



Anna Rose Willingham

James Bryant has been employed with Simmons Farms Raised Catfish for over three decades. He currently serves at the plant manager at the local farm.

# Bryant is proud of the Simmons Catfish name

By ANNA ROSE WILLINGHAM  
Herald Reporter

When James Bryant showed up on his first day of work at Simmons Farm Raised Catfish, he admits he didn't know if he would make it through the day.

"I almost did not make it my first day," Bryant said. "I came in at 6:30 a.m. that morning, and I didn't leave until midnight that night. But I came back the next day, and I've been here ever since."

Bryant, a Yazoo County native, has been with the Simmons family for about 37 years. And over the last three decades, he has worked in many different departments of the local catfish farm. His roles may have changed, but his commitment has remained steady. He is proud to be a part of the team that produces what he believes is some of the best catfish in the world.

Born and raised in Yazoo County, Bryant started at Simmons Catfish as what he describes as a general worker. Doing whatever was asked of him, he worked his way up the ladder at the company and now serves as plant manager.

"I make sure everyone is doing their job, are at the right equipment and are doing their jobs safely and correctly," he said.

When he first joined the Simmons operation, Bryant said he simply just needed a job at the time. He had no idea what the future would hold, but he was determined to his job and do it well.

"I ended up falling in love with it," Bryant said.

Owner Harry Simmons opened the local farm in 1982, giving him the ability to market his catfish and develop a brand that would come to be known for its quality. For three generations, Simmons Catfish has employed mostly local Yazooans, brought revenue into the community and expanded its products all over the country.

Bryant is proud to be a part of that history. "It makes me proud to see our product being served in so many places," Bryant said. "I love being a part of the catfish production and being able to feed so many people with the catfish we are producing."

Bryant finds the most rewarding part of his job is learning from others while being able to



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James Bryant speaks with a Simmons Catfish employee as the work day continues at the facility.

also influence other workers at the facility on a daily basis. There have been many challenges over the years, especially connected to COVID.

"But we have worked together to get around

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James Bryant

these problems," he said.

But some changes have been enjoyable for Bryant. He has enjoyed watching the operation expand tremendously over the years, especially how much more catfish can be produced in a day compared to 30 years ago.

When he is not at work, Bryant can be found gardening and taking his grandchildren fishing.

"Over the weekend I took my grandkids fishing, and I just about had to make them get in the truck because they weren't ready to leave," said Bryant.

Not only is Bryant proud of the quality product within Simmons' operation, but he enjoys the tight-knit connections among its employees and with the Simmons family personally.

"I am thankful for Harry Simmons," Bryant said. "He has been a fine man to work for over the years."

And as another box of Simmons Catfish heads out to the public, Bryant can't help but smile, knowing he was part of the dedicated team that sent it out the door.