

Gaithers' Invitation Helps Special Needs Singer Fulfill Her Incredible Goal

Ashley DeRamus—entrepreneur, fashion designer, singer and advocate—set a goal to be the first special needs person to sing the national anthem in all 50 states. That is a title and a goal she was able to achieve because she also happens to have Down syndrome.

When they heard about DeRamus' goal, Southern Gospel's first family, Bill and Gloria Gaither, extended an invitation for her to join their Alaskan Homecoming Cruise, where she completed her goal. Sharing both her vision and her voice, she performed in Juneau, Alaska in front of the USS Juneau Memorial on the seawalk. Bill Gaither and the Gaither Music Group were happy to assist Ashley in reaching this great achievement!

DeRamus has a message we can all learn from. She so eloquently states "Don't tell me what I can't do. Let me show you what I *can* do!" That is clearly more than just words, as she pushes herself beyond the limits of what most of us would ever dream.

DeRamus started her own clothing line, described as "special clothing for special people." Her enthusiasm and winning attitude have caught both national and international attention, and she has been voted the International Down Syndrome Advocate of the Year.

Always setting new goals for herself, DeRamus decided she wanted to be the first special needs person to sing the national anthem in all 50 states. And once she determines a course, she finds a way to achieve it. On July 22, she performed in the last state on her list: Alaska. Mayor Beth Weldon presented Ashley with a certificate and a key to the

city.

In a recent television interview with WVTM 13 News, Ashley simply stated “God created me to be who I am. Not a disease with Down syndrome.” This amazing young woman was also named one of six entrepreneurs who are inspiring the world. She is clearly living out the goal of the Ashley DeRamus Foundation, “Touching Lives and Giving Hope.” {eo}