

# From Here...To the Top!

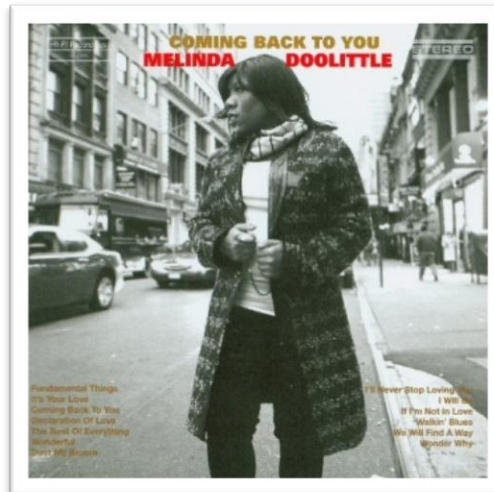
## Belmont Music Alumni

*An exhibit of some of the many notable people who attended or supported Belmont's Music and CEMB programs. The exhibit was originally on display in Bunch Library August 7-September 28, 2012 with a satellite display of objects and archival materials in the third floor display case. It was curated and with text by Graduate Student Elizabeth Pirtle under the direction of Music Librarian Lina Terjesen.*

**Melinda Doolittle** was born October 6, 1977 in St. Louis, MO. She attended Belmont as a commercial music major, graduating in 1999. After college, she made a career as a backup singer in Nashville for artists such as Michael McDonald, Aretha Franklin, and Aaron Neville. In 2007, she competed in Season Six of the television show *American Idol* and finished third. Since *Idol*, she released her first album in 2009 which has since sold over 53,000 copies. She is currently working on her second album as well as contributing time to various charities including Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, Ronald McDonald House, and the League. She also works extensively with Malaria No More and has traveled to Africa both as a presidential delegate and once with former first lady Laura Bush, bringing awareness to the disease.

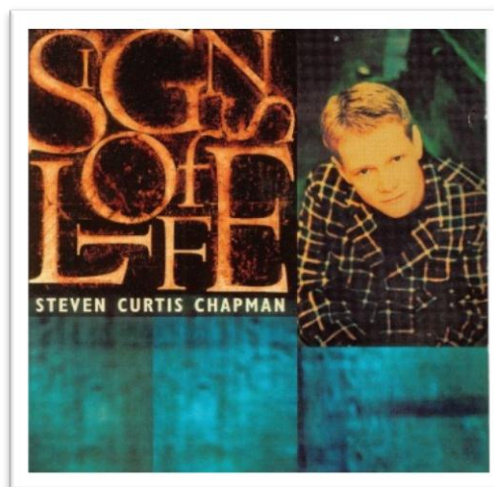


Melinda Doolittle in 2007 at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center hosting  
"Christmas at Belmont" (DVD 2665)

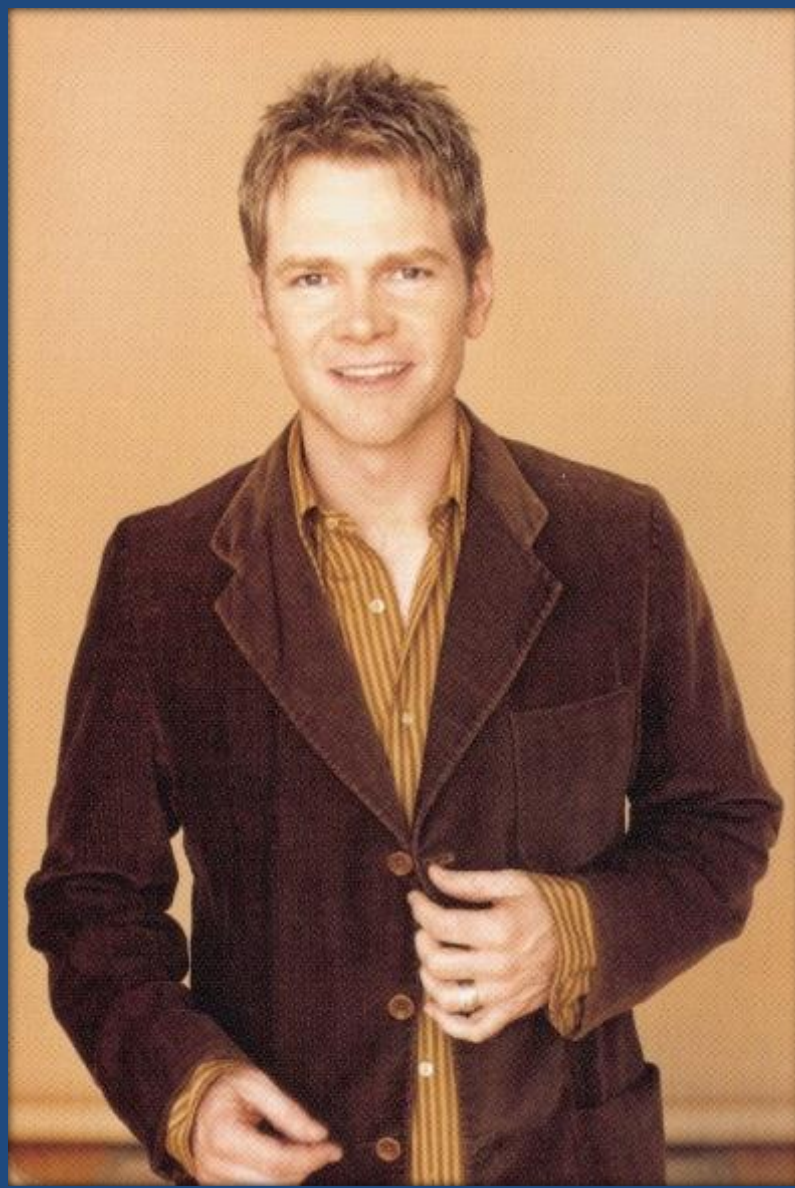


*Melinda Doolittle's first album, released February 3, 2009 on Hi Fi Recordings and produced by Mike Mangini. (CD 12015)*

