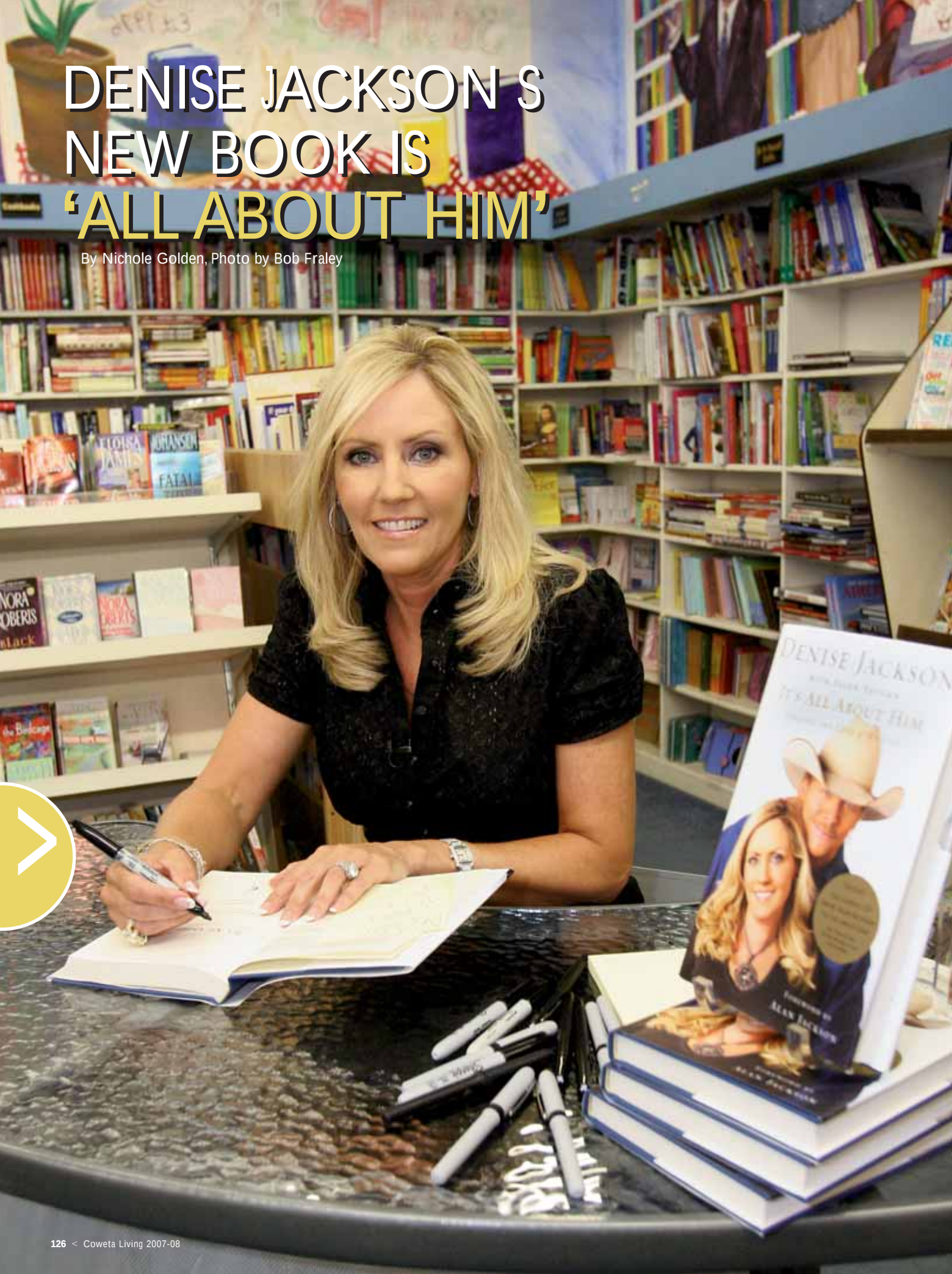
DENISE JACKSON'S NEW BOOK IS 'ALL ABOUT HIM'

By Nichole Golden, Photo by Bob Fraley



"It's All About Him" is a great story about young love, finding fame, laughter, tears and struggle. And the best part is that the main character comes out stronger in the end because of a newfound love.

It's the story of Newnan native Denise Jackson, wife of country music star Alan Jackson. "It's All About Him" (Thomas Nelson, $24.99) chronicles the couple's success, their separation in 1998 and reconciliation later that year.

