

APRIL 2026

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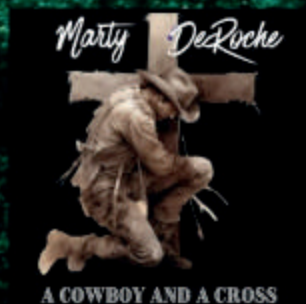


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From the Editor

There's a line from a John Denver classic that always makes me smile: "Sunshine on my shoulders makes me happy." And honestly - it truly does. These longer days of daylight feel like a gift. With talk of making Daylight Savings Time permanent, I can't help but think I'd cast a very enthusiastic 'yes' vote.

After months of cold winds, gray skies, and steady rain, there's something healing about stepping outside and feeling warm sunlight on your face. Fresh air fills your lungs, the world feels new again, and - pollen aside - it becomes my favorite season. It's the perfect time to get outdoors, enjoy the warmth, and soak up a little Vitamin D.



This season always reminds me of our own journeys. Many are walking through difficult days - storms that shake us, situations that chill us to the bone. Whether the struggle is personal, physical, financial, or spiritual, the weight can feel overwhelming. But just as winter gives way to spring, the sun will shine on you again. God sees every dark valley you've walked through, and He has never left your side. Trust in Jesus Christ to light your path and surround you with His love.

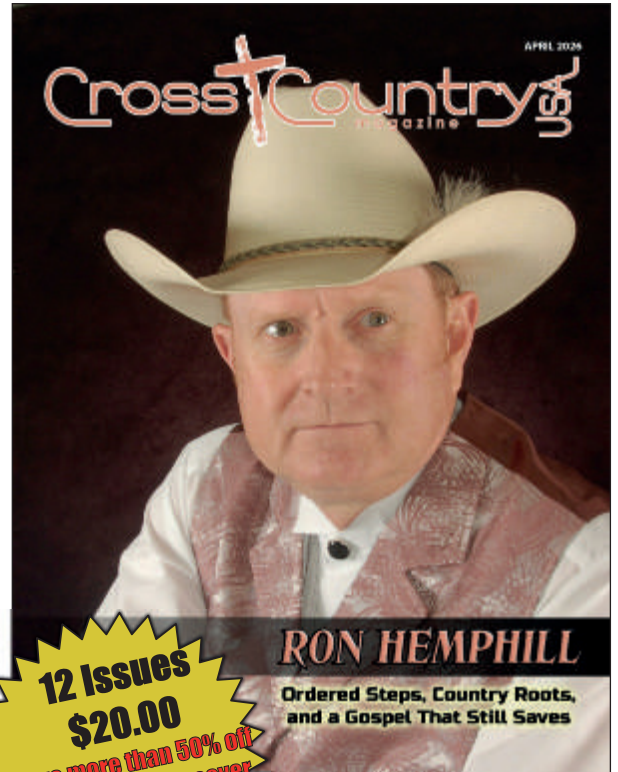
Our thoughts and prayers also turn toward those affected by the war in Iran. We honor the service men and women who lost their lives in the line of duty, and we lift their families in prayer. We remember the innocent who longed for peace in the Middle East. May God bring comfort, may He guide our president with wisdom, and may He place His hand of protection over the United States.

As the sunlight stretches a little longer each day, may hope stretch with it. May you feel God's warmth, His presence, and His promise that brighter days are ahead.

Robin

Robin Tanner, Managing Editor

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KHLOE GRACE

By Robin Tanner

Jacksonville, Florida native Khloe Grace is quickly becoming one of Country music's most compelling young voices. At just fifteen years old, she has already made a lasting impact with her heartfelt songwriting and powerhouse vocals. With five original songs released, Khloe continues to prove she's an artist with something meaningful to say.

Fans who follow her on social media or TikTok know she can sing music from different genres. Her musical influences range from Tim McGraw to Anne Wilson to Ella Langley and a growing list of artists who have shaped her sound and inspired her growing artistry.

Khloe's journey began at the age of seven, when she first discovered her love for music. She released her debut single at thirteen, followed by her second release, *Forever 13*, a song that touched hearts across the country. Written in honor of Aubreigh Wyatt, who tragically took her own life due to bullying, the song resonated deeply with listeners and has now surpassed three million streams. Its impact earned Khloe the Josie Music Award for 'Social Impact Song of the Year,' presented at the Grand Ole Opry in November 2025.

She carried *Forever 13* to national television during her audition for Season 24 of *American Idol* which aired on January 29, 2026. In an emotional moment, Aubreigh Wyatt's mother, Heather Wyatt, surprised Khloe at the audition. "I first heard Khloe's song about a year ago and immediately cried. It was beautiful. It was what Aubreigh had gone through."

After hearing Aubreigh's story, Khloe felt compelled to write the song, telling Ryan Seacrest, "Something kept telling me to write that song. I felt it in my heart." Heather, who had never met Khloe before, thanked her in person for honoring her daughter. Khloe later shared, "Meeting Ms. Heather at my *American Idol* audition was the most special surprise. I am forever grateful for you."

Turning to the judges, Khloe introduced herself, stating, "I went through some of the things Aubreigh went through, and it was really hard, so I was like, 'If I can write something that could ... help someone, that it's totally worth me writing this song.'"

The judges were visibly moved by her performance. Lionel Richie said, "I'm just so moved." He then turned to Heather, and said, "Heather, that's a gift right there. That's God looking back at you." Carrie Underwood, emotional through tears, praised Khloe's depth: "I feel like the maturity you possess is quite incredible. The way you had your heart broken for someone you didn't even know, and take that and



basically say that something positive is going to come out of it, and to potentially even think about all the people that hear that and see you and hear this story, maybe decide to change their mind about something - it's pretty incredible." Luke Bryan added, "The fact that you wrote about something you were going through shows potential in you as a singer and songwriter, and someone who can do a lot of good in this world."

Khloe earned a Golden Ticket from all three judges and advanced to Hollywood Week during the Music City Takeover in Nashville. Although her *Idol* journey ended there, she embraced the experience with gratitude. "I have made so many memories," she shared on social media. "I learned a lot and met some amazing people along the way. Trust me y'all, this is definitely not the end for me. Being on *American Idol* is something I have always dreamed of. This is just a stepping-stone in my journey."

Khloe recently released her newest single, *Does She Remind You of Me*, now available on all streaming platforms including more original songs, *Your Reasons To Stay*, *I Was There For You*, *Ghost In The Corner*, and *Give God A Chance*. Her biggest aspiration is to make a meaningful impact with her music, and she has already begun doing just that. With her talent, heart, and determination, Khloe Grace is well on her way to inspiring countless listeners.

Be sure to follow Khloe Grace Music on social media and watch her *American Idol* audition on YouTube.

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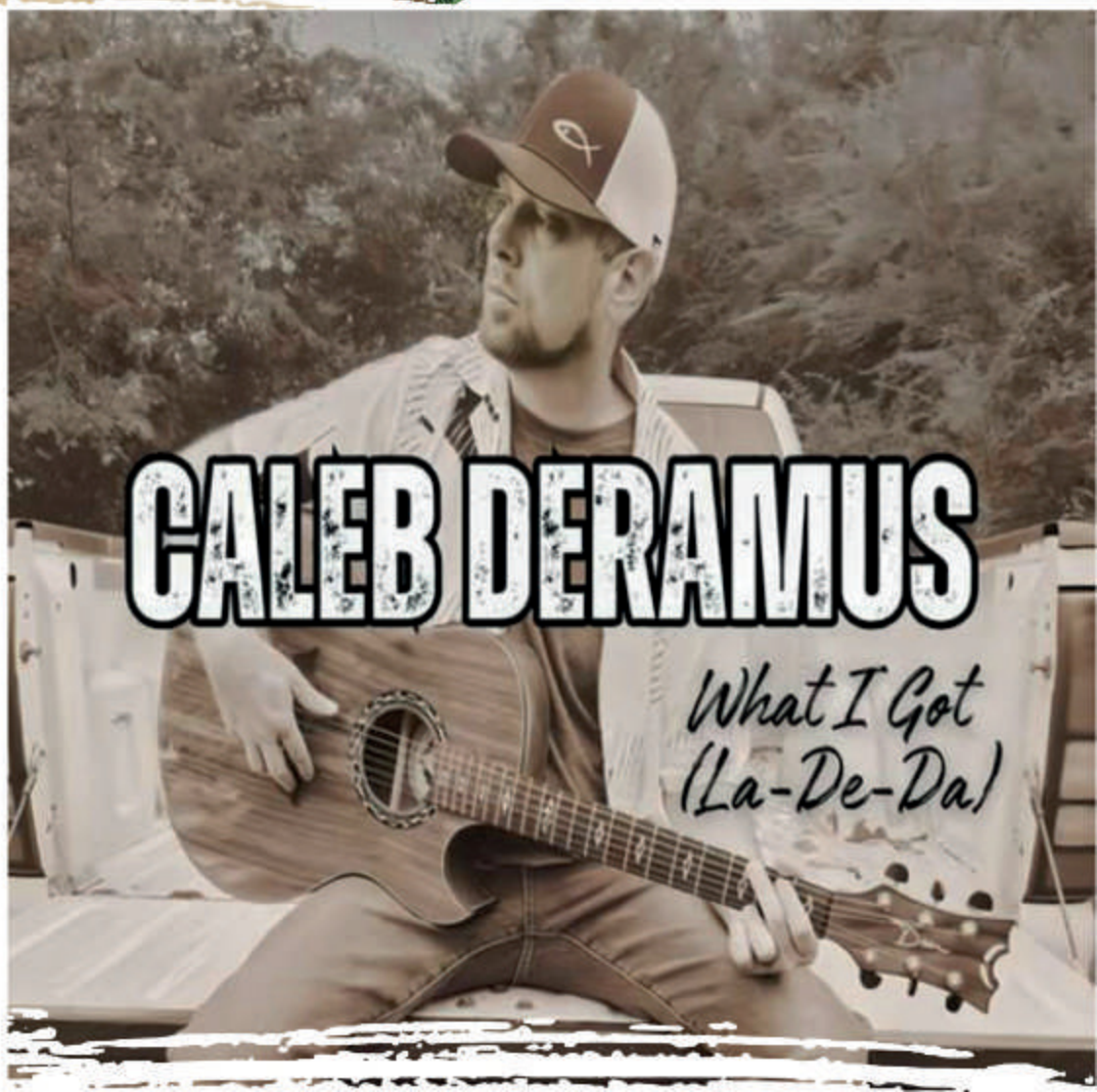
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Remembering...

Staff, Cross Country USA

JERRY GLENN KENNEDY

August 10, 1940 – February 11, 2026



Jerry Glenn Kennedy was born on August 10, 1940, in Shreveport, Louisiana, to Gordon and Essie (Laird) Kennedy. From the beginning, his life carried the unmistakable mark of a prodigy. At just eight years old, he picked up a guitar for the first time, took lessons, and quickly mastered the instrument with a natural ease that astonished everyone around him. By the age of ten, he had already signed his first major record deal - the earliest sign of a career that would become one of the most influential in American music.

