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Cross+Country^{USA} magazine

CHRISTINE J. SCOTT
A Life in Song

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BUSINESS OPERATIONS / C.O.O.

Randall Wilds

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Rachel Hodges

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

Valentine's Day turns our thoughts toward romance, but Scripture tells us that love is far bigger and deeper than that. When the Bible says, "the greatest of these is love," it points to a love that reaches beyond marriage. It's also a love that embraces family, friends, neighbors, and even strangers. It's the kindness we show each day, the compassion we extend, and the grace we offer one another. This kind of love reflects God's heart: patient, generous, and willing to see the good in others.

Valentine's Day becomes more meaningful when we celebrate it not just with chocolates and cards, but by living out that greater love in the way we treat each other.

Love is meant to draw us together, not push us apart. Yet today's world feels divided in so many ways - politically, socially, and even within our own communities. What we need is the kind of love that reaches across differences and chooses compassion over conflict. If we want healing, peace, and a future where our children feel safe, it begins with simple acts of forgiveness, kindness, and remembering that every person carries a story we may not see.

God's love is patient, merciful, forgiving, and unconditional - a love that reaches us at our best and our worst. When we receive that kind of love, we're called to reflect it in the way we treat others. That means showing kindness when it's not easy, offering grace when someone falls short, and choosing compassion over judgment. It means loving family, friends, neighbors, and even those who see the world differently than we do.

In a time when division is so prevalent, God's love invites us to bring people together. When we love others the way God loves us, we don't just talk about faith - we live it.

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." - 1 Corinthians 13:13

Robin

Robin Tanner, Managing Editor

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TRAYLEE OGLESBY

By Cory Parker

In Pine Mountain, Georgia, where the roads are dusty and the dreams run deep, Traylee Oglesby is carving out a name for himself, one song at a time. At just 20 years old, the self-described “small town kid with big dreams” has already earned the title of RCM Gold Artist, released a string of soul-baring singles, and shared the stage with legends like John Schneider and T. Graham Brown.

But his journey hasn’t been easy.

“My dad was my biggest supporter,” Oglesby says quietly. “He passed away unexpectedly on June 9, 2024. That loss changed everything. I found peace in songwriting and singing. It’s how I cope. It’s how I heal.”

That healing is evident in his latest releases, *Prayer List*, *I’ll Ease Your Pain*, and *Forgive My Shadows* - each a raw, spiritual plea for comfort and clarity. “These songs are all about losing someone you cherish deeply and wanting God’s help finding your way out of that hurt,” he explains.

Oglesby’s voice is steeped in the traditions of Waylon Jennings, George Strait, and Johnny Cash - artists who shaped his sound and spirit. “I’ve been singing since I was about 7,” he says. “But I knew I wanted a career in music around 13. I even auditioned for *The Voice* and *American Idol* when I was 14. Didn’t make it far, but it lit a fire in me.”

That fire has carried him through personal loss, industry challenges, and spiritual reckonings. “My biggest issue lately has been a separation from God,” he admits. “I’ve always believed that instead of listening to the world, you should listen to the word. God will put you where you need to be and when. Stop relying on social media and get back to your morals.”

It’s this blend of faith and authenticity that makes Oglesby’s music resonate. His lyrics aren’t just catchy, they’re confessional. His performances aren’t just entertaining, they’re cathartic.

One of his proudest moments came on stage in Mexico Beach, Florida, performing alongside Dukes of Hazzard star and Country artist John Schneider. “Not many get that experience,” he says. “I’m eternally grateful I did.”

Another highlight was connecting with T. Graham Brown, a Country icon known for his soulful delivery and spiritual depth. “Meeting him was unforgettable,” Oglesby says. “It reminded me that this path I’m on is real - and worth it.”

Still, the road hasn’t been without bumps. “My top challenge has been finding someone who truly sees the



passion I have for my music and can produce what I hear in my head,” he says. “It’s tough, but I’m learning.”

That learning is part of his ethos. “One of the most inspirational things I’ve ever been told is, ‘No matter how much you know, be willing to learn more.’ I think of that quote often. It keeps me grounded.”

Grounded is a good word for Oglesby. When he’s not writing or performing, he’s cutting wood, climbing trees, riding dirt roads in old Jeeps, and wearing his cowboy hat like a badge of honor. “I’m just a small town kid trying to make something of himself,” he says. “I was taught to work hard but follow my dreams, and that’s what I’m doing.”

His dream? To be one of the greats. “I want to help keep true Country music alive for as long as possible,” he says. “And when people come to my shows, they can always count on good music and a good time.”

That promise was on full display recently at Cowboy Town in Warm Springs, Georgia, where Oglesby delivered a crowd-pleasing live performance. It was a chance for fans to hear the heart behind the voice, and for Traylee to keep doing what he was born to do.

“I’m not chasing fame,” he says. “I’m chasing truth. And I think that’s what Country music is all about.”

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Remembering...

Staff, Cross Country USA

STUART JOHN PHILLIPS • JIM MCBRIDE



Stuart John Phillips

January 19, 1933 – December 25, 2025

Stuart John “Stu” Phillips lived a life that felt like a song - full of movement, melody, faith, and the steady rhythm of a man who followed every calling placed before him.

Born in Montreal, Quebec, on January 19, 1933, he grew up with a guitar in his hands and Gene Autry in his heart. As a young boy, he learned every Autry tune he could find, strumming them on his first guitar until the music became part of him. He often said Gene Autry was his hero, and in many ways, Stu spent his life becoming the kind of artist he admired: sincere, hardworking, and devoted to the people who listened.

By his early teens, Stu was already performing on Montreal radio shows, and at sixteen he was singing at fairs and rodeos across western Canada. The world was beginning to notice the young man with the smooth baritone voice and the easy storyteller’s charm.

His first major breakthrough came not on a stage, but behind a microphone. In the 1950s, Stu became a familiar voice across Canada as the host of popular radio programs such as *Stu for Breakfast*, *Town and Country*, and *Cowtown Jamboree*. Those radio successes opened the door to television, where he starred in *The Outrider* and later hosted *Red River Jamboree* on CBC Television from 1960 to 1964. During those years, audiences across the country came to know him as “The Travelling Balladeer,” a name that captured both his spirit and his sound.

Stu’s recording career began in 1957 with a series of Canadian folklore albums on Rodeo Records – “Echoes of the Canadian Foothills,” “Visit Old Québec,” and “A Visit to British Columbia.” But his dream stretched far beyond the Canadian border. As a boy, he had listened to distant Grand Ole Opry broadcasts on a crystal radio, imagining what it would be like to stand on that stage in Nashville.

In 1965, he made that dream a reality. Stu moved to Nashville, signed with RCA Victor, and began working with legendary producer Chet Atkins. His singles, *Bracero*, *The Great El Tigre*, *Juanita Jones*, and *Vin Rose* - introduced him to American audiences, while albums like “Singin’ Stu Phillips,” “Grassroots Country,” and “Our Last Rendezvous” established him as a rising voice in Country music.

Then, on June 1, 1967, the boy who once strained to hear the Opry through static was inducted as a member of the Grand Ole Opry. It was the honor of his life. Stu performed there often, cherishing every moment on that stage. At the time of his passing, he was the Opry’s oldest living member - a distinction he carried with quiet pride.

Stu’s career took him around the world, with performances in England, Germany, South Africa, and beyond. In the 1970s, he hosted more than 50 episodes of *The Stu Phillips Show*, a nationally syndicated television program taped in Louisville, Kentucky. And in 1998, he and his beloved wife, Aldona, became naturalized U.S. citizens, embracing the country that had embraced his music.

But Stu’s life held more than music. In the 1980s, he answered a long-felt spiritual calling, earning a Doctor of Ministry degree from the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. He was ordained as an Episcopal priest and spent years balancing ministry and music - sometimes blending the two in ways that touched hearts and changed lives.

His contributions to Country music were recognized in 1993 when he was inducted into the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame. Fans and peers alike remember him for his early Canadian roots, his American Country legacy, his gentle storytelling style, and that unmistakable baritone voice that seemed to wrap itself around every lyric.

Stu was also an entrepreneur at heart. He founded Long Hollow Winery in Goodlettsville, Tennessee, later passing it on to his son Joel and daughter-in-law Benita. In 2019, he opened Stage d’or LLC, an entertainment venue and coffee shop that reflected his love for community, creativity, and conversation.

On the evening of December 25, 2025, Stu Phillips passed away peacefully at the age of 92, surrounded by the family

he adored. After 71 years of marriage, his wife Aldona was by his side, along with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

To the end, Stu remained “The Travelling Balladeer,” always looking toward the horizon with hope. And as he stepped into the presence of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, those who loved him imagined him turning back with a gentle smile, offering one last benediction: “Good night, and remember, just beyond the next green hill there’s a brand-new day awaiting you.”



Jim McBride

April 28, 1947 – January 6, 2026

Jim McBride never set out to become a legend. He simply loved Country music - the kind that drifted through Alabama kitchens on Saturday nights, the kind that wrapped itself around a boy’s imagination and refused to let go.

Born Jimmy Ray McBride on April 28, 1947, in Huntsville, Alabama, he grew up listening to the Grand Ole Opry with his family, absorbing the rhythms and stories that would one day become the backbone of his own songwriting.

He started writing songs as a child, scribbling ideas long before he understood what a publishing deal was or how a melody could change a life. By eighteen, he was pursuing songwriting full-time, chasing a dream that didn’t always chase him back. In the 1970s, he found a mentor in fellow Alabamian Curly Putnam, a giant in the craft who recognized the spark in the young writer. A few of Jim’s songs even made their way onto Hee Haw, but success remained elusive. Eventually, frustration won out, and he stepped away from music to work for the U.S. Postal Service.

But Country music wasn’t finished with him.

In 1980, Conway Twitty recorded *A Bridge That Just Won’t Burn*, a song Jim co-wrote with Roger Murrah. That single moment - that one “yes” - changed everything. Murrah

called him with the news: “I guess you need to pack your bags, we’ve got Conway’s next single.” Jim quit the post office the day after Christmas and moved to Nashville, carrying nothing but determination and a catalog of songs that were about to find their place.

