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MAGAZINE

GPGT Magazine

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Valencya Thompson
Owner &
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E*mpower & Inspire* marks our first GPGT Business Issue and we could not have chosen a better partner for ourselves than NicholeNicole Boutique (NNB)! Owners Altimese Nichole and Nicole Mercedes have just the right amount of vision, discipline, diligence, loyalty, commitment, perseverance, tenacity, and fashion (of course right!) needed to have made this issue one of emPOWERment & Inspiration to rival countless others. But, we are in competition with no one. Instead, GPGT & NNB pray that this issue will be a model to show the world that powerful women of diverse backgrounds can and do work together everyday. It is our desire to dismantle all untruths that have been perpetuated about women, especially women of color for far too long. We unite, with all of our sisters of all racial-ethnic backgrounds to declare and decree that we shall be exactly who God designed for each of us to be boldly, unapologetically, with (G)odly humility to fulfill our individual and collective purposes for being on this earth. United we stand holding God's hand...knowing that everything God said we can have, we shall.

Let us all EMPOWER &
INSPIRE!

.....NO.....EXCUSES.....

A

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When we first made the decision to open a boutique, we knew it would be more than just selling fashion. We had a bigger dream and vision and at its core- we wanted to remind every woman of her beauty, strength, and potential.

Through the years, we've grown together, cried together, laughed together, and carried many burdens for one another through love-- all in the name of friendship and sisterhood. It has been 17 years in the making.

Friendship requires vulnerability and sisterhood is a choice. It's the decision to accept other women for who they were created to be and to love them through their own personal journey of growth. It's also an act of servitude and we're only beginning to touch the surface of our vision, which is creating a platform and community that reminds women of their resilience and power.

We pray this opportunity will be the start of something beautiful. A spark to a flame that fuels a desire from women, to women-- reminding that the support is real and you have a community of like-minded women cheering you on!

So, be inspired by this issue! Be empowered by the journeys shared-- and be courageous in following your dreams!!

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One Fighter's Journey to *Becoming* a *Boss!*

By: Jennifer Diaby

Photos: [LeAndre Shropshire](#)

Robyn T Jones

Robyn T. Jones, a resident of Douglasville, GA, was born and raised as the youngest of five in Atlanta, GA. Jones is currently completing doctoral studies in Leadership. She holds a Master of Science in Management with a concentra-

tion also in Leadership from Strayer University. Additionally, Jones earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business and minored in Vocal Performance at Talladega College. She is most proud to be **married to Pastor Contrell Jones**, as well as, the mother of two biological children and one bonus child! Robyn is the disin-

guished owner of RC Tax & Accounting, LLC. Somehow she finds time to be active in her community through initiatives with her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.

Robyn, a woman who wears many hats, serves as an adjunct professor for the FASTtrack program at Talladega College and she is on staff at Belhaven University.

“I didn’t have a direct occupation that I wanted to be when I was a little girl, but I always knew I wanted to be my own boss and run my own company.”

Jones stated, “I didn’t have a direct occupation that I wanted to be when I was a little girl, but I always knew I wanted to be my own boss and run my own company.” And, that is exactly what she did! The internal drive she possesses came from her dad and role model, a man of many talents and trades. Jones described that her father was a licensed mortician, licensed mechanic, and a chef who also prepared tax returns for friends and family in his hometown of Luthersville, Georgia.

Robyn is a woman of faith whose belief in God sustains her from day-to-day; though, her achievements have not come without life’s share of adversity. According to Jones, her life changed with a diagnosis of Lupus in 2010. It is noteworthy to mention that May is Lupus Awareness month (<http://www.lupusawarenessmonth.org/>). Even with this diagnosis, it is Jones’ desire to not leave earth until she has lived out her purpose. Jones explained, “My Lupus diagnosis was a physical and mental challenge because your entire life changes before your eyes. Just grasping it and really them not knowing what it was until four months down the road. Because, with any autoimmune disease, they mimic each other. It actually was mimicking MS as well.” Jones whole journey started in April of 2010, but she did not get a final diagnosis of Lupus until August of that same year. At the time, she lost clients because she was unable to service them. Jones adapted and now incorporates necessary

rest into her routine, and is transparent with her clients about any necessary health-related adjustments pertaining to her business. Consequently, these actions were met with respect, and God turned everything around doubling her business during her season of restoration. Jones said, “He has definitely been faithful... knowing that everything He promised me in life as a child, the promises in His Word, that God was going to fulfill those promises, if I did what I needed to do and that was to walk upright before Him, trust Him, and I’ve seen the promises of God completely manifest themselves in my life and in the life of my family.” Robyn loves people and that motivates her to get up every morning. Jones expressed with passion, “Just the idea of meeting new people, connecting with them is something that has always been me. If I know I am going to be in a setting where I can meet new people, connect with new people, glean from new people, especially people with passion and purpose, who aspire to do more with drive—that’s where I want to be. I look at my business as actually a business of ministry not just one in the market place, but I look at it undergirded with a ministry perspective.”

Jones’ Wisdom:

“Oh my God...it takes complete passion to be an entrepreneur. At one point in time, I would say it is a drive, but for me passion can push you past the feeling of failure, it will push past the pain, and

into your divine purpose.” Black women entrepreneurs should be confident in themselves and their purposes. To do so takes strong drive, it takes knowing really who you are as a business owner. She also noted, “You have to be okay literally in your skin and what you bring to the table in your function in the industry.

Jones Success Pie:

I see a pie sliced in four: drive, passion, purpose, and pursuit.

Greatest Challenge:

Overcoming divorce. Growing up in an era in the church where people expected marriages to last forever, Jones discussed how she was not prepared to deal with divorce, “It took me to a very dark place, a place that I never imagined myself, I was angry with God.” She described the emotional pain and hurt as devastating. Jones recalled, “I almost lost my mind and I’m so glad I made it, I can sing that song and know exactly what it means. The fact that I’m still in my right mind and able to have a decent conversation with you today, knowing who I am and my purpose, and the importance of my love for God ...I cannot even describe it! It is a testimony in itself.”