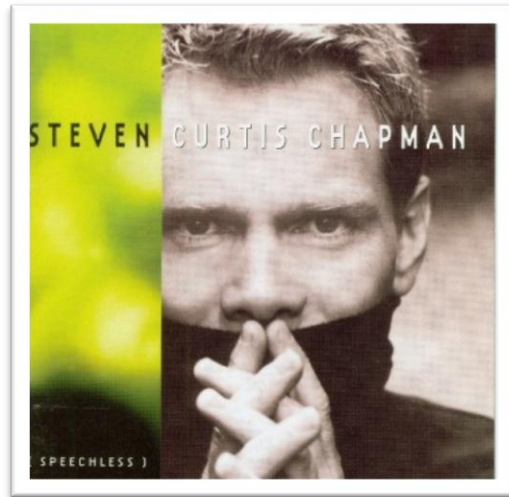
**Steven Curtis Chapman** was born November 21, 1962 in Paducah, KY. In the 1980s he moved to Nashville to pursue a career in music where he briefly attended Belmont. He soon signed with Sparrow Records, releasing his first album in 1987. Since then, Chapman has released more than 20 albums with eight becoming RIAA-certified Gold or Platinum records. He is the recipient of five Grammy Awards and 56 Gospel Music Association Dove Awards (eight of those being Artist of the Year). Longtime advocates of international adoption, Chapman and his wife, Mary Beth, adopted three daughters from China and have three biological children as well. The couple resides in Franklin, TN.



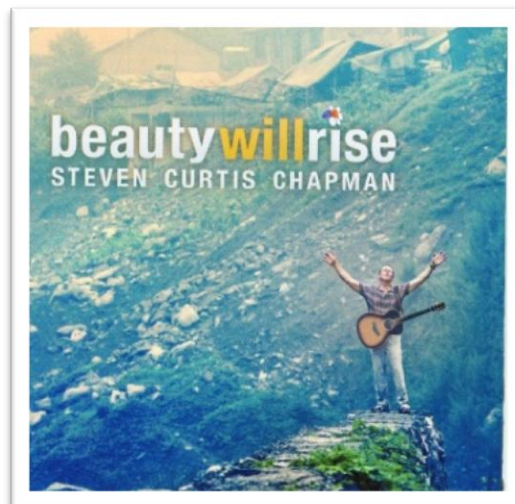
*Steven Curtis Chapman's ninth studio album, released September 3, 1996 on Sparrow Records. (CD 4404)*



*The cover photo of his 2004 songbook The Best of Steven Curtis Chapman.*



*Steven Curtis Chapman's eleventh studio album, released June 15, 1999 on Sparrow Records (CD 5401)*



*Steven Curtis Chapman's twentieth album, released November 3, 2009 on Sparrow Records. (CD 12016)*

**Sarah Colley** was born October 25, 1912 in Centerville, TN and died March 4, 1996. She graduated from Ward-Belmont College (now Belmont University) in 1932 with a degree in theatre studies with a concentration in dance. After graduation, she traveled as a dramatic coach with a theatre group. It was during this time that she would develop the small-town girl character Minnie Pearl, whom she would



portray on the Grand Ole Opry stage from 1940 to 1991 and on the television show *Hee Haw* from 1969 to 1991. She was the author of six books and released numerous albums. She was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1975 and has been a great influence on many country music singers and comedians, including Vince Gill, Amy Grant, Jeff Foxworthy, Jerry Clower, and Larry the Cable Guy. As a breast cancer survivor, she became the spokesperson for the Nashville medical center at which she was treated. The center later became known as the Sarah Cannon Cancer Center and now includes several hospitals in the middle Tennessee and southern Kentucky region. The Minnie Pearl Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit group, was founded in her name to help fund breast cancer research. She was married to Army Air Corps fighter pilot, Henry R. Cannon.



*1940s photo of Minnie Pearl featured in the book A Shot in the Dark: Making Records in Nashville.*



*Minnie Pearl with Red Foley Featured in Red Foley  
Old Shep by Cary Ginell.*



*Minnie Pearl was a regular feature on the television  
show Hee Haw. (DVD 1680)*



*Photo of Minnie Pearl in her book, Minnie Pearl's Diary.*



*Cooking was one of Minnie Pearl's favorite hobbies, as shown in her book Minnie Pearl Cooks.*

**Frank Rogers** was born in Florence, SC. He attended Belmont as a music business major, graduating in 1994. While at Belmont, he met friend and future collaborator Brad Paisley. After graduation, Rogers worked full-time for EMI Music Publishing and in 1999, along with Paisley and Chris DuBois, founded Sea Gayle Music Publishing. Since 1999, working as a record producer, songwriter, and session musician, Rogers has produced a total of 24 No.1 hits for several country music singers including Trace Adkins, Brad Paisley, Josh Turner, and Darius Rucker. He is the recipient of five CMA Awards and has been named Billboard Magazine's No.1 Hot Country Producer Award from 2006-2010 and Music Row Magazine's Producer of the Year in 2005, 2007, 2008, and 2009. His songwriting credits include three No.1 hits. He is the father of two children and resides in Nashville.



*Frank Rogers featured on [www.bebelmont.com](http://www.bebelmont.com).*



**Stephen Gause** was born in Columbia, SC in 1975. He attended Belmont from 1993 to 1997, graduating with a degree in commercial music with an emphasis in performance and production/engineering. Since graduation, he has toured with artists such as Jars of Clay, Derek Webb, Sandra McCracken, Steven Curtis Chapman, Michael W. Smith, Ginny Owens and Silers Bald as a monitor engineer, FOH engineer, tech and/or road manager. He toured as an artist exclusively from 1997 to 2001 and has released two solo projects. He currently lives in Nashville with his wife and twin daughters, working as a professional producer, songwriter, engineer, and mixer.

