

THE LIGHTHOUSE

A PUBLICATION OF THE MUSEUM OF THE GULF COAST

Barbara Lynn
(1942)

"Bopper"
(1930-1959)



Blues Musician Barbara Lynn
Remembers All the Good Times

August 2022

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August 2022

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from The Director

Once again in 2021, the Museum of the Gulf Coast was chosen for the Best of the Best award by Port Arthur News readers. We were also chosen for the first time by Beaumont Enterprise readers for the Best of the Best in the Museum category in Jefferson and Orange Counties. While we are still waiting for the 2022 Beaumont Enterprise results, we are happy to announce that for 2022 Port Arthur News readers voted us Best of the Best Tourist Attraction and Museum. On behalf of the staff, volunteers, and Port Arthur Historical Society Board of Directors, let me say "Thank You" to those who voted for us. We appreciate you honoring us in this way, and we will work to improve and continue making this a place you can be proud of.

With that said, on April 30, we had the pleasure of a joint induction ceremony. We inducted writer Mary Karr into the Notable People Hall of Fame and Singer/Composer Rodney Crowell, into the Music Hall of Fame.



Rodney was also our entertainment for this year's Gulf Coast Gala, and we were happy to see Mary join him on the stage for a number or two. Congratulations to you both.

Looking ahead, we encourage you to keep checking our Facebook page and website for upcoming events. Now with everything opening after these trying pandemic times, we will be running fast and jumping high to catch up on approximately 25 Hall of Famers being scheduled for their formal inductions into our Halls of Fame. The PAHS board of directors approved most of the inductees just before the pandemic. Between now and the end of this calendar year, we plan to complete the process with a formal induction for each of them. It will be really exciting, and I encourage you to participate in the events. Meanwhile there are still others close behind.

One final note, thank you, PNG Class, of 1972 and TJ Class of 1965, for using our 39,000-square-foot facility for your recent reunions. As a quick reminder, for those planning reunions and other special business/corporate and personal gatherings, remember it will be hard to find a better place to hold your event than at the Museum of the Gulf Coast. Plan ahead and contact us now to set a date for your upcoming event.

Tom Neal



Mary Karr and Randy Crowell

On April 30, the Museum of the Gulf Coast inducted Rodney Crowell into our Music Hall of Fame and Mary Karr into our Notable People Hall of Fame. Later that night, Crowell and his band delivered an amazing performance at MOGC's annual Gala event. He was joined on the stage by Karr for one of the songs they had written together. It was a great day for the Museum and a great event for our community. How we arrived here is also a very interesting story.

Over ten years ago, country music singer and songwriter Rodney Crowell figured it was time to write his memoir. When Crowell told a visiting friend what he was up to, his friend was emphatic that he should read another memoir he knew about first, and he was going to go home and return with a copy. What he brought back was Mary Karr's memoir, *The Liar's Club*, about growing up in Groves. Crowell was so taken with the book and the fact that they both were from Southeast Texas, that he discontinued his writing project and wrote to Karr proposing that they collaborate on something together. Karr was already a fan of Crowell's, and after

Inductions & Gala Highlight a Busy April

some coaxing, she agreed to provide the words for an album that became known as *Kin*. Ten years later (2021), Crowell was asked to do a streaming concert for our annual Gala during a time when the pandemic was making live events impossible. Half the proceeds from each Gala go to The Port Arthur Higher Education Fund benefitting students at LSCPA, and half to the Museum of the Gulf Coast. One year later, Randy Crowell was asked to perform again, but this time at Carl Parker Center in front of a live audience.

Randy Crowell has received two grammy awards: for Best Country Song and for Best Americana Album. His body of work is extensive and includes writing fifteen number-one hits. He has received numerous awards from The Academy of Country Music Awards, ASCAP, the Americana Music Association, and other organizations. More recently, Crowell was a prominent part of Ken Burn's documentary series *Country*. Mary Karr's book, *The Liar's Club* (1995), inspired a wave of memoirs in the late '90s by other writers inspired by its unique voice. It remained on the New York Times best-seller list for over a year. Twenty years later, it is still cited as one of the best in the genre. She has also written two additional memoirs and five books of poetry. Karr is a frequent contributor to *The New Yorker*. At their MOGC inductions, Both Karr and Crowell mentioned how special it made them feel to be inducted into our Museum, a place so close to where they were raised and to be inducted together.

The full induction ceremony can be viewed on the Museum of the Gulf Coast's YouTube Channel.
Photo by Bart Bragg.