The pain is in the past and Jones is walking in her divine purpose. She gives credit to her great network of people who surrounded and prayed for her during that difficult season. These good connections helped her move forward and not look back. Jones remarried June 1st, five years ago to her college sweetheart. Jones noted everyone always thought the two would have married years ago ■

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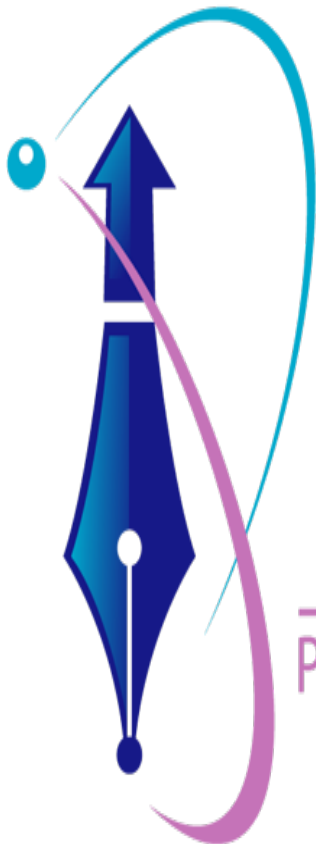
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To Be Released Soon...

Shelia Hampton

HOW **GRIEF** PUSHED HER TO **GREAT!**

By: *Corrinda Brown - Cryer*

Photos: [Troy Woods](#)

How do you maintain self-care, be a caregiver for others and stay empowered beyond your own hurt or grief? What does it mean to maintain your *happy place* or even find joy amidst sorrow? What happens when your *loss* or grief isn't the status quo? How do you empower other women, while struggling to explain coping with a loss - which some may think is not "grief worthy"? Shelia Hampton courageously breaks the mold and myth of what many may overlook as grief. Through a personal journey, this author, entrepreneur, poet, inspirational-motivational speaker, life coach, event planner, volunteer, and mentor identifies with various forms of grief.

Discussing grief can be a sensitive and complicated matter, yet through her own experience, Shelia Hampton shares steps to help others heal. While the objects of our grief may vary, in life we all experience loss - be it a loved one, job, home, car, friends, etc. In her book, *Diamond's Everlasting Foot Prints*, Shelia teaches us that "loss is loss."



Striving for balance as a wife, mother, a gracious grandmother and a fun-loving foster parent; Shelia attested to the reality, "We all have to go through trials because afterwards, God will have strengthened us to face obstacles, so we can help others. I believe that life experiences help you to assist others as you learn from yourself." Shelia's grief-healing journey tackles loss with a unique approach.

Getting to know the woman within, Shelia Hampton is more than an advocate for persons experiencing loss, she is also the Founder of Christian Women Intertwining Network (C-WIN) -- "A woman's confidential support group with a mission to uplift, encourage and empower women in all areas of their lives." Beyond grief, loss, or disappointment, Shelia's message of hope with C-WIN is to remind you, whatever you face in life Christians - WIN!

On the journey of being "whole again", Shelia's encounter speaks to various aspects of life. As a Deacon at Ark of Safety Christian Church, Shelia knows the importance of exhibiting sensitivity towards the concerns of others. Dealing with feelings of hurt alone is not a painless process, yet offering leadership as the Founder/CEO of Shelia Hampton Ministries, God has given Mrs. Hampton the ability to show others how to empower, encourage, and be strengthened by the love of God.

Meeting people where they are in grief requires versatility, open-mindedness, and a divine anointing to intentionally tailor how one addresses sensitive matters of life. Sharing her experience of

using "loss" to help others regain their strength is at the core of Shelia's healing journey. Since childhood aspirations of being a nurse, the passion to help heal has been present in Shelia's life. Authoring another book entitled, *Broken and Scattered into Pieces, but Made Whole Again* eludes to the beauty of being empowered by wholeness from within. Being a leader is not easy, the hurts are often misinterpreted, yet the expectation is to be there for everyone even through your own personal pain or fear. With resilience, Shelia admits the greatest feat she had to overcome was fear of telling her story; wondering whether people would perceive it in the way she intended.

With life there is transition and transformation. Being a true native of Washington District of Columbia, Shelia enjoys doing God's work to accomplish extraordinary endeavors that will bless lives. It is evident, Shelia has an anointed direction from God to assist others with their life struggles.

In the process of grief, while receiving various awards, Shelia's gift to tap into "non-traditional" areas of loss by sharing her story springs from her experience as an education advocate and mentor for over 30 years. She was the Founding CEO of Righteous Corner Learning Center (RCLC). Also, she was awarded a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Award and placed in the top 100 businesses in DC, MD, and VA.

While helping in the classroom and beyond, Shelia prays to see smiles as she educates and empowers others.

Shelia's heart for all beings is echoed in the sentiment, "...it's really not about us, ... if you can put yourself aside, then God can use you to help someone else. And my purpose is just knowing that I'm able to make a difference in someone else's life and to be able to help them."

For sure, today's culture may not always extend empathy to those hurting. Even rarer are the times when we extend compassion towards others when their hurt is different from our own. It's necessary to share our stories of triumph, healing and wholeness over anything or person we define as a "loss".

Shelia has learned to balance the waves of her personal grief while in pursuit of God's purpose for her life. As a woman of destiny, ministry, and personal responsibilities; Shelia knows the feeling of being pulled in various directions. We would say Shelia Hampton is a woman who wears many hats; yet, how God skillfully uses her to impact others is truly a creative work of art. Shelia, believing in the beauty of God's promises, desires to leave something for her offspring that they can leave for their children and future generations. Shelia works to be the difference she wants to see. In *Diamond's Everlasting Foot Prints*, Shelia uses a unique approach to empower grievers universally by relaying the notion that pet grief is just as real as the loss of any person, place, or thing. Shelia Hampton wrote a book offering a message of comfort and healing, of finding peace during the storm ■