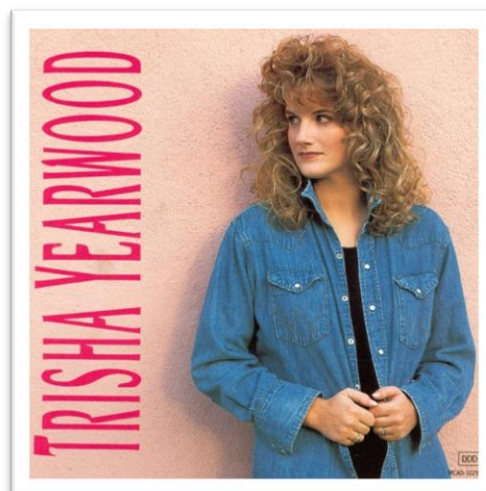


[www.myspace.com/stephengause](http://www.myspace.com/stephengause)

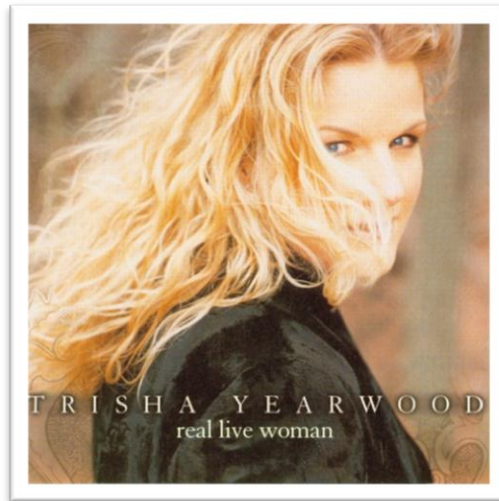
**Trisha Yearwood** was born September 19, 1964 in Monticello, GA. She graduated with a degree in business administration from Belmont in 1987. She signed with MCA Records in 1990 with her debut single reaching No.1 on the Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart in 1991. Since then she has had nine No.1 hits, received three Grammy Awards, and two CMA Awards. She has performed at the Olympic Summer Games in Atlanta, at the White House during President Bill Clinton's inauguration, and in Italy with Luciano Pavarotti at the Maestro's request. In addition to singing, Yearwood donates her time as a philanthropist with Habitat for Humanity and the Make-a-Wish Foundation. Recently, she has turned to cooking, her favorite hobby. Her second cookbook *Homecoming with Trisha Yearwood* remained on the NY Times Bestseller list for six weeks, and she recently joined the Food Network cast for her own show entitled "Trisha's Southern Kitchen." She is married to country singer Garth Brooks.



*Trisha Yearwood, photo by Big Machine Records. [www.gactv.com](http://www.gactv.com)*



*Trisha Yearwood's debut album, released July 2, 1991 on MCA Records and produced by Garth Fundis. (CD 1015)*



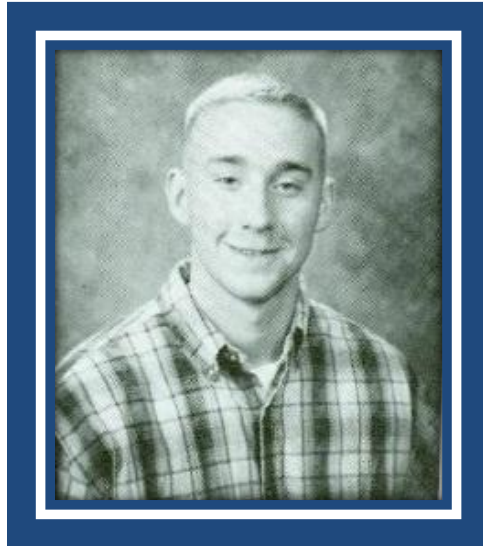
*Trisha Yearwood's ninth album, released March 28, 2000 on MCA Nashville produced by Garth Fundis and Trisha Yearwood. (CD 6366)*



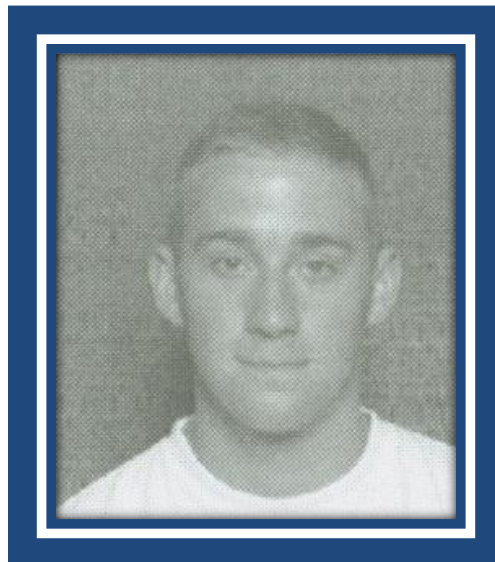
*Trisha Yearwood's tenth studio album, released June 5, 2001 on MCA Nashville produced by Mark Wright and Trisha Yearwood. (CD 7044)*

Songwriter **Ashley Gorley** was born in Danville, KY. He graduated from Belmont in 1999 from the College of Entertainment and Music Business. In 2001, he signed with Combustion Music Publishing and has since co-written over 100 songs by 50 artists including Carrie Underwood, Brad Paisley, Trace

Adkins, and Darius Rucker. He was the 2009 recipient of ASCAP's Songwriter of the Year Award and has been nominated for two Grammy Awards.



