

Gail Deculus-Johnson Brings African-American Memorabilia Alive!

By Shirley Hawkins
Contributing Writer

Gail Deculus-Johnson does not just celebrate African American History Month in February--but every day of the year.

That's because for 35 years, Deculus-Johnson, a former human resources director, has been avidly collecting Black memorabilia for her business Sable Images, Inc.—gathering rare historical pieces that illuminate the rich and often hidden history of African Americans in the United States and the Diaspora. And hundreds of attendees at the Pan African Film Festival and Art Show at the Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw Mall have been enjoying the incredible array of artifacts displayed at Deculus-Johnson's Sable Images booth on the second floor on sale until Feb. 20.

"Thirty-five years ago I didn't even know that black memorabilia existed," Deculus-Johnson revealed. She said she became 'hooked' on collecting after purchasing a miniature doll at an antique show.

"It was a charcoal Black doll with frizzy braids about the size of my palm," recalls Deculus-Johnson. "I bought it for twenty-five dollars. When a friend showed me that it sold for forty-five dollars in a book titled 'Black Memorabilia,' that was it—I was hooked."

Deculus-Johnson soon became a familiar figure at antique shops and swap meets in Ventura, Santa Barbara and Long Beach, arriving at 6 a.m. to scour aisles for rare collectibles.

And Deculus-Johnson's treasure-trove of memorabilia, which now numbers in the "thousands," is a wonder to behold. Rare photographs of Dorothy Dandridge, Josephine Baker, Lena Horne, Billie Holiday, Betty Shabazz Malcolm X, and W.E.B. Dubois grace the walls. There are "Colored Only" signs, cast iron banks, clocks, watches and even a rare first-edition copy of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

There's a photo of the Black Panthers with raised guns on the capitol steps in Sacramento and a rare comic book featuring Muhammad Ali sparring with Superman.

Deculus-Johnson also has Confederate notes featuring images of laboring slaves and copies of the Manumission Papers, which were distributed to former slaves. "You had to carry these papers to prove that you could not be sold," Deculus-Johnson revealed.

"My most prized possession is the full-body slave shackles I purchased in Ghana," said Deculus-Johnson. "The shackles go around your neck, wrists and ankles. I was desperately searching for these shackles and I spread the word. One night, there was a knock on my door. This brother said, 'I think I have what you're looking for.' He had to get permission from his siblings to sell the shackles. I gave him everything I had—clothes, money and books—to buy them. They hang on the wall of



my home today." Even celebrities are hot on the collectibles trail, and Deculus-Johnson recalls an interesting exchange with actor Leonardo DiCaprio. "He used to come to my former store on Crenshaw. I had this ancient wooden box with Black faces that would pop up when you turned the handle. He offered me a thousand dollars for it, but I didn't want to sell. I knew the piece was rare and I didn't know when I would find another one. We squabbled back and forth, but in the end I decided to keep it." And there is an instant emotional connection felt by many African Americans when they stop by Deculus-Johnson's booth. "An elderly lady came by and she was staring at the poster that read "Wanted—Colored Women for Rag Sorting" and she started to cry. She started talking about what our people had to go through to make it in the past and how far we've made it today." Deculus-Johnson is proud that her memorabilia continues to touch so

many people—from the corporate professional to teens curious about their heritage to incarcerated history buffs. "My mantra is 'Knowing your past shapes your future. You have to know your past to know where you're going,'" said Deculus-Johnson. Deculus-Johnson will also be exhibiting at the Carson Mall in Carson, Calif. from Feb 23rd to March 6th. For more information, call (323) 370-3664.

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Howard Stern sued for reportedly airing woman's IRS conversation



It looks like the King of All Media is getting some unwanted attention.

The Wrap is reporting Howard Stern is being sued by a woman who claimed that her personal and tax information were broadcast on Stern's show.

In her suit filed on Monday in Massachusetts federal court, Judith Barrigas insisted she was on the phone with the IRS service center in May 2015 talking through the potential misapplication of her tax refund, when IRS agent Jimmy Forsythe called the 63-year-old celebrity radio jockey's SiriusXM show on another line during their conversation.

"While on the phone with Agent Forsythe, Mrs. Barrigas suddenly began to receive a barrage of text messages and phone calls from unknown callers/individuals informing her that her personal information and phone number were being aired on Stern's show," said the lawsuit, as reported by the celebrity news site.

"Mr. Stern and 'The Stern Show' were fully aware that they were broadcasting and disseminating Mrs. Barrigas' tax and personal information, yet failed to take any action to stop the broadcast," revealed the complaint.

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1st Time Grammy Winner Bobby Rush & Blues legend Roy Gaines' daughter Blues Singer Carolyn Gaines



Written By Blues Singer
Carolyn Gaines

Yes, Bobby Rush the King of the Chilin Circuit a big blues winner Grammy night February 12th, 2017. Bobby's blues fans all over the blues world are very happy for the outstanding legend Grammy winner Rush. Bobby Rush won his first Grammy at the age of 83. Rush had

been nominated for Grammys three times in the past. Six-times Grammy winner Buddy Guy kept stepping up for the blues category until "Porcupine Meat" came along and won Bobby Rush's 1st Grammy. It was an honor to watch Grammy winner Bobby Rush to performed the night after the Grammy's at Maui Sugar Mill Saloon in Tarzana, California a two hours show.

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