



**WDASHistory.org**

Devotees and admirers of Gospel Music in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the surrounding Tri-State area were all touched by pioneering radio star **Portia Perry**.

From her commanding position as the *First Lady of Gospel Music*, she set the tone and sent gospel music soaring to new heights in the mid 1950s to early 1960s, reaching listeners in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

From Baptist Ministers Conferences, to cotillions and beauty pageants, Philadelphia's public schools, award ceremonies and 'live' remote broadcasts; Portia Perry brought style, glamour and a great ear for great music to the city's growing gospel community. Along with WDAS Radio, Portia Perry helped elevate the public's perception of both the African American musical artist and African American radio on-air personnel. She became a powerhouse personality in the days when American radio was extremely segregated-both the playlists and the on-air staff. She was undaunted. It did not matter to her that the message sent forth was 'no one of color need apply.' She did not care that radio was then, and in many places still is today, an 'all boys club.' She knew she had talent and she went into uncharted waters to set the bar of excellence for future generations of radio professionals of all colors.

We here at WDASHistory.org are deeply grateful for her numerous contributions to the rich tapestry which legends like Portia Perry created and wove into History. We will continue to let the world know of her legacy as a trailblazing radio leader and her ability to rise above the racism of her day, charting new territory for herself, women, African American radio professionals and people of good will everywhere.

Her tenacity, talent and strength will never be forgotten.

Wynne Alexander  
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