



The Northwest Western Swing Music Society

Presents the

***29TH ANNUAL
HALL OF FAME
INDUCTION CEREMONY***

1:00 - 3:00 pm

August 11, 2019

***Held at the
Historic Enumclaw Field House
Enumclaw, Washington***

—Celebrating Our 36th Year—



This festival has been dedicated to celebrating the life and legacy of Mayme Lou Bischoff, the First Lady of Northwest Western Swing. Our dear friend, long-time promoter and supporter of western swing music through the NWWSMS, left this world in June 2019.

The Society would like to extend its sincere appreciation to the musicians, dancers and all those friends from around the country who have come to honor Lou's legacy by sharing her love and enthusiasm for Western Swing Music.

2019 Governor's Proclamation

WHEREAS, music, often described as the universal language, is one of the great arts and is recognized as a source of enrichment; and

WHEREAS, western swing music is an integral part of American culture and is becoming increasingly popular; and

WHEREAS, the annual Western Swing Hall of Fame Festival and Awards Ceremony will be held August 8-11, 2019, at the historic Field House in Enumclaw, Washington; and

WHEREAS, during this festival several individuals will be honored as "Pioneers" or "Honorees" of Western Swing Music and placed in the NorthWest Western Swing Music Society's Hall of Fame;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim August 8-11, 2019 as *Western Swing Music Weekend* in Washington, and I urge all people in our state to join me in this special observance,

(Governor Jay Inslee)

TONY BACHLER

HONOREE OF WESTERN SWING



11/13/1939 it happened. Tony P. Bachler was born on the family farm in Almont, ND.

Tony's first exposure to music was through the Farmers Union gathering once a month. 16 farm families got together in a school house. The basic sound was fiddle and mandolin. By the age of 10, he was playing mandolin, entertaining with a fiddler named Walter Timkie. Music was Tony's friend. In the '50s the Bachler Brothers spent most of their lives on the road doing shows in North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Minnesota. They wore out several cars. By 1957, Tony's brother, Marlin, and he were regular guests on a Tuesday night TV show, Country Cousins Show, and had a one-hour show on the radio Sunday afternoon with Pete Linderman and the Radio Rhythm Ranch, KDIX out of Dickenson, ND. For his day job, Tony worked construction where he received training as an Iron Worker/Boiler Maker.

In 1962 Tony came to Seattle. He formed a trio with Dick Kent and Bill Kimber. As Tony puts it, "We played most every dive in the North End." Tony married his wife, Cecelia, in 1963. In the Catholic faith, Saint Cecelia is the patron saint of musicians . . . and she lived up to her name. She was and is Tony's inspiration. They have two daughters, Shannon and Lisa.

By 1966 Tony and his brothers were back together, playing various places in the Seattle area, including Mack's Shanty. The memory of their 3-part country harmony still sends chills through his bones.

By the mid-1970s Tony had gone out on his own, formed a band and was playing 6 nights a week at the 4-Stop. Jim Snider was playing at the Flame. Jim Miller – Roundup. Butch Paulson (with Nokie Edwards on guitar) played the Circle. In the late 70s Tony played with Paul Tutmarc (HOF 2017). Then in the late 70s Tony began playing the White Spot between Kent and Auburn. Frenchie LaRoche was the bass player who sang the most beautiful harmony since Tony and his brothers were together. Tony was 'in heaven.' He also worked with Al Workman from the original Wells & Fargo team (Workman and LaRoche).

After a 10-year stint at the White Spot, Tony and his band played various venues until Frenchie LaRoche retired. In the early 90s he finally decided to drop the band and began doing one-man-shows at fairgrounds, RV parks, retirement centers, etc. Tony has opened for various big names through the years.

Tony loves music - he loves playing it and he loves writing it. Tony has published 4 CDs of original music, and is working on his 5th. He has played in bands with instruments ranging from strings to horns to accordions and enjoys playing music, whether jazz, rock, country, bluegrass, or western swing. For Tony it's all good. Music has been his life's hobby. He still enjoys it and counts the friends and fellow musicians he has met through the years a blessing.

Tony has been a member and supporter of the NorthWest Western Swing Music Society. He still remembers his friend, Ronnie Hutchinson (one of the co-founders of the Society), talking about starting the Western Swing Music Society of Seattle at the Kirkland Eagles. Tony has played with many of the Society's musicians and now serves on the Board.

