



Former MIF director publishes memoir

Christie Lovvorn | AL.com Contributor By Christie Lovvorn | AL.com Contributor

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MOBILE, Alabama -- In her book "A Fusion of Cultures: A Memoir," Estela Gustilo Iguara Dorn shares her life's journey from Manila, Philippines, to Mobile.

This year Dorn completed the nearly 500-page book which chronicles her childhood in Manila, her work experience in Tehran, Iran, in 1978, her marriage, and relocation to first New Orleans, then Mobile. Dorn also devotes a large portion of the book to her experiences with the Mobile International Festival from which she retired as executive director in December 2010.

Dorn said her husband of 33 years, Chuck Dorn, inspired her to write the memoir.

"Chuck always says that I do have an interesting life," said Dorn. "We laugh about things and he always said I wish you could write a book, so I thought for my retirement project, I'm going to write a book and that's exactly what happened. I retired in December 2010 and in February 2011, one day Chuck was taking a nap and when he woke up, I said, 'Listen to what I wrote. This is the very beginning.' He said, 'I'm so proud of you.'"

"It's a big job to write a book," said Chuck Dorn, "but she had no outline to this book. It was all laid out and organized in her head. I realize this is a great ability."

Dorn said the title comes from her love of various cultures and how her experiences of those cultures have influenced her life.

"It's a very easy read -- enjoyable and insightful," said Chuck Dorn. "We've been exposed to many cultures through our travels and through the international festival and her book provides a lot of insight into those cultures."

During the writing process, Dorn only allowed her husband, her cousin Teresa Gustilo Villasor, and long-time friend Turner Rogers to read the manuscript which she is publishing herself through the use of Amazon subsidiary **CreatSpace.com**.

"It's a fascinating book. It was a real honor to be asked to edit it and a delightful pleasure to be one of first or the first to read it," said Rogers. "There's a little of everything in it- sociology, history, almost anything



Former Mobile International Festival executive director Estela Dorn has released her memoir. "A Fusion of Cultures." (Christie Lovvorn/Correspondent)

you could think of. Estela has such an interesting history and has done so many things and knows so many people. I really enjoy how Estela has a certain cadence when she speaks, a certain syntax and with her book, the experience is not so much like reading as like listening to Estela. For that reason, I edited with a very light touch."

Dorn said she hopes her book will put a big smile on the faces of her readers and that they will "see how lives may look different, but that cultures don't really divide us. It really doesn't matter what the culture of the individual is or where they come from. In the end, we're human beings."

Fittingly, Dorn launched her book on Aug. 5 at a Mobile International Festival meeting. Book signings include: Sept. 22 at the Richards DAR House at 2 p.m. and Oct. 24 at 6 p.m. at 360 Jazz Café where a portion of admission proceeds will be donated to the Mobile International Festival.

To learn more about Dorn's book, visit **www.esteladorn.com**.

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