As he grew, Jerry's gifts only deepened. His musical instincts, versatility, and creative intuition allowed him to move effortlessly between roles: musician, vocalist, songwriter, record producer, and industry executive. His fingerprints can be found across some of the most iconic

recordings of the 20th century. Over the decades, his work became woven into the artistry of legends including Roger Miller, Tom T. Hall, Elvis Presley, Reba McEntire, Kris Kristofferson, Ringo Starr, Bob Dylan, Tammy Wynette, Jeannie C. Riley, Roy Orbison, and many others. His influence was not confined to a single genre, Jerry helped shape Country, Pop, Rock, and Americana with equal mastery.

His achievements were recognized at the highest levels. Jerry was honored with four Grammy Awards, inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame in 2007, and celebrated by the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2008 as part of their prestigious "Nashville Cats" series. These accolades reflected not only his technical brilliance, but the respect he earned from peers, artists, and industry leaders who knew the depth of his talent and the integrity of his character.

Jerry Glenn Kennedy passed away peacefully on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, surrounded by his loving family. He was 85. Though the world knew him as a music icon, his greatest legacy was the one he built at home. He leaves behind his sons - Gordon, Bryan, and Shelby - each of whom has followed in his footsteps with their own successful and celebrated music careers. Jerry shared a deep love of sports with his boys, and he cherished every family gathering, every holiday, and every moment spent together.

His life was a testament to talent, discipline, humility, and heart. Jerry Kennedy shaped the sound of generations, mentored countless artists, and left behind a body of work that continues to inspire. But to those who loved him most, he was simply a devoted father, a steady presence, and a man whose passion for music was matched only by his love for family.

Jerry's legacy lives on in every note he played, every artist he lifted, and every life he touched - a lasting melody that will continue to echo for years to come.

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Little David Wilkins

*A Country
Music Legend*

By Howard Wear

Little David Wilkins didn't just play Country music - he lit up every room he walked into. From honky-tonk stages to Nashville's songwriting circles, his unmistakable blend of grit, humor, and piano-driven soul helped shape an era. His story is pure American music history.

Few artists embody the spirit, grit, and showmanship of classic American Country music quite like Little David Wilkins. A singer, songwriter, pianist, entertainer, and larger-than-life personality, Wilkins carved out a career that bridged honky-tonk tradition with the swagger of early Rock 'n' Roll. His sound - equal parts soulful piano, country storytelling, and unmistakable charisma - made him one of the most distinctive voices of the 1960s and 1970s Nashville era. But his influence stretches far beyond the stage. As a songwriter, Wilkins helped shape the careers of major artists across Country and Pop, leaving a legacy that continues to resonate with musicians and fans alike.

Born May 18, 1940, in Parsons, Tennessee, Wilkins grew up surrounded by the rhythms of Southern life: Gospel harmonies, front-porch pickin', and the early stirrings of Rockabilly that swept through the region. Music wasn't just entertainment, it was a way of life. As Wilkins once put it, "I grew up on Gospel, Country, and a whole lot of front-porch music. That's where I learned how to make people feel something."

By his teens, he had already developed a reputation as a natural performer, equally comfortable behind a piano or working a crowd with his trademark humor and energy. His early gigs in local clubs throughout the 1960s became the training ground that shaped his identity as an entertainer who could command any room, from a smoky bar to a national stage.

Wilkins' first major breakthrough came not from a microphone, but from a pen. In 1966, he co-wrote *Coming On Strong*, a bold, driving Pop-Country crossover hit recorded by Brenda Lee. The song climbed to No. 11 on the Billboard Hot 100 and became one of Lee's signature recordings. For Wilkins, it was a turning point - proof that his instincts as a songwriter were just as powerful as his instincts as a performer. He often explained his writing philosophy with simple honesty: "A good song ought to sound like real life. If you can't live it, you can't sing it." The success of *Coming On Strong* opened doors in Nashville's competitive songwriting circles and established him as a creative force with a unique voice.

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Wilkins continued writing for other artists while developing his own recording career. His style - playful, soulful, and unmistakably Southern - caught the attention of MCA Records, who signed him as a recording artist. What followed was a prolific run of singles that showcased his versatility and personality. Over the course of his career, Wilkins charted 17 Country hits, each one reflecting his signature blend of piano-driven rhythm, heartfelt storytelling, and a wink of humor that made him stand out in a crowded field of Nashville talent.

Songs like *Georgia Keeps Pulling on My Ring*, *Whoever Turned You On*, and *One Monkey Don't Stop No Show* became staples of his catalog, earning radio play and solidifying his reputation as a performer who could deliver both emotional depth and pure entertainment. His stage presence - equal parts Jerry Lee Lewis fire and country-boy charm - made him a favorite on the touring circuit. Wilkins himself summed up his approach to the stage with trademark confidence: "I've always said I'm not just a singer, I'm an entertainer. If you come to my show, you're gonna have a good time." Audiences didn't just listen to Little David Wilkins; they experienced him.



But it was his songwriting that extended his influence across generations of Country artists. Wilkins' compositions were recorded by some of the biggest names in the genre, including:

- Charley Pride, one of Country music's most celebrated voices
- Billy "Crash" Craddock, who turned Wilkins' songs into chart-topping hits
- Jack Greene, Grand Ole Opry legend
- Leroy Van Dyke, known for *The Auctioneer* and *Walk On By*
- Stonewall Jackson, a staple of the Opry stage
- Conway Twitty, whose version of *Georgia Keeps Pulling on My Ring* became a fan favorite

Wilkins' writing style - catchy, clever, and emotionally honest - made his songs adaptable across artists and eras. He had a gift for crafting melodies that stuck and lyrics that felt lived-in, authentic, and unmistakably Southern.

His influence even reached the King of Rock 'n' Roll. Elvis Presley's 1975 single *T-R-O-U-B-L-E* was widely noted to carry the swagger, rhythm, and attitude that Wilkins had been bringing to Nashville for years. While not written by Wilkins, the song's style reflected the musical lane he helped pioneer: piano-driven, high-energy, and unapologetically bold. It was a testament to the creative atmosphere Wilkins helped shape during one of Country music's most transformative decades.

As the years progressed, Wilkins continued performing, writing, and recording, maintaining a loyal fan base drawn to his authenticity and showmanship. He remained a fixture in the Nashville community, respected by peers and admired by younger artists who saw in him a blueprint for blending tradition with individuality. His humor, warmth, and unmistakable voice made him a beloved figure both on and off the stage.

Wilkins' contributions have been recognized through industry honors, historical markers, and tributes celebrating his role in shaping the sound of modern Country music. Yet despite the accolades, he has always remained grounded in the values that defined his early life in Tennessee: hard work,

humility, and a deep love for the music that carried him from small-town stages to national recognition.

Today, Little David Wilkins stands as a testament to the power of originality in an industry that often rewards conformity. His career, spanning songwriting, performing, recording, and entertaining, reflects a rare combination of talent and personality. He is a storyteller, a showman, a craftsman, and a pioneer whose work continues to inspire artists across genres.

Whether through the enduring success of *Coming On Strong*, the countless artists who have recorded his songs, or the fans who still cherish his performances, Wilkins' legacy is woven into the fabric of American music. His story is one of resilience, creativity, and the unmistakable spark of a true original, a man who brought joy, rhythm, and heart to every stage he touched.

Little David Wilkins is more than a Country artist. He is a cultural figure whose music captures the soul of the American South, the energy of classic honky-tonk, and the timeless appeal of a performer who always knew how to make an audience feel alive. His legacy continues to shine, reminding the world that great music - and great entertainers - never fade.

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The Story Behind the Song

HAND IN HEAVEN

Written by Jay Murphy

Recorded by The Murphys (ft. Abigail Murphy)

Staff, Cross Country USA

Born again believers in Jesus Christ have the promise that Heaven will be their eternal home. At times, we get homesick for Heaven but until our time comes we all have a work to do for the Kingdom of God. Jay and his daughter Abigail share the idea and the events that came from their latest single, *Hand In Heaven*.

“As a believer, one of my favorite topics is the rapture of the Church,” Jay Murphy shares. “The Bible tells us in 1 Thessalonians 4:18, in talking about the rapture, to comfort each other with the scripture references concerning the rapture. We, as believers are to long for it...and I very much do. To quote another song of ours (*When The Trumpet Blows*), ‘I just can’t wait, I fantasize of how that day might go, when I hear that trumpet blow.’ Then, when I read in Revelation 4, what heaven is like, it makes me want to go right now. And that is where I begin to be torn.”

Jay remembers when he and the family were taking care of his dad in 2021. “My dad’s health was getting worse. He had dementia and seemed to be keeping a urinary tract infection (UTI) by that time. All the normal concerns of life were mostly taking a back seat to caring for my dad, and that was increasing by the day it seemed. He was staying in an assisted living facility at the time but was in and out of the hospital a lot. It didn’t seem like the doctors were at all willing to listen to us about his condition, and my sisters and I were worn to a frazzle,” he recalls. “This time was the hardest four years of my life and definitely kept my prayer life exercised.”

“It was during the later part of 2021 when I was studying Philippians chapter one, again,” adds Jay. “As I read Paul’s very transparent words there in verse 23, where he states he has a great desire to go on to be with the Lord, I found myself



THE MURPHYS

L-R: Abigail Murphy, Jay Murphy, Mark Anderton

completely identifying with that. Don’t get me wrong, I didn’t want to pass and leave my family behind or even leave it to another family member to care for my dad. Absolutely not. What I wanted was for the Lord to blow the trumpet and call us all (my dad, my wife and daughter, and myself) home and leave the world behind.”

Then Jay was reminded of the next verse, verse 24, where He says that He knew that remaining here on earth was beneficial for others. “So, with that sobering thought, the Lord gave me the words of this song, because I truly do have a hand in heaven and my feet are on the earth. While I am so very ready to go to heaven, the Lord has myself and every other Christian here for a reason - to lead the lost to Jesus.

The lyrics actually state that I have “*a (single) hand in heaven, and a (single) foot on earth*” to give the imagery of a person reaching so hard for something so high that only one foot remains firmly grounded and only one hand is barely reaching the thing they are working so hard to reach.”

Jay shares when he played the song for Abigail. “A couple nights later, Abigail and I had taken my dad back to his house

to stay the night with him and let him get out on the farm the next day. That night I had my guitar out and told Abigail I had been working on new a song and I played it for her. I noticed that, while I was playing it, she started smiling from ear to ear. I stopped and asked her why she was smiling so big and she said “Daddy, that is my song.” And she meant it. While I originally intended to take the lead vocal on it, she took it and sung it with all of her heart...and I would not have it any other way. She definitely made the song her own.”

“To me,” Abigail shares, “*Hand in Heaven* is a reminder to not be idle while waiting for eternity. We are called to share God with the world, and we should fight the good fight for Him. I know personally I can get so caught up in my own world that I forget each person around me is an opportunity to grow the Kingdom! I really love singing this song as a reminder of my purpose and responsibility to God’s work, but also, it’s just a fun song to sing.”