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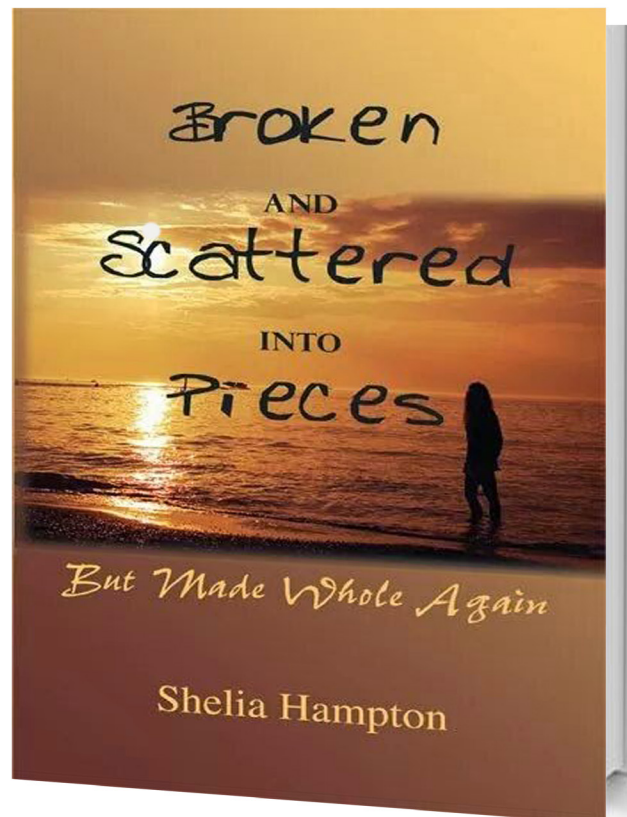
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DIETRA *Carree*

The Mommy Mogul

By: Makeba Evans
Photos: T. Reeves

Dietra Carree, the wife of Isaac Carree, mother to Alaina, career woman with Turner Broadcasting, and LainaBee Children's Consignment Boutique Owner, was born and raised in Danville, Virginia. Being the daughter of a minister and evangelist, Christianity runs deep within. Dietra described, "It's like who I am and what has helped me in making all my decisions. It's me at my core!"

Dietra is blessed to have two of her grandparents living in their 80s. Both were civil rights activists, who marched in Virginia and even with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Also, Dietra's father is a councilman in Danville, Virginia. Carree noted, "It's within me to be aware...because of those that paved the way." In addition

to being raised in a socially conscious family, Carree enjoys life and activating her faith through prayer. Dietra affirmed...He (Jesus) died so that we could go straight to Him, so I do."

Dietra remarked getting through challenges as a small-town girl that is pursuing her dreams as the greatest thing she has overcome. And she credited her ability to do so, to the biblical foundation laid by her family.

As a child, Dietra had dreams of becoming a lawyer. She even achieved a Political Science degree at George Mason University. Dietra noted her high affinity for current events and social matters.

Dietra is also a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., whom she enjoys volunteering with. Dietra expressed, "My goal this year is to at least give a few hours of myself a few times a month. I often tell my husband that everything is greater and bigger than just us. We must be mindful of humanity, of our lives, and of our situations."

DIETRA ON SELF-CARE:

Even with organizing her daughter's schedule, holding down a 9 to 5, running her own business, and being the best wife she can be, Dietra still strives to find time for self-care. She shared, "I just recently got back in the gym... The fact that I'm just taking time out to do something that

is key for me.” Dietra further shared, “My child has a busier schedule than I do – a social life rather. It’s easy to lose ourselves, but we need to still have girlfriends. Whether it be your dance mom friends, or your college girlfriends or just somebody to say, “Hey, I am not having the best day.” Getting it out or expressing it can help you get through some rough times.”

DIETRA ON BLACK WOMEN IN THE MARKETPLACE:

There is a market for women to just go for it! So, I am. Being a Black woman, I honestly feel like it’s an open market for anybody to pursue their passion. It’s an open field...There is definitely money to be made. That melanin that we exude, it takes confidence and the ability and just being willing to step out the box and just make it happen. We just

have a different edge honestly.

DIETRA ON BUSINESS:

I’m fairly new to this entrepreneurship situation. I have found that starting with your base of family, friends, church members, coworkers, etc., those are the best people to begin sharing your business. The world is our oyster. There’s like a heightened awareness of women who are just making it happen and I think we have an expected ability to just make changes and accomplish our goals.

The name of my business LainaBee, is after my daughter because her name is Alaina. When she was young, she was a busy one.

I provide an avenue for consignment for gently used clothes and dance costumes. I’m a dance Mom, I kept hearing all these moms say at a competition last year,

calizer or marketer, and I can be a little introverted. So, social media is a huge element to my business. For instance, with Instagram, if I’m posting twice there’s somebody posting five more times than I’m posting. What I post is valuable...I’m learning, step-by-step, bit-by-bit how to manage it all. You don’t have to be face-to-face with the internet. It is a good and a great thing for businesses. With that said, social media is ever-changing and every day, there is something new and something to learn.

DIETRA ON SUCCESS:

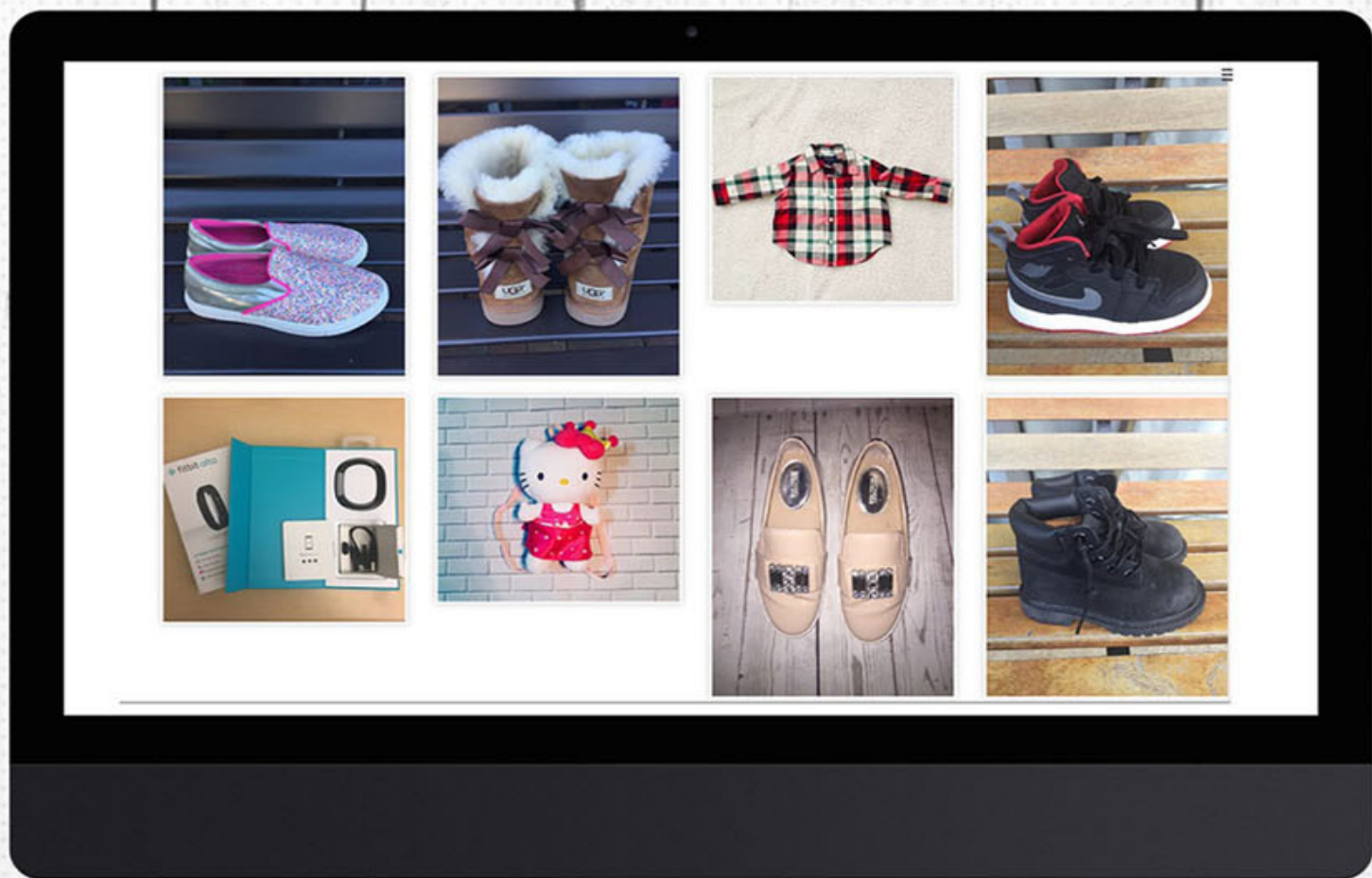
I would just say I have a great family and core values in just being able to...carry those with me, and I’m not saying we’ve got it all right, but we love each other...There’s so much more in me and I’m just not there yet..My loved ones are what make my life rich.”

