

A Tribute To Roger Bennett

March 10, 1959 to March 17, 2007



I have been going about my business today with a heavy heart. This morning I received a call that Roger Bennett had gone home to be with the Lord. Many people in Southern Gospel Music have passed on, but to this date, no has died that I knew as well as I knew Roger Bennett. Now, I would not say that Roger and I were close friends. However, I have many special memories of Roger Bennett and I want to share them with you.

At a time like this, our minds go to Roger's family. His wife, Debbie and children,

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Written by Scott Evans

Saturday, 20 September 2008 18:06 - Last Updated Thursday, 25 September 2008 19:58

Chelsea and Jordan, were his pride and joy! I never had a conversation with Roger when he wasn't talking about his family. Personally, I never met any of them but my thoughts and prayers are with them right now.

Most people in Southern Gospel Music became familiar with Roger Bennett when he joined the Cathedrals in 1979. It was shortly after that, I became familiar with this talented singer and songwriter. I was not very old when I went to see and hear the Cathedrals in New York for the very first time but I will never forget Roger taking the time to talk to an awestruck kid that was a huge fan standing at their product table purchasing music. As time went on, I saw Roger repeat that scene time and time again at product tables from everywhere from the NQC to a small churches.

As I began to get involved in the Southern Gospel Music Industry, I was able to get back stage for events and I saw another side of Roger Bennett. I cannot remember the year but I remember being back stage at a Garden Spot Promotions concert featuring the Cathedrals and I suddenly found myself in a room with just Roger. Roger struck up a conversation and we talked for about 30 minutes or so. We talked about everything from music to our family to our friends to current events! Since that day, he remembered my face (and often my name) and he always took a few minutes to talk and see how I was doing whenever he saw me.

In 1999, I remember talking at length with Roger and Scott Fowler about Legacy

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Five. I remember the excitement in their voices and the excitement they were generating in the industry. I remember the interview I did with them and how they genuinely wanted to carry on the Cathedral legacy. I believe they have done that better than anyone else!

I remember Roger pulling me aside when he found out my mom had passed away and praying right there with me. I remember him encouraging me in many ways as I went through the grieving process over the next several months. I remember that he always genuinely cared about what was going on in my life and he always seemed interested, not only in my Southern Gospel ventures (which he always supported fully), but also in my life in general.



More than anything, I remember the day that I heard Roger Bennett had cancer. The feeling was much the same as the feeling I had today. It was like someone just hit me as hard as they could. I remember contacting him and telling him I was praying for him. I remember his great attitude and I am thankful that God saw fit to give him to us for as long as he did. Since that day I have celebrated the successes and prayed harder during the set backs. It always amazed me how his attitude never changed.

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Roger Bennett will go down as one of the most talented musicians to ever grace a Southern Gospel Music stage. I am sure his home is full of the awards that he received over the years. Roger was talented on the piano and always added a lot to a concert with his playing and his humor. He famously grew up in Strawberry, Arkansas and if you ever heard him and George Younce joke about that, you know just how funny Roger could be. Roger was also a talented songwriter having written a number of great songs like "Healing," "I've Read The Back Of The Book," "Heroes Of The Faith," the recent Legacy Five hit "Out Of My Darkness" and so many others. Roger was also a great singer and was featured a number of songs recorded by the Cathedrals and Legacy Five.

I will miss Roger Bennett. I will miss his talent. I will miss our conversations. I will miss his presence with Legacy Five. I can imagine the celebrations when he received his "ultimate healing" and crossed over into heaven. I can imagine George Younce and Glen Payne leading a welcoming committee that included the likes of his good friend Anthony Burger and his other family and friends. I would imagine that it didn't take long before he found a piano and started singing! As his song said, "I've read the back of the Book and we win." We can rest assured now that Roger Bennett has won!

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