

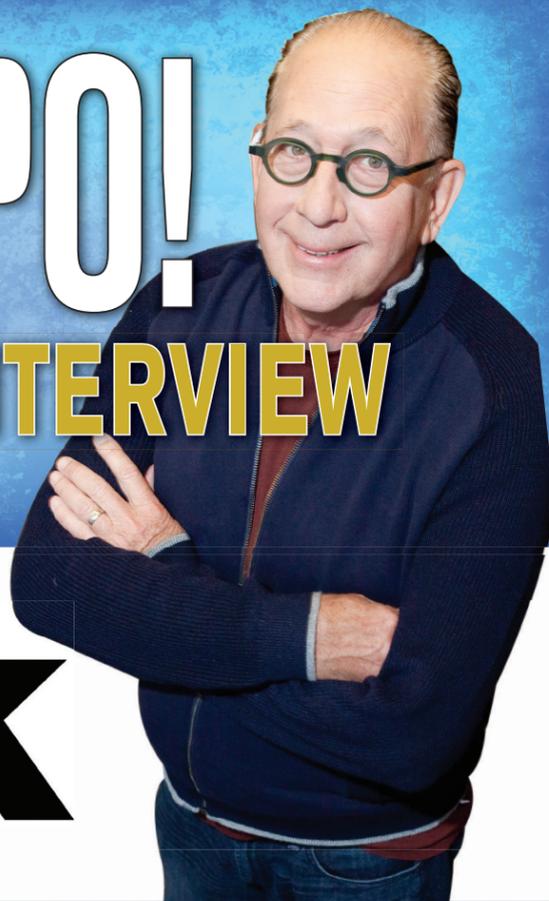


STORIES & PHOTOS

MUSIC DECISIONS GO LOCAL

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COUNTRY
AIRCHECK

FEBRUARY 2019

GEORGE STRAIT EVERY LITTLE HONKY TONK BAR



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FIFTY FOR 50: STORIES & PHOTOS

The year was 1969. The Beatles made their last public performance on the roof of Apple Records. The Pontiac Firebird Trans Am, was introduced. Woodstock attracted more than 350,000 music fans to a field in New York. Charles Manson and his cult made headlines, as did Senator Ted Kennedy's Chappaquiddick Affair. Neil Armstrong took "one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind." The U.S. Air Force closed its Project Blue Book, concluding there was no evidence of UFOs or UFO activity. The average cost of a new home was \$4,640 and the average purchase price of a new car was \$3,270. And Tom McEntee, then-editor of the *Country Music Survey* tip sheet, and a founding cabinet gathered fewer than 70 people for the first **Country Music Survey Radio Seminar**. In the 50 years that have followed, **Country Radio Seminar** has become the premier event for the Country radio format with its motto "Growth Through Sharing." From the Urban Cowboy era to The Class of '89 and the '90s boom to Outlaws and Bros, and from carts and turntables to automation and voice tracking, **CRS** has been there to help country pro-

fessionals on all sides come together to learn, lead and laugh. Along the way, friendships have formed, careers have flourished and the radio and record communities have remained fruitful. Memories from 50 years of CRS could fill historical volumes, but here just a few pages of photos and recollections return us all to the Sony Boat, the Bridge Bar, artist taping sessions, Opryland Hotel, the Pickin' Parlor, guest speakers, surprise, infamy, stuck elevators and even an attempted kidnapping.

Ida Vend/Lewiston, ID's **Kelly Wayne**: Garth Brooks was set to perform during one of the luncheons and invited everyone to put their business card into a fish bowl for a chance to sing with him on stage. Steve Ferguson was the lucky guy, and you could not have asked for a better guy to have the honor. His choice of song was "Friends in Low Places," and before Garth started to play his guitar, Steve felt the need to call his radio station and talk to the guy who was on the board in the studio to put the experience on the air back home. The best part was the DJ was unwilling to cut off a Kenny Chesney song that was playing, so Garth grabbed the phone and told the DJ that it was okay to cut Kenny off for this event. From there, it was explosive. What a wonderful memory, not only for Steve, but for everyone! Truly something that I won't forget.



Cirrhosis Of The River: Joel Raab (l) with wife Gayle Share-Raab and the late Don Williams on the RCA boat show.

Promo vet **Anne Sarosdy-Yarbrough**: Many years later, and everyone is *still* talking about a certain someone doing a certain thing in front of a window looking down on the Bridge Bar. I wonder how many people are going to send you all that one!

