

Most things in Louisiana have a history, and our farm is no exception. We'd like to take a minute to share with you the history of GrayWalk farms.

I have a degree in accounting and my background is in finance. I am also a certified financial planner, and in early 2000, set up a retirement financial trust which still exists today. I was also a real estate advisor and have always had an entrepreneurial bend. In the mid-2000s, I came upon the opportunity to acquire the Rapides Golf and Country Club. Rather than run it as a country club, we decided to convert it into a meeting and restaurant facility. We also had a plant nursery on the grounds.

As the recession hit and we tried to endure the ups and downs of the nursery industry and the housing market, we decided to change direction. We liked the nursery and enjoyed growing plants; we realized that people always need to eat, but they don't always need to landscape their yards, so we decided to grow crops instead.

With my background, we realized to make a go of it, we'd have to find a niche and we really didn't want to grow row crops and run a truck farm. We needed to create a niche market to succeed in our new endeavor. So we turned to the LSU Agricultural Extension in Shreveport. I was interested in growing tomatoes hydroponically and we turned to them find out what we'd have to do to leverage the assets we had to grow hydroponic tomatoes in greenhouses. With their help and excellent tutelage, we started out with three greenhouses of tomatoes. We found that not only did we love greenhouse growing, we were pretty good at it.

We decided to expand and added mustard greens to our produce offerings. From there, we added lettuce and expanded our greens to include collard, Swiss Chard and kale. We gradually expanded, and our produce is now in local restaurants and over 225 grocery stores. We love what we do and enjoy bringing a great product to the people of Louisiana.