Cynthia Fontenot: Proud to serve as Parade Marshal

By DANIELLE WOOD
Editor

Being chosen as the 1997 Cotton Festival Parade Marshal was definitely one of the biggest honors in Cynthia Fontenot's life, she said.

"Without saying, I was very shocked and I was too nervous to answer anything, or thank anybody," Cynthia said enthusiastically.

"This has been a great honor for me and my family. I was very surprised," Cynthia added.

Cynthia has been working with June Hadley and involved in the Cotton Festival for 11 years.

"I enjoy working with the Cotton Festival. I have met a lot of people," she said.

After June became second vice-president, Cynthia took her place as chairperson for Chapman and she has three sisters and a brother.

Cynthia's father, Emery Ortego, died in 1980 and her mother married Jessie Dalbis "Red" Fontenot of Ville Platte.

Her mother is Gloria Menier Ortego Chapman and she has three sisters and a brother.

"He raised me like I was his own child. He was very good to us. Anytime we needed him, he was there for us and I love him dearly."

Cynthia's in-laws are Mr. and Mrs. Dalbis "Red" Fontenot of Ville Platte.

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Cynthia Fontenot
Sherry Vidrine: Excited to be Colonel Cotton

By ROLAND MANUEL
Parish Editor

Colonel Cotton 1997 is one of the most deserving citizens of Ville Platte to carry that honorable banner.

Sherry Fontenot Vidrine has been a valuable and willing volunteer who has contributed much to the overall success of the Louisiana Cotton Festival for the past three decades.

Not only has she been an “on the spot” participant for many of the activities, she also served as Cotton Festival Association Treasurer for 17 of the 30 years that she has been a selfless servant for an activity that is so well known throughout the state. "It was while I was working at the American Security Bank in 1957 that I began working with the Cotton Festival under then President Elin Pitre," she noted. “Mr. Drouet Vidrine, who was my employer, encouraged me to help with the festival even if some of the work I did was done on company time.”

The new Colonel Cotton remembers that Drouet Vidrine was, and still is, a very civic-minded person who encouraged his employees to become involved in such activities also.

For the first two or three years of her participation, Sherry Vidrine served as an assistant to Jeannie Vidrine, who was then Festival Secretary-Treasurer. “When Jeannie relocated to Baton Rouge, Sis Rivers, my sister-in-law, was kind enough to take on the task of secretary and I took over as treasurer," Sherry explained.

Vidrine says that she has always felt that the Louisiana Cotton Festival was very important to Ville Platte. “It brought many civic clubs and individual citizens together to work for a common good and to make others aware of our town. It put us on the map, so to speak.”

Sherry is married to Larry Vidrine, who is currently serving as principal of Sacred Heart High School.

“Larry and I are both very involved with the festival. We have met many fine people from all over the state through our work and we have made some lasting friendships,” Colonel Cotton said.

Although Sherry is currently being honored for her devotion to the Cotton Festival, she is not the only member of that Vidrine family who have volunteered a great deal of their time. Husband Larry is a past president of the annual event while daughters Lori and Julie were both Cotton Pickers. Lori and her husband Scott are both physicians. Julie and her husband Bruce are both in the computer industry.

Sherry and Larry also have three sons. Vic, who is the oldest child, and his wife Jackie are both self-employed.

Steve is also a physician. His wife Renee is a home maker while being in charge of his medical records.

Youngest son David is the only single Vidrine sibling. He is a physical therapist who owns his own rehab service and is now under contract with Ville Platte Medical Center.

There are eight very loved and appreciated grandchildren in that Vidrine clan.

Sherry has one sister, Bonnie (Mrs. Jerry “Rab” Fontenot) of Ville Platte and two brothers, Darnell (deceased) and Dowell.

Her parents, Lula and Gilbert Fontenot, were from the Vidrine community. They are both deceased.

Colonel Cotton 1997, who has been employed with Soileau Industries of Ville Platte since 1981, admits that she feels very honored at having been singled out for such a great honor. “There are many, many tireless volunteers who work hard toward the success of the Cotton festival,” she commented, “Although none of us do it for recognition. I am grateful to all of my fellow workers, and I especially want to thank the members of the Cotton Festival Association.”

Sherry Vidrine
Serving his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Chris John represents the diverse interests of Louisiana’s Seventh Congressional District. Congressman John hails from Crowley, Louisiana in the heart of Acadia Parish. The district he represents is largely and traditionally democratic, and is as culturally diverse as the Cajun heritage for which it is known.

A small business owner and former state elected official, Congressman John brings to Congress considerable talents. After graduating with a degree in business administration from Louisiana State University, he joined his family’s trucking business. In 1987, he was elected to the seat his father once held in the Louisiana Legislature and proceeded to serve eight years winning re-election without opposition. In the Louisiana House of Representatives, he served on the Appropriations and Joint Legislative Budget Committees as well as chairing the Acadia Delegation. He also served as a member of the Natural Resources Committee and was appointed to serve as the Wildlife and Fisheries subcommittee Chairman.

True to his upbringing in the heart of Louisiana’s sportsman’s paradise, Congressman John is an avid outdoorsman committed to protecting the area’s wealth of natural resources. Continuing the commitment to the area’s resources that he began in the Louisiana Legislature, Congressman John is a new member of the House Resource Committee and will serve on the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee. Congressman John is also a member of the Congressional Oil and Gas Forum and the Congressional Sportsmen Caucus. Through these outlets, he is interested in protecting the district’s delicate estuaries, fisheries, and marshlands.

Next to Louisiana’s rich natural resources, the Seventh District is an agricultural producer of a large amount of our nation’s rice, soybeans, and crawfish. For this reason, Congressman John sought and received a spot on the House Agriculture Committee. As a local businessman whose family has interests in two area rice farms, Congressman John...