Media Release

Contact:
Logan Allen, DHS Division of Aging and Adult Services
501-320-6048 or logan.allen@dhs.arkansas.gov

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DHS names three to Senior Arkansans Hall of Fame

The Department of Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult Services has chosen Arkansas seniors from Pocahontas, Mountain View and Conway as 2014 inductees into the Senior Arkansans Hall of Fame. They were chosen from among ten nominees.

The Senior Arkansans Hall of Fame was created by the 78th General Assembly to honor the significant contributions of older Arkansans. Nominees must be a citizen of Arkansas and at least 60 years old or older and living at the time of nomination and have performed outstanding volunteer contributions or services, which have promoted, improved, and enriched the quality of life for Arkansas seniors. The inductees will have their names added to two perpetual plaques with names of all members of the Senior Arkansans Hall of Fame. One plaque is located at the Office of the Governor in the Capitol and the other is housed at the Division of Aging Adult Services’ central office in Little Rock.

Individuals inducted into Senior Arkansans Hall of Fame in 2014 are:

- Michael Dunn of Pocahontas. Dunn has been involved in a wide variety of volunteer effort that have made life better, not only seniors, but other residents of northeast Arkansas. He has diligently served on the East Arkansas Area Agency on Aging Board of Directors for 13 years in various capacities, including 9 years as vice president. He has been a delegate for five Silver Haired Legislative Sessions and is seeking to serve for the sixth time later this year. With more than 15 years of service on the Pocahontas Housing Authority Board, including 4 years as chairman, he has helped make housing affordable for seniors, as well as individuals of all ages. He has also served on the Black River Technical College Board of Trustees, including 6 years as Chairman and currently remains on the Foundation Board. Additionally, he has served on the East Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, Studio for the Arts Imperial Theatre Board, Pocahontas Rotary Club, and 5 Rivers Historic Preservation Board in various capacities.

- Billie Burnett of Mountain View. She has touched people worldwide both figuratively and literally. Orphaned at a young age, she knows firsthand the realities of going without food. As a result, she has a passion for feeding the hungry and regularly volunteers to distribute food to those who are in need. She has done so as well as provided counseling and support for those in need for more than 25 years with Stone County Food Ministry.

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As an active member of the Stone County Resource Council for the last 15 years, she has been active in promoting volunteerism in the community, supporting the local food ministry, and providing clothing and other necessities to low income families in need. She has a unique talent of writing in calligraphy and combined with her compassionate heart, spends many hours hand writing scripture verses on sea shells and has done so for more than 40 years. Thousands of her shells have been distributed around the world in more than 10 languages.

- Henry Hawk of Conway. Hawk has sought to increase the physical and mental well-being of senior Arkansans for many years. By living by his guiding principle of “teaching through example,” he has obtained the status of a world class athlete, obtaining multiple world records including being ranked number one in the world at age 65 in the mile and 800 meter races and winning 36 national titles in Masters Track and Field championships as a senior. It comes as no surprise he has been inducted to several sports hall of fames for his athletic accomplishments and commitment as a renowned fitness instructor.

As fitness instructor, he challenges his students weekly, traveling around central Arkansas holding 6 bi-weekly physical fitness classes at various locations. He has also produced a fitness video for seniors to benefit individuals who cannot make it to his classes due to transportation restrictions or inclement weather. He instructs many individuals of all ages but primarily focuses on seniors. He work in fitness has also leaded him to work with and provide physical therapy to various individuals suffering from injuries. He also has served on a vast number of community organization boards and councils to benefit others. These include the Conway Chamber of Commerce, Governor’s Council on Fitness, Senior Olympics, Baptist Health 55 Plus, Women’s Shelter of Central Arkansas, Soaring Wings Ranch for abused and neglected children, and Faulkner County Board of Realtors, UCA Letterman’s Club and the UCA Purple Club.

Other seniors nominated for the honor this year include Barbara Schenk, Greenbrier; Bettye Johnson, Pine Bluff; Cleffie Louise Gipson, Caraway; Bessie Dixon, Little Rock; Iseral Nelson, Doddridge; Lloyd Wessels, White Hall; and Amanda Charles, Pine Bluff.