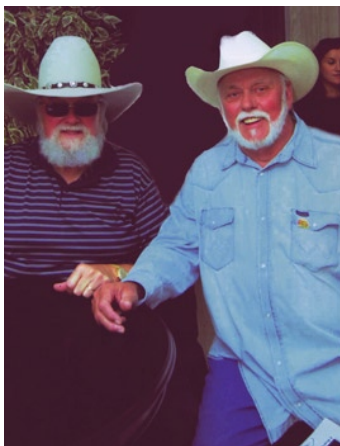


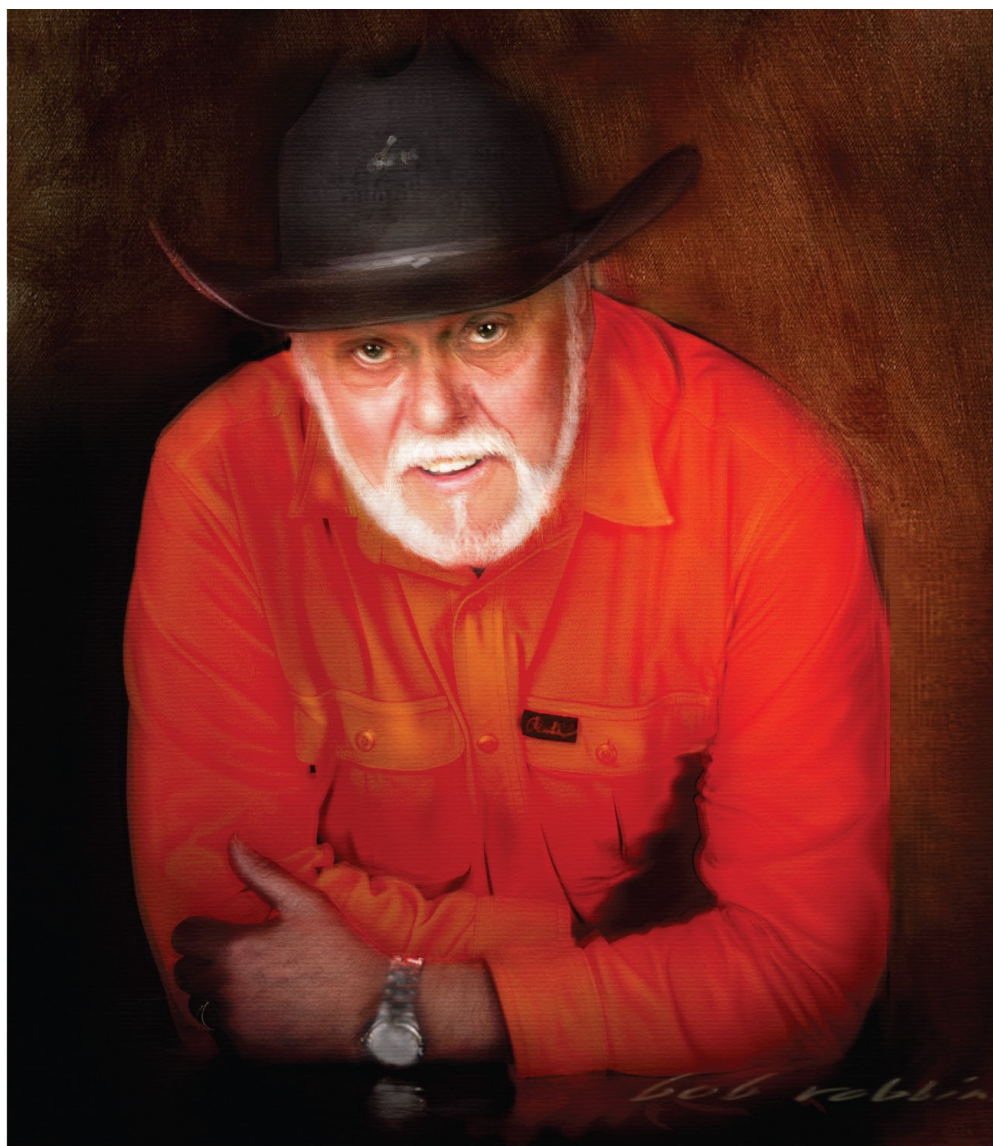


BOB ROBBINS

A Blessed Good Ole Boy



Having lost both of his parents by age 10, including his mother on Christmas Eve, Bob Robbins was adopted at 12 by an Air Force family and moved all around the world. His adoptive father was an air personality at KRMD/Shreveport, among other stations, and encouraged his son to pursue radio. The 45-year radio veteran has spent the past 29 years at KSSN/Little Rock, picking up Arkansas Citizen of the Year honors, a CMA Award and many other accolades. Robbins' life is steeped in his faith and his career can be characterized by his sense of community, commitment and compassion. While he will say he is the one who has been blessed with good fortune, Robbins' devoted generations of listeners would say they're the lucky ones.