“Well what are we going to do with these costumes afterwards...?” So Dietra took action! She further expressed: I’m learning how to come out of my shell and just be a better entrepreneur. I’m not the best vo-

DIETRA’S ADVICE:

For those interested in beginning something new, pursue your dreams and passions... Be more aware of the things that sit on your heart and just sit on your mind and you feel like you know what I really need to do that. If there is something you’re passionate about, do your homework and do your research and just go for it !

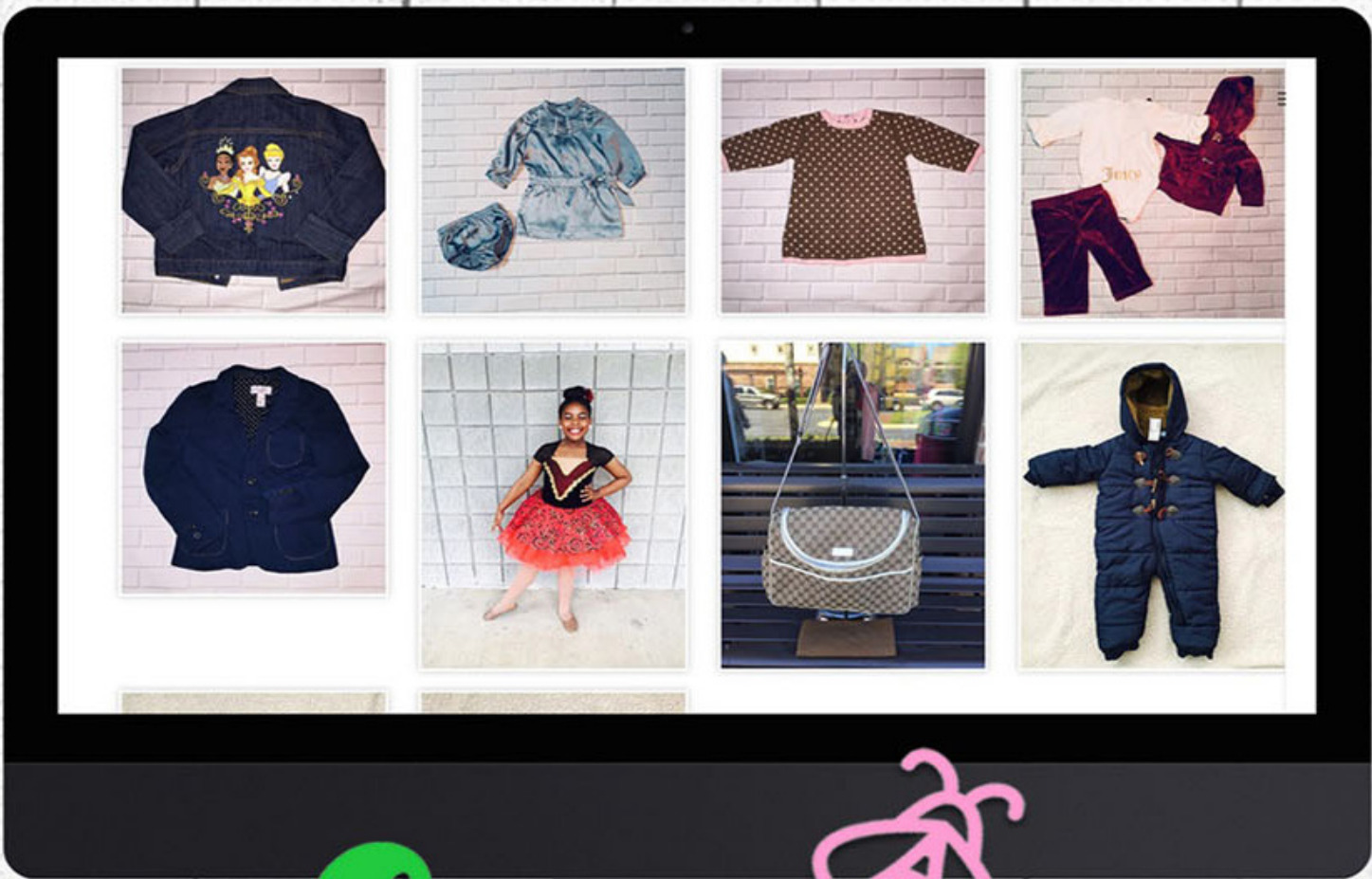




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Richmond
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& Crystal
Khalil**

AND
WALKING
WITH GOD

A Tale of Two Warrior Women Together for a Cause

Every so often, you come across people whose lives are nothing short of a miracle. They can speak confidently that one can grow an empire off of a tiny seed planted by faith and perseverance. Eslene Richmond- Shockley and Crystal Khalil are two faith-filled business women whose paths crossed while answering the call to serve others. Shockley is the founder and President of Caring For Others Inc., an internationally recognized non-profit organization dedicated to assisting those around the world who are impoverished. What started off in 2001 as a \$25 investment grew to reach over 3 million lives worldwide. While gaining sponsorship from a multi-billion-dollar company such as Porsche; Shockley also gained a relationship with Khalil, a DeVry University graduate, who now serves as the Director of North American Indirect Procurement for Porsche Cars North America and volunteer turned Board Member for Caring For Others Inc.

