



PASSPORT PRODUCTION RUNS IN THE FAMILY

As GPO Celebrates 100 Years of Producing the U.S. Passport, Families in D.C. and Stennis Share a Special Connection to the Work and Each Other

Above and on the cover: Josh Arjune and his mother Colleen Bailey at GPO D.C. headquarters.

For 100 years, GPO teammates have helped produce a document that millions of Americans carry with them around the world. For three GPO families, being part of that century-long legacy means even more because it is work they share with someone they love.

In D.C. and at GPO's Stennis Secure Production Facility in Mississippi, parents and their children are helping produce the U.S. passport together. Their paths to GPO are different, but they share a pride in knowing their work contributes to one of the Nation's most important secure documents.

For mother and son Colleen Bailey and Josh Arjune, that work has brought their family's story full circle.

The two came to the United States from South America when Josh was 11 years old. Josh was the first one to join GPO.

He joined the Agency in 2022 as a Printing Plant Worker (PPW), worked his way through several positions and eventually entered GPO's three-year production tech training program. He is now in his third year of the program.

Seeing her son at GPO encouraged Colleen to keep pursuing her own goal.

"I always wanted to get back in the Government after serving in a government position in South America," she said. "I kept applying, and then Joshua started at GPO, and it influenced me even more."

Today, Colleen is a PPW, and mother and son work the same shift. At the time of their interview, they were even assigned to the same passport binding line.

For Josh, helping produce the U.S. passport after immigrating to the United States himself is especially meaningful.

"Now, to be here and be part of making the book that gives people the opportunity to travel, it's really a full circle moment," Josh said.

Colleen also thinks about the passports she helps produce after those passports leave GPO.



“Everywhere I go, everyone is traveling,” she said. “I’m proud to know that I had a hand in the passports people are using.”

Their influence on one another continues. Colleen is now interested in following Josh into the production tech program.

“I’m so proud to know that my son is working with me in the same area. Looking at what he’s doing gives me the encouragement to keep climbing.”

Printing Plant Worker
Colleen Bailey

A SHARED TRADE

Elsewhere in GPO’s D.C. passport operation, Colin Dziedzic and his father, Joe Dziedzic, have found their own shared connection to passport production.

Colin joined GPO more than three years ago after working in a different trade. During the COVID-19 pandemic, layoffs and reduced hours had him considering a career change. Joe, already at GPO, encouraged his son to consider Federal service and the opportunities available at the Agency.

Colin took his dad’s advice, applied and was ultimately selected from a competitive pool of applicants. He completed GPO’s three-year Production Technician training program and now works on several aspects of passport production, including the final stages of assembling the book.

For him, the specialized nature of the work makes producing the U.S. passport particularly meaningful.

“It’s unique,” Colin said. “It’s not something everybody can do because of how specialized the equipment and process are and all of the security parameters we implement.”

Before coming to GPO, Colin said he did not realize just how much went into the passport.

“I always thought it was just a book, but there’s a lot more that goes into it than you realize,” he said. “It’s a very interesting process.”



Above: Joe Dziedzic (left) and his son Colin Dziedzic (right) hold passports at GPO D.C. headquarters.

Joe understands that fascination.

He came to GPO more than five years ago after approximately 30 years in the printing trade. He started as a bookbinder, later helped facilitate apprentice training and eventually returned to passport production in a supervisory role overseeing day-to-day binding operations.

Even after decades in the trade, the passport offered something different.

“The security features were the most intriguing to me,” Joe said.

He has since watched passport technology continue to evolve and was part of the team that produced the America 250 commemorative passports.

“It was an honor to be part of that,” Joe said. “To be able to say, ‘Yep, I helped, in some capacity, make that happen.’”

For Joe, encouraging his son to come to GPO was also about the opportunities he saw ahead for the next generation of teammates. He wanted Colin to build his own career, create his own network and develop his own knowledge.

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MEANINGFUL WORK AT STENNIS

Nearly 1,000 miles away at Stennis, another father and his son share the experience of producing secure documents for Americans, although neither began his career anywhere close to bookbinding.

Brian Knight retired after 20 years in the U.S. Air Force and later worked as a Government contractor at Stennis Airfield. A friend encouraged him to look at an opening at GPO.

