

Leisha Enterprises Celebrating fifteen years

Leisha Mosley Business owner since 1993

Cover Story

Twenty-seven percent of Texas businesses are women owned, according to the bureau of Vital Statistics 2006 report. Of those, 5.1% are African American women owned. Leisha Mosley, a young Jacksonville, Texas entrepreneur is celebrating her fifteenth year in business this year. Leisha Enterprises opened its tax preparation office on North Bolton Street in 1993. It has expanded in recent years to include an insurance agency, a credit repair division, an online travel service and her latest endeavor, Madea's Restaurant, a soul food restaurant named for her grandmother, the late Pauline Christopher Runnels. Madea's was opened in 2006 and is located in the Jacksonville Greenhouse Mall.

Leisha Dennis Mosley was born in Jacksonville at Nan Travis Hospital. She graduated Jacksonville High School in 1981, Tyler Junior College and Stephne F. Austin. After graduation, although she had a college degree, she could not find a job in Jacksonville.



Leisha Mosley, center pictured with her mother Evone Wilcox and sister Joyce Hinton.

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Her job search landed her in Dallas. Leisha found herself twenty-two, single and expecting her first child. At eight and one-half months pregnant, she enrolled in AIT Computer School to get certified in computer data entry. A determined young lady she was. On December 10, 1986 she gave birth to her first son. The following Monday, she returned to class and later graduated with a 4.0 grade point average.

While sharing her story, Mrs. Mosley paused, then smiled and said, "I say to my sons and other young people, don't look at me where I am now. You don't know what I went through to get to this point. I encourage them to become an asset to the community. to be careful and not become a parent until they are mature emotionally and financially to make and take care of a family. I do realize that God makes the final decision."

Leisha's first husband was a very good man, she said, but he was a drug addict. The drug problem was a sickness that needed treatment just as cancer does. In being the mature, independent adult she was determined to be, she kept many personal challenges and hardships she faced to herself. Planning, and through much effort, working it out as best she could. Not even her mother knew some of the valleys she went through. Leisha said she prayed constantly and kept it between her and God. "I believe in the word", she said. "Somewhere in the bible I read that parents are suppose to leave an inheritance for their children. So in order to plan for that, I have tried some of

everything, in the line of business," Leisha said.

She moved back to Jacksonville in 1992, transferring her job with the Texas Department of Human Services. She had gotten tax preparation training and experience working part-time for a tax preparation company in Dallas. After moving back, she took additional tax preparation classes and opened her own tax business in a portable building on North Bolton in 1993, working it after she got off work at her regular job. The first year she had 110 clients. The business grew so fast that eventually she had to give up the regular job to run it. Now, with the help of her Mom and Stepdad Arthel Wilcox and her husband Richard Mosley, she owns her own beautiful and spacious office building located near the intersection of 69 and 135. Her Mom, Evon Wilcox is the receptionist and office manager. Her sister Joyce Hinton is employed there as a tax consultant. Evon Says, "Leisha has worked since she was 14 Mama's yard, tomato field, Donut Delight, Sonic. She would go out and find her own job and go to work. She didn't have to do that. That's just her. Her daddy had to make her quit one job because she was closing alone at night. That was just too, dangerous."

"Madea's Soul Food Restaurant opened August 2007 and employs two to four people. It was named for my grandmother. She could cook., never wasting anything. If we had rice for breakfast, the leftover rice became rice pudding for the evening meal. The food at the resaturant is 98% cooked from scratch. We open from 11:00 to 2:00PM Sunday through Friday. On the menu we have chicken and dumplings, smothered pork chops, roast, chicken spaghetti, hot water corn bread, purple hull peas and a wide

variety of vegetables and homemade deserts.

Leisha said that inspite of being law abiding citizens, she and her family experienced something she hopes no other family has to endure. Homecoming night, 2004, she said, we were inside the Tomato Bowl watching the game. I looked up and saw my 13 year old baby boy crying profusely. An officer was standing nearby. It upset me to see him crying, so I went over to the officer to find out what was going on. The officer looked at me and said, "Take it outside." I took my son outside the Tamato Bowl.

She stepped back and started spraying me in my face and hair with pepper spray!

When I got outside my cousin was standing there talking to my other son. We were questioning both boys trying to find out what had happened. Two white high school boys had shoved my son around inside the stadium. While we were talking my middle son spotted the boys under the hill by the north corner of the stadium. He began to run toward them. I was behind him. By the time he almost got to them I reached him. He never made contact with them. I was talking to him and a friend of his, telling them to let me handle whatever was going on. My sister had come to me and was standing nearby. She said, "Here comes the sheriff's department. A woman wearing a county sheriff's deputy uniform walked over to me and grabbed me by my arm. I said to her, you can let go of me, I've got this under control.

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