

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

Don Law had one stipulation for his son Mike. "I don't care if you're a radio guy, a banker or a lawyer – you will have your college degree no matter what," recalls Kennedy. "So even though I was already two, three years into radio, there was no question that I was going to make sure I had my business degree, which I did get. And it worked out okay. It helped me start a couple of radio stations." Next February, the KBEQ/Kansas City PD/morning host will celebrate his 25th anniversary at the station. And there's no doubt his dad would be proud of his son the graduate – and one of the new members of the Country Radio Hall Of Fame.

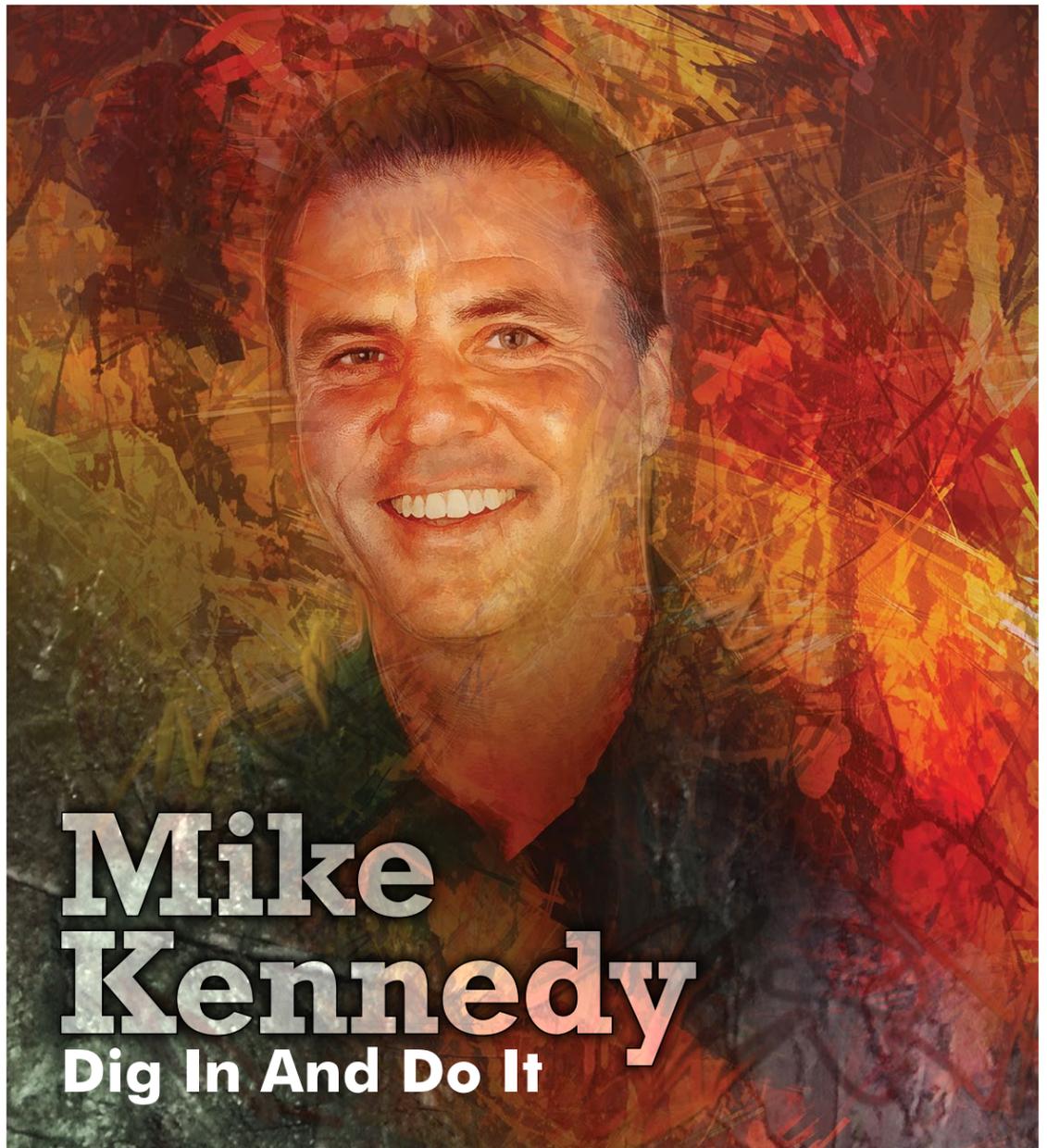
My first job in radio was in my hometown with my neighbor, Lyle Brown, who worked at KVOE/Emporia, KS. I helped him keep stats for a women's high school basketball game in 1976 when I was 16. As a kid I would always call the radio station request lines and bug the heck out of them. So to be able to jump into the car with a guy I had listened to on the radio, who just happened to be my neighbor, was pretty cool. I started out just tagging along and then they brought me in and paid me as a part-time guy.

Besides playing golf and going to class, radio was all I ever did. But it was not only radio; it was music. I was really into music. I remember saving up my money, running down to the dime store and getting a new 45 every week.

Al Higgins was my Radio/TV instructor in school. He was also the speech teacher. He really pushed me into getting in front of the camera. He was a serious voice and diction guy. We'd shoot video, I'd do ball games on cable TV and that eventually led to the radio, when I did play-by-play of college and high school football and basketball. He was a big influence.