KFRG/Riverside's **Heather Froglear**: Lon Helton getting up onstage and singing new, "questionable" lyrics on the Sony boat with Brad Paisley. (At least I *think* it was Brad. I had a few cocktails.) Best. Performance. Ever. David Friedman was there. And Jeff Kapugi. They can confirm this story. The whole boat was in *tears* with laughter. It was epic. Who knew Lon had it in him?



In The Beginning: (l-r) Jerry Seabolt, Tom McEntee, Barbara Starling, Charlie Monk and the late Biff Collie.

DIRECTORS' CHAIRS

Recollections from CRB's co-founder Tom McEntee and several of its Executive Directors.

Tom McEntee: I wasn't looking to create a schoolroom atmosphere where people came to be lectured. I was more focused on creating a place for people of similar interests and goals to gather and build something in common. And though it was impossible for me to imagine what might happen ... one thing was apparent: It could change the world of Country radio.

Frank Mull: I must pay tribute to the unknown or little known volunteers who truly made it what it has become today. The late Tom McEntee once wrote a page for our program book to one of those, Miss Jean Stromatt, defining her as "The Spark." There were an untold number of those who defined the event over its first 12-18 years.

Once upon a time, Mac Allen was our president and worked for Sonderling Broadcasting/Miami. He and I were charged with coming up with a slogan. A late evening conversation was had with the great Sammie Taylor of KWJJ/Portland in our first ever "rap room," which had been developed for attendees to review the day's sessions. Sammie



was probably into his third beer from the tub in the front of the room, and I would have been up to at least three 7ups or sparkling waters. Sammie willingly opined, "You know, Frank, an old fart like me can't learn much coming here at my age, but I figure if one of these kids can learn a single thing by me being here, it's well worth the cost of my trip to be able to share it

with them." Thus, "growth through sharing" was born. Mac and I were proud of it, and it still makes sense to me today.

Hardworking volunteers made CRS what it is today when it couldn't even begin to pay its own way. Look around for those who are no longer with us. It is on their backs this event will be carried into its next 50 years.

Bill Mayne: My first trip to CRS was in 1981 as a "carpetbagger" from CHR. To my amazement, primarily PDs were getting together and engaging with each other – truly sharing. Since then, the amazing relationships I have with people I've met at CRS have developed into some life-long best friends. I have learned more about our craft at CRS than anywhere else. CRS brings together a great, diverse group of people with a world of different perspectives!

Ed Salamon: The proof of the greatness of Tom McEntee's idea is that the Country Radio Seminar is still around after 50 years. A convention for radio and the music industry was not a new idea (there were many such meetings at the time, sponsored by various trade organizations and publications), but the fact that virtually all of the others have disappeared is testimony to the quality of Tom's vision. Each year I attended or participated (as panelist, moderator, Agenda Committee member, Board Member, sponsor or Executive Director) had its own memorable moments.

Many of us saw participation in CRS as a way to give back to our industry and format. In the '70s, it was the norm for me as WHN/New York PD, WMAO/Chicago PD Bob Pittman and other major market programmers and personalities to be sitting with registrants from unrated markets. We all learned from the experience.

Opryland Hotel Presidential Suite parties for United Stations/Unistar/Westwood One included mini-concerts and appearances by Garth Brooks, Little Texas, Lynn Anderson, The Crickets, Jonathan Edwards, Chubby Checker, Kenny Rogers (personally serving Kenny Rogers Roasters Chicken), Elvis' cook Mary Jenkins making peanut butter and banana sandwiches, and Ricky Van Shelton cooking beefalo, which he had raised on his ranch.

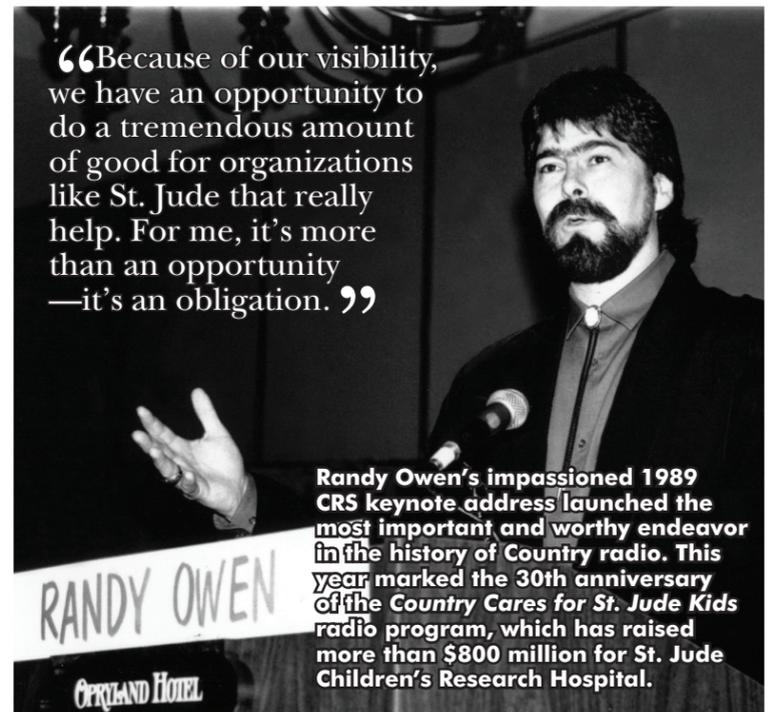
RJ Curtis: A 1990 luncheon featured Alan Jackson, Garth Brooks, and a band called Billy Hill. Alan opened and was still a new, unproven artist. He was relatively early into his second single, "Here In The Real World," and definitely won radio over during his set. Next up was Garth, coming off a No. 1 with "If Tomorrow Never Comes." He actually became a superstar at that luncheon when he introduced CRS attendees to "Friends In Low Places."