The hits followed quickly. Johnny Lee took *Bet Your Heart on Me* to #1 in 1981. Waylon Jennings topped the charts with *Rose in Paradise* in 1987. Jim’s name began appearing on records by the artists he’d grown up admiring: Johnny Cash, George Jones, Reba McEntire, Willie Nelson, Charley Pride, Kris Kristofferson, Randy Travis, Brenda Lee, Jerry Lee Lewis, Toby Keith, Dwight Yoakam - a list so long and storied it reads like a syllabus in Country music history.

But the turning point - the partnership that would define an era - came in 1988, when Jim met a young, unknown singer-songwriter named Alan Jackson. They clicked instantly. Together, they wrote songs that didn’t just climb charts; they became part of the American musical vocabulary. *Chattahoochee*, *Chasin’ That Neon Rainbow*, *Someday*, *A House With No Curtains*, *(Who Says) You Can’t Have It All* - songs that captured small-town dreams, riverbank summers, and the quiet ache of real life.

Chattahoochee became a cultural landmark, earning ‘Song of the Year’ from the CMA and ‘Favorite Country Single’ from the American Music Awards. It cemented Jim’s place not just as a hitmaker, but as a storyteller whose words shaped the sound of modern Country.

Over his career, Jim wrote five No. 1 singles, ten Top 10 hits, and eighteen Top 40 songs. His catalog reached far beyond Nashville, weaving itself into honky-tonks, radio stations, and front porches across America. Fellow songwriter Jerry Salley once said Jim was “instrumental in helping write America’s Country Music Songbook,” a tribute that captures both the breadth of his influence and the humility with which he carried it.

His peers honored him accordingly. Jim was inducted into the Alabama Music Hall of Fame in 1995 and the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2017. He later served as president of the board of the Nashville Songwriters Association International, championing the craft he loved and the writers coming behind him.

Jim McBride died on January 6, 2026, at the age of 78. The Alabama Music Hall of Fame remembered him as “a beloved Alabamian, songwriter, friend, mentor, and so much more.” And he was. He was a man who believed in the power of a good line, a good melody, a good story. A man who walked away from songwriting once, only to discover that the songs weren’t willing to walk away from him.

His legacy lives in the voices of the artists who recorded his work, in the fans who sang along, and in the countless writers he inspired. But most of all, it lives in the music - those timeless, unmistakable songs that sound like home.

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CATHY GUFFEY

By Chloe Wright

Cathy Guffey has loved music for as long as she can remember. As a child, when her family spent time together with the radio on, Cathy often lined up her dolls as an audience, auditioning for them, word-for-word, everything she heard. That fascination never declined – it actually grew through the years. From childhood music classes to Gospel chart songs, Cathy’s story is a story of faith, intention, and true personal affection for the One who gave her a voice.

“I wasn’t raised in church,” Cathy reflects, “but after I met my husband and we began to attend together, I fell in love with music. It had purpose.” While she may not have yet known the Lord, the Holy Spirit was moving in her heart with every note and every lyric.

Her calling immediately became evident when someone shared how profoundly one of her songs had impacted their life. “When I recognized that God was using me to reach someone for him,” she recalls, “I suddenly knew what I was called to do.” That realization became the basis of her ministry - and her most unforgettable moment as an artist.

Over the years, Cathy has received accolades for ‘Best Female Vocalist,’ ‘Songwriter of the Year,’ and ‘Song of the Year,’ in addition to charting multiple Top 10 songs, including the No. 1 single, *I’ll Take You to Heaven*. Her latest single, *All That Glitters*, continues to receive a lot of buzz, reminding her audience that faith shines brighter than any earthly achievement.

In addition to her stage work, Cathy has a passion for ministry that goes beyond to the radio waves. She is a well-loved DJ with Pure Gospel Radio and hosts a program called Cathy’s Corner every Monday evening at 7 p.m. (EST). “I can either play music or just talk,” Cathy explains. “Sometimes I do both. It blows my mind to think about who could be listening and where they are at. Hopefully one day in heaven, I can meet someone who was impacted by something they heard on my show.”

Cathy’s faith runs deep, constantly growing by her personal moments of reflection and conviction. She remembers a Sunday morning in church when she felt the old hymn *Stand Up for Jesus* aroused her spirit in a new way. “It suddenly hit me that I had not been doing that,” she recalls



with sincerity. “From that point on, I promised God that I would not hold back again. As long as I breathe, I will use that breath to praise Him.”

Cathy and her husband, John, both enjoy travel and ministry. Cathy recalls an impactful experience when visiting Italy, standing in the ancient Coliseum thinking about the martyrs who lost their lives because of their dedication to Christ. “It just engulfed me; the history reminded me of the price others paid so that I could freely be a vessel of the Gospel.”

Cathy’s hope is that all three of their children, six grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren can come to a place of recognizing and accepting the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Her life and her music are a testimony to that hope.

“I want anyone who comes to my concerts to feel happiness - to see Him in my smile and hear Him in my songs,” she explains. “And when they leave, I want them to recognize they were in the presence of the Lord.”

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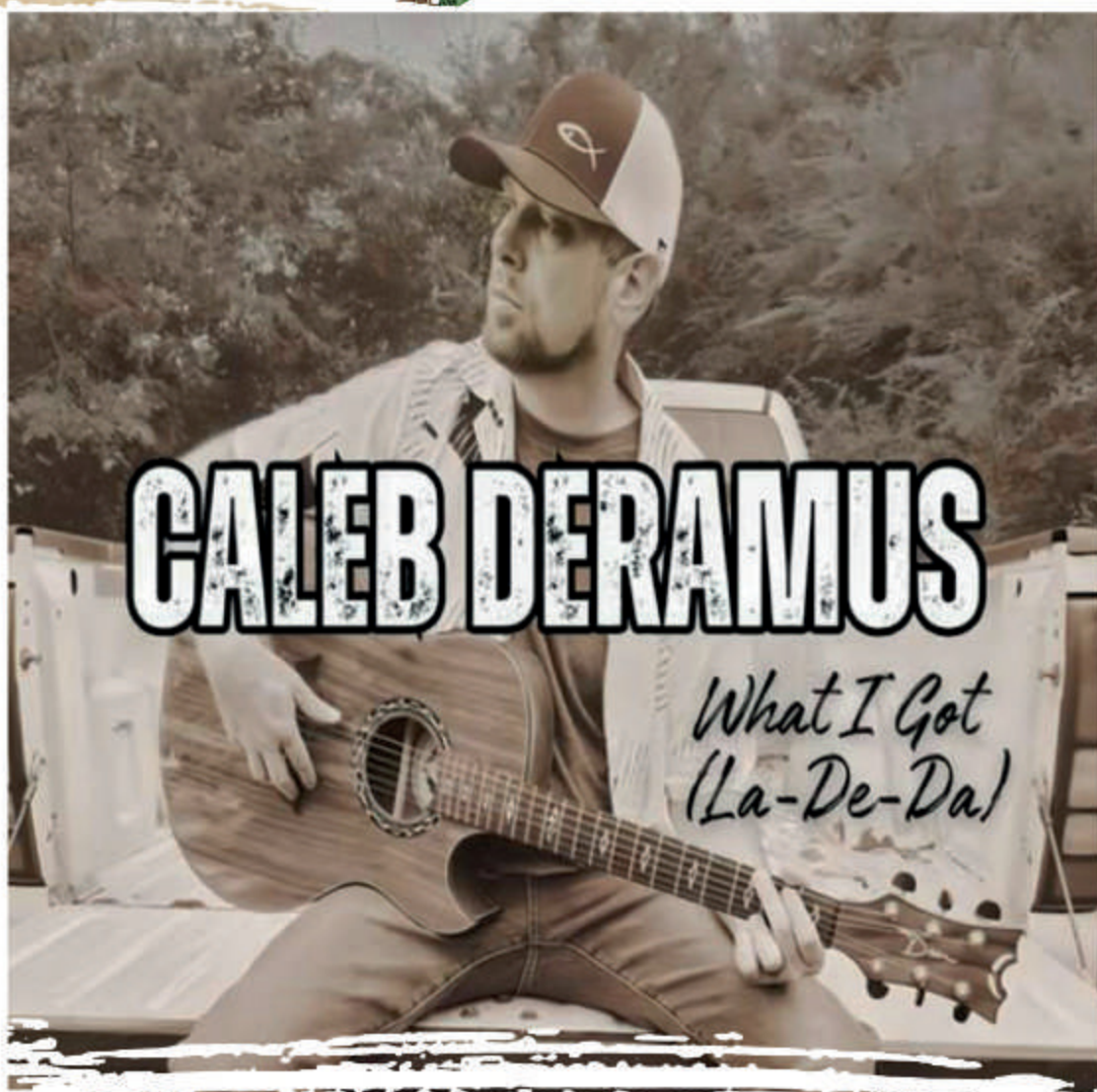
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The Story Behind the Song

LOVE CAN BUILD A BRIDGE

Written by Naomi Judd, Paul Overstreet, and John Jarvis

Recorded by The Judds

Staff, Cross Country USA

With Valentine's Day upon us, we wanted to feature a love song that goes beyond relationships, family, and friends, but a love that unites us as a nation. *Love Can Build a Bridge*, made popular by The Judds, is a poignant reflection on the power of love and unity. Its message feels even more urgent today than when it was first released decades ago.

In the history of Country music, few songs carry the emotional weight of *Love Can Build a Bridge*. Released in December 1990 as the title track of The Judds' final studio album before their initial disbandment, the song transformed from a simple plea for unity into a transcendent anthem of resilience and the power of human connection.

The song was co-written by Naomi Judd, along with Paul Overstreet and John Jarvis. While many fans associate the lyrics with the bond between a mother and daughter, Naomi's original intent was broader. She wanted to write a song that addressed the growing divisions she saw in the world - a reminder that regardless of our differences, love is the only path forward.

What gave the song its enduring power, however, was the timing of its release. Shortly after the song hit the airwaves, Naomi Judd announced her retirement from performing due to a life-threatening diagnosis of Hepatitis c.

Following the release of *Love Can Build a Bridge*, which went to No. 5 on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart, the Judds went on their farewell tour in 1991 before Naomi's retirement and Wynonna embarking on a solo career.

For Naomi and her daughter Wynonna, *Love Can Build a Bridge* served as the nightly emotional climax during their 1991 Farewell Tour. Watching the duo perform the song - often through tears - while holding hands, gave the lyrics a profound, lived-in meaning. It wasn't just about global unity anymore; it was about the bridge of love that would sustain them through a terrifying medical journey and a forced career end. Although by the late 1990s, the duo reunited and began performing limited shows together and continued to perform occasionally throughout the 2000s and 2010s.

