

Everly Brothers – Don & Phil

By Jerry Long
c.2024



Don (on left) & Phil Everly



The Everly Brothers, Don & Phil, were sons of country musicians Ike Milford Everly (1908-1975) and Margaret Eva Embry (1919-2021). Ike Everly, the brothers' father, was a coal miner in Muhlenberg County and a musician on nights after work and weekends. Ike Everly took lessons from Arnold Schultz, a pioneering black guitarist in the area, who taught him a unique thumbpicking guitar technique. Ike Everly later taught the technique to Merle Travis, his neighbor and fellow coal miner, who brought the style to mainstream bluegrass and country music. And, he taught his sons — Donald Isaac, who was born at Brownie in Muhlenberg County on 1 February 1937, and Phil, who was born 19 January 1939 in Chicago, IL.

The brothers made their radio debut as preteens on radio station KMA, Shenandoah, Iowa, working with their parents until they graduated from high school. In 1957 they joined the "Grand Ole Opry" in Nashville.

The Everly Brothers were at the top of the country and pop music charts from 1951 to 1973. In commercial terms, the Everly Brothers were one of the most successful acts in popular

music between 1957 and 1962. The brothers split up in 1973, reunited in 1983 and performed until 2005. From 1988 to 2002, they performed at the annual Everly Brothers Homecoming in Central City, Muhlenberg County, KY. In 1988 the city of Central City renamed its Chestnut Street Everly Brothers Boulevard. They were part of the first ten artists to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986. In 1997, they received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2001, they were inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Phil Everly died 3 January 2014 in Burbank, CA; he was buried with his father at the Rose Hill Cemetery, in Central City, KY. Don died 21 August 2021 in Nashville, TN; he was cremated.



The Tennessean, Nashville, TN, Monday, 23 August 2021, p.1A:

Don Everly, eldest of the Everly Brothers, dies at 84 in Nashville

By Dave Paulson, Nashville Tennessean



Phil, left, and Don Everly of the Everly Brothers arrive at London Airport from New York in 1960 to begin their European tour.

Don Everly — whose divine harmony with sibling Phil Everly in the Everly Brothers helped shape the course of rock and roll — died Saturday in Nashville at age 84.

Everly’s passing was announced on the duo’s official Instagram account and by the Country Music Hall of Fame, which inducted the Everly Brothers in 2001. The duo was also part of the inaugural class of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986.

In a statement, Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum CEO Kyle Young called Everly “one of the most talented and impactful artists in popular music history.”

Classics such as “Bye Bye Love,” “Wake Up, Little Susie” and “All I Have To Do Is Dream” epitomize the vocal blend of Everly and his younger brother, Phil, who died in 2014. As

his brother's tenor soared, Everly was the anchor, singing the main melody on the bulk of their songs.

Their sound soon found a rapt audience with the release of "Bye Bye Love" in 1957 – and it ignited the imaginations of teenagers who would later become The Beatles, Bob Dylan and Simon & Garfunkel.

"Phil and Don were the most beautiful sounding duo I have ever heard," reads a quote from Paul Simon engraved at Knoxville's Everly Brothers Park.

Born Feb. 1, 1937, in Brownie, Kentucky, Isaac Donald Everly and his brother grew up immersed in country music. They first hit the airwaves before they were out of elementary school, singing with their country-performing parents on their father's radio show in Shenandoah, Iowa, in 1945.

After a two-year stint in Knoxville, Tenn., the family moved to Nashville, where the brothers soon found attention as a duo. Among their earliest boosters was Chet Atkins, who led them to a publishing deal with Acuff-Rose and a recording contract with Cadence Records in 1957.

A lone release with Columbia Records, "Keep a-Lovin' Me," had flopped a year prior, but that wasn't the case with "Bye Bye Love."

Success came swiftly: "Love" topped the country charts and reached No. 2 overall, and just three months after its release, the Everly Brothers were made members of the Grand Ole Opry.

"I felt at home at the Opry," Everly told *The Tennessean* in 1998. "Because when we walked down the streets of New York City with a guitar case, people would yell at you back in those days and look to see if you had shoes on."

"Love" was penned by married Nashville songwriting duo Felice and Boudleaux Bryant, and it soon became clear that the Everlys were a perfect match for their material.

Over the next year, "Susie" and "Dream" – also written by the Bryants – would both top the charts.

Upon moving to Warner Brothers Records in 1960 and relocating to California shortly afterward, the duo's own songwriting prowess began to truly emerge.

On his own, Don Everly penned "So Sad (To Watch Good Love Go Bad)," and he is now the sole credited writer of "Cathy's Clown" – per a 2018 ruling, after Everly and his late brother's heirs battled in court.

As the artists they'd inspired began to arrive on the scene, the duo's commercial fortunes suddenly declined. Their last top 10 U.S. hit came in 1962 with "That's Old Fashioned (That's the Way Love Should Be)."

Still, they continued to find a receptive audience in the U.K., and shrewdly reconnected with their country origins. In 1968, they rode the country-rock wave with the album "Roots," tackling songs by Merle Haggard and Jimmie Rodgers.

In 1973, the duo's original run came to an infamous end when Phil Everly walked off stage in the middle of a performance. From the stage, Don Everly declared "The Everly Brothers died 10 years ago."

In a 1980 interview, Don Everly said staying in the duo "was debilitating emotionally."

"People have a tendency to talk about you as one person. We're not alike that much. We're not twins."

Following the split, Don Everly returned to Nashville. After spending a decade pursuing solo careers, the brothers reunited in 1983 for a concert at London's Royal Albert Hall, which was turned into a live album and concert film. A new studio album "EB 84" was released the following year, complete with a single written by Paul McCartney.

