

2022 Media Advisory:

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Grammy-winning songwriter Gary Nicholson named to Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame

While his name may not be instantly familiar, music aficionados will recognize a few of the more than 600 songs Nicholson has penned through the last four decades; songs that have been recorded by artists ranging from Willie Nelson and George Strait to Ringo Starr and Buddy Guy.

The two-time Grammy award winner and [Texas Heritage Songwriter's Hall of Fame](#) recipient generally takes a back seat to fame. He is “the man behind the song.” On October 30, Nicholson will be inducted into the prestigious [Nashville Songwriter's Hall of Fame](#), along with Shania Twain, Steve Wariner, Hillary Lindsey, and David Malloy. They join 213 previously honored songwriters, a virtual who's who of American music.

He graduated from South Garland High School in 1968, and knowing he wanted to pursue a career in music, Nicholson enrolled at the University of North Texas.

“My band at the time included the amazing steel guitar player, Larry White. Larry gave the Burritos’ steel player Sneaky Pete a tour of the MSA steel guitar factory in Dallas. After their show that night, Gram came over to our practice house and we played country music all night long. When we told him of our troubles as long hairs trying to play country music for rednecks that didn’t like hippies, and rock audiences that had no use for country music, he encouraged us to come to California, where there was a growing country-rock scene,” Nicholson recalls.

Two weeks later, Nicholson’s band arrived in Los Angeles. On their first night in town, Gram encouraged them to play the weekly talent show at the Palomino, and they won the fifty dollar prize.

Gary and his bass player, Garland native Wes Pritchett, formed a bluegrass trio, the Whitehorse Brothers, which expanded and became Uncle Jim’s Music, named for Wes’s uncle, who supported them financially and became their manager. The band was signed to Kapp Records, a division of MCA, for two albums in 1971.

Another friend from college, Jim Ed Norman, joined Uncle Jim’s Music for their second album. He had come to California as a member of the group Shiloh, which included Don Henley. After the Eagles’ outrageous success on the radio and Uncle Jim’s Music breaking up, Gary moved back to Garland and married his college sweetheart, Barbara, in 1973.

Through the 1970s in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Gary played a lot of country bars to make a living with Barbara teaching school. He wrote a country song “Jukebox Argument,” about a couple who were fighting and wouldn’t speak to each other but argued by playing songs back and forth on the jukebox. She played “Release Me” and he played “Stand By Your Man,” on and on with titles, ending with “She played ‘I’ll Get Over You’ and he played ‘Born To Lose.’”

Nicholson’s old college friend and bandmate, Jim Ed Norman produced Mickey Gilley’s record of that song for the “Urban Cowboy” movie soundtrack and signed Nicholson to his new publishing company in Nashville.

In August of 1980, Gary, Barbara and their two young sons moved to Nashville. Three years later, Norman became president of Warner Bros Records Nashville and Nicholson was signed to Tree Publishing, where he would be a staff writer for fifteen years before forming his own publishing company.

Today, after 42 years of songwriting, his songs have been recorded by many of his heroes and friends, including Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Bonnie Raitt, John Prine, Ringo Starr, BB King, Buddy Guy, Keb Mo, and a long list of artists. ([see discography](#))

Delbert McClinton has recorded 35 of the songs he and Nicholson have written together. “I am very proud of my body of work with Delbert. He has embodied the country and rhythm and blues that made rock and roll what it was to begin with. He is one of my major influences in music making.”

Nicholson has also produced five projects for Fort Worth native Delbert McClinton, winning Grammys® in the Best Contemporary Blues category for the albums, *Nothing Personal* in 2001, and *Cost of Living* in 2005. He has also produced successful albums for The Judds, Wynonna, Pam Tillis, Marcia Ball, Billy Joe Shaver, and others.

When notified of the upcoming induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame, among the most prestigious honors a songwriter can achieve, Nicholson said “I am a product of this environment, this community shaped me and gave me a way to live this dream. I credit this honor to the value of our songwriting community.”

A Sampling of Gary Nicholson Songs

“One More Last Chance” - Vince Gill
“Squeeze Me In” - Garth Brooks/Trisha Yearwood
“Same Kind of Crazy” - George Strait
“Worry B Gone” - Chris Stapleton
“Trouble With the Truth” - Patty Loveless
“Shadow of Doubt” - Bonnie Raitt
“Never Without You” - Ringo Starr
“He Won’t Ever Be Gone” - Willie Nelson
“Skin Deep” - Buddy Guy
“Follow The Money” - Buddy Guy/ James Taylor
“When Rita Leaves” - Delbert McClinton
“Falling And Flying” - Jeff Bridges

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