Decades later, *Love Can Build a Bridge* remains a staple in the American songbook for several reasons. The song has been covered by numerous artists. It's frequently played at graduations, memorials, and humanitarian events, serving as a universal "healing" song. *Love Can Build a Bridge* is also the name of Naomi's 1993 autobiography and the 1995 made-for-television biographical film "Naomi & Wynonna: Love Can Build a Bridge."



THE JUDDS
Naomi and Wynonna

Prior to embarking on their Final Tour in 2022, Wynonna and Naomi reunited for what became their final performance together at the CMT Music Awards on April 11. Marking the first time the Judds performed together on a televised award show in more than 20 years, the duo performed *Love Can Build a Bridge* from the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville one last time before Naomi's death on April 30 at age 76. It was a staggering, soulful performance that reminded the world of the song's core message: that love is the only thing we leave behind.

Fittingly, Wynonna closed her mother's May 15, 2022, memorial service at the Ryman Auditorium with a Pentecostal choir-accompanied rendition. "I want her to hear this," Wynonna said, before leading the audience in a chill-inducing singalong of Naomi's words. The song became the focal point of her memorial, proving that the "bridge" she sang about in 1990 was strong enough to span the gap between life and memory.

Love Can Build a Bridge
*I'd gladly walk across the desert
 With no shoes upon my feet
 To share with you the last bite
 Of bread I had to eat
 I would swim out to save you
 In your sea of broken dreams
 When all your hopes are sinkin'
 Let me show you what love means*

*Love can build a bridge
 Between your heart and mine
 Love can build a bridge
 Don't you think it's time?
 Don't you think it's time?*

*I would whisper love so loudly
 Every heart could understand
 That love and only love
 Can join the tribes of man
 I would give my heart's desire
 So that you might see
 The first step is to realize
 That it all begins with you and me*

*Love can build a bridge
 Between your heart and mine
 Love can build a bridge
 Don't you think it's time?
 Don't you think it's time?*

*When we stand together
 It's our finest hour
 We can do anything (anything), anything (anything)
 Keep believin' in the power*

*Love can build a bridge
 Between your heart and mine
 Love can build a bridge
 Don't you think it's time?
 Don't you think it's time?*



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CrossCountry Report

..... CHRISTIAN COUNTRY MUSIC NEWS & SCOOPS

Small Town Sunday Renews Management Agreement with Michael Turner of Straight Arrow Management



Christian Country band Small Town Sunday has officially renewed its management agreement with Michael Turner of Straight Arrow Management, continuing a partnership that has played a key role in the band's growth and momentum.

Since first teaming up, Small Town Sunday and Straight Arrow Management have worked closely to expand the band's reach, strengthen its brand, and position its faith-driven Country sound for long-term success. The renewed agreement reflects a shared vision for the future and a continued commitment to strategic development, touring opportunities, and new music releases.

"Michael has been an incredible advocate for our band and our mission," said Small Town Sunday. "We're excited to

continue building together and taking the next steps God has placed in front of us."

Michael Turner echoed the enthusiasm, stating, "Small Town Sunday is a special group with a powerful message and authentic sound. I'm honored to continue working alongside them as we grow their platform and impact."

The renewal comes at a time of strong creative momentum for Small Town Sunday, with new music and upcoming projects planned for the year ahead. Fans can expect continued releases, live performances, and meaningful content rooted in faith, family, and small-town values.

For more information on Small Town Sunday, visit www.smalltownsunday.com. For management inquiries, contact Straight Arrow Management at (615) 218-8222.

Dolly Parton Is Releasing Music Again, With an Assist From Reba McEntire, Lainey Wilson and More



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The Queen of Country Music has just re-released her song *Light of a Clear Blue Morning*, featuring Lainey Wilson, Miley Cyrus, Queen Latifah and Reba McEntire. All four are artists that Parton has worked with in the past in different areas of her professional and personal life.

She embraced the song's message of hope and courage, sharing an image of herself with a guitar slung across her back, watching the sun come up over a mountain range.

Parton originally released the song in 1977 as part of her "New Harvest...First Gathering" album. It deals with imagery of watching the sun break through after a dark, difficult night, bringing rejuvenation and hope for a bright day ahead.

It's a very meaningful song to her. According to Parton's website, she considers *Light of a Clear Blue Morning* as "her song of deliverance," and it represents her musical epiphany that "when the Lord has set you free 'Ye are free indeed.'"

Parton touted that this recording and music video will benefit pediatric cancer research at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt in Nashville.

The new rendition of this song is available across streaming platforms. The song was originally released in 1977 and has more than 7 million plays on Spotify.

13-Year-Old Dylan DeMarcus Follows in Dad's Footsteps With Stunning Rascal Flatts Cover

Dylan DeMarcus, son of Rascal Flatts' Jay DeMarcus, is proving that musical talent runs deep in the family with the release of his cover of the Rascal Flatts mega-hit *Bless The Broken Road*. The 13-year-old was inspired to record the song after a video of him singing it, posted by his uncle and Rascal Flatts lead vocalist Gary LeVox, went viral.

"Dylan and I had already begun working on some music for him to release when the time was right. The timing became right after the huge reaction from a couple of posts that Gary was kind enough to showcase on his own platforms," Jay explained. "We went into the studio last Saturday and rushed to finish this first release."

While Dylan has been playing and singing for years, this marks his debut track - and it's a moment his dad couldn't be prouder of. "I couldn't be more proud of my son

obviously, but to watch his growth in musicality, and see his passion for it continue to grow over the last couple of years, has been astounding. He has all of the things you can't teach."

Check out Dylan DeMarcus' cover of *Bless The Broken Road* on YouTube.

Bless The Broken Road was written by Jeff Hanna, Marcus Hummon, and Bobby Boyd. It was originally recorded by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band in 1994 and by Hummon himself in 1995. Eventually, the song was recorded by supergroup Rascal Flatts for their third studio album, "Feels Like Today." Released in November 2004, years before Dylan was even born, the track went on to become a five-week No. 1 single.

The release comes ahead of Rascal Flatts' 2026 tour, that kicked off on January 15 in Raleigh, North Carolina. The trek will make stops in Knoxville, Nashville, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and more before wrapping up on February 28.

Rascal Flatts will also appear at RodeoHouston and perform at select festivals this summer, including the Voices of America Country Music Festival and Boots and Hearts Music Festival.



Cross Country Report continued on page 24 > > >



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Vince Gill Announces '50 Years from Home' Tour

One of the most popular and most recorded singers of the past thirty years, music icon Vince Gill has announced a portion of his upcoming tour dates. The 22-time Grammy winner and highly acclaimed musician, songwriter, vocalist, and producer will embark on a summer tour beginning June 18 and includes a six-night residency in Nashville at the historic Ryman Auditorium.



Gill has spent much of the last nine years as a touring member of the Eagles. The iconic band is currently amid a lengthy run of performances before sellout crowds at Sphere in Las Vegas. He will continue to perform with the Eagles.

To honor this 50-year career milestone of leaving home in Oklahoma to begin his career as a performer, Gill is curating a series of EPs to be released over the course of a year, thematically titled "50 Years From Home." Thus far he has released three EPs, each featuring six brand-new songs and one previous hit: *I Gave You Everything I Had* (October 17, 2025), *Secondhand Smoke* (November 14, 2025) and *Brown's Diner Bar* (January 9, 2026).

As always, Musicians Hall of Fame member Gill will be joined on stage by a stellar cast of musicians. More information can be found at vincegill.com

"Gill is so much more than a world-class singer and guitar slinger; he's also the storyteller of many generations." - AMERICAN SONGWRITER

Nashville Christian Country and New South Artists Agency Have Partnered with Cynthia Reamy to Become the Marketing and Event Developer for Their Artists

Nashville Christian Country and New South Artists Agency have partnered with amazing Christian Country songwriter and business woman, Cynthia Reamy to become the Marketing and Event Developer for their artists. Cindee will be working with Rick Schweinsberg and Teresa Schweinsberg to market and bring on sponsors for major Christian Country events, which will continue to expand the reach of this music.



L-R: Rick and Teresa Schweinsberg, Cynthia Reamy

"Cindee will be a great asset to our team," said Rick Schweinsberg. "With her business and marketing background, we are grateful for her help in bringing this greatly needed style of family friendly, positive Country music to the masses. We want to continue to develop the Nashville Christian Country sound of quality in production, promotion, and presentation to compare with Nashville's Country music and expand its reach."

"I am so grateful Cindee shares our focus for getting this music, more importantly the message, out to those who have



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Cindee stated, "What an incredible blessing it is to join the Nashville Christian Country team, a feeling that surpasses mere excitement. The past year has been an extraordinary journey of growth, filled with love and respect for Rick, Teresa, the artists, musicians, and writers."

For those interested in getting involved or booking a Christian Country concert TO REACH BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH with a style of music much in demand in 2026, contact: newsouthartistsagency@gmail.com.

Known as one of the most iconic acts in Country music, The Gatlin Brothers will be spotlighted with a special tribute at the historic Ryman Auditorium in Nashville on Monday, February 23. The star-studded show will be in celebration of Larry, Steve and Rudy's 70th anniversary. It's a history-making milestone featuring all original members from 1955 when their musical journey began. (Tickets for the celebration are available via ryman.com.)

The close family harmonies of Larry, Steve & Rudy: The Gatlin Brothers have given the trio a signature sound that led to country classics like *All the Gold in California* and *Houston (Means I'm One Day Closer to You)*. The brothers won a GRAMMY® for their 1976 breakthrough hit, *Broken Lady*, and reached #1 with several other songs soon thereafter.

Larry Gatlin has written songs recorded by Elvis Presley, Glen Campbell, Barbra Streisand, Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, Dottie West, Roy Orbison, Barry Gibb and countless Gospel artists including the Gaither Vocal Band, the Booth Brothers, the Isaacs and many more. Larry was formally inducted into the prestigious Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in the fall of 2019.

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An Evening with the Grand Ole Opry at Carnegie Hall

On March 20, 2026, the Grand Ole Opry takes the stage at Carnegie Hall as part of the "United in Sound: America at 250" festival.

