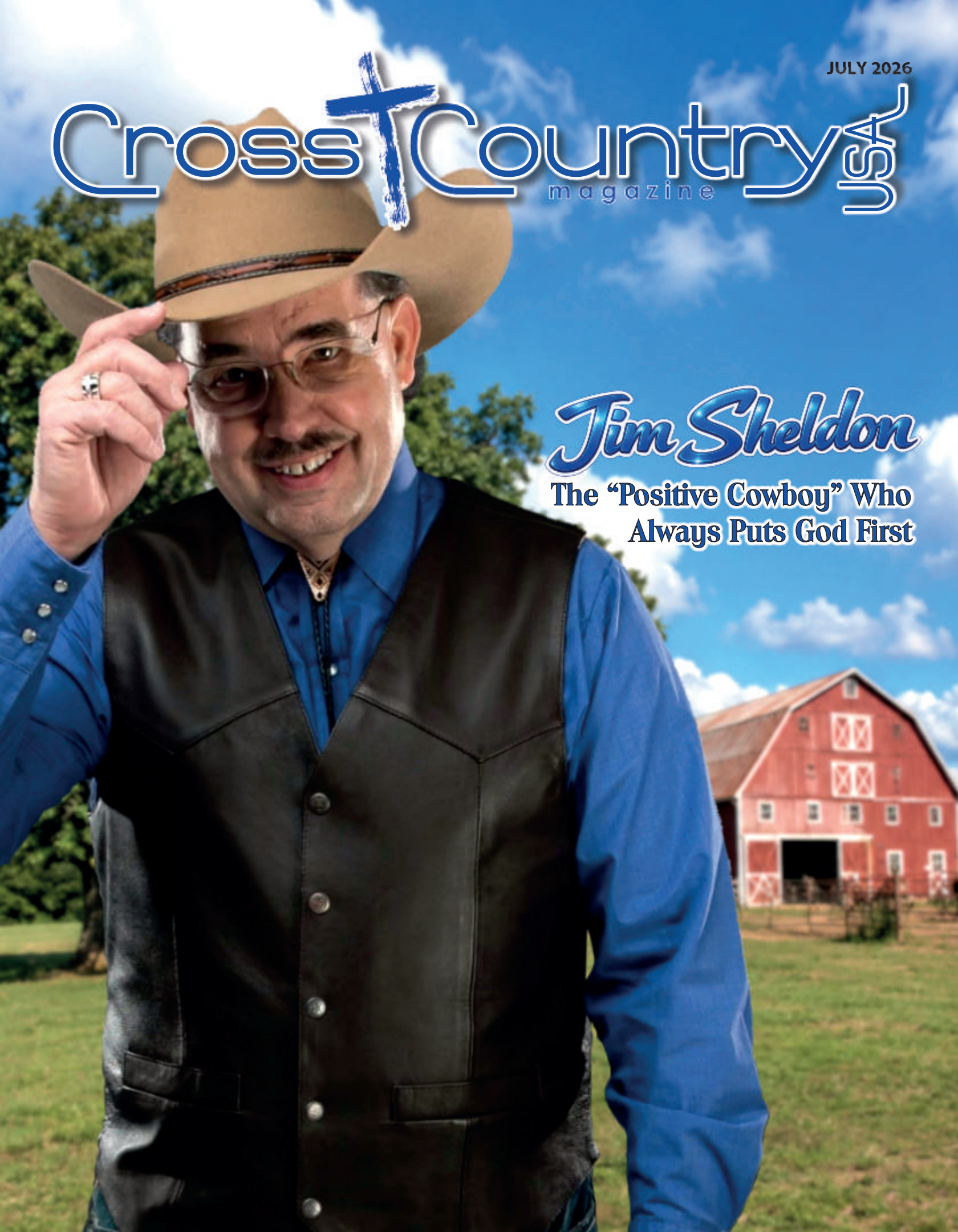


JULY 2026

CrossCountry^g magazine

Jim Sheldon

The "Positive Cowboy" Who
Always Puts God First



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JULY 2026

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BUSINESS OPERATIONS / C.O.O.

Randall Wilds

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Codi Lanier

MANAGING EDITOR

Robin Tanner

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

John Lanier

FEATURE EDITORS

Teresa Schweinsberg
Malik Riaz
Jackson McKee
Cory Parker

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

John Lanier

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Christine Scott • Gatlin Dean

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From the Editor

Happy 250th Birthday America!!

This month, we celebrate 250 years of freedom. Fireworks will light up the sky all over the USA, families and friends will gather for cookouts, parades, and fun patriotic festivities.

This July carries a sense of celebration mixed with reflection, as our nation marks 250 years of independence. Anniversaries like this remind us not only of where we've been, but who we want to become.

From the beginning, America has been a story of faith. Our founders prayed for guidance, families crossing oceans prayed for safety and soldiers prayed for courage for generations. America has never been perfect, but it has always been blessed because of God's grace. As we honor this historic milestone, I am reminded our nation's story is really a testimony of God's protection and purpose. Even in seasons of division and uncertainty, His blessings have carried us forward. As we celebrate America 250, may we remember that true freedom is a gift from God.

But this year, this momentous Independence Day feels even more meaningful. Two hundred and fifty years of freedom is no small gift. It's a blessing built on sacrifice, courage, and the hand of God who has watched over this land from its beginning. When I think about our nation's journey, the triumphs, the trials, I can't help but see how faithfully God has guided us.

Thank God for the freedoms we enjoy. Thank Him for the men and women who protect them. Thank God for the beauty of this land, from sea to shining sea. Thank Him for the promise that, no matter what tomorrow holds, grace is still sufficient, and His love still endures. May this July fill your heart with pride and a renewed faith in the God who has blessed America time and time again.

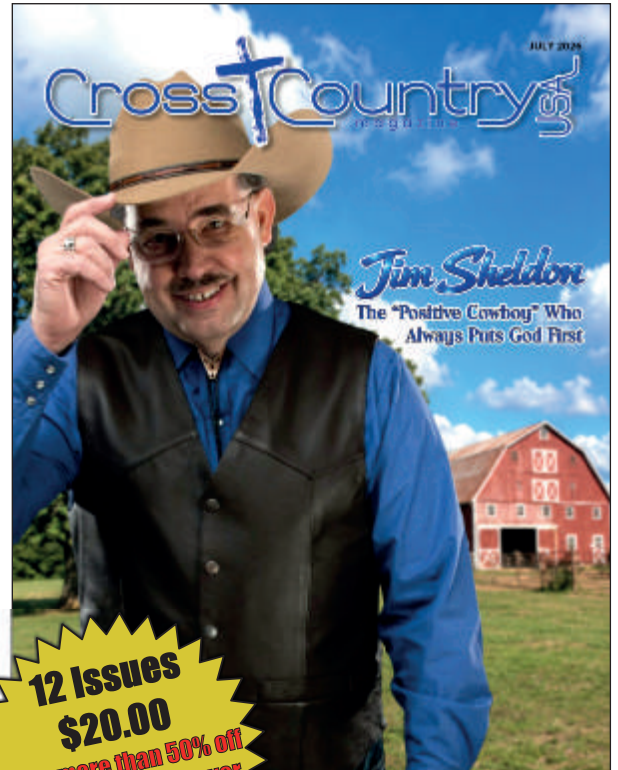
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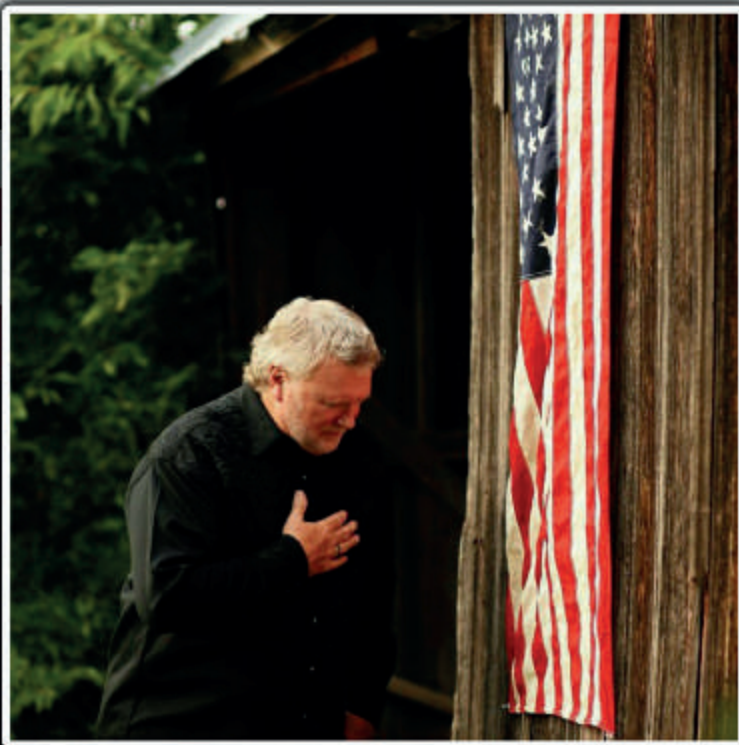
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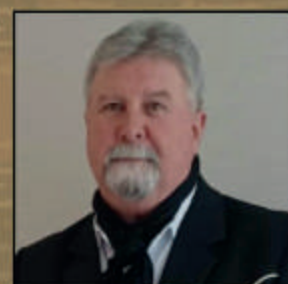
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LIAM TYSINGER

By Robin Tanner

Liam Tysinger is a rising Country and Christian country artist from Asheboro, North Carolina, whose music reflects a deep respect for traditional Country roots and the values of faith, family, and freedom.

Liam draws inspiration from legendary artists. “I love traditional Country music, like George Strait, Merle Haggard, Keith Whitley, Tracy Lawrence, Vince Gill, Randy Travis and modern traditionalists like Zach Top.”

At seventeen years old, Liam is making a name for himself with his traditional sound and a positive approach to his music. He brings a classic Country sound to a new generation of listeners.

Liam's musical journey began early. He started playing piano at just five years old, developing a love for music that quickly became a central part of his life. By the age of eleven, he began learning guitar and mandolin while also discovering his voice as a singer. Much of his early musical experience came through church and singing with family, where his passion for meaningful music first took shape. He has been performing ever since, touching lives along the way.

In 2021, Liam began performing publicly at showcases and local events, building a reputation for his natural stage presence and authentic storyteller style. This North Carolina native shares his excitement working in the recording studios on his debut album. “I recorded my first song at the historic Wishbone Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, in December of 2025. Then in January of this year, I laid down scratch vocals at Starstruck Entertainment Studios in Nashville Tennessee.”

Liam's latest single, *How Much Grace*, is currently in the Cross Country Hot 100 chart. From his upcoming new album on Rhythm Road Records, two new singles will be released in the coming months: *Turn Another Stone* and *Country Sunday*. His music is available on all streaming platforms.

Liam shares how his song has ministered to people. “The first time I played *How Much Grace* publicly, a young lady



went to the altar and made a commitment to follow Jesus.” This is what Liam Tysinger is all about - making an impact with his music. “I want to have a music career where I create clean, positive Country music alongside Christian songs that lead others to Christ and help them grow deeper in their faith.”