Along with their Hall of Fame inductions, the duo's last major turn in the spotlight came when they toured with Simon & Garfunkel in 2003-2004, and their final headlining jaunt in Europe in 2005.

Don Everly was last seen on stage in Nashville in 2019, accepting an award from the Musicians Hall of Fame.

"Sixty years and something has gone by," he said. "It's been a pleasure. I love all the musicians here in Nashville. I never felt Nashville was going to turn into Music City, but it did."

Everly is survived by his wife, Adela, his mother, Margaret (age 101), four children and five grandchildren.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 4 January 2014, pp.1A & 2A:

**Rock pioneer Phil Everly dies at 74
He and brother Don inspired musical legends**

By the Associated Press



Phil and Don Everly sing some of their hits at the 10th annual Everly Brothers Homecoming concert Aug. 30, 1997, in Central City. Phil died Friday.

LOS ANGELES – Phil Everly, who formed an influential harmony duo with his brother, Don, that touched the hearts and sparked the imaginations of rock 'n' roll singers for decades, including the Beatles and Bob Dylan, died Friday. He was 74.

Everly died of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease at a Burbank hospital, said his son Jason Everly.

Phil and Don Everly helped draw the blueprint of rock 'n' roll in the late 1950s and 1960s with a high harmony that captured the yearning and angst of a nation of teenage baby boomers looking for a way to express themselves beyond the simple platitudes of the pop music of the day.

The Beatles, early in their career, once referred to themselves as "the English Everly Brothers." And Bob Dylan once said, "We owe these guys everything. They started it all."

The Everlys' hit records included the then-titilating "Wake Up Little Susie" and the universally identifiable "Bye Bye Love," each featuring their twined voices with lyrics that

mirrored the fatalism of country music and a rocking backbeat that more upbeat pop. These sounds and ideas would be warped by their devotees into a new kind of music that would ricochet around the world.

In all, their career spanned five decades, although they performed separately from 1973 to 1983. In their heyday between 1957 and 1962, they had 19 top 40 hits.

The two broke up amid quarrelling in 1973 after 16 years of hits, then reunited in 1983, "sealing it with a hug," Phil Everly said.

Although their number of hit records declined in the late 1980s, they made successful concert tours in this country and Europe.

They were inducted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in 1986, the same year they had a hit pop-country record, "Born Yesterday."

Don Everly was born in 1937 in Brownie to Ike and Margaret Everly, who were folk and country music singers. Phil Everly was born to the couple on Jan. 19, 1939, in Chicago where the Everlys moved to from Brownie when Ike grew tired of working in the coal mines.

The brothers began singing country music in 1945 on their family's radio show in Shenandoah, Iowa.

Their career breakthrough came when they moved to Nashville in the mid-1950s and signed a recording contract with New York-based Cadence Records.

Their breakup came dramatically during a concert at Knott's Berry Farm in California. Phil Everly threw his guitar down and walked off, prompting Don Everly to tell the crowd, "The Everly Brothers died 10 years ago."

During their breakup, they pursued solo singing careers with little fanfare. Phil also appeared in the Clint Eastwood movie "Every Which Way but Loose." Don made a couple of records with friends in Nashville, performed in local nightclubs and played guitar and sang background vocals on recording sessions.

Don Everly said in a 1986 Associated Press interview that the two were successful because "we never followed trends. We did what we liked and followed our instincts. Rock 'n' roll did survive, and we were right about that. Country did survive, and we were right about that. You can mix the two, but people said we couldn't."

In 1988, the brothers began hosting an annual homecoming benefit concert in Central City to raise money for the area.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 5 January 2014, pp.1C & 4C:



Phil Everly

Muhlenberg Countians: Everly was humble, unaware of his influence

By Joy Campbell, Messenger-Inquirer

Phil Everly, the younger half of the harmonious Everly Brothers who hit the pop charts in the 1950s and '60s, "will be missed by the world — and especially by Muhlenberg County friends and fans," former Central City Mayor Hugh Sweatt said Saturday.

Everly died Friday at a Burbank, Calif., hospital at age 74.

The Everly Brothers' roots are in Muhlenberg County, where their father worked in the coal mines in the daytime and as a musician at nights and on weekends.

The older half of the duo, Don Everly, was born in Muhlenberg County in 1937. The family moved to Chicago where Phil Everly was born two years later.

Phil and Don Everly still have a number of relatives in Muhlenberg County, Sweatt said. And their regional influence reaches much farther than the stretch of U.S. 62 in Central City renamed Everly Brothers Boulevard.

Sweatt played a key role in organizing the popular Everly Brothers Music Festival, which had about a 15-year run starting with the first concert in 1988. The festival's crowds grew to more than 10,000 and brought talent such as John Prine, Chet Atkins and Travis Tritt to the outdoor event.

Supported by hundreds of volunteers, the event raised money for the Everly Brothers Foundation, which funded numerous scholarships for Muhlenberg students and made lasting community investments, including purchase of the land for the community college and city park.

"Phil was one of the most humble, nicest guys I've ever met," Sweatt said. "They were both so humble; when they came home, they never met a stranger. They felt honored to come home and play. We never could convince them that the honor was ours."

Joe Ben Tucker of Tucker Funeral Home said he stayed in touch with Everly after the festival ended. Both served on the community college's foundation board, and Phil Everly remained on the board until his death.

The Everly Brothers Foundation provided scholarship funds to the community college's foundation, and those awards are still being made in the Everly Brothers' name, Tucker said.