*Ashley Gorley, freshman class photo, 1996 Tower.*

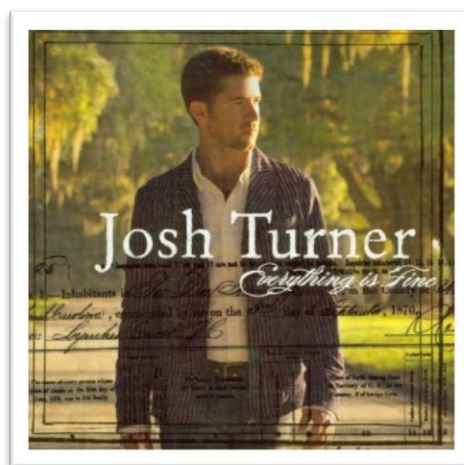


*Ashley Gorley, senior class photo, 1998-1999  
Student Directory.*

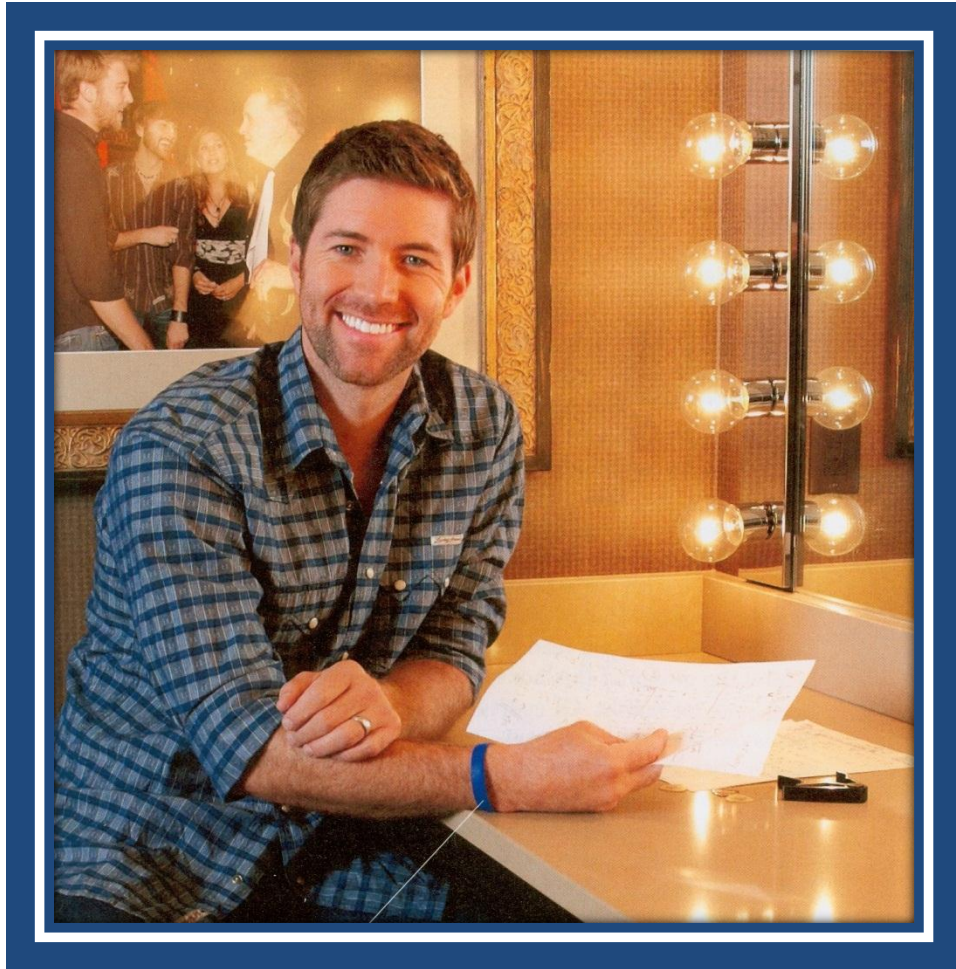




**Josh Turner** was born November 20, 1977 in Hannah, SC. After high school, he moved to Nashville and graduated from Belmont in 2001. Shortly afterward, he made his debut at the Grand Ole Opry and signed with MCA Nashville Records in 2003. He has since charted ten times on the Billboard country singles charts, with all but one of his singles reaching Top 40 or higher. He was nominated for two Grammy Awards in 2006 and for numerous CMA Awards between 2004 and 2007. Turner was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2007, becoming the second youngest member, and his fifth studio album was released in 2012. He resides in Nashville with his wife, Jennifer (also a Belmont alum), and their three children.



*Josh Turner's third album, released October 30, 2007 on MCA Nashville and produced by Frank Rogers. (CD 12014)*



Josh Turner featured in the Winter 2012 edition of Cambria Style.

**Jimmy Bowen** was born November 30, 1937 in Santa Rita, NM. He began his career in 1957 as a recording artist but eventually abandoned his singing career to begin working as record producer of Reprise Records. He then began to produce hits for big-name artists like Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis, Jr. In the 1970s, Bowen moved to Nashville and over the years became president for several record labels. He has worked with country music stars including Reba McEntire, Garth Brooks, George Strait, The Oak Ridge Brothers, and Hank Williams, Jr. While in Nashville, Jimmy revolutionized the industry by introducing digital technology and modernizing the way certain instruments were recorded and mixed. After 40 years in the music industry, Bowen left Music City for Phoenix, AZ where he currently resides with his wife, Ginger.



*Jimmy Bowen with Frank Sinatra, 1964. Photo featured in the book Rough Mix by Jimmy Bowen and Jim Jerome.*



*Jimmy Bowen at the 1987 CMA Awards pictured with Bruce Hinton, Reba McEntire, Al Gore, and George Strait. Photo featured in Rough Mix by Jimmy Bowen and Jim Jerome.*

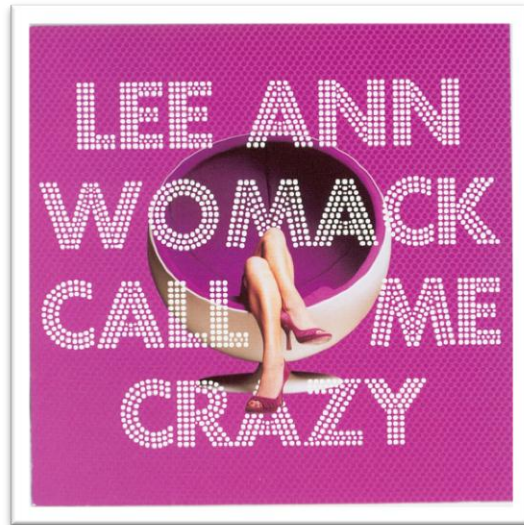


**Lee Ann Womack** was born August 19, 1966 in Jacksonville, TX. She moved to Nashville after high school to pursue a career in music, attending Belmont until 1990. She worked as a songwriter in Nashville until signing with Decca Nashville in 1996. In 2000, her third studio album *I Hope You Dance*, was met with major success. The title track reached No.1 on the Billboard Country chart for five weeks and crossed over to the Billboard Hot 100, becoming a major crossover pop hit at No.14. The song earned Womack three CMA Awards including Vocalist of the Year in 2001, a Grammy Award, three Academy of Country Music Awards, and the Billboard Music Award for Adult Contemporary Song of the Year. Between 2002 and 2005, she has received numerous awards including three CMA Awards and also a Grammy Award for collaboration with artist Willie Nelson. Throughout her career, she has released a total of six studio albums between 1997 and 2008. Her newest album is scheduled to release in 2012. Womack has two children and is married to record producer Frank Lidell.

