

ASPIRE

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2025 Employee of the Year Recognition Event



Pictured (l to r): Marie Bingham, Support Services Employee of the Year 2024, Kina Woods, Clinical Service Employee of the Year 2024, and Michael Robinson, Direct Care Employee of the Year 2024,

By: Kevin Walker

Mississippi State Hospital (MSH) rolled back the clock for a vibrant tribute to its outstanding staff, hosting a 1990s-themed Employee of the Year Recognition Event on Thursday, April 24, 2025. The lively celebration honored the dedication, compassion, and professionalism of the hospital's 2024 Employees of the Month — culminating in the announcement of the

prestigious 2024 Employees of the Year.

The event was a testament to the hospital's culture of appreciation, blending fun and nostalgia with meaningful recognition. Guests were greeted by a high-energy atmosphere as Roger and Tena Long of Go Long Productions kicked off the festivities with an energetic dance party set to 90s hit songs. Their leadership extended beyond

the DJ booth as they engaged attendees by teaching popular hip-hop dance moves, setting an upbeat tone for the day.

The program officially opened with a heartfelt welcome from Dee Payne, Treasurer for Friends of MSH, followed by an invocation led by Hospital Chaplain Melvin Collins. The combination of joyful entertainment and reflective moments underscored the hospital's



Roger L. Long and Tena Long, Go Long Productions/Choreorobics Dance Off



commitment to celebrating the whole person — mind, body, and spirit.

Following several rounds of lively 90s trivia, MSH Director James G. “Bo” Chastain delivered inspiring remarks, reinforcing the purpose behind the celebration. “These employees recognized today have strived to accomplish the mission of MSH by encouraging hope, promoting safety, and supporting recovery, while utilizing resources efficiently,” Chastain shared. “We value their service and appreciate what they mean to all of us here at MSH.”

Dee Payne also took time to recognize the vital

contributions of the Employee Recognition Committee, whose dedication made the day possible. Together, Payne, Chastain, and MSH Human Resources Director Bobby Blanks proudly honored each of the 2024 Employees of the Month, highlighting their achievements and unwavering commitment to the hospital’s mission.

No celebration would be complete without a delicious meal, and Cura delivered an unforgettable culinary experience. Guests enjoyed a creative menu inspired by classic 90s flavors, featuring dishes like Dorito Chicken Casserole, homemade pizza rolls, and other nostalgic favorites. Each Employee

of the Month received a custom-made hat adorned with a special Employee of the Year patch and a collection of 90s-themed patches of their choosing — a unique and personal keepsake tying together the theme of the day.

As the event concluded, the spotlight turned to the announcement of MSH’s 2024 Employees of the Year. The honorees represent the highest ideals of service across three categories: Direct Care, Clinical Services, and Support Services. Their exceptional work reflects not only professional excellence but also the heart of MSH’s mission to provide compassionate, quality care.



**" I FEEL
VERY
APPRE-
CIATED!"**

Kina Woods, Clinical Services

2024 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

Direct Care:

Michael Robinson

Michael Robinson was named MSH's Employee of the Year for Direct Care, recognized for his dedication, warmth, and leadership in patient care. A Jackson resident and Crystal Springs native, Robinson attended Crystal Springs High School and Jackson State University. Since joining MSH in 2019, he has served as a Support Care Professional III in the Intermediate Psychiatric Stepdown Unit (IPS), providing daily care and mentorship within the facility.

Known affectionately by colleagues as "Big Mike," Robinson brings positivity and encouragement to every interaction. "Always cheerful, 'Big Mike' is kind, generous, and welcoming of new employees. He displays the caring side of MSH to his patients," noted Dr. John Wilkaitis. His influence extends beyond his assigned role, fostering a supportive environment for both patients and staff alike.

Clinical Services:

Kina Woods

Honored as Employee of the Year for Clinical Services, Kina Woods exemplifies clinical excellence and collaborative leadership. A Byram resident originally from Natchez, Woods attended Natchez High School before pursuing higher education at Alcorn State University (Associate of Nursing), Mississippi University for Women (Bachelor of Nursing), and Louisiana State University (Master of Health Administration). Since joining MSH in 2009, she has served as a Registered Nurse and Infection Prevention Specialist within Service Outcome.

Woods is celebrated for her problem-solving abilities and steadfast commitment to patient outcomes. "I consider Kina my other half at work," shared colleague Misty Purvis. "She is what makes us the 'A Team' or 'Dream Team.' Kina goes above and beyond in her job... She didn't bat an eye when I needed help during a difficult time and covered my duties until I returned. Kina treats others with respect and has a 'let's get the job done' way about her. She is always a team player and a great co-worker." Her expertise, reliability, and compassion have left an indelible mark on her team and the broader hospital community.