"Phil was really just one of us; he was a great guy; his fame never took over where he was from," he said. "He worked hard on the festivals here. He was so interested. He was just a good old boy. In all honesty, I don't think they ever really realized how famous and important they were and how they influenced the music industry."

Don Everly mourns his brother

Don Everly said he didn't expect to see the day his brother would pass.

"I loved my brother very much," the 76-year-old wrote in a statement to The Associated Press on Saturday morning. "I always thought I'd be the one to go first. ... The world might be mourning an Everly Brother, but I'm mourning my brother Phil Everly."

The infighting and hard feelings between the Everly Brothers were well-known, but Don felt he had a special moment with his brother Phil before Phil's passing Friday — even if the two weren't together at the time.

"I was listening to one of my favorite songs that Phil wrote and had an extreme emotional moment just before I got the news of his passing," Don Everly wrote. "I took that as a special

spiritual message from Phil saying goodbye. Our love was and will always be deeper than any earthly differences we might have had."

The Everly Brothers were arguably the most influential vocal duo in music history. They brought their love of country music to rock 'n' roll in the 1950s and 1960s, transforming the pop charts of the day and inspiring legions of young proto-rockers like the Beatles, Bob Dylan and the Byrds, who would all go on to change popular culture.

Songs like "Bye Bye Love" and "Wake Up Little Susie" remain a shared memory for generations of listeners who were hooked by their deceptively simple harmonies that hid greater meaning in songs that were dark and new compared with the pop music of the day.

The two broke up amid quarrelling in 1973 after 16 years of hits, then reunited in 1983, "sealing it with a hug," Phil Everly said.

There was a heavy outpouring on social media following Phil Everly's death, proving The Everly Brothers remain relevant a half-century after their first hits.

Two events planned

The wheels already are turning to host an event to honor Phil Everly's life, said Marilyn Kirtley, who was president of the Muhlenberg County Everly Brothers Fan Club through most of its years and "did a little bit of everything for the music festival."

Community organizers are planning a celebration of Phil Everly's life on Jan. 19 — his birthday, Kirtley said. It will be held at the Muhlenberg County Music Museum, with the details shared later, she said.

Don Everly lives in Nashville, as does his mother, Margaret Everly, who is 94 years old, Kirtley said. "We hope we can get her here for Jan. 19."

Another event to honor the Everlys also is in the works, according to Kirtley.

"I had an interesting phone call from a young man, Matt Newton, who played the part of Phil in the musical, 'Bye, Bye Love,' that was held at the Ryman (Auditorium) in Nashville in 1998," she said. "They want to come and do an Everly Brothers tribute. We're excited. And we're already working on it."

Kirtley said Newton and Jeff Boyet, who starred as Don Everly, were chosen from more than 1,500 people for their roles in the 1998 musical. They still do some Everly Brothers performances.

Kirtley was surprised at Phil Everly's death even though she knew he was in poor health. "It's an end of an era; they were legends in their own time," she said.

Phil Everly gave permission for the Muhlenberg County Everly Brothers Fan Club name, Kirtley said. "We were more of a hospitality club. We took care of guests who came for the concert. Some of them came from England, the Netherlands and Australia. We met them at the airport and kept them in our homes."

Sweatt said Phil Everly's death had been the lead story on at least one world news broadcast Saturday.

"His memory will live on forever," he said. "People will know who the Everly Brothers are."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 8 January 2014, p.5A:

Death of Phil Everly a loss to region, world

Rock 'n' roll music lost one of its great pioneers on Friday with the passing of Phil Everly at age 74.

Though Everly was born in Chicago, there was a clear bond that he shared with Muhlenberg County.

The western Kentucky county was where older sibling, Don, was born in 1937, giving the brothers a lifelong connection to this region.

And throughout their success, they never forgot their roots.

Of course, the world knew Phil and Don as the harmonizing Everly Brothers.

With classic hits such as "Bye Bye Love," "Wake Up Little Susie," and "All I Have to Do is Dream," the duo skyrocketed to international stardom and fame during the formative years of rock 'n' roll.

In essence, they were among the original American idols of the late 1950s and early 1960s, influencing legendary artists from the Beatles to Simon and Garfunkel.

Paul Simon said, "Phil and Don were the most beautiful sounding duo I ever heard. ..."

Their talent and contributions to music were further solidified when they were elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's first class in 1986 and the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2001.

Among their other accolades include the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and Rolling Stone Magazine ranking the Everly Brothers No. 33 on its list of top 100 Greatest Artists of All Time.

A low point came when the brothers became estranged, breaking up in the 1970s over a well-publicized feud. Phil and Don, however, were able to set aside their differences in the 1980s.

And in 1988, they began the Everly Brothers Music Festival in Muhlenberg County, which drew thousands of fans during the 15 years the concert was held.

But the event was more than a homecoming concert. It was part of a philanthropic endeavor to raise money for the Everly Brothers Foundation.

Proceeds were used to buy land for the community college, and a scholarship fund was established in their name that still exists today for Muhlenberg students.

Phil Everly, who is survived by his brother, Don, was a talented musician, songwriter and performer who will never be duplicated.

Sadly, Phil Everly's voice has been silenced — but not without leaving behind an enduring legacy of charity and music that spanned more than seven decades.

Muhlenberg countians who knew the Everly Brothers summed up the duo by saying they never "really realized how famous and important they were and how they influenced the music industry."

Their fans and fellow artists know otherwise, making Phil Everly a true loss not only to this region but to the world.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 28 August 1987, pp.1D & 4D:

Muhlenberg family's tradition

Of course the brothers are a musical success – they're Everlys, aren't they?