Shockley found her inspiration to start Caring For Others Inc. in a dream where God told her she was called to use her educational background in international economics and finance to “feed his people and clothe the naked.” Interestingly enough, Shockley did not always have the

vision for her non-profit--- growing up she had dreams of becoming a doctor. “I was accepted into school to be a dentist; however, I did not have enough money to make it into school to become a dentist.” Can we say divine intervention?! Caring For Others Inc. started in one community and as the years went on, Shockley found that there was an increasing need within the state of Georgia. This need grew nationally and now Caring For Others Inc. has reached across waters to Africa and other locations between.

Khalil has been in procurement and supply chain for a little over 20 years. She began working with Porsche in 2001 and, over the years, has grown through the ranks within the company and has impressively “created her way” with new titles tailored to her specific skills and qualifications. Her passions of giving back, supporting poverty initiatives, and helping women have led to her involvement with Shockley and Caring For Others Inc. Khalil was introduced to Caring For Others Inc. through Porsche Cares Network which supports local nonprofits. From there, she gained what she calls a “mother-daughter relationship” with Shockley and views the Caring For Others team as her family. Khalil’s involvement in

Caring For Others Inc. also has helped instill the values of compassion and generosity into her eighteen-year-old daughter, and twenty-four and twenty-five-year-old sons.

The success that Shockley and Khalil have obtained has required a considerable amount of effort and faith despite struggle. Shockley's passion for justice given to the underserved was informed by the poverty she experienced in her home of Guyana, South America before moving to the United States; as well as, the microaggressions that come with the territory of being a woman and foreign. "For me, if the Good Lord called me, I am sure He will provide." Through faith and discernment, she transcended that oppression and used her testimony to do good to others in need. Khalil, a single mother, wrestling with financial stressors after a shattering divorce had to find ways of restoration in God to regain stability. "It was a point in my life when I knew I didn't have anything but God, and so everything that was afforded me, every opportunity, I knew it was nothing but God, and His favor." Khalil currently has a loving husband, Mikal Khalil, and is financially stable.

The greatest recalled accomplishment Caring For Others Inc. has seen was their involvement in restoring the lives of the victims of Hurricane Katrina. There was a large number of victims who traveled to Atlanta for safety and without financial assistance from the government, Caring For Others Inc. proved to be true to their name by caring for and assisting those people in need by providing shoes for children, clothes, underwear, and hygiene products. Towards the end of an interview with Shockley, we asked if there was anything she wanted to leave us with and she said the powerful words, "Poverty is a cancer, it kills and it destroys lives, and communities. Poverty is never going away – the Bible says poverty is going to be with us always, but if we can help just one person, our living is not in vain. Let us all do our best and get together and please give a voice to the faces of poverty."



Above: 1st photo - Khalil (left) & Shockley (right) serving in Antigua; Additional photos also from Antigua.

Below: Shockley (left in red) Khalil (right)



Mrs Kev On Stage

Love & LaughOFF- STAGE with Melissa Fredericks

by Tiffany Daniels-Harris
Photo: Emarie Marie

Wife, mother, author, entrepreneur, thirty-four-year-old Melissa “MrsKevOnStage” Fredericks does it all. Melissa’s life has always been in transition. She grew up as an “army brat” who constantly found herself moving around and being the “new kid” on the block. Even now, as a mother to two young boys, she’s finding herself in a transitional state as her children are entering a new stage

in their lives. She has jokingly expressed the need of a “preparatory course” for parents whose children are transitioning from elementary school to middle school. She now finds herself needing to have serious conversations with her eleven-year-old about suicide in light of the recent deaths of older students at their adjoining high school.

Melissa describes herself as an entrepreneur,

dreamer, and risk-taker. Before pursuing a career in entrepreneurship, Melissa had dreams of becoming a successful lawyer. She graduated with a degree in Law, Society, and Justice, and had even taken LSAT preparatory courses, but, of course, God had other plans! Melissa defines herself as a woman of faith, which allowed her to easily change the course of her life and lay the foundation for her entrepreneurial career. Melissa shares with us a time when her faith was put to the test after her family fell on hard times after her husband, comedian, Kevin “KevOnStage” Fredericks lost his job for a year. Eventually, God restored their finances and provided both Melissa and Kevin with jobs that supported their family more than what they had longed for, still the Fredericks were unhappy with their lives. Melissa describes herself as an entrepreneur, dreamer, and risk-taker. It was Kevin who encouraged her career and pushed her to “dream big.” This passion is what led the Fredericks family to leave their nine to five in Washington and move to Los Angeles to follow their

dreams.

Melissa's reasons for pursuing her career has also been in transition over the years. A few years ago, she wrote a book entitled "The Journey to Self-Love" which highlighted her struggle with low self-worth that made her act for everyone but herself. "I felt like I needed to do this for my husband, I needed to do this for my kids and every time they were my why so-to-speak, I would go for a little while and do a few things for a little while and stop." When Melissa decided to not only follow her dreams for family, but herself, she felt empowered to remain consistent in perfecting her craft. Melissa believes that women are often expected to "carry the cross" for their families and friends, without recognizing themselves as human beings who need to be cared for as well. In her book, she talks about silencing the temptation to call herself "selfish" when she decided to start caring for herself. "It's okay to say that I am enough of a reason, I get up in the morning and strive for all of the things that I do on a daily basis. My kids and my husband...I mean they do benefit, but I do it ultimately for myself

and that's not selfish." Melissa recounts her biggest accomplishment as currently on the "Love and Laugh Tour" with her husband. Her strength was put to the test as she had to avail herself as a mother while managing the duties of the tour all the while tending to her hard-working husband. "It's hard work and managing, you know, I'm just trying to manage, making sure our kids - like get their homework

"It's okay to say that I am enough of a reason, I get up in the morning and strive for all of the things that I do on a daily basis."

done and they're still feeling our presence because we're gone every weekend - I mean we're there during the week, but we're gone every single weekend. That's a lot, it is a lot to manage and I'm still working as well. On the weekend, we have a nanny or a babysitter." Needless to say,

she passed the test!