"I had no clue what a bookbinder was," he said. "This was not in my realm. I worked on airplanes for a living."

He applied anyway and joined GPO. Before long, he was encouraging his son, Joe Knight, who was living in Chicago and had spent about a decade working for the railroad, to do the same.

"I told my son, 'Look, this is the place.' It's meaningful work, and this place treats you well."

Bindery Machine Operator
Brian Knight

Joe eventually got the call and moved from Chicago to Mississippi with his wife and growing family.

Both entered GPO without bookbinding experience and learned the highly specialized work on the job.

"We both came in with no bookbinding experience," Brian said. "We had very technical, hands-on careers, so transitioning into bookbinding was a huge culture change for us."

For both Brian and Joe, however, the importance of what they produce gives the work a sense of purpose.

"There's a good chance that every passport we see is something we've touched," Brian said. "It's definitely a fulfilling environment."

Joe has worked throughout the bindery and now specializes in equipment used to stamp passport covers. His mechanical background has made the work a natural fit, and he says he is excited about the opportunity to learn new equipment as passport production continues to evolve.

"I like to learn hands-on and start new things," Joe said.

Brian said that even though the work involves manufacturing, that does not make its purpose any less significant.

"Just because you're doing manufacturing doesn't mean what you're doing isn't purposeful," Brian said. "You get that sense here."

That sense of purpose is part of why he was so eager for his son to join him at GPO.



Above: Joe Knight (left) and his father Brian Knight (right) at GPO's Stennis Secure Production Facility.

"This is the last job you'll ever need," Brian remembers telling Joe.

His son agrees.

"This is for sure the last one," Joe said.

Working for the same Agency has also given them something else in common. When they talk about work outside GPO, each understands what the other is describing.

"It's good to have somebody who knows what you go through on a day-to-day basis," Brian said.

And they still find opportunities for the usual father-son teasing. If something goes wrong on his son's shift, his son can expect to hear about it.

"He's the first one to give me grief about it every time," Joe joked. "'Well, I heard you broke this.' I wasn't even on it!"

Their family connection has a story of its own. Brian came into Joe's life when he was 19. Years later, as adults, Joe and his sister asked Brian to legally adopt them.

"I don't have any biological kids, so these are my kids, and I treat them that way," Brian said.

After spending much of his Air Force career away from family, helping his son find his own career at Stennis ultimately helped bring another generation of the family closer to home.

"You lose track of how important family is until you have it around," Brian said. "This is what's important."



A CENTURY OF PRIDE

The passport has evolved considerably since GPO began producing it in 1926, and the teammates who produce it today know that evolution will continue.

But for the families helping produce passports in D.C. and Stennis, Passport 100 is also a reminder that behind every finished book are people who understand the significance of what they make.

For Josh, it is the book connected to the American dream he imagined when he arrived in the United States as an 11-year-old immigrant.

For Colin and Joe, it is a highly specialized product whose complexity and security still inspire appreciation even after years spent working with it.

And at Stennis, it is work Brian and Joe describe as meaningful, fulfilling and purposeful.

For Colleen, the pride is simple.

“I’m proud to know that I had a hand in the passports people are using,” she said.

One hundred years after GPO began producing the U.S. passport, a new generation of teammates is carrying that work forward, and for these three families, they are doing it together.



GPO PASSPORT FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Meet more teammates helping produce passports who have family connections at GPO.

1) GPO DC HEADQUARTERS FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Pictured from left to right:

- ▶ Grandson Blaine Dement and grandfather Lester Dement
- ▶ Husband Juan Montiel and wife Glenda Escobar
- ▶ Wife Sophia Hoang and husband Richard Hoang

2) STENNIS FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Pictured left to right:

- ▶ Brothers Heath Williams and Rudy Williams
- ▶ Twin brothers Brian Rogers and Steven Rogers
- ▶ Kendon Necaise, whose cousin Nick Necaise (not pictured) also works in Stennis
- ▶ Richard Burliegh, his brother-in-law Mike Tally, and his brother Tyler Fremin
- ▶ Craig Mowery and his nephew Jarrod Belles

3) STENNIS HUSBAND AND WIFE

Pictured left to right:

- ▶ Husband and wife Myles and Sommer Bjork in Stennis