By Jennie Dear Messenger-Inquirer

DRAKESBORO – Don and Phil Everly don't live here anymore.

But on the porches of the houses, in the churches and under the shade trees, the music that influenced rock 'n' roll stars such as the Beatles and Eric Clapton continues.

Don Everly was born in the tiny Muhlenberg County community of Brownie, near Drakesboro. His brother, Phil, was born in Chicago, where his father was performing. With such hits such as "Bye Bye Love" and "Wake Up Little Susie," The Everly Brothers were to become one of the biggest rock 'n' roll groups of the late 1950s.

"The Everly brothers have talent and they've made it, but there's just as much talent sitting around at home," said their cousin, Shelba Jean Gibson.

"They have a harmony that's inherent – they weren't trained. They have the Everly sound and it came from their ancestors," said cousin Ted Wayne Everly. "I can't describe it, but I know it. It's a harmony that's one voice that's together, but not like a computer that's the same every time," he said. "It's not jagged, it's very soothing, it's very simple, it's down to earth."

"There's music in the Everly family," their aunt, Hattie Hall, said simply.

Mrs. Hall's parents, Isaac Milford Everly and Mary Delilah Everly, had nine children. Isaac was a coal miner, but he also played the violin. Mrs. Everly played the French harp.

But the vibrations that were to reach Liverpool, England, started when a blind man played guitar in Livermore.

"When we were children, we lived in Livermore, where there was a blind man who picked the guitar," Mrs. Hall recalled. "We were so enthusiastic over his music, he took an interest in us. We couldn't believe he could play that well, being blind. And my dad would give him money to teach us how to play."

The Everly Brothers' father, Ike Everly, was the closest in age – and friendship – to Mrs. Hall. "Uncle Ike used to think she was the grandest thing," said Shelba Jean, who is Mrs. Hall's daughter.

"I'm not near as good on the guitar as Ike was. He ran plumb off and left me," Mrs. Hall said. Ike and his brothers, Charles and Leonard, played guitar professionally.

"When Uncle Charlie died in 1946, he couldn't read and write but he was probably as good a rhythm player as you could find anywhere," Ted Wayne Everly said.

The boys also played whenever they got together. "I remember sometimes they'd practice out under the shade trees all day," Mrs. Hall said.

The brothers often practiced with Mose Rager and Merle Travis, two Muhlenberg natives who later became famous for their country music.

"They used to come over here and play, and they'd tap their heels like this, said Mrs. Gibson, thumping her foot against the bottom of Mrs. Hall's couch. "She used to fuss at them for wearing out a place on her couch," Mrs. Gibson said.

Mrs. Hall, who is 81, played an electric guitar until she hurt her arm in 1981, and she still plays acoustic guitar.

The next generation continued the tradition. "A lot of kids played marbles; other kids played basketball, or in the creek. We played music for fun," said Ted Wayne Everly.

Don and Phil Everly began performing at an early age with their parents, Ike and Margaret Everly. And the family soon left their home in Brownie, near Drakesboro, for bigger cities.

But Ike Everly kept bringing his two boys back to Muhlenberg County to visit the rest of the family.

And later, Ted Wayne Everly recalled with a chuckle, the brothers came back to Muhlenberg for a different reason.

"They came back for the girls," he said. "We used to triple-date. We would go hear the music, and then walk the girls home. Those are really nice memories."

Ted Wayne Everly said he once hoped to be a musician. "Then Don got so much better than me at the guitar, that he caused me to quit playing. I decided I needed to go into something else."

He still plays piano, guitar and banjo.

Like other Everly family members, Ted Wayne Everly plays by ear. "I took the fundamentals of music, and it was really difficult to play with music," he said.

Mrs. Gibson, who plays the piano, agrees. "I don't read music very well," she said.

Mrs. Gibson and her mother both play at church. "Most of my music has been for the church," Mrs. Hall said.

Churches have been the music halls for many of the Everlys. And the Everly Brothers still have a special respect for gospel music, says Ted Wayne Everly, pastor at the Lighthouse Baptist Church.

"Because of the family they never recorded it," said Ted Wayne Everly, who still keeps in close touch with the brothers. "There's a difference between music of the world and gospel music."

The "music of the world" included songs such as "Bye Bye Love," "(Till) I Kissed You," "When Will I Be Loved," and "Wake Up Little Susie."

The brothers split in July 1973. and didn't reunite until September 1983 They came to Muhlenberg County then, and sang at Drakesboro Elementary School. "The kids just swarmed them," Mrs. Hall said.

The tradition hasn't stopped. Isaac and Mary Delilah's grandchildren play instruments, and family gatherings still end in music, Hattie said.

"Every Everly plays – you can't be an Everly and not play," Ted Wayne said.





The Muhlenberg Everlys say Don and Phil were raised on music. Hattie Hall (top left) of Muhlenberg County says her nephews, Phil and Don Everly, inherited their talent. Ike and Margaret Everly (bottom left), and their young family played on the road and had a radio show (top right). Don and Phil Everly (bottom right) visit their Aunt Hattie Hall. Photos are courtesy of Mrs. Hall.

IN CONCERT – The Everly Brothers will play at the Executive Inn Rivermont in Owensboro at 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. tonight and Saturday. Tickets are \$31 .50 for dinner and show; \$21 for show only



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 1 July 1983, p.7D:

Everly Brothers reunite after 10 years

By Joe Edwards, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. The Everly Brothers, rock 'n' roll pioneers remembered for such hits as "Bye, Bye Love" and "Wake Up, Little Susie," are reuniting on stage after 10 years of separation.