Jay concludes, “My dad passed in February 2022, and we are still here...spreading the Gospel, which is needful for those lost without Christ, which is God’s heart and our purpose. And while we still cannot wait to get to Heaven, we are so happy to get to tell others about our great and wonderful Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Hand In Heaven

1st verse

*I love my life, Sharing the Lord
I'm in the fight, Word is my sword
Seeking the lost, To get them saved
Counting the cost, Got to be brave
Sometimes it's hard, I cannot lie
It can be tough, I can't deny
Ready to go, For what it's worth
I got a hand in heaven, And a foot on earth*

Chorus

*I got hand in heaven and a foot on earth
Been a long fight since my rebirth
Reaching for the lost with my eye on the sky
Longing for the trumpet when I'll leave this world behind
Don't get me wrong, I got to get to work
I got a hand in Heaven and foot on earth*

2nd verse

*I feel like Paul, Ready to go
But needed here, This I know
I am not weary, I am not faint
Just thinking clearly, Of where I ain't
I have a home, I haven't seen
My Lord is there, Waiting for me
To know my passion, Don't have to search
I got a hand in heaven, And a foot on earth*

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CrossCountry Report

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY MUSIC NEWS & SCOOPS

12th Annual Country For A Cause Returns June 3 With Star-Packed Lineup Benefitting Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt



One of Music City's most beloved pre-CMA Fest traditions is back. The 12th Annual Country For A Cause will return to 3rd & Lindsley on Wednesday, June 3 at 6:30 PM, bringing together an all-star roster of Country legends, rising voices, and fan favorites - all to support Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt.

This year's lineup features Darin & Brooke Aldridge, John Berry, Allie Colleen, Linda Davis, Hannah Dasher, Ty Herndon, Jake Hoot, Dani-elle Kleha, The Kody Norris Show, The Malpass Brothers, Neal McCoy, Makenzie Phipps, Mark Wills, and many more. The evening will once again be hosted by T.G. Sheppard and Kelly Lang, joined by longtime friend and emcee Devon O'Day.

The show is presented by Gus Arrendale and Springer Mountain Farms.

"We are beyond excited to host Country For A Cause once again. It's truly incredible to see the lineup this year - our most varied yet," share T.G. Sheppard & Kelly Lang. "We're bringing together legendary artists, rising stars, and you never know who may stop in. This is going to be an unforgettable show!"

"It's almost time for another incredible Country For A Cause concert, the 'unofficial' kickoff to CMA Fest," adds Sherri Forrest, President of Country For A Cause. "The buzz is already building, and VIP tickets have sold out in under five minutes in past years, so fans will want to be ready. We're grateful for the support of Gus Arrendale and Springer Mountain Farms, along with our artists, volunteers, and fans who help us raise thousands of dollars each year for Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt."

"How lucky we are to have the support of Country For A Cause in our Nashville community," says Meredith "Mamie" Shepherd, Senior Program Manager for Seacrest Studios at Monroe Carell. "T.G. Sheppard and Kelly Lang have been incredible champions of the patients and families seeking treatment and care at Monroe Carell. The generosity and love on display each year remind us how healing music can be."

About Country For A Cause

Founded as a heartfelt way to give back during CMA Fest week, Country For A Cause has become a cherished annual tradition. Over the years, the event has welcomed performances from Crystal Gayle, Lee Greenwood, The Bellamy Brothers, Ty Herndon, Doug Supernaw, Baillie & The Boys, Collin Raye, Billy Dean, Jeannie Seely, Jan Howard, John Rich, Jody Miller, Lulu Roman, and many others.

In 2018, the organization named Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt as its sole beneficiary. To date, the event has raised over \$200,000 to support the hospital's mission of providing world-class pediatric care.

Fans can learn more by visiting the official Facebook Group: Country For A Cause.

About Springer Mountain Farms

Gus Arrendale, President of Springer Mountain Farms, leads the family-owned company based in northeast Georgia, where chickens have been responsibly raised for more than

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Learn more at SpringerMTN.com or follow @SMFchicken.

About Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt
Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt is recognized as one of the nation's leading pediatric hospitals, treating everything from common childhood illnesses to complex conditions such as congenital heart disease and cancer. In 2025, the hospital was named among the nation's "Best Children's Hospitals" for the 19th consecutive year by U.S. News & World Report, earning the distinction of No. 1 pediatric hospital in Tennessee and sharing first place in the Southeast region for the fifth consecutive year.

The nonprofit hospital opened in 2004, expanded in 2012, and in 2016 began construction on an additional four floors, adding 160,000 sq. ft. to further advance its mission.

More information: ChildrensHospitalVanderbilt.org

"The Singing Barber" Noah Peters Marries in Heartfelt Ceremony Celebrating Faith, Family, and Community

Beloved viral sensation and community favorite Noah Peters, known nationwide as "The Singing Barber," has officially tied the knot to Jayden Davis in a joyful ceremony surrounded by family, friends, and fans who have followed his remarkable journey from small-town barber to breakout musical personality.

The wedding, held on March 7, at Proctor Farms in Rome Georgia reflected the same warmth, authenticity, and faith-driven spirit that have made Peters a standout figure both online and in his hometown. The couple exchanged vows in an intimate service filled with music, personal touches, and heartfelt moments that honored their shared values and deep connection.

Davis and Peters met in 2016, and became a couple in 2025. Davis told PEOPLE. "I feel like all my dreams and prayers are coming true!!"



Peters, whose soulful singing videos from his barbershop have garnered millions of views, has long credited his faith and community for shaping his life and career. Those themes were woven throughout the ceremony, from the worship-infused prelude music to the couple's personalized vows.

"This day is a blessing I've prayed for," Peters shared. "I'm grateful for the love we've been given and the people who have supported us every step of the way."

True to his nickname, Peters incorporated music into the celebration. During the reception, he surprised guests with a special performance dedicated to his bride, a moment that drew cheers, tears, and a standing ovation.

Noah Peters rose to national attention through viral clips showcasing his powerful voice while cutting hair in his barbershop. His blend of talent, humility, and uplifting spirit has earned him a devoted following across social media platforms. Peters continues to balance his musical opportunities with his passion for serving his community behind the barber's chair.

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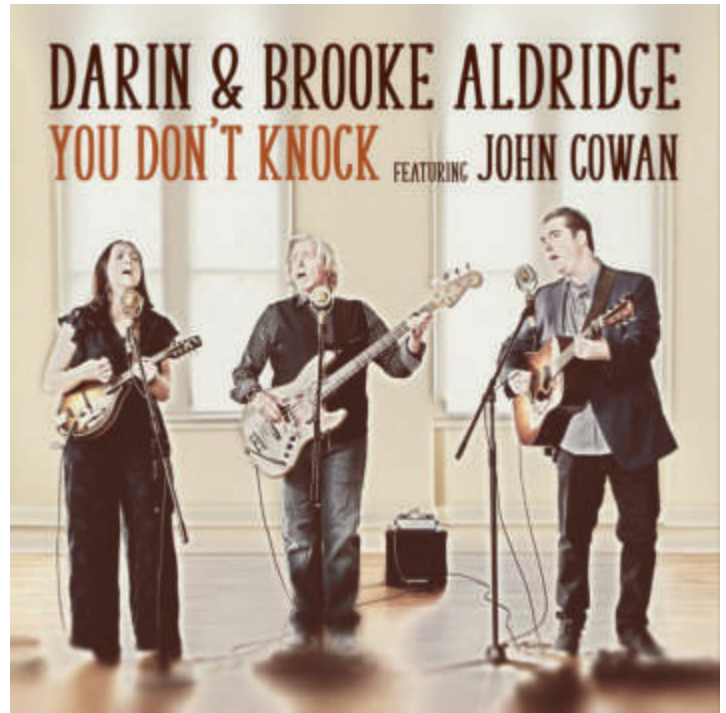
**Darin & Brooke Aldridge Released Latest Single
You Don't Knock Featuring John Cowan From
Their New Album "Soul Condition"**

Multi-award-winning Bluegrass favorites Darin & Brooke Aldridge released their new single, *You Don't Knock*, from their forthcoming Gospel album "Soul Condition" (April 17) on Billy Blue Records. The project marks the duo's second full Gospel release and features their first collaboration with acclaimed vocalist John Cowan (New Grass Revival and The Doobie Brothers), whose unmistakable voice adds a special touch to the track. A joyful, stand-up-and-sing-along Gospel anthem, *You Don't Knock* is already building buzz following its premiere with GodTube and across all streaming platforms.

"*You Don't Knock* is the kind of song you turn up the moment it hits the radio. Upbeat, soulful, and impossible to sit still to, our voices paired together once again with John Cowan, we wanted to deliver a track that begs to be felt, whether you're in the crowd or cruising down the road, drumming along on the steering wheel." - Darin and Brooke Aldridge

Their upcoming album "Soul Condition," is an 11-track collection that continues to showcase the heartfelt faith and soaring harmonies fans have come to expect from Darin & Brooke Aldridge. The project - the duo's 11th studio album - also features special appearances from Sonya Isaacs and Becky Isaacs of The Isaacs, both members of the Grand Ole Opry, along with GRAMMY-winning Gospel standout, Jason Crabb. Blending powerful collaborations with their signature Bluegrass-and-Gospel sound, the album highlights the duo's continued commitment to inspirational music rooted in tradition while reaching listeners across generations.

Darin and Brooke Aldridge continue to ascend to new heights in the music industry while keeping their easy-going, down-to-earth connection with audiences everywhere. Brooke is a four-time winner of the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) award for 'Female Vocalist of the Year,' while Darin, a former member of The Country Gentlemen, is a former IBMA 'Mentor of the Year' and a truly gifted singer and multi-instrumentalist. They have had numerous nominations over the years from the IBMA, the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America (SPBGMA), the Gospel Music Association (GMA Dove Awards) and the Inspirational Country Music Association.



In April 2023, they were named 'Bluegrass Artist of the Year' at the Absolutely Gospel Music Awards. Also in 2023, the IBMA nominated the smash hit collaboration *Jordan* featuring Ricky Skaggs, Mo Pitney and Mark Fain, in the 'Gospel Recording of the Year' category while the GMA nominated the song for its 'Bluegrass/Country/Roots Recorded Song of the Year' award.

The North Carolina natives have enjoyed top spots on the Billboard Bluegrass Album, SiriusXM's Bluegrass Junction, Bluegrass Today, Bluegrass Unlimited, Americana/Roots, and Gospel charts. Their music videos have been featured on CMT, CMT Edge, GAC, Bluegrass Ridge TV, and The Bluegrass Situation. Their television appearances include PBS' Mountain Stage, Songs of the Mountain and Music City Roots; RFD-TV's Larry's Country Diner, Country's Family Reunion and The Woodsongs Old Time Radio Hour; Great American Gospel; The Bluegrass Road and Blue Highways TV. They have graced the stage of the Grand Ole Opry more than 50 times.

A career highlight came on the group's 2021 release "This Life We're Livin'" as the Gospel single *He's Getting Me Ready*, featured Country Music Hall of Fame members The Oak Ridge Boys. The song spent an incredible, record-setting five months atop The Singing News Bluegrass Gospel chart.



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Experience Country music legends in this live theatrical tribute show.

