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Henderson welcomes 'Lady J'

By Lee Scrivner
News Staff Writer

Joyce "Lady J" Huston does not take root in one place for long.

A resident of Henderson for one month, she has toured the country as a performing musician many times, and has lived in numerous states.

But when it comes to her family heritage and her culture, Huston is about as rooted as it gets.

"I am my family's historian; I have a six-foot chart and hundreds of names," Huston said. "That is one of the things I speak about."

One of the many things.

Huston combines spoken word and music to create a one-woman performance that entertains as well as educates.

Last month, Huston spoke and gave a musical performance in recognition of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, and this month, in recognition of Black History Month, she was featured in "Remembering Freedom, A Celebration of Culture" at the West Charleston Library.

"I think getting into one's genealogy and ethnic heritage helps them know themselves," Huston said. "On my mother's side, I am descended from a white slave owner, James O'Kelley, and a black slave named Ellen Fisher."

But Huston speaks about other things, too. She is currently a spokesperson for the muscular disease Fibromyalgia Syndrome, with which she was diagnosed in 1992.

"I have pain in thighs and legs, but it does not affect my fingers and I can still play music," Huston said. "I use a wheelchair for long-distance traveling." (*No More*)

Proceeds from sales of Huston's forthcoming CD "Soul Stir Fry" will benefit Fibromyalgia Syndrome research, and she is organizing a telethon for the disease.

Huston's musical talents became evident even before graduating from high school in St. Louis, when she performed with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and in the musical "The Music Man" starring Tony Randall at the Municipal Opera House.

Huston's first singing gig was with Chuck Berry's pianist Johnny Johnson's band on the St. Louis river front.

SOULFUL SOUNDS — Singer/songwriter Joyce "Lady J" Huston performs last Saturday at Borders Books and Music, 1445 W. Sunset Road. Huston, an accomplished musician, is also the spokesperson for the local Fibromyalgia Syndrome support group.

She toured the United States for several years as a vocalist and a trumpeter, appearing with B.B. King, Milt Jackson, John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, Albert Collins and Rufus Thomas.

Huston studied music and composition theory at the University of Kansas and at Howard University in Washington D.C.

But her life in school was more than just music. She was also voted valedictorian of her high school, as well as "most talented student."

Huston also holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration from the University of California, Redlands.

After buying a house in Las Vegas in 1988, Huston began to break into the local music scene.

She played with "Bill Pinkney and the Original Drifters" and has been a soloist at the "Gospel Brunch" at the country star.

Huston has performed

numerous one-woman variety shows at Fitzgerald's Hotel and Casino.

From 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Huston will perform in "Remembering Freedom: A Celebration of Culture" at the Clark County Library, 1401 E. Flamingo Road. The performance is free. The performance will be followed by a \$10 dinner.