

Reg. Lindsay Story Part 3

Hello Everyone

I'm pleased to present to you the third part of my Dad's life story. Throughout his long career he has helped many artists to have a start in the industry by touring with his show or by performing on his stage and club shows. Apart from the younger generation of entertainers, there aren't many who haven't been on a show with Reg Lindsay. When his name is mentioned people say 'oh, I did a show with him' or 'we were on a show together back in 19..'. Something wonderful I have experienced is that so many people tell me about being at one of his shows, of meeting him sometime, of hearing of something he did for someone, or they talk about what a great entertainer he was; they always have something pleasant to say about Dad. Reg Lindsay has had a strong influence on the Australian country music industry and has helped pave the way for the younger country music entertainers to have their music more widely accepted and to be able to venture into the American market. He has had a legendary career in the true sense.

When television was introduced to Australia, Reg made several appearances on variety shows but really became a well-known television personality from 1964 when he began hosting the 'The Country & Western Hour'. The hour long show was taped weekly at Channel 9 in Adelaide, was screened on Saturday afternoons at peak family viewing time and many people tuned in religiously every week. The show featured Reg as compere and singer, there was a resident band, different guest artists each week and a very popular square dancing team led by Colin Huddleston. This very successful show ran for eight years when Reg then began hosting another television show, 'Reg. Lindsay's Country Homestead' from Channel 9 in Brisbane which ran for another 4 years. Throughout the twelve years these shows had incredible ratings and won four Gold Logies for Top Variety Show. As Reg was based in Sydney he flew out early every Monday morning to Adelaide and later to Brisbane, to record the show and then returned home late on Tuesday afternoon. It was estimated he flew more than 4 million air miles over the years, even receiving a special award from T.A.A. Airlines for the miles he covered in an airplane. Innumerable artists have appeared on his stage and television shows over the years, many acknowledging that Reg gave them a start in the industry and a large number of them are still well-known and entertaining audiences today.

In 1968 Reg. went to America to have a first hand look at the music scene and became one of the first Australians to be invited to perform on the 'Grand Ole Opry making several appearances on the Opry during the times he was in America.

Reg has worked with many of the big name artists in Nashville, San Antonio and Dallas. Reg. travelled back and forth to Nashville, Tennessee over several years, performing and travelling through America and was quite successful, considering that it was very difficult to make any inroads into the American music industry in the earlier years. He made many life long friends and recorded some of his albums there with some songs getting into the American charts. Reg's well-known hit, 'Armstrong', inspired by Neil Armstrong's moon walk, has been included in a time capsule at the Space Centre in Houston. It's been said that if he had stayed in America he would have become one of the top entertainers there but with family back home and a love for his country he decided to remain based in Australia. Reg remarried in 1988 and he and Roslyn became based in the Hunter Valley area where they continued their involvement in rodeo and horse breeding and still run a rodeo each year.

Reg has travelled and performed widely overseas, some places being Wembley Stadium in London, America, Canada, the Pacific Islands, New Zealand, Europe and Papua New Guinea. His records have been sold worldwide with many of his recordings being in the charts overseas. In 1973-74 he performed with Hank Snow on his Australian tour and also with Charlie Pride on his shows in Australia.

At the Tamworth Country Music Awards, Reg. has been awarded Gold Guitars for "Best Male Vocalist of the Year" in 1974, 1978 and again in 1980. He was inducted into The Tamworth 'Roll of Renown' in 1984 and the 'Hands of Fame' in 1987. In 1978 he was the guest of honour on the 'This Is Your Life' television show, which included Judy Stone and Julie Anthony who represented the many entertainers that had their first appearance or had a start in show business on one of Reg's shows. He was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in 1989 for Services to Country Music and the Entertainment Industry. The awards he has received for his contribution to the country music industry in Australia are literally too many to mention and he also has many from America. In 1903 he received a 'MO' Award, The John Campbell Fellowship Award.

'Reg Lindsay is, without a doubt, and in the opinion of many thousands of Australians, a truly great and honourable Australian, one who has made a quiet and sincere contribution to country music and to the community during his lifetime. The personal appearance side of his work has always been very important to him and throughout his career he has been an artist who values the support of his fans.'

Reg collapsed with a brain haemorrhage 1995 at the Tamworth Country Music Festival and during his convalescence the support received from friends, colleagues and fans was absolutely overwhelming, demonstrating the enormous respect and friendship of the Australian people for Reg. A song was written for

him “C’mon Reg Lindsay, We Need You’ which went to near the top of the charts. There were sacks full of cards and letters, hundreds of phone calls all sending support, best wishes and offering prayers, even the phones at the hospital were jammed with callers. At the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, USA they held a prayer for his recovery every night for six weeks while he lay in intensive care. His colleagues wanted to do ‘something’ so they held a benefit at a Sydney club, there were so many entertainers wanting to be there for him, to show their respect and friendship that the show went for 8 hours but eventually had to come to a close. The proceeds were donated to the John Hunter Hospital where he had been treated. He was on the road to recovery when, 12 months later he suffered a heart attack, and undergoing bypass surgery has been in and out of hospital ever since due to a series of strokes.

Reg has achieved everything there is to be achieved in country music both with dignity and integrity. Lee Kernigan has said ‘Reg. is a real pioneer and is, in fact, one of the greatest all-round performers that Australia has ever produced’ a sentiment supported by many people in the entertainment industry. He is an example of everything that has, over the years, contributed to Australian Country Music and after more than 50 years in the business, the country music legend said ‘Music means everything to me. It really is my life.’

Dad is now very fragile in health and has suffered many a setback but through it all has maintained a positive attitude, has never thought of giving in and would often say ‘I must get back to work’. He likes to hear how things are going with his family and friends, and what they are up to, we read him letters and cards from fans and he really enjoys listening to country music, especially when we take a guitar in and play and sing to him.

He has done so many things during his lifetime, had such an interesting career, been to so many places, that I’ve really only been able to give you an idea of some of the things he has achieved and of some of the things of which he has been a part. I hope you have enjoyed these articles on dad’s life and his involvement with country music.

Best wishes, yours in true country style,

Dianne Lindsay