And what can audiences expect during a live concert? “Depending on the setting, I usually play some classic Country songs, alongside some Gospel, Worship and maybe a little Bluegrass. I love it when a crowd gets involved, sings along, and reacts to what I am presenting. I'm not trying to be anyone but the man God made me to be.”

As a dedicated guitarist and vocalist with a distinctive sound, he connects with audiences through songs that reflect real life, strong values, and heartfelt country storytelling, and faith-driven Country music with a message of hope.

Follow Liam on his social media at LiamTysingerMusic.com.



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Remembering...

Staff, Cross Country USA

KYLE THOMAS BUSCH • TRENT BARRY CLUTTS



Kyle Thomas Busch
May 2, 1985 – May 21, 2026

Kyle Thomas Busch was born on May 2, 1985, in Las Vegas, Nevada, a city built on speed, spectacle, and the thrill of possibility. Long before he became one of the most dominant drivers in NASCAR history, he was a six-year-old boy perched in a go-kart, steering the wheel while his father worked the gas pedal. Racing wasn't something he discovered, it was something woven into him.

His father, Tom, was a mechanic and stock-car racer. His older brother, Kurt, was already carving out a path in NASCAR. Kyle grew up in garages, under hoods, and in the hum of engines. At just ten years old, he was serving as crew chief on Kurt's dwarf-car team, learning the mechanics of racing from the inside out. Those early years gave him not only skill, but a fierce, almost instinctive understanding of what made a car - and a driver - fast.

By his early teens, Kyle was racing and winning in Legends cars around Las Vegas. At sixteen, he made his NASCAR debut in the Craftsman Truck Series, and from that moment forward, he began rewriting the record books with a relentlessness that would define his career. He became the youngest driver ever to win both a pole and a race at the Cup level. He swept both poles and both races in a single Cup/Xfinity weekend - the first to ever do it. He led more laps in the Daytona 500 than any driver who never won the race.

And then came the records that seemed almost unreal: 234 combined victories across NASCAR's top three divisions - more than any driver in history. Two NASCAR Cup Series championships, in 2015 and 2019. A NASCAR Nationwide Series championship in 2009. Sixty-three Cup wins, ranking him ninth all-time.

Kyle Busch didn't just win races. He redefined what dominance looked like.

But his story was never just about trophies. It was also about the fire that made him one of the most polarizing - and ultimately beloved - figures in the sport. His rivalry with Dale Earnhardt Jr. in the late 2000s, especially the infamous 2008 Richmond incident, made him the driver fans loved to hate. Kyle leaned into the villain role with a grin, a swagger, and a refusal to apologize for wanting to win.

Yet over time, something remarkable happened. Fans who once booed him began to admire him - not because he softened, but because he never did. His unapologetic drive, his raw talent, and his willingness to be exactly who he was won them over. He became, in his own way, one of NASCAR's most authentic voices.

In 2010, Kyle expanded his legacy beyond the driver's seat by launching Kyle Busch Motorsports. In his very first season as an owner, he won the Truck Series owners' championship - another first in NASCAR history. His team became a proving ground for young talent, shaping the next generation of drivers.

His life off the track was just as full. He made memorable appearances with WWE, even briefly holding the WWE 24/7 Championship after pinning R-Truth in 2019. He co-founded Rowdy Energy, blending his competitive spirit with entrepreneurial drive. And through the Kyle Busch Foundation, he worked to support underprivileged children, using his platform to make a tangible difference. After Hurricane Katrina, he donated his 2005 Cup Series winnings to the American Red Cross, a gesture that revealed the heart beneath the helmet.

On May 21, 2026, in Charlotte, North Carolina, Kyle Busch passed away at the age of 41 after being hospitalized with a severe illness. The racing world - drivers, crews, fans, broadcasters, and generations of families who grew up watching him - felt the loss instantly.

In the days that followed, one truth rose above the statistics and the headlines: Kyle Busch lived wide open. He raced with everything he had. He loved fiercely: his family,

his sport, his fans, even his critics. And he left behind a legacy that will echo through NASCAR for decades.

He was a champion, a competitor, a mentor, a father, a husband, a brother, and a son. But above all, he was unmistakably, unapologetically Kyle Busch, a man who chased victory with his whole heart and, in doing so, became one of the defining figures of his era.

His records may one day be broken. His impact never will.



Trent Barry Clutts (Bill Cody)

December 16, 1958 – June 9, 2026

Trent Barry Clutts was born on December 16, 1958, in Huntsville, Alabama, to Rev. William Allen and Helen Ruth Robison Clutts. His childhood unfolded in the gentle rhythm of small Southern towns - first Crab Orchard, Kentucky, where his father pastored, and later Lebanon, Kentucky, the “big city” to a young boy with a growing imagination.

It was in Lebanon that Trent discovered the spark that would shape the rest of his life. Every Sunday, his father recorded his morning sermon to be aired at 1 p.m. on WLBN. Trent always went along to deliver the tapes. One afternoon, while waiting in the lobby, he peered through the studio window and saw Frank Kemp at the control board - headphones on, lights blinking, records spinning. Years later Trent would recall, “I was just standing there watching him push those buttons, and when that red light came on... that was it for me.” A calling had taken root.

Lebanon also gave him something even more precious. During his senior year, a sophomore named Rebecca Wheatley caught his eye in study hall. He nudged his best friend and whispered, “Who is that girl in the peach pants?” A wink across the room started a love story that lasted more than fifty years. Nearly forty-seven of those years were spent as husband and wife - building a home, raising their children, and walking through life side by side. Even after decades of marriage, he was still winking at her.

After graduating from Marion County High School, Trent followed the path that began behind that studio window. His radio career carried him to WVLK in Lexington, WHAS in Louisville, WHOO in Orlando, and KKYX in San Antonio. It was in Texas that he told Rebecca, “We won’t move again unless my dream job at WSM ever comes available.” In April 1994, that dream called, and the Clutts family packed for Nashville.

For the next thirty-two years, Trent became one of the most beloved voices in Country music. As host of WSM’s flagship morning program, *Coffee, Country & Cody*, and as an announcer and host of the Grand Ole Opry, he became a trusted companion to millions. His warmth, humor, and unmistakable voice made him a fixture in homes, cars, and backstage hallways across Music City.

His contributions were recognized throughout the industry. He was inducted into the Country Music Disc Jockey Hall of Fame in 2008, honored with a star on the Music City Walk of Fame in 2024, and - after his passing - inducted into the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame. His credits spanned television, radio, live events, red carpets, and even in-flight programming for United Airlines and Air Force One and Two. Wherever Country music was celebrated, Trent’s voice was never far away.

But the achievements that mattered most to him were never the ones printed on plaques.

Trent was a devoted husband, a proud father, a delighted grandfather, and a faithful friend. He and Rebecca raised three children - Luke, Hannah, and Levi - who were the joy of his life. He was an active member of Orinda Baptist Church, where his faith was not a performance but a steady, lived reality. And if you wanted to see him truly light up, you only had to mention his grandchildren, Lily Ruth and Isaiah. They were his heart’s delight.

On June 9, 2026, surrounded by the family he cherished, Trent Barry Clutts slipped peacefully into the presence of the Lord. He was 67.

In the days that followed, one sentiment echoed again and again from those who knew him best: Trent made people feel seen. He made them feel valued. He made them feel like somebody. In a world hungry for kindness, he offered it freely. In an industry built on spotlight, he shined it on others. And in a life anchored by faith, he reflected Christ not through grand gestures, but through the simple, steady way he loved people.

That is the legacy of Bill Cody - a man whose voice carried across the airwaves, but whose heart carried even farther.

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DARYL JORDEN

By Teresa Schweinsberg

New Nashville Christian Country artist, Daryl Jordan and his wife Betty are quite the team. Betty writes the songs, and Daryl sings them. Betty writes from experiences she and Daryl have lived together. Daryl sings with the emotion of an artist who knows what he is singing about, but it was not always so.

A truck driver by trade, who now manages a trucking company, Daryl Jordan found himself in a desperate situation one night while driving his route. Thinking about the mess he had made of his life and his marriage, a thought came to his mind. He looked at the bridge in Paducah, Kentucky, and thought about how easy it would be to drive off it and end all his troubles.

He recalls, "I was driving one night in a very dark time in our marriage. I was angry with myself for the hurt I had caused. There was no way to go back and fix it. Betty had forgiven me, but I couldn't forgive myself. In a very dark moment, I decided to drive off the bridge, but a supernatural power, either God Himself or an angel, held the wheel. I could not turn it at all to go off the bridge. From that moment, it was a turning point for me!"

Betty continues, "When I let go of things and let God have control, I was able to forgive. Learning to forgive is what both of us had to do. That is when I wrote the song *Let Go of the Reins*."



Daryl & Betty Jordan



Daryl grew up in church all his life with his Pentecostal preaching father. He shared that in 1990, his nineteen-year-old brother died in a car accident. That is when he turned his life over to God.

Betty also grew up in church. In fact, it was on her way to church one night when God got her attention. Her family almost had a collision which would have taken both her and her brother's life had God not intervened. That is when Betty realized she was not saved and would not have gone to Heaven. She got saved shortly after that on New Year's Eve, because she

says she "wanted to start the year out the right way."

After Daryl and Betty married, life was not always easy. There have been a lot of struggles. One weekend last year, they went away to relax and enjoy each other's company, but that is not how it turned out.

"That weekend turned into an ordeal," shares Betty. "We were eating when I started having severe stomach pains. They didn't go away. I went to the doctor on Monday when we got home for gall bladder or appendix. I was sent straight to the emergency room for a CT scan. They found a mass on my ovary and six other places where I had spots. I was in stage four cancer. I had four rounds of chemo and then surgery in February of 2025. I bled internally after the surgery. I had more surgery, and they found sepsis and E.coli. I was in the hospital for seven days with three more rounds of chemotherapy. Then, I went back for a scan, and they found no signs of any cancer in my organs as before or in my bloodwork. I never lost my faith and am claiming God's healing!"

Daryl and Betty say before, they looked at singing and songwriting as just a hobby for the last twenty-five to thirty years. However, a songwriting contest through Nashville Christian Country and a win started them on a brand-new journey of recording the songs Betty writes and Daryl sings. They are both excited to see where God takes them and how He will use them to touch someone's life.

Look for Daryl Jordan on all social media.

The Story Behind the Song

I'M FROM THE U.S. OF A.

Written and recorded by Roger Barkley, Jr.

Staff, Cross Country USA

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, we wanted to feature a patriotic song that honors our American pride. This song, performed and written by Roger Barkley, Jr., describes how many of us feel about the good ole U.S.A.!

No stranger to Gospel music, Roger Barkley, Jr. shares the backstory and inspiration on his song, *I'm From The U.S. of A.* "Years ago when gathering songs and writing material, we noticed a common trend. While breaking down equipment after services at churches, the majority of the vehicles leaving the parking lots of the "Sunday Crowd" were not listening to local Christian stations. There's a lot of great music with songs about family, country, morals, and values that are not labeled "Christian" music. That said, however, if those who claim to be followers of Christ are not tuning in, why would we expect the world we should be reaching to do the same?"