A September concert in London will be the first time the two have sung together since 1973, when they broke up on stage at Knott's Berry Farm near Los Angeles.

Phil Everly, 44, said by telephone from his home in Hollywood that they made their decision this past spring in Nashville, where 46-year-old brother Don lives.

"We settled it in a family kind of way. ... A big hug did it," he said. "I guess fate just turned. It was a personal thing."

Their heyday began in 1957 with the hit song "Bye, Bye Love" and continued with hits like "Wake Up, Little Susie," "All I Have to Do Is Dream," "Bird Dog," "Problems," "(Tilt I Kissed You," "Let It Be Me," "Cathy's Clown," "When Will I Be Loved" (later recorded by Linda Ronstadt), "Devoted to You." "So Sad," "Walk Right Back" and "Crying in the Rain."

They have said they broke up for personal reasons involving their families, but Phil Everly still isn't ready to elaborate.

"I'll just mark it down and forget the yesterdays and move on to the tomorrows," he said Tuesday.

Don has an unlisted telephone number and was not available for comment on the reunion.

Phil said the reunion concert probably will be recorded for cable television in the United States and other countries, and also probably will be recorded for an album.

There likely will be followup concerts, he said.

He said the two chose the Royal Albert Hall in London because "we did a show there with Dad once."

The brothers are among the founders of rock 'n' roll, along with Elvis Presley and Bill Haley. Their high harmony and pounding guitar-playing led to teen-age riots at theaters.

The Beatles once referred to themselves as "the English Everly Brothers." And Bob Dylan was quoted as saying, "We owe these guys everything. They started it all."

Their parents Ike and Margaret were country performers and took them along to harvest jubilees, revivals, square dances and tent shows. After interrupting their careers to serve in the Marines in the mid-1960s, they concentrated on television and had a summer replacement show on CBS in 1970.

After breaking up, they pursued solo singing careers.



Times-Argus, Central City, KY, 21 February 1973:

The ghosts of old Brownie still remember Ike Everly

By Jerry Bledsoe

They'll tell you right off just why they're here. It's because, dadgumit, they get tired sitting around the big old house that the boys bought for them out in Nashville. Doing nothing. What kind of a way is that to live?

And, well, it's lonely, you know, with the boys gone and living their own lives; and they like to see them, of course.

But probably the biggest reason is that they'd like to get back to doing the thing they love most to do: pick and sing for folks. The way they used to do. When the boys were little, and all. Make a comeback. That's what they'd like to do.

"I feel like I can play and we can sing as good as we ever could. That's how I feel," says Ike Everly.

So Margaret and Ike Everly, mama and papa of the famous Everly Brothers, have come to Greensboro. Just to get out of the house. And to visit with their boys, Don and Phil (who are playing this week at the Plantation Supper Club). And maybe to pick and sing a little, too. The way they used to. They're serious about this comeback business.

They are in their motel room with a pot of coffee perking. They always keep a pot of coffee hot. It doesn't take long to realize that they are warm and homey. Mighty nice folks.

Ike Everly is 63 now. Recently he's let his white hair grow long over his ears and sprouted a bushy white mustache. People tell him it makes him look like Mark Twain. Except, of course, that Mark Twain never wore double - knit suits with broad ties and bright striped shirts, or picked a country-blues guitar.

Margaret Everly is 11 years younger than her husband, but she looks more than that. She could easily pass for the Everly Brothers' sister. She is still pretty, her skin is smooth, and no gray shows in her long, wavy, auburn hair.

Margaret and Ike Everly grew up one house apart in a little coal mining town in Western Kentucky called Brownie (it's no longer there).

"I kinda watched her grow up," grinned Ike. "You know . . . I had my eye on her."

Like her father, Ike Everly went to work in the mines. "But I never did like it," he said. "I guess I'm natural-born lazy. My daddy always told me, 'You should do something else, ain't nothing to this mining.'"

The something else for Ike Everly was music. He can't remember just when he learned to play the guitar, but it was when he was little. He remembers that his sister had a guitar. "But was right strict with it. I used to sneak and play it when I could. There were a lot of fellers around that played, you know. I learned just watching those other fellers. Feller by the name of Jones, I learned most of what I learned from him, and he learned from an old black man named Arnold Schultz, and he's been dead for years."

Ike Everly would play at church, at parties, at contests where the prize was a sack of flour or a work shirt. He was 19 when he first left Brownie to try to make it in the music business. He went to Chicago. "Feller give me a ride up there and told me he'd get me on the radio. We played on the radio a while but we didn't make no money." He returned home to work in the mines.

He was 26 when he married Margaret. She was 15. ("Say we married in August and I was 16 in November. That's better than saying I was 15.") They began singing together. But it was not until the boys had come along and started singing with them that they began to get anywhere. Don was 8 and Phil was 6 when the Everly Family got its first real singing job with radio station KMA in Shenandoah, Iowa.

For eight years they had a morning radio show and they traveled all over the midwest playing dates at fairs, new store openings, or whatever else was available. In 1953 they moved to a radio station in Knoxville, Tenn. By then, things had changed. The boys were in high school. Soon they would want to break away on their own. And the era when radio stations hired singers on their staffs was coming to a close.

"We could see the handwriting on the wall," says Mrs. Everly. The radio job ended after two years. "They just sorta quit us," says Ike. Ike and Margaret Everly went back to school. She learned to be a beautician and he a barber. Times were hard for the Everlys.

