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BOB BECKHAM, STEVE BUCHANAN, JACK CLEMENT, DEAN DILLON, MERLE HAGGARD, TOBY KEITH, KRIS KRISTOFFERSON, RONNIE MILSAP, PAUL MOORE, BUCK OWENS, CARRIE UNDERWOOD & RASCAL FLATTS ANNOUNCED AS OFF-CAMERA WINNERS FOR THE 49th ANNUAL ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS

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Special Award Recipients, Studio Recording Awards, Industry Awards and Songwriter of the Year Award Winners Announced

ENCINO, CA (March 21, 2014) – Today, the Academy of Country Music announced the winners of awards that will not be televised during the **49th ANNUAL ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS**, due to time constraints. The ceremony will be telecast LIVE from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas on Sunday, April 6, 2014 at 8:00 PM live ET/delayed PT on the CBS Television Network. Special Awards, Industry Awards, Studio Recording Awards and Songwriter of the Year honorees will be feted at the **8th Annual ACM Honors** event on September 9, 2014 at the historic Ryman Auditorium in Nashville.

The Academy of Country Music Special Awards are voted on by the ACM Board of Directors and specific categories are awarded during years where the Board of Directors feels there are clear and deserving candidates. Industry Awards are voted on by all professional members of the Academy. The Studio Recording Awards (formerly known as the Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist (MBI) Awards) ballot is voted on by professional members of the Academy classified in the Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist category, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager *sub-category* (contained within the Affiliated category). The Songwriter of the Year ballot is voted on by professional members of the Academy in the following categories: Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist, Composer, Music Publisher/PRO, Record Company, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager *sub-category* (contained within the Affiliated category).

SPECIAL AWARDS

Career Achievement Award – Toby Keith and **Ronnie Milsap** have been chosen to receive the Career Achievement Award, honoring an individual artist, duo, group or multiple artist collaboration that have advanced the popularity and acceptance of country music through their endeavors in the entertainment industry in multiple areas during the preceding calendar year.

Toby Keith has been riding high ever since his 1993 debut single, "Should've Been a Cowboy." The Oklahoma native took the reins in 1999 by switching record labels and releasing the bold album, *How Do You Like Me Now?* Since that time, he's won ACM Awards for Entertainer of the Year (2002, 2003), Male Vocalist of the Year (2000, 2003), Album of the Year (2000, 2003) and Video of the Year (2003, 2011). In addition to his 20 No. 1 country singles, he's enhanced his unmistakable brand through movie roles (*Beer For My Horses*) and Toby Keith's I Love This Bar and Grill restaurants. Since 2002, Keith has performed on 11 USO tours in 21 countries, including Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan.

Ronnie Milsap brought a pop and R&B sensibility to country music in the 1970s and 1980s, even as his rich, clear voice rang true as country. Forty years ago, the North Carolina native marched to No. 1 with "Pure Love," paving the way for a total of 49 Top 10 hits on *Billboard*'s country chart. He won his first ACM Award as the 1982 Male Vocalist of the Year.

Three years later, “Lost in the Fifties (In the Still of the Night)” claimed Song of the Year. Milsap received the 2001 Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award and will release a new album in March.

Past recipients of the Career Achievement Award include **John Anderson, Vince Gill, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw, Johnny Paycheck, Carl Perkins, Reba** and **Kenny Rogers**.

Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award – Bob Beckham has been chosen to receive the Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award, honoring individuals who are pioneers in the country music genre.

Bob Beckham is remembered as a true music fan who took chances on unknown songwriters. Beckham was hired by Fred Foster at Combine Music in 1964. In time, its catalog grew to include Kris Kristofferson’s “Me and Bobby McGee,” “Sunday Morning Coming Down” and “Help Me Make It Through the Night,” as well as Chris Gantry’s “Dreams of the Everyday Housewife” and Dennis Linde’s “Burning Love.” Beckham also nurtured the talent of Larry Gatlin, Jerry Reed, Ray Stevens and many more. The Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame recognized him with the inaugural Mentor Award in 2008. Beckham died in 2013.

Past recipients of the Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award include **Alabama**, **Garth Brooks**, **Johnny Cash**, **Charlie Daniels**, **Larry Gatlin & The Gatlin Brothers**, **Merle Haggard, Emmylou Harris**, **George Jones, The Judds, Brenda Lee**, **Loretta Lynn**, **Willie Nelson**, **The Oak Ridge Boys**, **Dolly Parton**, **Charley Pride**, **Jerry Reed**, **Tex Ritter**, **Marty Robbins**, **Kenny Rogers**, **Billy Sherrill**, **Ricky Skaggs**, **Mel Tillis**, **Randy Travis**, **Conway Twitty**, **Porter Wagoner**, **Keith Whitley, Hank Williams**, **Hank Williams Jr.**, **Bob Wills** and **Dwight Yoakam**, among others.