The hometown story begins in Newnan, where Denise and Alan Jackson met as teenagers and were married in December 1979. After finishing college, Denise taught at Atkinson Elementary School and then became a flight attendant.

It was a conversation Denise had with singer Glen Campbell in the airport one day that prompted the couple to move to Nashville. After years of hard work and sacrifice, a country music star was born.

But this book is truly Denise Jackson's story about being a wife and mother under the glare of celebrity. The book's co-author, Ellen Vaughn, spent a total of two weeks in an apartment on the Jacksons' property in Tennessee for intensive writing sessions with Denise.

Denise began thinking about writing a book after she and Alan renewed their wedding vows. "Over the years it would come and go," she

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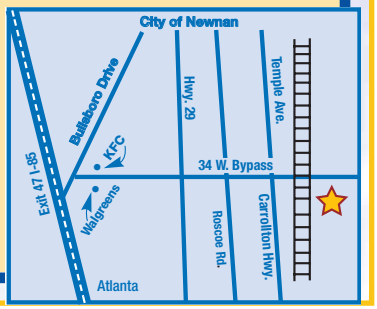

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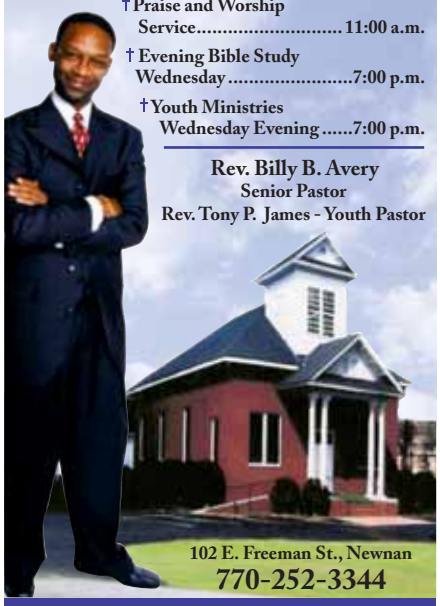

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"A MINISTRY WITH A PASSION FOR PEOPLE"

said about the idea. The thought would become lost in the "day to day stuff," she said, but in 2005 Denise began thinking about the book constantly. She prayed God would bring the right people to her if she was supposed to share the story.

About five months later, Denise received a call from her former Sunday School teacher, Robert Wolgemuth. He and wife Bobbie had prayed many times with Denise during the Jacksons' separation and attended their wedding vow renewal. After losing touch with the family for a few years, Wolgemuth had seen the family on a Christmas television special and called to suggest Denise write a book.

Wolgemuth, who had been in the publishing industry, guided Denise through the process and connected her with Ellen Vaughn, which Jackson said was a "pretty specific" answer to her prayer. Denise had nine chapters outlined, and Vaughn's "wonderfully brilliant" style helped expand that to 25 chapters.

Alan Jackson penned the book's forward, and his pride is evident. "When I first read it, I could not stop turning the pages even though I know how the story ends! Exhausted from tears and laughter, inspired by Denise's strength and ability, I sat down and wrote a song of the same title," Jackson said.

The song "It's All About Him" is included on a CD with the hardcover book.

Denise discussed the book with their three daughters prior to its release since the girls have vague or no memories at all of their parents' separation. Mattie, Ali and Dani are now 17, 14 and 10.

Mattie read the book and when finished told her mother how proud she was. "Mattie was so wonderful and sweet," said Denise.

Although Denise was raised knowing about God and attending church almost every Sunday, it wasn't until Alan left that she began a passionate relationship with God.

In the book, Denise does discuss Alan's infidelity and how the spotlight of fame "compounded and intensified" those feelings of embarrassment.

"We all make mistakes," said Denise. Her ability to forgive came from praying and knowing that "God's grace is big enough."

Along with Bible study and daily prayer, Jackson turned to Stormie Omartian's "Power of a Praying Wife." She said it was her "bible within my Bible" during the tough times.

The more she prayed for Alan, the more compassion she had for him and his struggles. "It was allowing me to become a better wife and better mother," she said about her change of heart. The once unconfident person with a teenage-sized faith became a woman with strength and resolve.

What marriage advice would she give? "God has to be part of that union," she said. No one human being is designed to be someone else's "all in all."

Jackson said it's nice to have a love affair she can actually tell her husband about.

"His Spirit will help us become the spouse we need to be," she says.

Jackson returned home to Newnan for a book signing at Scott's Bookstore in July, and a portion of the book sales went to Angel's House, a home for foster children in Newnan that the Jacksons helped build and for which they suggested the name. CL

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