president Bridget Lowery, DMH Executive Director Diana Mikula, Justin Scott, Sherri Proctor, Larry Hardy and Dr. Mark Lewis, Director Bureau of Mental Health.