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Shoptalk
By Tim Nudd

Lift Up Your Voices and Sing

For charity, Joan Baker tells the secrets of voiceover success

Anyone who's watched a movie trailer knows **Don LaFontaine**. Who? Don LaFontaine, that's who—the narrator of more than 4,000 coming attractions and the man considered the most successful voiceover artist ever. The story of how he and 18 other "voices" got started in the business is told in *Secrets of Voice-Over Success: Top Voice-Over Actors Reveal How They Did It*, by **Joan Baker**, herself a voiceover artist and coach who counted the late **Johnnie Cochran** as a client.

Baker started out wanting to be an actress but found that voiceover work was less constraining. "The one thing that had been plaguing me as an actress," she writes, was "being biracial. [Doing voiceovers, it] never came up." The book has a forward by **David Hyde Pierce**, and proceeds will go to the Alzheimer's Association. "The moti-

vation for writing this book was my father [**James Baker**], who had Alzheimer's for 12 years before he died in September 2003," Baker tells Shoptalk. "I wanted to do something to honor my father, but I didn't know what that would be. When he was going through the disease, I was afraid to read anything about it, because I couldn't bear to know what he was going through."

Two months after her father died, Baker took a course on self-expression and leadership at Landmark Education in New York. The assignment was to do a project that would impact communities in one's life. Baker naturally chose the voiceover book project. "I got an A in the class," she says.



SPEAKING UP: Baker with David Hyde Pierce