I was about 14 when I got my first radio job, working at Armed Forces Radio at what was then Nouasseur Air Force Strategic Air Command base in Casablanca, Morocco, working for Sgt. Bill Miller. We didn't have television, but the audio acetates of *Gunsmoke* and other weekly shows would come in, and he let me start out playing those. My first music show was a polka program. As I grew older, Bill said, "Robbins,

you're just too country. You gotta learn to talk better, like a radio person." But I never did, unlike my friend Bill Cody. Boy, he's got a helluva voice. I love to listen to Cody and am so honored to be in the 2008 Hall of Fame class with him.

My mom and I used to listen to WSM-AM a whole lot and try to get the Grand Ole Opry

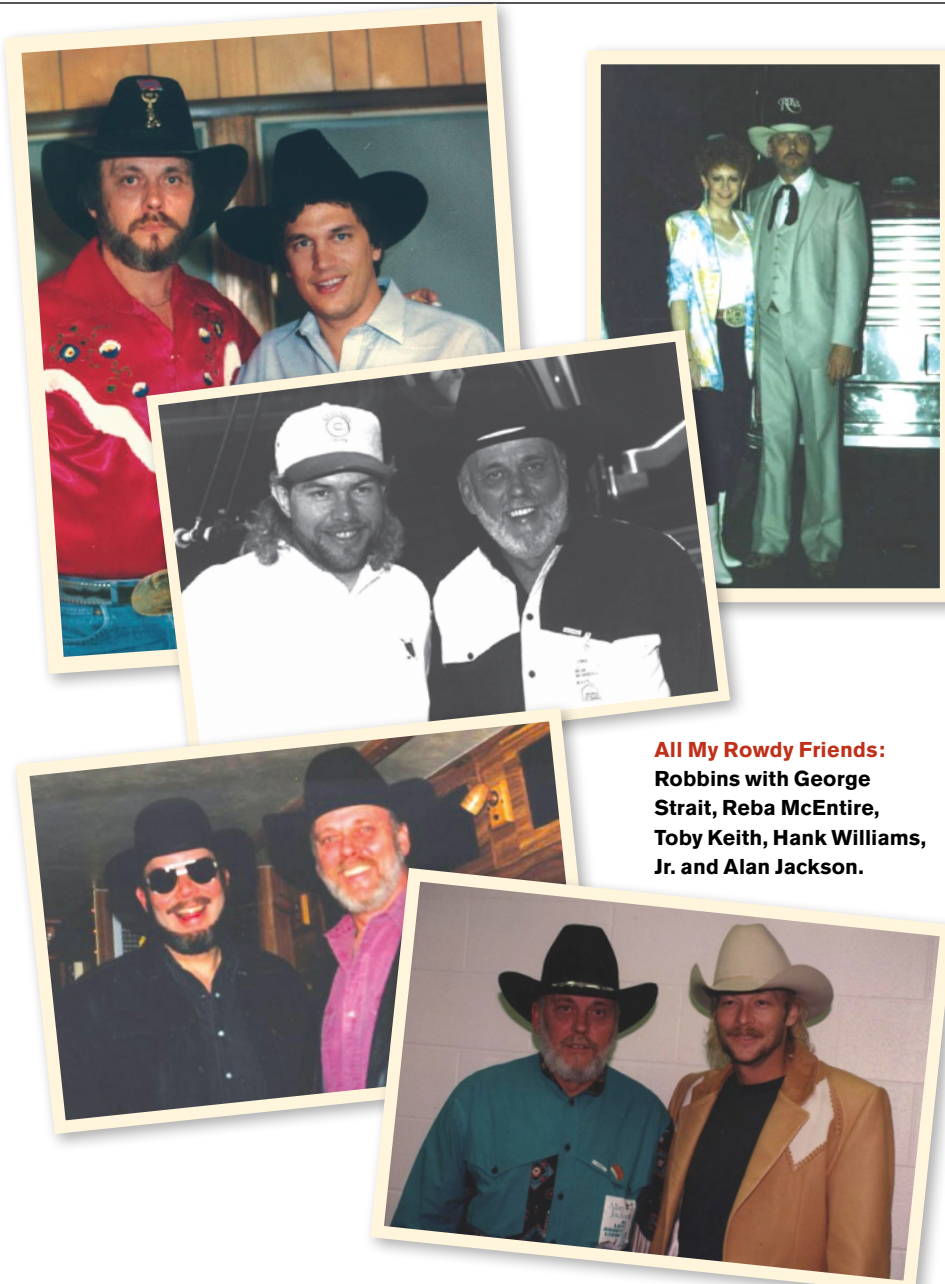
every Saturday night. I also used to listen to people like John R. and Wayne Moss, who was PD at KAAY and who I had worked for in Georgia. One morning he called and said, "You wanna come to Arkansas?" I said, "Hell, yeah!" So I came up here to 50,000-watt clear channel KAAY/Little Rock, and that's when I knew I'd be in radio for the rest of my life.

