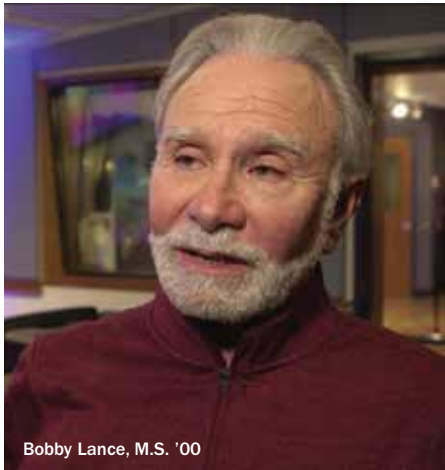


## Bobby Lance's, M.S. '00 Lyrics for Aretha Franklin

# *This is the House that Jack Built, Y'all, Remember this House*



Bobby Lance, M.S. '00



The year is 1968 and these are the opening lines to “The House that Jack Built,” co-written by Mercy alumnus Bobby Lance, M.S. '00 and performed by the late, great “Queen of Soul” herself, Aretha Franklin. The song would rise to #6 on the Billboard Top 100 and #2 on the U.S. Billboard R&B charts.

Lance visited the Mercy College music production studios in December 2021, nearly 22 years after getting his master’s degree to become a music teacher. He went on to teach for 22 years, retiring from the Greenburgh Central School District, Greenburgh, New York, in 2018.

“I felt a peace about Mercy,” he says. What I felt about Mercy was a home away from home. I felt very free here.”

Lance was born in Brooklyn; both parents had passed away by the time

he was a teen. He says school didn’t mean much to him as a child, but “music came naturally to me. I loved the blues back then, and said to my sister, who wrote poetry, ‘Let’s try to write some music.’”

Lance took a song they wrote into a room with Jerry Wexler, then Vice President of Atlantic Records. A connection to Wexler had gotten him the meeting; he’d sat for four hours in reception waiting for that serendipitous meeting to happen. When Lance was finally invited inside, he says Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding and a host of other big names were there in the room. “I couldn’t believe it. Here were all my idols. I walked in with my little red hat and my box guitar and my papers all over the place. The first song I played was ‘The House that Jack Built.’ Jerry looks at me, jumps up, curses and said, ‘This is perfect for Aretha.’ The rest, as they say, is music history.”

He would later write and release his first solo album “First Peace” in 1971, but eventually left the industry. He sought a way to fold his love for music into a teaching career—sharing that magic with children. As it turned out Mercy became the school to turn that dream into a reality. His first teaching position was as a music instructor in the Bronx, with “kids who didn’t have what other kids have, and they really appreciated the music. We just had fun.” His unconventional and whimsical style captivated his students and made his classroom a safe haven for many students throughout the years.

Lance credits his alma mater with unlocking his potential as a second career educator. His time at Mercy, Lance says, was truly special. “My first semester at Mercy, I went home and said to my wife I can’t believe that I have a chance to be creative. It was really exciting for me. I couldn’t

**“What I felt about Mercy was a home away from home. I felt very free here.”**

wait to go to class. I worked my butt off, and I finished my masters in a year.” Returning to campus, he was “blown away” by seeing Mercy’s new music production studios, which have been a home to over 300 students and alumni who have received or are finishing their undergraduate degrees in Music Production and the Recording Arts. Having worked with some legends over the years, including Eric Clapton, Cissy Houston, and hall of fame producer Richard Perry, he is quick to marvel at the opportunities available for students learning the business of music production at Mercy. “It’s incredible to know Mercy has this available as a major. It’s just one other thing I now love about Mercy.”



To hear more from Bobby, follow this QR code.



Bobby Lance, M.S. '00



(l to r) Bobby Lance, M.S. '00, Sam Stauff '09, studio manager and adjunct associate professor, Music Production and Recording Arts and Bobby's son Mitch Lance