GARY BLODGETT

HONOREE OF WESTERN SWING

Gary J. Blodgett Jr. was born July 31, 1966, in Glens Falls, New York. Gary Jr. was born into a house brimming with music. His first memories of music are from church and home. His mom, Nancy, taught Sunday school. Gary Jr's Pop was a professional guitar player doing country music and Western swing of the 1950s. Gary Jr. recalls, "Pop dabbled in all instruments and so we always had a guitar, banjo, bass, mandolin and fiddle in the house."

Gary was just 6 when he first performed with the family band in Corinth, New York, for the Adirondack Bluegrass League.

"When my grandfather died (I was about 4th grade), we were cleaning out his house and I found this old Victrola and a bunch of Bob Wills 78 records. My favorite song in my grandpa's Bob Wills' collection was "Silver Dew on Bluegrass Tonight." I listened to it over and over. It was really the first time I had heard Western swing, and I fell in love with it!"

"My family's band opened for Buck White and the Down Home Folks (prior to them changing their name to The Whites), Ricky Skaggs, Keith Whitley, Vince Gill, Marty Stewart, and others. In fact I remember being 12 and opening for Marty when he was about 17. I wanted to be like him when I reached that age." Gary said, laughing.

As Gary progressively improved his guitar skills, he became better able to play Western swing music. To improve his licks, Gary remembers sitting in on practices with a Western swing band that his Pop organized, called "Fiddle Frolic."

At 19, Gary began playing about 100 days a year in upstate New York with a band focusing on country and Western Swing top 40 music. The band opened for Slim Whitman, Box Car Willy, The Forrester Sisters, Whispering Bill Anderson, Joe Diffie, Tommy Cash, Neil McCoy, and Doug Supernaw.

Gary recalls, "I knew I wanted to get hired on with a road band so that I could play 5-6 nights a week. I was hired by a band, High Noon, out of Keene, New Hampshire. At 24 I moved to Daytona, FL, where the band was based. I spent about 10 years in Key West, playing nine shifts a week. In 2007 Gary moved to California where the thriving casino circuit kept him there. Gary played guitar with "Buck Ford and the Pure Country Band" for close to two years around 2012, opening for Mark Chestnut, Tommy Cash, Wade Hayes, Aaron Watson, Daryl Singletary, John Michael Montgomery, Clint Black, Aaron Tippin and Easton Corbin. Gary says, "Buck was doing a lot of Western swing music and it really brought me right back to the excitement I'd felt as a 10-year-old, hearing my grandpa's old Bob Will's 78 recording of 'Silver Dew on the Bluegrass Tonight'. Ronnie Elkan, fiddler in the Buck Ford Band, brought me to one of the Sacramento Western Swing Society dances. I met and had the pleasure of playing with Biff Adam, Jimmy Baughman, Bud Duncan, Chuck Hayes and so, so many other legends! I knew I had to be part of this society." Gary became a member and has graciously volunteered his time to set up, and run sound for the Western Swing Society dances.

Gary's prodigious talents spring from a lifetime surrounded by top tier musicians, and hours dedicated to perfecting his skills under the tutelage of his father, Gary J. Blodgett Sr, and other mentors like Smokey Greene, Al and Kathy Bain and Dan Tyminski. His depth and breadth of experience is beyond what most hope to achieve in a lifetime. Any musician privileged enough to share a stage with Gary will tell you he is a highly accomplished team player of the highest caliber. Gary was inducted into the Western Swing Society's Hall of Fame in October 2017.



GREG GIBBS

HONOREE OF WESTERN SWING



Greg Gibbs was born on June 19, 1963. He was introduced to music at the age of 10 when he started piano lessons. When he was 13 years old, while attending a family reunion at Lake Belton, he remembers hearing an 8-track being played on his uncle's boat. He had never heard music like that before!

For some reason, seven years later in 1983, he remembered that 8-track and its music. Greg asked his uncle, Dwight Scoggin, if he remembered the music he was playing in his boat. His uncle replied "Bob Wills, For the Last Time." That same day Greg bought the album and made a cassette tape to listen to in his truck. He was hooked!

That same year, a friend invited Greg to the Bob Wills Celebration in Turkey, TX, where he heard Hoyle Nix and became an instant fan. That sealed the deal. For Christmas that year, he told his mother, "All I want is a fiddle," and she obliged.

