

LAKE NORMAN COUPLE HOST FESTIVAL

# Black filmmakers get their due

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"Hollywood is slowly opening up to show that there are different sides of black life," she said. "One of the good things about the film festival is that HBO picks up a lot of our movies."

This year, Ben Vereen and Karyn Parsons ("Fresh Prince of Bel Air") will participate in the festival. Parsons has developed an animated film titled "The Journey of Henry Box Brown." Vereen is one of the stars of "Idlewild."

Though it is too late for this year's festival, which kicks off Thursday, Run and Shoot accepts screenplay and film submissions. Registration forms are available on the festival's web site, www.mvaaff.com.

Terrylyn Phillips of Raleigh is the lone North Carolinian in the screenplay finals. The festival runs through Sunday. For more information, log on to www.mvaaff.com.

FORMER MEMBER OF DESTINY'S CHILD

# LeToya Luckett finds success as solo act

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK—Former Destiny's Child singer LeToya Luckett spent the past six years trapped in pop's "What-ever happened to ...?" dungeon.

LeToya, who simply goes by her first name, was an original member of the chart-topping girl group, along with Beyonce, Kelly Rowland and LaTavia Roberson, and helped co-write hits like the Grammy-winning "Say My Name." But she was unceremoniously booted from Destiny's Child along with Roberson after a conflict in 2000, just before the group had its breakthrough pop success.

While her former best friends went on to conquer the music world, racking up No. 1 hits, multiplatinum albums and Grammys, LeToya's career floundered after several false starts and disappointments.

Now LeToya is finally emerging from shadows of Destiny's Child. She already scored a major hit with the ballad "Torn" and just released her self-titled debut album, which features fellow Houston natives Paul Wall and Mike Jones.

The Associated Press talked with LeToya about her musical rebirth.

AP: Are you surprised at the success of "Torn?"

**LeToya:** Very surprised. It's been a great song to me. That's one of my favorite songs on the whole album so I knew it would have some success because, one, people can relate to it. I've been through that situation before and I know other people have or know somebody that has. That's why I wanted to make the single because I knew people would be able to feel that record. But the way they have supported me and everybody's been like "Aaahhh! This is great and you've come back," I didn't expect that, so that felt good.

AP: Now that you have to start again in the music industry do you regret leaving Destiny's Child when they were starting to rise?

**LeToya:** I never left Destiny's Child. It was a dispute between myself, LaTavia and management and they decided to do what they did. Instead of me looking at it like, "I hate them and this is the worst thing that could ever happen to me," I didn't feel like that. Obviously, God had something else planned for me and I'm not going to worry or fret. The thing that made it difficult for me was the friendships we lost and not having my friends around anymore. I know they have had and will continue to have success so all I can do is wish

them well.

AP: What happened with the project that you and fellow ex-DC member LaTavia were putting together?

**LeToya:** Unfortunately, the production company folded so we went our separate ways. LaTavia and I are still friends but that situation didn't work out. I think coming out of the Destiny's Child situation and then getting into this situation I kind of took a hint that the group thing isn't what I need to be doing.

AP: From Destiny's Child to you and LaTavia not working out, did you ever feel turned off by the music industry?

**LeToya:** I was turned off by the politics. I've never been turned off from doing music. If I got back into a career in the music industry I wanted it to be right. ... I wanted to be a part of it whether it was A&R or doing something like that.

AP: Are you still in touch with the other girls in Destiny's Child, specifically Beyonce and Kelly Rowland?

**LeToya:** Not so much in touch with them but when we see each other it's cool.

AP: How did you keep busy during your hiatus from the spotlight?

**LeToya:** LaTavia and myself decided to move down to Atlanta and form a four-

## Weekend for music and literature

By Cheris F. Hodges

cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

From comedy to literary festivals, Charlotte is abuzz with activities this weekend.

In celebration of their highly-anticipated new album, "Feedback," Interscope recording artists Jurassic 5 will launch a massive nationwide tour.

They'll come to Charlotte's Neighborhood Theatre Friday at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$25.

Feedback follows J5's critically acclaimed releases "Power in Numbers" and "Quality Control." The album's first single is "Work It Out," a soulful collaboration with the Dave Matthews Band. The song is the culmination of a close relationship the two groups formed while touring together, and an introduction to J5's new effort.

"It's a step up for us because we have been basically known as an underground group. We've been known as a backpacker group. This album still has elements of that because that's

who we are, but at the same time we are also trying to step into another realm," said Soup, one of the group's four emcees.

DJ/Producer Nu-Mark handles the majority of the album's production, including the tracks "Future Sound," "Red Hot," and "Where We At," which features a vocal bit from Mos Def.

If you want to laugh, then check out Rickey Smiley and Friends at Grand Central on Central Avenue.

There will be four shows on Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.

Smiley's down-home southern humor has resonated with audiences nationwide. He has performed for sold-out crowds at Madison Square Garden, Universal Amphitheater, and the Lincoln Center as well as performing at some of the nation's top comedy clubs.

Smiley's best known for his most original impressions, from "Bernice and her church announcements" to "Coach McClain and his lack of motivational skills."

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## Doo Wop's Best

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## COCA-COLA "CITIZEN" OF THE MONTH

# "Frank Coley"

Un-Sung Hero of  
Westover Hills Community



The son of sharecropper parents, our "Citizen of the Month," Frank Coley, knows first hand what it means to share and give back. Coley's commitment to his community began over thirty years ago as he along with Tom Bradley Sr. and Robert Moten brought Community Watch to the neighborhood. A 2000 retiree from Charlotte Police Department. Coley was once only one of five police officers living in Westover Hills. As crime in the area increased, one by one all but Coley fled. Nestled near uptown Charlotte, Westover Hills is worth revitalizing, said Coley. Not only does he still reside in the area, but has been a major factor in reinvesting by bringing homes to the area to refurbish, and saved residents from losing their dwellings as well. It's not uncommon to see Coley sprucing up the area by personally landscaping needed property, whether he owns it or not. And, it's nothing for him to pick up the phone to check on aging neighbors when things don't appear right at their homes. To Coley, it's all about giving back because someone once helped him.

A native of Wayne County, Coley was one of eleven children born to Isaac T. Coley Sr., and Elnora Whitley Coley. In 1964 a cousin affiliated with N.C. Mutual Insurance saw great potential in Coley and with the help of fraternity brothers Dr. Moses Belton and Rev. Raymond Worsley helped him enter Johnson C. Smith University during late registration. Even though he came to Charlotte homeless, to Coley it seemed the doors were beginning to open. His experiences at JCSU helped prepare him for the future. Due to the untimely death of his father, Coley dropped out to care for his mother and sisters, but the stage for success was solidly set. As a Charlotte police officer he made a difference, and now makes a difference as campus security for Harding High School, a position he's held since 2002.

Frank and his wife of 36 years, Josephine Garrett Coley, have two children, son Lt. Commander Te-Ali Garrett Coley, a pilot with the Coast Guard, and daughter Carmalla Jo Garrett Cole, retired Air Force sergeant.

**Best Wishes "Frank" from**  
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