It wasn't just his songs, it was establishing himself as one of the most exciting, dynamic forces of nature radio had ever seen in a live act. Garth and his band basically stormed the room and took no prisoners. It was mind-blowing. My first day back at KNIX/Phoenix I said on air, "I just saw the future of Country music and his name is Garth Brooks."

Oh, and Billy Hill? The band featured legendary songwriter Bob DiPiero, and a single called "Too Much Month At The End Of The Money," which had peaked at No. 25. They had the misfortune to follow Garth, and simply couldn't maintain the energy in the room, or the audience for that matter. Attendees filed out in the middle of their set. You had to feel awful for them.

Paul Allen: One of my few WTF moments as Executive Director for CRS (1995-2002) was my planning for one of the late '90s CRS opening shows of country music's Super Faces. I had cleared dates and budget for Ray Charles and Ronnie Milsap for a show in the round, called "Ronnie and Ray," with two grand pianos and appropriate trappings. I thought it would be an iconic moment in CRS history. The then-president decided, "No. We need to use current artists for this show." I still scratch my head over this one.

FIFTY FOR 50: STORIES & PHOTOS



“Because of our visibility, we have an opportunity to do a tremendous amount of good for organizations like St. Jude that really help. For me, it's more than an opportunity —it's an obligation.”

Randy Owen's impassioned 1989 CRS keynote address launched the most important and worthy endeavor in the history of Country radio. This year marked the 30th anniversary of the Country Cares for St. Jude radio program, which has raised more than \$800 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



Going Off The Rails On A Crazy Twain: Nate Deaton (r) with Tony Michaels and Shania Twain.

KRTY/San Jose's Nate Deaton: It was 1995, right after "Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under" was blowing up. Shania Twain was at the *Grammys* and missed the artist taping, so they did liners in a suite at the Opryland Hotel. The funny thing about the suite was that the only bathroom was in the bedroom area where Shania was doing the liners. There was also a bar. When we finally got in to do our liners, I said, "It's so nice to meet you, but before we do anything else, I have to use the bathroom."



Sundae School: Elvis' cook Mary Jenkins (l) makes his beloved fried peanut butter and banana sandwiches at CRS 1990.



Psych Ward: Scott Ward (l) with Garth Brooks (c) and Lee Randall.

The late **Jeff Walker:** Back when we were at Opryland, Garth was doing the Artist Radio Taping Session. This was when we did the Artist-DJ Attendee Reception on Wednesday night. Characteristically, Garth stayed an hour and a half afterwards signing autographs. So when it was time to move from one end of the building to the other, there was such a crowd; fans and attendees were all crowding around. The only way we could get him through was to round up the college interns and form two human chains about 100 yards long for Garth to walk through. It was incredible.

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The Healing Power of Country Music

It started in 1989 at the Country Radio Seminar. Legendary performer Randy Owen asked the country music industry to come together to support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital®. The response was overwhelming, with country music artists, stations and fans making Country Cares for St. Jude Kids® one of the most successful fundraising programs in the history of philanthropy. Now, thirty years later, in honor and recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Country Radio Seminar, we congratulate and thank you for supporting our lifesaving mission: Finding cures. Saving children.®



St. Jude patient Allie



Learn More





Mane Event: (l-r) David Lynn Jones, Ronna Reeves, Butch Baker, Rich Grissom, Daniele Alexander, Harold Shedd, Ricky Lee Phelps, Shane Barmby, Bob Corbin and Dave Hanner.

