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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **T'AI CHI CHIH BEGINNER'S CLASS ON TAP**

TUPELO, Miss.— An eight-week T'ai Chi Chih beginner's class starts at 6 p.m. Monday, Sept. 20, at North Mississippi Medical Center Wellness Center, 1030 S. Madison St.

The 90-minute classes will be taught on consecutive Monday evenings through Nov. 8. The class is free to Wellness Center members and \$50 for nonmembers. To register or for more information, call (662) 377-4147 or 1-800-THE DESK (1-800-843-3375). Participants are encouraged to wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

T'ai Chi Chih, a form of moving meditation, is growing in popularity throughout north Mississippi. More than 100 local residents have practiced T'ai Chi Chih and are crediting the slow, gentle movements with health improvements, including lower stress levels, lower blood pressure, improved concentration, and all around well-being.

"I started T'ai Chi Chih as a skeptical student more than seven years ago," said Stephen Thompson, who now teaches the form in Tupelo. "But right from the beginning I felt a marvelous difference. Tension just seemed to melt away and I had more energy. Now I've been doing the movements faithfully every day for many years, and teaching others how to get the same great results."

Researchers at the Neuropsychiatric Institute at the University of California's Los Angeles medical school have reported that doing T'ai Chi Chih improves immune system function, and researchers at the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse have reported that T'ai Chi Chih practitioners experience a greater sense of well-being and less stress than they did before taking the classes.

Hundreds of accredited teachers nationwide say their students over the past 35 years have reported these and other benefits. "A lot of good can happen when we learn to work with the vital energy that circulates within us, which the Chinese call chi," said Thompson. "The stories are anecdotal but compelling—people with cancer report healings, people with high cholesterol and heart problems report improved health, and just about everyone who takes a T'ai Chi Chih class says it changes their life for the better."

The form was developed in 1974 by Justin Stone, now a vibrant 93-year-old teacher living in Albuquerque, N.M. T'ai Chi Chih is based on Stone's experience practicing T'ai Chi

Chu'an (which looks similar but is very different because it is based on martial arts principles), Zen and Indian meditation practices. Stone's Americanized version—T'ai Chi Chih—is a series of 19 flowing, soft movements which are taught in 13 countries worldwide by more than 2,000 accredited teachers.