Every day after work he would come home, go straight to his room, and learn songs off the "For the Last Time" album. In about a year, he got a job with a local band called "Old Country." For the next 4 years or so he jobbed around town until 1989 when he went to work with a local band, "Sage." They eventually incorporated twin fiddles and became a big hit around Wichita Falls area. Greg recalls, "We stayed quite busy playing rodeo dances. I worked with this band into the early 90's. During this time, I attended many Jody Nix dances and learned how dance music should be played. In 1991, I began working at the Red Door Senior Citizens dances on Tuesday night and have been there ever since."

Somewhere in the mid 1990's, Greg began working with Randall Palmore and Brady Bowen, both now close friends. Around 2000, Greg began working with Eddie McAlvain and Grady Smith. With Eddie and Grady, Greg played numerous Western Swing shows. Greg began working with Tommy Hooker around 2008 and still works with him, when the jobs are north of Fort Worth.

In October 2010, Greg was honored to work with Leon Rausch and the Texas Playboys at a show in Lubbock, TX. In 2010 and 2011, he worked at the Lincoln County Cowboy Symposium in Ruidoso with Brady Bowen. Greg was honored to be named the 2016 Academy of Western Artists' Male Vocalist of the Year.

Greg currently fronts his own band, "Greg Gibbs and Texas Standard Time," which includes band members Randall Palmore (steel), Buster Redwine (guitar) and John Jones (upright bass). Sadly, the band's drummer and Greg's longtime friend, Joe Paul Clark, suddenly and unexpectedly passed away in February 2019, at the age of 46. The band will go on, but Joe Paul will always be remembered for the fine musician and gentleman that he was!

Greg and his wife Carol, currently reside in Iowa Park, TX, just a few miles west of Wichita Falls.

DEWEY GROOM

PIONEER OF WESTERN SWING



Dewey Groom was born April 30, 1918, in Van Zandt County, Texas. There were seven Groom children and most of the family either sang or preached when they weren't in the cotton fields. It didn't take Dewey long to realize that he didn't want to be a tenant farmer like his family so he learned to play guitar and sing. When he was in his mid-teens he hitched a ride to Dallas, TX, and worked at his uncle's gas station. In 1941 he went into the Army like most men at that time and took his passion for music with him.

When he got out of the service he had developed into enough of an entertainer to land a spot on the radio with Pappy Hal Horton and played local school dances through the 1940's.

In 1950, Groom opened the Bounty Ballroom, a walk-up joint in downtown Dallas, and in the mid 1950's went to work alongside Jack Ruby at the Silver Spur ,which later became the Longhorn Ballroom. After a disagreement with Jack Ruby, Dewey left to go open up a place on Main Street with his big band. During this time Jack Ruby had left 216 Corinth and opened up the Carousel Club. In the meantime the Bob Wills Ranch House, then the Silver Spur, had sat vacant for a while. The land owner, O.L. Nelms, asked Dewey in 1958 to come back and open up his own place. So that is how the infamous Longhorn Ballroom came into being.

The Longhorn Ballroom in its heyday seated 2000 people which made it one of the largest dancehalls in the country for that era. Everyone played there from George Strait, Conway Twitty, Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson (who was a regular), Loretta Lynn and countless others. Dewey was revered and respected by the traveling musicians and entertainers because he never cheated anyone and the stars knew he was a man of his word. Most country acts of the day knew that they had made the big time when they could get booked at Dewey Groom's Longhorn Ballroom in Dallas, Texas!

Dewey also established Longhorn Records and recorded many local artists. For years he did segments on the locally produced 'COWBOY WEAVER SHOW.' There are several of his musicians that went on to work with major stars and to win acceptance into many Western Swing Societies. Dewey Groom was inducted into the Texas Western Swing Hall of Fame in the 1990's.

He operated the Longhorn from 1958-1986 when he retired and sold the business.

Dewey and his family retired to some family land in Henderson County, TX where he lived near all his family until his death on March 31, 1997.

His motto was that, 'he loved people and they loved him back'.



GARY & RAY HADACHEK

HONOREES OF WESTERN SWING



The Hadachek family, Midwest farmers, migrated to Tacoma, WA, in search of a better life.

Ray and Gary's Roots: Ray's family photos from the 1800s say it all. Each family member is holding at least one instrument. Although music was woven into the fabric of their lives, no one in the Hadachek family ever made a living from just music for any length of time.