Crystal Milestone Award – As previously announced, **Merle Haggard** has been chosen to receive the Crystal Milestone Award, which is given to an artist or industry leader to commemorate a specific, remarkable achievement.

Merle Haggard became the ACM’s first Entertainer of the Year when the award was presented for 1970. That win marked the Academy’s first Triple Crown achievement, as Haggard had already accepted the Most Promising Male Vocalist of the Year award for 1965 and the first of six Male Vocalist of the Year awards the following year. Two of his most celebrated songs have also collected Single Record and Song of the Year awards from the ACM: “Okie From Muskogee” (1969) and “Are the Good Times Really Over” (1982). A winner of the ACM Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award and Poet’s Award, Haggard joined the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1994. In 2014, he will celebrate the milestone of 50 years in country music.

Past recipients of the Crystal Milestone Award include **Jason Aldean, Garth Brooks, Kenny Chesney**, **Gayle Holcomb**, **Jennifer Nettles** and **Taylor Swift**.

Gene Weed Special Achievement Award – Carrie Underwood has been chosen to receive the Gene Weed Special Achievement Award, which acknowledges unprecedented, unique and outstanding individual achievement in country music.

Carrie Underwood represents country music with class, whether she’s dazzling viewers of NFL *Sunday Night Football* or starring in a live broadcast of *The Sound of Music*. Her Blown Away Tour traveled to London’s Royal Albert Hall, followed by extensive dates across the U.S. and Canada. Upon completing the tour, she donated $1 million to the American Red Cross for disaster relief. She continues to support her hometown of Checotah, Okla., through her C.A.T.S. Foundation. Underwood is a rare ACM Triple Crown recipient, following wins as New Female Vocalist of the Year (2005), Female Vocalist of the Year (2006, 2007, 2008) and Entertainer of the Year (2008, 2009).

Past recipients of the Gene Weed Special Achievement Award include **Garth Brooks**, **George Burns**, **Jeff Foxworthy**, **Willie Nelson, Blake Shelton** and **George Strait**.

Jim Reeves International Award – Steve Buchanan and **Rascal Flatts** have been chosen to receive the Jim Reeves International Award, which is presented to an artist for outstanding contributions to the acceptance of country music throughout the world.

Steve Buchanan strives to provide a gateway for fans around the globe to discover country music. A Tennessee native, Buchanan is the president of the Opry Entertainment Group. In that role, he has positioned the Grand Ole Opry to be viewed as a vital, world-class tourist destination that embraces contemporary and classic artists. After the Nashville flood of 2010, he led efforts to modernize the venue during its renovation. In addition, his executive producer role for ABC's *Nashville* gives insight to the inner workings of Music Row. He is currently working on mounting a Broadway show based on the long-running TV show *Hee Haw*.

Rascal Flatts carried their high-energy Live & Loud Tour to Europe in July 2013, enjoying sold-out crowds, widespread television exposure and significant digital sales. The group performed a total of seven shows across Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Along with packed houses, the trio appeared on BBC's Breakfast TV and grabbed the No. 1 spot on the UK iTunes country chart. They will return in March to Dublin and London as part of the all-star Country to Country 2014 event. Rascal Flatts will launch their Rewind Tour this spring, with dates scheduled throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Past recipients of the Jim Reeves International Award include **Garth Brooks**, **Dick Clark**, **Roy Clark**, **Merv Griffin**, **Alan Jackson, Charlie Nagatani**, **Buck Owens**, **Dolly Parton**, **Taylor Swift**, **Keith Urban**, and **Lady Antebellum,** among others.

Mae Boren Axton Award – Paul Moore 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.

Paul Moore has been an integral part of the William Morris team in Nashville for more than 35 years. He began his career there in 1978 as a secretary to the head of the office. In time, he became part of the management team for William Morris and later William Morris Endeavor. For 23 years, he was co-head of the agency's Nashville office. He remains involved in booking concert dates for WME clients at major fairs, rodeos, outdoor events and festivals, and oversees tour commitments for numerous country legends. Moore is a longtime board member for the Academy of Country Music and currently serves as Parliamentarian.

Past recipients of the Mae Boren Axton Award include **John Dorris**, **Rod Essig**, **Gayle Holcomb**, **Jack Lameier**, **Marge Meoli**, **Ray Pilzak**, **Gaynelle Pitts**, **Gene Weed**, **Tommy Wiggins** and **David Young**.

Poet's Award – Jack Clement *(awarded posthumously),* **Dean Dillon, Kris Kristofferson,** and **Buck Owens** *(awarded posthumously),* 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.

