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**ARTISTS AND INDUSTRY TURN OUT FOR
THE ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC'S 2ND ANNUAL
ACM HONORS
HELD SEPTEMBER 22, 2009 IN NASHVILLE**

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**EVENING RECOGNIZED SPECIAL HONOREES FROM THE
44TH ANNUAL ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS**

ENCINO, CA (September 22, 2009) – Music City talent and industry elite turned out in force tonight for the Academy of Country Music's 2nd Annual ACM Honors, an evening dedicated to recognizing the special honorees and off-camera category winners from the 44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards. The event, hosted by **Lee Ann Womack**, was held in Nashville at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center.

The evening was a mix of live music, historical video retrospectives and current video tributes and interviews with industry veterans honoring Special Awards recipients **Merle Haggard, Harlan Howard, Dolly Parton, Jerry Reed, Kenny Rogers, Randy Travis, Hank Williams Jr., David Young** and "Beer For My Horses," winners of the MBI (musicians, bandleaders, instruments) categories **Chuck Ainlay, Tony Brown, Tom Bukovac, Eric Darken, Dan Dugmore, Aubrey Haynie, Jelly Roll Johnson, Greg Morrow, Gordon Mote and Glenn Worf**, and winner of the Industry Awards categories, **Fran Romeo, Romeo Entertainment; Louis Messina, The Messina Group; Joe's Bar** (Chicago, IL), **The Ryman Auditorium** (Nashville, TN) and **Turning Stone Casino** (Verona, NY).

Artists who performed in tribute to honorees included:

- **John Anderson**, performing Randy Travis' "Diggin' Up Bones"
- **Bobby Bare**, performing Jerry Reed's "A Thing Called Love"
- **Vince Gill**, performing Merle Haggard's "Holding Things Together"
- **The Grascals**, performing a medley of Hank Williams Jr.'s "All My Rowdy Friends Are Coming Over Tonight," "Born To Boogie," and "Woman I've Never Had"
- **Jamey Johnson**, performing a medley of Hank Williams Jr.'s "Whiskey Bent & Hell Bound," "Country Boy Can Survive," and "Family Tradition"
- **Miranda Lambert**, performing Merle Haggard's "Twinkle Twinkle Lucky Star" and Hank Williams Jr.'s "Anymore Love Songs"
- **Jim Lauderdale**, performing a medley of Harlan Howard's "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down," "Heartaches By The Number," and "Tiger By the Tail"

- **Patty Loveless**, performing Harlan Howard's "Blame It On Your Heart"
- **Brent Mason**, performing a medley of Jerry Reed's "Amos Moses" and "Guitar Man"
- **Joe Nichols**, performing Merle Haggard's "Okie From Muskogee"
- **James Otto**, performing Randy Travis' "Deeper Than The Holler"
- **Kellie Pickler & Jamey Johnson**, performing Kenny Rogers' "Every Time Two Fools Collide"
- **John Rich**, performing Kenny Rogers' "Lucille"
- **Blake Shelton**, performing Kenny Rogers' "The Gambler"
- **Carrie Underwood**, performing Randy Travis' "I Told You So"
- **Steve Wariner**, performing Jerry Reed's "East Bound & Down"
- **Lee Ann Womack**, performing a medley of Dolly Parton's "9 to 5," "Here You Come Again," and "She's An Eagle When She Flies"

In addition, **Rodney Atkins** presented the Industry awards and **Eddie Montgomery** and radio executive **Charlie Cook** presented the MBI awards. Melanie Howard, widow of **Harlan Howard**, accepted on Howard's behalf, and **Jerry Reed's** grandchildren accepted on Reed's behalf. **Dolly Parton** accepted her award via a video thank-you. **Hank Williams Jr.** was unable to attend due to a family commitment; his daughters Hilary Williams, Holly Williams and Katie Williams accepted on his behalf.

Video tribute participants included **Roma Downey, Rod Essig, Jeff Fisher (Tennessee Titans coach), Mark Hartley, Gayle Holcomb, Gerry House, Toby Keith, Kris Kristofferson, Reba McEntire, Tiffany Moon, Robert K. Oermann, Dolly Parton, Kellie Pickler, Lionel Richie, Kid Rock, Bob Romeo, Adam Sandler, George Strait, Carrie Underwood, Keith Urban, Phil Vassar and Holly Williams.**

The Academy of Country Music Special Awards are voted on by the ACM Board of Directors and are awarded during years where the Board of Directors feels there are clear and deserving candidates. The evening's honorees included:

Jim Reeves International Award

Dolly Parton has been chosen to receive the Jim Reeves International Award, which is presented to an individual for outstanding contributions to the acceptance of country music throughout the world.