"As I continued to write, I prayed that God would allow a song that could be played on secular as well as Christian stations," he admits. "As I had been writing profusely, it was almost as if the inspiration had stopped. I thought to myself, 1. I asked it wrong. I made sure that God knew I was not wanting to be a Crossover artist and especially one that doesn't bring the Cross over. 2. Maybe that's not what He wants."

"Two days later, as I finished leading worship, I felt that tap on the shoulder and voice say, 'write this down.' My answer was, "write what down? His answer: you haven't picked up the pen yet! As I half-heartedly put pen to paper, I was writing so fast and trying to catch up with reading. I asked God. Are you sure you want me to say that? His response again was: if you don't want it... don't ask for it."



Roger recorded the song at Chapel Valley Studios in Sharps Chapel Tennessee. "I recorded it with Shane and Travis Roark and all the guys that make me sound good, in mid to late 2017. I remembered Travis asking... is there any Country phrase you left out? I said something about momma and a train, lol! We never were going to send it to radio being a longer song, but we decided maybe it could be the Christian Country 'Free Bird' that DJs can use when they need a longer song."

"The music video would become 'Video of the Year,' (produced by self-owned Barkley Music and Media). With God's timing and sense of humor within a few years the song would be used on numerous secular shows on places like IHEART & SiriusXM, reaching more than I could've ever dreamed or expected."

From Roger's "The Good Ole Days" album, the song was first released in 2018. Now, Roger decided to re-release the song in celebration of 250 years of America. "With all the fussing and fighting within the country being reported, what better time to re-release the song as a reminder of what we are, what we CAN be, who we are, and better yet WHOSE we are."

The song is available on all major streaming platforms and at his website, www.rogerbarkleyjr.com.



I'm from the U. S. of A.

(Verse One)

*I had a daddy that fought for Uncle Sam.
I got uncles and cousins that battled in Viet Nam.
I got in-laws and outlaws that all bled red, white, and blue.
Names on the wall that spelled freedom for me and you.*

(Verse Two)

*Johnny came home with one leg from Afghanistan.
Jenny still loved him, and she stood by her man.
Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Marines.
When we come together,
that's something like you've never seen.*

(Chorus)

*I'm from the U. S. of A. - and I'm proud to be.
We start our baseball, football, and Nascar
with 'O Say can you see.'
I still believe in God and country.
So, stand up and say, 'I'm from the U S of A.'*

(Verse Three)

*Blue collar workers and the farmers out in the field.
Firemen, policemen, and those who stand behind the shield.
Mammas and daddies out fighting for our Liberty.
If you wanna burn our flag, well you gotta go through me!*

(Bridge)

*From our house to the White House,
we oughta get back to God's House.
Put the Ten Commandments back on display.
I know you can't conceive it, but if you don't like it leave it.,
It wasn't your blood that bought it anyway.*

(Chorus)

*I'm from the U. S. of A. - and I'm proud to be.
We start our baseball, football, and Nascar
with 'O Say can you see.'
I still believe in God and country.
So, stand up and say, 'I'm from the U S of A.'*



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Barbara Jean Smith

A Kentucky Voice Carried by Faith, Family, and the Call of God

By Cory Parker



Lexington, Kentucky, may be the city on her birth certificate, but the heart of Barbara Jean Smith was shaped sixteen miles down the road in the small, storybook town of Wilmore. With a population of barely a thousand in her childhood years, Wilmore was the kind of place where neighbors were family, the front porch was a gathering place, and the rhythms of life were set by church bells, camp meetings, and the warm hum of community.

Wilmore held two landmarks that left their imprint on her spirit: Asbury University and The Wilmore Campgrounds. She remembers the campgrounds vividly - people traveling from all over to worship under open skies, families filling the grounds with laughter, testimonies, and song. "It was a warm town with loving families and friends," she recalls. "Those memories shaped me."

Long before she ever stepped onto a stage, a little Kentucky girl spent her weekends at the Grand Ole Opry, watching legends who are now etched into the golden era of Country Music. "To me, that was real Country music," she says. "And I loved how every show ended with a Gospel song."

But her greatest musical influence wasn't on the Opry stage. It was sitting right beside her. "My daddy was my music hero," she says. "He'd play rhythm guitar, and he always had me singing."

Saturday night and Sunday afternoon singings became her classroom. Under shade trees and on front porches, surrounded by grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, she learned harmony - the kind that comes from family, faith, and the joy of singing together.

Barbara Jean and her husband, Danny, have been married nearly 53 years, raising three children - Eric, Ryan, and Stefanie - and building a life anchored in love, perseverance, and ministry.

Danny is more than a husband; he is her encourager, her steady hand, her God-sent nudge. For two years, Barbara Jean sat in church too afraid to sing, despite a lifetime of music. "I was scared to death," she admits. "I was terrified of making a mistake." But Danny kept nudging: "God has given you a gift. You need to use it."

He would arrive early at church, set up soundtracks, and gently push her toward the calling he knew God had placed in her. One morning, a church member overheard her practicing, and everything changed. “Now I sing,” she says. “Now I let God move. I never sing without praying for His grace and guidance.”

Though she grew up around church, Barbara Jean didn't fully surrender her life to Christ until adulthood. For years, she took the children to church alone while Danny worked long, exhausting shifts to provide for the family. She loved God, but she believed she had to be perfect to receive Him. “A big wrong,” she says now with a smile.

Through prayer, conviction, and the relentless love of God, she came to Christ and a few years later, Danny did too. From that moment forward, they became a team for life and for the Lord.

Barbara Jean served as an Environmental Secretary at the local Health Department for twenty-two years before retiring. During those years, her singing ministry stretched across Kentucky and into Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Illinois = wherever vacations and holidays allowed.

Now, with retirement behind them, the road is wide open. They've traveled to West Plains, Missouri for the ICGMA Awards Convention and to Texas for the Texoma Convention - gatherings that reaffirmed their calling and connected them with fellow believers spreading the Gospel through music. “Our country needs a great revival,” she says. “And we want to be part of it.”

Barbara Jean's music has traveled farther than she ever imagined. She was honored as: Horizon Female Artist at the 2023 Gospel Music Fan Awards and ICGMA Top 5 Horizon Female Artist (2023)

Her voice has reached seven states in person, and countless more through radio.

From her most recent album, “Pathway to Heaven,” two singles have been especially impactful: *Thank God for the Darkness* - a song that has been circulating nationally and resonating deeply with listeners who understand that God often works His greatest miracles in the shadows. *What Can*



I Say - this single continues to gain traction on Gospel and Christian Country stations, strengthening her presence on national airwaves.

Both songs reflect Barbara Jean's signature blend of heartfelt testimony, traditional Country warmth, and Gospel truth - the sound of a woman who has lived what she sings.

Barbara Jean approaches ministry with reverence and readiness. “I've learned that a Christian has work to do every day,” she says. “We must read the Word, be a witness, and be ready, because Christ is coming again.”

Her life verse is Hebrews 11:1: “*Faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see.*”

And her message to others is simple, powerful, and lived: “Let go of the gift that is within you - and let God use it as He wills.”

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CrossCountry Report

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY MUSIC NEWS & SCOOPS

Ma Bell's New Patriotic Anthem 'Hey! Hey! USA' Reaches Platinum Status



There is exciting news for patriotic music fans as *Hey! Hey! U.S.A.* has achieved Platinum Status on Airplay Express, a milestone made possible through promotion by Grace Records Nashville LLC.

Written by Kathy Bell and Bob McGilpin, and performed by the always entertaining Ma Bell, this uplifting patriotic anthem showcases a fun and energetic musical style that audiences have quickly embraced.

Known for her natural ability to make people laugh, sing, and tap their toes, Ma Bell brings her trademark humor and audience interaction to this heartfelt tribute to America. The song celebrates all branches of the United States military while honoring the sacrifices and service of our nation's veterans.

"This release is very special to me," says Ma Bell. "It was written to celebrate every branch of the military, pay tribute to our veterans, and help everyone celebrate America's Freedom 250th. We hope people everywhere will enjoy it,

dance to it, sing along, and share in the joy of this patriotic celebration."

The growing popularity of *Hey! Hey! U.S.A.* has resonated with listeners who appreciate its positive message, patriotic spirit, and feel-good energy. As America commemorates its 250th anniversary, the song serves as a musical reminder of freedom, unity, and gratitude.

Ma Bell extends her heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported the release and helped make this Platinum achievement possible.

The Randy Owen Center for the Performing Arts Opens at Jacksonville State University with Star-Studded Tribute Concert

Jacksonville State University officially opened the Randy Owen Center for the Performing Arts in unforgettable fashion on May 27, in Jacksonville, Alabama. Some of the biggest names in Country music gathered to honor Jax State alumnus and ALABAMA frontman Randy Owen during a sold-out grand opening celebration.

Live in Concert: Randy Owen and Friends brought together a lineup of Country music royalty to perform songs spanning ALABAMA's Hall of Fame career while celebrating Owen's impact on music, philanthropy, and Jacksonville State University.

Artists performing throughout the evening included ALABAMA's Owen and Teddy Gentry, Jason Aldean, Luke Bryan, Riley Green, Jamey Johnson, Pam Tillis, The Oak Ridge Boys, Mark Wills, Drake White, The Isaacs, and Gordon Mote.

All of the evening's performers were kept secret from Owen ahead of the concert, creating a night filled with emotional surprises honoring the Country music legend and his impact on generations of artists.

The concert marked the official opening celebration of the new state-of-the-art facility, which will serve as a cultural hub

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L to R: Riley Green, Megan Mullins Owen, Kelly Owen, Jason Aldean, Randy Owen, Jamey Johnson, William Lee Golden, Duane Allen, Mark Wills

Photo Credit: Brandon Phillips/Jax State Digital Media Services

environment for Jax State students pursuing careers in music and the performing arts.

"My wishes, and my hopes, and my dreams are that someday some kid will come through here, like me, and when they leave here, they have a dream," notes Owen. "Because if I can make it, anybody can. I've been so blessed to be here, and this is one day that I'll never forget."

For more information about the Randy Owen Center for the Performing Arts, visit jsu.edu/roc.

for performances, arts education, university programming, and community engagement for generations to come.

"What took place says everything about what Randy Owen means to Jacksonville State University and to the Country music industry," says Jax State President Dr. Don C. Killingsworth, Jr. "When artists and friends of this caliber come together to honor one person, it speaks to the respect Randy has earned through his career, his character, and the way he has invested in others throughout his life. Randy has never forgotten where he came from, and now future generations of students will have a place that inspires them to dream bigger, create boldly, and share their talents with the world. The impact of this facility and what it will represent will be felt at Jax State for decades to come."

Named in honor of Owen, the center stands as a major investment in arts education and cultural enrichment for Northeast Alabama. The facility will host concerts, educational programming, student performances, touring productions, and community events while also serving as a learning

Musicians On Call Honors Reba at 'Music Heals Live!'

Musicians On Call held its "Music Heals Live!" event on May 20th at The Pinnacle in Nashville. The Star-studded evening raised more than \$700,000 to support Musicians On Call's bedside, virtual, songwriting and streaming programs nationwide.

