

Doris Fields (Lady D)

Biographical information:

Beckley, WV 25801

D.O.B. December 4, 1959 – Charleston, WV

**Description:**

Blues came about as a vocal medium. Just as it derived from the field hollers, chants and spirituals of the deep South, there was no need for instrumentation. The enslaved Africans who created this most American of music genres used what they had on hand to express their hopes, sorrows and circumstances. They had their voices.

The Blues is an extension of the spirituals which became work songs, which became the roots of American music. The blues, like spirituals and gospel music has purpose. We can see blues and gospel music not just as entertainment, but also as tools, coping devices...medicine. The people who created this music were not able to go to therapists to talk about what it was like to be a slave, or to be marginalized and discriminated against. The music was medicine for the mind and soul.

**Accomplishments/Milestones**

1. Researching blues legend Bessie Smith and writing and performing my original play about her life; *The Lady and the Empress*.
2. Being accepted into the blues community and having performed with some of its' most notable stars such as West Virginia's own Nat Reese, Johnny Rawls and Memphis Gold.
3. Working with the Charleston WV Blues Society and their Blues in the Schools program. (Speaking at schools about the origins of blues)
4. Interviewing Hubert "Rabbit" Jones. Rabbit is in his eighties. He is an unofficial music historian who knows the stories and musicians that have come through Charleston and the coalfields of southern WV from as far back as the 1940's. I also interviewed Henry Womack, the now late uncle of soul singer, Bobby Womack. His stories about the early days in music with Bobby and his brothers were not only entertaining but very informative.
5. I was the host of the radio show, "Simply Jazz & Blues" on Groovy 94.1 FM in Beckley, WV from 2010 to 2016. This experience gave me access to blues and jazz music and artists that I may not have otherwise heard their music or have come in contact with them.
6. I was the founder of the Simply Jazz and Blues Festival which ran from 2013 to 2017 in Beckley, WV. This festival put me in the path of local, regional and international artists who are some of the world's most famous tradition bearers of blues music.

**ARTIST STATEMENT**

I have wanted to be a singer from the age of three. I have never wanted to do anything else in life. I joined the children's choir at church when I was seven years old and I have been singing publicly ever since. I went on sing with several bands and have now been fronting my own band for 17 years.

I grew up watching television shows like Ed Sullivan, American Bandstand and Soul Train. I emulated singers like Sarah Vaughn and Lena Horne. Later, my all time favorite singer became Chaka Khan and she

was my greatest musical influence. After beginning my research of Bessie Smith some 16 years ago, she has also become a great influence in my music and my performances. I do not consider my musical education to be over with as I enjoy learning from other singers and musicians.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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