

BUSINESS

Loretta Harrison

Loretta's Authentic Pralines

New Orleans, Louisiana



Loretta S. Harrison, founder of Loretta's Authentic Pralines. Loretta's motto is "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Loretta has been in business for 29 years. She was the first African American woman to successfully own and operate her own praline company in New Orleans. The divorced mother of three credits her family and friends as invaluable to helping her achieve success.

At the age of 12 years old, she knew that one day she would own her own business. As a young black female entrepreneur, she did not know what a business plan was let alone working capital, but Loretta had a recipe and trust in God.

Armed with faith, Loretta's Authentic Pralines was born. Literally with \$700 in capital and a dream, she decided to take a family recipe and try it out on the public at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Unfortunately, success did not come without a few failures along the way. Yet, she has always and will always believe in her product and herself. It is that determination that brought her through the failures of owning a business in order to realize the successes.

Loretta found a home in the French Market Farmer's Market and a second storefront and warehouse in the Fabourg Marigny. In addition she has an online storefront which makes her pralines accessible to many across the country.

Today, Loretta's Authentic Pralines is like many businesses recovering from Hurricane Katrina. With the a few trusted employees, and family and friends to help, Loretta continues to serve customers the best quality product on the market.

Through the recovery, Loretta has been unwavering in her love and dedication toward the rebuilding of New Orleans, "There's no other place to be." With that dedication, have come invitations to meetings with President George W. Bush, Jr., Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, Senator David Vitter and Mayor Ray Nagin to voice the need of local entrepreneurs such as herself. In 2007, she was the recipient of the Young Leadership Council Award.

Loretta firmly believes that if you "put God first, He will grant the wishes of your heart."

It is the many qualities that Loretta Harrison possesses that led to the dramatic performance called success.