In honor of the nation's 250th birthday, Carnegie Hall is celebrating the rich landscape of American music with performances from influential artists across a wide range of genres. For one night only, the Opry takes the stage to showcase the past, present, and future of Country music and its lasting impact on the American sound. Representing the Opry are members Henry Cho, Rhonda Vincent, Scotty McCreery, and special guests The War & Treaty.

Experience this one-of-a-kind show live in New York City. (Tickets are on sale now.)

This marks the Opry's fourth visit to the legendary Carnegie Hall stage, following historic performances in 1947, 1961, and 2005...

1947: Ernest Tubb, Minnie Pearl, George D. Hay, and others bring the rowdy Grand Ole Opry show to Carnegie Hall - a stage primarily known for classical music - for a barn-burning two-night run.

1961: The Opry returns with a new cast, including Bill Monroe, Grandpa Jones, Marty Robbins, and Patsy Cline in her one-and-only Carnegie Hall appearance.



2005: The Opry marks its 80th anniversary with a star-studded lineup including Alan Jackson, Alison Krauss, Bill Anderson, Brad Paisley, Charley Pride, Little Jimmy Dickens, Martina McBride, Ricky Skaggs, Trace Adkins, Trisha Yearwood, and Vince Gill.

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A Decade of Devotion and Patriotism: Celebrating Ten Years of Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance

Award-winning Country music artist Neal McCoy has long been known for his energy, charisma, and unmistakable patriotism. For decades, he has been a fan favorite, performing his music across the world and connecting with audiences through humor, heart, and authenticity. But over the last decade, it's his unwavering devotion to reciting the Pledge of Allegiance every single day that has become one of the most meaningful chapters of his life. For a man whose career includes hits like *Wink*, *No Doubt About It*, and *The Shake*, this milestone wasn't about music - it was about meaning.

On January 7th, in Washington, D.C., Neal McCoy stepped onto the north lawn of the White House with the same sincerity he brings to every stage he's ever stood on. The air was brisk, the flag had just been raised, and the moment carried a weight he couldn't have imagined when he first began this ritual.

At exactly 7 a.m. EST, McCoy recited the Pledge of Allegiance live on Facebook/Meta - just as he has done every single day since January 7, 2016. That's 3,654 consecutive days. What began as a simple gesture of patriotism has grown into a daily ritual shared by millions, creating a community bound by faith, gratitude, and love of country.

"Patriotism is not political," McCoy says. "Today is a big milestone for me and for all the followers that tune in each day to recite the Pledge of Allegiance with me. I am honored to be in the nation's capital and especially the White House. It is such a historical building and one of the most worldly known buildings, so to be welcomed inside the gates and to honor our flag and America here is really something."

Born and raised in Texas, Neal McCoy built his career on connection - the kind that makes fans feel like family. His high-energy shows, his unwavering support for the U.S. military, and his genuine kindness have made him one of the most beloved entertainers in Country music.

He has earned multiple Entertainer of the Year awards, achieved gold and platinum albums, and performed countless shows for troops around the world. Yet it is his daily Pledge - a simple, steady act of devotion - that has become one of the most defining symbols of who he is.

As McCoy approached the ten-year anniversary of his daily Pledge, he partnered with Allied Flag, America's premier manufacturer of 100% American-made flags, to release a limited-edition Premium American Flag. Each flag is fully sourced and crafted in the United States to government specifications - a detail that matters deeply to McCoy.

"I started saying the Pledge of Allegiance on Facebook over nine years ago and I have not missed a day," he says. "I have great memories of saying the Pledge daily at school and always wanting to help raise or lower the flag each day. Working with Allied Flag gives us the opportunity to share those memories with folks all over our wonderful country."

The history of the Pledge is never far from his mind. "The first version of the Pledge was written in 1885. In 1954, the words 'Under God' were added, and a year later it was sung for the first time by the Air Force choral group the Singing Sergeants on the floor of the House of Representatives on Flag Day."

Allied Flag President Tyler Young shares the same sentiment: "Neal's voice has carried the Pledge into millions of homes, reminding us that faith, family, and country still matter in America. Standing together with Neal is more than a partnership; it's a celebration of the American spirit we both cherish."

The limited-edition flags, boxed in custom packaging featuring McCoy's name and likeness, is now available at AlliedFlag.com and NealMcCoy.com.

As America celebrates its 250th anniversary, Allied Flag celebrates its own milestone - 75 years of crafting American flags in the United States. Their mission mirrors McCoy's: to honor the values that bind us together. From farms and front porches to schools, businesses, and government buildings, the American flag remains a symbol of sacrifice, freedom, and unity. And for ten years straight, Neal McCoy has helped millions pause each day to remember exactly what it stands for.

McCoy's musical legacy is equally impressive. He has released fifteen studio albums and 34 singles to Country radio.

His breakthrough came in 1993 with back-to-back No. 1 hits *No Doubt About It* and *Wink*, from his platinum-certified album "No Doubt About It." His catalog includes "Pride: A Tribute to Charley Pride" (honoring his longtime friend and mentor) and the big-band standards album "You Don't Know Me."

He has completed 15 USO Tours - an achievement he considers one of the proudest of his career - and has received multiple Humanitarian Awards from the Academy of Country Music, the Country Radio Broadcasters, and the Masonic Grand Lodge.

Neal also supports his own charity, the East Texas Angel Network, which is dedicated to

improving the lives of children in East Texas living with terminal or life-threatening illnesses.

McCoy's contributions to Texas culture and American patriotism will soon be recognized in a major way. He will receive the "Spirit of Texas" award during the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at Billy Bob's Texas on March 25, 2026. The evening will include cocktails, a silent auction, and a cowboy-inspired dinner, with proceeds supporting the Hall of Fame's expanded museum, educational programs, and preservation efforts - a fitting tribute to a man who has spent his life honoring the spirit of the Lone Star State.

And through it all, he continues to tour year-round. As Neal likes to say, "No two shows are the same."

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For more than four decades, Christine J. Scott has carried a message of hope, healing, and unwavering faith through every song she sings. From her first childhood solo to her upcoming fifteenth recording, her journey has been marked by God's grace in seasons of joy, loss, and renewed purpose. Today, Christine stands as a seasoned vocalist, songwriter, author, conference speaker, and minister whose testimony continues to touch audiences around the world - one heartfelt lyric at a time.

By Cory Parker

Christine's passion for music began at an early age. At just ten years old, she stepped into the spotlight for the first time, singing a solo of *Climb Every Mountain* during her school choir's performance of "The Sound of Music." By the age of fifteen, she had already recorded her first album at a studio in Houston, Texas. These early milestones laid the groundwork for a lifelong calling in music - one firmly rooted in her faith. From the very beginning, her relationship with God has guided and shaped every step of her journey.

Christine went on to record ten albums as part of the trio Hearts of Grace. In 2020, her life took a heartbreaking turn when her husband and father passed away only three weeks apart. Through grief and loss, she remained steadfast in her faith, gaining a deeper understanding of what it truly means to live daily in God's grace. During this season, she felt a clear calling to step into a solo ministry. Since then, she has released two solo projects, with another album scheduled for release in March of this year. This upcoming project will mark her 15th recording since she began her career in 1980.

Her first solo album, "Bring Him Every Need," was released in 2023 through Grace Records Nashville. Three songs from the project were sent to radio - *Bring Him Every Need*, *It Will All Be Worth It Someday*, and *How Did That Feel*. All three charted successfully, with *How Did That Feel* surpassing 800,000 plays and *Bring Him Every Need* reaching more than 700,000 plays on iTube247.com.

In November 2024, Christine signed with Phyllis Salter Gann of Salter Gann Universal Promotions and Management LLC, along with Major Record Distribution LLC. In December of 2025, she came onboard both the management company and the MRD label. She is now working side by side with Phyllis, CEO/Owner. Her ministry has grown rapidly, opening doors she never imagined possible. Her EP featuring five of her songs was released across all major digital platforms and on YouTube.

One standout track, *Mended Fences*, from the "Getting Ready to Go" project, was released worldwide through The Orchard on April 4, 2025. The song quickly climbed the Airplay Express Gospel Chart, earning Silver, Gold, and Platinum rankings and reaching the number one position. Today, *Mended Fences* is Christine's most requested song and is played internationally - including in China and as one of only two songs being played in Russia. As Christine humbly says, "To God be the glory."

The message of *Mended Fences* resonates deeply with listeners from all walks of life. Christine shares that anyone who has faced pain or addiction can find comfort in the hope offered through Jesus Christ, as well as healing through forgiveness - both for others and for themselves.

About a year ago, Christine's ministry was further strengthened when two dedicated individuals, Tim Day and Leanne Brasington, joined her team. Their support with scheduling, travel, and event coordination allows Christine to focus fully on singing and ministering without unnecessary distractions. She is thankful for both. Speaking for the team, Tim says "Take the time to invest in someone or something you believe in."

The Ministry Team



Leanne Brasington



Tim Day



Phyllis Salter Gann



Her ministry has led her to some remarkable platforms, including multiple appearances on the main stage at the Ark Encounter, where she was invited to sing *Amazing Grace* inside the Ark. Christine regularly attends the National Quartet Convention and has performed in various artist showcases. She also sang twice at the Biblical Times Theater for the Southern Gospel Promoter's Association (SPGA) and, in 2025, was elected Secretary of that organization.

Grateful for God's continued blessings, Christine remains focused on her mission. She shares that her greatest desire is to lead people to Christ and to remind believers of God's goodness. Whether singing at church services, private events, or women's conferences, her goal is always to glorify God and walk faithfully through every door He opens.

Beyond music, Christine is also an accomplished graphic artist who works with Wilds & Associates, creating ads for publications such as *Cashbox*, *Cross Country USA*, and *Christian Voice Magazine*. She is also a published author, with two books to her name: "Apply Within" and "Daily Heart Songs Devotional – Volume 1."

With many talents and a grateful heart, Christine continues to share the love of Jesus both on and off the stage. She credits her journey to the support of family, friends, prayer partners, and listeners around the world. Her testimony and music encourage, uplift, and draw audiences closer to God, reflecting a life marked by faith, perseverance, and grace. With over four decades of recording and a lifetime devoted to worship, Christine says "He gave me my first breath, I'll give Him my last."