Reba McEntire received the Music Heals Golden Ukulele in recognition of her longstanding support of the organization. "Music brings light into dark times and gives hope when everything feels hopeless," shared McEntire. "That's the power of music. Tonight is about the caregivers who take care of all of us in our most challenging times. It's about the patients. The ones who have gone on and the ones who have survived. It's about the singers and musicians who go room-to-room putting smiles on people's faces."

Cross Country Report continued on page 24 >>>

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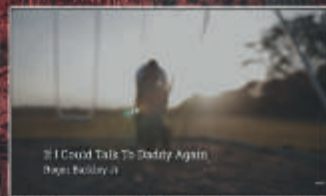
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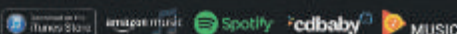
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This honor is something I'll always cherish because I get to share it with you all. Time is very precious, and to give time is the most important thing of all right there with love and kindness. So, what you all do, I applaud you and I thank you and we'll continue coming to see the patients and the caregivers. And we'll take it day-by-day, and note-by-note."

Belle Frantz performed McEntire's hit *The Last One to Know*, while Vince Gill honored McEntire with a few stories of their friendship over the years and sang *One More Last Chance, Go Rest High on that Mountain and Whenever You Come Around*. Wynonna shared *Why Not Me, Only Love*, a debut of her brand-new song *Girl Who Could Sing*, before closing out the night with *No One Else on Earth*.

Mitch Glazier, Chairman & CEO of the RIAA and Chairman Emeritus of the MOC Board of Directors, received the Leadership in Music Golden Ukulele, presented in a surprise moment by Martina McBride.

"Throughout my life and career, I've had the privilege of experiencing how music can heal, bring joy, and connect people who often can't find commonality. It has been an honor to serve on the Musicians On Call Board, help launch their initiatives in DC and to partner through service and fundraising. To watch the smiles on the faces of patients and their families when a musician transports them to a happier place through song is a wonderful gift. I am humbled to accept the Leadership in Music Golden Ukulele. I hope the generosity of supporters and incredible talents of volunteer artists like Reba, Martina, Wynonna, and Vince here tonight will ensure that this important work is just getting started," said Glazier.

The evening also recognized standout Musicians On Call volunteers from Chicago, Los Angeles and Boston for their extraordinary service to patients and caregivers. MOC Co-Founder Michael Solomon presented the Vivek J. Tiwary Volunteer Guide Golden Ukuleles to Stan Garrison, Daisy Perez and Dianna Perez.

Charles Esten then presented Jeff Scornavacca and Keenan Kamae with the Michael Solomon Volunteer Musician Golden Ukulele.

"We are deeply grateful to the over 500 supporters, volunteers, and caregivers who joined us to celebrate Musicians On Call's national impact and help us raise over



L-R: Vince Gill, Shane Tarleton, Martina McBride, Reba McEntire, Wynonna, Mitch Glazier, Pete Griffin and Charles Esten.

Photo: Heather Durham

\$700,000 to bring the healing power of music to healthcare facilities across the country," said Musicians On Call President & CEO, Pete Griffin. "The absolute highlights of the night were honoring two true champions of our mission, Reba McEntire and Mitch Glazier, and five exceptional volunteers for their tireless advocacy and the incredible heart they bring to patients' bedsides. Having them there, alongside spectacular, soul-stirring performances from Vince Gill, Wynonna, and Belle Frantz, made the energy in the room at The Pinnacle electric. It was truly an unforgettable and historic night for all of us."

Kelly Lang Unveils Latest Single 'This Too Shall Pass' Ahead of Upcoming Album 'Jealous Green Eyes'

Acclaimed singer-songwriter, producer, and author, Kelly Lang, recently released her powerful new single, *This Too Shall Pass*, from her forthcoming album, "Jealous Green Eyes," arriving later this summer. Sponsored by Gus Arrendale and Springer Mountain Farms, the heartfelt single delivers a timely message of hope, strength, and perseverance during a season when so many are facing different challenges around the world. Through Kelly's signature emotional storytelling and soulful delivery, *This Too Shall Pass* offers comfort and encouragement to listeners from every walk of life, serving as an uplifting reminder to keep faith through life's challenges and trust that brighter days are ahead. *This Too Shall Pass* was

premiered digitally by GodTube, featured on My Mornings With Vanessa Broussard on Lindell TV, and made its television premiere on American Country Network on Sunday, May 31st.

"It seems like everyone is carrying some kind of storm these days. I wrote *This Too Shall Pass* as a reminder to hold on just one more day because brighter days are ahead. But one of my favorite parts of the song is the reminder to hold on to the good times, too, because they also pass by so quickly. At its heart, it's a song of hope, encouragement, and resilience, something I think we could all use a little more of these days."

- Kelly Lang



Her new album, "Jealous Green Eyes," features eleven self-penned or co-written tracks that leave no stone unturned, exploring life, love, heartbreak, and divorce through her signature storytelling style. The project may even include a surprise "answer song" to one of Country music's most iconic hits, *I Loved Em Every One*, recorded by her legendary husband, T.G. Sheppard, which adds an extra layer of intrigue fans won't want to miss. Additional singles will roll out throughout the summer ahead of the album's official release date, which will be announced soon.

Wynonna Judd Unveils New Single 'Kentucky Queen,' Announces First Solo Album in a Decade, 'The Hard Truth,' Out October 2

Country music icon Wynonna Judd is stepping boldly into a new era with the release of *Kentucky Queen*, the debut single from her forthcoming solo album, "The Hard Truth," arriving October 2. The project marks Wynonna's first solo studio album in ten years, following 2016's "Wynonna & the Big Noise," and features collaborations with Patterson Hood, Iron & Wine, and The War and Treaty.

A deeply personal and creatively fearless collection, "The Hard Truth" finds Wynonna confronting the past, honoring her

roots, and embracing the emotional honesty that has defined her legendary career.

"I've spent a lifetime singing about heartbreak, healing, faith, and survival, but I've never made a record like this one," Wynonna shares. "These songs tell the truth about where I've been, what I've lost, what I've overcome, and who I've become. This album asked me to be brave enough to tell the truth, even when my voice shook."

She adds, "My hope is that when you hear these songs, you feel what I was feeling while writing and recording them. If they help someone feel seen, understood, or a little less alone, then every hard truth was worth telling."

Wynonna introduced *Kentucky Queen* during SiriusXM's The Highway Music Row Happy Hour at CMA Fest, teasing the song with a nod to her upbringing: "I was raised in the dirt. And now I wear rhinestones. So I'll just put it that way."

The single's opening lines paint a vivid picture of her Appalachian roots and the rugged beauty that shaped her identity, echoing the themes of resilience and self-discovery that run throughout the album.

"The Hard Truth" arrives as Wynonna continues to navigate profound personal loss following the passing of her mother and musical partner, Naomi Judd, in 2022. The Judds were inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame just one day after Naomi's death, a moment Wynonna has described as both heartbreaking and deeply meaningful.



Despite her grief, Wynonna honored The Judds' legacy by completing what was to be their Final Tour, and she has continued to perform for fans across the country. She will spend much of the year on the road, including select co-headlining dates with Melissa Etheridge.

With "The Hard Truth," Wynonna Judd reclaims her voice, her story, and her strength - delivering a powerful new chapter from one of Country music's most enduring and beloved artists.

Cross Country Report continued on page 28 >>>

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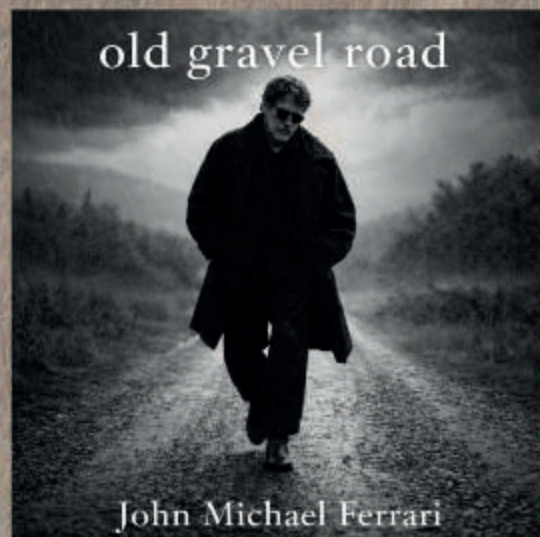
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Michael Peterson Signs Deal with StarVista Music To Release Two Albums



As the popularity of '90s Country continues to surge, hitmaker Michael Peterson is teaming up with StarVista Music to bring two of his beloved albums to fans in a whole new way. "Down On The Farm" and "We Are Veterans" is now available digitally for the first time across all major streaming platforms.

Originally available only on CD, these projects represent a meaningful chapter in Peterson's catalog, and their long-awaited digital debut offers both longtime listeners and a new generation of fans the chance to discover or rediscover these songs. With the continued revival of '90s Country music, this release ensures that Peterson's work remains accessible, relevant, and ready to connect with audiences everywhere.

"This new digital age of the music business is fascinating," says Michael Peterson. "When I was releasing music in the 90s, I remember sitting in a room with the label executives talking about what record stores we had to visit to sign CDs to create the buzz on a new album. Now, it's all virtual and digital. The technology is amazing, and I really like how quickly the fans can hear and learn about new music."

Michael Peterson continues to tour worldwide, performing concerts and connecting with audiences through speaking engagements that reflect his passion for music and storytelling. He is also currently in the studio working on new

music, with plans to release an upcoming project in the near future.

For more information, visit michaelpetersonmusic.com and follow him on all social media platforms.

Lee Greenwood and Allied Flag to Launch Limited-Edition Flag in Commemoration of U.S. 250th Anniversary

Lee Greenwood, one of America's most recognized patriotic voices, has partnered with Allied Flag, a leading producer of 100% American-made flags. As part of the collaboration, Allied Flag has introduced a limited-edition American flag presented in a custom-designed package featuring Greenwood's name and likeness. These exclusive collector's editions are available only at Bass Pro Shops.



"I've always believed that the American flag represents the very best of who we are as a nation, our freedom, our faith, and the sacrifices made to protect it," shares Lee Greenwood. "Partnering with Allied Flag to create something that's proudly made in the USA and honors that spirit means a great deal to me. I hope this flag serves as a reminder of our unity and the pride we share as Americans."

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Timed to coincide with the United States Semiquincentennial, this special release reflects the pride and historical significance of our nation's 250th anniversary. As America celebrates this milestone, the limited-edition flag serves as a tribute to the country's enduring spirit, honoring the generations who have shaped its history while celebrating the unity, freedom, and patriotism that continue to define it today.

"Allied Flag was built on the idea that the American flag stands as a powerful symbol of freedom for every citizen," said Tyler Young, President of Allied Brands. "Lee Greenwood's lifelong dedication to our country reflects everything that flag represents, and we're proud to partner with him as we approach this historic 250th anniversary celebration."

Known for his stand-out patriotism and support of the U.S. military, Greenwood has been honored with the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's National Patriot's Award and entertained troops on more than 30 USO Tours.

Secretary Rollins Welcomes President Trump's Appointment of John Rich as Special Envoy for American Landowners

As Special Envoy, John Rich will serve as a leading advocate for America's farmers, ranchers, and private landowners, helping ensure their concerns are heard and their rights are protected. He will engage directly with landowners across the country and work to address challenges posed by government overreach, activist pressure campaigns, and outside interests that threaten private property rights and the long-term viability of rural communities.