More information at CountryRoadsNashville.com.



Country Roads USA Cast

Photo Credit: Michael Gomez

Red, White & Bluegrass: The Kody Norris Show Drops "Spirit of America" Celebrating America 250



Award-winning Country and Bluegrass group The Kody Norris Show is helping kick off the America 250 celebration with the release of a new single, *Spirit of America*, the first taste of their highly anticipated summer album. Premiered by Whiskey Riff, the song paints a heartfelt portrait of the nation and the people who keep it moving forward, from hardworking truckers on the highways and farmers in the fields to the coal miners of West Virginia and the soldiers who serve and fight abroad to protect our freedoms. Honoring the grit, sacrifice, and everyday strength found across the country, the track reminds listeners that the true "Spirit of America" lives in its people.

"As we celebrate America 250, *Spirit of America* was one of the first songs we knew we had to record," shares Kody. "Owner of Rebel Records, Mark Freeman, pitched this song over to us to be the first single from our forthcoming album! The hard-working hands behind this country are the very ones that have kept our nation moving forward for 250 years, and we hope to honor a few of them with this song."

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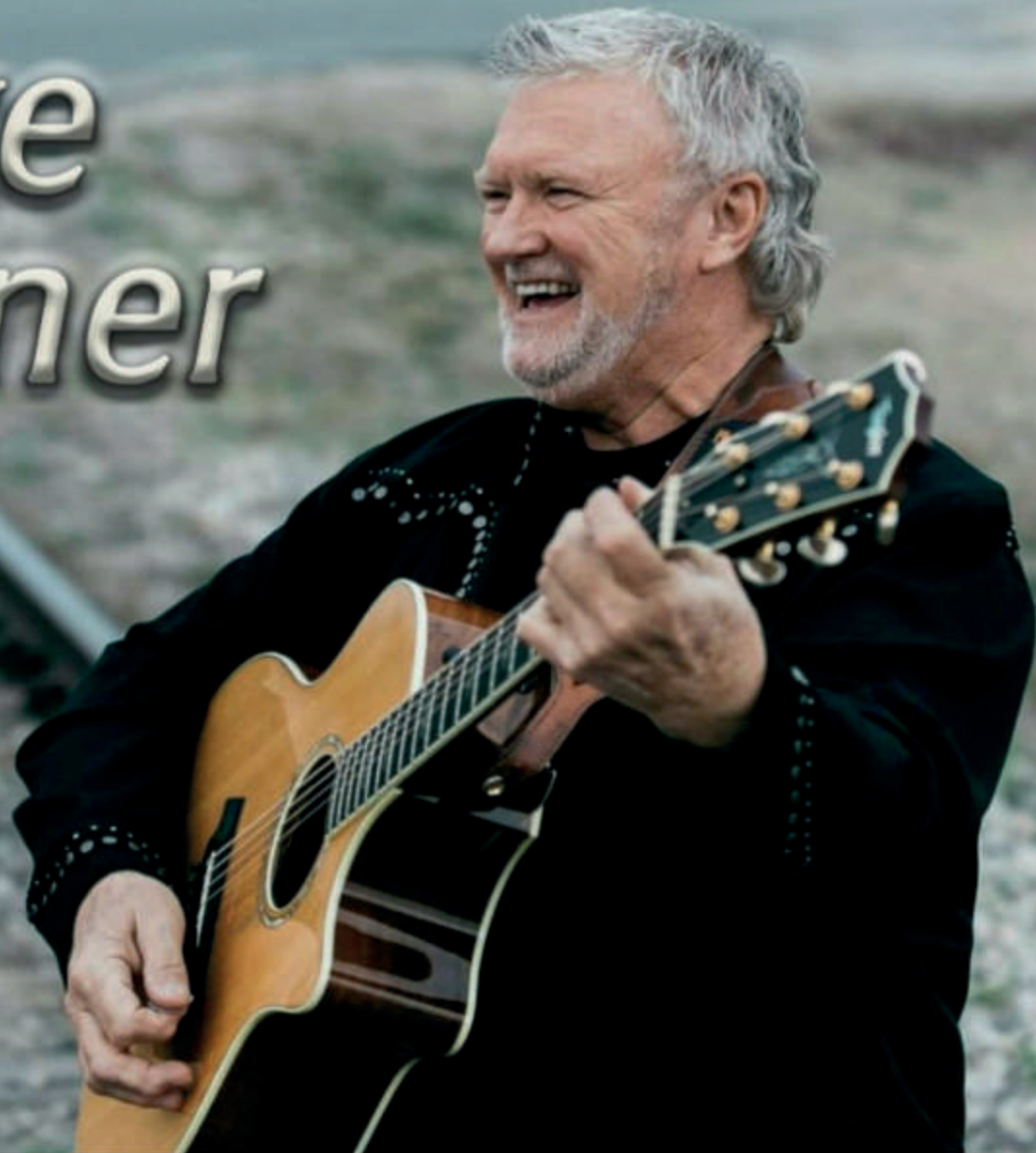


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The group is also excited to start their official "Spirit of America" tour, announcing over 60 shows in 20 states, including Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Minnesota, Missouri, Texas, and more. They will also be heading to Colorado for their first-ever Rockygrass with artists including Punch Brothers, The Del McCoury Band, Tim O'Brien, Steep Canyon Rangers, and more.

The Kody Norris Show celebrated a standout night at the 2026 SPBGMA Awards, earning an impressive five honors, including 'Entertainer of the Year,' 'Song of the Year' for *The Auctioneer*, 'Band Overall of the Year,' 'Guitar Performer of the Year' for Kody Norris, and 'Male Vocalist of the Year' for Kody Norris, a sweep that underscored the group's rising momentum in Bluegrass music.

The night brought an additional emotional highlight when, during their Friday evening performance, Norris surprised Hayden "Jim" Hensley onstage with an invitation to join as the band's official banjo player and newest member, turning an already triumphant evening into a truly unforgettable moment for the entire Kody Norris Show family.

The Kody Norris Show continues bringing Bluegrass music to both core fans of the genre and new audiences. They are a youthful voice in Bluegrass music, and insiders have awarded them multiple IBMA & SPBGMA Nominations and wins. The Kody Norris Show's album "All Suited Up" (2021) charted at #7, and "Rhinestone Revival" (2023) at #8 on the Billboard charts. Their trademarked high-energy style delivers an unrivaled live show experience. The band has played the Ryman Auditorium, Grand Ole Opry, SiriusXM, and other stages worldwide. Rife with rhinestones, loaded with laughs, and a heaping helping of high-powered traditional music, The Kody Norris Show is truly one of a kind.

For more information, visit thekodynorrisshow.com.

Keepin' It Country Farm Announces Star-Studded 2026 Love Tattoo Foundation Benefit Concert Series

Keepin' It Country Farm, home of traditional Country artist Richard Lynch, has unveiled the highly anticipated lineup for its 2026 Love Tattoo Foundation Benefit Concert Series. Set against the backdrop of the farm's stunning barn-style venue in historic Waynesville, Ohio, the concert series brings together some of Country music's most beloved voices - all to support American veterans through the Love Tattoo Foundation.

The 2026 season promises an unforgettable celebration of authentic Country music, community, and patriotism. The series will once again be hosted by Richard Lynch & The Richard Lynch Band. Concerts begin at 7pm, doors open at 6pm

2026 Love Tattoo Foundation Benefit Concert Lineup: May 30 – Mo Pitney, June 27 – French Family Band, August 1 – Rhonda Vincent, August 29 – Buddy Jewell, September 19 – Billy "Crash" Craddock, October 17 – Suzy Bogguss, November 7 – Richard Lynch & Friends

			
Mo Pitney May 30, 7 pm	French Family Band June 27, 7 pm	Rhonda Vincent August 1, 7 pm	Buddy Jewell August 29, 7 pm
			
Billy "Crash" Craddock Sept. 19, 7 pm	Suzy Bogguss Oct. 17, 7 pm	Richard Lynch & Friends Nov. 7, 7 pm	



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Season passes for all seven concerts are available. Individual tickets may be purchased online at www.lovetattoofoundation.org/store, as well as at select regional outlets including The Feed Store (Lebanon, OH) and Mom's Restaurant (Franklin, OH).

The Love Tattoo Foundation is a registered non-profit organization dedicated to honoring and assisting American veterans who carry mental or physical scars from their service. Its mission is to raise funds and awareness to help give veterans the opportunities they sacrificed so that others could enjoy theirs.

The foundation was born from a deeply moving moment. Law enforcement officer Charles "Chuck" Brisbin was inspired by the story of a young soldier who returned from Afghanistan disfigured. Wanting to honor his sacrifice, Brisbin wrote a poem titled *Love Tattoo*. He then asked Richard Lynch - known for his deep respect for America's military - to bring the poem to life as a song. The emotional impact was immediate and profound, often moving veterans to tears. From that powerful collaboration, a larger calling emerged.

Recognizing that many veterans aged 18 to 81 carry lifelong scars without a dedicated organization addressing their unique needs, Lynch, Brisbin, and supporters took a stand. The Love Tattoo Foundation works to ensure these heroes are lifted up and honored - not forgotten.

Keepin' It Country Farm, located at 5329 Township Line Rd., Waynesville, Ohio, is more than a venue. It is a working farm, home to Richard and Donna Lynch, and a living tribute to traditional Country music, agriculture, and the American rural lifestyle. The property houses The Ohio Country Music Hall of Fame, the Traditionally Lynch TV and radio programs, and serves as headquarters for the Love Tattoo Foundation.

Richard and Donna Lynch remain steadfast in their mission: preserving Country music "as it was meant to be" while giving back to veterans and the local community.

"We are driven to succeed in our daily business endeavors to support the traditions of the American farmer, the rural lifestyle, and of course the continuation and history of true Country music," they share. "Our goal is to always 'Keep It Country.'"

With a lineup featuring Bluegrass royalty, Grand Ole Opry legends, and rising traditionalists, the 2026 Love Tattoo

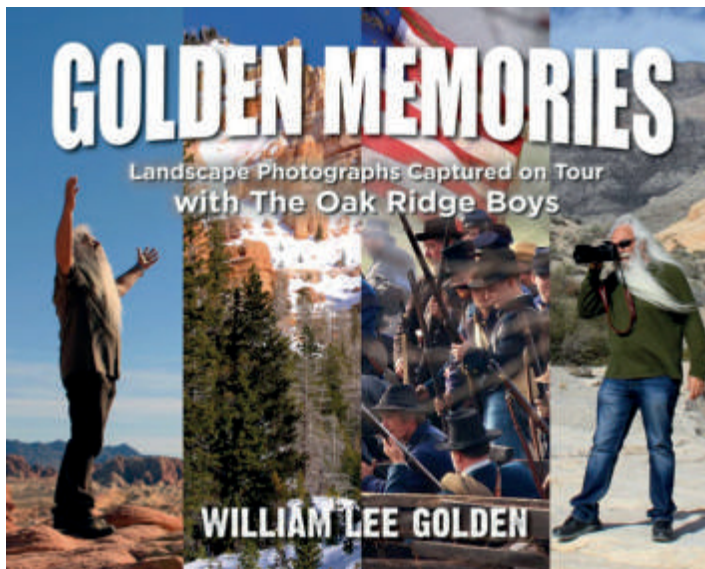
Foundation Benefit Concert Series is poised to be the farm's biggest season yet.