Ray and Gary's grandfather made and played fiddle. Their grandmother played piano. Most of their relatives played fiddles along with horns and the button accordion. Uncle Lloyd (not his stage name) played drums with Benny Goodman, Lawrence Welk and Tommy Dorsey. Lloyd was even called in to substitute for Gene Krupa a few times. The boys' Aunt majored in music and still lives in San Diego – at 88, she plays sax with two jazz bands.

Ray and Gary's dad was a multi-instrumentalist, but specialized in bass guitar and fiddle. He had his own band but during the day worked as an engine mechanic. Ray's grandfather was a machinist. Following in their footsteps, Ray started out in auto body and paint, moving into machining. Gary worked for cable TV and the City of Tacoma.

Instruments were all over the house, tenor guitar, bass guitar, mandolin, fiddle, button accordion. Ray remembers none were ever designated 'off-limits' to the children. Through middle school and high school Ray played clarinet and sax but, early on, Ray developed a fascination for the banjo. The house rule was you could play any and all instruments in the home; but, the boys' father would not buy another. So Ray went out and found a used banjo at Sears, made payments and finally brought it home. A few years later, Ray began looking at steel guitars. While shopping for an amp, Ray's father ran into a musician quitting music, ready to sell everything. He called Ray and came home with that Fender 400.

Around that time, one of Ray's neighbors, Northwest steel guitar virtuoso, Chubby Howard, had a TV program, Western Jamboree. Chubby helped get him started. Then Ray's cousin showed him the E9 tuning, saying E9 would be the tuning of the future – and, he was right.

The Hadachek Brothers in the 1960s: In 1964, Ray first joined a bluegrass band, playing 5-string banjo and dobro. In the late '60s, the band toured California, filling in for bands at Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm. But Ray didn't enjoy touring and could make as much money staying at home as he did on the road. The music stopped when Ray served in the Marine Corps at Camp Pendleton, but resumed when he returned to civilian life.

Gary began his music career joining a military band 1962, **The Country Gentlemen**. The 60s provided ample opportunity to perform between radio programs and remote broadcasts. He joined the Army, playing until he shipped out to Viet Nam. Gary was the drummer for Tacoma-based band, **Bobby and the Innkeepers**. They toured the Hollywood and LA area. This band is part of the University of Washington's Kearney Barton Collection of North West Music.

The brothers met JC McCormick and formed the trio **Cherokee**, playing country and western swing music off and on through 2012.

Here are some additional highlights from their music careers.

1970s: During the early 70s, they worked with JC, playing western swing, country and rock & roll. The brothers complimented each other's styles. Together they forged a driving energy.

1980s: Through the 80s, Ray and Gary did not play together steady. Gary explored Rhythm & Blues/Rock while Ray turned towards Rock & Roll and jazz! One of Ray's fondest memories was jamming with Speedy Price – he enjoyed the sound of blending Speedy's jazz style with his rock style. It was during this period Ray played with local house bands, backing such artists as Tex Williams and the Hager Twins.

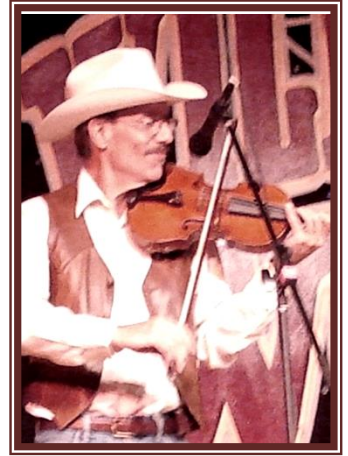
1990s: With the founding of the Seattle Western Swing Society (aka, NorthWest Western Swing Music Society) and the Country Western Music Association (CWMA), Ray found himself playing with Hoot Gibson and Bill Garner, as well as other bands, representing these organizations at various events.

By 2000, the brothers were playing western swing events with JC McCormick as **Cherokee**. Their band was always standing by to help out at the festivals.

Gary passed away suddenly on November 17, 2012. Ray played the weekly jam where his brother last performed, at Stonegate in Tacoma, WA, until it closed in the Spring of 2019. JC McCormick has rebuilt the **Cherokee** band with Ray – and the music continues.

