

SYLVIA PERRY

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Sylvia Perry is a native of Jacksonville, Florida. A graduate of the legendary Raines High School, she furthered her education at Florida State University completing a BA Degree in Inter-cultural Communications, a MA in Organizational Leadership and a Jurist Masters degree. She is the publisher of the Free Press of Jacksonville, a 38 year old weekly newspaper serving the African-American Diaspora of Northeast Florida. She is the recipient of numerous awards on behalf of the publication and is actively involved in the Jacksonville community. Sylvia's duties and responsibilities include the overall production of the weekly newspaper including procurement and assignment of articles, representation of newspaper throughout the community, selection and assignment of photo editing, quality control and maintaining industry standards.

A second generation publisher, the newspaper was founded by Florida's first founding female publisher, Rita J. Perry. Publisher Emeritus Perry was a pioneer that promoted and published news stories that captured reader's attention and dialogue becoming the first founding female publisher in the state. The Jacksonville Free Press was first published in 1986. The newspaper has since come to be recognized as a major link to the northeast Florida African American community serving a community response which was crying out for a wealth of positive and informative news for African Americans by and about African Americans.

Sylvia has served on numerous civic boards and committees including Groundworks Jacksonville, Planned Parenthood, Jacksonville Urban League, Mayor's Media Advisory Council, Leadership Jacksonville, National Council of Community and Justice, Cultural Council, Junior League of Jacksonville, the Clara White Mission, Theatreworks, National Council of Community and Justice, Head Start Policy Council, the Florida Association of Black Owned Media, National Newspaper Publishers Association, and the Jacksonville Small and Emerging Business. Over the years the Free Press has received awards from prestigious organizations including the NAACP, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sickle Cell Association, Girl Scouts, Clear Channel, Urban League and the Onyx Award among others.

Sylvia has worked at the paper since its inception while a high school student enjoying being a Student Council President by day and roving reporter by night. Through the years, her travels as a seasoned journalist have taken her to locations such as Libya, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Sudan and The White House. In addition to owning a boutique PR firm, a property management company, ThePluggedNation and a published author, she maintains that continuing the legacy began over 35 years ago is "something that she has to do."

In addition to traveling and serving the community through journalistic awareness, she has served as the Southern Area Director of The Links, Incorporated. A member for over 29 years, the opportunity allowed her to continue her dedication to service throughout the Southeast. In the role, she set a historic agenda for the area's 84 chapters and 5,000 plus members which included the states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, North Carolina and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. She also holds membership in the Florida Association of Black Owned Media, the League of Women Voters and Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Incorporated where she chairs the chapter's fundraising outreach.

