

# *Cake Man Raven*

## *Aka Ice Man*

### *Founder, Cake Man Raven Confectionery*



Raven Patrick De'Sean Dennis, III, grandson of the late Mrs. Evelyn Nowlin Murrelle, son of the late Raven Dennis, Jr. and Mrs. Ruth Murrelle Dennis, currently resides in Linden, New Jersey.

A native of Harlem, New York, a young Raven "Cake Man" Dennis, III, dreamed of going south to grandma's house and soon his dreams were fulfilled. At the age of four, he wanted to do everything he could to stay outside. Striving to be like grandma, Raven grew flowers and vegetables, and made mud pies and mud cakes, while his grandmother baked and cooked family dinners. At nine, he made his first cake and at 13, sold his first creation: two coconut pies to his elementary school teacher Gloria Bowman for \$5.00, which currently sell for \$16.00 in his Brooklyn Confectionery.

During his years in high school, his talents in pastry arts allowed him to win cake shows and competitions all over South Carolina. Soon his high school teacher introduced him to Marketing & Distributive Education Clubs of Americas, where he competed in the area of entrepreneurship. His business plan won the top state award in 1984 and 1985.

While holding the title of Mr. South Carolina, he then went on to the national competition in Kansas City in 1984, and received honors in the San Francisco finals in 1985. Raven returned with top honors and a scholarship.

After graduation from Mt. Pleasant High School, he carried the name "cake boy," later maturing to Cake "Man" Raven, a name given to him by the local newspaper, *The Lee County Messenger*.

He continued his education at Johnson & Wales University and Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Holding his South Carolina business cards in pocket, which simply read "All Occasion Cakes," he aspired to go to Cornell University for graduate school, but when his grandmother died in December 1989, his plans were shattered. He returned to Johnson & Wales in 1998 to pursue a Masters Degree in Education while working as an Admissions Officer for Johnson & Wales and as an undergraduate advisor of the Lambda XI chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

During this period throughout college, Raven worked at the New York Hilton Hotel as a room service waiter and later became night captain. During the dayshift, he worked at Georgeson's on Wall Street in a stock brokerage firm. After finding that numbers were not his forte, he returned to making wedding and special occasion cakes.

In addition to his travels in "Cakedom," there is yet an untold story; he is also called "Ice Man." He has carved ice in the historical **World Trade Center's Windows on the World**. He created ice carvings for the Grammy Awards from 1986 to 1988. He also worked with International Management Group as a corporate dining room manager. Amidst the turmoil, Raven decided that he would bake full-time in his apartment until he was able to rent a storefront or purchase a building.

In December of 1991, a reporter wrote an article on the Cake Man calling him "Harlem Cake Man Raven." Within the same week, CBS Weekend news called, and filmed a program on the cakes called "The Rage in Harlem." Raven's experiences in the south created the training that enabled him to travel the world with his cake creations. He has created cakes in eighteen states and four countries worldwide.

The year 2000 brought tragedy to "Cake Man's" life when his father died. However, the darkness soon turned to light. Raven transitioned into his life's goal of owning a full-service bakery and confectionery, obtaining a space at 708 Fulton Street in Brooklyn, which has been the official home of "Southern Red Velvet Cake," a thriving business for the past four years. The signature cake, the Red Velvet, has been sent to Japan for Thanksgiving; Manchester & London for Valentines Day; and Hong Kong on tour with a local dance company. The Grammy Awards, Espy Awards, Daytime Emmys, Apollo Hall of Fame and Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame, have all been the back drop for his creations.

Cake Man prays that God will continue to bless him in his business, community and life endeavors.

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### **Greatest Cake Moment**

When Patti Labelle licked her purple shoe shaped 50 th Birthday Cake.

### **Greatest Accomplishment**

To celebrate his 20 th Year Anniversary at Florence Civic Center October 7 th , 2001 and thanked his first customers one by one.

### **Worst Moment**

Receiving the news of the demise of his Grandmother while serving the late Vice President's Spiro Agnu's planning committee luncheon.

### **Cake's Motto**

"If I can help somebody along the way than my life shall not be in vain."

