

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 10, 2018
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MDOC Adds New Corrections Officers to Ranks

PEARL – The Mississippi Department of Corrections’ first academy graduation of 2018 produced 24 new officers.

Included in the group is Hester Lee of Pascagoula, who previously worked in law enforcement and corrections in Louisiana. She is assigned to South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI).

“I entered law enforcement because I wanted to help people and to serve my community,” Lee said. “I am just continuing that career. I am hoping to become a probation and parole officer.”

Catherine Griffin, a squad leader, also has aspirations other than being a correctional officer.

“After I have served some time as a correctional officer, my goal is to join the K-9 unit,” Griffin said. “I have always loved animals and there is a special bond between an officer and their dog. I want to be a part of that.”

College student Timothy Ervin, who is attending Hinds Community College, said he plans to make law enforcement a career.

“MDOC is part of my career path in law enforcement to eventually join the U.S. Marshal Service,” Ervin said.

FBI Special Agent Walter Glenn Henry was the guest speaker at the program Friday at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. He encouraged the graduates to be true to themselves and honor their profession.

“It’s all about professionalism,” Henry said. “It is all up to you to be yourself but also to be the leader wherever you go.”

Henry challenged the graduates to defy a prediction from observers that some of them will commit wrongdoing.

“It is up to you to change that narrative,” he said. “This is more than a job. Be the public servant and look past the negative. I have met this class and I am confident this class will do well.”

Several graduates were honored for their skills and leadership during basic training.

Deshonique Kennedy earned the highest academic award, and Dianna Conner won the second highest.

Eric Smith received Top Gun for marksmanship skills with the rifle and handgun, and Shelia Watson won with the shotgun.