

## Bill DeJarnett

A few months ago, a member of our music community, Bill DeJarnett, passed away. As I was reading through all the musicians talking on social media about him, I realized he was truly a local legend.

We became a Music Friendly community back in December 2020. We realize what a rich music history we have. We are fortunate. I would like to share some of Bill's friends memories of him.  
-Donna Dow

Bill's family used to own DeJarnette's store on Washington and Main St. I met Bill and his sister as a young musician there, myself. He played in the Laymen which included other well-known musicians, Danny Baxley, Joe Pollaro and Mike Spence. Bill was a well-liked musician who loved to play and took his music very seriously. He played guitar, sang and was respectable on the fiddle too! From country to rock n roll you could always count on Bill giving his very best. I think Bill was the first rock 'n roll musician I ever saw wear a cowboy hat! He still kept his long hair though!!!

He was also blessed with a great sense of humor, which added to his likeable personality. (Sometimes his humor had a twist to it and required a little thought.)

He loved Denison, and was the go to guitar man for adjustments , accessories and advice ,while working at Victory music. If anyone...deserves to be noted as a "Local Legend", It is Bill DeJarnett. -Shelley McBride

Bill DeJarnett and I became business partners and opened Victory Music in 2002. To be honest, we didn't know each other that well at the time. But we didn't have a lot of money to invest, so I suppose the risk was low. Together we built Victory Music into what it is today. We were partners for 18 years, and I can tell you that in all that time, we never had a single argument-- never an angry word. Through the years, we became the best of friends. We helped each other, we covered for each other, and we listened to each other tell the same stories over and over again. We endured many of life's ups and downs together. And we managed the whole time to have a lot of fun. It was all part of our get rich slow plan, and it worked. Our workdays were filled with jokes and laughter. Bill was a good man, a good friend, and he will always be part of Victory Music. His memory will live on through all the students he taught, all the good words he brought back to life, all the music he shared, and all the people whose life he touched.  
-James Brown, business partner

Bill was more than a local musician. He was a mentor, a teacher, and very highly respected and loved in the music community. Bill has given more to people than he could ever imagine just doing what he did best—his music, talent, and knowledge. His father was a musician, his children are musicians, and his grandchildren are musicians.

He was part of the Bittersweet Band in the 70's, then a local band known as Dealers Choice. His passion and love for music was amazing. Passing on his musical talent to his children and grandchildren is a true blessing, and his legacy will forever live on. Bill was a gentle and kind soul and will be greatly missed.

- Bill's Obituary

I knew him from high school. We were in driver's ed together. I kept up with Bill's music career throughout the years and I feel he is an excellent choice for this inaugural award. I booked Bittersweet at Music on Main for a reunion in 2006. I have many memories from this evening, and the band did an excellent job. I recall making a guitar out of a ceiling fan motor housing weighing about 20 pounds, and after playing for an hour Bill said it was as good as anything he had. Of course, the sound was awesome with Bill playing it. He was a good friend. He always had time to talk to you and answer any questions you had about his music and his art.

-Gary Sewell

I met Bill when we were in high school when the Beatles were popular. As a beginning guitarist, I was highly motivated to get with others who knew how to play. Two friends told me about Bill who was already a functional player. We went to him and he was everything they described and more. He could not only play, he could bar chords—a major milestone for guitarists. We were speechless. Bill was already playing for audiences with his Dad's country and western band at the Texoma Roundup Club, and he was known as Little Billy DJ. The original band was Brand X who won the talent contest at Denison High School. They were local phenoms. Copperhead, the Insertions and Bittersweet were other bands. The VietNam war, family, and medical issues interrupted the music career. Bittersweet played both rock and roll and country and western at the Texoma Raquet Club which became the winning formula from 1976-1996. They were reunited in 2006 for a final gig at Music on Main in Downtown Denison.

-David Lowe

We had many talks at the music store. He had such cool stories from traveling and playing. I would go in for some guitar picks, and come out hours later.

-Morris McCann

When I first began giving guitar lessons Bill was giving lessons at B&N Music. He would send students who were more interested in Rock n Roll to me and I would send the ones that really wanted to learn Country Music to him. He really helped me establish my business. Bill was a great mentor and all-around nice guy!

-Dennis O'Toole

I have a lot of memories playing with his band Bittersweet back in the 70's. Bill was a pioneer of the Texoma Music Scene for sure.

-Bob Hash

I will truly miss my good friend and brother in music. Bill was one of the finest men I ever knew and would help anyone.

-Luther Thompson

When I came back out of the Navy and I first wanted to start playing music, I went to see Bittersweet play at Courtney's Over in Sherman. That was the very first time I ever got to sit in, and I sang the Cowboy Rides Away.

-Greg Guymon