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FAYETTE COUNTY'S HALLOWEEN QUEEN MAKES SEASON SPOOKY

Uniontown, PA – Jacquelyn “Jackie” Loveall was just 12 years old when she discovered her passion for spooky things.

Born and raised in Fayette County, Loveall spent her first few autumns building haunted houses in her mother’s Evans Manor basement in Uniontown and inviting neighborhood kids over for a scare or two.

Loveall, now 55, recently celebrated her 34th anniversary at her day job. As a registered nurse with Mon Health Medical Center, she specializes in labor and delivery and has served as a nursing educator for the last 12 years.

“I love what I do, but Halloween is my passion. I was a ‘hauntertainer’ long before I was a nurse,” she said. “Ever since I was a little kid, I’ve always loved scary movies, and I used to go to all the haunted houses the old Scream in the Dark organization hosted all over Uniontown. It made me want to act, and do makeup and costumes and all those spooky things myself.”

It wasn’t long before her homemade haunts outgrew her mother’s basement – then her entire home.

“It just kept getting bigger and bigger so we eventually went out and bought an acre of land to accommodate the hundreds of people that started coming every year,” she said. “Eventually we decided to open for more than just one night, so I bought a farm on Rolling Hills Estate Road and the rest is history.”

Today, Loveall is affectionately known in the haunt community as “Spookygirl” and locally as Fayette County’s “Halloween Queen.” She can now add another title to her name, as she has been selected as the October “Face” in the Fayette County Public Relations Initiative’s “Faces & Places” series.

Loveall, along with her husband, David Wymard, 57; and daughters, Jessica Wymard, 28, and Kelsi Wymard, 25, are now celebrating their 16th year operating Haunted Hills Estate Scream Park at the family farm.

“It took me a long time to find the right location, but the farm is totally creepy, very scary, and truly is haunted. It has a real history,” Loveall said. “Sometimes I feel like I live at a resort. I’m just missing the beach.”

Haunted Hills Estate Scream Park features three unique attractions: The Deadwoods Challenge Trail, The House, and The Imperium. The three combined turn Loveall's home into a 2-hour mega-haunt that terrifies people from across the country every fall.

This year, the scares are bigger and better than ever before, as Haunted Hills has teamed up with Hollywood professionals, expanded their animatronic collection, and added a carnival midway (complete with creepy clowns and fire breathers) to entertain guests in between attractions.

"Our haunt is professional; it's interactive; it's not just people jumping out at you. What we have here is real entertainment, and we're proudly known as, 'The Haunted House That's Worth It.'"

Loveall's hard work and dedication has helped put Fayette County on the map, as the scream park regularly wins local, state and national awards. Last year, ScareFactor, one of the nation's top authorities on all things horror, named Haunted Hills Estate the "No. 1 Haunt in Western Pennsylvania."

"ScareFactor is a big deal nationwide, so for them to even come to our haunt to assess it speaks volumes about what we have to offer here. To me, that is amazing," she said. "It's just a huge 'wow,' but more important than all these reviews is that my guests keep telling me it's the best haunt they've ever been to. If they've made a memory here, I've met my goal."

Loveall said she knows her success has been possible because of the "dead-icated" team she has behind her. Her daughter, Jessica, serves as operational director, while other haunt members include Aidan Finnegan, director of marketing; Fayette County business owner Emily Bloom of Bloomin Hair; Laurel Highlands High School student Ashley Miner, makeup artist; longtime actors Az Ramey and Frank Machnik; attraction managers Marina Hayes, Rebecca Miller and Diana Vines; and Loveall's sister, Robin Yauger, owner of Creepy Creator Halloween.

"I have some truly amazing people working for me. Every year, we're adding more things. We're already planning for next year," Loveall said. "I hope Fayette County really does recognize that we're bringing people in from all over the country. We've come a really long way as a team, and it's just amazing."

Loveall's passion for horror doesn't end October 31. In addition to hosting Happy Horror Days in December and a Valentine's Day haunt in February, she spends every season in Spookygirl mode.

"Everywhere I go, I see a building and think, 'Oh, that would be a great haunted house,' or 'I'll meet an entertaining waitress at a restaurant and tell her to come work for us,'" she said. "Every day is Halloween in my world. It doesn't matter if it's January, March or July. I started off as a kid and now I can say at 55 that I'm extremely satisfied that I finally got what I wanted and reached my goal."

While other haunts often rely on major cities to find success, Loveall said she always felt it was her duty to offer her hometown "something more."

"We need stuff here in Fayette County. People want things to do, especially with the country's drug epidemic and other issues. They want something fun and exciting," she said. "My guests love what they see. They love to be scared and laugh. It's what they're here for."

Loveall's success makes her feel like "a famous painter" drawing crowds from all over to "see what we painted," or an author penning the chapters of a scary story - something she wouldn't trade for the world.

“I look back at chapter one, chapter two, and I feel like I’ve finally reached the final chapter. All I can say is, ‘Wow,’ she said. “My purpose was always to entertain people, and those people keep coming back year after year. It’s just reassurance that I’m doing something right. I’m doing the right thing.”

Haunted Hills Estate Scream Park is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through Nov. 9. For more information about the haunted attraction or the farm’s history in Fayette County, visit www.hauntedhillsestate.com.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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