For additional information, visit lovetattoofoundation.org. Learn more about the venue at keepinitcountryfarm.com.

Come for the music. Stay for the mission. Help us honor those who sacrificed for our freedom.

Country Music Hall of Famer & Oak Ridge Boy William Lee Golden Releases New Picture Book, 'Golden Memories'

Country and Gospel Music Hall of Fame, Grand Ole Opry, and Oak Ridge Boys member William Lee Golden has released his latest picture book, "Golden Memories" - a personal collection of photographs he has captured while traveling across the United States and around the world. The book features scenic moments from coast to coast, including Red Rock Canyon, the Grand Canyon, sunsets along Old Hickory Lake just outside Nashville, as well as international stops in London, Paris, and beyond. Spanning images Golden has taken since he first began shooting digital photography in 2008, the collection offers fans a unique, behind-the-scenes look at the places and moments that have inspired him on and off the road.



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<<< *Cross Country Report, continued from page 27*

"I've been blessed to travel all across the country both with The Oak Ridge Boys and on my own," shares William Lee Golden. "Along the way, I began taking photos on each journey as a way to remember the places I've been and the roads that led me there. I'm grateful to Scot England for helping me be able to share these moments with you, and I thank you for being part of my journey."

There are few things more potent than family harmony, and rarely has that been more evident than on the three new albums recorded by Country Music Hall of Fame and Oak Ridge Boy member William Lee Golden, who, along with his talented sons, created William Lee Golden and The Goldenes. The Brewton, Alabama native cements his considerable legacy in the music industry with three distinctive collections that reflect his musical roots and the journey that has made him one of America's most unique troubadours. From revered Gospel classics to beloved Country gems and iconic Rock favorites, Golden leads his family through the songs that have been stepping stones on his well-traveled musical journey. It all comes together as a rich sonic tapestry that fans will cherish. (Sadly, Rusty Golden passed away on July 1, 2024 at the age of 65 at his home in Hendersonville, Tennessee.)

For more, visit williamleegoldenandthegoldens.com.

A New Era in Pediatric Care: Dolly Parton Children's Hospital

In a landmark moment for pediatric healthcare, East Tennessee Children's Hospital on February 26, announced it is officially becoming Dolly Parton Children's Hospital, marking a powerful new collaboration designed to elevate children's healthcare across East Tennessee and beyond.



"Being fortunate to have grown up in the mountains of East Tennessee, I learned early on what it means to take care of one another," said Dolly Parton. "Every child deserves world-class care, wrapped in kindness and love. I'm so honored

to stand alongside this hospital and do my part to help bring more hope, more comfort and more healing to children and families."

For nearly 90 years, East Tennessee Children's Hospital has delivered transformative and expert pediatric care. In a region where neighbors show up for one another and roots run deep, Dolly Parton is reinforcing a longstanding commitment to children and families in a bold new era for the hospital - one centered on compassion, innovation and access.



Driven by excellence and grounded in its commitment to families, Dolly Parton Children's Hospital will continue advancing its mission to improve the health and well-being of children through exceptional, comprehensive, family-centered care, deepening its impact of pediatric excellence across the region.

"This is more than a name change," said Matt Schaefer, President and CEO of Dolly Parton Children's Hospital. "With Dolly's support, we are strengthening our mission to deliver world-class pediatric care to families, ensuring every child who walks through our doors receives the treatment they deserve."

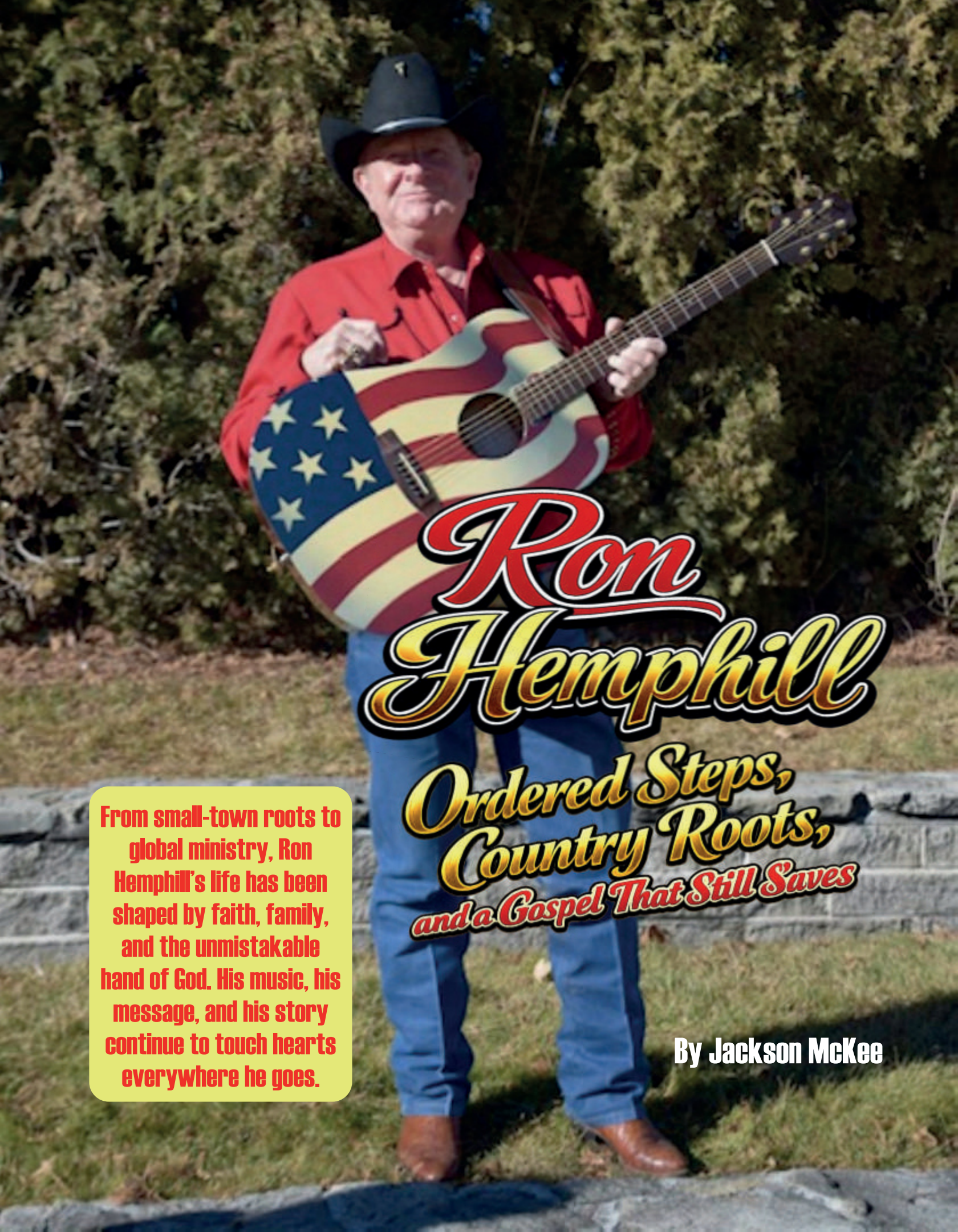
Everyone is invited to be part of this historic moment by contributing to the future of pediatric care at Dolly Parton Children's Hospital. To learn more or get involved, visit DollyChildrens.org.

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From small-town roots to global ministry, Ron Hemphill's life has been shaped by faith, family, and the unmistakable hand of God. His music, his message, and his story continue to touch hearts everywhere he goes.

By Jackson McKee

When Ron Hemphill talks about his life, he doesn't start with the awards, the #1 songs, or the miles he's logged across 48 states and 23 countries. He starts with something far simpler - and far more powerful.

"I look back now and see that the footsteps of a good man are ordered of the Lord," he says. "I couldn't see it then, but today I see how the Lord directed my life."

Those footsteps began in Miami, Oklahoma, wound their way through Joplin and Seneca, Missouri, and eventually carried him around the world as a pastor, a Country Gospel recording artist, and a man whose songs have literally saved lives.

But before the stages, before the pulpits, before the #1 hits, there was a teenage boy with a ponytail, a rebellious streak, and a radio that - no matter how far he drifted - always seemed to find its way back to a country station.

A Soldier's Path, A Shepherd's Calling

Ron grew up on a steady diet of Jack Greene, Conway Twitty, George Jones, and Merle Haggard. "Country Western music," he laughs, "back when that's what we called it."

After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1972, becoming a third-generation soldier. His grandfather fought in WWII, his father in Korea and Vietnam. Ron expected to follow the same path.

"I received orders for Vietnam," he recalls, "but then they changed my orders and sent me to Fort Carson. At the time I was very displeased about the change."

Only later did he understand the divine redirection.

Those years brought more than military discipline, they brought family. Ron and his high-school sweetheart, Paula, married in 1972. Today, 53 years later, they're still "living the dream," surrounded by children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. One great-granddaughter is already in Heaven. "One day we will see her again," he says softly.

A Rebel Meets Redemption

After leaving the Army, Ron tried to re-enlist, but God had other plans. A trip to Oregon to visit Paula's brother turned into a job opportunity, and that job turned into a spiritual turning point.

Paula got saved first. Then she got filled with the Holy Ghost. Then she started in on Ron. "I was rebellious and wanted nothing to do with it," he admits. "I had served the Lord as a boy and walked away."

But the Lord - and Paula - kept tugging.

Finally, Ron surrendered his life back to Christ. And that's when everything changed. "I sat down with the Lord and asked Him what I should do. I was willing to give up my guitar and music if that's what it took. Instead, He gave me a new song, *I'm On the Right Road Again*."

From there, the doors opened quickly: worship team, deacon, elder. And then came the call that would define the rest of his life.

A Church in the High Desert

"In 1982 the Lord spoke to our hearts to move to Prineville, Oregon, to pioneer a church," Ron says. "Fifty-three years later, I am still pastoring."

That longevity is rare. That faithfulness is rarer still.

Balancing the pulpit with a music ministry hasn't always been easy. "My biggest challenge is living in Oregon and actively pastoring our church," he explains. "Country music is big in Oregon, but we don't have any radio stations that play Country Gospel or Christian Country."

Still, he travels when he can, singing, preaching, encouraging, and carrying the message God placed in his heart.

From Rock & Roll Drummer to Country Gospel Chart-Topper

Ron's musical journey didn't begin in church. It began behind a drum kit in a Rock band, ponytail and all. But even then, his roots were never far away.

A fellow soldier taught him his first guitar chords - Am and G - at Fort Eustis, Virginia. A Beatles songbook taught him the rest.

Years later, in 2005, he recorded his first Nashville album. Today he has eight.

In 2008, he was invited to sing at the 39th Annual Country Radio Seminar in Nashville. "I felt like a fish out of water," he laughs. But he went. And he sang.

