

King Robert Vernon Berry

As Carnival Memphis celebrates our 88th Anniversary, Robert Vernon Berry has been chosen to reign as King to honor the Mid-South Home Furnishings & Décor Industry.

King Bob Berry grew up in Clarksdale, Mississippi and worked on the family cotton farm throughout high school. He went to the University of Mississippi where he was a member of ATO fraternity. Following college, he moved to Maine to work for Outward Bound in their sailing program. In 1986, he went to work at Little Palm Island, as its first employee, and helped take it from a sleepy fishing camp to a five-star luxury resort.

Over 25 years ago during a trip to Ecuador, King Bob fell in love with the local crafts and had the idea to start a company to sell these items. He brought some samples back and pre-sold them and naively thought he was off to the races. He became a private sailboat captain in Maine to raise funds to purchase inventory. He went back to Ecuador trying to fill the orders and found out how difficult it was to export these items. Undeterred Bob bought a 2 door Honda and drove to San Miguel, Mexico. He filled the car up with trinkets - drove them back to Memphis and sold them at Junior League shows and friends' houses. When it all sold, he took the money, drove back to Mexico and did it again and again. Growing up on a farm didn't offer Bob much sales experience but taught him to be very handy, so he understood how the craftsmen were creating items he saw while in Mexico. This led him to start making changes to their stock items and use their age-old techniques to make something that was unique and different from what they were currently making. Seeing the interest in these new creations was intoxicating so King Bob started doing more. And with the help of his partner, Lucy Woodson and a friend of hers named Cristy Beasley the business took off.

From those humble beginnings, Worlds Away has become a great Memphis entrepreneurial success story with Bob and Lucy at the helm. Today, the company continues to create unique and sophisticated styles for all design applications for the home, hotel or venue and are sold all over the US and in 21 other countries. Their clients include specialty retailers, furniture stores, design showrooms, E-commerce websites, as well as individual home designers. Larger retail partners include Neiman-Marcus, Wayfair, Houzz, McGee and Company, Clayton Gray Home, and Candelabra. From their factories to their showrooms around the world, the goal remains the same: design and create a diverse collection of furniture and



Lucy Woodson and King Bob Berry

decor that fit seamlessly into any style and will look as current 10 years from now as it does today.

Lucy Woodson's Carnival history dates to her serving as Queen of the Grand Krewe of Osiris in 1970 and four years later she held the position of Forgotten Woman. Her sister Peggy Garrott Peters reigned as Queen of Carnival in 1981. In 1998, her daughter Neely served as Queen of Carnival and her daughter Peyton served in the same position ten years later. Lucy served on the Carnival Board of Directors for several years and has also been the "Official Decorations Chair" for Carnival events since then. She has also stayed very involved in Osiris over the years. The couple has tirelessly given their time, talents and support towards the betterment of the organization and community.

An avid hunter, fisher and golfer, King Bob is a member of the Memphis Country Club and Chickasaw Country Club. Lucy's granddaughter, Gigi, will serve as a Carnival Page this year.