Pictured (front row l to r): Jeannie Pittman, Friends of MSH, Jessie Buckley, Friends of MSH, Carolyn Trigg, Friends of MSH, Michael Robinson, Direct Care Employee of the Year 2024, Katie Storr, DMH Chief of Staff, Marilyn Garth, Friends of MSH (back row l to r): Dee Payne, Friends of MSH Treasurer, James G. "Bo" Chastain, MSH Hospital Director, Kelly Breland, DMH Chief Financial Officer, Craig Kittrell, DMH Deputy Executive Director of IDD Services



Pictured (front row l to r): Jeannie Pittman, Friends of MSH, Jessie Buckley, Friends of MSH, Carolyn Trigg, Friends of MSH, Kina Woods, Clinical Service Employee of the Year 2024, Katie Storr, DMH Chief of Staff, Marilyn Garth, Friends of MSH (back row l to r): Dee Payne, Friends of MSH Treasurer, James G. "Bo" Chastain, MSH Hospital Director, Kelly Breland, DMH Chief Financial Officer, Craig Kittrell, DMH Deputy Executive Director of IDD Services

Support Services: Marie Bingham

For the second time in her distinguished career, Marie Bingham has been named Employee of the Year for Support Services, having previously received the honor in 2011. A lifelong Mississippi resident, Bingham grew up in Terry and attended Terry High School. Since 1977, she has served as a Custodian Team Lead in Environmental Services, ensuring a clean, safe, and welcoming environment across hospital facilities.

Bingham's dedication is evident in every task she undertakes, earning admiration from colleagues and supervisors alike. "Humble, dedicated, consistent, dependable, committed, and optimistic are just a few of the characteristics found when you google 'how to describe a great employee,'" shared Carla Dearman. "These are also characteristics one could use to describe Ms. Marie Bingham. Ms. Marie always has a warm smile and a friendly, 'How you doing today?' for anyone who crosses her path. Her work ethic is second to none, and her pride in her work is easily seen by just looking around. Everyone feels the respect and joy Ms. Marie exudes when she interacts with them. She is a tremendous asset to Mississippi State Hospital and someone we should strive to emulate."

A Day to Remember

The 2024 Employee of the Year Recognition Event was more than a celebration — it was a reminder of the vital role every staff member plays in advancing the mission of Mississippi State Hospital. Through music, laughter, heartfelt stories, and well-deserved recognition, the hospital community came together to honor the individuals who make MSH a place of healing, hope, and excellence.

Congratulations once again to Michael Robinson, Kina Woods, and Marie Bingham, along with each of our 2024 Employees of the Month. Your dedication inspires us all.



Pictured (front row l to r): Jeannie Pittman, Friends of MSH, Jessie Buckley, Friends of MSH, Carolyn Trigg, Friends of MSH, Marie Bingham, Support Services Employee of the Year 2024, Katie Storr, DMH Chief of Staff, Marilyn Garth, Friends of MSH (back row l to r): Dee Payne, Friends of MSH Treasurer, James G. "Bo" Chastain, MSH Hospital Director, Kelly Breland, DMH Chief Financial Officer, Craig Kittrell, DMH Deputy Executive Director of IDD Services



Pictured (l to r): Friends of MSH, Inc. Board members - Jeannie Pittman, Marilyn Garth, Jessie Buckley, Carolyn Trigg, Dee Payne, Friends of MSH Treasurer



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"I WAS VERY SURPRISED! IT'S NOT JUST ME WINNING, IT'S THE WHOLE ENTIRE STAFF, WHOLE ENTIRE GROUP, MY WHOLE ENTIRE BUILDING. EVERYONE WORKS AS A TEAM, SO THEY MAKE THIS POSSIBLE."

Michael Robinson, Direct Care



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James G. "Bo" Chastain, Director





**“IT WAS ON
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Jestyne McGee, Direct Care

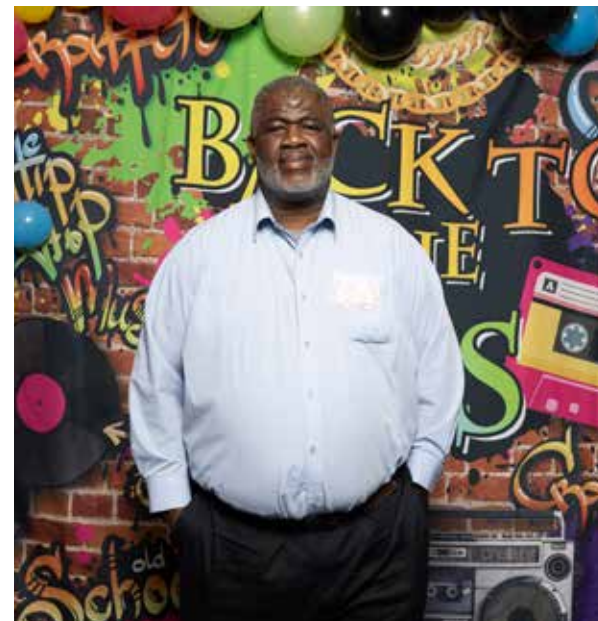






**"I ENJOYED
IT! FROM
DAY 1 UNTIL
NOW I'VE
ALWAYS
ENJOYED
WORKING
AT MSH."**

Marie Bingham, Support Services





**"I HAVEN'T
TOLD A
LIE SINCE
THE THIRD
GRADE."**

*Michael Robinson, Direct Care
(Wanted to share his famous quote.)*