"Yeah," says Ike, "we seen some lean days."

Ike and Margaret wanted to help their boys to get a start in a music career and Ike went to see Chet Atkins (they call him Chester), who was playing at a fair in Knoxville. They didn't have the money to get in the fairgrounds so they had somebody call Chet over to the fence. "I told him, 'I got two boys here and I think got talent and I wish you'd try to help 'em.' He said, 'Ike, I'll do everything I can.' And he did just that. He sure did."

With Atkins' help, Don got two of the songs that he had written, recorded by other artists, and a little money started. Margaret went to work in a department store.

When they got their barber and beautician certificates in hand, Ike and Margaret packed up their car and took their boys to Nashville to get their careers started. Margaret went to work in a department store beauty shop and Ike began work at the first of a series of Nashville barbershops that he would get to know well. The boys started making the rounds.

It took a while. They put out one record that didn't go. But then they did Bye-Bye Love, and it was a hit. After that, the Everly Brothers were soaring. One hit after another. They bought their mama and papa a big house in Nashville and retired them.

"They wanted us to quit doing anything," says Mrs. Everly.

Which was nice at first. But after a while they began to get restless. Ike went back to cutting hair off and on, just to have something to do. "We found that retirement was the worst job of all," says Margaret.

About a year ago they decided what they really wanted to do. "We'd pass a lot of time just sitting, playing and singing for ourselves," says Ike. That was what they wanted to do--but for other people. They wanted to perform again.

So Ike went on the boys' TV show a couple of times and went out to Las Vegas with them once. Then he and Margaret went alone up to Chicago to a university workshop on country-blues music and they really enjoyed working for the young people. A couple of months ago they went on a tour to Europe with their boys, and Ike and Margaret performed alone in Holland, and again on the BBC in England. "That really put a shot in our arm," says Margaret.

So they're going to try to make a go of it again. "We do basically the same thing we did back in radio," says Ike.

They believe that people are ready again for the old-style country and blues songs that they do. And they say they're willing to go most anywhere to do them. "We want to get anywhere we can," says Ike.

"That's right," Margaret agrees. "We don't want to be doing nothing. Being back doing something we love--that's important."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 9 February 1958, p.9A:

**Their Sons Making Good, Everlys Try
To Help Other Youths In Music World**

By Emmett Rogers

One sure way to keep young, they say, is to work with young people.

That's what Ike and Margaret Everly, parents of the popular singing team, "The Everly Brothers" are doing these days. Having left the world of music a few years ago to help their boys get started on a career of their own, the elder Everlys found it is a hard business to stay out of.

As Ike put it: "We're too young to quit and too old to get a job" (in some other field).

These days, the Everlys are conducting a talent search in communities throughout the country. There is, they have found, considerable talent among youngsters with a yen for a musical career.

The Everlys will bring their talent search to Utica Thursday night, where near a score of acts are expected to perform at the high school there beginning at 8:15 p.m. Sponsored by the Eastern Star, half of the proceeds will go to the building fund of the Masonic Lodge of Utica.

Must Please Crowd

A television appearance, and more important, an opportunity to have an audition with a major recording company, awaits the winner of the local talent search. Acts must be crowd-pleasing, for the audience determines the winner.

The Everlys' part in promising young entertainers' climbs to fame comes later, when their contacts in the musical world enable them to get an audition for a recording made by the winners.

Recordings by winners in this area (talent searches have already been held in Morgantown and Central City are being made by Radio Station WOMI.

"If we can help any of these youngsters, we're going to do it," Ike says. And you can tell he means just what he says.

The Everlys' own youngsters – Don, 21, and Phil, 19 got their big break in April of 1957, when their recording of "Bye, Bye Love." Since then, Mom and Pop Everly haven't seen much of the boys, who are rarely home more than two or three days at a time.

Sons on Big Record

This past week they appeared on the television show, "The Big Record" with Patti Page. They had just come off a 17-day tour, headlining a show which included The Crickets, Paul Anka, the Hollywood Flames, Bill Justin and a flock of other entertainers.

At the first of the year, Mrs. Everly had gone to New York to be with the boys who were appearing in five shows daily at the Paramount Theatre and rehearsing for an appearance on the Ed Sullivan show of Jan. 5.

Now the boys are off on another tour, this time through Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois.

They are considering tours of England (with maybe a couple of weeks for a vacation in Switzerland) and Hawaii. They recently turned down a trip to Bermuda.

Busy Young Men

Ike calls them "pretty busy young men" and he doesn't get to see them as much as he would like to.

Mrs. Everly hopes they will get to settle down, and there are some signs of that already. They have started to buy hunting guns, and Ike bought them beagle pups.

Until the talent search got under way recently, the elder Everlys had been keeping the home fires burning in Madison, Tenn., near Nashville. Mrs. Everly tried to keep up with the boys' mail and there was the business of the two successful young men to look after,

Being on top hasn't turned the boys heads, Mrs. Everly says, "The only trouble is, you don't have enough time to yourself." Then, too, the boys got mobbed by young girls in New York City.

The Everly Brothers, despite their youth – they were 20 and 18 when their big break came – did not just explode into the music world from nowhere.

Started Early

From the time the boys were 6 and 8 years old, the Everlys had a family show on radio and television in Iowa. They did a summer stint on radio in Evansville, Ind., in 1951. Later they moved to Knoxville, Tenn., where they again appeared on radio and television.

The boys early heard the music of their father's guitar. Indeed, the long-time favorite of country music fans, Merle Travis, gives credit to Ike Everly for getting him started on the guitar.

