

L. Gale Buckner, Commissioner
Jim Shuler, Director
Office of Communications



DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

3408 Covington Highway ▪ Decatur, Georgia ▪ 30032-1513
Telephone: (404) 508-7147 ▪ Fax: (404) 508-7341

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CONTACT:

Jim Shuler, Director
DJJ Communications
(404) 508-7238

JimShuler@djj.state.ga.us

New Leadership at the Augusta YDC

(AUGUSTA) — Department of Juvenile Justice Commissioner L. Gale Buckner is pleased to announce the swearing-in of permanent new leadership at the DJJ Youth Development Campus (YDC) in Augusta, Georgia. After an exhaustive search, the Augusta YDC now has a new Director, Assistant Director of Security, and an Assistant Director of Programs.

Ronald Brawner, who has extensive experience working in Georgia's adult corrections system, will be Director at Augusta YDC. Brawner replaces temporary Director Gary Jones, who now returns to his position as Police Chief in Sardis, Georgia. Jones was appointed as the special liaison to Commissioner Buckner while the Commissioner called for a comprehensive joint internal affairs and GBI investigation at the Augusta YDC, following the teen beating death of resident Jade Holder there last November. As a result of Holder's death investigation, Commissioner Buckner launched statewide unannounced inspections at all twenty-seven DJJ secure facilities to ensure the safety and security of all youth in department custody.

Rounding out the new leadership team at Augusta YDC will be Melvin Womble, who is the Assistant Director of Security and Aisha Hunter, who was named Assistant Director of Programs.

"Over the last five months we have focused on making certain we operate safe and secure facilities for our youth and staff throughout the state," said Commissioner Buckner. "Chief Jones performed a significant role and I thank him for his hard work. I also thank my Safety and Security Team for their dedication to this task," Buckner said.

"Today we're here to express our confidence in Mr. Brawner, Mr. Womble, and Ms. Hunter," said Commissioner Buckner. "Choosing people to fill these key roles was not easy, and I believe these are the right people to lead as our new Director and Assistant Directors at the Augusta YDC."

Ronald Brawner is the new Director of the Augusta YDC. Since 2005 Brawner has served as the superintendent of the Georgia Department of Corrections Augusta Transitional Center. Prior to taking the top position at the Transitional Center, Brawner spent three years as Assistant Superintendent there. His Georgia Corrections background includes Chief of Security at Frank Scott State Prison, Lieutenant at Dodge State Prison, Sergeant at Pulaski State Prison, and Correctional Officer at the Georgia Women's Correctional Institution. Brawner, who is also an ordained minister, holds an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice from Georgia Military College, a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Brenau University, and he is pursuing a Master's Degree in Management.

Melvin Womble is the new Assistant Director of Security at the Augusta YDC. A retired drill instructor and platoon sergeant with the United States Army, Womble spent two years as a unit manager at the Augusta State Medical Prison where he managed a close security dorm with 400 inmates. He has also served as a Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT) sergeant at that same facility for six years.

Aisha Hunter is the new Assistant Director of Programs at the Augusta YDC. Hunter came to DJJ in 2005 as a Juvenile Correctional Counselor-3 at the Augusta YDC. Prior to joining the department, she worked as a Social Services Tech with Georgia Pines Residential Services in Moultrie. Hunter has a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Albany State University and a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice from Capella University.

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