

# Shelia Hardwell Byrd: The person 'in the know' at the City of Jackson

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Shelia Hardwell Byrd, Director of Communications, City of Jackson Mayor's Office, is a distinguished public servant.

As spokesperson for Mississippi's largest city, Shelia Byrd makes public television appearances and media comments concerning a broad range of issues including but not limited to employee furloughs, boil water advisories, city budget matters, or when and how sales tax proceeds will be used. She also directs communication efforts via the City's website and television station, PEG Network.

Preparedness is absolutely necessary to direct communications for the Capital City, and Byrd rises early and alert.

Her motto is: *Trust in God, always, and know that He has equipped you to accomplish all He's set before you.*

Shelia grew up in Winnfield, Louisiana. She is the youngest girl of five, and her youngest brother is the baby of the family. Her mother married young and spent much of her time rearing her children, and her father was self-employed in the construction industry. Her parents displayed strong work ethic principals at home.

Shelia determined that her mother, Betty Flowers was the woman who influenced her the most. "Mama was a compassionate person and I can only hope that others see that trait in me," Shelia said. She added, "Public service has been my calling." Shelia also admired her Aunt Helen Crosswell, who helped raise her younger siblings, and was a dedicated military nurse.

Shelia described leadership as the ability to motivate others to help them reach their potential or accomplish a goal, especially for the common good. She wins people over to her point of view by being attentive.



Shelia Byrd

She described herself as a very open individual with keen listening skills. When she was a journalist, she took the time to listen to interviewees so she could fully understand their side of the story. People opened up to her because she had the patience to hear their story.

Mentoring youth and senior programs are community causes which are dear to her heart. "I've been very active in my church, Berean Seventh-Day Adventist Church, working with youth," she noted. She is also a member of the Mississippi Federation of Democratic Women, a Keep Jackson Beautiful board member, and she serves on Jackson State University's College of Business's Community Advisory Board.

She recalled that her gender was sometimes an issue for her when she was an Associated Press legislative reporter. "Occasionally, as one of the few black females covering the Mississippi Legislature, she was forced to stand tall and to dispel some preconceived stereotypes. "Politics is often perceived as a male-dominated realm," she declared. She was happy to affirm that lawmakers perceived her reporting fair and objective.

Her idea of a perfect union is

centered upon a platform which includes the opportunity for conflict or vigorous debate. "Conflict is necessary to produce progress and change. It's hard to imagine a nation free of conflict," she said. She believes The Civil Rights era is an example of a controversial time which forged change. She proposed, "I believe we as a people must do a better job of reasoning with each other."

She contended regardless of party affiliation the well-being of families is accepted. "In general, these themes boil down to strong schools and economic viability to ensure the masses are gainfully employed," she concluded. In a better Union, she contended, "People with opposing political philosophies and ideologies could come to the table and work out agreements that would be beneficial to society." However, she is reminded, based on the vitriol spewed in these national campaigns, our country still has work to do toward forming a better Union."

Shelia Byrd pointed out a few issues in her home state which concern her and they are as follows: "Too many of us are still holding on to our divisive past. Mississippi has a national reputation for its Confederate history, educational shortfalls, and poverty. However, there is more to this state and our people and we've got to do a better job of letting the world know that Mississippi's story is rich, multi-faceted and progressive. For instance, Jackson State University is one of the best research institutions in the South, with scientists working on cancer treatments. Right in Jackson is one of the best schools in the country. Casey Elementary is a Blue Ribbon School. We have countless talented artists and people who are actively making a difference when it comes to improving the quality of life for residents here."

Byrd regrets that not enough

of the positive stories in our state flourish. On the other hand, Shelia said, "I love Jackson because of our strong community. We're connected and care about each other and about moving Jackson forward."

Her priority includes raising her two sons to be strong, Black men who make significant contributions to society.

"I want to always be a positive role model no matter my career path," she said. She advises younger women planning to enter the field of public service, "To believe in oneself and have total trust in one's instinct. She cautions others that reliance on someone else's instinct is not always the right thing to do.

Byrd holds a B.A. in Mass Communication from Grambling State University. She is currently pursuing a Master's of Public Policy and Administration Program from JSU. She is an award-winning writer, who was the recipient of the Feature Writing, 2014 Prism Award of Excellence, and a Public Relations Excellence Award, and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education District III, 2013 Distinguished Service Scholar Award.

She was formerly the Media Relations Specialist for JSU's Communications Department, an Associated Press news reporter, the American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi Communications Manager, The *Clarion Ledger* Jackson Voices Project Site Director, and JSU's Media Relations Specialist.

She believed more than anything that people will remember her for her outspokenness. However, she would like for them to remember her kindness, sincerity, and her work ethics.

"My hope is that I don't leave this world without doing something to make it better for someone else," she concluded.



## Kathryn G. Taylor named District Health Officer for West Central Public Health District

JANS – Kathryn G. Taylor, MD, has been named the District Health Officer for the Mississippi State Department of Health's (MSDH) West Central Public Health District V. She has been the Deputy District Health Officer since July 2015.