The Everlys returned to their old home grounds recently to conduct a talent search in Central City. The crowd that turned out for the event "gave them a shot in the arm."

Ike recalls that in the days of the family show, "We played county fair dates, many a time from a flat-bed truck, and loved every minute of it."

Now the whole family is back in the business – in two teams.

The younger team is sticking close together, too, turning down movie, offers, waiting for a story that would suit two brothers.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 1 August 1957, p.2D:

Muhlenberg Countians Make Music For Nation

Don and Phil Everly Join Travis, Others In Melodic Fraternity

By Emmett Rogers

CENTRAL CITY, Ky. – The melodies that echo from the nature-endowed hills of Muhlenberg County inevitably seep into the blood of its people and pour forth again whenever they reach for a guitar and start up song.

One need not journey into the Green River country to hear this native talent, for it has become a staple of the entertainment world.

Tonight on Ed Sullivan's TV show, the Everly Brothers, Don, 20, and Phil, 18, will appear for the second time this summer. The source of their current popularity is the song, "Bye, Bye Love," which has already sold more than a million records. To commemorate this event, the brothers were presented with a gold record on Allen Freed's Rock and Roll show a few weeks ago.

Young as the brothers are, they have a performing musical background that stretches back through their boyhood and over four states. When the boys were quite small, the family left Muhlenberg County for Shenandoah, Iowa. For several years, the whole family, mother, father and two boys, sang country music on the radio there.

In 1951, they came to Evansville for a summer engagement, went back to Iowa for a year, then ventured to Knoxville, where the Brothers made their first record, "The Sun Keeps Shining" and "Keep A Loving Me" on the Columbia label. Columbia released the boys after about a year.

With a lifetime of singing behind them, the Everly boys had never given a thought to any other career.

The family moved to Nashville and before long the brothers had a contract with Cadence Records. Their first waxing on this label, "Bye, Bye Love." has been at the top of the hillbilly hit parade chart in Billboard magazine for several weeks.

The broad appeal of the record has also kept it on the pop hit parade chart in Billboard for ten weeks, and recently it was rated No. 2 there. It presently holds the No. 3 position.

(In Owensboro, the Wax Works reports it has been their best selling record for the last several weeks.)

Sudden popularity is keeping Don and Phil on the move right now with personal appearances in California, a date on the Vic Damone show Aug. 21, a tour of England in August, and a third appearance on the Ed Sullivan show Oct. 6.

The Everly brothers grew up to the singing and guitar playing of their father, Ike, and Merle Travis.

At the unveiling of a plaque in his honor in Muhlenberg County last summer, Travis paid special tribute to Ike Everly, who had helped him learn to play and sing. When the Everlys headed for Iowa and a radio singing career, Merle went on to become a top-notch country, or as it was called in those days, hillbilly singer. He made hit records of "Detour," "Divorce Me C.O.D." and "Kentucky Means Paradise." Travis, whose daughter Pat graduated from Owensboro Senior High School this year, also wrote many songs.

Perhaps the best known is "Sixteen Tons," written years ago, which achieved tremendous popularity when it was recorded two years ago. In recent years, Travis has worked chiefly with his guitar, collaborating with Hank Thompson on an instrumental, "Wildwood Flower." His most recent release is an album, "Merit Travis Guitar."

Another successful Muhlenberg County musician, a youngster, is Dave Rich, who now lives in Central City.

His best selling records have been "Lonely Street," released last fall, and "Red Sweater," which is still getting a good play from disc jockeys and on juke boxes.

Others among his recordings for RCA Victor are "Pretty Blue Eyes," "Ain't It Fine," "I Forgot," "I Think I'm Going To Die," "Darling, I'm Lonesome," and "I'm Sorry, Goodbye."

His music has taken him to Nashville, for the Grand Ole Opry; to the Hillbilly Homecoming last year; to Shreveport for the Louisiana Hayride; to Minneapolis; and to Chicago, where he appeared with Pee Wee King.

Dave left his work once to follow his ambition to become a minister, but the company which had him under contract recalled him.

A songwriter as well as a performer, Dave had the satisfaction of having one of his creations, "Free, Free" recorded by T. Tommy, a Nashville disc jockey and singer.

Dave, who is the youngest of five brothers, was born in Brier Creek. Only 21 now, he started playing the guitar professionally six years ago with his brother, James "Spider" Rich.

Spider plays with the Les Smithart band in Henderson and Evansville. For a while he toured with the Jam and Honey show from the Grand Ole Opry.

During World War II, one of his hands was badly injured by a ricocheting piece of metal. He overcame the difficulty and developed his hand to the point where he is now recognized as one of the best guitarists in the nation.

Another Muhlenberg County product is 20-year-old Billy Harlan, of Central City. Billy, who was born in Cleaton, started playing the guitar and singing when he was 13. He switched to the bass fiddle to play with Dave Rich for three years.

Since the first of the year he has been with Jim Reeves' band touring England, Germany, Newfoundland, Scotland, Canada and much of the United States. Reeves' band, which appears on the Grand Ole Opry show, has a record, "Four Walls," which climbed near the top on both the hillbilly and pop hit parades this week.



Left: TALENT SEARCH – Mr. and Mrs. Ike Everly take time out from their present life in the music world conducting talent searches to search the map of the broad United States, trying to keep up with their busy sons. Right: YOUNG TEAM – Singing is their business, and has been for most of their young lives. "The Everly Brothers" work hard at the entertaining that has brought them success.



