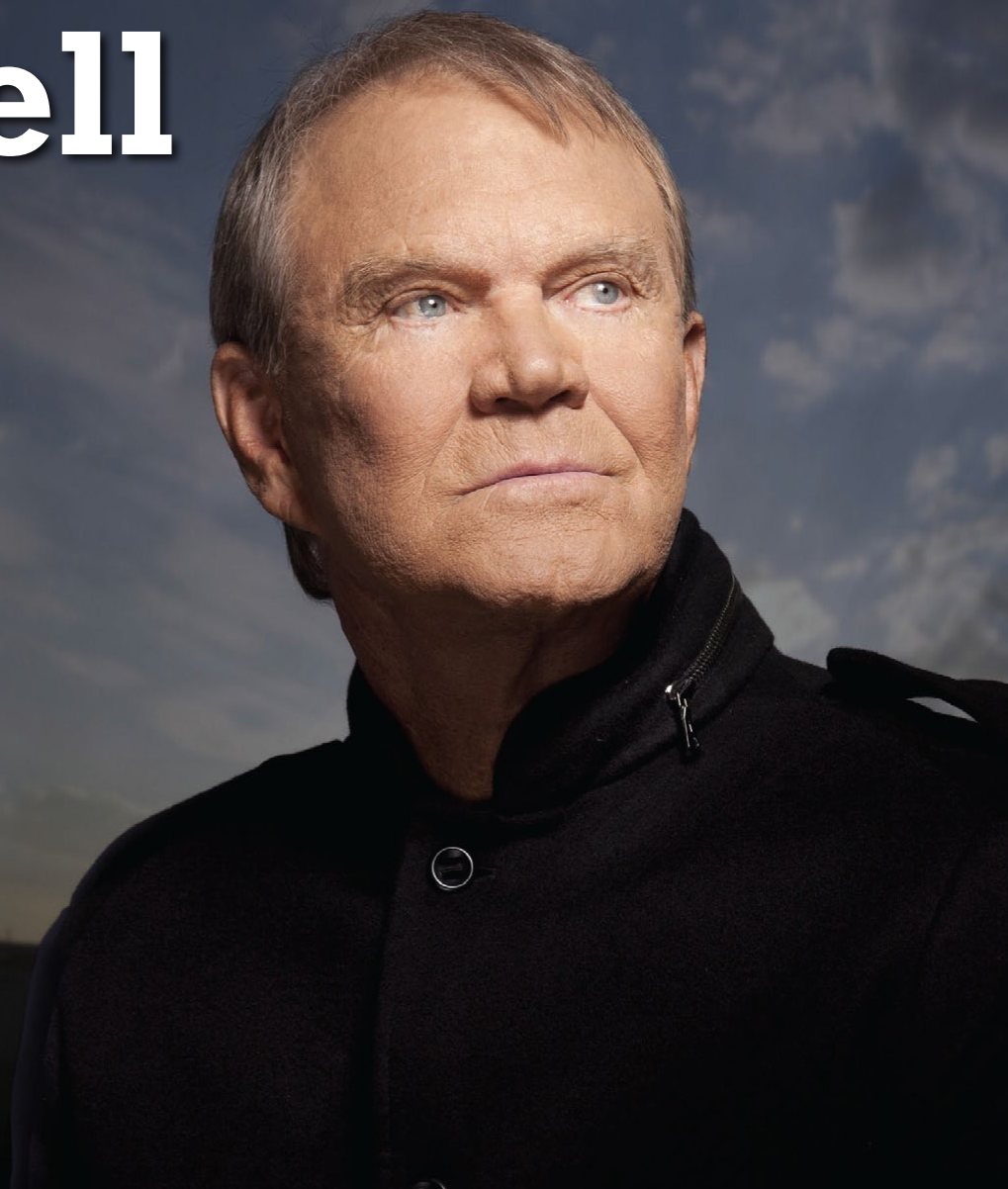


Glen CRS Career Achievement Award Campbell

Extraordinary musicianship, mass-appeal entertainment and the unique ability to interpret songs are among the hallmarks of Glen Campbell's unparalleled career. **Country Aircheck** asked three of today's most influential country artists for their personal reflections on Campbell's many contributions. **Keith Urban** and **Brad Paisley** performed a musical tribute to Campbell during last November's CMA Awards, and **Blake Shelton** joined The Band Perry alongside Campbell in a Grammy tribute earlier this month.