ROB LOREN

PIONEER OF WESTERN SWING



Rob was born and raised in Pasco, Washington. His father was a violinist and string teacher. Rob studied violin through high school and into college. After years of study and playing classical music Rob tired of playing music off of a printed page. He wanted to play fiddle. Rob left college to pursue a professional music career. He played with various groups for about 15 years, in most every musical genre—except classical. While playing in one of those groups they were booked in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

He settled in New Mexico where he returned to college at University of New Mexico, receiving a music degree in strings. He also met his wife there and their two children were born there. Rob continued to play in local groups. In one of those groups he met a guitar player who would eventually play with Ray Price. It was through this contact that Rob got in an invitation to become a member of Ray Price's **Cherokee Cowboys**.

There were many gigs and special venues they played but two of Rob's highlights were playing with Merle Haggard at Billy Bob's in Ft. Worth and working with Ray on the "Nashville Now" television show. After long road tours and gigs he tired of the road he left to spend more time with his family in New Mexico.

Soon, after leaving the road with Ray Price, Rob accepted a position teaching strings in the Wichita, KS school district. But he continued to perform professional gigs. It was then he became a member of Hank Thompson's **Brazos Valley Boys**---and he continues to be a member of the **Brazos Valley Boys** to the present. While working with the **BVB**, Rob worked with Dugg Collins, Curly Lewis and opened for Bill Anderson and countless others. Rob is now retired from teaching and is involved in playing with various groups in the Midwest, playing everything from western swing to bluegrass and classical.

MIKE MOORE

PIONEER OF WESTERN SWING



Mike was born in Jackson, Mississippi. He and his family moved to Tulsa where he attended public schools. It was at this early age he started listening to western swing that Tulsa had to offer. He attended Tulsa University and received a music education degree and a doctorate in music from Oklahoma University.

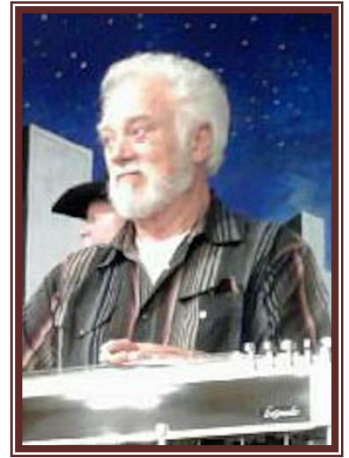
While in college he worked with various music groups in the Tulsa area including; Roy and Candy, Johnny Lee Wills, Eldon Shamblin, Tommy Perkins, Jana Jae, BJ Thomas, Conway Twitty. In addition Mike has played over 20 years with the Brazos Valley Boys. He was on Hank Thompson's last released recording "My Favorites," playing trumpet on several tunes. Besides western swing bands, Mike has worked with The Four Tops, Ray Charles, Natalie Cole and the Temptations to name just a few.

Mike is married to musician Jama Lou Redding-Moore. They have a son David who is also a musician. David is completing his doctorate in music at Northern Colorado University.

Mike is retired from public school teaching but still keeps a full gig schedule. Besides the Brazos Valley Boys, Mike is involved with the Modern Oklahoma Jazz Orchestra and continues to be a music clinician across the Midwest. Regardless of his schedule he always takes time to play western swing with the Brazos Valley Boys.

TOM PHELPS

HONOREE OF WESTERN SWING



Thomas Wayne Phelps, better known by friends as Tom, Tommy or Hollywood, grew up in the state of Washington working in the saw mill with his dad, logging and learning how to make cedar shakes for roofs. He began his love for music by playing guitar with his dad around the age of 8. He would later play guitar with his mom while harmonizing together.

Joining the Army in 1966, Thomas continued playing music while stationed in Germany. He recalled playing for the locals, "Although they didn't speak English they sure could sing Hank Williams songs." It was during his time in the Army that he heard a steel guitar being played for the first time and it drew his interest.

Upon discharge from the Army he went into driving semi-trucks for his own business as well as others and playing music wherever he could on his off times. He bought his first steel guitar in 1970 and Thomas states, "I ground many listener's teeth off in the beginning!" as he wasted no time taking his steel to the stage. It was in very short order that Thomas' skills showed themselves as he mastered the instrument.

He had the pleasure of backing many stars. Some that come to mind were Tex Williams, Stone Wall Jackson, Dottie West, Shelly West, Freddy Hart, Winn Stewart, Ferlin Husky, Bobby Bare, Tommy Cash and Sammi Smith. In his travels he met up with the Diamonds and joined their vocal group for three years.

