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## FAMILY PHYSICIAN PHILLIPS HONORED WITH MAFP'S HUMANITARIAN AWARD

JACKSON, August 12, 2022 – Family physician **D. Melessa (Lessa) Phillips, MD, MPH**, of Jackson, was honored as the recipient of the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians **Humanitarian Award** at its Annual Meeting July 16-20.



This particular award is not given every year, and has been only given to four previous recipients. The MAFP Humanitarian Award is given to a family physician who exhibits a commitment to the ideals of family medicine by striving to improve access and to fill gaps in the health care delivery system for underserved populations in Mississippi. Physicians honored with this award have shown an outstanding commitment to patients and communities in need, and they use their leadership in addressing issues of social justice regarding access to care.

Dr. Phillips was born in Dublin, Ireland, and graduated from Newcomb College. She earned an M.D. degree from Tulane University School of Medicine. After completing a family medicine residency at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine Dr. Phillips stayed at the department, working her way up to the Chair of the Department of Family Medicine. Not only was she the first woman physician

*MISSION: Improve the health of all people in Mississippi by supporting family medicine physicians.*

## Phillips/add 1

chosen to head a department at UMMC, she served in the position of chair for 20 years.

Dr. Phillips retired from UMMC in 2006 and continued to educate herself, earning a master of public health degree, graduating summa cum laude from San Jose State University in San Jose, California. After becoming a W.K. Kellogg Foundation fellow, she developed a passion for global health equity for the medically underserved. She has designed and supervised cervical cancer screening programs in Nigeria for marketplace women and she started the first cytotechnology training program at Ibadan University in Nigeria.

The author of numerous peer-reviewed works and textbooks, her interests are the social determinants of health and their effect on primary care clinicians' ability to achieve the best outcomes for their patients. Currently, she now teaches and serves as the Academic and Faculty Development Advisor for the Mississippi Delta Family Medicine Residency in Greenville.

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*The Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians, founded in 1949, has over 1,200 members consisting of physicians, residents and medical students. The MAFP is dedicated to supporting family medicine physicians as they improve the health of all Mississippians. MAFP envisions a family physician for every Mississippian.*

*MISSION: Supporting Family Medicine physicians as they improve the health of all Mississippians.*