The district comprises of Claiborne, Co-piah, Hinds, Issaquena, Madison, Rankin, Sharkey, Simpson and Warren counties.

A native of Jackson, Dr. Taylor earned her Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Mississippi College and her medical doctorate from the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Upon completion of her residency in family medicine at the UMMC, she became an instructor and assistant professor of family medicine at the school before practicing at Care Plus Reservoir Family Medicine in Brandon.

"In my previous practice, I enjoyed getting to know my patients and helping each one on their individual path to wellness," Dr. Taylor said. "I am excited about the opportunity to continue this on a larger scale as we work together to improve the overall wellness of the people of Mississippi."

Dr. Taylor is an active member of the community through her past and present work with local non-profits, including the Jackson Free Clinic, the Animal Rescue Fund of Mississippi, and the McClean Fletcher Center. She is also a member of the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians, the Mississippi State Medical Association, the Mississippi Public Health Association and the American Academy of Family Physicians.

## UMMC chief Woodward to steer accrediting body for medical schools

JANS – Dr. LouAnn Woodward, vice chancellor for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, is on track to direct the organization setting medical education standards across the United States and Canada.

On July 1, she will become chair-elect of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) for 12 months before taking over as chair of the accrediting body in July 2017 for a one-year term.

Woodward, who has led UMMC since March 1, 2015, was appointed in 2013 to a three-year membership to the



Dr. LouAnn Woodward LCME and was reappointed this year. She has served on its executive committee and chairs its subcommittee on International Relations.

Sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Medical Association, the LCME establishes benchmarks for U.S.- and Canadian-chartered medical education programs operated by universities or medical schools.

"Across the country, there are many changes in the way we teach medicine and in the profession itself," Woodward said. "It's an exciting time to be involved in medical school accreditation.

"I'm honored to receive this opportunity and humbled that my colleagues have confidence in me to take it on."

The U.S. Department of Education recognizes the LCME for its role in accrediting medical degree education programs in the United States. Established in 1942, the agency is also acknowledged by the World Federation for Medical Education.

Most state boards of licensure require that medical schools earn accreditation from the LCME, signifying that they meet national standards for the awarding of an M.D.

Woodward serves as one of 18 members of the LCME, currently chaired by Dr. John Fogarty, professor and dean of the Florida State University

College of Medicine in Tallahassee.

"LouAnn has done a great job in her time on the board, reviewing and making recommendations on some of our most difficult cases that come before our committee," Fogarty said.

"We were very pleased that she accepted our invitation to run for chair-elect, and she was confirmed unanimously by our board."

Woodward, also a professor of emergency medicine, is a native Mississippian. She earned her undergraduate degree from Mississippi State University and received her

medical education at UMMC, where she also completed her residency training.

She served for several years as associate vice chancellor for health affairs and vice dean of the medical school under her predecessor, Dr. James Keeton.

During Woodward's year of service as chair, the LCME will observe its 75th anniversary.

"The LCME is a well-respected organization in setting the standards for medical education," Woodward said. "I feel fortunate to be in a leadership role as we celebrate this important milestone in its history."



The audience at the caregiver workshop listens during the presentation on Social Security.



Ivory Craig, AARP, interim state director



Rho Lambda Omega President Sharon Bridges, Esq. (right) thanks Barrie Carpenter, Public Affairs Specialist, Social Security Administration, for speaking to the audience.

## Alzheimer's caregiver workshop hosted by local sorority

JANS – Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Rho Lambda Omega Chapter hosted a workshop for Alzheimer's Caregivers. Held on Saturday, March 19, at Central Mississippi Planning and Development, twenty-five family caregivers listened and interacted with speakers. Caregivers had an opportunity to receive information, obtain resources and ask questions that

would assist them as caregivers," said Sharon Bridges, Esq., Rho Lambda Omega Chapter President. "We also wanted to allow caregivers to share their struggle in a safe environment and secure the help they need."

Workshop speakers were: Ivory Craig, AARP; Barrie Carpenter, Social Security Administration; Kyndell Jones, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Gail Marshall

Brown, Alzheimer's Association; and Bennie Hubbard, Hubbard Financial Services. Topics included: Preparing to Care, Alzheimer's Advocacy, Financial Planning and Self-Care for Caregivers.

Caregiver Sylvia Thomas was in attendance at the workshop. "I really enjoyed *Taking Care of the Caregiver* and the *Social Security* sessions," said Thomas. "It is important for me to

attend so I can make sure I am doing what is best for my mom. I appreciate the sorority for hosting events like this."

According to the Alzheimer's Association, African Americans are two times more likely to have Alzheimer's disease than whites. In 2014, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., partnered with the Alzheimer's Association to raise awareness

regarding Alzheimer's disease and to provide support and care to caregivers. "Caregiving can be a challenging role that can take a toll on their overall health, well-being and finances," said Jennie Hall, health promotions, co-chairman. "It is critical to provide caregivers a chance to take a break, secure resources that can assist them, and give them the opportunity to share their stories."