

dian, shop-a-holic and ex-talk-show host. An event coordinator discovered her talent as an impersonator during her stand-up routine at a nightclub and booked her at a trade show as Joan Rivers.

This door-opening experience has shaped the course of Hanson's life. She quit her day job and studied Rivers' every detail in order to perfect her impersonation.

Hanson has always dreamed of living in the spotlight. As a child, she hosted talent shows in her garage for the neighborhood children. She majored in theater, but decided to take a stable career as a real estate agent in the property management field before discovering financial success as a loan officer.

"In the depths of my tummy, I felt like I wasn't doing what I wanted with my life," said Hanson. After two years of studying with a voice coach, Hanson decided to leave her secure but unsatisfying job for the entertainment industry. She performed with *The Orange County Crazies* improvisational group at comedy clubs and starred in her own variety show, which featured her talent as a voice impersonator, before becoming a full-time Rivers clone.

"I'm probably the best Joan Rivers impersonator, but it's a team effort," said Hanson. "I have no way to keep myself organized without Maureen and Jack (Hanson's husband). There's no way, it would be impossible without their help. I would really say that's the answer to my success. I'm the one who gets the applause and takes the bows, but I would not be able to do it without Jack and Maureen, their encouragement keeps me focused and I thank God for bringing them to me."

At local shows, both Dobson and Jack Hanson make the show run smoothly. Dobson is usually helping Hanson rehearse and calm her nerves while talking to the clients and finalizing last minute details. "Every day is an adventure, something new; full of surprises," Dobson said. Who would have thought I would be working with a Joan Rivers impersonator? In the past I was planning my children's birthdays and now I plan large corporate events and I'm having a great time."

Nick D'Egidio, a Frank Sinatra impersonator, has been booked through Hanson Productions and often works with Hanson at events. "She (Hanson) is the best. I love her comedic abilities," D'Egidio said. "She's actually better than Joan Rivers. Joan Rivers has bad comedy timing. Every show I do with Dee Dee is better than the last. I love working with Dee Dee, she's the best anytime, anywhere."

Holly Vest also works with Hanson as a Tina Turner impersonator. "She (Hanson) is my favorite person to work for and to work with," Vest said. She's at the top of her game at all times. She wants to make sure that her clients and performers are happy."

Hanson averages about 15 events each month that take her to destinations across the country. When she travels outside of Southern California, the client takes care of her travel expenses and hotel fees.

"Monday I was in Palm Springs. Tuesday it was San Diego. Wednesday I did a show at Rancho Mirage. I was in Canada Thursday and Friday. Then I was in bed, since I was pretty exhausted," commented Hanson. "I need a facial!"

Her impersonation of Rivers has also brought her work in



photos courtesy of DEE DEE HANSON



Above: The real Joan Rivers poses as Cher and Dee Dee Hanson plays Joan.

Left: Hanson played a Joan Rivers impersonator on the *Cybil* television show starring Cybil Shepard.