FIFTY FOR 50: STORIES & PHOTOS

KTKU/Juneau's **Chuck Geiger:** My first CRS as PD of WCTO/Allentown in 2000 was on a panel called "90 Ideas In 90 Minutes." I sat up there on the panel in a suit sweating like a sauna. I looked like a bad lawyer or like I was being deposed. Becky Brenner was the moderator and asked me a question, and I leaned into the mic and said, "Senator to the best of my recollection, I can't recall." That was a great time, and I learned a lot. I caught some great shows and remember artists who are superstars now just chillin' in hotel rooms. Highlights included Brad Paisley, Little Jimmy Dickens, Montgomery Gentry, and Loretta Lynn performing at the *Grand Ole Opry*. All of our regional reps from back then now run record companies.

Curb's **Mike Rogers:** Epic had a basement suite at Opryland. We used to call it the Bunker. On one particular all-nighter the power went out at the hotel. Rob Dalton called the front desk to complain that he was in a pitch black room trying to entertain some folks and when could he expect the power back on? The person on the other end of the phone prompted Rob to think about opening his curtains to let in the daylight. Who would have thunk it? How time flies when you are having fun.

WYCD/Detroit's **Tim Roberts:** One of my favorite funny memories of CRS was when George Briner brought his blender to his room at Opryland Hotel for an after party. Tim Closson, me, Jim Patrick, Kim Carson and a few others were living



Coal Miner's Son: Chris Stapleton pays tribute to his dad, a coal miner who passed away before he could see his son perform at the Ryman, by placing a chunk of coal onstage during his performance.

in Margaritaville there. Leaving his room in the wee hours, I got completely lost in the maze of Opryland Hotel and couldn't find my room. So who do we see in a random hallway? Garth Brooks! Classic moment and really funny. After encountering Garth, I found legendary PD/consultant Mike Chapman sleeping and snoring in the Conservatory still holding a cigarette and a scotch (not spilling it either). Now *that* is a party.

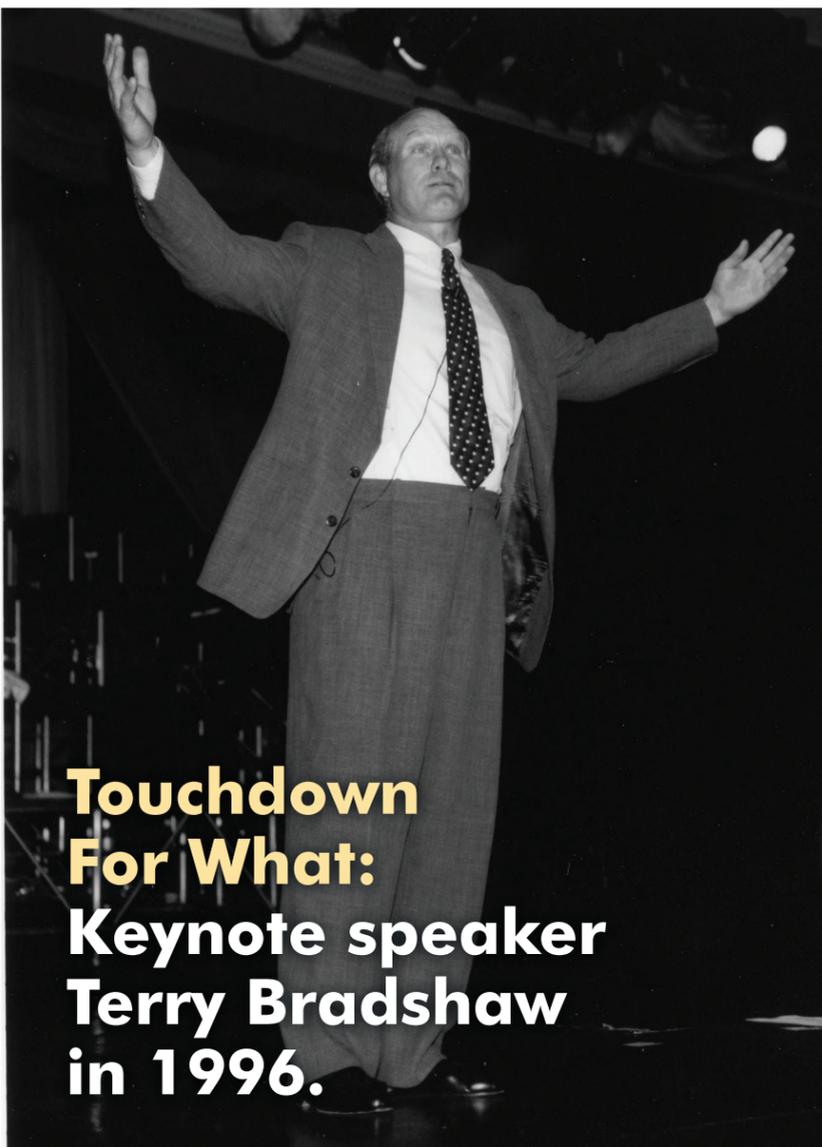
Ken Kragen's Power Of Three speech was so inspirational and motivational that it literally changed the way I thought about work every day. I have seen so many, many great speakers and feel like I've gotten five doctorates in Country programming and management. Some of the best included Lou Holtz and Terry Bradshaw. These people gave mind-blowing, life changing inspiration. And all the great programming minds I've met including Les Acree, Bill Mayne, Rusty Walker, Joel Raab, Jaye Albright, Mike McVay, Becky Brenner, Mark Tudor, Mike Chapman, Randy Michaels. A little nobody programmer like me got to hang with these legendary people, pick their brains, and they became my friends and mentors. Especially the first year I attended, I was blown away you had access to that many people ... and they'd actually talk to you.

