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Frutelnd Jackson was born into a musical and church-going family on June 9, 1953, in Sunflower County, Mississippi, the fourth of six children born to John Andrew Chandler and Ida B. Collins. Although his parents moved the family to Chicago when he was a baby, they frequently traveled back and forth to Mississippi, where both grandparents lived and were active in the church.

Frutelnd's early exposure to church singing and growing up in a household where blues music was the norm laid the foundation for what would become his life's work. He soon fell under a spell of the musical influences of his favorite Uncle, Woodrow "Dick" Chandler, who was a locally known guitar and piano player in Inverness, Mississippi. When he was 12 years old, Uncle Woodrow gave Frutelnd his first guitar. He extended his guitar training by learning folk sounds and listening to the distinctive Motown rhythms.

Frutelnd's formal musical training began in high school, where he played the bugle and trombone and learned to read music. He later attended Columbia College as a performing art major and Roosevelt University in Chicago, where he refined his vocals. The years after college were spent pursuing other professional interests. He relocated to Mississippi and built a thriving wholesale seafood company, but Hurricane Elena destroyed the business. Stranded on the Gulf Coast with a family to support, he did whatever he needed to survive, always comforted at the end of the day by listening to the blues from his childhood. He had grown up hearing the blues as a young boy but did not become a serious listener until later.

For the first time in his life, Frutelnd figured out where he was supposed to be and what he was supposed to be doing. He had found his pulpit to champion the downtrodden. In 1991, he established the "All About the Blues Series, Blues in the Schools" program in conjunction with the Blues Foundation in Memphis, Tennessee. He has introduced the blues into classrooms across the country, reaching well over 1 million students. "Blues in the Schools" workshops and artist residencies have proven to be an excellent tool for students from all walks of life, including gifted students, the physically and emotionally challenged, and inner-city-high-risk students.

Frutelnd Jackson is a five-time Blues Music Award nominee on the Electro-Fi record label and the Blues Foundation's "Keeping the Blues Alive" Award in Education.

