

Bill Mayne

The Business Of People

Capping a decade as CRB Executive Director with this year's 50th CRS, Bill Mayne also celebrated a career marked by service to the radio and music industries. As a personality, PD, label executive, consultant and philanthropist, Mayne has touched nearly every facet of the business. Likewise, his legacy extends to countless individuals who have called him a colleague, coach, mentor, boss and friend. The subject of The Interview in this publication's October 2018 issue, Bill gets to sit out the customary profile for this honor as others share their favorite Mayne events.



WYCD/Detroit's Tim Roberts:

Bill has been a huge influence, but he also has a great sense of humor. As PD at KSCS/Dallas, Bill hired Chuck Edwards for nights, but it was a very volatile relationship. Chuck – well known as one of the biggest pranksters in radio – ended up with us in Detroit and Bill became a label head. On a visit to the station, I hid in my office and locked the door as Bill went to VP/MM Debbie Kenyon's office, where they summoned Chuck to "meet the new PD." I overheard Bill's typically unique greeting, "Hey, big boy! I decided to get back in the saddle!" Chuck was completely stunned. "Where's Tim?" Debbie replied, "We'll discuss that later." The charade lasted seven or eight minutes before Debbie broke down laughing and told Chuck it was a joke. He went crazy cussing and shouting before admitting, "That was the greatest punk of all time." It's another reason to love Bill. Amidst all the chaos of the business, we have laughed a lot along the way.

Incoming Hall of Famer Gregg Lindahl: I was programming WSM-AM and Bill was programming KZLA/Los Angeles when he recruited me as his APD. I turned him down – you're welcome, RJ Curtis! What blossomed was a friendship that led to other opportunities. In 1999, I was president of a digital start-up called mp3radio.com back when "mp3" was a dirty word to labels. Bill was GM at Warner/Nashville, and not only did he invite me to speak to his team, but he sponsored the first-ever live streamed and on-demand concert from the Ryman featuring his artists. It was a visionary move, and a gutsy one, too, as it ran counter to label guidance. Bill is a creative innovator and the best advocate for anything and anyone in which he believes.

CRB's RJ Curtis: Bill would have you to believe our long relationship began when he found me abandoned in a bassinette on the side of a dirt road, sparing me from being raised by a pack of wolves. In fact, we met in December 1983 when Bill came to KZLA as our new PD. Bill, whose philosophy about on-air talent was, "You either got it, or ya ain't," quickly concluded I belonged in the "ain't" category. However, he saw my potential for programming, which is probably the only reason I was able to have a long career in radio. Since then, I have never made a single career decision without seeking his counsel. The Bill Mayne "coaching tree" extends deep and wide in the country music industry; I'm proud to be a small branch of that tree.



Peer Music's Michael Knox: I wish I could tell a single story about Bill that sums up our relationship, but that's not the case with us. I wouldn't be where I am today without his guidance, though. And, I wouldn't have the nickname "Foxy Knoxy."

Summit's Beverlee Brannigan: Bill spent most of the '80s and '90s recommending me for jobs in bigger markets and pitching me on new opportunities. I was happy in Des Moines and always politely declined, but he never quit bringing up my name when there was an opening. Bill has always been my fan club president, and I'm proud to call him a friend.

BMLG's Scott Borchetta: In 1989, Bill was the Warner/Nashville VP/Promotion, and I had just started my own independent promotion company. Warner had one of my favorite artist rosters at the time, but trying to get Bill to take a phone call, let alone hire me, proved extremely difficult. After months of phone calls, we met in Bill's office to discuss Carlene Carter's "I Fell In Love." Following brief pleasantries, I said, "Bill, I think Carlene's first single is a smash, and I'll work it for free to show you what I can do." He agreed to let me work it – for free – and we ended up with a Top 5 single on Carlene. Then, the tight-ass finally started hiring me! I became his go-to indie, and we had great success together until I went to work for MCA. That's classic Bill. He'd make you earn it, but once you were in, you were in.



'80s Babies: Emmylou Harris visits KZLA/Los Angeles. Pictured (l-r) the station's Des Phelan, RJ Curtis and Vern Orne; Harris; and the station's Bill Mayne and Tom Fenno.

Emmis/New York's Charlie Morgan: Bill is equal parts passion and compassion. His boundless passion for everything he engages in is what first pulls you to him. But just as important is his compassionate heart. Bill sees the best in you, cares deeply for your success and supports you unconditionally. It is little wonder he has had such impact on so many people in the country music industry. I am lucky to be one of those people.

EMCo's Jack Purcell: Fresh out of the mailroom, I worked for Bill in the old Warner Bros. building on Division. He would greet me each morning with the reminder, "I am Gumby gawd-dammit!" Other Bill Mayne truth-isms: "I've forgotten more about radio than he'll ever know," "That's bullshit, and you know it" and, of course, the Bill Mayne mic drop, "He's a f***ing idiot!" I'd like to think I escaped a few of these remarks, but thank God I didn't. He is a Music Row treasure. As for the rest of our stories? Those will remain locked in the vault.

Arista's Lisa Owen: After a career in Pop sales and marketing, Bill hired me to train his regionals at Warner/Reprise. He asked if I would ever consider Country and some months later, I reached out. He had an opening in Chicago, but as a California girl, it wasn't something I considered. This earned me the nickname "Princess." He eventually called with a West Coast offer, to which I jokingly said I didn't see a proposal or a big rock on my finger. He came back a few hours later with a nice contract and said, "Princess, here is your big rock. I'm down on one knee; please say yes." I eventually accepted and have spent the last two decades in Country.

CRB's Chasity Crouch: Bill Mayne is an exceptional leader, encourager and mentor. One of his favorite job responsibilities while at CRB was to mentor those just starting their careers. He takes great pride in the stories and life experiences he's accumulated over 50 years, and has always been willing to share those to help guide others.

iHeartMedia's Rod Phillips: When I officially moved to Music City, Bill was the first person to not only reach out to me directly, but to show up in my office and shake my hand. He was perfectly cordial in finding a way to say hello and offer help as I learned my way around. And it only took 95 minutes! I'm kidding ... sort of.

BMLG Records' Michelle Kammerer: For me and numerous others, he picked up the phone late at night when we've needed advice, walked us through career changes, and has been there for us more times than we can count. Plus, his homemade smoked ribs would make your mama cry.

Warner's John Esposito: During my first meeting with Bill, the CRB and its CRS event were in decline and in need of massive repair and support. There was talk that the organization's best days had passed. Though only playing the role of acting director, the case Bill made to me to trust him and give them a second chance was so compelling that I rallied the crew and made the decision to offer further support. Due in large part to Bill's campaigning, CRS had an uptick that year, not only in attendance, but in quality according to people who had gone for years. If not for Bill Mayne, I'm fairly sure CRS wouldn't exist today. Not only did he save its butt, he led it on a path to thriving like it never had before. Bravo! **CAC**