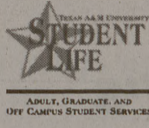




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Johnny Cash remembered

Inspirational 'Man in Black' dead at 71

By Jim Abbott
KRT CAMPUS

Somehow, it's hard to imagine that death finally managed to wrap its arms around Johnny Cash.

The Man in Black, who died Friday at 71 from complications related to diabetes, just carried himself with that kind of presence.

It all started with that voice. His sonorous baritone, quavering with a mixture of determination and vulnerability, delivered classic country songs such as "I Walk the Line," "Folsom Prison Blues" and "Cry, Cry, Cry" with cinematic scope.

His powerful personality transcended labels and generations, whether it was introducing Bob Dylan to prime-time TV audiences in the 1960s or interpreting Nine Inch Nails to establish his credibility on MTV.

"Johnny Cash is Johnny Cash, and that's the highest praise you can give a guy," legendary Sun Records founder Sam Phillips, who died earlier this summer, told the Orlando Sentinel last year. "To be distinctive."

Beyond the music, Cash's combination of an independent mind, strong religious convictions and destructive human shortcomings made him a character with competing spiritual and earthly sides.

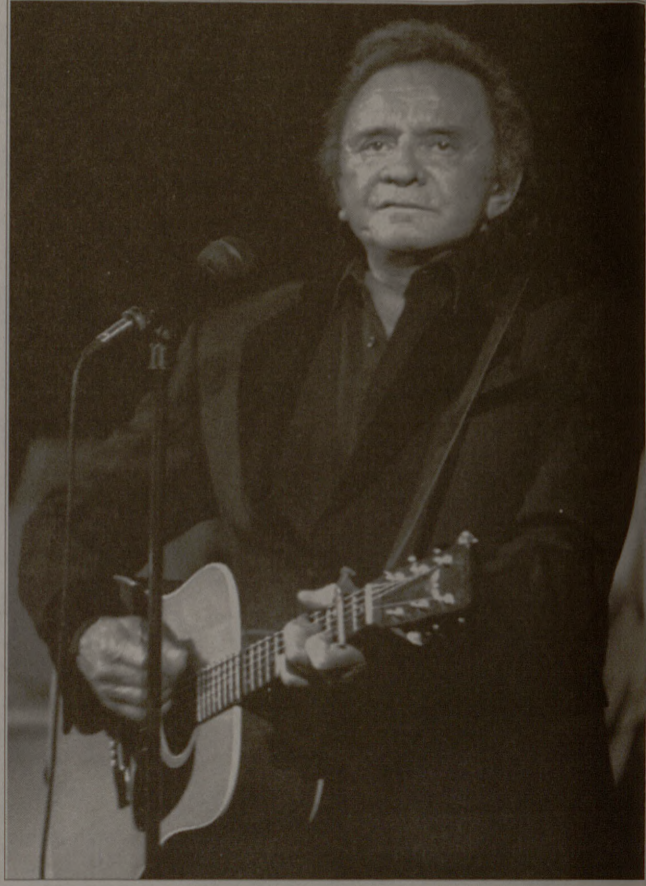
"I believe what I say, but that don't necessarily make me right," the singer told Rolling Stone in 2000. "There's nothing hypocritical about it. There is a spiritual side to me that goes real deep, but I confess right up front that I'm the biggest sinner of them all."

Like the faces on Mount Rushmore or Elvis Presley, the gravelly voiced country star is being remembered today as a uniquely American icon.

"He sang about people who were oppressed, poor people, working people, social causes," said Randy Noles, author of "Orange Blossom Boys," a historical book about "The Orange Blossom Special," one of the songs that Cash helped make famous. "He wasn't like any country-western singer I'd ever heard before."

Noles, 48, discovered Cash on the 1960s TV variety show the singer hosted on ABC. He had tuned in to see folksinger Bob Dylan, but was surprised to be mesmerized by Cash instead.

"Dylan was the coolest thing I could imagine, but when I watched the show it turned out it wasn't Bob Dylan that impressed me, it was Cash. The show was so raw and dark and real. It was very stark and he was very stark, like somebody reached through the black-and-white TV set, grabbed me by the collar and said, 'You have to watch this.'"