### **Word to the Wise**

Hold on to your senior elders in life. Their lessons will be your homework to answer life's greatest question: "How shall I live?"

## **Appearances**

48 Hours- New York Never Sleeps

CBS Nightly News- Rage in Harlem

Kathy Lee & Regis Philbin- Sweetheart Weddings

ABC- Roz Abrahams

NY1- Chancey Place

Channel 5- Men Who Cook

Channel 7- Eyewitness News (Ella Fitzgerald Tribute)

WOR 710 AM-Cake Man & Red Velvet Cake (Arthur Schwartz)

ABC Good Morning America- the Cake Man's Beginning

CNN—Financial Show

NY1

BET— 106 & Park / Styles

Secrets Of New York

Crain's NY

PACE University

## **Newspaper Articles**

New York News Day- Lena Horne's 75th

Daily News- Patti LaBelle's 50th

New York Times- Harlem Cake Man

Sumter Daily Item -Harlem 's Cake Man First Sale in Lynchburg

South Carolina State Paper-Harlem Man Returns 's Home

Emerge Magazine- Cake Man's Creations: Not Half-Baked

Soap Opera Magazine- Tyler Noise Birthday 1000 Susan Lucci

The Courier Life - Boro Hall Repeal Cake (Marty Excerpt)

The Courier Life- Cake Man's Creation in Fort Green

The New York Magazine March 2002- Talk of the Town

Columbia University's Columbia News

## **Edible Replicas**

Mother Zion 200th Anniversary

75th Birthday of Empire State Building

65th Anniversary of Riverside Church

Inaugural Brooklyn Borough Hall Cake

South Oxford Space

Hanson Place SDA Church

Bust of Martin Luther King Jr.

Bust of Isaac Hayes

Battle of Brooklyn Flag

Columbia University 250th Anniversary Cake

Brooklyn Bridge Cake

Brooklyn Academy Of Music Building

Gramma phone for Hal Jackson's 40th Anniversary Celebration in Radio

Sean "P. Diddy" Combs' Bad Boy Entertainment Logo

# **Clients**

**Maya Angelou  
Ella Fitzgerald  
Muhammad Ali  
Danny Glover  
Spike Lee  
Arthur Ashe  
Savion Glover  
Susan Lucci  
Harry Belafonte  
Dizzy Gillespie  
Stephen Marbury  
Brandy  
Mary J Blige  
Macy Gray  
Isaac Hayes  
Regis Philbin  
Ron Brown  
Lena Horne  
Dan Rather  
Sean "P. Diddy" Combs  
Jermaine Hawkins  
Charles Rangel  
Cab Calloway  
Kool & The Gang  
Betty Shabazz  
Ossi Davis  
Mario Cuomo  
Reverend Ike  
Cast of Sex in the City**

# **Clients**

**Nancy Wilson  
Bill & Camille Cosby  
Ed Kennedy  
Stevie Wonder  
Robert De Niro  
Ed Koch  
Lynn Whitfield  
David N. Dinkens  
Jesse Jackson  
Dionne Warwick  
Faith Evans  
Barbara Jordan  
Oprah Winfrey  
Pattie Labelle  
Morgan Freeman  
Katie Couric  
50 Cents  
Jay-Z  
Jam Master J  
Lil kim  
Lil Flip  
Alicia Keyes  
Janet Jackson  
Zab Judah  
New York Governor George Pataki  
New York Borough President Mary Markowitz  
Council Member—District 35— Letitia James  
Hal Jackson  
Wendy Williams— Radio Station WBLS**

## Cake Man Raven Confectionery History

The history of how Cake Man Raven Confectionery, Inc. is one that needs to be written and shared. Cake Man's history is an example of courage, motivation and determination to reach your dreams while having confidence in yourself to make it happen. It took a lot of sacrifice for Cake Man Raven and his family to get to the point where you see such a successful establishment. Below is a brief synopsis of how he struggled year after year to make his mark all over the world for his famous Red Velvet Cake. Hopefully, after reading his history you too will be inspired to reach your dreams!

