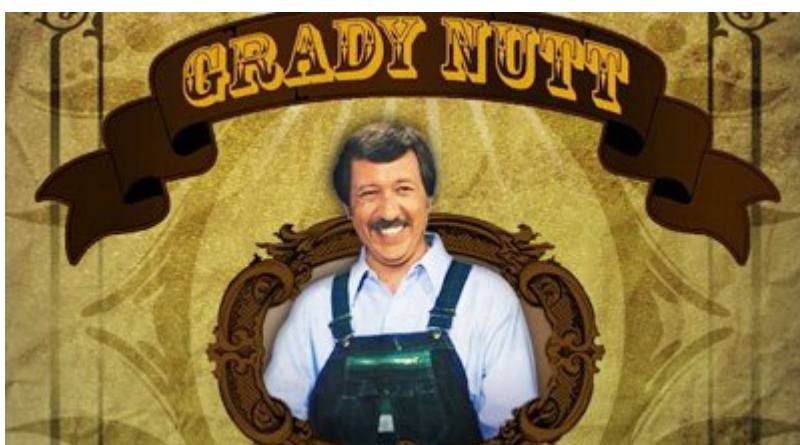


Website remembers humorist Grady Nutt

December 10, 2012

NASHVILLE (ABP)—Thirty years after the tragic death of television's "prime minister of humor," the family of Baptist comedian Grady Nutt has launched an official website in his honor.



The family of Baptist comedian Grady Nutt has launched an official website in his honor, www.gradynutt.com.

"For years, fans have asked us if we are ever going to release any of Grady's classic bits, or if we had any lost clips hidden in a vault somewhere," Nutt's widow, Eleanor, and sons Perry and Toby wrote in an introductory message at gradynutt.com. "Well, we couldn't think of a better time to launch our new website and release some of Grady's best material."

An ordained Baptist minister, Nutt, 48, was one of America's best-known entertainers when he died in a plane crash in 1982. His homespun stories about church-centered culture in the rural South became instant classics on Hee Haw, one of the most popular shows in television history.

The website launch coincided with the Dec. 7 release of a new commemorative two-CD compilation of material titled [Grady Nutt's 30th Anniversary Celebration](#).

"These are some of Dad's greatest bits," Perry Nutt said in a press release. "Listening to these stories takes you back to a time before digital, when all recordings were scratchy but real."

Along with the website and new recordings, the family is providing space for fans to interact on Facebook and Twitter.

"Over the years, we've heard from people around the world how Grady touched their lives," said Toby Nutt, Grady's other son. "We couldn't think of a better time to communicate with his fans and release some of Grady's best material."

Born Sept. 2, 1934, in Amarillo, Grady Nutt grew up as the oldest of four children in a devout church-going Baptist home. His father worked as a dairy salesman and operated a dry-cleaning business before going into the ministry. Grady was licensed as a minister at 13 and joked that being able to legally perform weddings made him popular in junior high.

He attended Wayland Baptist College in Plainview, where he sang in the International Choir, before transferring to Baylor University in Waco, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1957.

Nutt married his college sweetheart, Eleanor Wilson, of Memphis, Tenn., on June 18, 1957. Nutt served as minister of youth at First Baptist Church in Waco and later at Gaston Avenue Baptist Church in Dallas.

In 1960, he moved to Louisville, Ky., and attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he received his master's degree in 1964. He served as minister of music at Southside Baptist Church in Louisville and was pastor of Graefenburg Baptist Church in Kentucky for two years before

becoming assistant to the president at Southern Seminary in 1964.

Traveling to recruit students on college campuses across the South, Nutt began entertaining young people with humorous stories about churches and preachers, experiences from his early life and familiar events from the Bible.

Nutt's reputation as a speaker grew, leading to his "discovery" by Ralph Edwards, producer of the hit TV shows *Truth or Consequences* and *This Is Your Life*. His first appearance with Edwards led to more appearances, such as *The Mike Douglas Show*, a popular nationally syndicated daytime talk show. Nutt appeared on the show 11 times and hosted it when Douglas was unavailable.

In 1979, he joined the cast of *Hee Haw*, a country-music and comedy variety show set in fictional Kornfield Kounty. The program aired 1969-1971 on CBS before 20 years in local syndication and was viewed by 35 million people each week across 98 percent of the country.

In 1981, NBC aired *The Grady Nutt Show*, which starred Nutt as a minister of a local church, always involved in some kind of funny crisis.

Nutt boarded a charter flight after finishing a speaking engagement in Cullman, Ala., on the night of Nov. 23, 1982. The twin-engine Beechcraft Baron aircraft crashed immediately after takeoff, killing Nutt and two professional pilots. An official cause of the crash was never determined, but weather was thought to have been a factor.

More than 1,000 people attended Nutt's funeral at Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, where he was an active member. The overflow audience included both church friends and country music legends like Roy Acuff and Grandpa Jones.

After going into the entertainment field full-time in 1969 as a lecturer-

entertainer, Nutt averaged about 20 speaking engagements a month. He regularly spoke at Baptist student gatherings. He addressed the 1980 Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis and was featured at a world-hunger benefit concert during the 1982 SBC meeting in New Orleans.

Nutt recorded six albums and wrote five books, including a 1979 autobiography that summed up his life's journey with the joy of humor in the title [*So Good, So Far*](#). "And I can hardly wait for the next turn in the road," he concluded.