

Original Isle of Capri employees reflect on casino industry

Written by Administrator
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BILOXI, Miss. (WLOX) - Monday marks a big milestone not only for the coast, but also for those who have been working in the casino industry since the very beginning.

August 1, 1992 marks the date of the opening of Mississippi's first casino, Isle of Capri -- a turning point for the coast.

"Today 30 years ago changed the complexion of the Mississippi Gulf Coast financially, especially at a time when most of your hotels couldn't even pay their water bill," said Golden Nugget General Manager Chett Harrison.

Three employees have been here from the start.

"They just said all the casinos were coming, and I figured I'd try it out." said Crystal Morrow.

During Morrow's first week on the job, she found out she was pregnant. Today, she works as a player services supervisor while her son is going on 30.

"It's grown. It has definitely grown, and it just kept going. it's just a friendly atmosphere."

Shirley Shoemaker started out as a cleaner. She was promoted to a lead, and now, a department manager.

"We started out very small. Now we had done grew and grew, and it's a good job, though, to have working at a casino business." said Shoemaker.

"This is my first job and my last job," said Tommie Proby Jr., who works in housekeeping. "A lot

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of people think it's low class, but to me, it's high class."

He says he's been working on the property for six decades, about 30 years before the Isle Capri even opened. Proby Jr. worked at a restaurant occupying the same space at the same time.

"To me it's been fun, you know," he said. "I just like to work and be around people to talk."

"These four employees are the bedrock and the cornerstone of what was to come over the next 30 years," said Chett Harrison.

Harrison presented the group with PTO, gift certificates and permanent executive parking spots. Their fourth employee, who has also been at the casino since day one, was away on vacation.

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