In 2011, he received his first #1 song, *You Can't Keep a Good Man Down*, in Pigeon Forge. "Who am I to be there with them?" he remembers thinking as he stood among legends like Marty Raybon, James Payne, and Chuck Hancock.

Since then, he's earned three #1 songs - two originals and one cover of *Thank a Soldier*.

And every single release he's put out has charted.

Songs That Save Lives

Awards are wonderful. Chart positions are exciting. But nothing compares to the moment Ron realized his music had saved a life. A woman in Georgia heard his song *God Still Cares* at the exact moment she was contemplating suicide. The song stopped her. She prayed. She lived.



“She called to share her testimony,” Ron says. “I cried like a little baby. That song changed her life, and her testimony changed mine.”

On tour in England, it happened again. Another woman. Another moment of despair. Another life saved.

“I realized that when God gives us something, it is more than just about us,” he says. “It was more than a song. It was an invaluable gift.”

Encounters with Legends

Ron has met his share of heroes, but one moment stands above the rest. “At CRS-39, we ran into Charlie Daniels,” he recalls. “He was so humble, so friendly, so encouraging. As big as he was in stature and success, he still had time for the little man.”

Charlie’s words stayed with him: Keep singing. Keep playing. Give your best to God and man.

Ron has done exactly that.

A Message for a Broken World

“To be blunt,” Ron says, “this world is going to hell in a handbag. Yet the message of the cross is still just as strong today as ever.”

Romans 10 echoes in his heart: Faith comes by hearing... and how shall they hear without a preacher?

Ron has spent his life answering that call through sermons, through songs, through stories, through every mile and every melody.

He still sings the old songs. “The Lord told me, ‘Don’t let the old ones be forgotten.’” And he still brings the same heart to every event. “During one of my concerts, you can expect Country-style music with a Gospel message. Sometimes I preach between sets. Sometimes I share scripture or stories. I use a lot of levity and invite audience participation. There are no big I’s or little you’s. It’s a time to encourage and lift one another up in Jesus’ name.”

Meanwhile, Back at the Cross

Ron’s latest single, *Meanwhile Back at the Cross*, written by Gordon Mote, is climbing the Cross Country USA Hot 100, currently sitting at #38.

“Each month I have to shake my head as it climbs,” he says. “I give tribute to Gordon Mote as the writer of the song and God as the author and finisher of my faith.”

He still feels humbled by radio interviews. “After all - who am I?”

He’s a pastor. A singer. A soldier. A storyteller. A man whose songs have saved lives. A man whose footsteps have been ordered by the Lord.

And he is a reminder that God still calls ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

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The Music & Legacy of Red Sovine

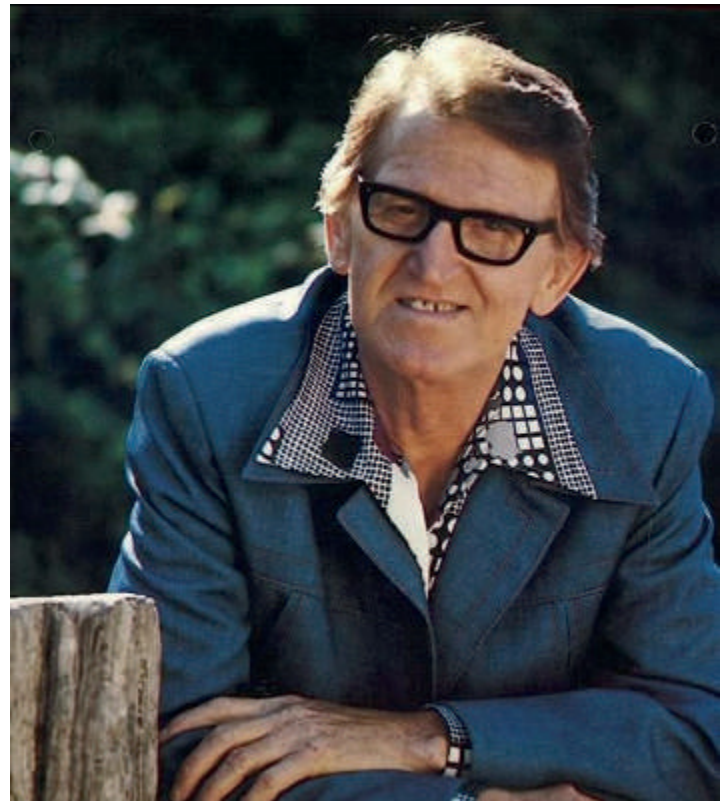
Red Sovine is the gentle voice that carried America home. There are singers who chase the spotlight, and then there are storytellers who simply open their mouths and let the world feel a little less lonely. Red Sovine belonged to the latter. His voice - soft as worn denim, steady as a trucker's heartbeat at midnight - became a companion to anyone who ever traveled far from home or carried a burden too heavy to name.

Born Woodrow Wilson Sovine in Charleston, West Virginia, he grew up in the lean years of the Depression, where music wasn't a luxury but a lifeline. His mother taught him his first chords, and from that moment on, Sovine understood that a song could be a shelter that could hold a nation together.

By the time he stepped onto the Grand Ole Opry stage in the 1950s, Sovine had already lived a dozen lives - radio singer, harmony partner, road musician, songwriter. But it was his gift for recitation, that tender spoken-word style, that made him a name in Country music. He didn't just sing; he told and people listened.

In Sovine's world, truck drivers weren't just men behind the wheel, they were America's quiet pilgrims, carrying freight and faith across the map. He gave them dignity, humanity, and a place in the country canon. Songs like *Giddyup Go* and *Teddy Bear* weren't hits because they were clever; they were hits because they were true. They honored the long nights, the missed birthdays, the heartbreak, the grit, and the grace of life lived on the road. More recitations from Sovine included: *Phantom 309*, *Little Joe*, *Daddy's Girl* and *Little Rosa*.

When Sovine spoke, you could almost hear the hum of tires on asphalt, the CB radio crackle, the ache of a man remembering what he lost - or what he hoped to find. His stories were simple, but never small. They were about fathers



and sons, strangers and angels, and the kind of kindness that still feels possible in the quiet hours before dawn.

Even after his passing in 1980, Sovine's songs continue to drift through truck stops, late-night radio shows, and the memories of those who grew up hearing his voice on long drives. His music remains a reminder that the most powerful stories aren't always shouted - they're spoken gently, with a full heart that would definitely bring tears to your eyes. Red Sovine didn't just sing about America. He sang to America. And in return, America kept him close.



Christine Scott

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Jeremy Ryan Abbott - known to fans simply as J Abbott - is enthralled with music and the craft of songwriting. To him, music is far more than sound; it is feeling. It is faith expressed outwardly, family woven into melody, and passion shaped by years of hard work. Today, that lifelong journey enters a new chapter with his signing to Grace Records Nashville LLC, marking a major milestone in Abbott's rising career.

Abbott's musical story began almost as soon as he could walk. Raised in a home where faith was central, he grew up performing with his family's Christian music ministry, The Abbotts, touring throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Those early years not only developed his vocal ability but also taught him that music can minister, connect, and ultimately help fulfill one's calling.

By his twenties, Abbott was no longer confined to church venues. Determined to grow, he stepped into bars, clubs, patios, VFW halls, American Legions, Moose Lodges, and any place willing to hand him a microphone. He sang with local bands, entered karaoke competitions, and performed anywhere a crowd could gather. At times, he performed seven nights a week, building a reputation for grit, consistency, and heart.

It was during this season that fans began calling him "Rascal," a nod to the raw emotion he poured into Rascal Flatts classics like *God Bless the Broken Road* and *These Days*. The nickname stuck, reflecting both his fun-loving

personality and his ability to connect deeply with listeners through the shared language of Country music.

A pivotal moment came during a trip to Nashville, where Abbott attended a VIP Breakfast on Broadway hosted by Mark Wills Music. Soon after, he auditioned for American Idol Season 7, advancing to the IZOD Center in East Rutherford, New Jersey. He later competed on America's Got Talent in Columbus, Ohio. These experiences sharpened his stage presence and fueled his determination to pursue music professionally.

Since then, Abbott has shared stages with industry greats, top producers, and Grand Ole Opry musicians. One standout moment was performing before thousands at a Pittsburgh Pirates Semi-League Baseball game, a powerful confirmation of his ability to command a large audience with authenticity and energy.

Musically, J Abbott stands at the crossroads of Country, Christian Country, Gospel, and touches of Country Rock. His influences range from Gospel icons like the Gaither Vocal

Band, The Crabb Family, and Phillips, Craig & Dean to Country legends including Mark Wills, Rascal Flatts, George Strait, Garth Brooks, and Jason Aldean. The result is a sound that feels both familiar and fresh - resonating with traditional Country fans while engaging a new generation.

Abbott's songwriting is rooted in lived experience. His number-one hit *Over & Over Again* is among his most personal works, written in memory of his father, Kenneth Abbott, who passed away at just 58. The song chronicles grief, healing, and the renewed faith Abbott found in Jesus Christ - whom he calls "a new best friend." The message resonated deeply with listeners, helping many through their own hardships and climbing to number one on multiple charts.

Another major success, *Knock Knock*, also reached number one and ranked as the #3 song of 2023. These hits solidified Abbott as a rising force in Christian Country and Southern Gospel, earning him multiple fan-voted nominations at the AGM and ICGM Awards, including 'Breakthrough Artist of the Year,' 'Song of the Year,' 'Video of the Year,' and 'Album of the Year' for "A Better Man."

With the release of his highly anticipated single and music video *Who Needs Whiskey*, Abbott steps boldly into the next phase of his career. The song isn't really about whiskey at all. It's about what happens when God brings the right person into your life. Suddenly, the things you used to lean on don't hold the same weight anymore. You don't need the old escapes, the old crutches, the old ways of coping. Love brings a steadiness that a bottle never could. That's the heart of the song.

The song showcases the writing talents of Nashville hitmaker Corey Lee Barker, whose catalog includes more than 2,300 recordings for artists such as Vince Gill, Neal McCoy, and Bill Anderson.

Produced by seven-time Grammy Award winner Mark Fain - known for his work with Miranda Lambert, Luke Combs, and Carrie Underwood - the track captures Abbott's signature blend of heartfelt storytelling and modern Country edge. Engineers Steve C. Chandler and Ben Fowler, both industry heavyweights, helped shape the polished, emotionally rich production. The music video, directed by Chris Odem, features a compelling performance by Heather



Rickman, who brings Abbott's vision to life with authenticity and energy.

Momentum surrounding *Who Needs Whiskey* surged with the announcement that Abbott has officially signed with Grace Records Nashville LLC. The label describes him as "a powerful and uniquely strong voice... capable of connecting on multiple levels - crossing generational and cultural boundaries and bridging faith, Country roots, and high-energy storytelling."

For Abbott, the signing is deeply personal. "The journey has gone from singing in the living room with my family as a kid to embracing the very best in the music industry," he says. "To have a team that believes in the message and the music - it's unbelievable."

Despite his growing success, Abbott remains grounded. "Family and faith are everything for me," he says, crediting his mother, Mary Abbott, as a constant source of strength. "That is and always will be the foundation of everything I do."

