



GILES

Giles blazes trails in news and entertainment

By **EMILY ANDERSON**
Special to the Press

Henri Giles is the type of person you could sit and talk to for a long time and not realize all her accomplishments. Warm and friendly, she conveys a feeling of acceptance and humility. You have to look elsewhere to find just what she has achieved as a writer and producer.

Currently a lecturer for the department of communications at the University of Tennessee at Martin, Henri Giles's list of projects is long and varied. It includes writing, directing and producing the Emmy-winning documentary "Reflect, Reclaim, Rejoice: Preserving the Gift of Black Sacred," as well as projects for OWN: the Oprah Winfrey Network, CBS News, The Hallmark Channel, CMT/MTV, The Food Network, and many others. Long-time viewers of Oprah may remember the famous Oprah and Gay-

le road trip segment that she worked on. She has co-authored a book with Rev. Joseph E. Lowery entitled "Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land." Another award winner was the documentary she produced for CMT and MTV, "Waiting in the Wings: African Americans in Country Music." But in talking with her, she will probably modestly suggest you check the webpage of the communications department rather than tell you about these things.

As you look at her list of credits, you will see that she has enjoyed many successes in her field. And in that capacity, she has been somewhat of a trailblazer because there has been a lack of diversity in the area of writing and producing in news and entertainment.

"It isn't that there is a lack of talent or stories to tell. What is missing is access." She is hopeful that recent successful mov-

ies like "Hidden Figures" will change this. "It isn't that there weren't plenty of great people that I worked with. It is just that when you walk into a job and look around, you don't see anyone like yourself."

Giles moved back to Martin in 2015 to teach at her alma mater. She currently teaches media writing, writing for broadcast media, and film appreciation. She is no stranger to West Tennessee, having grown up in the tiny town of Stanton in Haywood County. When asked about her influences she replied, "The first to come to mind, of course, is my mother, but being one of six girls, there was no lack of strong women in my family." Her role models in her career include Oprah and Ava DuVernay, best known for directing the movie "Selma."

Currently, Giles plans to continue doing freelance work as well as her teaching duties at UTM.



*A little sassy
A little sweet
All up to you!*



Be your own kind of beautiful
The Whispering Tree

309 University St., Martin
731-588-5704



The Whispering Tree