

## **Koko Taylor - Blues Stories - 2001 Miss. Valley Blues Festival**

RIP Koko Taylor - born Cora Anna Walton, 9/28/28, Memphis, TN – d. 6/3/09, Chicago, IL

Just before this photo was taken at the 2001 Mississippi Valle Blues Festival, in Davenport, IA, I enjoyed having fried-chicken dinner with KoKo and family in the backstage food/tent area, and Koko greeted and treated everyone as if she was their loving "auntie." Over dinner, as MC/facilitator, I explained to now 'Auntie Koko' the details regarding the ceremony for her receiving the RiverRoad Lifetime Achievement Award from the Miss. Valley Blues Soc. and Key to the City of Davenport, IA from the Mayor that would precede her set of music. She was most honored and humbled by the awards, and the ceremonies. I told her that she could speak to the audience, or not, after the ceremony, whatever she'd like to do/say was fine with me and all. After dinner and chat, when the time for the award ceremony was announced, we went to the edge of the bandshell stage and we stood together for a few seconds waiting to be called on stage. Just before we were to step out on stage 'Auntie Koko' turned to me and said very softly, "Hawkeye, I'm really nervous. Would you please hold my hand?" I smiled, took her hand, and walked her out to center stage to the huge applause and cheers of the waiting audience. 'Auntie Koko' smiled a big beautiful smile, 'relaxed,' she let go of my hand, and she basked in the much deserved attention and appreciation being shown her. 'Auntie Koko' was definitely the "real deal" and justifiably known as the "Queen of the Blues."

"Friday evening closed with a stellar performance by the reigning "Queen of the Blues," Ms. Koko Taylor. Koko was the recipient of the RiverRoad Lifetime Achievement Award from the Mississippi Valley Blues Society for 2001. The presentation of the award for her 40+ years of entertaining blues audiences across the globe included a plaque, a commemorative poem written by blues poet laureate, Dr. Sterling Plumpp and the Key to the City of Davenport from Mayor Phillip C. Yerington. After the ceremony ended, Koko put on a fabulous show filled with youthful energy and a mix of high energy and slow burning blues. Her set closed with an extended version of her classic hit, Willie Dixon's "Wang Dang Doodle," leaving everyone looking forward to the next two days."

<http://www.mnblues.com/review/2001/mvbf2001-dp.html>



**with Koko Taylor**