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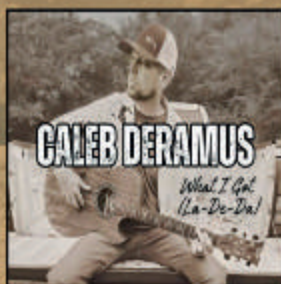
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The Music & Legacy of K. T. Oslin

She was one of Country music's most distinctive and transformative voices, a woman who arrived in Nashville on her own terms and reshaped the genre with a perspective it had rarely heard before. K.T. Oslin paved the way for many of today's female artists. Known for the hit song *80s Ladies*, her influence is still prevalent decades later.

Born Kay Toinette Oslin in Crossett, Arkansas, in 1942, she spent years building a life in the arts - first as a folk singer, then as a Broadway performer, and later as a commercial jingle vocalist in New York. Long before she became a star, she was already a respected songwriter, with her work recorded by artists like Dottie West, Gail Davies, Sissy Spacek, and The Judds. Yet her true breakthrough didn't come until she was 45, an age when most women in Country music were being pushed aside rather than welcomed in.

When she released *80's Ladies* in 1987, she didn't just introduce a new song - she introduced a new kind of woman to Country music. Her lyrics were bold, honest, and unafraid to speak to the experiences of women who had lived full lives. She wrote about friendship, independence, heartbreak, desire, and the complicated beauty of growing older. Her voice carried a rare blend of strength and vulnerability, and her storytelling resonated with listeners, especially women who had long been waiting to hear someone speak their truth.

Oslin earned three Grammy Awards, including wins for *80's Ladies* and the powerful ballad *Hold Me*. She made history as the first woman to win CMA Songwriter of the Year and claimed the CMA Female Vocalist of the Year award in 1988. Her album "This Woman" went platinum and earned ACM Album of the Year, while her singles climbed the charts and solidified her place as one of the most compelling artists of her era. Songs like *Do Ya, I'll Always Come Back*, and *Come Next Monday* showcased her ability to blend humor, heartache, and wisdom in a way that felt both theatrical and deeply personal.

Before Nashville embraced her, Oslin had already lived a rich creative life on the stage, appearing in Broadway productions such as *Hello, Dolly!*, *Promises, Promises*, and *West Side Story*. That theatrical background shaped her musical presence. She performed with an expressive, almost



cinematic quality, delivering songs as if she were inhabiting a character - yet always with a core of truth that made her work unmistakably authentic.

K.T. Oslin's legacy extends far beyond her chart success. She opened doors for women who didn't fit the industry's narrow mold, proving that artistry has no expiration date and that lived experience can be a powerful, creative force. Her songs continue to resonate because they speak to real life - messy, beautiful, complicated, and honest. She gave voice to women who had been overlooked, and in doing so, she changed the landscape of Country music. K.T. was on the forefront of the music videos in the mid-80s and 90s, showcasing mini movies to her hit songs with extraordinary storylines.

Oslin passed away on December 21, 2020, in Nashville at age 78, leaving behind a body of work that remains as vibrant and relevant as ever. Her influence can be heard in every woman who writes fearlessly, sings truthfully, and refuses to apologize for her story. She was a trailblazer, a storyteller, actress and her musical talent has left a lasting impact in the music world.

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Music, Ministry, and the Making of a Modern Appalachian Storyteller

By Burke Allen

Delnora has always carried a quiet strength - an artist shaped by heritage, heartache, and a faith that refuses to dim. Her music doesn't chase trends; it tells the truth. And in this season of her life, that truth is rising with a clarity and conviction that's impossible to ignore.

Music has been woven into Delnora's DNA from the very beginning. Growing up in Princeton, West Virginia - deep in the heart of Appalachian coal country - she was surrounded by a musical legacy that runs deeper than the mines that shaped her home state. Her great-grandfather, Henry Reed, was a master of old-time fiddle whose repertory became foundational to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

"Dr. Alan Jabbour considered my Great Granddaddy his mentor," she says with unmistakable pride. "He relearned how to play the violin with Granddaddy's long-bow style. He preserved those tunes, those recordings... and now there's a festival every summer in Virginia where pickers from all over

the country come to play his music. Granddaddy never chased fame. It found him because he was a master of his craft."

That heritage didn't skip a generation. Her father, Tim Reed, is an accomplished guitarist and songwriter. Her mother, Linda, plays piano and sings. "I have a family full of amazing pickers," she laughs. Her album "Reed's Roots" stands as a tribute to the generational gift that shaped her authentic Appalachian sound.

With that kind of lineage, it's no surprise that Delnora's own musical journey began early. She was in the studio by 13 and released her first album while still in high school. A photo of teenage Delnora still hangs on the wall of the Cracker Barrel outside Knoxville, a quiet reminder of how long she's been chasing the dream.

Determined to reach Nashville, she compressed a four-year communications degree into just two and a half years - while performing around town and spinning Country hits as a weekend DJ. "Within days of walking across that graduation stage, I knew I was headed for Tennessee with a heart full of dreams and determination," she says. "I've been here ever since."

Opportunity came quickly. She signed with one of the most powerful managers in town, landed major-label interest, and found herself in rooms most young artists only dream about. But success came with a cost she wasn't willing to pay. "There was a push to sing songs with themes I wasn't comfortable with," she recalls. "It just wasn't authentic to who I was or how I was raised."

The breaking point came when she lost a major label deal because she refused to record a particular song. "It sounded like a hit," she admits. "But all I could think was: the kids I teach in Sunday School are going to hear this on the radio."

That moment became a turning point. "Just because a Country song has a mandolin or pedal steel doesn't mean it has to be soaked in whiskey and bad decisions," she says. "Most folks I know are good, decent, God-loving, hard-working people. That's who I am, and that's who I write for."

Her path shifted again when she began writing with industry veteran Reed Nielsen (Vince Gill, Huey Lewis, Eric Clapton). Both were at crossroads - Delnora searching for new material, Nielsen battling cancer. After her grandfather passed away from the same disease, she found herself writing from a deeper place. "When Reed asked what was on my heart, I told him," she says. "The song that came out of that session was *When You're Gone*."

They continued writing together until Nielsen's passing in 2014. "He made me a better songwriter, a better artist, and a better person," she says. "I miss Reed, but I know where he is. His spirit lives on in those songs."

After stepping back from touring to welcome her son, Delnora returned to the stage at the Inspirational Christian Music Association's 2019 event in Franklin, Tennessee. Her performance of *When You're Gone* opened new doors, including collaborations with #1 hitmaker Corey Lee Barker and producer Chris Golden. Her song *Blank Page* became her first #1 in the inspirational country genre.

The shift from mainstream artist to ministry-focused musician didn't happen overnight. "I spent about a year trying to understand what that mix of ministry and music could look like," she says.

She began writing new songs, including *Man at the Well*, inspired by a conversation with Jeff Bates about how the story isn't just about the woman - it's about Jesus.

Her journey led her to Cowboy Churches and Recovery Churches, and eventually to a month-long tour with Andrew and Char Marshall. "At first, I worried the people they were ministering to wouldn't relate to me," she admits. "But God showed me we are all the woman at the well. We've all fallen short. We all need recovery."

Night after night, she watched her song *Blank Page* speak to people who desperately needed a second chance. Her stripped-down version of Brandon Lake's *Gratitude* became a tender altar moment where she saw "world-weary hands and hearts open to Jesus."

Though she's now a veteran artist, Delnora remains grounded. She's as comfortable singing around a campfire as she is on a big stage. Still, her accomplishments are remarkable: performances on the Grand Ole Opry stage, multiple awards including New Artist of the Year and Inspirational Song of the Year, and chart-topping singles across Christian and Country formats.

Delnora has just learned that she has five nominations in four categories in the 2026 Inspirational Country Music Association (ICMA) Awards: Female Vocalist of the Year, Songwriter of the Year, Inspirational Country Song of the Year (*Peacemaker* - Delnora with Chris Golden), and Vocal Duo/Duo Performance (*On My Knees* - Bruce Hedrick and Delnora / *Peacemaker* - Delnora featuring Chris Golden).

Her collaboration with Grammy winner Carl Jackson on *Return to Windy Mountain* hit #1 on the Bluegrass charts, and songs from her eight studio albums continue to resonate with audiences nationwide.

Delnora's recent video work has added new depth to her storytelling. She filmed *Peacemaker* - her heartfelt duet with Chris Golden - in Butcher Holler, Kentucky, at the Loretta Lynn homeplace and the Country Music Highway Museum. The song spent three weeks at #1 on Christian Music Weekly and recently topped Country Gospel charts in Christian Voice Magazine, Cross Country USA Magazine, and Cashbox.

She also filmed *Man at the Well* on the set of *The Chosen*, an experience she describes as "overwhelming in the best way."

Delnora's mission is simple: Love God. Love People. Love Music. "We don't have to compromise our values to make good music," she says. "Real life, real struggles, real faith - that's what people connect with. I'm not perfect, and that's OK. I want my music to remind people there's still goodness in this world."

"For me, every song is a chance to connect," she says. "My hope is that these songs speak to your heart, from my heart. In the brokenness, I want people to find hope."

From tiny churches to outdoor amphitheaters to the Grand Ole Opry, her goal never changes: "that everyone who hears my music walks away feeling a little more hopeful, a little more loved, and a little more connected to the good things in life."

www.delnora.com



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LEGENDS SERIES

JOHNNY JONES

By Deborah Baliles

Johnny Jones always had a love for music, even as a little kid. Although shy, he would listen to the radio, go around ever humming or singing to himself. At the age of fourteen he learned to play guitar and was invited to perform at a school assembly program. His stepping out of the shadows shocked the entire school. According to him, "It wasn't that I sounded all that great, it's just that the students and teachers didn't think I had it in me, to get up on stage and *perform*." From that day forward, he began playing and singing in the little country church he would grow up in.

Just getting started on his music road, Johnny joined the Air Force right out of high school. At the Sheppard Air Force Base, Jones would bring his music influences to the Service Club stage, filling many of his evenings and weekends. Folks would hear the Johnny Jones music version of The Carter Family and Johnny Cash, as well as many other stars of the Grand Ole Opry and the Wheeling Jamboree. A local television station happened to be hosting a March of Dimes fund raiser. They also happened to be seeking local talent. Johnny thought, "Why not?" His audition was selected and on the night of televising, he had the honor of being introduced by Ken Curtis, Festus on the TV Classic, Gunsmoke. Spotting his talent, Johnny was chosen to go on tour with the ATC Command Performance, a variety show by the men and women of the Air Force, performing at bases all around the country.