A key focus of Rich's work will be advocating for landowners facing pressure related to large-scale solar and wind development that may impact productive farmland, ranchland, and rural livelihoods. He will work closely with USDA leadership and stakeholders to ensure landowners have a strong voice in decisions affecting their property and communities.

"America's farmers, ranchers, and landowners are among the greatest stewards of our nation's resources and the backbone of our rural communities," said Secretary Rollins. "President Trump understands that private property rights are fundamental to the American way of life. John Rich has long been a champion for rural America, and I look forward to

working alongside him as we continue fighting for the people who feed, fuel, and clothe our nation."

"President Trump has afforded me the great honor of serving as Special Envoy for American Landowners," said Special Envoy Rich. "I look forward to representing and advocating for landowners' rights and standing up for the farmers, ranchers, and rural families who work every day to provide for our country. Protecting private property rights and ensuring that landowners are not harassed, intimidated, or pressured by outside interests will be at the heart of this mission."



The appointment reflects President Trump's ongoing commitment to ensuring that America's farmers, ranchers, foresters, and landowners have a strong voice in Washington and a federal government that supports, rather than hinders, their success.

Armed with confidence, ambition and determination, John Rich is a multi-platinum hit generator and music industry leader whose creative talents are matched only by his business savvy. Whether through a raucous party anthem or a sober reflection on hard times in the heartland, Rich's ability to capture the American zeitgeist in song has made him one of the most successful and prolific entertainers in the music business today. And in 2011, Rich impressed Donald Trump and American TV audiences with his business acumen and leadership skills, winner of Donald Trump's Celebrity

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Now, the multi-faceted Rich is applying his talents to his latest venture, a lifestyle brand called Redneck Riviera that launched in 2014 with an apparel line geared to what he dubs the 'WORKHARD PLAY HARD' crowd.

For more information, visit johnrich.com and bigandrich.com and follow him on X.

Ricky Skaggs Releases New Music for the First Time in Over a Decade

Fifteen-time GRAMMY® Award winner Ricky Skaggs released new music for the first time in more than a decade when his new single, *Say A Prayer*, on all digital platforms on June 26 via Skaggs Family Records (distributed by Virgin Music Group).

Written by Gordon Kennedy and Ben Cooper, *Say A Prayer* combines Country, Bluegrass and Rock influences with instrumentation that includes sitar, fiddle, mandolin and banjo. The song was written in response to the challenges facing communities around the world and centers on themes of faith, reflection and unity.

"I'm incredibly excited to share my new single, *Say A Prayer*, says Skaggs. "The song addresses a world carrying a lot of grief right now, serving as a universal call for everyone to stop and lean into faith. It's got a chorus that resonates with faith, Country and Rock audiences alike."



The release comes as Skaggs continues a busy touring schedule. In addition to his regular tour dates, Skaggs and his band Kentucky Thunder joins Dierks Bentley on select dates of Bentley's Off The Map Summer Tour, that kicked off on June 12. Skaggs will also return to Nashville's historic Ryman Auditorium to close out the Bluegrass Nights at the Ryman series on July 21.

Say A Prayer is available on all streaming and digital download platforms.

The album cover for Debra Camp's "The SCARS you Can't See" features a woman with long blonde hair playing a white piano against a sunset background. The text on the cover includes the title "The SCARS you Can't See", "THANK YOU" followed by credits to Mike Owens, Randy Fowler, Christian Hutton, and Randall Wilds, a thank you to Jesus Christ, and a thank you to DJs and fans. It also says "NEW RELEASE JULY 1ST" and "DEBRA CAMP".

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JIM SHELDON

The Positive Cowboy Who Always Puts God First

By Cory Parker

There is a reason people across the country know Jim Sheldon simply as “The Positive Cowboy.” The name isn’t a stage gimmick or a branding hook - it’s the truest description of the man himself.

Whether he’s singing, teaching, producing television, or praying with a stranger after a concert, Sheldon carries the same steady joy, the same unshakable faith, and the same conviction that God deserves first place in everything.

“I just want to encourage people,” he has often said. “If God can pick me up, dust me off, and use me - He can do it for anybody.”



A Life Shaped by Grace

Born on a U.S. Naval base in Illinois and raised in New Orleans, Sheldon grew up surrounded by music and ministry. But everything changed on May 7, 1972, when at 18 years old he surrendered his life to Jesus Christ. “That day,” he has said, “God gave me a brand-new start.”

He went on to earn an Associate’s degree in Church Music Ministry from New Orleans Baptist Seminary, serving in youth and music ministries throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Virginia. But like many believers, Sheldon’s journey included valleys as well as mountaintops.

A painful divorce left him feeling disqualified and defeated. “I thought God was done with me,” he once admitted. During that season he drifted into country music, performing in the Washington, D.C. area and singing songs that mirrored his own struggles. Yet even then, God was quietly drawing him home.

Redemption, Restoration, and a New Beginning

In 1992, God rewrote his story. Sheldon met Jeanette - his future wife - while singing at a Country venue. Their marriage marked a turning point. He rededicated his life to Christ, repented, and began seeking God’s direction with renewed passion.

He joined his first quartet, Solid Rock III, singing bass before moving into lead and baritone roles with other groups. For nearly two decades he worked day jobs while traveling on weekends, sharpening his craft and waiting for God’s timing.

A major influence came through eight summers at the Charles Novell School of Music, where he later joined the teaching staff. Mentors like Charles and Rob Novell, Danny Funderburk, Bill Baise, Ann Downing, Jeff Stice, Donnie Sumner, Billy Blackwood, Nick Bruno, Bev McCann, and others poured into him. Pastor Bob Melvin and Glen Payne of The Cathedrals offered words he never forgot: “God gave you the talent and the desire. Now go sing - and serve with a servant’s heart.”

There were moments he nearly quit. “I told the Lord, ‘If You don’t want me doing this, shut the doors.’ But every time I prayed that, He opened another one.”

Stepping Out in Faith

Sixteen years ago, Sheldon took the biggest leap of his life - launching a full-time solo Country/Gospel ministry. He

anchored his calling in Proverbs 3:6: “*In everything you do, put God first; He will direct and crown your efforts with success.*”

“That verse became my roadmap,” he says. “I told God, ‘I’ll go wherever You send me.’ And He’s been faithful every step of the way.”



God honored that surrender. His first project, *His Grace*, produced by Donnie Sumner, led to a signing with Homeland Inspiration Group’s Mont Eagle Records and his first charting single, “God Is Looking At My Heart.” Since then, Sheldon has recorded more than ten albums, many produced by Grammy-winning musician Mark Fain and award-winning engineer Steve Chandler under the Positive Country Records label.

His first music video, *I Belong to Jesus*, went viral. Later projects such as *Gloves*, *Sin Is Color Blind*, *Father of the Fatherless*, and his upcoming 2026 album “Scars and Regrets” have continued to expand his reach. The new project includes *As Long As You Can Remember*, a tender tribute to his mother, Kay Lilley Sheldon, and her battle with Alzheimer’s. The music video, released in April 2026, has already touched thousands.

A Ministry That Travels Far Beyond the Stage

Sheldon's charting songs include *I Would Crawl All The Way, I Saw A Man, I'm Going Home, Church Like We Knew, Old School, He's There, He's A Mighty Good Friend, Acre of Grace, Yes, He Did,* and *That's the Kind of Morning*. He has traveled coast to coast for more than 30 years - first in a pickup truck, then a van, then an RV, and now a touring motor coach.

"I didn't get it all at once," he laughs. "God blessed me little by little. Those steps mean more to me than anything."

In 2012, Sheldon became co-producer of The Music City Show with Scott Godsey and Bev McCann, where the "Positive Cowboy" persona became a household name. He and the Music City Quartet have also appeared on The Nashville Corner. Both programs continue airing on the Family Friendly Entertainment (FFE) network on Roku and other platforms.

Sheldon co-owns Nashville 37201 Media, the umbrella for FFE, and owns Positive Country Records, with Bev McCann overseeing daily operations.

During the challenges of 2020, Sheldon began posting short devotional videos called Positive Moments with Jim Sheldon. "People needed hope," he said. "I just wanted to remind them that God restores." The response was overwhelming, and the videos now air regularly on FFE.

A Legacy of Encouragement

Sheldon has been honored with multiple ICGMA awards - including 'Male Gold Cross' and 'TV Show of the Year' and continues to receive nominations for both ICGMA and Prayze Factor Awards.

But his greatest reward isn't a trophy. After one concert, a young boy approached him for prayer. His parents were going through a painful divorce. Later, the boy told his grandmother, "I don't want to be sad and crying all the time. I want to be like that Positive Cowboy - joyful and happy in Jesus."

"That," Sheldon says, "is why I do what I do."

Still Riding Forward

Through every season - heartbreak, restoration, open doors, and new beginnings - Jim Sheldon has chosen to put God first. With a smile on his face and a song in his heart, he continues traveling, recording, teaching, and ministering with the same steady conviction: "Wherever God sends me, that's where I'll go. I just want to lift Him up and encourage people along the way."

And so the Positive Cowboy rides on - joyful, faithful, and always pointing people to the One who changed his life.

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DALE ROCHELL

By Robin Tanner

Oklahoma native Dale Rochell grew up active in church and singing for most of his life, Dale would never have imagined where God would take him. Dale has enjoyed many years on this amazing journey in ministry. He states, “I am so, so blessed to be part of the ever-expanding Gospel music world, surrounded by beautiful fans and fellow artists.”

Dale cherishes the many years of mingling and forming relationships with countless contemporary and Southern Gospel artists. He opened for Carman during the early days, spending lots of time with him and his crew. Whether it be in travels, sharing an event, or sharing a stage, Dale has been amongst some of music’s greats - the likes of Joe Diffie, The Kingsmen, The Hinsons, Mary Faye Jackson, Barbara Fairchild, Mike Leichner, Karen Peck & New River, Craig Morgan, Darrell and Chris Freeman, Molded Clay and many other artists that have become close friends.

Dale reflects on an influential friendship that has remained for generations. “I developed a long friendship with The Hinsons, the original group. That friendship has carried over to the next generation. In recent years as the legacy continues, The Hinsons (Kenny’s son Weston, wife Christie, and daughter Jordie) have shared many events/dates. I love to reminisce of those days in the 70s/80s, Oh, the family blends. The music that came out of that era is still popular today, as far as I am concerned. Purposely, I try to do many of those old songs in our services.”

Dale acknowledges another special group that touched their lives during a difficult time. “I was invited to sing at the Daywind Nationwide Talent Search in Alabama, where I met the Gospel group, Molded Clay. While there, we received a call from the veterinarian that, due to heart issues, our family pet of thirteen years had been put to sleep. Seeing us upset, the guys from Molded Clay walked up and asked if they could pray with us. Positive they were our angels sent to us from God himself, such a comforting, blessed group of men.” Dale was runner up in the talent search, but at the time it did not seem so important.

While Dale was singing at the Loretta Lynn Annual Gospel Sing, to their surprise the guys from Molded Clay were there. “Such a welcomed sight,” says Dale. “We were uncertain that we would ever run into them again. But there they were. That night we had a meal with them, ending with an acapella song, sitting right there in the middle of Cracker Barrel! What a joy!”



