

December 21, 2025

Salle Ann Robinson

Yesterday's post about Pat Conroy leads naturally to today's featured island resident, Sallie Ann Robinson. If there is one person that is the face of Daufuskie, It's Sallie Ann. Known to just about every island resident, she has a million watt smile and is the most positive, upbeat person you could ever hope to meet. She is also probably the best known island resident, featured in TV appearances and a number of publications, including O magazine. An accomplished author and chef, she is a tireless advocate for Daufuskie Island and preservation of its history.

Sallie is a sixth generation Gullah resident of Daufuskie. She was in sixth grade when Pat Conroy taught at the Mary Fields school (she is Ethel in Conroy's novel, *The Water is Wide*), and he recognized her intelligence, curiosity, and work ethic and encouraged her mother to find a more traditional and robust education off of the island. She spent the next year in Savannah taking classes at Bartlett Middle School, then returned to South Carolina , graduating from Bluffton's H.E. McCracken High School in 1975.

After living and working on Hilton Head Island, Robinson moved to Philadelphia, living with her great aunt. She found the opportunity to train as an LPN while living there. Eventually she returned to South Carolina and was working as a home health care nurse on Hilton Head Island when a client encouraged her to collect and write down the Gullah recipes from her childhood.

Her work often involved long, overnight hours, but she found time not just to write down the recipes but also to document the people, places and emotions behind them. It was a needed shift from what she was seeing in other books and media about Gullah food, often written by outside sources.

She published *Gullah Home Cooking the Daufuskie Way* in 2003, followed by *Cooking the Gullah Way, Morning, Noon and Night* in 2007. Her third cookbook, *Sallie Ann Robinson's Kitchen: Food and Family Lore from the Lowcountry*, was published in 2019. She is also the co-author, with Jenny Hersch, of *Daufuskie Island*, a book about island history.

To keep not only the Gullah past alive but the present viable, she established the Daufuskie Island Gullah Heritage Society, a non-profit organization designed to help restore deteriorating Gullah homes and cemeteries. She personally hosts tours of the island and uses a percentage of those sales for ongoing restoration. She worked with other native islanders during the late 1980s to launch Daufuskie

Island Day, which is observed on the fourth Saturday in June. The 49th annual celebration was held in 2025.

