

The Renaissance

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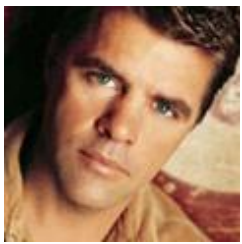
Tracy Byrd

It seems unlikely that a stop to a simple mall recording studio could bring fame and fortune but, for Tracy Byrd, that's all it took. With the encouragement from a friend, Tracy recorded a cover of Hank Williams' hit, "Your Cheatin' Heart." The owner of the store was so impressed that he entered

Byrd into a talent contest. The rest is history. By 1992, Byrd was signed to MCA records.

Born December 17, 1966 in Vudor, Texas, Byrd has had more than 30 hit singles, 11 additional Top Ten Hits, 9 studio albums, 2 greatest hits albums, 4 gold certifications and 1 double platinum certification. But Byrd doesn't spend all of his time on stage, he also donates his time as a spokesperson for The Special Olympics and helps raise money for The March of Dimes, The Tracy Byrd Hyperbaric Medicine and Wound Care Center at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Beaumont, and he completed the 2001 Houston Marathon with all funds going towards the Children's Miracle Network. You might also recognize Byrd from his book, *Eat Like a Byrd: The Tracy Byrd Cookbook* which "uses rubs and marinades to create memorable meals" or from his variety of rubs, spices and marinades on the shelf of your local grocery store.

<http://www.myspace.com/tracybyrd>



Richie McDonald

Many remember Richie McDonald best from his 15 years as front-man for the band Lonestar. During this time, McDonald helped write and record seven albums. He's sung backup for many great artists like Mindy McCready and Jim Brickman, and co-wrote songs with Clay Walker, The Wilkinsons, Billy Dean, Sara Evens and Heartland.

Born February 6, 1962 in Lubbock, Texas, McDonald's solo career has seen him release 4 singles and two independent albums. He's also appeared in several music videos. While with Lonestar, McDonald helped create 27 singles and 9 number 1 hits. McDonald donates his time to help St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, Feed the Children, the Minnie Pearl Cancer Center and the Children's Miracle Network. McDonald decided to leave Lonestar in 2007 in order to slow down and spend time with his wife and three kids, and credits his success in life on his faith: "Having faith gets you through hard times," he says. "It gives you something to believe in and I feel like that's what has got me through all these years. My faith has gotten me through everything."

<http://www.myspace.com/richiemcdonald>



Tracy Lawrence

For an ironworker with his hands in phone sales, Tracy Lawrence has come a long way. Early in his music career, he had to work several jobs before breaking into the music business. While playing talent shows to

survive, he began working with Wanda Collier, a music publisher, doing some shows and co-writing some songs, while learning his way around the music scene in Nashville. He had a gig at the Bluebird Cafe and met Wayne Edwards, who became his manager. In 1991, Lawrence signed with Atlantic Records.

Born January 27, 1968 in Atlanta, Texas, Lawrence has released more than 30 hit singles, 8 number one singles, 9 studio albums, 3 compilations, a live album, a Christmas album and his own label – "Rocky Comfort Records." Lawrence donates time to play for our soldiers, to headline Flood Relief Benefits, runs the Tracy Lawrence Foundation and even teamed up with NASCAR to help hurricane pets, as well as many others. His Epsilon Kappa chapter of the Sigma Pi Fraternity would be proud.

<http://www.myspace.com/tracylawrence>

The Country Rat Pack
October 8, 2009 8:00 PM



What is a Rat Pack?

Not to be confused with the North American bushy-tailed rodent known for building complex nests to store food, the term Rat Pack was first used in reference to a group of friends in Hollywood. It could be because the original group would often come home tattered after a night on the town; because, like a pack of rats, the original group was resistant to new members joining, or just because it sounded as cool as the original members – regardless, The Rat Pack will always be remembered.



According to Stephen Bogart, the original Rat Pack initially centered around Humphrey Bogart, and consisted of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, and Joey Bishop. And while the group was typically seen as a “Men Only” club, there were several females included in their ranks: Shirley MaClaine, Lauren Bacall, Angie Dickinson, Marilyn Monroe and Judy Garland. Others were added, but we’ll always remember the original crews.

The Rat Pack made a well received revival in 1987: Davis opened the show, followed by Martin and then Sinatra. In 1989, a

performance called *The Ultimate Event* was recorded in Detroit and then was shown on Showtime the following year as a tribute to the recently deceased Davis. Currently, Rat Pack movies are gaining popularity with many celebrities playing members from the original pack. One such film was the remake of the popular *Ocean’s 11* starring George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Don Cheadle, Andy Garcia, Julia Roberts, Bernie Mac and Carl Reiner. Rat Pack tribute shows are very common and can be found on the Vegas Strip.

Rat Pack Films

Some Came Running (1958) (Sinatra, Martin, MaClaine)

Never So Few (1959) (Sinatra, Lawford)

Ocean’s Eleven (1960) (Sinatra, Martin, Davis, Lawford, Bishop)

Sergeants 3 (1962) (Sinatra, Martin, Davis, Lawford, Bishop)

4 for Texas (1963) (Sinatra, Martin)

Robin and the Seven Hoods (1964) (Sinatra, Martin, Davis)

Marriage on the Rocks (1965) (Sinatra, Martin)

Texas Across the River (1966) (Martin, Bishop)

Since the original Rat Pack consisted of some of the most popular and “coolest” entertainers of the time, it only makes sense that Tracy Byrd, Tracy Lawrence and Richie McDonald be deemed the Country Rat Pack.

Live Recordings

1993 *The Clan in Chicago, Live at the Villa Venice, Chicago 1962*

1999 *Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr. - The Summit in Concert 1962*

2001 *Ratpack: From Vegas to St. Louis: Sands Hotel Las Vegas Sept 6th 1963; St. Louis 1965*

2001 *The Rat Pack Live at the Sands*

2003 *A Night on the Town with the Rat Pack*

2003 *The Ultimate Rat Pack Collection: Live & Swingin’*

2004 *The Rat Pack on Stage: Las Vegas/St. Louis*