I'm proud of a bunch of people I've worked with. There's a young man named Johnny Dare who worked for us as a van driver and AM board operator who's had the biggest show in Kansas City for probably 15 years at Active Rock KQRC. I hired [KXKT/Omaha MD] Hoss Michaels to help sign-on the first station I ever built from scratch. He was my GM, on-air and my right-hand man. When I sold that station, he also moved to Kansas City and became our promotions and marketing guy for many years before he went off to Lincoln and Omaha. T.J. McEntire and Zeke Montana have been with me the entire 22-plus years KBEQ has been Country. My wife, Nycki, who started with us as a teenager, is now in her 20th year in the business and doing mornings at Hot AC KZPT with another KBEQ alumnus, Kelly Ulrich. And what's funny and ironic is the entire staff of our Country competitor [WDAF] are all KBEQ alums and still in the market.

I have a million stories. My go-to favorite is when Garth Brooks played here at the Kemper Arena back in the '90s. My daughter was a young child. She came to the show with me and Garth was kind enough to hang with us backstage. But he was also kind enough to ask me if it was okay if my daughter had some of



All of my musical influences were basically late '60s and '70s. And of course I was a huge Commodores fan so Lionel Richie was *the* guy.

The most challenging moments were not leaving. A lot of guys dream of going to Chicago, Dallas, Houston or Phoenix. "Okay I'm going to start in the smaller markets and work my way to Kansas City, and maybe the next stop is Chicago." The biggest internal struggle was when some of those tremendous opportunities came up. But my daughter was growing up here and there was no way I was going to be apart from her. So I had to pass on some really cool jobs. You're thinking, "Oh my god, I really want to be in Dallas," but I continued on at KBEQ, which took off and became a big radio station. And big for me.

We came up with this concept from Lollapalooza we called *Y'allapalooza*. I know everybody does their own radio station concert, I get that. But to keep it going for 20 years is a big deal. It's been a successful event since we came up with it. And then something as simple as a

that every owner we've had ... it's like, "It's working well, the station's making money, our ratings will fluctuate here and there, but here's how we do it and I want to continue to do it in this way." That's where my passion is, that's where my team has their passion and our listeners. Knock on wood, we've been lucky everybody has bought into the philosophy and we've just let this thing ride.

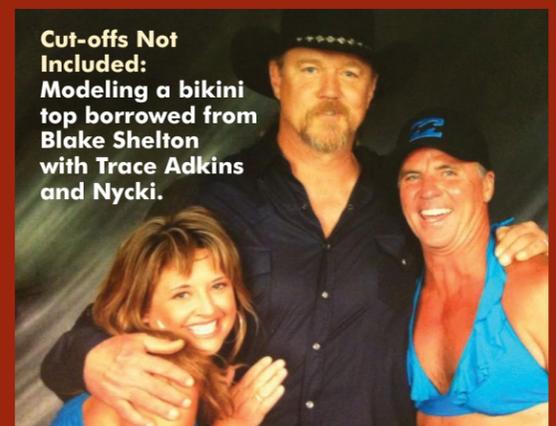
We're on the air doing an interview with Toby Keith to talk about his Songwriters Hall of Fame induction, or so I thought, but he keeps diverting the conversation. I really didn't know what the heck was going on until I looked up and my wife was there with a lot of people who are not normally here in the morning – our GM and GSM. Then Toby enlightened me to the fact that I had indeed been elected to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. And then John Rich called a few minutes after that. I was totally shocked and floored. There was champagne involved.

I would thank Jesus [for the HOF induction], but everybody already did that on the ACMs. There are



Lick It Up: With wife Nycki and Kiss in 2009.

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Cut-offs Not Included: Modeling a bikini top borrowed from Blake Shelton with Trace Adkins and Nycki.

the cookies they had made. He wasn't going to give them to her unless I gave my permission. I'm like, "Good Lord have mercy, yeah you sure can." That's always one that jumps out at me. It's just crazy.

Around 1991 Mick Jagger decided he was going to have a solo career. A bunch of radio guys and PDs flew in to New York City. We watched the show at Webster Hall and it was pretty cool. I've been a huge Rolling Stones fan my entire life. And then to go up into the VIP area with a very small group and see Mick in his element – which included what I believe to be a nice, white flowing gown ... he wore it well. You kind of go, "Wow." That was a "this is so cool and so weird" moment. A few years back when Lionel Richie did his country project, I had the opportunity to listen to it at his house and be within a couple feet of him for hours.

radio station golf tournament, which we've done now for almost 20 years. We raise money for the Children's Mercy Hospital. I'm proud of the signature events we've been able to create for the brand of the station and for the charities that benefit from what we do.

The best piece of advice I've ever received was "Dig in, do what you do, be true to yourself and what you love, and things will pay off for you." Most of the people I've worked with over these last few decades know this radio station has been a true believer in helping break new artists and new music. We try to be on the cutting edge and try to be exciting, even though – I will say this with confidence – there's a good bet I could have had better ratings over the years going the safe route. But that's not how we built the station. I've been so lucky

a few people who gave me the reins to do what I wanted to do. My original GM who signed me here was Kathy Stinehour. She told me to put the gloves on and get after what was then KFKF and WDAF 61 Country, which were our big competitors. She let me do what I wanted and needed to do to get this station going. The late Dan Wastler was our GM for many years, as was Herndon Hasty. I've got a gentleman named Marc Harrell who's my GM now. There's something about that position. They trust us and let us do our thing.

And you know, my dad's not with us any longer but I definitely want to thank my mom and dad – Mary Ann and Don Law – for letting me play disc jockey in the basement of the house and make a lot of noisy music – and for not making me go get a real job. **CAC**

Q104 AND STEEL CITY MEDIA WANT TO CONGRATULATE MIKE KENNEDY

ON HIS INDUCTION
TO THE COUNTRY
RADIO HALL OF
FAME

WE ARE
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PROUD
OF YOU!

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#1 FOR NEW COUNTRY



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