

# CELEBRATING

## *Mississippians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

### Shannon Boatner



Shannon Boatner has always been an independent and determined man, despite being confined to a wheelchair due to a developmental disability. After earning his Certificate of Completion from his local high school, and his GED, Shannon proved that determination to his family and others who thought he lacked the maturity and skills to live on his own.

It was the early 1990's and Hudspeth Regional Center was opening a group home in Meridian, Mississippi. Shannon took initiative to learn more about what it took to live there. Before his mother knew it, Shannon was moving into the group home! While in Meridian, he took classes at Meridian Community College and developed an interest in business, later putting that knowledge to work at Boatner Shredding, a paper shredding

company he established with the help of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services.

As much as Shannon loved his business and his group home, he felt it was time for a change and have a place of his own. In 2017, Shannon jumped at the opportunity to live in an apartment where he received supports of his choice through the ID/DD Waiver Program. He retired from Boatner and moved to Brandon where he enjoys spending his days at his provider's day program and putting his musical talents to work by writing songs and singing karaoke at Burgers and Blues restaurant in the evenings. He also likes to attend other live entertainment events in the metro-Jackson area.

One of his support staff describes Shannon as someone who "puts forth initiative to prove to others what he can do," so his dream of owning his own home may one day become a reality. For now, Shannon is enjoying life, often traveling to visit friends and family across the state. He stays politically informed, and feels it is important to exercise his right to vote in every election. As a whole, Shannon attributes the respect and dignity he's gained over the years to his independent nature and ability to advocate for the rights he deserves.



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