



# MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

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## **For Immediate Release**

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### **MSH POLICE CHIEF JAMES BLACKWELL NAMED ‘HEALTHCARE HERO’**

WHITFIELD—Mississippi State Hospital Police Chief James Blackwell was recently honored by the Mississippi Business Journal as he was named one of the publication’s 2012 “Healthcare Heroes.”

The publication recognized Chief Blackwell as someone in the field of healthcare whose outstanding contributions in the field have increased the well-being of the community. Chief Blackwell has been director of the Mississippi State Hospital police since 1975 and has overseen its transition from a group of security guards with little formal training to a staff of 35 employees with police officers certified through the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy who also receive specialized behavioral health training.

The Healthcare Heroes were chosen from six categories: animal care, nurse, physician, professional, volunteer, and first responder. Honorees in the First Responder category, including Chief Blackwell, were individuals serving in the military, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, firefighters and police officers selected for their professional achievement and community involvement in the line of duty.

Chief Blackwell has dedicated his life to public service. After completing military service as an MP stationed in Germany and Maryland in the 1960’s, he returned to Mississippi and began a career in law enforcement at Mississippi State Hospital in 1975.

His dedication to duty also extends to the surrounding community. Chief Blackwell makes himself available to all law enforcement agencies in the state to provide resources and referrals in handling mental health issues in their communities. He meets regularly with other law enforcement officers to review, report and develop strategies for dealing with other common law enforcement issues.

A native of Raleigh, Chief Blackwell currently resides in Rankin County. He is pictured here with his wife Lily, as he receives his award.

*MSH, a facility of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, was founded in 1855 and facilitates improvement in the quality of life for Mississippians who are in need of mental health, chemical dependency or nursing home services, by rehabilitating to the least restrictive environment, utilizing a range of psychiatric and medical services, which reflect the accepted standard of care and are in compliance with statutory and regulatory guidelines. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission.*



**PHOTO ATTACHED: Healthcare Heroes Chief Blackwell**