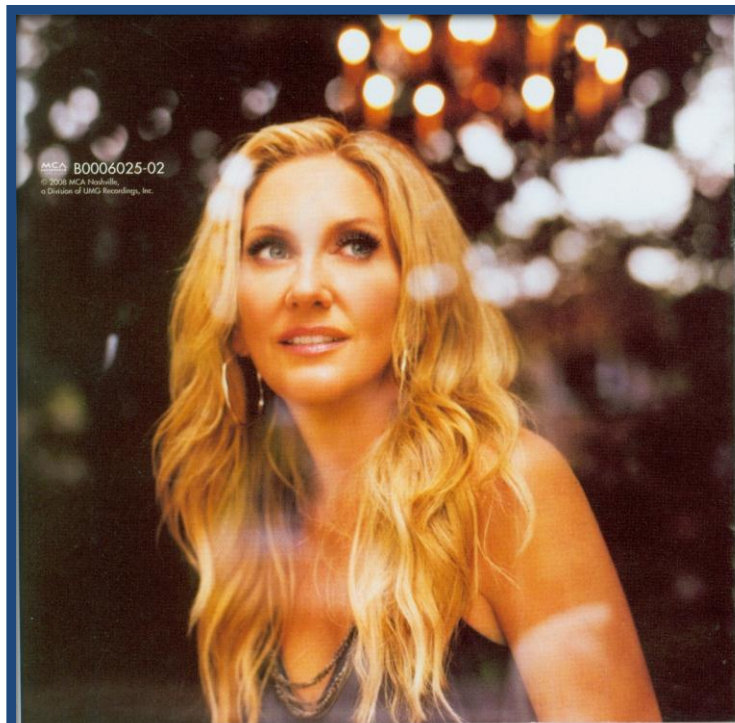


*Lee Ann Womack, photo from [www.countryuniverse.net](http://www.countryuniverse.net)*





*LeeAnn Womack's sixth studio album, released October 21, 2008 on MCA Nashville and produced by Tony Brown. (CD 11888)*

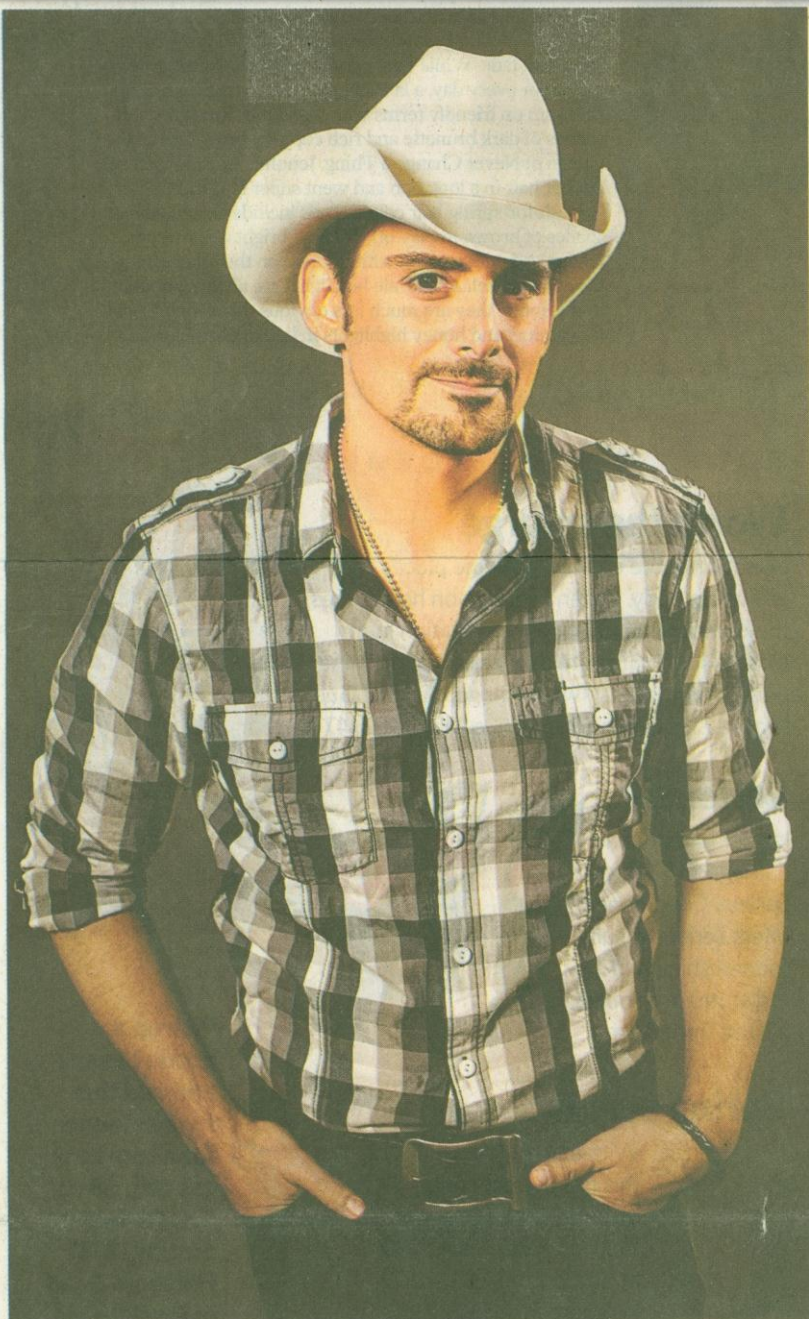


*Lee Ann Womack photo featured in her 2008 album Call Me Crazy.*



*Lee Ann Womack arrives to ring the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange in New York City on Oct. 22, 2008.  
Photo from [www.cmt.com](http://www.cmt.com).*

