

Senator Billy Thames honored by Board of Mental Health



Senator Billy Thames was presented with a Resolution in honor of his retirement and support of mental health through the years at the Board of Mental Health meeting on June 21, 2007. Pictured are Board of Mental Health Chairperson, Dr. Patricia Ainsworth of Rankin County and Senator Billy Thames of Smith County.

The Mississippi Board of Mental Health honored Senator Billy Thames at their Board Meeting on June 21, 2007, at the Juvenile Rehabilitation Facility in Brookhaven, MS. Senator Thames was presented with a Resolution in honor of his retirement and support of mental health through the years.

Senator Thames addressed the Board of Mental Health and expressed his sincere appreciation for the resolution. He also urged the Board to continue to support the

administration of the Department of Mental Health in assuring that Mississippi's citizens with mental illness remain a priority of the Mississippi Legislature. He emphasized to the Board that "It's all about people," not politics or personal interest.

Senator Thames was elected to the Mississippi State Senate in 1979 and has been re-elected eight times representing Smith, Jasper, Clarke, Scott and Jones counties during his 28 year tenure. In 1996,

Senator Thames convened a committee to study the needs of persons with mental illness and their families and as a result authored the 1997 Mental Health Reform Act which made sweeping changes to mental health provision, including the creation of the Crisis Intervention Center system.

"There is no way to put into words our gratitude and appreciation to Senator Thames for his dedication to those with mental illness and developmental disabilities in Mississippi," said Ed LeGrand, Mississippi Department of Mental Health Executive Director. "Senator Thames has been instrumental in helping to secure funds to expand services for citizens with mental illness and mental retardation."

Senator Thames is a native of Simpson County and currently resides in Smith County.