I have seen magical, intimate performances by Keith Whitley, Randy Travis, Earl Thomas Conley, Shania Twain, Keith Urban, Garth Brooks, George Strait, Alabama, and witnessed life changing moments for artists at the New Faces shows. For those who don't attend CRS I think, "Are you nuts? You could never experience this anywhere in the world. It's a party in your living room!" Also, who was that guy at the Mercury '70s party who could drink a beer upside down while standing on his head. Remember *that*?

Entercom/Portland's **Mike Moore:** In 1995, I went to CRS looking for a job. I had been in touch with New City/Orlando OM Steve Holbrook about a PD opening they had for WWKA K92FM. Steve informed me that he would not be at CRS, but that I should connect with Alan Furst while in Nashville. Apparently, I passed the test with Alan and then flew to Orlando where I interviewed with about 10 people before landing the job! It turned out to be the biggest break of my career, and much of what I learned in Orlando set me up for the success I've enjoyed over the years. Special thanks to Bobby Kraig, Bob Wood, the late/great Rusty Walker and Keith Hill for the encouragement and coaching during the interview process.



VIP: Chuck Geiger with Loretta Lynn.



Touchdown For What:
Keynote speaker
Terry Bradshaw
in 1996.

Abbey
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Kelsea BALLERINI

MISS ME MORE
HER FASTEST
MOVING SINGLE
TO DATE
**OVER 55 MILLION
STREAMS**



BLACK RIVER
ENTERTAINMENT



Gotta Have Faith: Tim McGraw brings Faith Hill out for his 1999 Super Faces performance. McGraw and Hill met for the very first time at New Faces in 1994 (inset).

FIFTY FOR 50: STORIES & PHOTOS

Valory's **Chris Palmer**: Can I just join the 1,100 other people that are going to tell the story of the "incident" at the Bridge Bar?

Consultant **Bob Moody**: During CRS in 1991, while everyone was on the RCA Boat, Tim DuBois and Allen Butler invited a small group of landlubbers to a studio to hear a new duo about to release their first single. Brooks & Dunn were there as we were played tracks from their forthcoming album. When Ronnie sang "I saw the light, I've been baptized..." I turned to their manager Bob Titley and said, "I wonder what the Baptists will think of *that*?" Years later, I asked Bob if he remembered what I had said in the studio that night. "Remember it? I worried about it every single day up until 'Brand New Man' hit number one!"

Cherry Creek/St. George, UT's **Dale Desmond**: A couple years ago, Warner had a morning cleanse activity including massages and acupuncture. [The late] Lisa McKay was there with me, and we laughed at each other with pins sticking out of our faces and ears. It was the last time I talked to her. We miss you, Lisa! Thanks for the laughs!

Two years ago, I made arrangements to meet [KRTY/San Jose PD] Julie Stevens in the Omni lobby on Saturday morning at 4:30am and share an Uber to the airport for a 6am flight. Being a smart CRS'er, the plan was to hang out in the Warner suite until 3am, then go back to my room, shower, pack, get a quick nap, then be in the lobby promptly at 4:30am. The plan worked until my nap lasted until 5:15am, when my phone buzzed telling me that my flight was boarding! I jumped up, grabbed my suitcase, ran for the elevator, and ordered an Uber on the way down. At the checkout desk, I (not literally) ran into [KXKT/Omaha PD] Hoss Michaels. He asked if I wanted to share a ride to the airport. I said, "I have to be there in 10 minutes! The Uber is at the curb! Let's go!"

In the car, I told the driver, "If you can get us to the airport in 10 minutes, I'll give you a \$50 tip." Hoss swears the driver did 110 mph down I-40, and we made it in nine minutes. Made my flight. Julie just shook her head.