Evansville Press, Evansville, IN, Sunday, 8 July 1951, p.13B:



Chas Nunn & Sons Milling Co. Makers of NUNN-BETTER Flour and Feeds
Presents A New Program Of Old Fashion and Homespun Music Monday Thru
Friday 12:30 to 1 P.M. W1KY— 820 K.Cs. and WIKY-FM— 104.1 M.Cs.



1950 Federal Census of Shenandoah, Page County, Iowa, sheet 13:

		relationship	age	birth place	residence & occupation
Everly, Ike M.		head	40	Kentucky	— residence 502 E. Nishna musician — string instruments; general entertainer — radio station
“	Margaret E.	wife	30	Kentucky	
“	I. Donald	son	13	Kentucky	
“	Phillip	son	11	Illinois	



1940 Federal Census of Chicago, Cook County, IL, p.22603B:

	relationship	age	birth place	residence & occupation
Everly, Isaac	head	30	Kentucky	musician; rents resident of KY in 1935
“ Margaret	wife	21	Kentucky	
“ Donald	son	3	Kentucky	
“ Phillip	son	1	Illinois	



Isaac Milford Everly (1908-1975) & Margaret Eva Embry (1919-2021)



Times-Argus, Central City, KY, Wednesday, 29 October 1975:

Ike Everly, noted country musician, dies on Oct. 22



Ike Everly

Veteran country music entertainer Isaac M. (Ike) Everly, father of the singing duo Phil and Don Everly, died at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 22 at Park View Hospital of pneumonia in Nashville, Tenn.

Mr. Everly and his wife, the former Margaret Embery, who survives, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary last month at their Brentwood home.

Mr. Everly, a singer and guitar player, had been semi-retired since the early 1970's.

He was born in Ohio County, Ky. April 29, 1908. He was a long-time entertainer and a member of the Musicians Union of Nashville.

Mr. Everly lived at 888 Forest Acres, Brentwood. The Everlys formerly lived in Brownie and Central City.

He was a veteran country music entertainer and at one time he taught a guitar class with students, including Merle Travis.

He had been in semiretirement. During his hey-day he headlined country music shows on WLS radio in Chicago and on several Knoxville stations.

He also taught his sons and Phil said, "Dad hardly got the recognition he deserved. He was our teacher and directed us during the early part of our career, and thus his influence as a guitarist and singer was felt around the world."

In addition to his wife and sons, he is survived by two brothers, Roland Everly and Leonard Everly, both of Drakesboro; three sisters, Mrs. G. W. Hall and Mrs. Emmitt Moore of Drakesboro, and Mrs. George Griffin of Central City; six grandchildren.

Services were at 10:30 a. m. Saturday at Tucker Funeral Home in Central City with the Rev. Roy Geary officiating. Burial was in Rose Hill Cemetery in Central City.



Woodlawn-Roesch-Patton Funeral Home & Woodlawn Memorial Park Obituary:

Margaret Eva Embry Everly, mother of Don and Phil Everly, passed away peacefully at her home in Nashville on December 6, 2021, at the age of 102. Born November 21, 1919, in Rockport, KY, she was raised in Muhlenberg County, KY. Margaret was married to her husband Ike at the age of 15 and a mother of two boys by the age of 20.

As “The Everly Family,” Ike, Margaret, Don, and Phil were known for performing on radio shows starting in the 1940s. Ike’s formidable thumb-picking guitar style along with the familial vocal harmonies had the family working their way from Kentucky, to Chicago, to Iowa, and eventually Knoxville, Tennessee. It was in Knoxville and finally Nashville where Margaret and Ike, along with the help of Chet Atkins, pushed for the boys to become the focal point. The Everly Brothers became an international success story because of Margaret’s drive and determination.

Margaret was preceded in death by husband Isaac (Ike) Milford Everly Jr; parents Louatress "Blue" Embry (Two Papa) and Eva Burden Embry (Two Mama) sons Donald (Don) Isaac Everly and Phillip (Phil) Everly; siblings Gladys Embry, Mavie Embry, Pauline Doss Wheatley, Dimple Moore, Zirkle Embery, James Kenneth Embry, Shirley McKinney Embry, Lucian “Prock” Embery, and Wanelta Miller.

She is survived by grandchildren Venetia Ember Everly, Stacy Dawn Everly, Erin Invicta Everly, Phillip Jason Everly—his wife Karina Everly, Edan Donald Everly—his wife Keri Everly, and Christopher Isaac Everly; great-grandchildren Arabella Clover Everly, Easan Everly Portman, Stirling Isaac Everly, Eres Invicta Portman, Jacqueline Ulla Everly, Lily Edan Everly, Victoria Jeanette Everly, and Esper Invicta Everly; multiple nieces and nephews including Barbara Minerva, Diana Sue Taylor, and Artie Doss; daughter-in-laws Patrice (Patti) Yvonne Everly (Phil) and Adela Garza Everly (Don)

Margaret was surrounded by an abundance of loving and supportive caretakers, neighbors, and friends. Additionally, in her position as the beloved matriarch of “The Everly Family” legacy, she cherished personal relationships with many of her sons' fans from around the world. She was a woman of strong faith as well as a great storyteller. God rewarded her with a long, healthy, and productive life. She was excitedly working on multiple manuscripts and future projects up until the day she passed. Margaret loved Nashville and considered it her home.

Mrs. Everly will be laid to rest at Woodlawn Mausoleum in Nashville. There will be no service at this time.





Everly Brothers monument is in front of the Music and Motorsports Museum at 174 Moreland Street – corner of North First and Morehead Streets in Central City, KY. The Muhlenberg County Music Museum in Central City features Everly Brothers memorabilia.