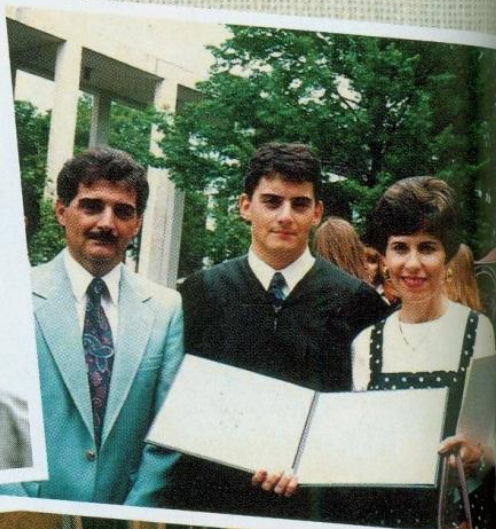
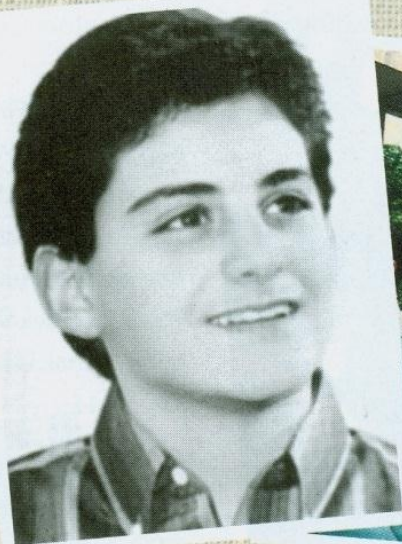
**Brad Paisley** was born October 28, 1972 in Glen Dale, WV. After high school, he was awarded a full-paid ASCAP scholarship and attended Belmont University, graduating in 1995 with a Bachelor's Degree in music business. Within a week after graduation, Paisley signed a songwriting contract with EMI Music Publishing, working alongside friend and fellow Belmont alum Frank Rogers. In 1999, Paisley, Rogers and Chris DuBois founded Sea Gayle Music Publishing. To date, Paisley has had 16 No.1 hits with a record 10 consecutive singles at the top of the charts. Paisley has been awarded the 2008 ACM, CMA Male Vocalist of the Year, and the 2010 CMA Entertainer of the Year. He currently resides in Franklin, TN with his wife, actress Kimberly Williams-Paisley, and their sons Huck and Jasper.



Brad Paisley brings his H2O Frozen Over Tour, which adapts the water theme for winter weather, to Bridgestone Arena on Saturday. JEREMY COWART

*Brad Paisley, photo by The Tennessean February 25, 2011.*





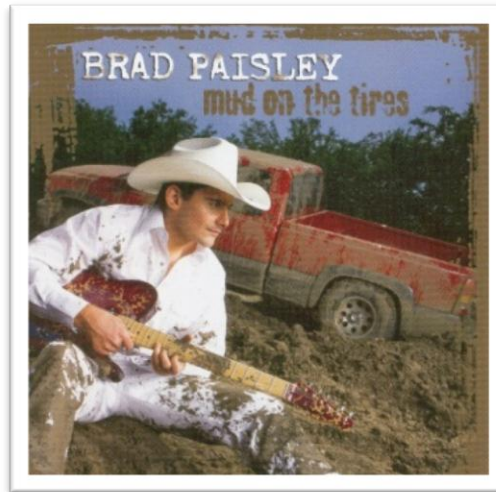
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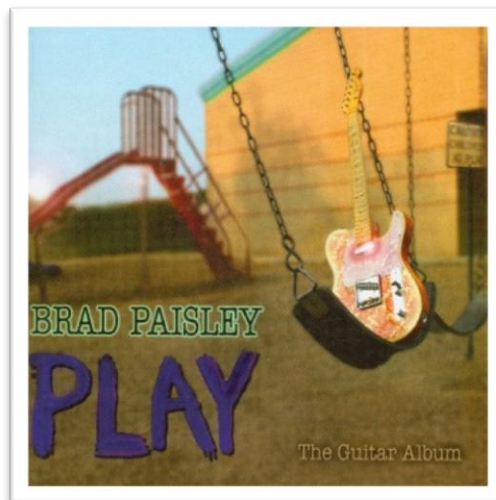
NG LIKE IT: At the platinum  
res album with (from left) my  
Jimmy Gilmer, Arista's Mike  
Photograph © Tony Phipps)

*Photos with Brad Paisley's family and friends as featured in his biography Dairy of a Player by Brad Paisley and David Wild.*