Industry vet **Tim McFadden**: Everybody was raucous during "Indian Outlaw." Then, as they started listening and getting into "Don't Take The Girl," the room got more and more quiet. You couldn't even hear the clinking of glasses by the time the song was over. Tim said thank you and walked off the stage. Boom. Done. That one-two punch sent them through the roof. People went nuts.



Panic At The Disco: Todd "Gill" Stuart and Jimmy Harnen at the After Midnight Disco Party.

Curb's **Mike Curb**: There are very few careers where you can point to a single night or performance and say, "That show made a difference." But Tim McGraw's *New Faces* performance did just that. Even before the album was released Tim told me he wanted "Don't Take The Girl" as the second single. We wanted to show that even though he had a big hit with a novelty song, he had depth and was a serious artist.



On Point: (l-r) Shane Allen, Chuck Swaney, Marci Braun, Steve Hodges and Brent Jones.



OGs: The CRB's first Exec. Director Frank Mull (l) with keynote speaker Gordon "Maverick of Radio" McLendon, the Texas broadcaster who is widely credited with the creation of Top 40 radio, at CRS 1985.



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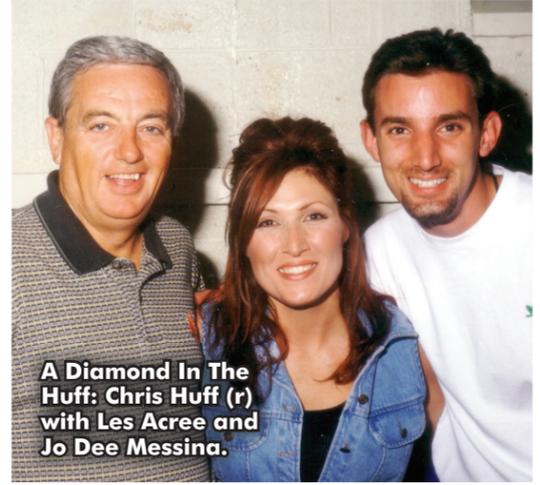


FOLLOW RADIO DISNEY COUNTRY





Y-MCA: The MCA promo team interprets "it takes a village" literally.



A Diamond In The Huff: Chris Huff (r) with Les Acree and Jo Dee Messina.

FIFTY FOR 50: STORIES & PHOTOS

KILT/Houston's Chris Huff: It was CRS 27; I was on the beach and needed a gig. I had some snazzy business card magnets made and was determined to hand them out to as many PDs and consultants as possible. On the next to last day, a friend told me about someone who might have an opening and took me to the Pickin' Parlor to meet him. It was the one and only, legendary Les Acree of WIVK/Knoxville. He asked me to send him my stuff once I got back home. I told him I would, handed him my magnetic business card and went on my way, thrilled just to have met the man.

As promised, I got home and overnighted my materials. A couple of days later, I got a call from Les; he was furious. "That card of yours erased my room key! I was locked out of my room all night!" What?! My heart sank. I couldn't believe I'd blown my chance because of my business card magnets! But luckily, Les had a great sense of humor. He wasn't really furious with me. He'd liked my stuff, and within weeks, I was packing up and heading to Knoxville to work for the legend himself.

KVOO/Tulsa's Brian Jennings: At CRS 2004, it was surreal to sip a Jim Beam with Hank Jr. and talk about baseball. Luckily, I left the Bridge Bar before Hank got tanked. As his handlers were moving him toward the escalators, a CRS attendee handed Hank his phone and asked him to say hello to his wife. Hank threw the phone against the Bridge Bar glass wall. Once outside, he may or may not have relieved himself against the wall of the Renaissance.

KSNI/Santa Maria, CA's Jay Turner: Hands down, one of my favorite CRS moments was the *Keith Urban and Friends* show where he did "Jolene" with the great Dolly Parton and then accompanied



Strait Outta CRS: (l-r) Royce Risser, Travis Moon, Bree Wagner and George Strait at the UMG reception in 2013.

