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**Mississippians to be Honored at 2016 GIVE Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service**

*Annual Ceremony Recognizes Volunteer Efforts of Community Activists and Organizations in Mississippi*

JACKSON, Miss. – Volunteer Mississippi, in coordination with the Office of the Governor and First Lady Deborah Bryant, will recognize the outstanding volunteer service efforts of nine individuals and five organizations from across the state at the 2016 Governor's Initiative for Volunteer Excellence (GIVE) Awards luncheon on Monday, April 11 in Jackson, MS.

The recipients of the 2016 GIVE Awards are:

* Junior League of Jackson (Volunteer Organization Award of Distinction)
* Atmos Energy, Southaven (Outstanding Employee Volunteer Program)
* Michele Baker, CVA of Jackson (Outstanding Achievement by a Volunteer Management Professional)
* Louis Bourgeois of Oxford (Outstanding Humanitarian Achievement through the Literary Arts)
* Owen Onassis Brown, II of Jackson (Outstanding Educational Mentorship by a Youth)
* Julie Cannon of Bay St. Louis (Outstanding Service in Children’s Advocacy)
* James Philip Caranna of Gulfport (Outstanding Service by a National Service Participant)
* Z. Rose Coffey-Graham of Starkville (Outstanding Service in Strengthening Families)
* Contact the Crisis Line, Jackson (Outstanding Volunteer Initiative in Crisis Intervention)
* Matthew A. Gallardo of Hattiesburg (Outstanding Disabilities Service by a Youth)
* Jimmy Johnson of Long Beach (Outstanding Service by a Public Servant)
* Mid-South Project Package, Southaven (Outstanding Service to the Armed Forces)
* South Rankin Food Resource Center, Inc., Richland (Outstanding Volunteer Initiative in Hunger Relief)
* Jennifer Yancy of Taylor (Outstanding Achievement in Serving the Needs of School Children)

These prestigious awards, initially launched in 1993 by First Lady Patricia O. Fordice and Governor Kirk Fordice, are a small token of thanks to the many people who live their lives in service to their neighbors and this great state they call home. Since 1993, 239 individuals and organizations have been recognized with a GIVE Award. The Awards will be presented at a special luncheon ceremony to be held 11 April 2016 at the Mississippi Museum of Art, the Monday of National Volunteer Week.

To learn more about the 2016 GIVE Awards, please contact Krista Estes at 601.432.6306 or krista@volunteermississippi.org.

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*Volunteer Mississippi’s mission is to engage and support Mississippians of all ages and backgrounds in service to their communities****.****Established in 1994 as the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service (MCVS), Volunteer Mississippi has worked to encourage a culture of citizenship, service and responsibility to America.*

*The GIVE Awards recognize individuals, groups, and organizations for volunteer efforts which have made a significant difference to the state or to local communities, establishing high standards for volunteer involvement and effectiveness and multiplying valuable resources. Awards are given to volunteers in some specific categories, such as; youth, seniors, persons with a disability, faith-based volunteers, National Service Participants, Public Servants, and lifetime achievement. In addition, awards are also given for outstanding service to a variety of specific causes, such as, but not limited to, Children & Families, Health, Homelessness, Hunger, the Environment, Animal Advocacy, Literacy, Education, Mental Health, Arts & Culture, Anti-Violence, Disaster Relief, Economic Development, and other essential causes that affect the lives of Mississippians.*