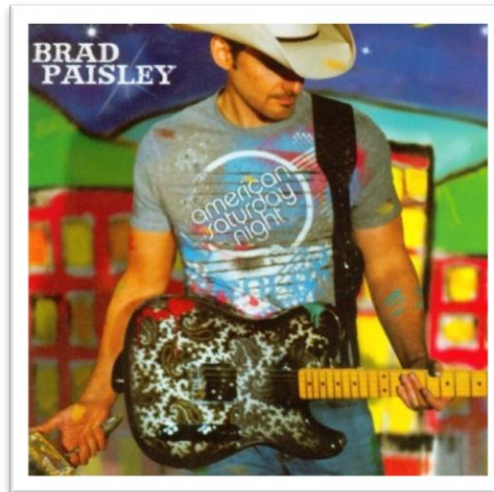




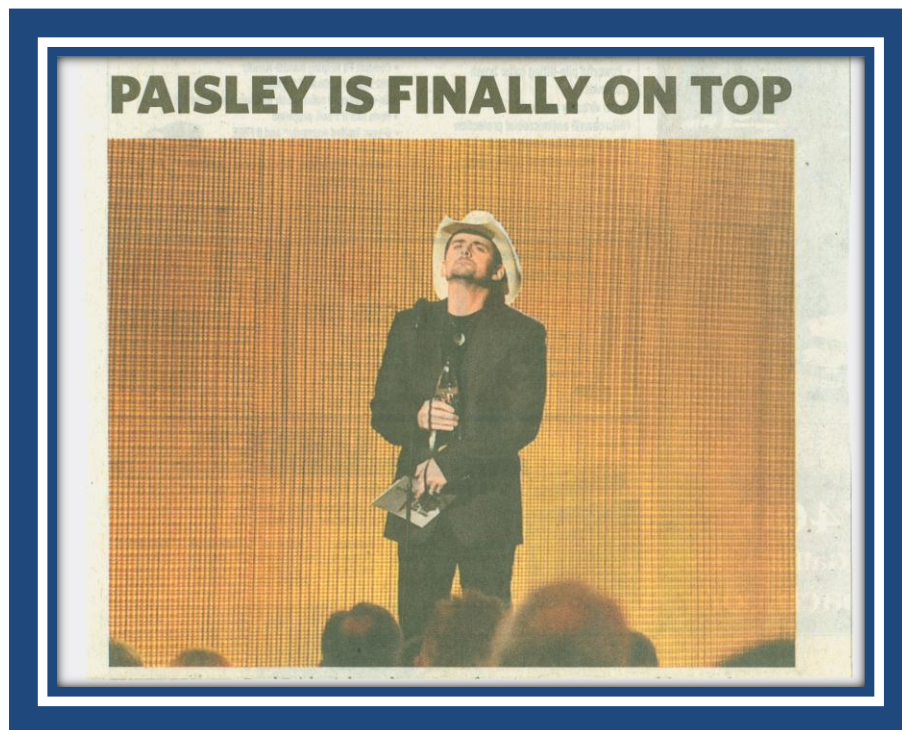
Brad Paisley's third album, released July 22, 2003 on Arista Nashville and produced by Frank Rogers. (CD 8572)



Brad Paisley's seventh studio album, released November 4, 2008 on Arista Nashville and produced by Frank Rogers. (CD 12013)



Brad Paisley's eighth studio album, released June 30, 2009 on Arista Nashville and produced by Frank Rogers. (CD 12012)

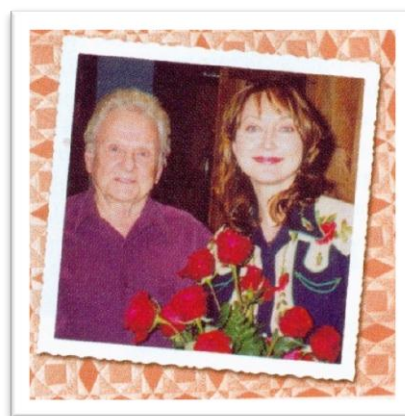


*Brad Paisley receiving the Entertainer of the Year Award at the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards. Photo by The Tennessean November 11, 2010.*



*Brad Paisley and fellow Belmont students in the courtyard for the Senoir Lunch, 1995 Tower.*

**Pam Tillis** was born July 24, 1957 in Plant City, FL but grew up in Nashville, the daughter of country music star Mel Tillis. After attending Belmont briefly, she left to pursue her music career. She made her debut at the Grand Ole Opry at age eight and signed with Arista Nashville in 1989. Since then, she has had 13 top ten country music hits, 30 singles on the U.S. Billboard country charts, and a No.1 single in 1995. She was named the 1994 CMA Female Vocalist of the Year and the recipient of a Grammy Award in 1999. As well as singing, she has acted in guest spots on television and on Broadway. In 2011, she began working on a new movie alongside Jennifer Aniston and Jennifer Landon. She is working on a duets album with Lorrie Morgan, set to release in summer 2012. Tillis has one son, Ben, and resides in Nashville.



*Pam Tillis and Ralph Stanley, featured in the 2001 album Clinch Mountain Sweethearts: Ralph Stanley and Friends. (CD 7019)*

