



# ASPIRE

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## 50 YEARS AND COUNTING... LILLY BLACKWELL CELEBRATES A MILESTONE

BY TIM DURR

September 16, 1964. That was the day Lilly Blackwell began her employment at Mississippi State Hospital (MSH). September 16, 2014. That was the day the MSH family paused to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Blackwell's tenure in the psychology department at MSH.

The celebration began during Department Director's meeting when Blackwell received her 50th year pin and certificate from Friends of MSH, Inc., and proclamations from the Mississippi Senate and House of Representatives presented by State Sen. Dean Kirby and State Rep. John Moore who took time out of their schedules to come and personally congratulate Blackwell. In addition, Gov. Phil Bryant sent a proclamation which was read by MSH Director James G. Chastain.

"I'm honored to be here today and on behalf of the Mississippi House of Representatives," Moore said. "We want to thank you for your 50 years of service to Mississippi State Hospital. Ms. Lilly has given her entire life to Mississippi State Hospital.

"I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your service to the people of the state of Mississippi," Moore added.

Sen. Kirby said he is proud of Blackwell.

"I can't tell you as chairman of the public health committee what it means to me to see the dedication and the hard work that you have done," Kirby said. "I can't imagine what all you've been through in 50 years, but I want to tell you that we do appreciate you for what you are doing."

As tears flowed from her eyes, Blackwell thanked everyone for their kind words.

"I thank each of you for what you've done for me," she said. "I've enjoyed working here, and I've enjoyed working with everyone."

The celebration continued with an afternoon reception hosted by the psychology department that included a buffet, live band, and many family and friends stopping by to get a hug and offer congratulations.

Blackwell, who is married to MSH Police Chief James Blackwell, said she has no immediate plans to retire.

"I just enjoy working," she said. "I like working around people and being around people."

Blackwell, a native of the Simpson County community of Shivers, said she developed strong work ethics as a child.

"My mother and daddy brought me up



Lilly Blackwell

with strong work ethics," she said. "They always told me that when you get a job, you stick with it, do your job, and go to work each day."

The celebration of Blackwell's 50 years of service will continue in December when she will serve as grand marshal of the MSH Christmas parade.

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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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*Representative John Moore presenting proclamation from the House of Representatives.*



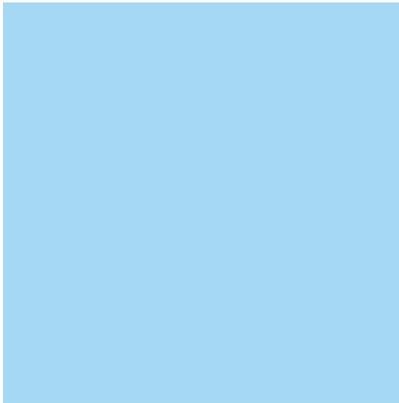
*Senator Dean Kirby presenting proclamation from Mississippi Senate.*



*Lilly Blackwell being presented Service Award for 50 years from Mr. James Chastin, Director of Mississippi State Hospital.*



*Lilly Blackwell with family*



*Former and Current Directors of Psychology.  
Left to Right: Dr. Susanne Jourdan, Dr. Amy Baskin, Lilly Blackwell, Dr. Patricia Alexander.*



Mississippi State Hospital celebrated its 25th Annual Serendipity art show and silent auction on Thursday, Sept. 4, and employees and visitors walked away with nearly all of the 207 pieces of art that were on display.

All of the pieces in the show were created by MSH patients and JNH residents who participate in the hospital's Art Services program. The pieces included ceramics, pencil drawings, paintings in various styles and formats, scratchboard, and mixed media. Approximately 500 people attended the event.

"We had a wonderful event this year and a great turnout," MSH Art Services Supervisor Evelyn Bates said. "People were amazed at the quality of the artwork."

Dee Payne of Florence brought her grandchildren to the show.



"I thought the show was wonderful," Payne said. "There were so many different mediums to enjoy and see. The pictures and ceramics were great."

"I brought five grandchildren, one of whom is Grayson, an artist himself," Payne continued. "He loves to come and see all of the different artwork."

Two of Payne's granddaughters said they look forward to Serendipity.

"I enjoy coming out here because the art is really good," said Anna Riley Payne of Richland. "I just enjoy everything, and I think the artists are really good."

"I like the art because the pieces are so detailed," said Kameron Morrison of Richland. "I also like the fact that none of them are the same, they are all different."

Nancy Creel of Brandon said she marks the first Thursday in September on her calendar as a reminder to come to Serendipity.

"This is my third year to come and the quality is very good, its outstanding, Creel said.