BEAUMONT, THE BLUES, & BARBARA LYNN



Barbara Lynn on Dick Clark's American Bandstand

Blues guitarist and Museum Hall of Fame musician Barbara Lynn Ozen is 80 now, but the blues don't seem to have kept her down. Her recollections are infused with the generosity of her parents, her love for her children, and her gratitude for those who helped her along the way. Her unusual musical career started with piano lessons, but after seeing Elvis Presley on television, she asked her parents to let her switch to guitar. They started her off on an Arthur Godfrey ukulele but soon realized Barbara was determined and gifted. "My parents went out and bought me a

left-handed guitar. That was what I wanted." After school, Lynn would rush through her homework and then turn on the radio and teach herself the guitar. "I would play that radio every day, and I'd hear blues songs on it, you know, and I started singing and trying to follow the chords on my instrument." At school, Barbara formed a girl group, Barbara Lynn and the Idols, and they would sing every day on the side of the school building at lunch. Recognizing her talent, the staff eventually let her bring her guitar to school. Talent contests soon followed. "My very first big contest was over at the Jefferson Theater, and I won the talent contest, then one of my other friends won the beauty contest, and then the other one won the bathing suit contest. Yes, it was getting deeper then," she said with a laugh. Other talent show wins followed, and bands started calling, asking Barbara to play with them in local clubs. Her mother was friends with the wife of Clifton White. He had seen her play and wanted her to open for his group, Clifton White and the Royal Nights. After seeing how much Barbara wanted to perform, her parents gave their permission.



Barbara Lynn received the National Heritage Fellowship Award from Rep. Randy Weber at the White House

Lynn's mother quit her job at the box factory in Beaumont and traveled with her. One night Joe Berry caught Barbara's set at Lou Ann's. "Joe saw me perform right across the bridge. Tore that house down. He went back and told Huey, 'I just saw a black girl play the guitar, and man, she can sing.'" Barbara sent Huey Meaux a tape, and the record producer realized Barbara was also a gifted songwriter. "So Huey drove here in one of his Cadillacs, and he asked my parents, 'Would you let Barbara record an album for me? I will take very good care of her.'" Meaux apparently knew he had struck gold with a young lady who could play, sing, and write. He brought her to Cosimo Mattasa's studio in New Orleans and eventually recorded Barbara's song "You'll Lose a Good Thing" with a group of seasoned studio musicians. "Huey would call me and say, 'Barbara, I think we got a hit record. It took 17 cuts, but we got it.' And he was not lying, I'm telling you. He started calling me and telling me, I have to go on American Bandstand,

Dick Clark out in Philly, and then Dick Clark called me to come back again!" When Meaux presented Lynn with her first check, she said she almost fell over. "I said, 'for me?' He said, 'Yes, for you, and there's still more to come because you're the songwriter.'" Barbara had not yet experienced some of the complex emotions she captured in her songs, but she witnessed a great deal in the neighborhoods of Beaumont. "The way I do it is that I write from life; I see what people are going through—especially "You'll Lose a Good Thing." I saw women and men fighting in the streets and all that, and I heard my neighbor say, 'Let me tell you something. If you lose me, baby, your gonna really lose a good thing.' So I took that, some words, and I said, 'I'm going to write me a song like that.' And I did! (laughs) And people loved it, and it just kept rising and rising, and then I ended up on billboards top 100. In fact, they called Huey, 'Man, she's going to knock down The Beatles. Knock them off #1. She's now Number 1 on the charts!'" After the release of her next song, the Rolling Stones called Lynn.

Dana Howard Hired as New Education Coordinator

Dana Howard joined the museum staff as the new Education and Tour Coordinator in June. She has been in education since 2015, starting as a substitute teacher and working as a teacher's aide in a special needs classroom, and later, a theater arts teacher. She has a degree in Drama from LSCPA and is completing her BA in Mass Communication/Public Relations with a minor in Digital Marketing at LSU. She spent many years volunteering for local community theater organizations, doing every job you can do in the theater. She is actively involved in her son's Scout troop, and this fall will be her first year as a PNG Purple Pride Band Mom. On Sunday

mornings, you will find her singing with her church Praise Team. Dana has big plans for educational opportunities and community outreach, and has already restarted our monthly scout meetings.



(Lynn continued) "They called me because they heard one of my songs, and I asked them which one. They said the one you wrote called, 'Oh Baby (We Got a Good Thing Goin')." They asked if they could record it, and I said, 'Yes, you have my permission, you can!' And they sang that song, and that song was a hit, and I laughed all the way to the bank. Yes indeed, Mick Jagger? My god, Mick Jagger, have I heard of you!" In the years to come, Barbara traveled and played with nearly all the great musical artists of that time: Chuck Berry, Stevie Wonder, Bo Diddley, Gladys Knight, Smokey Robinson, Dionne Warwick, Jackie Wilson, Sam Cooke, Otis Redding, James Brown, Al Green, Marvin Gaye, Ike and Tina Turner, The Temptations, and B.B. King. "Michael Jackson and the Jackson Five, they opened for me at a club I played at in Chicago called The High Chaparral. The owner said a young group

from Gary, Indiana is going to open for you. And I said OK, not knowing he was going to become a superstar, so I got a chance to meet Michael and play with him. And they took me to meet their mother and father sitting down in the club, and when they got on stage, I said, 'Oh my goodness, look at this young boy.' I mean, they were really great; I feel honored to say I worked with Michael." Today, Lynn estimates that she wrote nearly 30 songs and is proud to say that she continues to get royalty checks from songwriting. Spotify shows "You'll Lose a Good Thing" has over eleven million plays. Barbara Lynn Ozen is the recipient of the 1999 Pioneer Award by the Rhythm and Blues Foundation, and the 2018 National Heritage Fellowship award by the National Endowment for the Arts, which is our government's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts. — Robert Fong

Teen Troupe gets a Reboot

The Teen Troupe is an important part of the Education Outreach program at the Museum of the Gulf Coast. We encourage teens to volunteer their time, which will provide them the opportunity to learn new skills that will be helpful in college and beyond. The main focus of the Teen Troupe will be assisting when the Museum has events like Family Fun Days and summer day camp programs. We are excited to restart this program and we already have 5 teens signed up!