After four years of serving his country, Johnny came home to pick up his music, right where he left off. He toured with various bands, as well as performed solo work on stage, radio, and TV. A couple of released singles would receive enough notoriety to land him a guest appearance on The Bonnie Lou and Buster Show, a TV show syndicated out of Knoxville, Tennessee. Confident that he wanted to sing Country music, Johnny made the move to Music City - Nashville, Tennessee - where he immediately hooked up with a touring band and went on the road. At the persuasion of a booking agent, Jones would form his own band, continuing to travel the US and Canada.

Life changes would pull Johnny off of the road into DJing, and eventually into songwriting. Still performing at local gigs, travelling for extended periods of time was no longer possible for a single parent raising a two-year-old son.



Later, now all grown-up son (Casey), would convince his father to record his first album; a Country music album showcasing original songs written over the prior several years. Casey played tambourine, alongside two other late great musicians, Marty Williams and Danny McKeown.

Career Country music peaks included the privilege of sharing the stage with greats such as Dave Dudley, Tom Paul, The Glaser Brothers, Mel Street, Tom T. Hall, Darnell Miller, and others. Johnny also secured a guest spot on The Wheeling Jamboree.

2008 would bring very real news to Johnny, the news that no one wants to hear. Diagnosed with prostate cancer, the options were surgery or radiation treatments. Not wanting to undergo surgery, Johnny opted for radiation. Waking early one morning, he heard a still, small voice whisper, telling him to have the surgery. Following the decision for surgery, while planning the trip to Cleveland Clinic, something amazing started to unfold. There would be moments of visionally seeing the face of Jesus. The fear was subsiding with each manifestation, until all fear was gone. Braving the surgery, Johnny had never been more sure of, "If I live, it will be for His purpose. If I die, I will be with Him."

It would appear that the surgery was a little too late; he still had cancer, and now it had spread to his bones. Yet, Johnny still found the hope in that still, small voice, "As I reflect, had I taken the radiation, I might not be here, given the weeks of treatment it would have involved. Although the cancer is in stage four, with no medical cure, I am alive today because of God's will guiding the different treatments that I have undertaken."

While enduring the treatments, Johnny joined the National Songwriters Association International (NSAI) where he began to write Country Gospel songs. He has recorded over four Gospel albums, with all original songs written finding their place in music charting. Johnny has this to say about that, "My plain ole Country songs were not that good, so I have found what my Heavenly Father wants me to do with the time I have left on earth. I know, without a doubt, He loves me. He has kept me between the ditches, even when I had nothing to do with him. Yes, He has kept me around for what I am doing right now!"

Johnny enjoyed gathering with lifelong friends, fans, artists, and DJs at concert events and conventions. Gospel Music FanFair, when it was in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, was his first convention (and first performance) in this setting. As a member of the Music City Christian Fellowship, he sang with the Country Chorale on the Sunday Morning Country Show at the Grand Ole Opry. From Agape Fest in Texas, on

to ICGMA in Missouri, Johnny circles back to perform at the ICMA in Nashville. These are just some of the travels of an artist loving and living life to the fullest! Still, Johnny feels exceptionally privileged to have hosted his own Gospel television program for twenty weeks on Living Faith TV, out of Abingdon, Virginia. He later returned to perform on two Christmas specials.

The latest single to radio is *(Someday) Things are Gonna Get Better*, co-written by Johnny Jones and Cindy Huhlett, and is available on most digital outlets. Johnny recently had his Christmas song, *The Reason For It All* go to #1 on the GTE Music Charts.

From the pen of all its writers, there is power in music. Music warms up the heart for the healer. Out of his own personal journey, Johnny affirms, "Jesus is the great physician, but I believe that music can start the healing, be it mind, body, or soul. When I get to Heaven, it is my hope that folks will greet me there, telling me that a song I wrote or a song that I sung encouraged their first step to salvation. What life would not be complete with just these words?"

To continue, "Oh, but don't count me out just yet, I am still here for my Father's purpose! Nearly eighteen years later, and counting, I never thought I would wind up here, singing this kind of music. But then again, I am loving every minute of it!"

www.johnnyjones.net





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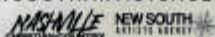
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Zach Williams never set out to become one of Christian music's most recognizable voices. In fact, for years he ran in the opposite direction - chasing the Rock-and-Roll dream, numbing the emptiness with addiction, and living on the edge of collapse. But God has a way of turning prodigals into prophets, and Williams' life reads like a modern Damascus Road story.

ZACH WILLIAMS

The Southern Rock Prodigal Who Found His Way Home

By Jackson McKee

There's a grit to Zach Williams' voice that can't be faked. It's the sound of gravel roads and second chances, of a man who has lived hard, run far, and finally surrendered to the grace that chased him down. Long before he became one of Christian music's most recognizable voices, Williams was a wanderer - talented, restless, and dangerously close to losing everything.

Today, he stands as a multi-award-winning artist with more than 1.5 billion streams, multiple RIAA Platinum singles, and a testimony that continues to pull prodigals out of the dark. But the road here was anything but straight.

Williams grew up in Jonesboro, Arkansas, surrounded by faith but not anchored by it. He was athletic, gifted, and driven - qualities that eventually led him into the world of Southern Rock. For years he fronted a touring band, living the lifestyle that came with it: late nights, addiction, and a growing sense of spiritual emptiness.

He has never glamorized that season. In fact, he speaks of it with a kind of holy sobriety. "I was running from God

as hard as I could. I was chasing everything that was destroying me."

The turning point came in a tour van in Europe. A song - Big Daddy Weave's *Redeemed* - played through the speakers. The lyrics hit him like a freight train. In that moment, he knew he couldn't keep living the way he was.

He quit the band. He went home. He began the slow, painful work of rebuilding his marriage, his faith, and his identity. That surrender became the foundation of everything that followed.

Williams' rise in Christian music was swift, but not because he was polished. It was because he was real. His breakout single, *Chain Breaker*, became an anthem for anyone who had ever felt trapped by their past. It shot to No. 1, earned him a Grammy, and introduced the world to a voice that carried both grit and grace.

Songs like *Fear Is a Liar*, *Old Church Choir*, and *Rescue Story* followed - each one a chapter in the same redemption narrative.

"I've always believed in writing songs for real people going through real things," Williams says. "I don't ever want to forget where I came from."

That authenticity is why his music resonates across genres - Christian Country, Southern Rock, Worship, and even Mainstream Country audiences who recognize the truth in his storytelling.

Williams' newest album, "Jesus Loves," released September 19, 2025, marks what he calls his most personal project yet. It leans deeper into his Southern-Rock roots while sharpening the spiritual edge that defines his work.

The title track, *Jesus Loves*, has already become a Top 10 Christian radio hit. But it's the raw honesty of *Killed A Man* that has captured the attention of longtime fans. The song is a confession - an acknowledgment of the old life he buried when he surrendered to Christ.

"This album is an invitation for the misfits, the church kids, and the prodigals," Williams explains. "It's a reminder that no matter your story, you're already loved."

Other standout tracks include:

- *Friend in High Places* - a revival-tent, rootsy celebration
 - *Church Kids* - a joyful collaboration with CAIN
 - *Everything Changed* - a testimony song with the emotional punch of *Rescue Story*
- The album is bold, unvarnished, and deeply human - much like the man who wrote it.

To support the new album, Williams launched the Revival Nights Tour, a cross-country experience featuring We The

Kingdom, Leanna Crawford, and Ben Fuller. But calling it a "tour" feels insufficient. These nights are part concert, part altar call, part spiritual homecoming.

Williams often pauses mid-set to share pieces of his testimony. He talks about addiction, pride, brokenness, and the God who refused to give up on him. "I want people to know that if God can change my life, He can change theirs," he says

Crowds respond - not with polite applause, but with tears, raised hands, and the unmistakable sound of chains hitting the floor.

What makes Zach Williams such a compelling figure in Christian Country is not just his sound - it's his posture. He sings like a man who remembers the pit he was pulled from. He stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the people he ministers to, not above them. His music is for the wanderer, the weary, the ones who feel disqualified by their past.

"This album is for the misfits... the prodigals... the ones who think they've messed up too much," he says. "I want them to know they're already loved."

That message is the heartbeat of his ministry - and the reason his influence continues to grow.

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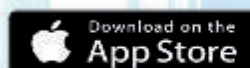
OFFICIAL CHRISTIAN COUNTRY TOP 100 - FEBRUARY 2026

