

"The Best of Ferguson"

By Teyuna T. Darris, M.A.

Joyce Ann 'Lady J' Huston--- A Hidden Gem in Ferguson

Some of my favorite people in the world are musicians. And musicians who can creatively use their talents to advocate for important causes should definitely have their stories shared. In this month's edition of The Best of Ferguson, we will learn about a "hidden gem" in Ferguson known as Lady J Huston.

The Albert "Blues Boy" King Band with Joyce "Lady J" Huston on Trumpet



Joyce Ann 'Lady J' Huston is a Ferguson resident, vocalist, trumpeter and songwriter. She grew-up in St. Louis, MO, and was the Valedictorian of her graduating class at Central High School where she was voted "Most Talented" in 1979. It wasn't long after graduating from high school that Joyce (who would soon adopt the stage name Lady J Huston) began touring the United States as a traveling musician, and eventually lived in Las Vegas, Nevada where she maintained a lively career as a Blues and jazz musician for 25 years. Along the way, Lady J Huston studied music at Howard University and business administration at the University of Redlands where she earned the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

During her decorated music career, Lady J Huston toured as the trumpeter and music director with Blues legend Albert King. I asked Lady J Huston what she thought about Albert King and his music. She replied, "If you hear stories about being with Mr. King, I guarantee you, they will be classics. While touring with him, I performed alongside many music greats such as B.B. King, Etta James, Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Bobby Blue Bland, Millie Jackson, Robert Cray and more!"



And while she lived and performed in Las Vegas, Lady J Huston was known as the "Las Vegas Queen of the Blues" because she "won multiple awards for 'Best Blues Band' and 'Best Blues Artist', and headlining shows in showrooms, festivals and venues." Her band, "Lady J Huston & The Fireballs", was inducted into the Las Vegas Entertainment Consumers Exchange Hall of Fame--- this is just one of her many accolades.

In late 2013, Lady J Huston decided to return to Saint Louis--- this time settling in a beautiful house she saw in Ferguson, MO. In 2019, Lady J Huston directed and arranged a composition with the St. Louis Blues Society's music project, entitled "18 in 18" which featured eighteen popular

St. Louis-based Blues acts. And musicians in the Jazz Edge Orchestra collaborated with Lady J Huston on the recording of "Hide-Away".

During our conversation, Lady J Huston told me that she has been featured on ABC World News Tonight with Diane Sawyer in 2013 as the celebrity spokesperson for the Las Vegas Lupus Organization. She was also featured in a segment on the season finale of America's Got Talent in 2008. A video of Lady J Huston can be viewed on the National Blues Museum's social media featuring her in their "Artist Spotlight" series.



I asked Lady J Huston "What three things make you awesome?" She replied, "A dimple on my left cheek (because people really get a 'kick' out of that), my advocacy work for positive race relations and for people's general health and wellbeing." Lady J Huston and her work were featured in an episode of the Bernie Hayes TV Show during which she discussed her health advocacy work.

Lady J Huston also shared with me that she recently celebrated her first viral video on Facebook which was a mini-concert she recorded on Facebook Live in her music room in support of the December 2020 Georgia elections.

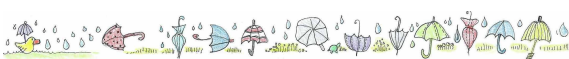
Lady J Huston also works as a virtual assistant, and in her free time, manages a Facebook group called "Black Corona Lives Matter" through which she does advocacy work to raise awareness among African-Americans about the dangers of COVID-19 and provides information to educate them about the importance of taking the steps needed to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Lady J Huston was featured on KMOV-St. Louis in March 2021 for encouraging African-Americans to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Lady J Huston is also passionate about her family's history and genealogy. She told me "This is dear to my heart...I became highly involved in researching and preserving my family's history after hosting the 1991 O'Kelly Family Reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada. I did a family history presentation and was urged by many to continue that work." Part of this work includes donating familial artifacts from the Black O'Kelly Family Association (a nonprofit organization chartered in Ferguson, MO) to the Washington University - St. Louis libraries and the Missouri History Museum.

Lady J Huston is a member of various genealogical societies and a charter member of Florissant's Chapter of National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) where she serves as the chairwoman of the public relations committee. The O'Fallon Chapter of the NSDAR presented Lady J Huston the 'Women in Arts' award in 2018.

It's great to know that there are "hidden gems" like Lady J Huston in the Ferguson Community. I look forward to seeing and hearing more of the great work she does, and I wish her much success in her endeavors.

Nominate someone you know, or yourself to be featured in The Best of Ferguson at teyuna@teyunadarris.com.
www.teyunadarris.com
Ph: 314.755.2949



About the Author

Teyuna Darris grew up in Ferguson, and works as a public school teacher and academic tutor. She is also a PhD student at Liberty University and enjoys reading, writing and narrating poetry and prose.

