

## **About Face: Treymane Bunch, Shipbuilder**

I've never been a real outspoken person. I've always been quiet so now you got other kids that kind of want to come pick on you.

It's been times in my life I have been like, "Why can't I be normal?" And as I got older it just became part of me.

Originally I was born in Ahoskie, North Carolina. A country town. Blink your eye, you've been through it. I was raised mostly in Suffolk, Virginia. Growing up, for me, around here it was at times hard. I'm looking teachers square in the eye and everyone looking at me like, "Oh man, you're so tall." In sixth grade reaching 6' 6" when someone comes up to you nine times out of ten the first question they're going to ask, "How tall are you?" Second question, "Do you play basketball?" I've been called Shaq. I've been called Tiny. Um, Tree Top. And Jolly Green Giant. And me being young at the time, teenager of course, I was like man that's rude to say. But I got used to it over time and I was like, ok this is how it's going to be, might as well get used to it. It's life, I can play the hand that was dealt to me.

As the years went on in 1999 I actually came to the apprentice school here. At first, you know, it felt weird I was still dealing with the questions, how tall you are. "Man if I were you I'd be playing basketball." Or, "I'd be doing this, or that, or the other." And my mind won't in the right spot with school and I was only here for about six months and I ended up leaving. I end up working other places and end up having more responsibilities. In 2005, by this time I'm more focused on work. I know what I got to do to get things done. When I came back in to the shipyard I had a whole different attitude.

I've been here 12 years now. I work on the 1050 crane in the north yard. People know me from south yard to the north yard. Can't miss me. And the reason why everyone knows me is because I'm seven feet tall. I guess I'm the giant in the shipyard. When it comes to hooking up jobs I'm normally like the first one. While the other guys waiting they'll be like, "That ain't fair."

As far as hindering me I guess when I go on the boat when everyone can just walk through I find myself every once in a while hitting my hard hat on something.

I respect the shipyard for being here talking about diversity and inclusion. Just because, you know, it makes people feel more comfortable first off and make other people look at people differently and respect them more.

We're all here to get a job done. You human just like I'm human. I think when you've got different groups of people that come from different areas in life. They give you a different take on things. They have their own opinions on how things can get done. That makes a big difference because now it opens up my eyes. I'm like, I ain't think about that.

Work with a bunch of good guys that taught me a lot. Especially in the dry dock crew. All the senior guys I learned a lot from them. We're like brothers. You know we have our good days, mostly. And we have had some bad days. So you know we're like a family down there. I would say moving forward just treat people with respect. And look at them just as you would look at yourself in the mirror every day.