Thomas Ephraim follows his wife Linda, as The Gray Wiggers Employee of the Year, making the award a family affair. Thomas has worked the past 10 years at our Centre Street Select store and has always worked hard throughout his career at Goodwill. He considers his greatest accomplishment meeting and marrying Linda. They have been married for 26 years and have two children.

Thomas has lived a colorful and interesting life. He was born in Pocahontas, MS and raised in Chicago. He moved back to Jackson for his senior year of high school at Murrah. He has one younger sister and was raised in a strict household. Over his career he has worked construction, drove a transport truck for a carnival company traveling all over the US and Canada, and played the drums while singing with blues singer Gary B.B. Coleman.

If you do get invited over the Ephraims for dinner – go! Thomas loves to cook and does everything from scratch – such as biscuits and pancakes for breakfast and especially barbequing. In fact, at the top of his bucket list is to own and operate his own restaurant!

His advice for success in life: “Don’t go to a job interview with baggy pants, you won’t get it and always be courteous to others. Know too, that God is Good!”

Congratulations Thomas on being named THE GRAY WIGGERS EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR!
Luther “Trell” Gatlin is originally from Baton Rouge, LA and moved to Tylertown, MS with his family where they operated a family-owned restaurant. He is the youngest of 6 siblings. His parents have made the most difference in his life, instilling strong Christian beliefs (his father was a pastor) and teaching Trell and his brothers and sisters to work hard for what you want.

Previously, he worked as a Customer Service Manager for Walmart before joining Goodwill. He has excelled as store manager of our Hattiesburg store by building a strong team, challenging his employees through goal-setting, innovation, and providing a customer-friendly shopping experience. He especially enjoys meeting and knowing his customers, including their families.

Learning was and is central to his development. As a young child, he went with his brother and sisters to the bus stop, but his Mother needed to tell him ‘it’s not your time.’ He is on plan to receive his college degree from William Carey this year. He would like to continue to excel and pursue a career at Goodwill to help people maximize their career goals.

In his youth, he ran a portable window washing business and played the snare drums in high school. On his bucket list is going skydiving, traveling the world (he will start with the islands) and eventually opening his own business.

Congratulations Trell on being named THE DON SIMPSON ACHIEVER OF THE YEAR!
Goodwill is truly a family-affair for Willie Charleston, recipient of the GIVS Spirit Award. His grandmother, Lena Mae Banks, was one of the first employees to work at Goodwill back in the early 60s! She worked at the Palmyra location, and Willie has fond memories of seeing her at the store and even helping her work at times.

Willie was born in Jackson and graduated from Jim Hill High School. He played the bass drum in the band, attended ROTC, sang in the choir and was on the track team. Upon graduation, he has worked for the Jackson Public Schools cafeteria, landscaping services, Roses in Clinton and was named Employee of the Year while working for Tom Wimberley Auto. At Goodwill, he meets and greets customers while receiving donations.

Willie has always liked to work, even as he grew up. That is based on the strong work ethic he learned from his grandmother. He has a deep respect for family tradition and wants to keep his family’s good name going. When asked where he wants to be in 5 years – he states “Working for Goodwill, I want to carry this on as a family tradition.”

On Willie’s bucket list is to start a Gospel singing group and be the best granddad ever to his two grandsons. He offers sage advice, too, from his years of life experiences: “Be kind to others. Talk to your supervisor if you have problems, don’t try to take issues into your own hands. Come in with a good attitude and be the best you can be at whatever you do.”

Willie Charleston exemplifies the daily spirit of GIVS and is well-deserving of THE GIVS SPIRIT OF THE YEAR AWARD!

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Dean have long been supporters of our Goodwill Mission. Elizabeth was President of GIVS in 1978-79 and named Southeast Volunteer of the Year. Jack was President of the Board in 1971-72. The Dean family honored Elizabeth’s memory through a contribution to renovate our Metro Select Store employee room.

This wonderful gesture was celebrated at a dedication event by the Dean family and our employees on March 2nd.

Good People, Good Moves!

Promotions

Marquita Kitchens
Assistant Manager, Crossgates

Dana Cotting
Assistant Manager, Crossgates

Nikki Reed
Manager, Crossgates

Cervetra Williams
Assistant Manager, 51 Place

Jasmyne Barnes
Assistant Manager, Hattiesburg

Yazmeen Harris
Assistant Manager, Centre Street

Monica Garner
Assistant Manager, Centre Street

Jacqui Page
HR Assistant, Ridgeland

Bill Walker
Donated Goods Retail Analyst, Ridgeland

Roy Johns
VP of Donated Goods Retail, Ridgeland

Crystal Walters
Assistant Manager, Jacksonian
MDRS Appreciation Luncheon

MRDS staff and counselors were recognized by Goodwill for their significant contributions at a VR Appreciation Luncheon on April 19th at Biaggi’s Restaurant.

Goodwill of Mississippi and Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services have formed a long partnership that has changed the lives of numerous people with disabilities over the past 60 years! Through training, evaluation, work experience and job placement, Goodwill has provided Vocational Rehabilitation clients long-term independence as a contributing member of the community.

VR Counselor Kendria Davis was the big raffle winner!

Chris Howard, Executive Director of MDRS, receives a plaque from Dave Hollingsworth, Goodwill President & CEO

Partners Since 1958 with State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

Goodwill Fun Fact

Goodwill of Mississippi assists people with disabilities and other barriers to obtain employment.