Dale is pleased that his solo career is “bouncing all around.” Following an award event, and winning, Dale opened on the main stage for Triumphant Quartet and Karen Peck & New River. He has appeared on the Don Frost & Friends Gospel Hour on TCT television. An interview on TCT’s Texas Country Gospel, produced by Ms. Mary Faye Jackson, led to co-hosting a show with her. (Shows airing on TCT are seen 24/7, all over the US and some foreign countries.) Dale was also a part of the Jammin’ for Jesus event held at the Baldknobbers Theater in Branson, Missouri, singing and co-hosting the December, 2021 show. “All I can say is, Thank Ya, Jesus! All that I ask is, stand with me on your knees. Mention me when you talk to Jesus.”

If it’s a group ministry or solo ministry, all face challenges such as finding the right music, booking events, balancing schedules, a family, and a weekday job. Dale jokingly adds, “I suppose my biggest challenge is my wife. Oops, I better rephrase that. I suppose my biggest challenge is, well, me. My wife works a secular day job, in addition to the work she does for our ministry. During the really trying times of our ministry, my biggest challenge is to hold back my bark, sometimes forgetting to be thankful and so grateful for my best friend.”

Dale has been blessed with radio success with three number one songs, ten songs that have made the Top 10, nationally, and a music video that was nominated for 'Top Country Gospel Music Video of the Year.' He received runner-up behind close friend, Chris Golden of William Lee Golden & the Goldenes and the Oak Ridge Boys. Chris and Dale have done a number of events/services together. His video, of the song *Home* was nominated for 'Country Gospel Music Video' in 2024. "WHO ELSE BUT GOD - could have done such things? Thank You, Jesus!"

Dale has been invited to sing in Williamstown, Kentucky at The Ark for three consecutive years as well as the Gospel Fest at the Loretta Lynn's Ranch In Hurricane Mills, Tennessee for a few years and the Troubadour Theater in Nashville, Tennessee. Dale and his wife Janell do approximately 160 dates a year and stay booked ahead nearly a year. He adds, "We have seen GOD move in many churches and events across this country, and that is an AWESOME PLACE to be, SEEING SOULS SAVED & baptized."

One of Dale's previous singles included *Three Nails and A Cross*, written by George Strait, Bubba Strait, Dean Dillon, and Bobby Boyd, produced by Mary Faye Jackson. "We are blessed for the many email responses from those who have seen the video. Randal Christy, Gospel radio out of Ada, Oklahoma and Randall Wilds, Millennium Music Group have been very influential in the success of that single release, Thank You, Jesus."

Another previous release, *I'm No Stranger to the Valley*, reached number one on the national charts. Last year, his release of the old Joe Diffie classic, *Home*, resulted in yet another chart hit. Dale shared, "Joe Diffie and I grew up around the same area in Oklahoma. I've known Joe since back in our high school days and we used to have weekly jam sessions at his place. After Joe recorded *Home*, I loved it and always had a connection to the song. Then after turning everything over to Christ and with losing my mom three years ago, it felt like a fitting song to do." The song also features a companion video.

Dale's current single is *Angels Among Us*, a song that was a hit for Alabama. Dale recorded an acoustic version and it's climbing the charts. A video for that song will be released soon. Dale is in the process of recording great new songs, and he says he would like to record a Positive Country album later this year.



This is the 70th year of the ICGMA and Dale is nominated for 'Male Vocalist of the Year,' 'Gold Cross Male Vocalist.' 'Song of the Year.' (*Angels Among Us*) and 'Music Video of the Year.' Dale exclaims, "I wouldn't take nothing for my journey now... Glllooorrrryyy!"

A concert with Dale Rochell will always turn to church, an event to give all the honor to God. "If I should stop in the middle of a song, it is because God said, 'Whoa, that is not the right song.' That God only be glorified, not Dale Rochell. I am just here...to go. See you there!"

Dale concludes, "My testimony is lengthy, way too much for these pages. My life is filled with broken pieces, terrible choices, and ugly truths. But I know a God of comebacks. I am not a perfect preacher, in fact, not a preacher at all. However, to all those sitting in audiences thinking that they could never do a God-called thing, let me tell you, you can. Besides, you will, if God gets a hold of you! Have to say, do not know who is having the greater time of their life - Him or me!"

Follow Dale Rochell on Facebook/Waves of Faith Country Gospel.

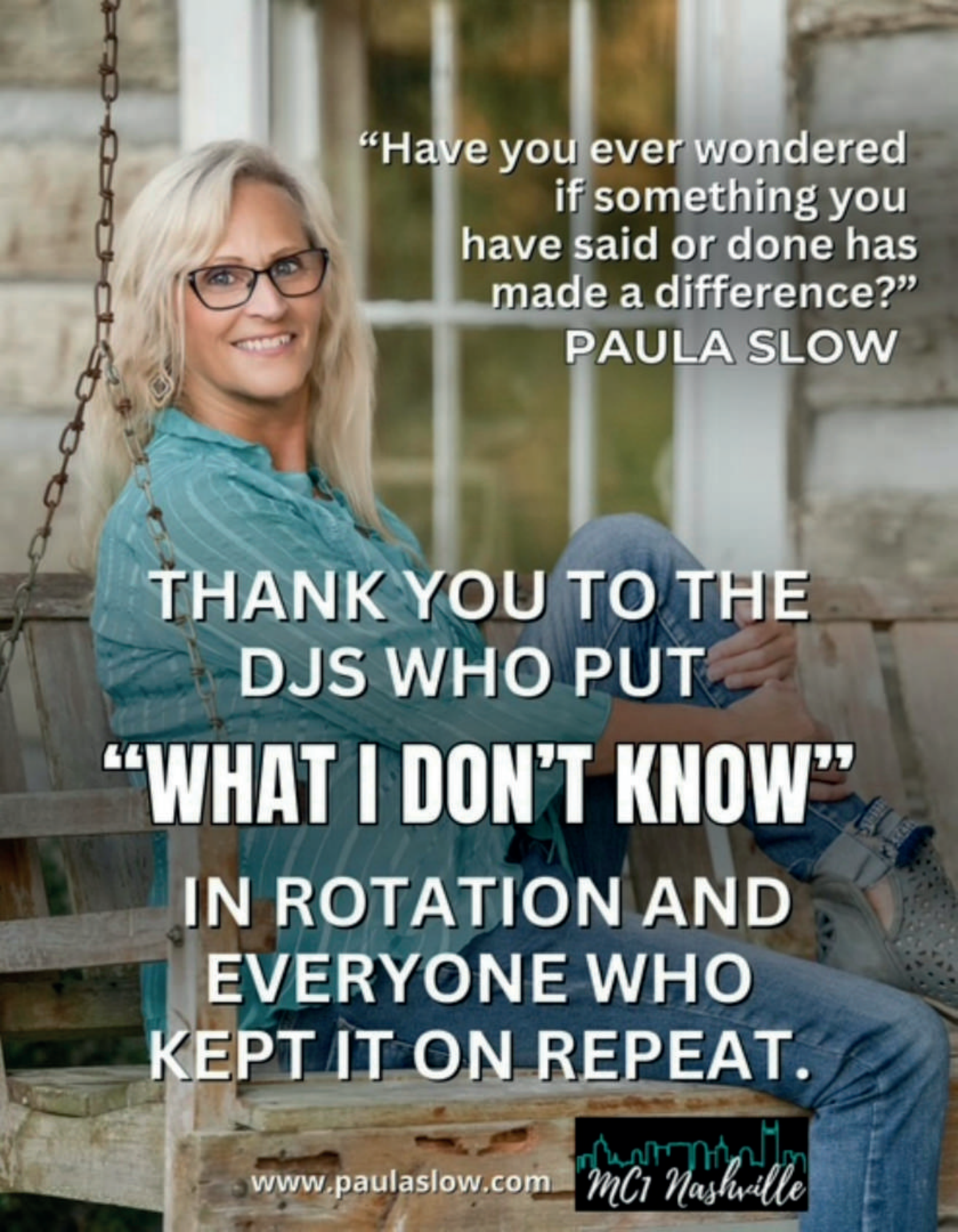


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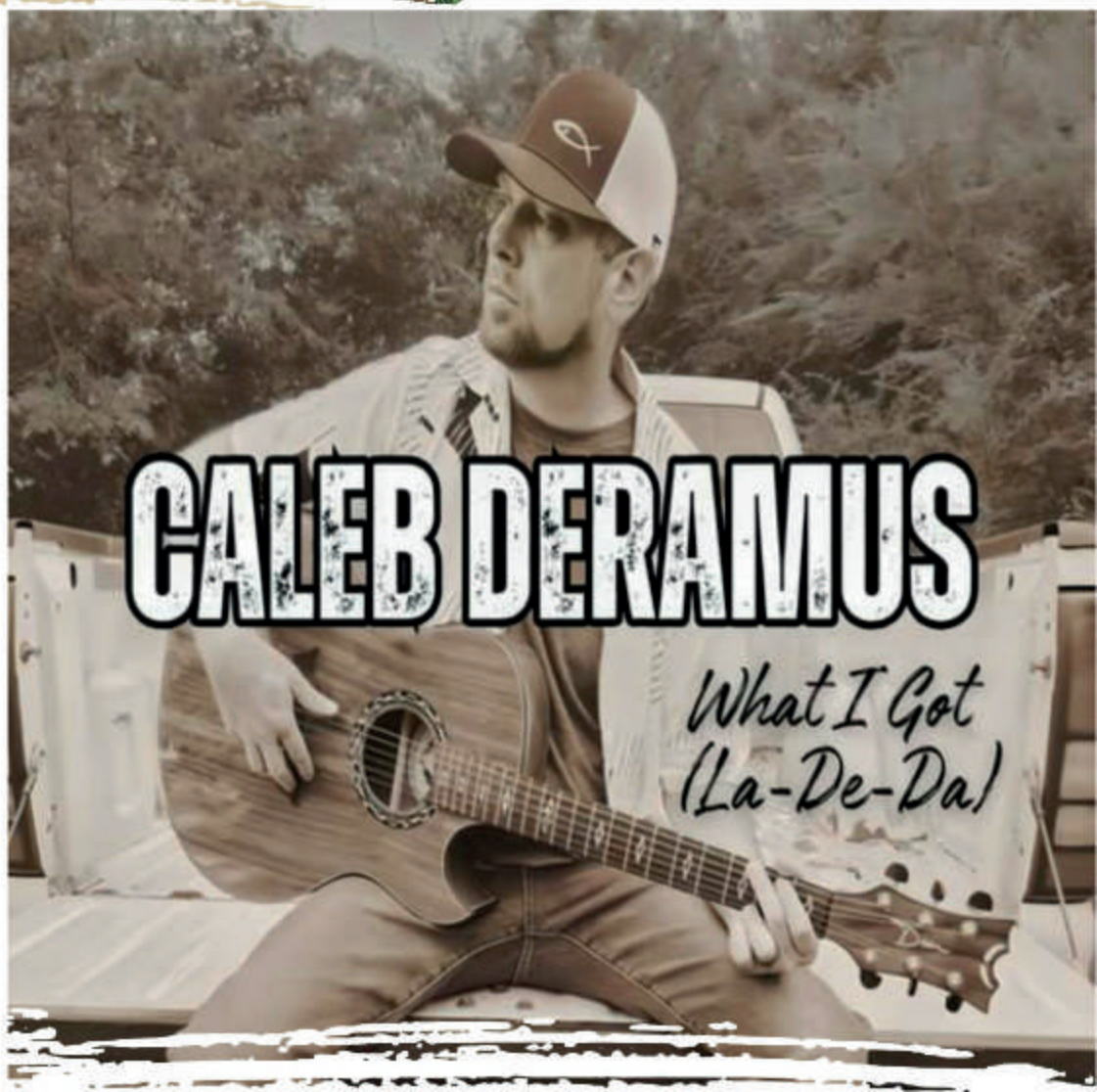
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If you are a fan of Chris Stapleton or Jamie Johnson, get ready for the Gospel to be presented in that same style of gritty voice by Tyson Leamon, new Nashville Christian Country artist. Tyson's voice and testimony will be something you will not soon forget after hearing.