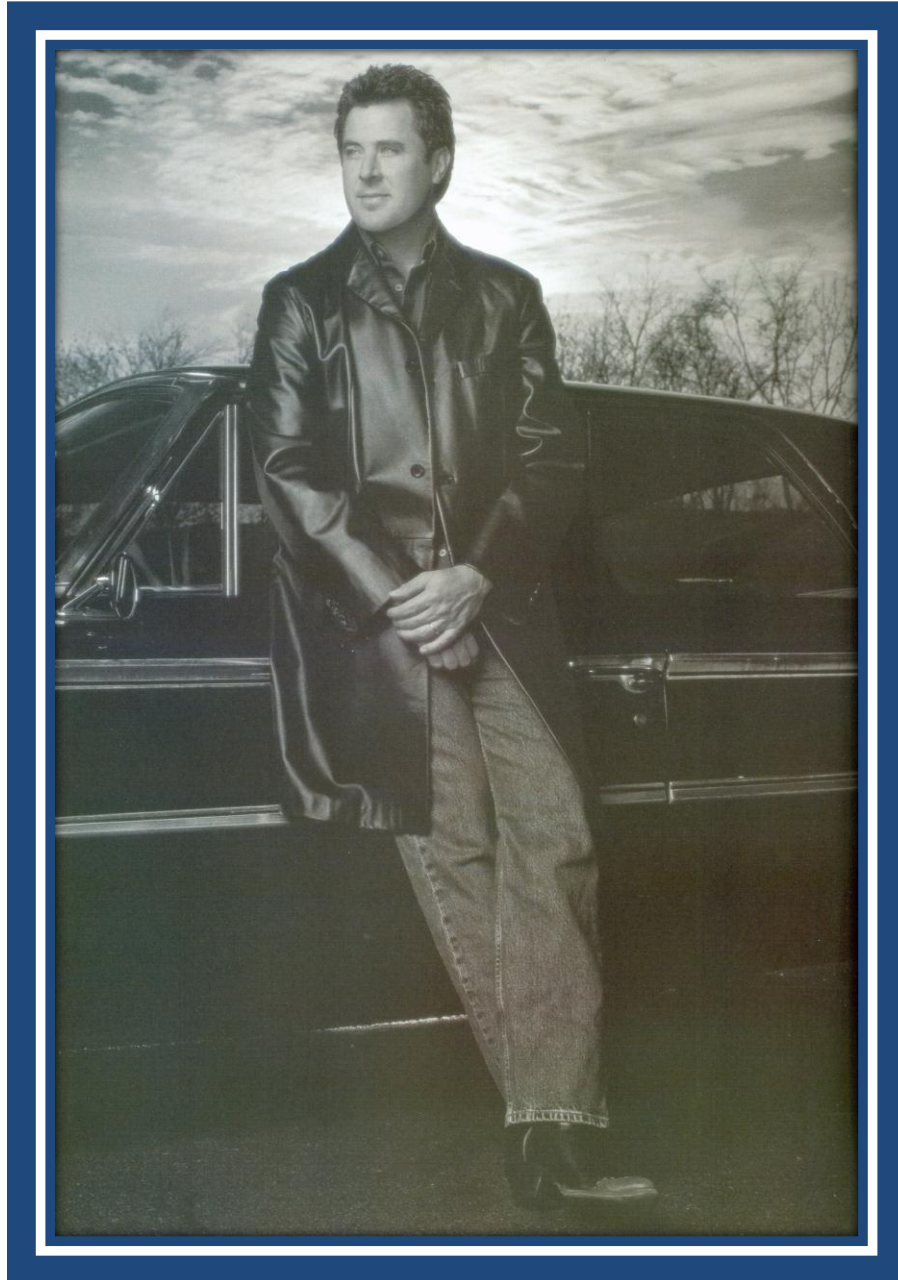


*Pam Tillis as featured in StarLink's Hall of Fame.*  
[www.starlinkproductions.com](http://www.starlinkproductions.com)

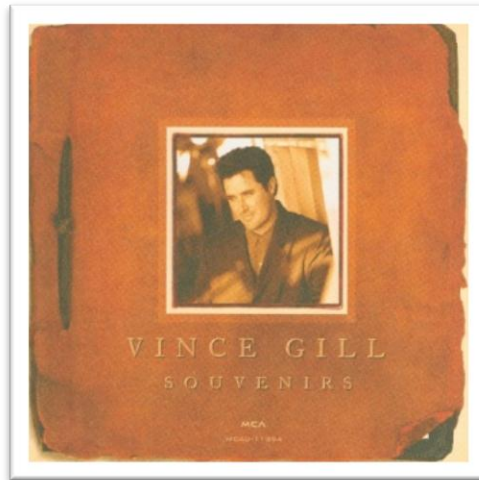
**Vincent Grant “Vince” Gill** was born on April 12, 1957 in Norman, OK to lawyer and part-time musician J. Stanley Gill, who taught him to play guitar and banjo and encouraged him to pursue a music career. After graduating from high school, Vince played in a number of bluegrass and country rock bands until he signed with RCA Records in 1983. Since then, he has sold more than 26 million albums and is the recipient of 27 Grammy Awards (more than any other male country artist). He hosted the CMA Awards from 1992-2003, himself earning 18 CMA Awards including Entertainer of the Year in 1993 and 1994. He



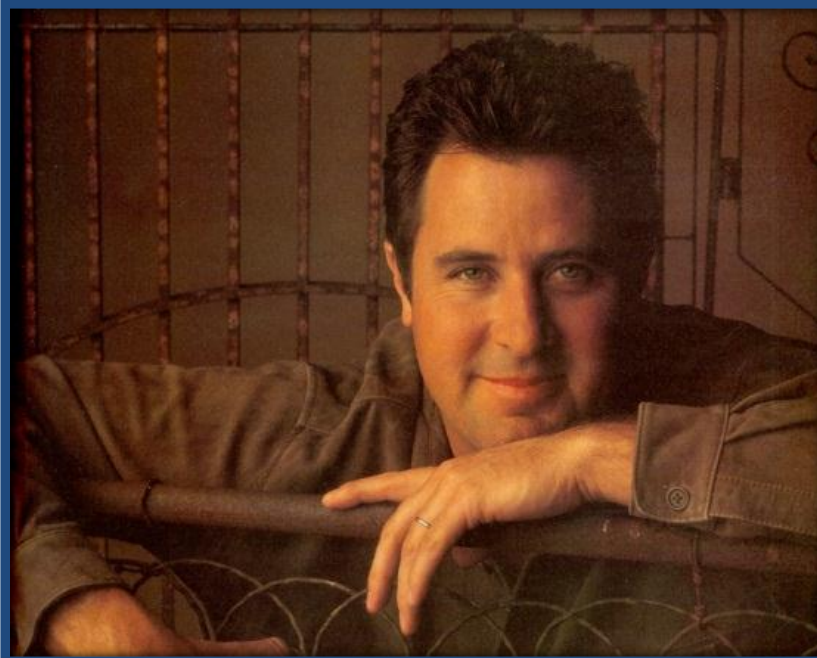
was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2007 and is regarded as one of country music's best known humanitarians, participating in hundreds of charitable events throughout his career. In 2011, Belmont University awarded the longtime Bruins supporter and recording artist with an honorary Doctor of Humanities Degree. Vince has two children and resides in Nashville with his wife, singer Amy Grant.



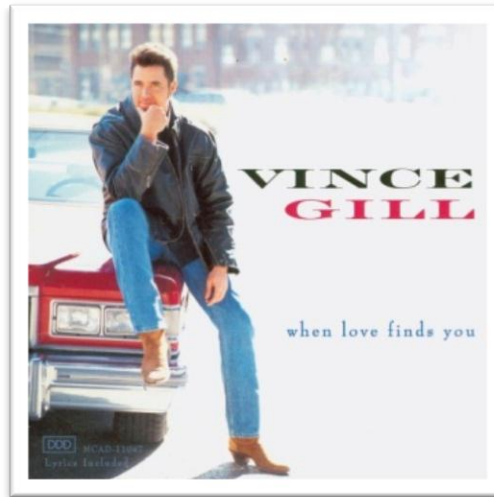
*Photo of Vince Gill featured in his 2003 songbook Vince Gill: Next Best Thing.*



Vince Gill's tenth album of greatest hits, released November 21, 1995 on MCA Nashville and produced by Tony Brown, Steve Buckingham, Reba McEntire, and Dolly Parton. (CD 2294)



*Photo of Vince Gill featured in his 2003 songbook Vince Gill: Next Best Thing.*



*Vince Gill's eighth album, released June 7, 1994 on MCA Nashville and produced by Tony Brown.*



*Vince Gill's seventeenth album box set, released October 17, 2006. Photo featured on Disc 4. (CD 10885-10888)*



*Vince Gill's fourteenth album, released April 18, 2000 on MCA Nashville and produced by Tony Brown. (CD 6352)*