

RAY PRICE

by Tamela Meredith Partridge
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For more than 50 years, Ray Price has redefined and broadened the Nashville sound with his innovative and appealing blend of country music stylings.

"For me, a great song has to be honest," Price says. "It should also be positive, bring up some kind of memory, have a lot of meaning, and tell a good story."

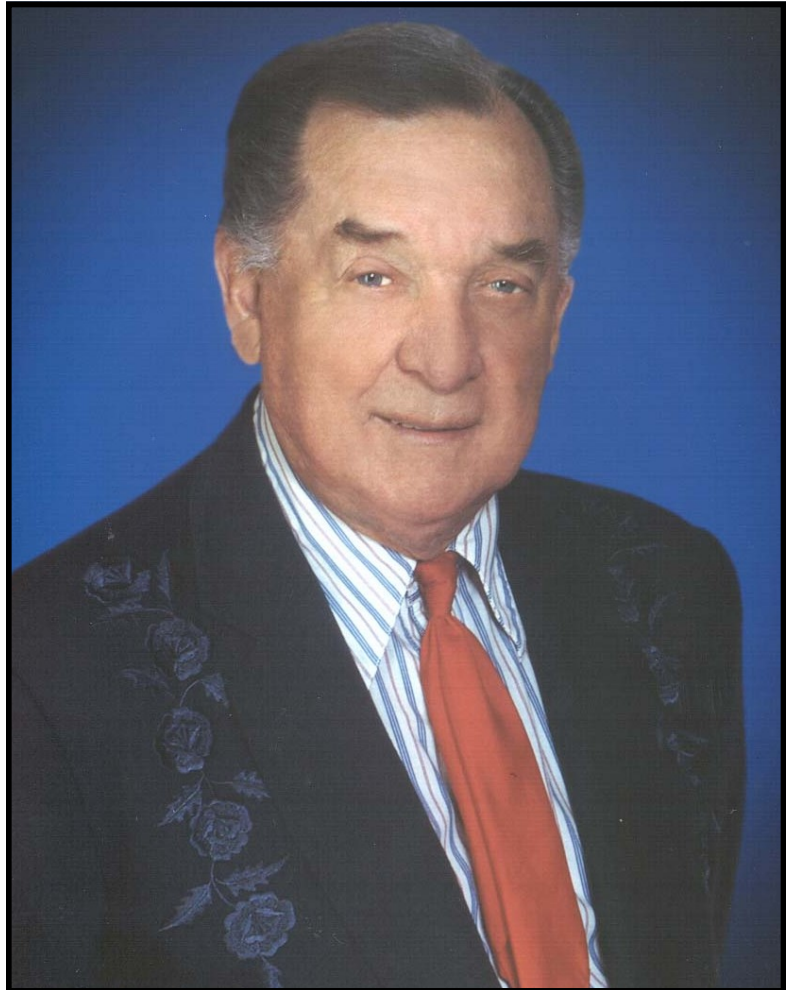
Born in Perryville, Texas, Noble Ray Price worked on his family farm and later moved to Dallas as a teenager.

After serving in the Marines during WW II, Price pursued his dream of a musical career while studying veterinary medicine at North Texas Agricultural College in Arlington, Tx.

"I was staying in a naval barracks close to the college that the government allowed us to stay in," Price says. "There was a group of boys there that played music. One day I went with the guitar man to a music publisher in Dallas to sing some songs that he was trying to get published. The music publisher was very busy that day, but he listened and asked us to come back the next day and do it again. When I returned the next day, they had a recording contract there waiting for me. That's how my music career happened. I never thought of failing or anything like that. I just figured I would surely learn enough to do something to make a good living doing what I loved."

Leaving college behind, Price moved to Nashville, Tn, where his close friend and mentor was Hank Williams Sr. Price performed many shows with Williams and also co-wrote the hit song, "Weary Blues From Waitin'" with the legendary country artist.

"Hank Williams got me on the Grand Ole Opry," Price says. "He was a great friend and a big influence on me. We were roommates for the last year of his life. All of the guys back in those days when I was on the Grand Ole Opry -- Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubbs and Red Foley -- were really kind, understanding, and helped me a great deal."



Price's band, The Cherokee Cowboy's, was initially formed from the remnants of Hank Williams' band, the Drifting Cowboys. The Cherokee Cowboys became a training ground for numerous country superstars, such as Willie Nelson, Roger Miller, Johnny Paycheck, Darrell McCall, Buddy Emmons, and Johnny Bush.

The eight-time CMA Entertainer of the Year crossed over to the pop chart thirteen times by creatively melding the string arrangements of pop, emotion of classic country and the haunting trademark sound of the Ray Price shuffle beat.

"I've got an awfully big pop following out there from some of the songs I've had," Price says. "The older fans seem to keep coming back, and I add new ones all the time."

The '96 Country Music Hall of Famer has charted over 80 country singles, including the No. 1 hits, "Crazy Arms," "City Lights," "My Shoes Keep Walking Back To You," "Won't Mention It Again," and "She's Got To Be A Saint."

"Being a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame means I was recognized for all the years of hard work I have put into my career," Price says. "I was lucky, because there were other singers who have not gotten into it so far, but I'm sure they will."

Price and country legend, Willie Nelson, recently recorded a Grammy nominated duet album, "Run That By Me One More Time." The eleven song project includes a Floyd Tillman classic, "I'll Keep on Loving You," a Bob Wills gem, "Deep Water," and a couple of Willie penned tunes that Price rendered hits, "I Just Destroyed the World," and "I'm Still Not Over You."

"This is the second album that Willie and I have recorded together," Price says. "It's a duet collection of our favorite country songs with a few new tunes as well."

Price's current solo album, "Time," includes such choice selections as "You Just Don't Love Me Anymore," "If It's All the Same to You," and a duet with country artist, Vince Gill, "What If I Say Goodbye."

For Price, 78, leaving behind a legacy of remaining true to his music and career is what it's all about.

"Being a singer is an answer to a prayer that I had when I was a little boy," Price says. "I think it's what I was born to do. There have been a lot of valleys and peaks, but that is to be expected in any business. And even though I never got rich from doing the right thing for myself musically, I hope my career says that you don't have to go for the money if you want to win the show."