

## Q&amp;A: BARI-ELLEN ROSS

Missed opportunity  
flavors new 'Soup'By Sadie Jo Smokey  
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

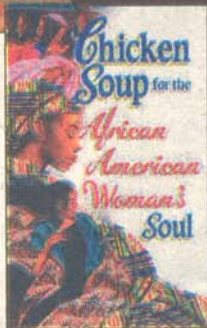
The first time Bari-Ellen Ross met her future mother-in-law, Ross was emotionally unprepared for what she saw. Miss Gladys, 89, had a small, frail body, couldn't speak and wore a pink bow in her hair. Ross didn't get to know her future mother-in-law in the traditional sense. Miss Gladys died a few weeks before the wedding.

Ross, a Litchfield Park author, speaker and consultant, wrote about what she learned about her mother-in-law after her death. The story is included in *Chicken Soup for the African American Woman's Soul*. It's just one of 75 inspiring, uplifting and funny stories in the book, written by African-American women, men and Caucasian women. There are more than 30 titles in the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, published in 31 languages.

A series of book signings and performances are slated for Dec. 8-10 at Ross's Hooked and Cooked restaurant and South Mountain Community College, both in Phoenix.

JOHN SEVERSON/  
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Bari-Ellen Ross will celebrate her contribution to the *Chicken Soup* series during events beginning Dec. 8.



We interviewed Ross about the latest in the *Chicken Soup* series.

**Question:** Why did you write a piece about your mother-in-law?

**Answer:** I wrote that piece as a birthday gift to my husband, Charlie. I wanted to give my husband

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## FROM THE COVER E4 WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2006 THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

## Valley author's story about family is 1 ingredient in 'Soup'

## 'CHICKEN SOUP'

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something deep, something lasting. He was just coming out of the deep grief. It was my gift to him.

**Q:** Why include it in a *Chicken Soup* book?

**A:** I remember when the series first came out in the 1980s. I was living in New York, and everyone was reading them. The comments were that the stories were really sappy. I found them uplifting. Some stories made me teary. Some made me laugh. They were snippets of people's lives. I think the stories will appeal to anyone who has a heart.

**Q:** How did your story get into the book?

**A:** A nephew of mine saw a call for stories online. He knows I love to write. It's one of my passions. I thought about some of my old stories. But I had just written this story, so I sent it in.

**Q:** Why do you think your story made it into the publication?

**A:** They had over 3,800 submissions. Lots of people wrote about their moms, their dads or their girlfriends. Their own personal struggle with kids, men or drugs. A lot about overcoming. I wrote a story about a missed opportunity. Someone I didn't know. I think that's one of the reasons it made it. The story is a unique characterization.

**Q:** What other stories in the book impressed you?

**A:** There are a couple of stories by men who wrote about the influence of women in their lives. There's a story this Caucasian woman wrote about signing up (African-American) women to vote in the 1950s and 1960s. I think

that's why they call these books 'soup.' You take so many different ingredients and flavors, and what do you get? Soup.

**Q:** What does your husband and his family think of your story?

**A:** He loves it. A couple of his sisters are coming from Virginia for the signing. They've been very supportive.

**Q:** You're hosting events at your restaurant. How many authors are you expecting?

**A:** We have two events at the restaurant, a reception and a lunch buffet. I think 30 of the 70 authors are coming to read and perform their stories that weekend.

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## 'Soup' events

The *Chicken Soup for the African American Woman's Soul* national book tour arrives in Phoenix on Dec. 8. Reservations are required for all three events, 1-877-255-4218. The book, \$14.95, is available at Ross's Hooked & Cooked, bookstores and online.

■ **VIP Reception**, 6-10 p.m.

Dec. 8, Ross's Hooked & Cooked, 1301 E. Broadway Road, Phoenix. Event includes seafood soul buffet, book signings by contributing authors, vendors and live music. \$30.

■ **Literary Experience and Book Signing**, 4-8:30 p.m. Dec. 9, South Mountain Community College Performing Arts Center, 7050 S. 24th St., Phoenix. Event includes readings and performances, networking with contributing authors, book signings, vendors and new-author introductions. Free.

■ **Book Signing and Buffet Luncheon**, noon-5 p.m. Dec. 10, Ross's Hooked & Cooked. Event celebrates the contributing authors; features book signings, vendors and live jazz. Free. Buffet, \$14.