



# MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

P.O. Box 157-A, Whitfield, MS 39193  
Phone (601) 351-8018 Fax (601) 351-8364  
www.msh.state.ms.us

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## **For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Adam Moore (601) 351-8262, adam.moore@msh.state.ms.us

## **MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL NAMES 2012 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR**

WHITFIELD— Mississippi State Hospital employees gathered together on Friday, Feb. 1 to recognize their fellow staff members as the hospital named its 2012 Employees of the Year.

Three employees, one from each of the hospital's three service areas, were chosen from among the 2012 Employees of the Month. Everyone was recognized for their outstanding work and dedication, but three received top honors in their field of service.

Those three were Clinical Service Employee of the Year Melita Breeden of Newhebron, Direct Care Employee of the Year Siriphorn Chotivittayathanin of Pearl, and Support Services Employee of the Year Christopher Thomas of Brookhaven. Breeden is an academic teacher in the Community Services Division at the hospital, where she has been employed for nine years. Chotivittayathanin is a mental health technician on Oak Circle Center, the hospital's child and adolescent unit. She has been employed at the hospital for seven years. Thomas works as a System Administrator at Mississippi State Hospital. He has been employed there for 3 years.

"It is very important we stop and take a moment to recognize people and show our appreciation for those who go above and beyond what they're asked to do. These are people who we depend upon, and they set the example for us," MSH Director James G. Chastain said.

Also present at the awards program was special guest speaker Barbie Bassett. Known around the Jackson metro area as the WLBT Chief Meteorologist, many people may not know the other programs with which she is involved. She helped spearhead a campaign that set a world record for the most hair cut for a single charity in a single day when more than 900 people donated hair for wigs to be used by cancer patients, and she is also the author of two books.

She has a host of other professional awards and recognitions for her work in the meteorology field, and she is also a pianist and an accomplished opera singer. She shared some lessons she said she learned growing up in the small town of Marks, Mississippi.

"Sometimes we have to risk embarrassment from other people in order to do what's right," Bassett said. "The smallest step in the right direction will always result in great joy. My dad always told me 'Barbie, if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.'"

"Making one small adjustment in your time, your family, or even in your career will open up many, many opportunities that you didn't realize were there."

She also reminded people of the old phrase garbage in, garbage out.

“If you get the wrong people out of your life, the wrong things will stop happening,” Bassett said. “When you get the right people in your life, things begin to improve.”

She encouraged people to be more aware of all the various distractions that can pop up in everyday life, and to press on with their goals and ambitions despite the people or things causing the distractions. Above all, she encouraged people to live by their faith.

“Don’t let your fear get in the way of your faith, because fear will talk you out of your dreams,” she said.

*MSH, a program 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 and utilizing a range of psychiatric and medical services that reflect the accepted standard of care and are in compliance with statutory and regulatory guidelines. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission.*

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**PHOTO ATTACHED: Mississippi State Hospital named its 2012 Employees of the Year in a program with special guest speaker Barbie Bassett on Feb. 1. Pictured are (l to r) 2012 Employee Recognition Committee Chairwoman Jackie Yates, Friends of MSH President Joel Ross, Support Service Employee of the Year Christopher Thomas, Clinical Service Employee of the Year Melita Breeden, Direct Care Employee of the Year Siriphorn Chotivittayathanin, Barbie Bassett, and MSH Director James G. Chastain. Friends of Mississippi State Hospital, a volunteer organization dedicated to supporting the patients, residents and employees of the hospital, sponsored the program.**