*"Cake Man Under the Stairs"* was scheduled to open November 21, 1999. Unfortunately, due to faulty legal terms the lease was voided and Cake Man was unable to purchase the building. That not being enough, his father fell ill and suffered heart failure on January 5, 2000. As spring approached, it was the renewing of faith and conviction to keep his father's and "Aunt Tee's" dream to make a confectionery a reality. He became more determined than ever to continue their dream of building a first-class confectionery.

Cake Man began looking at property in Brooklyn. The process of choosing a quality building took a while until one day, Cake Man discovered a bodega on Fulton Street. The bodega was closed down for quite a long time due to unlawful practices and the physical condition of the building was a disaster. After taking a look at the building, Cake Man came out and said to the real estate agent, "How fast can I get this building!"

On April 2000, the contract was sealed, 708 Fulton Street became *"Home to the Harlem Cake Man Raven."* His Committee consisted of George Konter, Shirley MacClain, Sister Shirley, and Brother George, Kappa Brother Vaugh, Cousin Timothy, Sister LaLa, and Brother-in-Law, Lisa McClain, Linda Myers, Cornellia Griffin, Rachel Zander, Jonathan Adwein, Kevin Briggs, Terrance LeGer, Big Terrance, and head of demolition, "Jay Dee" a neighborhood personality.

Support came real slow from Harlem and family because the move just did not seem practical. Fort Greene was moving fast, but it still wasn't Riverside Drive. The previous building in Manhattan provided quick access for his customers to get to the Harlem Cake Man. In four weeks, Cake Man sold all the equipment and product in the bodega. In order to get rid of the old stock quickly, customers were encouraged to buy 1 get 3 free. Then, the clean-up was extensive. Passersby would say, "How long?" Cakes reply, "Not long....." Mid-June became the date of July 14th at 9:00p.m.

Until finally everything came together - lights, camera and action! Families consisting of children, grandparents, uncles, aunts began to arrive to the anniversary and had a wonderful time. The 3 day weekend came to a close with spiritual sounds from such personalities as Monique Walker, Kevin Snippets and Lorenzo Tyler.

Cake Man's sister and brother-in-law worked tirelessly on the lighting. Aunt Virginia Price was out at Home Depot purchasing all the lighting equipment at 2:00p.m. Now it's 8:00a.m. and there was light for the first time in 708 Fulton. The food was being prepared in Harlem by Sister Lily and the wait staff was composed of the Hospitality Club from St. Luke's AME head by sister Zrown. At 7:00p.m., the food made it to 708 Fulton Street, the Church van pulled up and the air was still in mayhem.

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The 1st year was hard and the struggle was long. The staff was Cake Man and who-so-ever let them come!!! The 2nd year was a staff consisting of 1 pastry chef, 1 dishwasher, 1 baker and 1 counter person. The 3rd & largest Anniversary included 2 Borough Presidents on the same stage! Marty Markowitz and The Honorable C. Virginia Fields presented a Proclamation to Cake Man Raven. Other guests included the Reebok Van, Local Artist, choirs from SDA St. Luke AME Church, Emmanuel and other soloists.

Today, I thank my God for blessing me and you to be able to assemble one more time in unison and give thanks for yet the close of another year and the start of our 5th here at 708 Fulton Street. To God be the glory for the lives that have touched mine over my short life here thus far. We have 16 employers now and the store is opened 14 hours a day for 7 days a week to try and meet the needs, standard, and expectations of you, our patrons.

**"You may have come pass all other bakeries and stores... all were shut tight,  
But Thank God,  
by all "his favor,"  
"Cake Man" had on just a little light to serve someone without a fight!!!  
You may have come and there was "No Cake,"  
Thank God it's, "constantly baked."  
"You may have come, and "your order was late, not found or even baked."  
It was surely a mistake.  
Keep us in your Prayer, "to whom much is giving, much is required."**

"I've tried to train our young people to respect themselves first and to meet and get to know that MAN or WOMAN in the mirror 1st. First, then once you know yourself, accept how you are and what you've been taught and you'll be able to teach and tell someone else. The only way to help a community and its economy is to employ its children. Give the children a strong foundation to include the understanding of sacrifice, principles, and morals and character will build a community and nation of leaders who will continue the tradition of the circle of success."

**CAKE MAN RAVEN**