We love Mrs. KevOn-Stage because she uses her platform to celebrate black womanhood. She views being a Black woman as the "ultimate advantage" in life. Melissa Fredericks wishes to inspire people to take the leap and embrace the many transitions that life has to offer. "Society tells you that you're a minority twice--- you're a woman and you're Black. That means I have a perspective that nobody else has, and that is an asset that we have to hone to our advantage. You do have to push through obviously because we are Black and we are women, but at the same time, you can make your voice and your presence known and you have something to offer."



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THE BLUFFTON BOSS

REBECA ROSADO

in her words



1) Tell us about yourself.

My name is Rebeca, I was born in Puerto Rico, but moved to Bluffton, SC 17 years ago. I love this town and consider it, my second home! I'm 41 years old. I am the mother of three wonderful children. I'm the third child out of seven and I'm proud to say I am the daughter of Jose Rosado and Yolanda Baez. I am also the owner and Director of Little Steps Day-care and Preschool.

2) What did you want to be when you were a little girl?

I always dreamed of being a doctor!! However, after being accepted in the Pre-Med Program at the University of Puerto Rico, I realized that it was not what I was called to do. I spent a year trying to love it, but it was not for me. The following year, I began studying in the Pedagogy Department at the same school; I hesitated to do this because being an educator was not a "good thing". Everyone had always said, that I was not going to get good pay, that it was something that anyone could do, etc. Though, as that first year passed by, I fell in love with teaching!! So...I graduated in the Class of 2001 with Magna Cum Laude Honors.

3) Are you a woman of faith?

I am a pastor's daughter!! I was raised in the church; my dad is the founder of the first Latino Christian church in the

Bluffton area, Ebenezer Church. I believe in God and believe that He is the one that gives me the strength to continue to push forward.

4) What makes you get up every morning?

Other than my toddler's cry in the morning, I get up every day with the thought of all the responsibilities of being a mom, an educator and a business owner.

5) What is your "why," as in - what motivates you?

My "why" is my family!! Being able to provide for them, give them an education, and help them succeed in anything they put their mind to!

6) What does it take to be an entrepreneur?

Being an entrepreneur means putting yourself last and your business first. It can be very exhausting at times, especially since there are around 80 families depending on my service every day in order to begin with theirs.

7) What does it take to be an entrepreneur who is also a Latina woman?

Being a Latina entrepreneur means that I have to work harder and give it my 150% to gain people's trust. The kind of business I do requires a lot of trust and I feel that sometimes being Latina (sadly) can be a set back. Though I am very proud of my culture and my first language; Little Steps is a proof of that, since it's the only daycare and preschool with a Spanish Immersion Program. With this program, I give a job opportunity to other Latina women.

I love my staff, I have women from Mexico, Honduras, Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia and Puerto Rico.


8) What is the greatest thing you have ever overcome?

All the fear and the doubts that I had 15 years ago when I began this journey. Being a woman with so many dreams and so many goals and having them shut down one after another - mostly by myself. I was the only person that stood in the way of my dreams and when I was able to realize that, nothing stood a chance against me.

9) What do you consider to be your greatest success thus far?

Other than being a mother...professionally I have succeeded by being in the daycare business for over 10 years and being able to purchase a building for Little Steps.

10) Is there anything else that you want our readers to know?

I would like people to know that we are the only daycare that provides the surveillance camera system, giving the opportunity to parents to access their child's classroom while at work! Also, I'd like people to know that I LOVE what I do...and that Little Steps is like my fourth child. I have created, nurtured and continue to keep this alive; it is my legacy and my joy. There is no better feeling than walking into the daycare and seeing those beautiful faces 

Photos: Provided by Rosado



Little Steps

Daycare and Preschool

843-815-3276

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1) Tell us about yourself.

It's funny where life takes us and we find out who we are in the journey. I never thought that when my family moved from California to Virginia that I would end up being a mommy of 3 whimsical children, wife to an amazing man who pastors, child of God, artist, business owner, coffee lover, movie fanatic and professional window shopper. I've always been a dreamer who was fascinated by life, people and how things in the world worked. I grew up pretty much an only child. To combat the loneliness I had, I turned to art to express myself. First, drawing and painting which led into photography, creative writing and videography. My photography passion officially became a business in July of 2013 with my husband and 1st born, who was 3 months at the time, literally by my side. Since then, we have photographed weddings and other special moments in Jamaica, Florida, Atlanta, Maryland and of course in various parts of Virginia. It continues to be an amazing experience that I'm so grateful that I get to live.

2) What did you want to be when you were a little girl?

I wanted to be a film director and I'm currently writing a script with my husband, for our debut feature film, that we will co-direct.

3) Are you a woman of faith?

I am.

4) What makes you get up every morning?

I get up for the simple fact that I am loved.

5) What is your "why," as in - what motivates you?

Seeing that same love through my husband and children, and of course who they are just as people, helps me to live life to the absolute fullest. A great deal goes to them. Without them, I wouldn't be who I am today nor where I am today.

6) What does it take to be an entrepreneur?

Selflessness. When one understands that your business and what you do is not truly about you, then you have the "entrepreneurial spirit" that will lead, guide and take care of you.

7) What is the greatest thing you have ever overcome?

Myself. On my own, I get in the way when it comes to doing what's right in family, business and more. The same Love that is my motivator, continues to change me and causes me to see victory in situations and circumstances that arise.

8) What do you consider to be your greatest success thus far?

My children now and forever more.

Katie Bennett: BostonBelle

By: Corinda Brown-Cryer

Photo: Provided by Katie Bennett



As women we're raised to be strong, multifaceted, classy, sophisticated, stylish and chic. All while maintaining our health, figure, spiritual growth, finances and fulfilling our purposes. Well, Katie Bennett a marathon runner, bangle business entrepreneur and marketing Client Success Director has firsthand experience on pacing herself to remain empowered. Being a BostonBelle, this UGA graduate embraces the beauty of motivation to live a purpose-filled life.