When I first moved to KSSN, my in-laws were

honest with you, and I laid that in his casket with him and thanked him for all his support.

God, I hate to tell this. Right after KSSN came on the air, I was doing news, too, which was recorded and then given to the board operator. I went in and read, "It's 2 o'clock, KSSN/Little Rock. It's 49 degrees, and here's the news." I started into this story and it was a very simple

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All My Rowdy Friends: Robbins with George Strait, Reba McEntire, Toby Keith, Hank Williams, Jr. and Alan Jackson.

not too happy that I was quitting a very good job in radio and taking less money. But it was just a move that I wanted to make ... I had that gut feeling that I've got to do this, it's Country radio — that's what I love. Of course, now they'll tell you it was the smartest, best thing I ever did in my life. I just knew we had a winning format and that we were going to do it. God has blessed us, and we did.

The happy times are when people win tickets to see someone like George Strait — to hear them get so excited about going to a show when they've never been able to see a concert before. But one of the saddest things that's ever happened to me was years ago when the newspaper had a write-in DJ popularity contest going on here in Arkansas. A charity of each DJ would benefit if that DJ won, and mine was the Special Olympics. Cessna had agreed if I won, they would bring enough airplanes in to fly the Special Olympians and their chaperones to Notre Dame for the World Olympics. The newspaper published ballots, and you'd cut them out and send them in.

There was a gentleman named Bill who would call me every day. He had had throat cancer, and when he talked it was just a whisper. He was in the hospital, but the nurses would give him newspapers and he'd fill out all the ballots and send them in. When the deadline came the newspaper scheduled a news conference to announce the winner. I found out I had won so that I could dress accordingly the next day, but was asked not to tell anybody. Bill called me the day before they made the announcement and whispered, "Bob, do you know who won? Did we do it?" I said, "Bill, I don't know, but I feel really good."

Well, Bill passed away that night and never did know we won. I cried like a baby. I had never met this man in my life, but I went to the funeral home and I took a KSSN cap with me. It's one that I had worn, and was pretty soiled, to be

name like Smith, but I said, "So and so Joe Schmidt. Schmidt?" And I went through a bunch of curse words. I took the cap out, stuck it in the eraser, hit it, it went around, stopped, I did the story again and took it to the board op. And he stuck it in, me thinking the first take had been erased. When I heard it on the monitor, I knew. I slid into the control room, but it had already happened. That's when we found out Country music and Kissin' Radio had a bunch of listeners.

Kirby Confer, who was one of the original owners, called me over into his office. I just knew I'd be fired. I walked in and said, "Kirby, I just want you to know I didn't do that on purpose." And I went through it, and Kirby was just as calm as could be. He said, "Bob I know it. We'll have to put something in the file and your file that you have done this, and I need you to write up a report and give it to Joanne," who was the business manager. Then he said, "I also want you to sit here and answer these phone calls." Two weeks later they were still calling! I went to denying it after about two days. There were only two women who complained. Everybody else said, "Hey, tell Bob he's all right. He's like us."

Garth Brooks, George Strait, Earl Thomas Conley — artists like those are so special. I'll never forget Trace Adkins the time they wouldn't add his record here years ago. He went on the air with me and after he finished he stood up — of course, he's as tall as a mountain — and said in that ol' deep voice of his, "I've done the interview with you. When the hell you gonna play my record?" If I had to pick one song that would be my favorite of all time, it'd have to be Don Williams' "Good Ole Boys Like Me," where he's talking about how "John R. and the Wolfman kept me company by the light of the radio by my bed." That's me. When you listen to that song, you hear Bob Robbins' life. CAC