# Serendipity Celebration





# Serendipity Celebrating 25 years

BY TIM DURR

Longtime MSH Psychological Services employee Melanie Norwood said she has been coming to Serendipity for more years than she can remember.

“I think it’s wonderful, I enjoy it every year,” Norwood said. “I have been collecting pieces for a long time.”

Norwood said some of the pieces are nostalgic for her.

“I have a little village made up of pieces I have collected throughout the years,” she said. “Those pieces remind me of my grandmother’s farm. Each year I look for more pieces to add to my collection.”

MSH Art Teacher Ron Lindsey said he heard many positive comments from the many visitors who viewed the exhibit.

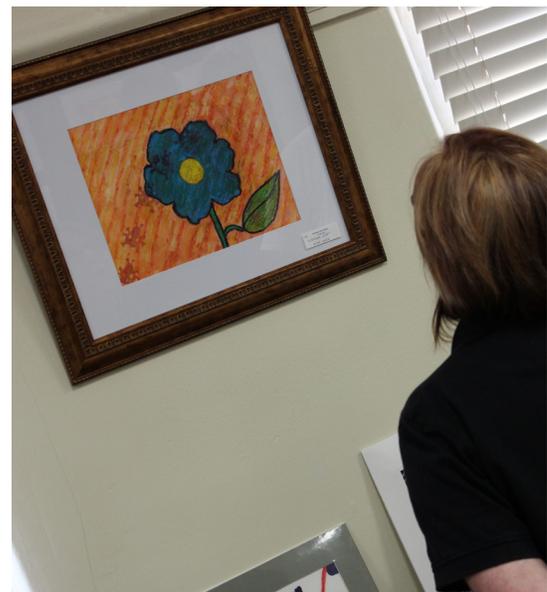
“We’ve had great traffic, it was constant all day long,” Lindsey said. “I heard many people say they thought it was a professional show. Some people from out of town even said it looked like an art show in an uptown gallery.”

Before the show opened, patients and residents who had artwork in Serendipity were recognized during a special reception.

“There were lots of smiles on the faces of our patients and residents,” Lindsey said. “They were very proud and it’s always great to see their faces light up.”

Bates encourages everyone to mark their calendar for the first Thursday in September, 2015.

“We encourage those who came this year to come back next year and invite others,” she said.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO MARCIA HARDGE

BY TIM DURR

Congratulations to Marcia Hardge who has been named Director of Nursing for the MSH Chemical Dependency Unit. Hardge began as a staff nurse on Female Receiving, B-63, in 2008 and advanced to Charge Nurse in 2011.

“Becoming Director of Nursing has helped me to fulfill my goal to advance in my nursing career,” Hardge said. “I am excited to be given the opportunity to continue my advancement in a new capacity at Mississippi State Hospital.”

Hardge is a graduate of MSH’s Educational Advantage Program (EAP) which provided financial assistance for employees to attend school.

“The Educational Advantage Program provided me the opportunity to attend nursing school without having to work, which allowed me to be able to focus and excel in school,” Hardge said. “It provided the opportunity to work at Mississippi State Hospital and develop a passion for psychiatric patients and the desire to continue my career here.”

Hardge, who was named Employee of the Month for June 2013 and Employee of the Year for 2013, said she looks forward to utilizing her education and experience to improve the Chemical Dependency Unit.



*Marcia Hardge*

## FRIENDS HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING

BY ADAM MOORE

Friends of Mississippi State Hospital named its Board of Directors for the 2014-2015 year at its annual meeting on Wednesday, Aug. 27. The Friends of MSH Board of Directors for the 2014-2015 year includes Bridget Lowery, president, Gale Martin, vice president, Sheila Shows, secretary, Dee Payne, treasurer, Larry Anderson, Kelly Breland, Jessie Buckley, Kathy Denton, Marilyn Garth, Mike Kimbrell, Joel Ross, Larry Swearingen, Larry Taylor. The Board of Directors Emeriti for the 2014-2015 year includes: Jerald Ball, Bill Bobbs, Mary Crossman, Miriam Hollens, Gladys Jackson, Steve Lesley, Jeannie Pittman, Bradley Sanders,

Bobby Stephens, and Ray Wallace.

Founded in 1987, Friends of Mississippi State Hospital is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the work of Mississippi State Hospital (MSH) and educating the public about mental illness and the needs of the mentally ill. Friends helps enhance quality of life by offering a variety of events and programs for Mississippi State Hospital’s patients and residents of Jaquith Nursing Home, which is located on the MSH campus.