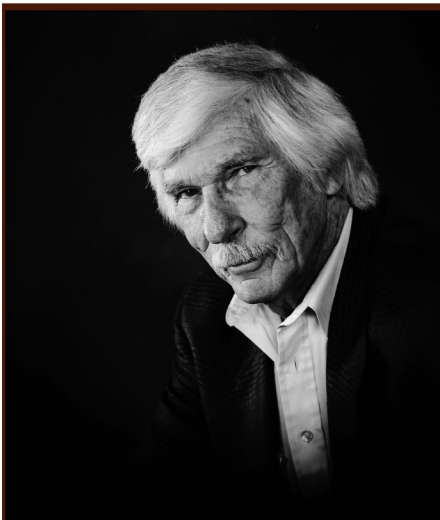
Port Arthur Sertoma Club Donates land to MOGC

The Port Arthur Evening Sertoma Club recently donated land with a covered area to the Museum of the Gulf Coast. "We are very grateful to the Sertoma Club for this very generous donation," said Museum Director Tom Neal. "We often host events with several hundred kids, and since the property is adjacent to our building, we will definitely find some good uses for it." Sertoma President Barbara Cropper and PAHS President Dr. Sam Monroe completed the transaction at the Museum.



Sweet Toothy Rejoice!

A major improvement over the basic praline has people stopping by the Museum's gift shop to buy a bag or two. Some say the Trinity Praline tastes so good because they are creamier. Other speculate that the sugar to caramel ratio has been perfected. Whatever the reason, word is spreading and we are scrambling to keep them in stock. If you are lucky enough to visit when we have them you might want to buy more than one bag!



Director & Film Actor L.Q. Jones Dies at 94

L.Q. also produced four independent films. *A Boy and His Dog* follows a teenager and his telepathic dog as they fight for survival in the desert after a nuclear holocaust. Based on a short story by Harlan Ellison, Jones also directed the film, starring a young Don Johnson and his friend Jason Robards. Science Fiction fans consider it a cult classic, and George Miller cited it as an influence for his "Mad Max" series. It is one of the first dystopian films. Jones received the science fiction community's highest honor, a Hugo Award, for his directing.

(Photos Bart Bragg)

MOGC Hall of Famer, L.Q. Jones, died of natural causes at his home in Los Angeles, California on July 9, 2022. Justice Ellis McQueen was born in Beaumont, Texas, and graduated from Port Neches-Groves High School. He attended both Lamar Junior College and the University of Texas where he obtained his degree. After short stints in professional football, baseball, and ranching (in Nicaragua), he attempted to act professionally, following in the footsteps of his college roommate, Fess Parker.

Adopting the name L.Q. Jones, he worked steadily for over seven decades. He accrued over 60 feature credits and was often seen on television westerns as well. By his own estimate, Jones worked with over 200 directors. His most noteworthy acting role was in Martin Scorsese's film *Casino*. Martin Scorsese asked Jones to rewrite the dialogue scene he had with Robert De Niro, and it is one of the best scenes in the film.



Memorials

VIRGINIA AVERY

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Tom and Linda Neal

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The Thursday Bridge Club

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Steve and Peggy Mundschaug and children
Tom Fontenot and Family

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Pat Holmes
Vanessa Broussard
Cody Holmes

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FAYE SWANZY - for her 93rd Birthday
Alexis Swanzy

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Leroy and Norma Ezer
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Tip and Lynda McClelland
Toni and Noel Noble
Carole Thomas
Cynthia Weeks
Carole Emerson

"Doonie" Donates Art Piece in Honor of Mary Karr

This metal sculpture was created by Kent Scott, a life-long friend of Mary Karr, in celebration of her fiftieth birthday and the release of her book of poetry "Viper Rum." Scott is frequently mentioned in Karr's second memoir "Cherry." He donated this piece to MOGC, and it will be a part of her permanent exhibit. Scott flew in from California to be a part of Karr's induction.



Thank you

Thank you to our steadfast supporters of the Museum of the Gulf Coast, and the Port Arthur Historical Society. Your generous contributions are a vital part of our effort to preserve the storied history of this region. Those members and non-members who wish to contribute a memorial in the name of a loved one, or make a donation, please call (409) 999-6282, email us at MuseumoftheGulfCoast@gmail.com, or go to MuseumoftheGulfCoast.org



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