“**A**round the age of 15,” Tyson shares, “I thought I was already saved. Then, at a youth conference, I heard Crowder sing a song called *How He Loves* and had a total life encounter with God! I didn’t live a perfect life after that, but I knew from that moment God was real! I had experienced Him in my life.”

Tyson grew up as a preacher’s kid. He had what he calls a “head knowledge” of Jesus, but not a “heart knowledge.” Though he started singing at age three, and was singing in his uncle’s church by five, then got a guitar at age twelve and started playing it, he still did not have that heart knowledge he needed. He transitioned to singing in Southern Gospel quartets, and then to playing in Contemporary Christian bands, still without a complete knowledge of God. “Now, here I am at forty-one with that ‘heart knowledge,’ singing Christian Country,” says Tyson.

Though it sounds like a straight path for Tyson, it was far from it. The path was anything but straight. “Without the real relationship I needed with Jesus, I veered off into trouble. I was a bit of a rebel. I started playing in a Hard Rock band, where I began a life of drinking, drugs, and promiscuity. I even landed in jail a couple of times for misdemeanors of public intoxication. I tried to get ‘right’ a couple of times but realized I didn’t need to be right. I needed to be set free!”

He adds, “You can find Jesus anywhere, even in a bar, when you’re ready. He left the ninety-nine to search for that one who was lost. I was that one! I went to jail in front of my young daughter. She asked my parents where I was going, and it broke me!”

“I was in jail for three days drying out and got under conviction,” he continues. “I prayed for help in my jail cell and thought I was O.K. Later, at a label party in Nashville, I

was trying hard not to do what I did before, but also trying to fit in. That's when the Lord spoke to me, and said, 'You need to leave!' I didn't want to drive after drinking a little. I looked up and saw a church called Restoring Hope. I walked in the door and realized it was Aaron and Amanda Crabb's church. Caleb and Courtney Curtis were doing worship. I had alcohol on my breath, but they all accepted me. I told them I needed to be set free. They prayed with me at the altar. I have been clean and sober for eight years by the grace of God. Some people never make it out of



addiction. I didn't go through any programs. I got desperate with God and asked Him to help me, and He did."

It was in that moment Tyson wrote what has become his signature song, *Who I Am*, and God has blessed it. It has over five million views on TikTok. He has even sung it in "The Singing Barber," Noah Peters' chair on social media.

Tyson says, "The first person to contact me after posting the song was a military vet on TikTok. He was on the verge of suicide but said it stopped him. He didn't kill himself, because the song gave him hope. He said, 'You saved my life, man!' Veterans, especially on the verge of suicide, have

connected with the song. I have received over ten thousand messages from people hearing *Who I Am*. Other people are even covering it now, because it touched them."

Tyson has now been called to preach and shares his songs and testimony at men's conferences.

Tyson's desire for the future is, "to see more full-time ministry. I want to reach more people for the Kingdom. I want to tell them you can change, but you need the support of God. You also need to surround yourself with the right people. If you keep sitting at the bar with someone

who is drinking, there is a ninety percent chance you'll be drinking with them rather than leading them to Jesus. Jesus will use rough people to reach rough people, but you have to turn one hundred and eighty degrees first to be strong enough to witness to them."

Tyson is married to his wife Cara, who prayed for him. Together they have a daughter, Ella, age fifteen.

Tyson's newest radio single - written by Cynthia Reamy and released by Nashville Christian Country - is titled *A Prayer I Never Prayed*. Listen for it on your favorite Christian radio station.

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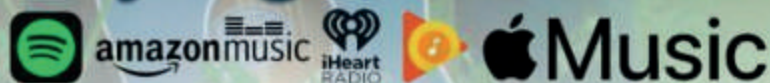
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OFFICIAL CHRISTIAN COUNTRY TOP 100 - JULY 2026

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	4	He Made It All	Dust And Grace	51	63	Cherished Memories	Jeff Hamilton
2	5	What I Don't Know	Paula Slow	52	29	The Most Perfect Gift	Clare Cunningham
3	9	Jesus Loves Me	Dierks Bentley	53	64	He'll Never Stop Being Good	Sunday Drive
4	10	Whiskey Road	Michael Tetrick	54	75	Soldier Of The Cross	John Penney
5	14	What I Got (La-De-Da)	Caleb Deramus	55	42	Gods Great	The Messengers
6	15	He Lives	Ed Bruce	56	73	At War With Myself	Cyndi Reynolds
7	13	Song For My Son	Walker Hayes	57	67	There's Power In The Name Of Jesus	Jonathan Ray Smith
8	21	In Times Like These	Bruce and Betsy Mullen	58	68	Somebody Here	Linda Lanier
9	17	Looking For The Light	Delnora	59	72	Beverage Of Choice	Brother Daniel
10	16	It's Time, Lord	Eddy Mann	60	53	Meanwhile Back At The Cross	Ron Hemphill
11	20	This One's For You	Rocky and Tamie	61	78	I Was There	Jerry Weatherly
12	18	Jesus Is The King	Ken Mobley	62	87	Real Good Day	Kevin Morris
13	3	Say Hello To Heaven	Steve Warren	63	97	House of Fire	Lonnie Hardy
14	22	In The Morning	Hunter Logan	64	76	River Of Life	Sonshine Road
15	43	When I Hear His Name	Victoria Steelman	65	30	Waiting In The Water	Debbie Mills
16	11	Heaven Sweet Home	Blake Shelton	66	95	I'm From The US Of A	Roger Barkley Jr
17	36	God Is Good Ya'll	Wings of Love	67	98	Georgiana Alabama 1939	Michael Ray Fain
18	37	Preacher Man	David Timms	68	94	Angels Among Us	Dale Rochell
19	12	New Man	Chuck Day	69	46	Man From Galilee	Jennifer Sides
20	32	Saving Grace	Krystina B	70	84	The Good In Bye	Small Town Sunday
21	34	The Bridge	Daryl Baker	71	-	The Eastern Gate	Ava Kasich & Martha Lambert
22	8	I've Been Thinking	Waymasters	72	90	The Promise	Charity Hamilton
23	35	Let Me Tell Ya' Bout My Faith	Kali Rose	73	-	Jesus On My Mind	Bruce Hedrick
24	1	Shout Of Testimony	Mike Leichner	74	80	Someday Things Are Gonna Get Better	Johnny Jones
25	6	It'll Be Good To Be Home	The Journeys	75	-	Rocks	Heather Thomas Van Deren
26	45	The Turn	The Pauls	76	96	Strength Of A Survivor	Aaron Justice
27	7	Get Out Of The Boat	Felicia Deramus Paul	77	-	Piano For Sale	Chris Golden
28	39	Brothers And Sisters	Ken Lehning	78	-	How Much Grace	Liam Tysinger
29	57	Jesus Is The Way	Rachel Taylor	79	99	Chandelier Angel	Danny Mullins
30	38	Why Me	Jenny Dean	80	-	I Know A Carpenter	Michael Knight
31	44	That's The Way Mama Raised Me	Luke Hendrickson	81	93	Sunday's Best	Shellem Cline
32	2	Everything You Do	Norman Lee Schaffer	82	-	High Tower	The Epps Family
33	40	Take Over Me	Rex Robards	83	-	The Storm	Jan Harbuck
34	50	My God Can	Valerie Ellis Hawkins	84	88	Footprints In The Sand	Dwight Sanders
35	27	Somebody Bigger Than You And I	David Smith	85	100	Little More Like Jesus	Dave Edwards
36	19	Warrior Of God	Mark Umfleet	86	-	I'm Yours	The Murphys
37	41	Edge Of Heaven	Scott Peacock	87	-	We All Need Jesus	J'Lee
38	47	The Last Song	Terry and Debra Luna	88	-	Love Is All You Need	Joy LaVallee
39	23	Picture This	Jessie Ritchie	89	-	What A Beautiful Day	Lester Feltner
40	26	Wish You Were Here	Johnathan Bond	90	-	Far Side Banks Of Jordan	Julie Reese
41	71	Healer	Allen Frizzell	91	-	One Man	Bruce & Betsy Mullen
42	31	Three Nails And A Cross	George Strait	92	-	Drinking From The Fountain	Daryl Branson
43	52	My Tiny Soul	JW Jackson	93	-	Man Down At The River	Gary Herd
44	24	Hannah Whooped The Devil	Jason Welch	94	-	Squeeze Your Guts Out	Jimmy R. Price
45	58	If I'm Guilty	Thomas Brown	95	-	Old Gravel Road	John Michael Ferrari
46	54	Heading Home With Jesus To Be	Lizzy G And Jeff Naper	96	-	Empty No More	Marty Denton
47	83	Snowy Sunday Morning	Biscuits and Gravy Band Indiana	97	-	Leading Me Home	Melissa Garner
48	56	Tell Me That There Ain't A God	Jon Brennan	98	-	America I Will Stand Up For You	Mike Leichner
49	74	Wayfaring Stranger	Debbie Bennett	99	-	Me And Jesus Gonna Get It Done	Norman Lee Schaffer
50	65	Getting Back Up	Troy Richardson	100	-	Stand Up For The Flag Kneel At The Cross	Ray Epperson



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The Legacy & Music of AARON WILBURN

Aaron Wilburn was an award-winning comedian, singer, and prolific songwriter. He could write songs that could minister to the soul with such anointing as listeners felt the presence of the Lord through his touching lyrics. He also had a gift for writing uplifting songs that brought smiles and laughter. He could bring an audience to tears and laughter in a concert setting all while lifting up the name of Jesus. He had songs in numerous genres, including Southern Gospel, Bluegrass, Black Gospel, Country, and Praise and Worship. We pay tribute to the music and humor of our dear friend, Aaron Wilburn.



Aaron was born July 9, 1950, in Ardmore, Alabama, where his family was sharecroppers and worked in the cotton fields. He used to go to a neighbor's house on Sunday mornings to watch The Happy Goodman Family and the Florida Boys on TV's Gospel Singing Jubilee, as he did not have a television at home. Wilburn told The Augusta Chronicle in September 2012 that his family did not have indoor plumbing until they moved to Huntsville.

