

# Against All Odds

## Gospel Singer Georgia Hale Goes from a Master to a Master's Degree

By Anita Oubre

**W**ho would have ever thought that a young girl who grew up picking cotton on a Mississippi plantation would go on to become a Billboard Charting Gospel Singer with a Master's Degree and the subject of a forthcoming documentary and possible stage play?

Georgia Hale was that young girl.

At an early age she discovered the power of her own voice and began a singing career that continues to this day and has seen her reach the heights of that calling, along with that of her famous daughter, Joanna Hale McGill. Recently, as a mother-daughter duo, the two of them had a song on the Billboard Gospel Indicator Chart.

As she recounted in a recent interview, Georgia said, "God has been speaking to me since I was a child growing up picking beans and cotton on a plantation in Anguilla, Mississippi. I was the oldest of nine children and I learned responsibility and hard work early on in life. At the age of five, I was in the cotton fields with my mother being carried on her cotton sack"

Those experiences instilled in her a

determination to be successful as an adult and she did just that, going on to become the first one in her immediate family to get a full education.

As Georgia explained, her grandparents were the heads of the household and they ran a tight ship. The children worked the fields of the plantation. There was no running water or indoor plumbing. During the ripening season, cotton was chopped and picked daily by Georgia and her siblings.

Georgia's grandfather could not read or write so he was not going to sit by and let the next generation pass up the opportunity to learn. "He made sure we had perfect attendance at school, rain or shine," Georgia said.

The family was devout in service to The Lord and church was a second home to them. Georgia was baptized at the age of nine at



Union Chapel Baptist Church.

As she recalled, “My brother and I were sad because we didn’t want to work the fields on our baptism day. We had to walk to Deer Creek for our baptism. I went out into it and when the water touched me I was brand new and I was happy.”

Georgia especially enjoyed singing in the choir with her mother. “It was a feeling that went through me when I sang and I liked it,” said Georgia.

When Georgia moved to New Orleans, she brought that “feeling” with her. She found a home church right away and noticed the church choir “needed a little something more” and the spirit led her to lend them a hand.

“I had been going to this church for a while but I was busy with devotion and nobody knew I could sing,” she explained. “One service the spirit hit me and I started singing. Everyone looked back to where I was sitting. The preacher told me to keep on going and I haven’t stopped yet,” Georgia proudly stated.

Georgia was invited to join their choir and that led to the beginning of many years of singing with such gospel groups as Sisters in Christ, Rising Star Gospel Singers and the Generations Gospel Singers. The groups did outreach and performed at

many churches, hospitals and senior centers.

The Generations Singers were together for several years and they were known for “Trouble in My Way.” They were invited to sing that particular song at many churches and events. Georgia recalled that, on the group’s first anniversary, 22 churches were invited and the collection plate was overflowing with thousands of dollars.

“The group was on fire for The Lord and we traveled and sang for multiple churches on any given Sunday,” Georgia said. “All of us were piled up in one car. We would sing at a church and then they would feed us, but we had to be at the next church so the car was always full between us and all the plates of food,” Georgia laughed.

The group eventually broke up and the members went their separate ways but Georgia is still close to many of the women in the group. For her, those years were special because she knew she was blessing people with encouragement through her music ministry.

A single mother, Georgia is very proud of her children. Her eldest son is a minister and her youngest son is in the trucking business. She has a daughter in South Carolina who is a minister and her daughter Joanna is a renowned gospel singer. (Joanna’s story was told in the January/February 2019 issue of Breakthru Media magazine.)

Joanna wrote the single, “God’s Alright” and she performs it with Georgia which



Georgia Hale with Sally-Ann Roberts



Top: Michael Hale, Chatting Hale; Bottom: (l to r) Monica Hale, Georgia Hale, Joanna Hale-McGill

means so much to them both. The song was inspired by the healing of Georgia’s brother after a heart transplant that he waited ten years to receive. This was the song that hit the Billboard chart for them.

This mother and daughter duo not only spread the word through their music ministry, they also have their own YouTube channel, “Raising Hale,” a light-hearted comedy show that showcases the dynamics in this special mother-daughter relationship.

“People recognize me from the show and that is so much fun. I’m told our mom-daughter chronicles make people laugh and that’s what it is all about, bringing joy and happiness to people,” said Georgia.

Georgia has strived to give her family a better life than the one she had growing up. She was the first in her family to obtain a high school diploma and she didn't stop there. She received her B.A. in Social Work in 1992 and when she was turned down for jobs because she did not possess a master's degree, she went back to school, and obtained her M.A.

"I would drive from Picayune (Mississippi where she currently lives) to Southern University at New Orleans four nights a week in an old car but God always looked out for me and made a way for me," reflected Georgia.

Georgia's compelling life story has caught the attention of producer Natalie Randall. A documentary about her, titled "From a Master to a Master's Degree," is currently in the works. A stage play written by Joanna is also being contemplated.

At the end of the day, though, Georgia is a self-professed "country girl at heart." Her favorite pastime is fishing and singing. She loves spending her leisure time with her family on the bayou.

"My granddaughters know I will be ready for a day of fishing when they come



Joanna Hale-McGill and Georgia Hale

to town. I have the bait, bucket, and pole ready and we spend all day fishing and it is awesome," Georgia happily stated. "I was brought up in the country and it prepared me for the city, with a little help from God."

Georgia's Music can be found on Spotify and Amazon episodes of "Raising Hale" can be found at <https://youtu.be/nJ7PmSgAtiU> and on Instagram @raisinghalereality



Georgia Hale and Joanna Hale-McGill



Georgia Hale and Eric Paulsen