Brad Paisley

Glen is a good example of somebody who's so good at so many things that it's hard to properly reward any of them. He was, first and foremost, a virtuoso guitarist who began playing on Beach Boys and Frank Sinatra records – stuff that wasn't the least bit country and also not easy. Those records had chords out the wazoo, and you had to cop a completely different style for each of them.

I was born too late for the *Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour*, his network TV show where you'd see him play leads with people. God bless The Nashville Network in its day; that's where I realized what he was. Glen would come on to perform, and you'd say, "Oh, he *played* that?" He was so well-trained by playing for all those other guys as a session player.

Where you really saw Glen shine were the live shows. He could stand onstage, sing and then take a ride on the guitar – an intricate, creative, flourishing ride – before coming right back to the song. And he's still doing that today.

Because his records were always very tasteful, you'd be hard-pressed to realize this guy was the lead player. It's different than on a Vince Gill or Stevie Ray Vaughan record, where you think of a guitar being just as prominent as the vocal. Glen was a *vocalist* on records. There were some songs with leads, however. On his 1989 *Walking In The Sun* album, he re-cut Lefty Frizzell's "Gone, Gone, Gone" and played some great guitar on that.

We had a great night five or six years ago. He joined us for an encore and played two songs with me, which was a blast. I think we played "Folsom Prison Blues" and something else. He just went off, started improvising and basically schooled me.



Keith Urban

I remember the first time I met Glen, I looked at his hands and thought, "Those are the hands that played the songs I grew up listening to." I have to say, though, that Glen had a stronger vocal influence on me than anything else. My dad had Glen Campbell records, so I knew all those songs by the age of six.

There was something about his voice that just had this beautiful tonality to it. He had a kind of an angst or cry in it that really appealed to me. Because I emulated those songs early on, he probably impacted my vocal style without me really knowing it.

"Where's The Playground Susie" is one I've always loved. Oh my gosh, melodically it's just magnificent! That's another Jimmy Webb song, and Glen had the right voice for Jimmy's melodies; it was a perfect marriage. Glen can sing so many different kinds of songs, but there are certain vowel sounds and notes that, when you blend them the right way, showcase the core strength of his range.

Another lesson from Glen was the understanding that you can be a great guitar player, but if the song doesn't require a bunch of gymnastics, you don't put it in. That's the mark of a tremendously gifted musician – the instinct of what *not* to play.

I hope people continue to realize what a pioneer he was on TV by bringing people on his show who never would have received exposure if not for Glen's ability to expand country to a national stage. That's an extraordinary and commendable thing which helped our genre massively.

I often use him as a reference when people talk about what is country and what is pop. All of his songs were huge pop hits and Glen didn't wear a hat, which allowed some of those songs to find their way across musical borders. What he was doing then bore little or no resemblance to Hank Williams, but it certainly didn't make it any less country. **CAC**



Blake Shelton

Growing up, I owned the 45s for "Rhinstone Cowboy" and "Southern Nights." We listened to those so many times it was mind-numbing. As it turns out, that's what everybody across the country was doing with Glen Campbell.

Right now, I can appreciate how he was able to balance TV with being a current country artist at the same time. You can work it to your favor if you treat it right, and he's the template for that.

As a vocalist, he spanned all genres with his sound, which at times leaned as much pop as it did country. Lyrically though, the songs were definitely country. For every singer like me that he impacted with his vocals, there's another group he influenced as a guitar player.

It was an honor to be part of the Grammys earlier this month, but especially this particular tribute and performance for, with and about Glen Campbell. I know when my career is over, I'll look back at it as one of the big moments.

A few years ago, we played a show together up in Canada. One of my favorite things was watching Glen hold a note with that huge grin on his face at the same time. I don't know how somebody does that so effortlessly. After the show, he was just the warmest guy you can imagine meeting. Suddenly, here's this iconic figure standing there in white tennis shoes that he wore onstage. We loved that and wondered, "Why the hell can't we get away with that?"