It was while performing with the Diamonds, in Sparks, Nevada, he had the pleasure of meeting Bobby Black. Bobby invited Thomas on stage to play steel with him during his show with the California Cowboys at the Nugget Hotel and Casino. It was here that he realized his heart was set on playing country music through the pretty sounds of his steel guitar thus ending his days in doo wop music with the Diamonds.

Thomas shared the stage with Bill McCarty who was also a member of the Diamonds. They kept in touch, sharing their musical talent whenever possible. It was during a visit with Bill that Thomas was introduced to Leon Womack, Ralph Chase, Jimmy Baughman and Jerry Johnson. The six musicians enjoyed an evening of performing at the Klondike in Lake Head. That evening led to Ralph Chase inviting Thomas to play at one of the Western Swing Society's dances in 2016. Thomas has enjoyed playing with the many talented musicians and vocalists nearly every month at the Western Swing Society for the past two years.

After being inducted into the Western Swing Society's Hall of Fame in Sacramento, in October 2018, Thomas spent the winter of 2019 touring the US with Jack LeDuc, playing a George Strait tribute show.

HYRAM POSEY

HONOREE OF WESTERN SWING



Starting in the late 60's in high school orchestra, Hiram learned to read music and apply it to the violin. He loved the southwestern lifestyle, and admired the local bands that came to town to play dance music every Saturday night in his hometown of Alamogordo, NM. A friend introduced him to one of the best fiddle players in the state, and from that relationship Hiram became a champion fiddler, winning over his mentor and moving into the national champion spotlight.

Playing with friends for fun and practice, Hiram became a recording artist at the tender age of 16 when he recorded his first album at Goldust Records in Mesilla Park, NM. Working for a railroad company for most of his adult life, Hiram spent most weekends in Nashville, traveling back and forth to keep both ends of the candle burning. As soon as retirement became an option, Hiram moved to Dickson, TN and now spends all his free time composing music for sessions, movie tracks, and producing other artists to help them get recorded.

Hiram is a respected session player himself, and has played on multiple stages with established recording artists. He has five collections of instrumental music ranging from traditional country/bluegrass to jazz and new-age stylings.

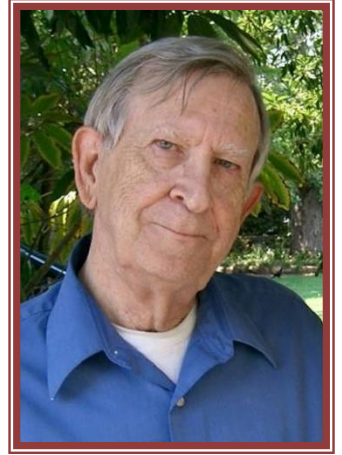
Hiram Posey is a Nashville, TN based composer, producer, and session player. A Grand 'Ole Opry performer, Posey has played with the tops in the country and jazz music world. As a multi-instrumentalist, he has recorded six solo CD's.

Hiram plays recording sessions with various artists. He plays with the David Church Show often appearing on the RFD-TV Show- "*Midwest Country*", Tennessee River Boys, Margie Singleton, Jimmy Parker, Lonnie Spiker. He is Band-Leader for the "*Music City Hayride Show*", and justy recently won- "*Instrumentalist of the Year*" for the *Academy of Western Artists, Will Rogers Awards Show* in Dallas, Texas- March 14th 2019. Hiram is also Nominated for "Instrumentalist of the Year" for the Josie Music Awards Show to be held on September 21, 2019 at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, TN.

Starting in early 2019 Hiram launched his own show- "*Hiram Posey & Lonnie Spiker with The Swangers*" presents- A Musical Tribute to Bob Wills, which will be touring the theater circuits with Hiram's new group- the "SWANGERS, consisting of some of Nashville's finest players in the music biz....." THIS show plays the FINEST WESTERN SWING MUSIC on the planet....!!!!

BOB RICHARDS

PIONEER OF WESTERN SWING



RadioBob's stories about Bob Wills

Bob Richards was born in Arkansas, way too many years ago. He and his family came to California in 1942, just in time for the start of World War 2 with Japan. When he was 12 his mother bought him a windup console phonograph for \$3 from a Goodwill store. At noon, every weekday in 1947, Bob listened to KLX radio in Oakland. The announcer's was named "Cactus Jack" and he played an hour of Bob Wills music from records and transcriptions.

