



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Krista Estes

Volunteer Network Officer, Volunteer Mississippi
601.432.6306 | kestes@ihl.state.ms.us

2019 GOVERNOR'S INITIATIVE FOR VOLUNTEER EXCELLENCE AWARDS RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

Mar. 1, 2019 (JACKSON, Miss.) – The Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service (Volunteer Mississippi) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2019 Governor's Initiative for Volunteer Excellence (GIVE) Awards. The 2019 GIVE Awards Recipients are:

Mary Tooke Kitchens, Crystal Springs

The Marsha Meeks Kelly Award for Lifetime Achievement in Volunteer Service

Kearn Lynda Cherry, Gulfport

Outstanding Achievement in Empowerment Initiatives

Etricia Easley, Columbus

Outstanding Service by a National Service Alumni

Beth Gardner, Lake Cormorant

Outstanding Humanitarian Service

Beverly Goff, Pascagoula

Outstanding Service in Children's Advocacy

Michael J. Higgins, Jr., Olive Branch

Outstanding Volunteer Service to Veterans

Dennis "DJ" Jewel, Columbus

Outstanding Volunteer Service by a US Veteran

Verdine Judd, Okolona

Outstanding Service in Strengthening Families & Communities

Paige Scruggs, Ellisville

Outstanding Service in the Promotion of Healing

Dr. Myrtis S. Tabb, Cleveland

Outstanding Achievement in Servant Leadership

Heartland Hands Food Pantry, Southaven

Outstanding Achievement in Hunger Relief

Jackson Free Clinic, Jackson

Outstanding Achievement in Healthcare Access

WellsFest and Its Volunteers, Jackson

Outstanding Achievement in Community Building

This distinguished group will be honored at a private ceremony at **The Westin Hotel of Jackson** on **April 8th**, kicking off celebrations for National Volunteer Week.

“Mississippi’s legacy in volunteerism runs deep”, said Monica Ritchie, Executive Director for Volunteer Mississippi. “We are honored and privileged to recognize these 13 outstanding individuals and institutions representing volunteer excellence for the state of Mississippi.”

The GIVE Awards were established through the Office of the Governor and Volunteer Mississippi to recognize those individuals and organizations that have made an outstanding impact in their communities through their gifts of service, advocacy, and outreach on behalf of the citizens of Mississippi. Nominations are made by the general public and a group of industry peers serve as judges to review the submitted information and to determine the recipients. Nomination information is released by Volunteer Mississippi in January of each year.

For more information about the GIVE Awards contact Krista Estes, Volunteer Network Officer, at krista@volunteermississippi.org or by calling (601) 432-6306.

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About Volunteer Mississippi

The Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service (also known as Volunteer Mississippi) was established in 1994 to encourage a culture of citizenship, service and responsibility to America. Volunteer Mississippi works to engage and support Mississippians in service to their communities through volunteerism and national service programs. As a state service commission, Volunteer Mississippi administers funds through AmeriCorps State and the Volunteer Generation Fund to address critical community needs and engage Mississippians in service. Learn more at volunteermississippi.org.