



Hall of Honor Inductees

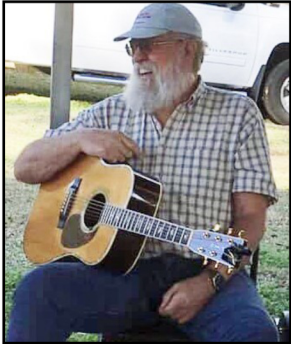
2024

Les Emard



Les Emard joined the Navy as a teenager and a crew member on his ship taught him to play lead and sing

country songs. Les was in two country bands and played with Charlie Patrick. During his time with Patrick, he became interested in bluegrass. When the Ionia Theater Bluegrass Jam started, Les, Charlie and Al Emard played on a radio show to promote the jam.



Les performed with the Hallway Pickers Band with Homer Gullett, Phil Andler, Allen Emard and Ellen Beam. Les and the Hallway Pickers performed twice on Access to Bluegrass; those shows can be found on the YouTube Access to Bluegrass Archive.

Les also joined Bob Conley, Jeff Conley and Allen Emard to form the Ovations Bluegrass Band. Les knew 10,000 songs from memory never and never used a book.

Les attended many festivals and attracted a crowd to his jams. All were welcome to jam, however Les was all business when it came to playing music. He insisted that conversations be carried out later, or over the phone.

The Bluegrass Music Tribute Page on Facebook said of Les, “Les was a big coffee drinker. He would still be picking sometimes a 5:00 am that next morning as long as there was someone there to play along with him. Les was a big guy with a big heart and gruff voice. He mentored young people and encouraged them to follow the music. “

Bonnie and Deja Davenport

From 1994 until the station closed in 1997, Deja had joined a group of volunteers WBYW radio DJ's in Grand Rapids in presenting bluegrass on a program called *Back Home in the Country*. Deja filled in for other DJ's, and took requests from callers; making many trips to Grand Rapids where he carried records, tapes or CD to fill requests and



play the style he wanted.

Losing that venue to share his music he got the idea to join AccessVision in Battle Creek, since offered lessons in the production of programming. He needed help, so Bonnie also attended a class. A producer, director, audio engineer and two camera operators were also needed. For nine years family members Kevin Smith, Valetta Smith, Dustin Lawson, Terry Bryan, Frank Bryant and Patrick Gault assisted Deja and Bonnie filling the roles of director, audio engineer, and camera operators The show was most often filmed on Sundays.



The Access to Bluegrass show was produced from 1997 to 2006. Deja Davenport produced the show; although not a musician, bluegrass was in his heart from the time he was born. It was what kept him happy until the day he went to meet the Lord. Knowing and respecting the many people who put their hearts into playing and singing this music was the thing that motivated him as he produced the show. His idea was that this would give local bands a place to show their talents. The show also gave audiences their first taste of the bluegrass music that he loved. As the program grew bands from around the country began to drop in and do shows also when they were in the vicinity doing festivals. Some made the trip from their home states to provide shows. Over 100 different groups played and many several times.

Bonnie prepared a meal for lunch and snacks for the day. Bonnie took the tapes home and edited them, adding introductions and endings, names of bands and their members. Copies were made and each band received a copy of their show and could purchase extras at cost. All shows were numbered, and records kept of the band and band member's names. In addition, we delivered and/or mailed shows to more than thirty outlets over the years. Various sponsors helped with costs, including the Northern Indiana Bluegrass Music Association.

More recently, Patrick Vidro, from the Byron Center Public Access, has reedited the tapes and created an archive on YouTube. You can find the shows as "Access to Bluegrass Archive."

Southeast Michigan Bluegrass Music Association

Hall of Honor

Class of 2016

Michael Adams
John Bayerl
David Blakney
Bobby Hutch
Tom Laing
Gordon L. Lamb
Larry McDaniel
Virgie McClearn
Nick Mladjan
John Morris
Jim & Fay Wilder
Jerry & Ada Yates

Class of 2017

Gary & Maggie Bilby
Burke Cole
Dana Cupp, Sr.
Leroy Drumm
Fred Ellis
Pete Goble
Cayce & Ruth Kiger
Mitchel Manns
Roy & Fay McGinnis
Freddie Newby
Cranford (Ford) Nix
Ralph Paige
Virgil Shouse
Bill & Pam Warren
Robert White

Class of 2018

Bob Campbell
Jimmy Campbell
Roy Cobb
Dana Cupp, Jr.
Richard "Dick" Dieterle
Tim Ellis
Jimmy Thompson.

Class of 2019

Ruby Bennett
Greg Cahill
David Conley, Sr.
Duane Estep
George Kilbreath
Jimmy Kittle
The RFD boys

Class of 2020

Gary Adams, Sr.
John Coffey
Jerry Eicher
Marvin "Red" Ellis
Jim LaPrad
Oscar N. McKinney
Ralph Mullins
Bruce Pettinger
Wes Pettinger
Roger Schultze
Sandy Schultze/Pettinger

Class of 2021

Randy Beckey
Farrell Clark
The Miller Brothers
Dick & Sandy Neff

Class of 2022

Brad Campbell
Wayne Holcombe
Terry Nisley
Dan Taylor
Larry Taylor

Class of 2023

Lee "Nolan" Faulkner
Sherman Funk
Marvin Ramsey