

JERED "TEA CUP" WRIGHT, SHIPBUILDER

IT'S ALL IN FUN, I DON'T LET IT GET TO ME. REALLY WHEN I WAS YOUNGER I THINK IT GOT TO ME A LITTLE BIT MORE BUT I'VE GOTTEN USED TO IT. REALLY I'M JUST A REGULAR GUY. I LIKE DOING THINGS MOST GUYS LIKE DOING, BUT FOR MOST OF YOU THAT DON'T KNOW ME. I'M 5 FOOT TALL. THAT KIND OF GETS IN THE WAY OF A FEW THINGS SOMETIMES.

WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL I TRIED PLAYING BASKETBALL AND I WAS OKAY AT IT I WASN'T LIKE A SUPERIOR ATHLETE. I WENT TO TRY OUTS AND I WAS TRYING OUT AND THEN RIGHT AT THE END THE COACH HE CUT ME. HE SAID, "YOU KNOW JERED YOU'RE TOO SHORT TO PLAY BASKETBALL. I CAN'T LET YOU ON THE TEAM."

I TRY NOT TO LET THINGS HURT MY FEELINGS BUT I REALLY THINK THAT ONE REALLY GOT TO ME. IT KIND OF IS JUST LIKE A KNIFE IN YOUR SIDE. IT GETS TO YOU.

FOR THE LAST EIGHT YEARS EVERYONE'S BEEN CALLING ME TEA CUP, MIDGET, OR SHORT GUY. THERE'S A FEW PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO CALL ME SAWED-OFF. I'VE GOTTEN USED TO JUST BEING SHORT AND BEING CALLED SHORT ALL THE TIME BECAUSE, IT'S THE TRUTH.

BEING SHORT HAS BEEN A BLESSING. SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE I WAS MADE TO WORK AT THE SHIPYARD. BEING ABLE TO GET INTO A LOT OF SPACES AS A WELDER HAS HELPED MY CAREER A LOT. I THINK WHEN I FIRST STARTED I WAS KIND OF JUST LIKE, A GO-GETTER. I WAS JUST TRYING TO MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF. AND THEN AS I PROGRESSED IN MY CAREER IT WAS LIKE, WELL HOW ARE WE GOING TO WELD THIS JOB? WELL, TEA CUP CAN DO IT. YOU'RE IN SOME VERY AKWARD POSITIONS AND YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT AND STRETCH. I GUESS SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A CONTORTIONIST BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT YOUR ARM AROUND YOUR HEAD OR YOU'RE REACHING AROUND A PIPE AROUND THIS SIDE AND THROUGH A BUNCH OF PIPES AND YOU'RE WELDING WITH A MIRROR. YOU'VE GOT TO WEDGE PIPES OPEN SO YOU CAN GET A WELD CORRECTLY. IT'S A CHALLENGE AND I ENJOY THE CHALLENGE.

WHEN YOU'RE LITTLE AND YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN PICKED ON FOR THE SAME THING YOU'VE GOT A CHOICE. YOU CAN EITHER CRY ABOUT IT YOUR WHOLE LIFE BECAUSE I'M FIVE FOOT TALL AND I'M NOT GOING TO CHANGE. OR YOU CAN GET OVER IT AND HAVE AS MUCH FUN LAUGHING ABOUT IT AS EVERYONE ELSE DOES.

IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS OUR DIFFERENCES AS PEOPLE BECAUSE NO ONE'S THE SAME. THERE'S ONLY ONE TEA CUP AT THE SHIPYARD. I'M THE ONLY ONE HERE, BUT THERE'S OTHER SHORT PEOPLE THAT ARE AROUND. JUST BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE DIFFERENT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THEY'RE ODD OR STRANGE OR DON'T DESERVE THE SAME THINGS THAT EVERYONE ELSE DESERVES IN THE COMPANY. WE ALL BUILD THE SAME SHIPS AND I THINK WE CAN COME TOGETHER AS A TEAM AS LONG AS WE TREAT EACH OTHER FAIRLY.