

## LORETTA LYNN

by Tamela Meredith Partridge  
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Loretta Lynn may have been born a "Coal Miner's Daughter" in Butcher Holler, Ky., but in Nashville, Tn. she's the reigning Queen of Country.

"I haven't changed with the times," Lynn says, "the times have followed me. When I came to Nashville, there was a lot of pop. No one was as country as me. It's the same thing today. I've just been waitin' 'til it comes around again."

Loretta Lynn will perform at The Little Nashville Opry on Saturday, August 20 at 7 p.m.



Loretta Lynn's story of success is a classic American folk tale that still has numerous pages to be written.

Loretta, the second of eight children born to Clara and Ted Webb, grew up in a log cabin in the Kentucky mountains. Her father supported the family during the Depression Era by working in the cornfields during the day and at the Van Lear coal mine by night.

Loretta married Oliver Lynn (a.k.a. "Doo," "Doolittle," or "Mooney" for moonshine) by age 14. The couple moved to Washington, where she took care of the house -- three rooms, an outhouse, no running water -- and their children (four of her six children were born before she was 21). She even worked for a time in a restaurant.

"I made fifty cents an hour breaking dishes," Lynn says.

Lynn's entry into country music began when Doo gave her a \$17 guitar for her 26th birthday.

"After Doo heard me sing the babies to sleep," Lynn says, "he got me a guitar and swore that I could sing better than what was on the radio."

Local bands and radio shows led to Lynn forming her own group and playing throughout the Northwest. In 1960, a tiny Vancouver label by the name of Zero Records released her debut single, "I'm A Honky Tonk Girl."

"We did that with two tape recorders," Lynn says. "I was the first girl in country music to sing her own harmony."

Doo mailed copies of "I'm A Honky Tonk Girl" to radio stations nationwide and the couple traveled 80,000 miles promoting the single while surviving on bologna and cheese-and-crackers.

"I'm A Honky Tonk Girl" went to #14 on the Billboard singles chart, earning the feisty vocalist a Decca recording contract (later MCA).

Lynn's string of #1 hits throughout her 45-year career include "One's On The Way," "She's Got You," and "Out Of My Head And Back In My Bed."

Lynn is a pioneer among women songwriters and became the first female recording artist to be inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. In 1966 alone, Lynn wrote "You Ain't Woman Enough To Take My Man" and co-wrote "Don't Come Home A Drinkin' (With Lovin' On Your Mind)."

"I may be country but I'm a little bit smart too," Lynn says with a smile. "You can't wait for someone else to write you a hit. I just got off my butt and went to work."

The straight-shooting songstress wrote from the heart, and the hip, on such controversial songs as "Fist City" and "The Pill."

"Everyone was taking it (the pill) but me and I have the kids to prove it," Lynn says. "I write about everyday life and that's what got me into so much trouble. Women weren't supposed to talk about those things in public."

Besides her solo career, Lynn also teamed with Conway Twitty to record such #1 duets as "After The Fire Is Gone," "Lead Me On," "Louisiana Woman, Mississippi Man," "As Soon As I Hang Up The Phone" and "Feelins'."

Lynn was out of the spotlight during the '90's due to caring for her ailing husband, Doo, and after he died in '96, grieving his loss. In her 2000 album, "Still Country," Lynn wrote the song, "I Can't Hear The Music," as a tribute to Doo.

"Doo was very sick, and I didn't know he couldn't hear," Lynn says. "One day I was playing something for him, and he said, 'I can't hear the music anymore.'"

Lynn's latest project, "Van Lear Rose," was released in April, 2004, and soared up the charts to become a No.2 Billboard country album. Lynn penned all thirteen songs for the Grammy award-winning album, reminding the world yet again of her power as a songwriter and vocalist.

"Not half bad for this ol' Kentucky girl, I guess," Lynn says in the lyrics of "The Story of My Life," the new album's closing track. "Here's the story of my life. Listen close, I'll tell it twice."

Lynn also earned the prestigious '05 Country Music Television Johnny Cash Visionary Award. In tribute of Johnny Cash's important impact on the music world, CMT's Johnny Cash Visionary Award recognizes an artist's extraordinary musical vision, innovative and groundbreaking music videos, and pioneering initiatives in entertainment.

"At an age when most women seem to slow down, it seems Loretta is just getting started," said country artist, Reba McEntire, while introducing Lynn at the CMT Awards in April. "Loretta has proven that she still has much to say, and no one else can say it like her."

Lynn continues to be active in several projects. As an entertainer, she performs over 90 concert dates a year. As a creative artist, she writes songs and recently released a second autobiography, "Still Woman Enough." As a matriarch, she celebrates her family of six children (one is deceased) and twenty-nine grandchildren. As a businesswoman, she operates a 18,000 square-foot Coal Miner's Daughter Museum at her dude ranch in Hurricane Mills, Tn.

"Working keeps you young," Lynn says. "I ain't ever gonna stop, and when I do, it's gonna be right on stage. That'll be it."