

# CHARLIE MONK

## Toiling In Ubiquity

### PRESIDENT'S AWARD

**C**harlie Monk thinks there is just one reason he's receiving the President's Award from the Country Radio Broadcasters at this year's CRS—his age. "They're not sure I'll be around next year," he quips. "They think I'm starting to look a little paisley."

In truth, the "mayor of Music Row," as Monk is known, is receiving the honor for his service to the industry. The President's Award is given annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the marketing, production, growth and development of CRS.

#### Mayor McCheese

Industry colleagues say the award couldn't go to a more deserving individual. Monk was, after all, one of the five original founders of CRS some 38 years ago, and he has been part of planning every event since then. "If I got paid minimum wage for every [volunteer] hour I'd put into this thing I'd be a rich man," he says.

Monk, a music publisher and Sirius Satellite Radio personality who regularly refers to himself as "the beautiful and talented Charlie Monk," claims to be the only person who has worked on and attended every single CRS. He's also the longtime producer and sometime host of the CRS New Faces show.

His "Mayor" moniker was hatched in a *Country Weekly* story about him, and it has



**Tights Spot:** Monk pictured with curiously dressed Malrite head of programming John Chaffee (above) and Marie Osmond (right).

long been a source of bemusement for Nashville's real mayor, Bill Purcell. "He thinks it's fine as long as I don't go downtown," Monk says of his pretend turf war with Purcell. "He refers to me as 'the ubiquitous Charlie Monk.' I've tried to tell him 'No, I'm a Methodist.'" Rim shot.

It's jokes like that one that have made his monologue at the New Faces show an annual highlight. While sometimes cutting, with what he calls his "little barbs and put-downs," Monk says there have only been three occasions where his New Faces jokes have seriously offended anyone.

One of those incidents happened decades ago when he insulted a music journalist, who called him the Monday after the show to tell him off. Two days later, she was fired. "That proves you shouldn't mess with me," he says, laughing.

Asked for the all-time favorite of his New Faces jokes, Monk replies, "I once said Jimmy Bowen was to country music what Saddam Hussein was to world peace." He's also tickled about having once called Mike Borchetta "the Joe Isuzu of country music."

Work on his monologue is a yearlong process. And while he admits insulting people for laughs can be "treacherous," Monk picks his victims carefully, choosing those with a strongly defined personality. Many, he says, have begged him to be a punch line

in his monologue, something that's become almost a rite of passage in the country music business.

#### CRS: The Early Years

Monk says CRS started "because there was no event or organization patronizing the radio people. There was an event that WSM [Nashville] had—the disc jockey convention—but there was nothing academic about it, it was just a two-day drunk. We wanted to have an educational seminar."

In the early days of CRS, he says, there were "no goodie bags, no banners, no competing events and we probably had 95% participation in every academic seminar."

It's that academic tradition of CRS that Monk is most proud of, and as a longtime member of the CRB board he's sometimes been the one keeping the group focused on that goal when the temptation can sometimes be to



concentrate more on the moneymaking aspects of the event that ensure its future.

He recognizes there is a balance that must be achieved there. "I don't care whether it makes a penny," he says of CRS, adding, "by the same token, I want it to continue."

"I've never been concerned about growth," he continues. "Bigger is not necessarily better for me. I'd rather have fewer people learn more than more people learn less."

Monk says CRS is now "such a well-run event. It moves and shakes." Over the years of helping organize it, he says, "It didn't always come off like we planned, but I feel like it's always come off better than I expected."

Today, he says, "the ones who want to learn about radio and the impact it might have can come to this event and get their money's worth. If you just want to party, you can come and do that too."

While he's proud of the stars the seminar has drawn over the years, noting "probably without exception every major country act has been to this event," he also gets concerned when the celebrity aspects overshadow the learning.

"We've gotten so show bizzy, it's about security and entourages for these acts," he says. "We've made the stars more important than the radio people. I don't find any of them more important than the validity of helping to build country music."

"This event," he adds, "belongs to everybody." **CAC**

It's a good thing Charlie Monk has a good heart, passion for the industry, and a beautiful family. He has a terrible sense of fashion and his "sense of humor," well, let's not go there.

—**Bill Mayne**,  
903 VP/Promotion & Artist  
Development

He's a mentor, inspiration and role model. He likes to be the life of the party, but he's a very serious family man, serious Christian and serious business man.

—**David Haley**,  
Equity Sr. VP/Promotion

I often refer to Charlie Monk as the Jay Leno of country music. Whereas Jay is a national treasure, Charlie could be called a Nashville treasure. Whereas Jay is one in a million, Charlie was won in a raffle.

Seriously, his contributions have been numerous and generous and I am personally very excited about him receiving this honor.

—**Jeff Walker**,  
AristoMedia/Marco Music Group  
President

## MONK MOMENTS:

### Thoughts On Charlie From Industry Colleagues

Charlie's name has become synonymous with backstabber. I can't believe there is a person left in this business that doesn't have an axe to grind with him. (Kidding!!)

—**Royce Risser**,  
MCA VP/National Promotion

Charlie was one of a very few that called me several times a week when I was between jobs just to say hi, see what was cooking and to offer me some very good advice about life in general. He's a very good, caring man and I'm proud to say he's a friend. I'm so pleased to see him get this award. (I'm sure he'd hate for people to know that he's really a nice guy!)

—**Bill Macky**,  
Category 5 Exec. VP/National  
Promotion

The first time I saw Charlie perform his "Let us pray . . ." opening of the New Faces show, I had only been working in country radio for three weeks. When Charlie started ripping people in the industry, getting an equal amount of laughter, applause and groans, I thought, "Wow, maybe one day I'll be on Monk's list." Now I can't get off of the freakin' thing!

—**Scott Lindy**, Sirius  
Director/Country Programming

