

Entertainment News: ‘Rhinestone Cowboy’ Glen Campbell Dies at 81

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 9, 2017 - 9:11am

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NASHVILLE – Glen Campbell had many acts in his long career – sought after session guitarist, singer, TV & movie star and country personality – but his greatest contribution to culture may be the 2011 public announcement of his Alzheimer’s disease, and the documentary about the condition, “I’ll Be Me.” Campbell died on August 8th, 2017. He was 81.

The amiable persona he built as a pop music star was amplified by his variety show “The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour,” which ran on CBS-TV from 1969 to 1972. The show opened every week with his hit song “Gentle on My Mind,” and featured the good time personality of Campbell interacting with the guests and musical acts, which included an eclectic mix of artists like Ray Charles, The Monkees, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, The Righteous Brothers, Liza Minnelli and Tom Jones. And this was all before his signature song, “Rhinestone Cowboy,” became an unlikely number one hit in the summer of 1975.

Glen Travis Campbell was born in Billstown, Alabama, a sharecropper’s son who was seventh of 12 children. His Uncle Boo taught him guitar, and he moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1954 to join the band Dick Bills and the Sandia Mountain Boys. He then moved to Los Angeles in 1960 to begin his formidable career as a recording session musician. He was a member of the “Wrecking Crew,” a team of session players who performed backing tracks on some of the greatest records of the 1960s. Campbell backed artists like Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Elvis Presley, Bobby Darin and Merle Haggard. In 1965, he toured with The Beach Boys, and played guitar on their legendary “Pet Sounds” album.

Signed by Capitol Records, he had his first minor hit in 1965 with “Universal Soldier.” Just as Capitol threatened to drop him, he began his most fruitful song period to the end of the 1960s, teaming with various songwriters to score crossover hits like “Gentle on My Mind,” “By the Time I Get to Phoenix,” “Galveston” and “Wichita Lineman.” His TV show came as a result of a summertime series in 1968, substituting for “The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour” (a common practice for TV in that era). Admired by actor John Wayne, Campbell took a supporting film role opposite him in “True Grit” (1969). He always joked that his acting was so bad in that film, that in comparison it secured the Oscar for John Wayne as Best Actor.

Post his TV show, he maintained his popularity, and scored his biggest hit in 1975 with “Rhinestone Cowboy.” Campbell said when he heard the first lyric, “I’ve been walking these streets so long, singing the same old song...” he knew it was written for him. He followed that song with another number one in 1977, “Southern Nights.” The 1980s to the end of his career was often characterized by difficulties, including a stormy relationship with country star Tanya Tucker in 1980, in addition to struggles with alcohol and cocaine, which landed him in jail for ten days in 2003.

In 2011, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, and became the face of the condition as he went public and embarked on a farewell tour. This roadshow was recorded as a documentary, “Glen Campbell: I’ll Be Me” (2014) by director James Keach, and garnered an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song for “I’m Gonna Miss You.” Campbell succumbed to the disease at his Nashville home. He was married four times, and is survived by his current wife Kimberly Woolen and eight children.

Glen Campbell never got too far from his roots in Alabama. “I’ve been blessed with the upbringing of parents who told me, ‘There’s an old saying... if he tells you a hog weighs five pounds, wrap it up.’ That pretty much says it.”

Source material for this article is from Wikipedia. Glen Campbell, 1936-2017

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