

A New Yorker Falls In Love With The South

Introducing Daisy Karam-Read

By: Melody Worsham

Daisy Karam-Read, a New York City native, moved to South Mississippi in 1998. She fell in love and married Gulf Coast attorney, Jerry Read. They were introduced through a mutual friend in Houston, Texas. Advising her New York friends that she would soon be moving down south, she was warned of the differences in Mississippians. When Daisy arrived in Ocean Springs, she was pleasantly surprised how very different things were in reality. The perception of the state, and its people was unfounded. "The difference between reality and myth is huge. I am so glad I heeded her mother's advice to "see it, then judge it," Daisy said. She was quite moved by her discoveries of the rich, cultural heritage of Mississippi. In 2005, Daisy was working in public affairs at the Ohr O'Keefe Museum in Biloxi. She decided to call the Sun Herald, and asked if they would consider allowing her to write a column, that she would call, "A New York Yankee in Mississippi." Ten days after making her proposal, the Gulf Coast was assaulted by Hurricane Katrina, and as a result, nothing came of it.

The idea for a book about a New Yorker falling in love with Mississippi came to be while Daisy and her husband found refuge after Katrina. They were staying in Mobile, Alabama, after they lost their Gulf Hills home. During that time, Daisy expressed her sadness and regret to their friends, Ann Jordan and U.S. District Judge L.T. Senter Jr. "Aside from losing everything... I am most unhappy that I will never get to write the column. More than anything, I wanted to share my thoughts about the South," Daisy said. Ann Jordan urged Daisy to go in another direction, "Make it a book... I can see it as a book!" "Thanks to Ann," Daisy said, "I wrote the book!"

As soon as she could, Daisy began putting her thoughts on paper. She had written numerous newsletters, press releases and articles for museums, but had never written an entire book. She was ready for the task, and full of enthusiasm. This project was quite ambitious, but she felt very sure, it had to be done. "If you don't make a decision to sit down at the computer at 9 o'clock and not leave the computer until 5 o'clock, then I think writing a book is no more than a dream."

It took about a year to finish the book. Daisy found the perfect title, "From Manhattan to Mississippi - A New Yorker Falls in Love with the South." The book is full of her first encounters with southern culture, along with intense study of



the history. The author's observations about the delightful art of southern storytelling, to Mississippi's long history of innovation, the book is quite an enjoyable read. It is an insightful, loving tribute.

The book contains some fascinating Mississippi trivia. Did you know that this state was the first in the Union to allow women to own property, and was the first to publicly fund a college for women? This book is a very slender collection of

my thoughts," Daisy said modestly. "It concerns me that this wonderful place is not fully appreciated, or understood." Daisy has filled the 112 pages, dispelling many of the myths about Mississippi's people and culture. Making the move to Mississippi has enriched Daisy's life tremendously. While she continues to embrace the big city life on the East and West Coasts, she can't say enough about Mississippi's legendary hospitality. "In

Mississippi," she explained, "there are no strangers - only unmet friends."

Daisy said she wrote this book, hoping that someone would care... And care, they did! Mikala Brown, employed at the Walter Anderson Museum, told her mother about the book. She is a history teacher at the Presbyterian Christian Secondary School in Hattiesburg. After reading "From Manhattan To Mississippi," Mikala's mother conferred with the School Board and it was agreed that this little book, would be required reading for Mississippi History students. Immediately, 45 copies of the book were stocked in the school library. Mississippi's First Lady, Marsha Barbour ordered 50 books, that would be given to every "first spouse" in the nation. A book-signing engagement is in the works for the prestigious New York community, the Hamptons. Last summer, Daisy was given the honor of signing copies of her book at the Mississippi Central Park Picnic! This is a yearly event for transplanted Mississippians, living in New York City.

Daisy loves to travel, and often her trips include plenty of publicity events. She is always received warmly, and interest in the book continues to grow. In fact, "From Manhattan to Mississippi," is Quail Ridge Press' fastest re-print in the publisher's history! You can pick up your very own copy of Daisy's book at the Walter Anderson Gift Shop, Pass Christian Books, Bay Books in Bay St. Louis and Southern Antiques in Ocean Springs. The book is also sold at national outlets such as Barnes & Noble, Borders, and Books-A-Million, as well as online at Amazon.com.

Daisy Karam-Read currently resides in Gulfport. She holds a Master's degree from Tulane University with an emphasis in Art History. She has worked as an Art journalist for the Smithsonian Museum of Art where she authored a biography of Eugene O'Neal. An actress on both the East and West coasts, she loves to travel. Her many adventures have taken her all over the world. Warm lasting friendships, wonderful memories, and cultural enrichment have provided Daisy with a very exciting and fulfilled life. In closing Daisy said, "I will travel till my very last minute...I was born to move!"

Daisy Karam-Read will be signing copies of her book on March 6th at the International Women's Day event at the Jeff Davis campus of MGCCC.