When the Texas Playboys came to San Jose, Bob persuaded his uncle to take him to the dance. He actually met and talked with Bob Wills who was very nice to that 12-year-old. Bob has been a fan ever since. But that was not the last time he would meet Bob Wills and Tommy Duncan.

By 1960 he was working for a country entertainer known as Texas Tiny (real name was Guy Cherry). Tiny had a remote broadcast on KGER 1390 in Long Beach, Ca. The station was 5000 watts, covering the entire West Coast at night. When Tiny had a gig, Bob would do the show.

Joe Allison of Liberty Records had signed Bob Wills and Tommy Duncan to separate recording contracts and put out an album called *Together Again*. They had a #5 single called "Heart To Heart Talk." Tiny knew Bob and Tommy for many years from back in Texas. It turned out the Playboys were appearing together at George's Roundup, a country night club, located near Texas Tiny's Drive Inn, where the show originated. So they came and joined Tiny and Bob Richards for an interview.

In 1978 Bob was program director of KARM, a country music station in Fresno. He arranged an interview for the all night trucker show, featuring Eddie Briggs, an award-winning DJ. The guest was Joe Holley, left-handed fiddle player, and long-time member of the Bob Wills band. He talked about his days with the band and had some amusing stories. Bob has made both of these interviews available on-line.

The YouTube channel Bob developed, [radiobob805](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC805), is his hobby. He is a Bob Wills fan and has been since 1946 when he first heard him on the radio. He remembers how hard it was to find those 78s to buy. Now he owns many recordings by Wills unavailable elsewhere. Bob adds pictures to the audio to make a slide show and uploads it to his channel. He personally knew many of these early country artists. His favorite music is Western Swing, from Milton Brown to George Strait. Sometimes he puts things up well, just because - because he can. Sharing is what it's all about . . . *Bob would appreciate ideas for Western Swing music that the NWWSSMS members would like to see him post. He literally has everything Bob Wills ever recorded.*

PHIL SPEER

HONOREE OF WESTERN SWING



Phillip “Phil” Speer was born November 9, 1955, in Bakersfield, California. He grew up listening to Bob Wills, Ray Price, Merle Haggard and Buck Owens.

When Phil was young his family moved to the San Francisco Bay Area. Phil honed his skills as a drummer and as soon as he was old enough he began playing clubs and casinos in the Western part of the country. During this time, Phil had the opportunity to drum in bands opening for **Ernest Tubb, Alabama, Johnny Lee, Charly McClain, New Riders of the Purple Sage, Norton Buffalo** and **Elvin Bishop**.

Since moving to the Sacramento area in 2016, Phil has been involved with the Western Swing Society. He has played at WSS dances with the **Buck Ford and the Pure Country Band**, with **Bite The Bullet**, and has filled in on drums for the house band when needed. Phil is a team player and has made himself available anytime he has been asked.

Phil said he was honored to fill in for Buck Ford’s drummer, Arron Smith, for six months when Arron was recovering from a serious leg injury. He has since been a reliable backup drummer whenever Buck Ford needs him. He has also been working with Gary Blodgett for the past couple of years which has been a treat.

Phil’s talents as a drummer are evident by the list of top caliber musicians with whom he has worked. He has played with and is respected by Bobby Black (**Commander Cody**), Jim Baughman (**Merle Haggard**), Pat Donahue (**Prairie Home Companion**), Al Quaid (**Jason Roberts**), Dave Ristrim (**Luke Bryan**), Bruce Kaphan (**Jewel**), Jay Dee Maness (**Buck Owens**), and **Buck Ford and the Pure Country Band**.

Phil’s solid drumming on shuffles and swing keep the dancers on the floor and make him an asset to any Western Swing band.

SUZE SPENCER

PIONEER OF WESTERN SWING



Suze Spencer was born into one of America's most renowned western music families. Her grandfather, Jack Spencer, performed with Hawaiian steel guitar virtuoso Bennie Nawahi in **The Red Devils** and **Georgia Jumpers** in 1930-1931 and in 1932 with Bennie Nawahi and **The International Cowboys** where Jack, Vernon and Austin Spencer performed along with Billy Nichols and a young Leonard Slye. Her grandmother and great aunts were ace harmony singers. Suze began learning guitar by watching her grandfather and Karl Farr, the original guitarist with **Sons of the Pioneers**. Later, Lloyd Perryman, Roy Lanham and Freddie Green were influential to her style.