Talk about exploring options. While she thrives in her professional career and entrepreneurial passion, Katie also knows the challenge of pushing through a physical recovery. Amid a diagnosis which suggested running would not be in her future, Katie was determined to focus on

what she could do vs. what was temporarily delayed. What's worse than being in your zone, then being forced to readjust beyond your control? How do we continuously work toward our purposes? Where is the handbook on how to react when life happens? Well, Katie discovered the power of will over might, beyond restrictions.

Coincidentally life may present unforeseen challenges at some point or in some area of life. Like Katie, sometimes we're in a good place, but an unfortunate circumstance could force us to rest, refocus and re-align our goals. The inner part of some women won't press pause because the voice within can't be forced to be still. You know you can hear it clearly

whispering, "Don't give up!" Of course, it could be perceived as being "hard-headed" or stubborn, let's instead consider it to be a little sprinkle of faithful determination. This is all the while refusing to sit back and just exist, thriving to live instead, as well as, be present in each moment. Surely, it can be an emotional roller coaster, but that's where a supportive village and sister circle of friends builds you up. Now, if you've ever recovered from a health or life matter which "forced you to be still", you know it's a daunting task to endure the process.

In living, at some point we may face "undesired" circumstances as we fight each day to be the best women God created us to be. The wave of emotions can range from high to low. Gracefully, overcoming challenges of what we should and could not do. What seems minuscule to one individual, could be a blessing or achievement beyond one's wildest dreams to another. Graceful in spirit, Katie has what each woman strives for at a certain stage of life, peaceful confidence. Spoken from an inspiring place, "I

have more to give...I know that there's always ways to improve." Though at times, we are "stretched to the core". Sometimes life will present a moment where God ordains us to "pause and pursue our purpose."

Katie's determination is a beautiful reflection of how we as women are sweetly graced with strength, courage, a fighting spirit, energetic passion, motivation, and tenacity. No matter what we face as women there is nothing we can't endure with discipline, balance and healthy time management. When seeking to be a better version of yourself, the noise of detractors can scream loudly. Sometimes those close to heart, don't understand the "why" of your motivation. The ability to fulfill your purpose could be questioned. But, Katie's advice to handle doubtful critics is simple, just respond, "Oh yes I will, you watch." Yes, you will overcome! Yes, you will fight until the very end! Yes, you will not be limited by hurt, health or anything that attempts to detour you from your life's purpose. You see driven determination is a force to be reckoned with. On this journey of wom-

anhood, sometimes we start in one place, but God directs our paths to be a beacon of light where He knows our purpose will align to His plan. Coupled with faith, motivation can play a significant role in much of what we pursue and persevere through as women. For Katie, it is no different. Just like determination, motivation fuels the soul. Remaining motivated takes strategy, for Katie this means to, "...do as much as I can in a day because we don't have that much time in the grand scheme of things."

Following your heart is not always easy. But, it has rewards that are priceless and graced with God's peace. Yes, the road to discovering our purposes can be coupled with hurt and disappointment, but like Katie once we muster the strength to look within, then next step is to push forward ■





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streetvisions
by Patricia Overstreet



I am an Atlanta based visual artist, interior designer, and graphic designer. I am a wife and the mother of two little girls, and I currently reside in South-west Atlanta. My ultimate goal is to spread my love of creativity wherever I can. With that mindset, I believe everyone can have a well-appointed and organized home-no matter the budget; their brand should reflect themselves and the core beliefs of their business and art should be a part of everyday life. Those factors have always been very important to me and they are what I strive to convey in every project I am involved in.

Do not allow that space between where you are now and where you want to be to be like a terrifying thing, and I'm saying this because it's just the way that I've always felt. And when I began to let that go, I felt like I could fly! I want my art, and every encounter I have with my clients, and every time I help someone's brand and their business- I want to bring all of my experiences from my journey, brand and unique perspective. I would love to work with you on your next home or business project! Continue to embrace yourselves and one another.

Ticora Davis



The Creator's Lawyer

By Tiffany Daniels-Harris

Photos: [Ariel Perry](#)

Here at Good People Great Things, we love a woman who can lay down the law with a sprinkle of style and finesse, and Ticora Davis, owner of The Creator's Law Firm, is just the woman to do it! Born and raised in North Carolina, from as early as eight years old, Ticora knew she wanted to pursue a career in law. Her voice was encouraged during deep home discussions around current events, pop culture, and government. She first tapped into her legal instincts after watching Johnny Cochran during the noted OJ Simpson case. As a young girl, she found herself surprisingly invested in the case "I believe OJ is innocent, just because they found some blood that doesn't mean anything... Free OJ!" and, with that same spirit, Ticora went on to take the necessary steps to becoming the success story that she is today.

The Creator's Law Firm has been a success as a boutique intellectual property and business law firm servicing clients all across the country. The vision for her law firm is to serve God and His people. "I am a woman of faith which is really why my law firm is called The Creator's Law Firm, because it's His law firm. I serve the ultimate Creator. I serve creative people, but every day that I wake up I know that I am serving a higher power. I always strive to honor Him in the work that I do." Ticora's faith was what led her to open her own law firm, because if it was up to her, she would have worked for someone else, just making a decent salary with benefits. But God, tugged at her heart, pushing for her to open up a firm that affirmed his plan for her life.

Her experience as a Black woman lawyer and law firm owner, has been nothing short of a faith journey. Each day relying on God, her legal skills and the talents God's placed within, she gets up and gives her all. "There's a special honor that's placed upon Black women that makes us just have this level of resiliency. It doesn't mean that we cannot be delicate, or it doesn't mean that we cannot have emotions. I feel like we should be able to embrace every single thing, all of the emotions that are available to non-Black women. There is a level of resiliency that we just kind of...almost are born with."