"Cowboy" **Jack Clement**'s career stretched back to Sun Records, where the Memphis native mixed 1950s recording sessions by Johnny Cash. Two of Cash's early hits were written by Clement: "Ballad of a Teenage Queen" and "Guess Things Happen That Way." A few years later in Texas, George Jones cut Clement's "A Girl I Used to Know." In Nashville, Clement opened a publishing company and signed Bob McDill, Allen Reynolds and Don Williams. Clement joined the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1973. He was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in April 2013, four months before his death.

Tennessee native **Dean Dillon** hitchhiked to Nashville to pursue a music career as a recording artist, but he found his biggest successes as a prolific songwriter. He penned hits for George Jones ("Tennessee Whiskey"), Keith Whitley ("Miami My Amy"), Toby Keith ("A Little Too Late") and Kenny Chesney ("A Lot of Things Different"). Dillon truly found his muse in George Strait, who built his legendary career on Dillon's unique songs, including his debut single "Unwound" followed by "The Chair," "Nobody in His Right Mind Would've Left Her," "It Ain't Cool to Be Crazy About You," "Ocean Front Property," "Marina Del Rey" and "If I Know Me" to name a few. He was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2002.

Kris Kristofferson emerged as a songwriting force in the 1970s. He used his widely varied experiences---from Rhodes Scholar to Army helicopter pilot to janitor at Nashville's Columbia Studios—to craft some of the most emotionally compelling story songs ever written. His composition "For the Good Times," recorded by Ray Price, received 1970 ACM Awards for Single Record and Song of the Year. In addition to solo success with "Why Me," Kristofferson's songs have been immortalized by Johnny Cash ("Sunday Morning Coming Down"), Janis Joplin ("Me and Bobbie McGee"), Ronnie

Milsap ("Please Don't Tell Me How the Story Ends") and Sammi Smith ("Help Me Make It Through the Night"). Born in Texas, Kristofferson joined the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2004 and received the ACM Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award in 2005.

Buck Owens' boisterous single "Love's Gonna Live Here" spent an astonishing 16 weeks atop the country airplay chart in 1963. He followed that composition with more original material like "My Heart Skips a Beat," "Together Again" and "I've Got a Tiger by the Tail," writing the latter with Harlan Howard. An icon in the Bakersfield, Calif., country scene, Owens received the 1965 ACM Award for Male Vocalist of the Year and his band The Buckaroos won three consecutive ACM trophies. He joined the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1996 and accepted the ACM Pioneer Award in 1988. Owens died in 2006.

Previous recipients of the Poet's Award include **Bill Anderson**, **Bobby Braddock**, **Guy Clark, Hank Cochran**, **Merle Haggard**, **Tom T. Hall**, **Harlan Howard**, **Roger Miller**, **Fred Rose**, **Don Schlitz**, **Cindy Walker** and **Hank Williams**.

INDUSTRY AWARDS

- **CASINO OF THE YEAR**: Small Capacity - Mohegan Sun Wolf Den - Uncasville, CT
  Medium Capacity - Mohegan Sun Arena – Uncasville, CT
- **NIGHTCLUB OF THE YEAR**: Billy Bob's Texas – Fort Worth, TX
- **VENUE OF THE YEAR** : Small Capacity - Austin City Limits Live at The Moody Theater – Austin, TX
  Medium Capacity - Grand Ole Opry House – Nashville, TN
  Large Capacity - Bridgestone Arena – Nashville, TN
- **DON ROMEO TALENT BUYER OF THE YEAR**: Nicole More – Neste Event Marketing
- **PROMOTER OF THE YEAR**: Brian O'Connell – Live Nation

- **STUDIO RECORDING AWARDS (FORMERLY THE MBI AWARDS)**
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- **BASS PLAYER OF THE YEAR**: Michael Rhodes
- **DRUMMER OF THE YEAR**: Shannon Forrest
- **GUITAR PLAYER OF THE YEAR**: Rob McNelley
- **PIANO/KEYBOARDS PLAYER OF THE YEAR**: Charlie Judge
- **SPECIALTY INSTRUMENT(S) PLAYER OF THE YEAR**: Bryan Sutton
- **STEEL GUITAR PLAYER OF THE YEAR**: Paul Franklin
- **AUDIO ENGINEER OF THE YEAR**: Justin Niebank
- **PRODUCER OF THE YEAR**: Dann Huff

SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR

- **SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR:** Shane McAnally

About the Academy of Country Music Awards

The 49th Academy of Country Music Awards is dedicated to honoring and showcasing the biggest names and emerging talent in the country music industry. The show is produced for television by dick clark productions and will be broadcast LIVE from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas Sunday, April 6, 2014 at 8:00 PM live ET/delayed PT on the CBS Television Network. Allen Shapiro, Mike Mahan, R.A. Clark and Barry Adelman are executive producers. Bob Romeo is executive producer for the Academy of Country Music.

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