While Suze was taking swimming lessons at a Country Club in Mt. Diablo, California, in 1959, the Spade Cooley band was setting up and rehearsing on the patio. She was captivated by his music. A few years later during a visit to Lake Tahoe, her grandfather took her to Harvey's Wagon Wheel to hear Bob Wills. It was there she learned to swing dance and fell in love with the steel guitar.

Suze began studying both Western Swing and Classic Western guitar in earnest during the mid-1960s after moving to eastern Oregon. Her grandfather sent her Western and Swing 78 records to play along with on her Victrola. Before long, she was playing at barn dances and in pick-up bands at Grange Halls for dancers throughout the area. In the late 1960s while competing with her Nez Perce friends in the Indian Games at the Pendleton Roundup, she stepped up to play rhythm guitar (filling in for an absent band member) for her first big rodeo dance. They played four sets and it went by in a heartbeat.

By the late 1980s, Suze was managing a music store and noticed a distinctive lack of roots music instruction available. She began a total immersion series – taught a 3-hour class on Saturday mornings with a band lab on Wednesday, for six to eight weeks. By the third year of teaching western swing, she began bringing in guest artists and increased the series from one to three a year. When a student graduated (completed three, six-eight week sessions) she held a big swing dance open to the public where the students played and danced all evening. The series sold out for over 15 years.

Suze teaches individual, group lessons and master classes in the Classic Western and Western Swing styles in SW Washington, at festivals, universities and music camps across the USA. She is the published author of the rhythm guitar style of Ranger Doug Green of **Riders In The Sky**. Her critically acclaimed album *"Tall Boots" Rare Gems of America's Western Music Pioneers* continues to be top favorite among the international roots music audience. She performs in her Western swing band; **Way Out West**, old time band; **The Cascade Troubadours** and hot Texas fiddling duo; **The Archtops**. She serves as an advisor for the International Western Music Association and is the booking agent for **Sons Of The Pioneers**.

There is a great deal of interest in Western Swing music among the youth of today as well as adults. "Western Swing is so full of life and energizing to play, it just made sense to build the program around the festivals so more folks could participate." In August of 2018 she convinced the NWSMS to give it an experimental try at their HOF celebration in Enumclaw, Washington. "It was a tremendous success," said Suze, "The folks loved it and begged us to do it again." This year, she has expanded the program to 2 1/2 days before the festival "If we want to keep this music alive, we've got to teach it to the next generations," said Suze. She is happy to lend her lifetime of teaching experience to help keep the music and dancing going for years to come.

ROBERT WATERHOUSE

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

The Category of Special Recognition



This designation, established in 2014, recognizes those who, through their actions, although not meeting "Inductee" requirements, greatly encouraged and continue to inspire those preserving, performing and promoting Western Swing music.

Robert started playing fiddle seriously in 1981, when he was living in Somerville, Massachusetts and took a group class in Cambridge with Alan Block, a fiddle player well known for playing contra dances and festivals in and around New England. Robert learned a ton of music from Alan, mostly traditional fiddle tunes from New England, Appalachia, and the British Isles, but also some old time songs. About that time, Robert purchased his first Bob Wills album, a double record set, and fell in love with Western Swing. He was hooked but what set the hook was attending a live performance of **Riders in the Sky** in Boston. Looking to add to his music collection, Robert became a great fan of **Asleep At The Wheel**.

Robert would play some the Bob Wills numbers at home (Maiden's Prayer, Faded Love, San Antonio Rose) but it wasn't until 1994 that he played any of them with a band. That was when Robert joined **Acoustic Squeeze**, an eclectic group formed in the Willamette Valley with Sam Bernardi (accordion), Bob Burgeni (bass), Leslie Darland (guitar) and Robert on fiddle. They played whatever suited them, and what suited them was a mix of Bluegrass, Country, Zydeco, Jug Band and Western Swing. It was a fun band that lasted only about four years.

It wasn't until 2013 that a good friend, and great fiddler, Tim Crosby, told him of this Western Swing band he was playing with, the **Oregon Valley Boys**. He told Robert that it was great fun, but Tim was going to have to devote his time to another band, **Kathy Boyd and Phoenix Rising**. Tim offered to pass Robert's name on to the **Oregon Valley Boys** for consideration. Well, he got a call from Randy Hill to play three gigs that summer. Robert played those gigs and kept going to rehearsals afterwards until he became an official Oregon Valley Boy. Robert says, "It has been the best playing and band experience I have ever had."