From a small-town Ohio boy with a big heart to a nationally signed artist, J. Abbott's story is a testament to what faith, hard work, and purpose can build. With a mature voice, boundless energy, and lyrics that inspire hope, he stands out in a Country music landscape often driven by trends rather than truth.

With the support of Grace Records Nashville and an unwavering commitment to his calling, J. Abbott's journey is only just beginning.



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CHUCK DAY

By Robin Tanner

Chuck Day is known worldwide as one of America's most beloved singers and songwriters. As the co-writer of *Midnight Cry*, the most recorded song in modern Christian music history, his influence stretches across generations, genres, and continents. With a career spanning more than fifty-two years, Chuck has penned more than thirty-six No. 1 songs, including *Child of the Light*, *Angels in the Room*, *I'll Stand Up and Say So*, and *Low Enough*.

When asked about the beginning of his musical journey, Chuck reflects with gratitude. "I started singing with my mom at age ten in Adel, Georgia. It wasn't long before my little brother Greg joined in. Greg could sing harmony as well as lead perfectly and I could sing lead and harmony parts as well. We became a family group, singing at church."

Music was woven into the fabric of the Day household. His mother - a trained vocalist and musician from Lee College in Cleveland, Tennessee - played piano and accordion and was already an accomplished songwriter.

By age twelve, Chuck and his family traveled to Madisonville, Kentucky, to record the first of four albums at the Happy Goodman Studios. "Rusty Goodman produced our records and became my mentor through my teen years. I am very grateful for the time and effort he poured into helping shape me vocally and influencing my musical career."

His mother also worked for the legendary J.G. Whitfield, "The Old Gospel Man," promoting major Gospel concerts across South Georgia. Chuck and his family performed on shows featuring The Goodmans, The Hinsons, The Oak Ridge Boys, The Dixie Echoes, and many more - relationships that shaped his early years and musical identity.

When Chuck was eighteen, he entered professional music, joining Windy Johnson and The Messengers Quartet, one of the top groups of the era. After the fuel crisis forced the group to disband, he continued with The Glory Road Quartet and The Roger Horne Trio.

Chuck's artistry has been shaped by some of the greatest voices in Gospel and Country music, including Rusty Goodman, Kenny Hinson, Merle Haggard, Ray Price, and George Jones. He would eventually make the transition into secular music. "I toured with Marty Haggard, son of Merle Haggard, and later with Country legend Freddy Fender," Chuck recalls.



He eventually formed his own club band in the Florida Panhandle - until one life-changing night in Brewton, Alabama. "The Holy Spirit showed up on stage and placed His hand on my heart and convicted me. I left soon after that and changed my life."

That moment redirected his path back to Gospel music. Chuck joined The Accords, a powerhouse regional group from Georgia, and soon after, he and his brother Greg wrote *Midnight Cry*. Both brothers married, started families, and eventually formed their own group, The Days.

After charting consistently in Southern Gospel, they showcased at the National Quartet Convention, catching the attention of Bill Traylor of Homeland Records. They signed with the newly formed Chyenne Records alongside artists such as White River, Steve Gatlin, Paula McCullah, Bruce Haynes, and Lisa Dagg.

Their popularity grew rapidly, and they became regulars on the TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network). But as the demands increased, Chuck made a pivotal decision. "I came

to a place where I made the decision to leave and go into solo ministry so that I could pay more attention and care to my family. God honored that.”

Since stepping into solo ministry, Chuck’s career has flourished - through chart-topping songs, awards, concerts, and countless lives changed. “The friends I’ve made, the relationships God has put together, the people whose lives have changed because we met - I don’t understand it all, but I am grateful.”

His contributions have earned him some of the highest honors in Inspirational Country and Gospel music. Chuck has been named ‘Entertainer of the Year,’ ‘Male Vocalist of the Year,’ ‘Songwriter of the Year,’ and ‘Living Legend’ at the Inspirational Country Music Awards in Nashville. He is also an inductee of the International Country Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame, the Texas International Music Hall of Fame, and the Georgia Country Music Hall of Fame.

Alongside his wife, Selena, Chuck has traveled to 42 countries doing missions work, sharing not only his music but also his message of God’s love. Today, he continues to tour across America and around the world, carrying a testimony shaped by grace, grit, and a lifetime of ministry.

Chuck’s journey is filled with unforgettable moments: Winning ‘Song of the Year’ for *Midnight Cry* and *Angels in the Room*, performing on the Friday Night Grand Ole Opry with The Roger Horne Trio, and singing before 128,000

people on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., at the 9-11 March on Washington.

Chuck’s songwriting achievements include more than 36 No. 1 songs, and a career built on faith rather than promotion, “All my chart songs have been a gift from God! I don’t promote my songs. I put them out and let them stand on their own. God and the listeners decide! Praise the Lord!”

Chuck describes his concerts with one word. “Honesty! I will sing my heart out, tell the truth, and look you straight in the eye while I do it with a smile. Why? Because I love every one of you!” Fans can expect to hear many of his iconic songs, including *Midnight Cry* and his latest single, *New Man*, written by Joey Herzog.

When asked about a spiritual moment that stands out, Chuck’s answer is simple and profound: “There have been so many. I guess the thing that comes to mind is when people respond to an invitation to be reconciled to Christ. There is no greater honor.”

Chuck’s vision for the next chapter of his life is rooted in mentorship and ministry. “I want to be a better example of Christ. I want to become a leader for those coming up. I don’t need awards or accolades - I want to help the youth, the new ones out there trying to do this. I want to help them write amazing songs, record stellar records, stand on stage with Kingdom authority, and tell their stories.”



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CrossCountry **HOT 100**

OFFICIAL CHRISTIAN COUNTRY TOP 100 - APRIL 2026

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	10	Greatly To Be Praised	Melissa Evans	51	61	I Feel New	J'Lee
2	4	Living Proof	Ken & Kim Stull	52	69	Saving Grace	Krystina B
3	11	When Love Arose	Joy LaVallee	53	98	This One's For You	Rocky and Tamie
4	8	I've Been Thinking	Waymasters	54	73	Love Like Jesus Does	Aaron Justice
5	7	If That Ain't True Love	Melanie Walker	55	66	One Of These Days	Carol Barham
6	9	New Man	Chuck Day	56	74	Picture This	Jessie Ritchie
7	21	Three Nails And A Cross	George Strait	57	75	God Is Good Ya'll	Wings of Love
8	20	Blood Bought Cowboy	Marty Deroche	58	50	Hannah Whooped The Devil	Jason Welch
9	14	I Saw A Miracle Today	Michael Ray Fain	59	84	Take Over Me	Rex Robards
10	15	Waiting In The Water	Debbie Mills	60	77	You Can Talk To The Father	Richard Strong
11	16	Pushing You Away	Mike McAdoo	61	88	There Is Hope	Matt Hill
12	23	Everything You Do	Norman Lee Schaffer	62	78	That's The Least That I Can Do	Greg Marlow
13	24	In Times Like These	Bruce and Betsy Mullen	63	53	No Thought To Pray	Jerry Weatherly
14	1	You Can't Box Me In	Fortner Brothers	64	72	The Journey	Joe Land
15	25	You Can Call On Him	Aaron Partridge and Steve Apirana	65	83	Give It All You've Got	Steve Anthony
16	26	Get Out Of The Boat	Felicia Deramus Paul	66	76	My God Can	Valerie Ellis Hawkins
17	43	Heaven Sweet Home	Blake Shelton	67	75	Brothers And Sisters	Ken Lehning
18	35	Shout Of Testimony	Mike Leichner	68	--	Whiskey Road	Michael Tetric
19	31	Say Hello To Heaven	Steve Warren	69	79	Gods Great	The Messengers
20	45	He Made It All	Dust And Grace	70	--	Looking For The Light	Delnora
21	27	Wish You Were Here	Johnathan Bond	71	94	Jesus Is The King	Ken Mobley
22	34	What I Don't Know	Paula Slow	72	89	Heading Home With Jesus To Be	Lizzy G And Jeff Naper
23	33	Daddy's Hat	Debra Camp	73	85	Walking Out Of Egypt	One Voice
24	54	Why Me Lord	Richard Lynch	74	97	Jesus Is The Way	Rachel Taylor
25	6	It's Never Too Late	Chuck Hancock	75	85	When I Hear His Name	Victoria Steelman
26	48	It'll Be Good To Be Home	The Journeys	76	--	Edge Of Heaven	Scott Peacock
27	17	God Talks To Me	Dawson Road	77	60	Your The Man	Judy Bailey
28	55	Warrior Of God	Mark Umfleet	78	87	Why Me	Jenny Dean
29	37	Honey In The Rock	Mary James	79	86	Let Me tell Ya' Bout My Faith	Kali Rose
30	3	Hand In Heaven	The Murphys (ft. Abigail)	80	92	Build Me An Ark	Caroline Owens
31	47	God Don't Waste The Hurt	Gary Russ	81	--	The Bridge	Daryl Baker
32	42	What I Got (La-De-Da)	Caleb Deramus	82	--	That's The Way Mama Raised Me	Luke Hendrickson
33	49	Man From Galilee	Jennifer Sides	83	--	Getting Back Up	Troy Richardson
34	12	Mama's Old Chest Of Drawers	Marvin Harrell	84	90	Tell Me That There Ain't A God	Jon Brennan
35	2	Country Sinner	Victoria Steelman	85	--	Jesus To The Rescue	Beverly Brown Simms
36	56	Jesus Loves Me	Dierks Bentley	86	--	The Last Song	Terry and Debra Luna
37	46	Somebody Bigger Than You And I	David Smith	87	--	The Turn	The Pauls
38	59	Meanwhile Back At The Cross	Ron Hemphill	88	--	If I'm Guilty	Thomas Brown
39	18	Footsteps Of My King	Todd Lee	89	96	Cherished Memories	Jeff Hamilton
40	13	My Everything	Tarrance Phillips	90	--	Beverage Of Choice	Brother Daniel
41	51	Footprints In The Sand	Dwight Sanders	91	--	Wayfaring Stranger	Debbie Bennett
42	52	Don't Cry For Me	Teresa Johnson	92	100	Someday Things Are Gonna Get Better	Johnny Jones
43	63	It's Time, Lord	Eddy Mann	93	--	There's Power In The Name Of Jesus	Jonathan Ray Smith
44	58	He Lives	Ed Bruce	94	--	Snowy Sunday Morning	Biscuits and Gravy Band Indiana
45	67	The Crossroads	Richard Sprayberry	95	--	At War With Myself	Cyndi Reynolds
46	68	Blessings	Steven Paul McCollum	96	--	Let's All Go Down To The River	Steve Bruce Band
47	65	The Way You Do	Michael Walsh	97	--	Somebody Here	Linda Lanier
48	80	Song For My Son	Walker Hayes	98	--	Just A Little Talk With Jesus	Ray Epperson
49	57	The Most Perfect Gift	Clare Cunningham	99	--	River Of Life	Sonshine Road
50	64	In The Morning	Hunter Logan	100	--	You Got It	Royal Clark