Behind great joy, there is a story that makes the taste of success that much sweeter. Ticora didn't always feel like she had what it took to become a lawyer. She was sexually abused as a child by a family member, which led to depression in her early twenties. Her unprocessed trauma affected her performance as a student, leaving her to complete her undergraduate degree with a 2.2 GPA. When Ticora went to law school, she made the decision to get the help she needed in therapy, and to truly heal from the mental space she was in. "I think that's probably the greatest gift that I've given to myself to love me enough to fight for me." Now, as an established lawyer and owner of a law firm, Ticora provides pro bono legal services to survivors of sex trafficking who are pursuing entrepreneurship. She recalls her greatest success as just simply starting her law firm. After facing rejection from other attorneys who she reached out to for mentorship while starting

her law firm, she felt like an underdog in her field. But her perseverance and faith in God carried her through the hardest of times, and with that, she was able to fulfill her dream. Now, sharing her life with her wonderful husband, baby boy and a baby girl on the way, Ticora is truly blessed. In an interview, we asked Ticora if there was anything she wanted to leave us with, and she said, "I really want people to know and understand that it doesn't matter the challenges that you face in your life or everything that's stacked against you or what someone has said about you. All that matters is that your relationship with Christ and the faith that you have in Him. You know if He has planted a seed in your belly to do something, only you can do it in a unique way that He gives you to do it."





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SONJA GRIFFIN EVANS

THE INTERNATIONAL GULLAH ARTIST

By: Makeba Evans Photos: Lloyd Wainscott/Provided by S.G.E.

Sonja Griffin Evans is an internationally renowned Gullah artist that was born and raised in Beaufort, South Carolina. She uses her God-given talents to preserve the memories, traditions, spirituality and history of her Gullah ancestors. Sonja says, "Painting is what God gave me to bring me out of my darkness and it is the very thing that I now have something to use to help others be able to come out of their darkness."

That darkness is depression. It is more common in women than men and affects how people deal with normal activities like sleeping, eating, working, dealing with emotions and many other aspects of navigating through life on a daily basis. Being able to shake depression off of yourself is not how this disorder works. Some people need medication to regulate depression-related imbalances. For Sonja, painting was the spark that helped her fight through her bout of depression. For a short period, she was hospitalized and as a part of her

therapy a counselor asked what her hobbies were? “I like to paint!”, was the response she gave the counselor. Laughing, at the thought, she says, “I was looking around the room and said who in the world said that?” The counselor later offered her a canvas, paint and a paint brush and her artistry journey began. “I can remember the first piece that I painted was actually a tree planted by still waters, green pastures, and so I realized that I was painting the 23rd Psalm,” Sonja states.

Through her mixed media artwork, Sonja Griffin Evans is giving the viewer snapshots of our Gullah brothers and sisters. In this area of the United States, they were able to maintain and practice many of their collective African traditions, music, recipes, agriculture, basket weaving, dances, celebrations, expression through clothing and more because of the isolation of the coastal islands. Unlike other slaves that were forced into the American way of life, the Gullah were often left on the islands without their slave masters and/or overseers.



Ron Clark, Distinguished Educator, featured receiving Sonja's painting

In the warm months, the weather conditions and heightened threat of being stricken with some illnesses, the slave masters would leave these slaves to their own devices. She explains, “Because my ancestors were isolated on islands, they could maintain more of their African culture. So, in my artwork – what I do is I depict scenes of the Lowcountry, the sea islands and my interpretations of my Gullah ancestors.”

Some historians believe the word “Gullah” was born through shortening the origin of many of the slaves that were working the plantations of the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida. Angola was

shortened to N’Gulla and finally Gullah.

Just like we all have done as children, Sonja had dreams of what she thought she would do as an adult. She dreamt of being a singer and would practice the autograph she would use to sign artifacts for her fans. “God has a sense of humor and now I’m using that autograph to sign paintings.” As an artist, she tells stories, shares inspirational quotes, monologues, and sings as she creates and shares her pieces. Sonja says, “It’s kinda like all the gifts and talents that the Lord blessed me with, I can use all together – you know. I just had to live a little bit longer to pick up all the tools that I needed to finally fulfill what my

purpose was in life.” Through her sometimes-featureless faces, the body language and scenery tell the stories of people who will never financially benefit only to be burdened, abused and worked too hard as they took care of someone else’s family, livestock and land. The colorful clothing that caress the skin of the people in her paintings show how many visions and ideas of people can come together to form what is known as community, which often transcends to mean friendship, family and a village. As the people in her paintings stand tall and protect their loved ones, you see symbols of the intelligence of the left-handed people. In many pieces of her art, messages are read that should be further investigated by the viewer to better grasp what the eyes are beholding. The art collection which displays a single little girl on each canvas displaying the love of a woman in her life, shared by styling her hair, shows the time we take to make our children look and feel beautiful. The ever-present imagery of three birds soaring

through the skies of her art bring the spiritual movement of the trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. “I personally believe that for each one of those pieces that is created, God has already pre-destined for it. So, it’s just a matter of that person finding their piece,” states the artist. As an African-American woman that is currently creating in a particular niche, she finds herself sometimes limited as an artist. “The Lord gives you a way to take a product that is so personalized within your culture and makes it a way that it crosses all boundaries and sometimes that’s a little bit difficult for Black female artists. To be able to reach multi-cultural, all colors – that’s a challenge.” With all of those factors being a part of the artist she is, and is becoming, she was recently invited to do a three-city solo exhibition tour in France. Sonja states, “As a woman of color and an artist to be invited to showcase your artwork, your culture, abroad! And in that atmosphere, and some artists never reach

that, or have that opportunity – especially artists of color.” The three cities her art was showcased in France were Challex, Nantes and Angers. France was the 3rd largest trader of slaves. She adds, “Before I went to France, I had a send-off exhibit from Charleston. About 40 percent of all African-Americans can trace their roots through the ports of Charleston. So, I had a send-off from the McCleod Plantation in Charleston. And seeing that, Charleston was the largest slave port city in the US, well one of the cities where I was exhibiting was in Nantes, France. It was the largest slave port city in France. And so for me, I was literally fulfilling a dream of our ancestors. And that was to take their spirits back home through my art.” Sonja Griffin Evans has her art in distinguished galleries both nationally and abroad for the world to see.

She has been featured in radio broadcasts, on television shows, and in publications like Southern Lady Magazine, Upscale Magazine and Hilton Head Monthly to name a few. Her art has made appearances in places where we do not often think art to be on display. She shares, "I told my friend two years ago. You know, I'm gonna have an ornament on the White House tree before The Obamas get out of there, and the last Christmas...Congressman John Lewis presented an ornament with my image, Amazing Grace."

There are so many different ways people measure what success means to them. They can vary from cars, homes, money, fame, contacts and much more. Sonja tells us what success means to her, "Success does not only mean being able to only see my hopes and dreams come true, but when I am able to do that for someone else, then I am truly successful."


(Sonja featured next to Congressman John Lewis receiving her art.)





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