An internationally renowned singer, actor, songwriter and philanthropist, Parton's accomplishments have made her a global superstar. She has contributed countless treasures to the world of entertainment, penning classic songs such as "Jolene," "Coat of Many Colors," and her mega-hit "I Will Always Love You." After 40 years as an entertainer, Parton is still shoring up the foundation of country music and sharing it around the world. Past recipients of the Jim Reeves International Award include **Garth Brooks, Dick Clark, Roy Clark, Merv Griffin, Charlie Nagatani and Buck Owens**, among others.

Poet's Award

Merle Haggard and **Harlan Howard** have been selected to receive the Poet's Award, which honors songwriters for outstanding musical and/or lyrical contributions throughout their careers in the field of country music.

Merle Haggard scored his first Top 20 in 1964 with a cover of Wynn Stewart's "Sing A Sad Song," followed up by his own major hit "Swinging Doors" and his first No. 1 single, "The Fugitive." Haggard gained popularity in 1969 with songs like "Working Man Blues" and the controversial rebel anthem "Okie from Muskogee." He dominated the charts throughout the 1970s and 1980s with 40 No. 1 hits including "That's The Way Love Goes," "Hungry Eyes," "Today, I Started Loving You Again" and "Mama Tried."

More than 4,000 songs have come from the pen of legendary scribe **Harlan Howard** including "I Fall To Pieces," "I've Got A Tiger By The Tail," "Somebody Should Leave" and "Why Not Me." Howard's career finally took flight during the late 1950s when a few songs such as Charlie Walker's rendition of "Pick Me Up on Your Way Down" and Ray Price's "Heartaches by the Numbers" both hit No. 2 on the

country charts. Howard scored an unprecedented 15 compositions in the Top 40 during 1961 and penned 100 Top 10 hits throughout his songwriting career. He died at the age of 74 on March 3, 2002 in Nashville and his legacy lives on through his songs that are still recorded by artists today.

Previous recipients of the Poet's Award include **Bill Anderson** and **Fred Rose**.

Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award

Jerry Reed, Kenny Rogers, Randy Travis, and Hank Williams Jr. have been chosen to receive the Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award honoring individuals who are pioneers in the country music genre.

Jerry Reed scored his first single "If the Good Lord's Willing and the Creeks Don't Rise" when he was just 18 years old, and gained recognition in 1958 when Gene Vincent covered his "Crazy Legs." He penned Brenda Lee's "That's All You Got to Do" and had his own hits with "When You're Hot, You're Hot," "Amos Moses" and his first charting single "Guitar Man," which was later covered by Elvis Presley. One of Reed's biggest hits "A Thing Called Love" was recorded by Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash. He later had a string of Top 40 hits and continued to record and release songs into the 1980s.

Kenny Rogers got his first taste of musical fame as a member of First Edition with hits "Reuben James" and "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town," and became a superstar in his own right with a string of timeless story songs including "Lucille," "The Gambler," "Daytime Friends," and "Coward of the County." He has nine ACM awards to his credit (among countless other awards), including Entertainer of the Year in 1978 and the Career Achievement Award in 2000. Rogers has sold more than 120 million records during his illustrious career, and is one of the Top 10 best-selling artists of all time. His new project is scheduled for release in 2009, featuring another duet with fellow music legend Dolly Parton.

Randy Travis' debut, *Storms of Life*, sold more than three million copies, making him the first country act to go multi-platinum. Travis dominated radio in the late 1980s with his instantly recognizable baritone on classic hits such as "On the Other Hand," "Diggin' Up Bones," "No Place Like Home," and "Forever and Ever Amen." To date, Travis has sold more than 25 million records, has 22 No. 1 hits, six Grammy Awards, nine ACM Awards, 10 American Music Awards and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Hank Williams Jr., has made an everlasting mark on the music industry with his observations on life and society in songs such as "A Country Boy Can Survive," "Family Tradition," "All My Rowdy Friends (Have Settled Down)" and "Whiskey Bent and Hellbound," which have shown his skill for storytelling. Williams was named the Academy of Country Music's Entertainer of the Year three times.