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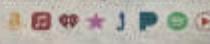

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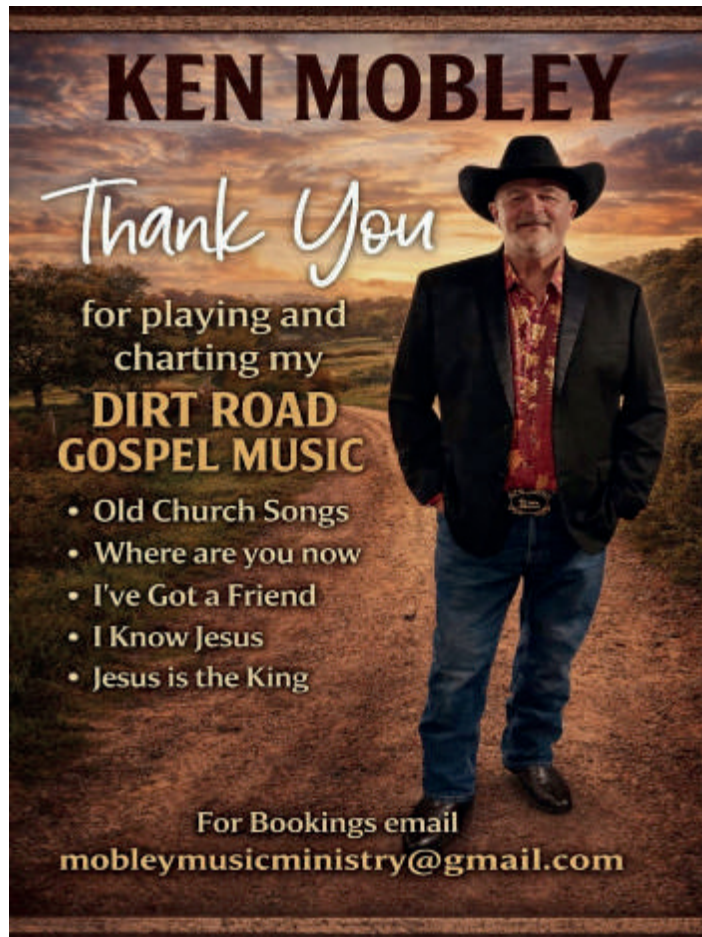
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We sat down with the Indiana-born singer, songwriter, Army veteran, and father of four to talk about music, resilience, and his relentless fight to be heard in today's industry.

Born to Sing, Built to Survive The Unbreakable Spirit of Gary Chamberlain

By Malik Riaz

When you listen to Gary Chamberlain sing, you're not just hearing a voice, you're hearing a lifetime of stories, grit, heartbreak, and redemption. You're hearing a man who has lived boldly, served honorably, and risen above tragedies that would silence most. You're also hearing "Little Gary," the son he tragically lost and continues to honor through every note he sings.

Early Beginnings

Gary's musical journey began before most kids even had a curfew. "At 14, I put on a concert for the student staff and faculty at Hamilton Southeastern Junior High School," he recalls with a smile. "I was writing my own original music, performing as a lead vocalist, and playing at local events. That's when I started gaining attention."

By that time, Gary was also heavily involved in athletics, including football, basketball, cross-country, and wrestling, but music kept calling him back. And it wasn't long before Indiana took notice.

Gary was selected by sportscaster Dave Calabro for Dave's Team, a popular news segment on WTHR Channel 13. Soon after, Fox 59 featured him performing the National Anthem at a high school football game, and even spotlighted how his original songs were played over the PA system during school passing periods.

"That was surreal, hearing my own music echoing through the hallways, that's when I knew this was bigger than a hobby," Gary says.

'Teen Country Magazine' soon featured him, and that's when things really exploded. Gary began touring and opening for national recording artists while still a teenager.

Sharing the Stage with Legends

The list of musicians Chamberlain has performed with reads like a Country Music Hall of Fame roster: Garth Brooks, Vince Gill, Martina McBride, The Charlie Daniels Band, Tracy Lawrence, Mark Chesnutt, Little Texas, Lady Antebellum, and Ronnie Milsap.

“In the mid-1990s, I opened for Garth Brooks,” Gary recalls. “I was lucky enough to learn how to play *The Dance* from Garth’s guitar player, Ty England.”

Another memory still makes him laugh. “I remember hanging out with Steve Wariner and Keith Urban at a cabin in Kentucky. Steve was teaching Keith a guitar lick for *Where the Blacktop Ends*. Watching them work was magic.”

But even with his rising star, Chamberlain stepped back from music at 18 to decide whether he wanted to continue his career independently, without his parents’ support system.

Service, Sacrifice, and Heartbreak

Gary joined the Army National Guard and proudly served his country. In 2005, his unit, the Indiana National Guard’s 38th Infantry Division, became one of the first National Guard units deployed to Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina.

“We were part of Task Force Cyclone, we provided humanitarian assistance, security, and road clearing,” Gary explains.

But in 2006, tragedy shattered Gary’s world. While drilling at Camp Atterbury, his First Sergeant pulled him aside: “his home was on fire.”

Gary lost his 2-year-old son, Garrison Grant Chamberlain, the first fire-related fatality the town had seen in 50 years. The community mourned deeply, and Gary channeled his grief into his music.

For years, Gary dedicated himself to public service working as a police officer with the Marion County Sheriff’s Department and later as an operations manager for a security company. Today, he is working toward launching his own security-focused business.

A Daughter’s Words That Changed Everything

It wasn’t a manager, producer, or agent who brought Gary back to music. It was his daughter, Layla Ruth.

“One evening I was playing my guitar after work, and she said, “*Dad, you just need to do music again*”.

That was all it took. Gary returned to writing and recording with renewed passion. And it didn’t take long for the industry to respond.

His 2023 hit *Like Johnny Cash* was nominated at the Josie Music Awards for ‘Song of the Year’ and his band was nominated ‘Band of the Year.’ The tribute track was inspired by his love for Cash’s authenticity and honesty.

“I wondered what kind of song Johnny Cash would release if he were still alive today,” he said. “That’s how I wrote *Like Johnny Cash*.”

The Battle of the Modern Independent Artist

Gary is candid about the challenges of today’s streaming-driven world: “It’s challenging to be heard in the modern music environment... but I refuse to give up.”

He emphasizes that his mission is to create music that resonates with people. “I hope my songs, especially the lyrics - resonate with others. That’s the entire reason I write, play, and perform music.”

New Releases & Public Praise

In June of last year, Gary released *Need a Shot of You Again*, followed in July by *Just Go to Church*, a deeply personal reflection on loss, healing, and hope.

“The lyrics and music are beautiful. There’s pain and honesty,” says Ryan Ahlwardt, host of *Indy Now* on Fox 59.



Fans across states agree:

“Great band and great people. Love the hit single *Like Johnny Cash*,” says Ryan Edwards of Lapel, Indiana.

“This dude rocks, I’d go see him anytime!!” adds Joseph DeSario of Spring Hill, Florida.

A Story for the Ages

Gary’s life, marked by soaring highs and unimaginable lows, has shaped him into an artist with profound emotional depth.

“The losses and challenges I faced taught me to appreciate and master the art of writing, singing, and playing music,” he says. “Never give up on your dreams.”

His commitment is clear: No AI. No shortcuts. Just genuine, human music.

www.garygrantchamberlain.com

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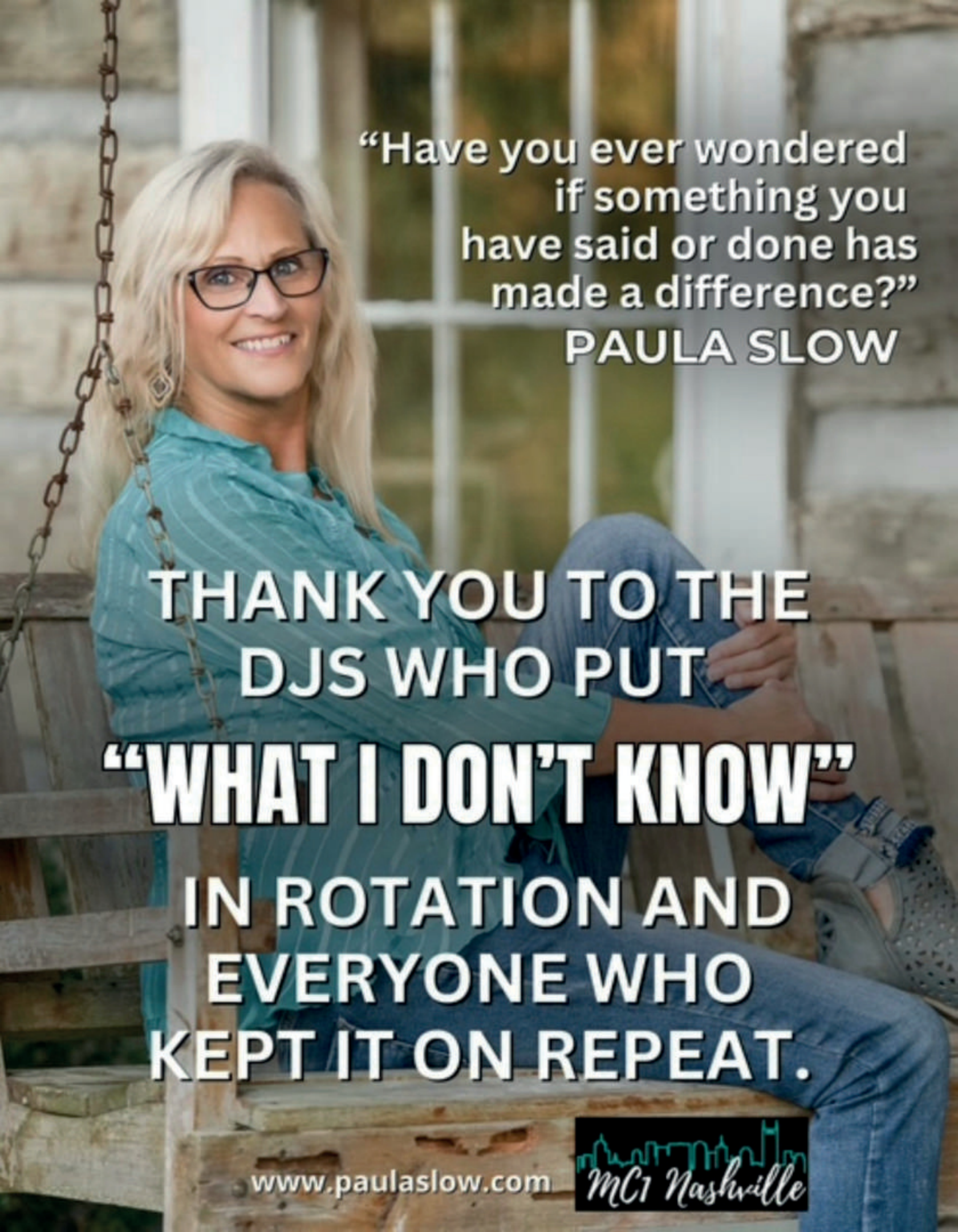
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