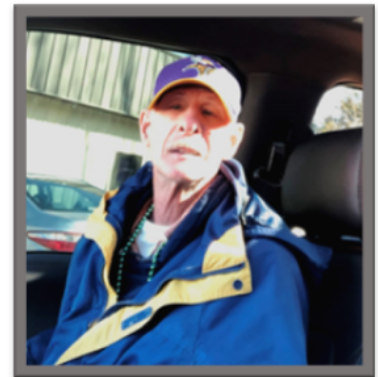


# CELEBRATING

## *Mississippians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

### William's Story

Originally from Plainfield, New Jersey, William Johnson lived with and helped care for his mother until he was 57 years old when she passed away from a long illness. William moved to Columbus, Mississippi to live in an apartment on his brother's property, but in 2008, his brother passed away and William moved to an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF). It was there that William found his self-described dream job as a store clerk. The job gave him the opportunity to organize food items, collect money, and assist with food deliveries. Eventually, the tasks took a toll on his physical health and William had to move on from it, but found another job as a dish washer.



William had lived in the ICF for 14 years when Matt Nalker, Executive Director of the Arc of Mississippi became his Supported Decision Maker, a person-centered process in which appropriate levels of support were identified through face-to-face discovery interviews with William and the people he is closest too. While getting to know one another, William told Matt one of his dreams was to move into his own home. "He had almost given up hope about leaving the ICF because he'd lived there for so many years. It was my honor to help William move into a home in the community," said Nalker.



Now 72 years old, William lives in a home in West Point and is living out what he describes as his "golden years"—a much more simple life in a home that he loves. He spends his days enjoying fresh air while sitting outside, and working at the local prevocational center once a week. He hopes to get married one day, and own a small beagle. "We were glad to have the opportunity to help William amplify his voice," said Nalker. "He is a wonderful person to know, and I'm happy to call him a friend."



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