Past recipients of the Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award include **Alabama, Johnny Cash, Charlie Daniels, Merle Haggard, George Jones, Brenda Lee, Loretta Lynn, Willie Nelson, The Oak Ridge Boys, Dolly Parton, Charlie Pride, Tex Ritter, Conway Twitty, Porter Wagoner, Hank Williams, Sr.** and **Bob Wills**, among others.

Tex Ritter Award

Beer For My Horses been chosen as the recipient of the Tex Ritter Award, which is given to a movie released and/or receiving major exposure during the preceding calendar year, featuring or utilizing country music.

Beer For My Horses (August 2008, produced by Showdog Productions, in conjunction with CMT Films – executive producers: Leslie Belzberg, T.K. Kimbrell, and Jeff Yapp; producers: Toby Keith and Donald Zuckerman; director: Michael Salomon) is an action-packed movie starring **Toby Keith** and comedian **Rodney Carrington**. Keith plays Joe Bill "Rack" Racklin, a rogue Oklahoma deputy sheriff who has just watched another girlfriend pack up and drive out of his life when an old flame, Annie (Claire Forlani, *CSI: NY*) moves back home from the big city—but their reunion is interrupted when Annie is kidnapped. Operating against orders and racing against time, Rack hits the road with deputy and best friend Lonnie (Carrington) for a raucous road trip across state lines to rescue the love of his life. The film features appearances by Emmy winner **Tom Skerritt**, rock star **Ted Nugent** and music legend **Willie Nelson**.

Past recipients of the Tex Ritter Award include *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *O'Brother, Where Art Thou*, *Sweet Dreams* and *Walk the Line*, among others.

Mae Boren Axton Award

David Young has been chosen as the recipient of the Mae Boren Axton Award, which is given in recognition of years of dedication and service by an outstanding individual to the Academy of Country Music.

Young has been with the Academy of Country Music in various positions for 20 years. Most recently as senior director of operations, his responsibilities have included managing the office and all logistics for the Academy. Additionally, Young has been an essential part of making the ACM Awards run smoothly by overseeing various show-related areas including credentialing, hotel reservations, ground transportation, on-location catering and ACM in-house production for the New Artists Show and the All-Star Jam. During his tenure, he has overseen logistics for additional ACM events including the Celebrity Golf Classic and has managed office technology, coordinating volunteers and interns, and worked as a liaison with Dick Clark Productions. Young joined the Academy as a receptionist in 1989 and was quickly promoted to executive assistant for the former executive director of the Academy, Fran Boyd, who retired in 2002. Young's enthusiasm, work ethic and spirit eventually propelled him to senior director, a position in which he made an integral impact on the Academy's growth and future.

Past recipients of the Mae Boren Axton Award include **Jack Lameier, Marge Meoli, Ray Pilzak, Gaynelle Pitts, and Gene Weed.**

The winners of the MBI and Industry Awards are voted based on Academy of Country Music ballots in their respected category. Honorees included:

Winners of the MBI (Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist) categories:

- **Chuck Ainlay** – Audio Engineer of the Year
- **Tony Brown** – Producer of the Year
- **Tom Bukovac** – Top Guitarist of the Year
- **Eric Darken (Tied)** - Top Specialty Instrument(s) Player of the Year
- **Dan Dugmore** – Top Steel Guitar Player of the Year
- **Aubrey Haynie** – Top Fiddle Player of the Year
- **Jelly Roll Johnson (Tied)** – Top Specialty Instrument(s) Player of the Year
- **Greg Morrow** – Top Percussionist/Drummer of the Year
- **Gordon Mote** – Top Piano/Keyboard Player of the Year
- **Glenn Worf** – Top Bass Player of the Year

Winners of the Industry Awards categories:

- **Fran Romeo, Romeo Entertainment** – Don Romeo Talent Buyer of the Year
- **Louis Messina, The Messina Group** – Promoter of the Year
- **Joe's Bar (Chicago, IL)** – Nightclub of the Year
- **The Ryman Auditorium (Nashville, TN)** – Venue of the Year
- **Turning Stone Casino (Verona, NY)** – Casino of the Year

About the Academy of Country Music

Founded in 1964, the **ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC** is an artist and industry-driven organization, providing the financial resources to ensure the on-going philanthropic work of **ACM Lifting Lives**, the charitable arm of the Academy which works to improve lives through music. The Academy is comprised of more than 3,800 professional members and more than 180,000 associate members and is headquartered in Encino, Calif. For more information, log onto www.acmliftinglives.org or www.acmcountry.com.

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