How travelling ministry musician Thomas “Rodney” Stokes, Jr., gained a new life through bariatric surgery with Dr. Avara at South Mississippi Surgical Weight Loss Center.

story and photos courtesy of South Mississippi Surgical Weight Loss Center.

For Thomas Stokes, Jr., being a member of a travelling band for eight years meant eating at a lot of fast food restaurants. Though his band, Rod & Staff, successfully played between 35 and 50 churches every year, his attempts to lose weight were unsuccessful. He steadily gained weight until he found himself in a 5XL shirt size.

He knew he had to do something. He was to marry the girl of his dreams, and wanted a new life centered around health. He prayed about it, and having seen his cousin’s results following bariatric surgery, made an appointment with Dr. Avara of South Mississippi Surgical Weight Loss Center.

He began a three-month preparation for his transformation to come. He would learn how to eat healthy, how emotions affect hunger, how he would need to eat and drink after surgery.

Three weeks before his wedding, he underwent gastric sleeve surgery at Singing River Health System.

“I did everything they asked me to do,” said Thomas. “I followed instructions precisely, from moving to Atlanta and experienced every ride for her birthday. When it was his birthday, they vacationed in Disney-world.

“It’s a great feeling to simply shop in the regular section,” said Thomas. “Today when we go to church, I can tuck in my shirt. It seems like such a simple thing, but to me it’s everything.”

Thomas attributes much of his success to Dr. Avara.

“Dr. Avara is so good at what he does, he believes in you — and that helps you believe in yourself.”

Thomas advises those who are considering bariatric surgery to fully commit to it by embracing the pre-op classes, following the doctor’s instructions and studying nutrition.

“If you stick to it, you can achieve your goal no matter how high you set it.”

The South Mississippi Surgical Weight Loss Center was founded by South Mississippi Surgeons in the year 2000. For over 30 years, South Mississippi Surgeons (SMS) have been providing quality surgical care.

Dr. Avara has practiced general surgery since 1987 and has performed over 2,500 bariatric procedures. He is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a member of the Eastern Association for Surgery of Trauma, and the American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMB). To learn more, visit smsurgicalweightloss.com to register for a FREE informational session about surgical weight.

Obesity may not be your fault, but it is your responsibility to take action. We are here to help!

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For more than 15 years, the team at South Mississippi Surgical Weight Loss Center have dedicated their careers to improving the lives of their patients through the use of bariatric and metabolic surgery. Our comprehensive pre and post-surgery program ensures that every patient is appropriately educated prior to surgery, while receiving the long-term support needed to achieve and maintain weight loss goals after surgery. Our Center of Excellence is the only comprehensive program of its kind on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and we are dedicated to helping patients lose weight, and live a long, healthy life.

Call or go online for a FREE Informational Seminar to begin your journey.

South Mississippi Surgical Weight Loss Center