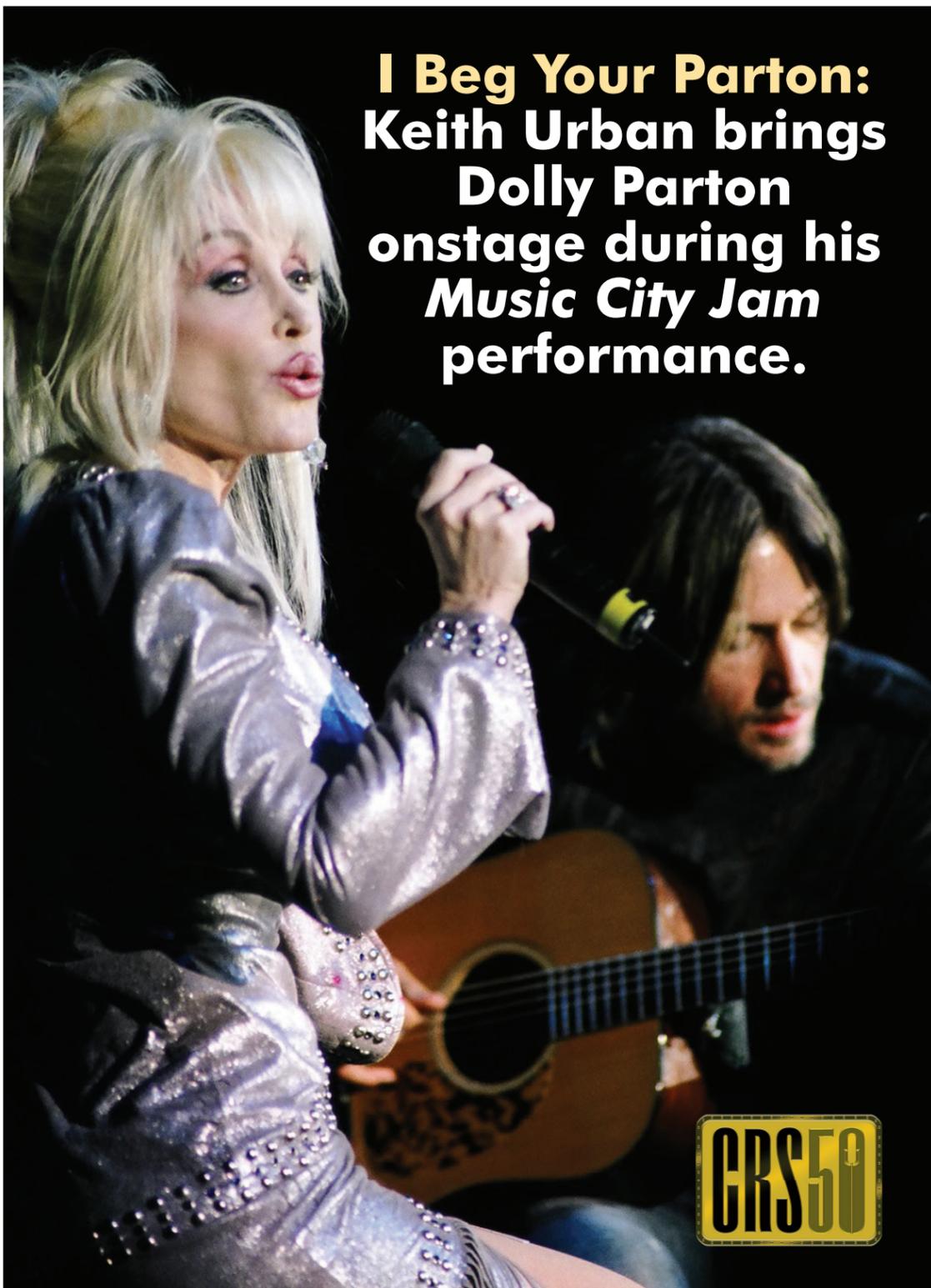
Ronnie Dunn on a goose bump-inducing version of "Believe." Then, there was this time when a few of us were chatting with Clay Walker, right after he moved to RCA, and spontaneously he said, "Hey, you guys want to hear some of the new record?" We said, "Can you make a shoe stink? Hell yeah, we do!"

About eight of us went down to the lobby where Clay proceeded to commandeer one of the airport shuttles to take us a few blocks to his bus for a drink and some new music that (almost) nobody had ever even heard. There are *so* many stories: From The Boat to Blair's Disco Party to watching some of the world's best songwriters at the ASCAP performance hall.

Industry vet Dale Turner: My first CRS was in 1974 when I was at WTHI/Terre Haute, IN. Had I not taken time off and paid my own way (I admit, the drive was only four hours and the registration was much cheaper), I never would have met many of my peers. That includes Les Acree, who eventually gave me a job at WKDA/Nashville. Without that opportunity, I never would have met Joe Galante, Norro Wilson, Rick Blackburn, Roy Wunsch, Jerry Seabolt, Frank Leffel, Jack Pride and others. And those relationships led me to the record side of the business. Further, while in Nashville and Cincinnati radio, I still paid my own way to CRS until 1983. I always rationalized it as a personal investment in my career, like taking evening courses in business management at the University of Cincinnati. No regrets.