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	12	God Talks To Me	Dawson Road	51	15	Get On Board	Carl Ray
2	2	That's When God Moves	David Timms	52	39	Always Enough	Dale Rochell
3	9	Hallelujah	Dust and Grace	53	97	What I Don't Know	Paula Slow
4	3	You Can't Box Me In	Fortner Brothers	54	74	He Made It All	Dust And Grace
5	7	Here's My Heart	Scott Peacock	55	14	A Pew For You	Aaron Loy
6	11	Country Sinner	Victoria Steelman	56	78	Somebody Bigger Than You And I	David Smith
7	6	Mama's Old Chest Of Drawers	Marvin Harrell	57	65	Footprints In The Sand	Dwight Sanders
8	10	Just Me	John Penney	58	--	Three Nails And A Cross	George Strait
9	13	Living Proof	Ken & Kim Stull	59	79	Man From Galilee	Jennifer Sides
10	8	Gonna Hit Those Church Steps Running	Carey Easley	60	77	Meanwhile Back At The Cross	Ron Hemphill
11	16	God Does Not Change	Cowboy Joe Babcock	61	63	Don't Cry For Me	Teresa Johnson
12	20	It's Never Too Late	Chuck Hancock	62	88	What I Got (La-De-Da)	Caleb Deramus
13	19	Hand In Heaven	The Murphys feat. Abigail	63	71	The Most Perfect Gift	Clare Cunningham
14	23	Anyway	The Pauls	64	73	I Feel Knew	J'Lee
15	17	Looking In The Rearview	Daryl Baker	65	37	I Felt God Today	Heather Thomas Van Deren
16	26	Greatly To Be Praised	Melissa Evans	66	75	God Don't Waste The Hurt	Gary Russ
17	24	I've Been Thinking	Waymasters	67	28	Why Me	Jenny Dean
18	33	If That Ain't True Love	Melanie Walker	68	100	Blessings	Steven Paul McCollum
19	27	My Home In Glory Land	Beverly Brown Simms	69	22	He Owns Both Sides Of The River	Terry & Debra Luna
20	21	When Love Arose	Joy LaVallee	70	25	Right Where You Want Me To Be	Don Stiles
21	34	New Man	Chuck Day	71	84	No Thought To Pray	Jerry Weatherly
22	1	Wake Up Call	Cyndi Reynolds	72	87	In The Morning	Hunter Logan
23	31	I Saw A Miracle Today	Michael Ray Fain	73	80	The Way You Do	Michael Walsh
24	30	Waiting In The Water	Debbie Mills	74	90	Love Like Jesus Does	Aaron Justice
25	50	My Everything	Tarrance Phillips	75	56	One Of These Days	Carol Barham
26	55	Back Pew Prayer	Woodie Kitchen	76	72	Bucket List	Daniel Wheeler
27	47	Blood Bought Cowboy	Marty Deroche	77	82	He Lives	Ed Bruce
28	35	Footsteps Of My King	Todd Lee	78	76	Thanks To Calvary	Greg Finch
29	61	Everything You Do	Norman Lee Schaffer	79	83	The Crossroads	Richard Sprayberry
30	52	Even When I Fall	Thomas Brown	80	86	My God Can	Valerie Ellis Hawkins
31	62	Pushing You Away	Mike McAdoo	81	96	It's Time, Lord	Eddy Mann
32	44	In Times Like These	Bruce and Betsy Mullen	82	36	Grandma's Bible	Debbie Bennett
33	48	Hannah Whooped The Devil	Jason Welch	83	94	The Journey	Joe Land
34	42	Where Are You Now	Ken Mobley	84	99	Why Me Lord	Richard Lynch
35	4	Somebody's Praying	Michael Knight	85	92	You Can Talk To The Father	Richard Strong
36	45	You Can Call On Him	Aaron Partridge and Steve Apirana	86	81	Country Church	Claude Davis
37	46	Get Out Of The Boat	Felicia Deramus Paul	87	54	Take Over Me	Rex Robards
38	67	Say Hello To Heaven	Steve Warren	88	91	That's The Least That I Can Do	Greg Marlow
39	68	Shout Of Testimony	Mike Lechner	89	93	Picture This	Jessie Ritchie
40	5	Father To The Fatherless	Jim Sheldon	90	--	Warrior Of God	Mark Umfleet
41	60	Blessed Is The People That Know	Jonathan Ray Smith	91	43	Nothing No Nothing	Rachel Taylor
42	49	Honey In The Rock	Mary James	92	95	God's Great	The Messengers
43	58	Daddy's Hat	Debra Camp	93	98	I Got A Friend	Ken Mobley
44	18	Through Christ	Jimmy R Price	94	--	Saving Grace	Krystina B
45	85	Wish You Were Here	Johnathan Bond	95	--	Give It All You've Got	Steve Anthony
46	66	Your The Man	Judy Bailey	96	--	Tell Me That There Ain't A God	Jon Brennan
47	89	It'll Be Good To Be Home	The Journeys	97	--	Brothers And Sisters	Ken Lehning
48	59	Don't Need A Stone	By Faith	98	--	Build Me An Ark	Caroline Owens
49	53	Not On My Watch	Darin Kinser	99	--	Heading Home With Jesus To Be	Lizzy G And Jeff Naper
50	69	If That Isn't Love	Bruce Minchey	100	--	Walking Out Of Egypt	One Voice



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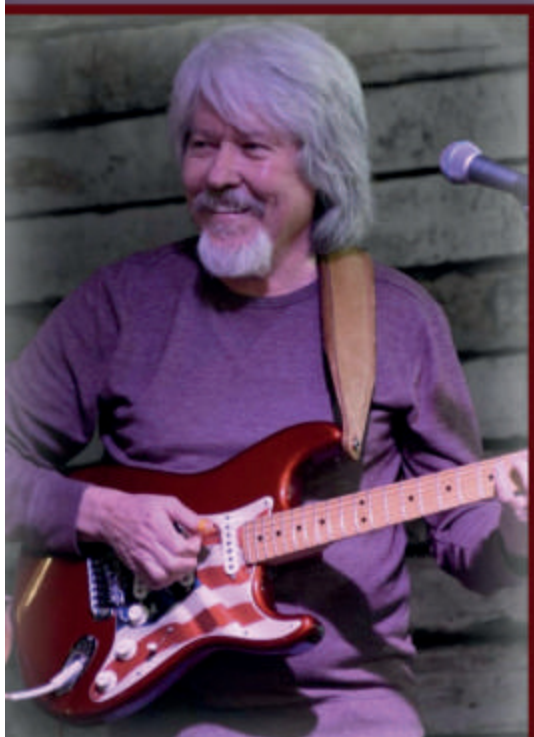


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A photograph of the five members of The Freemans band sitting together on a couch. From left to right: a man with a mustache in a black and white patterned shirt, a man in a grey shirt, a woman with long red hair in a patterned jacket, a woman with blonde hair in a black top and patterned skirt, and a man with a beard in a black and white patterned shirt.

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ADAM GRANT

The Country Voice that Refuses to Quit

From a Georgia patrol car to Nashville's Indie charts, the singer-songwriter's journey is one of grit, grace, and God.

By Cory Parker

On a quiet stretch of farmland in Shiloh, Georgia - population just over 400 - Adam Grant wakes up to the sound of birdsong and the rustle of deer in the brush. His 142-acre property isn't just home; it's the soul of his music. "This land grounds me," he says. "It's where I write, where I heal, and where I remember why I started all this."

Grant, a retired law enforcement officer and lifelong Country singer-songwriter, has lived a life that reads like a Southern ballad - equal parts heartbreak, hope, and hard-earned triumph. His latest single, *Even Though You're Gone*, currently sits at #14 on the Cashbox Independent Country Top 100, a testament to his staying power in an industry that often forgets its own.

But for Grant, music was never about fame. It was about fire.

"I believe it was 1997," he recalls. "I was at the Georgia Dome for the Richard Petty tribute. Joe Diffie sang *Ships That Don't Come In*, and man, it just did something to me. That performance lit a fire in me. I decided that night - singing Country music was what I wanted to do with my life."

A year later, he made his first pilgrimage to Nashville. At the Nashville Palace, he met Vern Gosdin. "I shook his hand, and he looked at me and said, 'How ya doin', son?' That moment only made my desire stronger."

Grant's path wasn't paved with record deals or radio payola. It was built on grit. In 2010, he formed Badhorse, a Country group that quickly made waves on the independent circuit. They scored three consecutive #1 hits on the New Music Weekly charts and were named 'Best New Group' that same year. Their song *Still Love Them* climbed to #2 on the Inspirational Country charts.

"We were just a bunch of guys with a dream," Grant says. "But we had heart. We had songs that meant something."

Badhorse's music caught the attention of filmmakers, landing them in two motion pictures - one with Travis Tritt, another with John Schneider. Their video for *It's All Good*, filmed with NFL legend Terry Bradshaw at the Titans stadium, became the theme song for the 2012 NFL Alumni Awards hosted by Alec Baldwin.

But just as the music was rising, life threw Grant a devastating curve ball.

"In 2014, my son was diagnosed with leukemia. He was five," Grant says. "It was the hardest time of our lives. But by the grace of God, he's now a senior in high school and completely healed."

Two years later, while conducting a traffic stop on the interstate, Grant's patrol car was hit from behind by a drunk driver going 80 miles per hour. The crash left him with severe injuries and forced him into medical retirement after three surgeries, including a major neck operation.

"I lost my career in law enforcement that day," he says. "But I didn't lose my music."

Instead, he doubled down. His recent singles *In America* (rose to #5 on Cashbox), *I Ain't Hurting Much* (a duet with Billy Payne at #28), and *Throw In The Towel* (with Gale Jenkins, went to #58) - are proof that Grant's voice still resonates.

"I do this organically," he says. "No big label, no machine behind me. Just me, my guitar, and a belief that these songs matter."

That belief is rooted in faith and patriotism, two pillars that define both the man and the music. "I love this Country, and I love God," Grant says. "You can hear it in every song I write. I'm not trying to be trendy. I'm trying to be true."

His songs are steeped in the traditions of the genre's golden age - storytelling, steel guitars, and a reverence for the everyday American experience. But there's also a modern

edge, a lived-in wisdom that comes from surviving what many wouldn't.

"I've been through enough to quit," he says. "But I couldn't stop even if I wanted to. Music is just in me, and it's not going away."

Back in Shiloh, Grant still writes daily. He's got a stack of unreleased songs ready for the studio and plans to keep releasing music to radio and streaming platforms. "I'm not chasing trends," he says. "I'm chasing truth."

And maybe that's why his music connects. Because it's not just about the notes, it's about the life behind them.

"Anyone who knows me knows I feel strongly about America and our freedoms," he says. "And I've learned that no matter what life throws at you - cancer, crashes, career changes - you never give up. You never lose focus on your goals."

Adam Grant isn't just a Country artist. He's a survivor, a storyteller, and a Southern son who turned pain into purpose. And as long as there's a song to sing, he'll be out there - on stage, on the radio, or under the Georgia stars - reminding us all that it's still all good.