Wilburn grew up singing with his family in the church. He decided to become a songwriter at a young age and began writing songs at eleven. He was fifteen when his first song was recorded by a Georgia-based Gospel group, The Sego Brothers and Naomi.

Wilburn began his career as a member of the Happy Goodman Family. Playing rhythm guitar and often singing as a guest soloist during the group's appearances, Aaron traveled with the legendary family group throughout the early 1970s. During his tenure with the Happy Goodman Family, his passion and talent for songwriting moved him to the forefront of the Southern Gospel music industry. According to him, his quality of songwriting rose to a new level after he started traveling with The Happy Goodman Family and listening to the outstanding songs of the group. *What A Beautiful Day*, and *Just Any Day Now* was co-written with musician Eddie Crook who played piano with the Goodmans.

After leaving The Happy Goodman Family, Wilburn pursued a solo career for over forty years and wrote more than a thousand songs.

Throughout his five decades of songwriting, Wilburn wrote or co-wrote beloved songs including the Singing News 'Song of the Decade,' *Four Days Late*, performed by Karen Peck and New River. Many of his songs topped the national radio charts. He won GMA Dove Awards in the early 1990s for two Bruce Carroll recordings, *Who Will Be Jesus* and *Sometimes Miracles Hide*. Two of his songs, *What A Beautiful Day (For The Lord To Come Again)* and *Four Days Late*, were voted as 'Song of the Year' at the Singing News Fan Awards in 1975 and 2001, respectively. More of Aaron's songwriting efforts include, *Home, It Won't Rain Always*, *That Sounds Like Home To Me*, *It's Beginning To Rain* and many more. His songs were also featured on numerous Grammy-nominated recordings. Artists that recorded his songs were Jeff & Sheri Easter, The Bowling Family, Karen Peck and New River, The Crabb Family, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver, and many others.

Wilburn was a multi-faceted touring performer, blending humorous tales and quick one-liners with a seemingly endless repertoire of comedic songs as he shared the Gospel. Aaron shared his talents in Gospel concerts, church services, secular conventions, corporate banquets, and events of all sizes

throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and numerous other countries. Frequently seen on Bill Gaither Homecoming concerts and videos, Aaron was also a pioneering Christian performer on YouTube, garnering more than 10 million views for his works.

Wilburn told The Augusta Chronicle that he started making more comedy songs after people constantly appreciated his sense of humor and made queries about his songs. Aaron's humorous songs included, *Puttin On The Dog*, *If My Nose Was Running Money*, *Walmart After 12*, *Side By Side* and many more songs to add to that list. Wilburn won several awards and nominations during his five decades of career included numerous awards for 'Comedian of the Year.'

Aaron Wilburn passed away on November 27, 2020, at the age of 70. His songs will be sung for many generations to come as they continue to touch lives everywhere. We will always appreciate the comedic efforts that he left through his funny songs and hilarious stories. He is a member of the Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame and the Alabama Hall of Fame. A song he co-wrote with Lee Black is *Love The People that God Gives You*. Aaron shared his love for God and people through his songs and life. Aaron's songs will live forever.



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By Cory Parker

Jak Gibson still remembers the moment music claimed him. He was six years old, holding a guitar that felt too big for his hands, learning his first three chords from his uncle. His uncle, aunt, and mother played in a Gospel-Bluegrass band, and young Jak watched them with wide-eyed certainty. Long before he ever stepped onto a stage, he knew music wouldn't just be part of his life, it would shape it.

Growing up in Greencastle, Indiana, Jak found his voice in the same places many great American storytellers do: church pews, front porches, and small-town gatherings where music wasn't a performance but a way of life. Those early harmonies carved something deep into him, a reverence for songs that tell the truth, even when the truth is hard. Over time, that foundation grew into a sound fans now describe as an honest blend of country, Rock, Blues, Gospel, and Southern grit. His voice carries the warmth of a man who has lived the stories he sings, and his acoustic-driven performances feel less like concerts and more like conversations with an old friend.

Jak's journey has taken him far beyond the Indiana fields where it began. He has toured across the United States, sharing stages with some of the most iconic names in Country and Southern Rock. Diamond Rio, Travis Tritt, Marty Stuart, Montgomery Gentry, Kentucky Headhunters, Kitty Wells, Jerry Reed, Little Jimmy Dickens - the list reads like a hall of fame roster, and Jak earned his place among them with the kind of authenticity that can't be manufactured. His talent and dedication led to his induction into the Wabash Valley Musicians Hall of Fame, along with multiple Male Vocalist and Musician of the Year awards throughout the 1990s. He recorded two albums, "Jack Gibson Unplugged" and "What's It Gonna Take," and even spent time performing on Broadway in Nashville, Tennessee, sharpening his craft in the heart of Country music.

But for all the miles he's traveled, Jak's heart has always stayed close to the stories that raised him. His songwriting reflects the life of a working musician - the struggles, the gratitude, the faith, and the quiet victories that don't always make headlines but matter just the same. Songs like *Show Me the Way* reveal a man searching for direction with honesty and humility. *Doing This For So Long* opens a window into the mind of a songwriter who has spent years chasing the perfect rhyme. *Whistle Blowing in the Wind* paints a cinematic picture of trains passing through small towns, stirring questions about where life leads and what we leave behind.



And *Standing at Your Door* captures the ache of love shaped by timing, distance, and devotion.

In recent years, Jak has felt a pull back toward the music that first called him - Gospel and traditional Country. It isn't a retreat; it's a return. "I believe I'm going back to my roots," he says. "Sometimes you have to get out of your comfort zone. I'm ready to see what God's plan is. He gives me the words, I just use the pen to write it down." There's a quiet conviction in his voice when he says it, the kind that comes from a man who has lived enough life to recognize when he's being led.

Jak Gibson's story is not one of overnight success or manufactured fame. It's the story of a man who kept showing up - guitar in hand, heart on sleeve, faith intact. It's the story of a songwriter who never stopped listening for the next lyric, the next melody, the next moment of truth. And as he continues to write, perform, and rediscover the music that shaped him, one thing is clear: Jak isn't finished. Not even close. The road ahead is still wide open, and he's walking it with the same grit, grace, and God-given fire that's carried him this far.

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Randy Travis

Celebrating a Legend, Honoring an Icon

Staff/Cross Country USA

With more than 23 million albums sold, Randy Travis stands as one of the most influential and beloved artists in American music history. A Grand Ole Opry member for four decades and a 2016 inductee into the Country Music Hall of Fame, his career is defined by extraordinary achievements: seven Grammy Awards, 11 ACM Awards, 10 American Music Awards, seven Music City News Awards, eight Dove Awards, and five CMA Awards. Three of his recordings - *On the Other Hand*, *Forever and Ever, Amen*, and *Three Wooden Crosses* - earned CMA 'Song of the Year' honors. His legacy includes 23 No. 1 singles, 31 Top 10 hits, more than 40 film and television roles, and a catalog of Gold, Platinum, and multi-Platinum albums. These accomplishments are not merely milestones; they are the foundation of an icon whose influence continues to shape the genre.

This year, Tennessee honored Randy Travis with a series of historic celebrations marking the 40th anniversary of his landmark debut album, "Storms of Life." On June 2, 2026, exactly four decades after the album's release, the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, the City of Hendersonville, and Sumner County Tourism unveiled a Tennessee Music Pathways Marker outside Moby Dicky's Restaurant at 155 Sanders Ferry Road, the former site of Morningstar Sound Studio. The location, now officially dedicated as Point Amen, commemorates the studio where "Storms of Life" was born and where the sound of modern Country music was forever changed. Governor Bill Lee declared the date Randy Travis Day, cementing the moment in state history.

Morningstar Sound Studio, perched on a peninsula overlooking Old Hickory Lake, served as the creative home for 25 No. 1 hits and countless recordings by artists such as Dan Seals, Anne Murray, and George Jones. Among the classics crafted there were *Forever and Ever, Amen* and *Bop*,

two of the most enduring songs of the 1980s. The dedication ceremony drew an impressive gathering: Randy and Mary Travis; Morningstar co-founders Kyle Lehning and Tony Gottlieb; members of the Dan Seals family; Warner Records Nashville Chair and President Cris Lacy; state and local officials; and leaders from Tennessee's tourism and music communities. Songwriter Paul Overstreet delivered a moving performance of *Forever and Ever, Amen*, the hit he co-wrote with the late Don Schlitz.

Mary Travis spoke with deep gratitude and reflection. "Wonderful things, wonderful communities, events like this, are built when older gentlemen plant trees under whose shade they know they will never sit. Without everyone here today, and without all those who came before us, laid the groundwork, and helped shape the music industry into what it is, none of this would be possible. They talk about all his awards and accolades but Randy always said, 'These awards are built out of blood, sweat, and tears there, not metal and crystal.' And Randy sure put the work in. It's been a beautiful journey, and it's been such an honor to walk alongside him and enjoy this incredible honor today."

Two days later, the celebrations continued in Nashville as Randy Travis cut the ribbon on the newly dedicated Randy Travis Room at The Nashville Palace. The event honored both the 40th anniversary of "Storms of Life" and Travis's personal history with the venue where his career began. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he worked there as a cook and dishwasher while performing under the names Randy Traywick and Randy Ray. His live album "Randy Ray Live at The Nashville Palace," funded by owner John A. Hobbs, ultimately led to his breakthrough record deal with Warner Brothers' Martha Sharp and producer Kyle Lehning.

The new room features a curated collection of photographs chronicling Travis's storied career and a striking large-format vinyl artwork celebrating his legacy. Hosted by

Palace mainstay Becky Hinson and longtime bandmate Steve Hinson, the evening included performances by Rick “LD” Money, Dina Johnson, Joe Spivey, and appearances from Lance Dary, Bill Cook, and David Johnson. Barrett Hobbs expressed admiration for Randy and Mary Travis, affirming that the Palace will continue to champion emerging talent in the spirit of Travis’s legacy.

Artists from across genres and generations - Waka Flocka Flame, Drake Milligan, Kylie Frey, Walker Montgomery, Jacob Tolliver, Cassidy Daniels, James Dupré, Jeff Bates, Palmer Anthony, Dianne Sherril, Dalton Webb, Bobby Johnson, Cody Glenn Cox, and more - took the stage to honor Travis with performances of his signature hits.

The night culminated in a powerful all-sing of *Forever and Ever, Amen*, uniting artists, friends, and longtime band members in a moment that captured the enduring reach of Travis’s music.



Since his near-fatal stroke in 2013, Randy Travis’s resilience has inspired millions. With Mary’s unwavering support and years of therapy, he has made remarkable progress in speaking, walking, and singing. His 2019 memoir “Forever and Ever, Amen” earned critical acclaim, and his 2022 documentary “More Life” received six Telly Awards. In 2024, he released *Where That Came From*, his first new recording in more than a decade, made possible through advanced AI technology. The song debuted at No. 45 on Billboard’s Country Airplay chart and ignited renewed advocacy for creators’ rights in the digital age. He received the ACM Milestone Award in 2025 and continues to champion fair compensation and protection for artists.

In 2026, Randy Travis returned to the road with his More Life Tour, featuring James Dupré and members of his original band, offering fans a moving celebration of his legacy. More information is available at randytravis.com.

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