Parlor Tricks: (l-r) Rusty Walker, Jim West, Roger Allen, Bob Glasco and John Willyard circa 1998 in front of the Pickin' Parlor.



I Beg Your Parton: Keith Urban brings Dolly Parton onstage during his Music City Jam performance.



WALKER HAYES



CAITLYN SMITH

ANNA MOON



BRANDON RATCLIFF

TEDDY ROBB



MONUMENT 



Face The Music: The 2005 class of New Faces.

FIFTY FOR 50: STORIES & PHOTOS

KUZZ/Bakersfield's **Brent Michaels**: Myself, Jerry Hufford (our KUZZ promo director), Toni Marie (my former music director, now MD in Portland), Bob Reeves, and a promo director and his wife from the Midwest were on our way to the Sony event at their brand new building. As I recall, they had just moved in, and the event was also to serve as an open house. On our way up to their offices, our elevator just stopped. We had no cell service. Since it was after hours, we buzzed the emergency button in the elevator, but they had to send a tech, and it took over an hour. Luckily, we had a great group who laughed the whole time. Not good for Bob, who had to pee, but had planned to use the bathroom as soon as he got off the elevator. When we finally got there, we were greeted by Randy Goodman, who took us into a room with Brad Paisley. I had joked in the elevator that, "I just came to see Cam," so she came to visit and take a picture with the elevator crew. *Everyone* at Sony was so nice, and I even got a note from the building maintenance director apologizing. It's a night I'll never forget.

WKXC/Augusta, GA's **Tee Gentry**: I was at a hotel restaurant in downtown Nashville having breakfast and someone says, "Hey, Tee!" It was Kenny Chesney sitting by himself having breakfast back when he could do that. At CRS at Opryland Hotel (shut up – I was 10), I hired a film crew to get artists saying things for a TV campaign we were doing. I was at the artist taping event in a huge ballroom, and Garth Brooks walks in. Everyone in line at the other booths ran to get in line to get liners from Garth. The line looked two miles long, so the film crew and I ran up to Garth as he was sitting down,



Lunchback Of Notre Dame: (top, l-r) Paul Allen, Ed Benson, Alan Sledge, Ed Salamon and Lon Helton; (bottom, l-r) Tony Brown, Reba McEntire and Bruce Hinton at McEntire's 2000 luncheon performance.

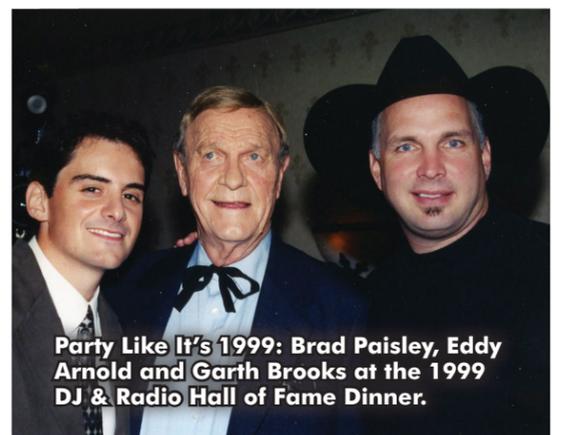
and he stood up and said, "Can I help you?" I thought he was pissed, but I told him what I needed, and he did everything we needed, including a few I got for another station as a favor. That was a cool moment. He has always been a class act.

KFKF/Kansas City's **Dale Carter**: Somehow I hooked up with John Wesley Ryles and we were stumbling

from hospitality suite to hospitality suite at the Opryland Hotel—both of us of fairly light complexioned and blonde. The Urban League was also having a convention and John and I stumbled into one of their suites. As much as we stuck out in that environment, we continued drinking and the people from the Urban League didn't seem at all fazed.



Size Matters: Charlie Monk emcees New Faces in 1971 from the world's smallest stage.



Party Like It's 1999: Brad Paisley, Eddy Arnold and Garth Brooks at the 1999 DJ & Radio Hall of Fame Dinner.

WXTU/Philadelphia's **Mark Razz**: On my first trip to CRS, I was walking through the Renaissance lobby and a record rep I didn't really recognize invited me to lunch to get to know me and to meet his band. I got into a van that took me outside town — and it was the first time I'd ever been to Nashville, so it felt like we were going miles and miles away. I'm pretty sure it took like four hours for the whole thing. I don't even remember who the artist was, but it took most of the day away from my CRS experience. I remember another group calling my cell to invite me to a spa day. I told them I didn't think I'd make it because I had no clue where I was, who I was with, or when I'd be back. To this day, I couldn't tell you who that rep was, but ever since my advice to CRS attendees is never get into vans with strangers. **CAC**