Also during the Annual Meeting, the Friends organization made some special recognitions, including honoring

a group of volunteers who have been dedicated to the hospital for more than 35 years.

Friends of MSH presented the Omicron Federated Club of McComb with the Together We Make A Difference Award for the many community service projects it provides, both for the hospital and with other mental health awareness organizations. Club member Lorraine Gayden received the Nancy B. Foreman Award for her work and service guiding the Omicron Federated Juniors and Pre-Teens organization.

The Nancy B. Foreman Award and



*Friends Board of Directors - The Friends of MSH Board of Directors for the 2014-2015 year includes (front row, l to r) Kathy Denton, Jessie Buckley, Bobby Stephens, Bill Bobbs, Bridget Lowery, Miriam Hollens, Marilyn Garth, Jeannie Pittman, Sheila Shows, (back row, l to r) Larry Taylor, Steve Lesley, Ray Wallace, James G. Chastain, Joel Ross, Gale Martin, Larry Anderson, and Dee Payne.*

the Together We Make a Difference Award are given each year to individuals or groups whose service has shown a commitment to improving the lives of those served at the hospital. The Foreman award is named in honor of Nancy B. Foreman, one of seven individuals who signed the charter to establish the Friends of MSH organization in 1987, and who traveled at her own expense throughout the state to serve as an advocate for Mississippi State Hospital.

Hospital Director James G. Chastain presented the Foreman award to Lorraine Gayden before presenting other members of the Omicron Federated Club with their award.

“Because of Ms. Gayden’s passion and commitment, generations of young people have learned about mental illness and chemical dependency and the impact they can have on individuals and families,” Chastain said. “They have also learned that everyone, regardless of their ability or disability, has value.”

Gayden said she is proud to have

three generations of her family who have served Mississippi State Hospital’s patients and residents – herself, her daughter, and now her granddaughter. She said their service has made a tremendous impact on the club members of all generations.

“We have come in rain, sunshine, sleet and snow,” Gayden said. “We’ll continue to come as long as we’re alive, and that is the truth.”

“Of all the projects we do, this is one of the girls’ favorites. These girls love coming here every year because it means so much not only to them, but to the patients as well. It’s made a tremendous impact in the lives of these young ladies.”

In addition, Friends thanked the Rankin County Cattlemen’s Association with its annual Vivian Shivers Helping Hands Award.

Friends of MSH gives the award annually to an individual or group who sets the standard for displaying the volunteer spirit. Members of Rankin County Cattlemen’s Association ear-

lier this year cooked the meal for another annual Friends of MSH event, the annual Legislative Appreciation Luncheon.

“This event is the one opportunity each year we have to obtain the undivided attention of so many legislators at the same time,” Chastain said. “The impact of those few minutes is enormous in terms of giving them a small glimpse into the lives of those living with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental illnesses.”

However, Chastain noted it can be challenging to prepare a lunch that is cost-effective, appetizing, and appealing enough to draw so many legislators to a meeting on their own time.

“This year we had all of those – rib-eye steak sandwiches, hot off the grill, prepared by the very best, the Rankin County Cattlemen’s Association.”

Rankin County cattleman Richard Peden accepted the award on behalf of the group.

“I want to thank you for this honor,



*Friends Annual Meeting Omicron Awards - At its annual meeting, Friends of Mississippi State Hospital presented the Omicron Federated Club with its Together We Make a Difference Award and club member Lorraine Gayden with its Nancy B. Foreman Award for her work with the Omicron Federated Juniors and Pre-Teens. Pictured are (l to r) MSH Director James G. Chastain, and Omicron Federated Club members Jacqueline Martin, Lorraine B. Gayden, Alexis Bridges, Lauren Johnson, Jada Alexander, and Friends of MSH President Bridget Lowery.*



*Vivian Shivers Award - At its annual meeting on Wednesday, August 27, Friends of Mississippi State Hospital thanked the Rankin County Cattlemen's Association with its annual Vivian Shivers Award. Pictured are (l to r) MSH Director James G. Chastain, Cattlemen's Association members Richard Peden and Gale Martin, and Friends of MSH President Bridget Lowery.*

but mostly I want to thank you for giving us this opportunity," he said. "Anytime you have an opportunity like this in the future, please let us know about it."

The Vivian Shivers Award is named in honor of Vivian Shivers, who began her career as a registered nurse at Mississippi State Hospital in 1976. After her retirement in 1987, she remained an active volunteer and advocate for the hospital. She routinely attended and volunteered at events and activities on the MSH campus for many years.

For more information about Friends of Mississippi State Hospital or volunteer opportunities available at the hospital, please contact MSH Public Relations at 601-351-8018.

