



MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY**

JACKSON - A veteran correctional officer killed Monday afternoon in an automobile accident was helping to escort an inmate from Greene County Hospital to Forrest General Hospital.

Officer Iris Smith, 53, of Lucedale died instantly when the Mississippi Department of Corrections van she was driving collided with the back of an 18-wheeler at J M Tatum Industrial Drive on U.S. 49 in Hattiesburg.

Smith, who was going north on U.S. 49, was traveling alone while another officer was with the inmate in an ambulance.

Gov. Phil Bryant issued a statement today about the officer's death.

"Deborah and I are saddened by this untimely death and pray for strength for her family and loved ones," Bryant said.

Smith, a sergeant, worked at South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI) in Greene County. She also had worked at George County Community Work Center since being hired Oct. 2, 2000. She was commended for extra effort.

MDOC last had an officer killed in the line of duty in 1999.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Sgt. Smith's family," Corrections Commissioner Marshall Fisher said. "Her unexpected death shows how fragile life is. It's the kind of news we all dread hearing. She was driving from one destination to another as a certified peace officer to provide the secure custody and control of an inmate when her life was cut short."

The accident, which was reported at 3:17 p.m., is still under investigation by the Hattiesburg Police Department.

Meanwhile, arrangements for Smith are pending.

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