MICHAEL ARNSWORTH • KRT CAMPUS

Legendary singer/songwriter Johnny Cash died Friday, Sept. 12, due to complications of diabetes resulting in respiratory failure. Cash is seen here performing at the Majestic Theatre in downtown Dallas.

Cash's death comes after the loss of his second wife and soulmate June Carter Cash, who died at 73 on May 15 after a critical illness following heart valve surgery. Those close to the couple say her death was a blow for Cash.

It was June Carter Cash who saved her husband's life and career in the late 1960s, when his music was going off the tracks because of drug addiction and irrational outbursts. In a famous incident, he once kicked out the footlights on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry.

"This is the first time I've been here without my baby," Cash said. "The pain of a loss like that, it's just indescribable. But this is part of the healing process for me. And I know June is here with us, because she loved this place and she loved all of you."

He was born Feb. 26, 1932, in Kingsland, Ark. His father, Ray, was a sawmill and railway worker who moved the family to Dyess, Ark., to work as part of a federal project to reclaim swampland near the Mississippi River. The family's rugged rural existence would become the fodder for several memorable songs.

Cash sang about a childhood memory in the 1959 hit "Five Feet High and Risin'," as well as "Pickin' Time," "Christmas As I Knew It" and "Cisco Clifton's Filling Station."

By the time he was a teen, he was writing his own songs, inspired by the country music he heard on the radio. While he was in high school, he sang on the Arkansas radio station KLCN.

Later, he moved to Detroit to work briefly in an auto factory before enlisting in the military as a radio operator in Germany during the Korean War.

After the war, Cash was selling washing machines in Memphis, Tenn., when he nervously approached Phillips for an audition at Sun Records.

"You could tell he was a very internal guy," Phillips said last year. "You could tell he was a person who was very earthy in a way, yet highly religious. I don't know if a word from the Bible was spoken, but you could tell he was a person of conviction. He had this feeling about him."

"I told him, 'I know one thing, if I don't get something out of you, it will be my fault because that voice is distinctive.'"

Accompanied by the Tennessee Two, guitarists Luther Perkins and upright bassist Marshall Grant, Cash recorded classic songs with Phillips: "Cry, Cry, Cry," "Big River"; and "I Walk the Line."

In the 1960s, Cash was among the few in Nashville to openly embrace a scruffy-looking folksinger named Bob Dylan, inviting him to appear on his weekly TV variety series and singing harmony on "Girl From the North Country" on Dylan's "Nashville Skyline."

He inspired iconoclastic outlaws such as Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson to push the boundaries of the studio gloss that dominated country music until the 1970s.

Big

By Stephen...
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS pocket of Arkansas brated victory at ing "S-E-C!" an Colorado ga points it has at h and couldn't p Dame-like cor Washington Sta to the Pac-10 Co Iowa State w ing Iowa's 321-t tackle Robert G tory charge to Hawk Trophy r winner of the The 18th-ranke the Big 10 won trophy back for six years.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Cattle prices soar to heights unseen in more than a decade

HOUSTON (AP) — Cattle prices are soaring to levels not seen in at least a decade after herds were trimmed due to drought, demand grew and a mad cow disease outbreak in Canada combined to mean more bucks for the beef.

"We just kind of pinch ourselves each day," Matt Brockman, executive vice president of the Fort Worth-based Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers, said of the high prices after nearly a decade of depressed prices, decreased demand and drought. "It certainly is a welcome reprieve."

Brockman said the drought and previously low prices caused Texas cattle raisers to liqui

date their herds and even forced some to leave the business. The first signs of improvement came last year when the drought eased, demand grew and prices began to climb, he said.

"We don't get into droughts overnight and we certainly don't recover from them overnight," Brockman said, noting the drought still continues to affect some ranchers in West Texas.

Ranchers still struggling with drought "can't take advantage of these higher prices right now because there are limitations on their ability to increase production," unlike ranchers in areas of Texas where the drought has lessened, allowing cattle raisers to restock and begin to take advantage of the improved market, Brockman said.

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