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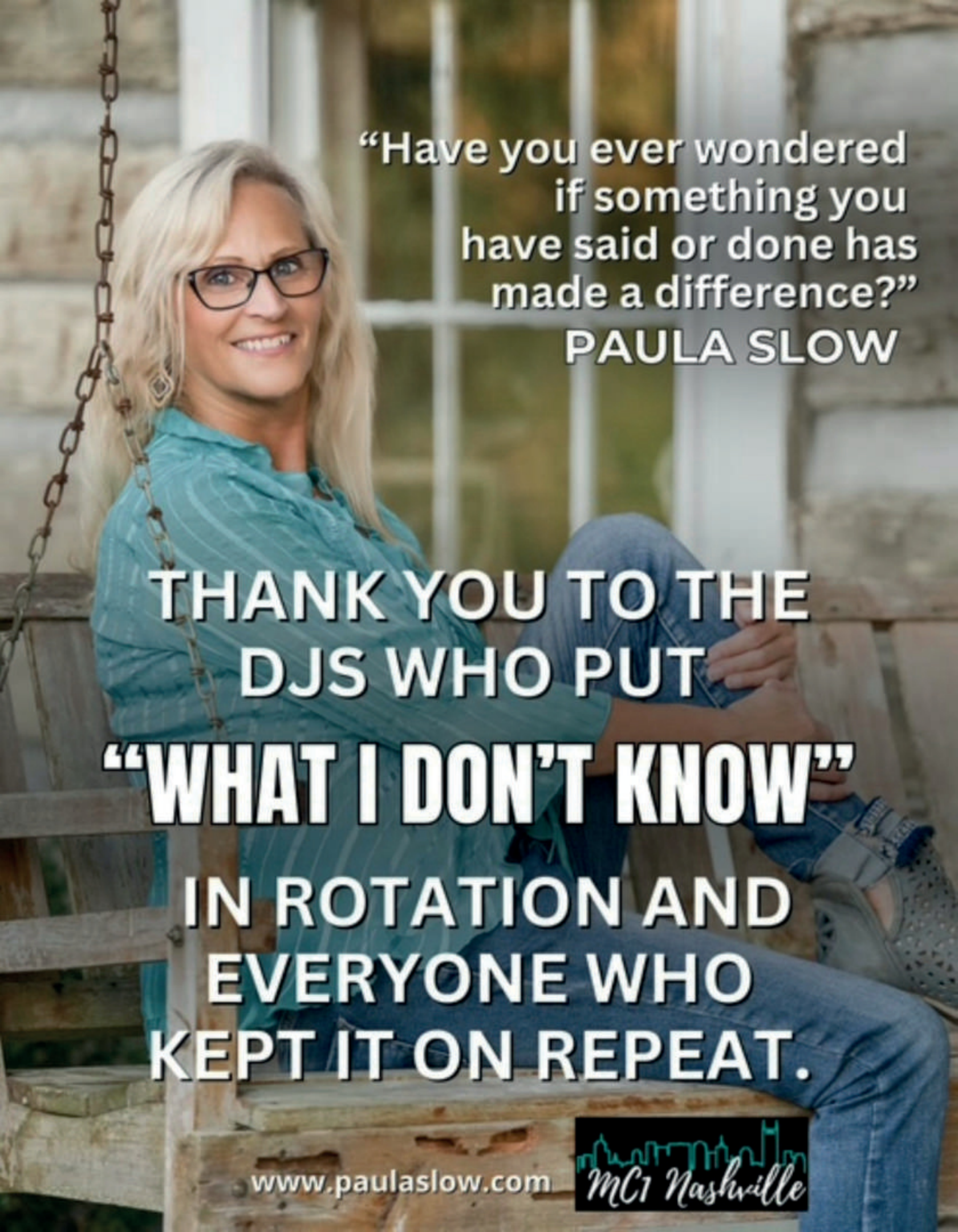
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Darryl Worley

**Building Community,
Serving Heroes, and
Sharing Stories**

By Robin Tanner

Platinum-selling artist Darryl Worley has spent more than 20 years building a remarkable Country music career. He has scored nearly 20 hit singles and three chart-toppers, including his self-penned *Awful, Beautiful Life*, *I Miss My Friend*, and many others.

After spending Christmas 2002 entertaining America's troops in Afghanistan, Kuwait, and Uzbekistan, he returned home and wrote the patriotic anthem *Have You Forgotten?*, which became his second No. 1 hit and remained at the top of the charts for six weeks. Worley is also known for his commitment to giving back through The Darryl Worley Foundation, his annual charity events, and his ongoing support for the U.S. military and veterans.

Worley's *Awful Beautiful Life* Luxury Tiny Home Resort has officially broken ground in Enterprise, Alabama, bringing a fresh take on the growing tiny-living trend. As more travelers seek alternatives to traditional hotel stays, tiny homes have become an appealing option, offering comfort, style, and amenities in a compact footprint. Enterprise sits in the middle of a 75-mile corridor traveled by more than 12 million cars each year on the way to the

Florida panhandle, making it a prime location for a project of this scale. The resort is scheduled to open in late Spring 2026.

Located just miles from Fort Rucker, the development will provide convenient short-term lodging for government contractors, flight-school graduation families and guests, and visitors to the Army Aviation Museum. Worley recalls the moment the idea came to life. "I won't forget getting that phone call from my dear friend Ronnie Gilley as he shared



this incredible vision last year. I've done lots of good things with Ronnie, but this one sparked something in me as I knew we could help the families of those stationed at Fort Rucker," he says. "We're building a project that's a two-for-one for the military. One, there is a constant need for short-term lodging due to the constant in-and-out flow to and from the base and, two, we are building a lifestyle community with 5-star amenities, while also delivering a home option for the military at an incredibly affordable price."

The resort will feature 75 tiny homes, a resort-style lagoon pool, a dog-walking park, and a variety of lifestyle amenities. Each unit is designed for comfort and entertainment, offering a downstairs bedroom, kitchen, sitting area, and a covered porch with a large overhang that allows guests to enjoy outdoor living in different weather conditions. Additional features include an event center, fully equipped fitness center, pickleball court, cornhole court, a clubhouse, and a chill lounge. The entire property will be secured with a 24/7 gated entrance to ensure privacy and safety.

Worley notes the broader housing climate as part of the inspiration behind the project. "You know, the previous administration drove home prices and interest rates through the roof," he says. "That prompted Ronnie to come up with a very special, unique and different product that is going to be a perfect fit for our military! I might also add, the lifestyle Awful Beautiful Life Resort is creating will also be very

inviting to the massive migration of retirees that are moving south in record-breaking numbers!"

(For more information or investment opportunities, visit darrylworleyawfulbeautifuliferesort.com.)

Worley has also added a new chapter to his career with his podcast, Sounds Like Life with Darryl Worley, co-hosted by Travis McLeese. Together, they go behind the scenes with some of the most captivating personalities in entertainment while highlighting many of the nation's heroes. Guests have included, Rhonda Vincent, T. Graham Brown, RaeLynn, Andy Griggs, Cledus T. Judd, and many more celebrities, patriots, and friends who share their stories and faith. Worley reflects on what the podcast means to him personally and professionally. "For me, the podcast is a way to bring all of my stories and experiences to life. It will also reinforce the messages in my music by allowing us to talk through so many different creative moments down through the years. Most of all, it's another great opportunity to make someone laugh and to get closer to the fan base that has made my life an amazing vacation." The series is available on Apple, Spotify, iHeart, YouTube, and other podcast platforms.

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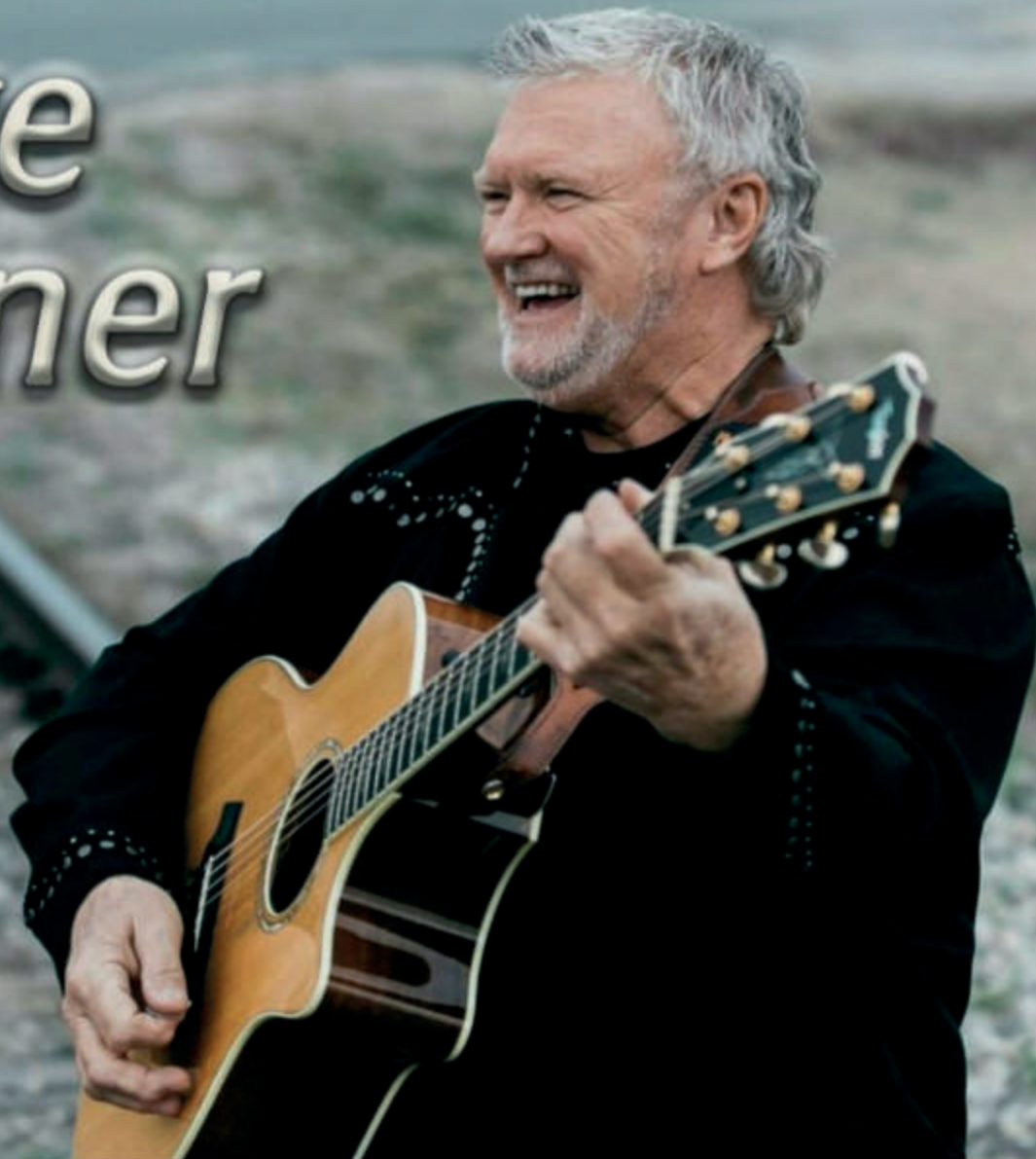
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