



## 2013 Induction Class



Country music star **Skeeter Davis** was born Mary Frances Penick on December 30th, 1931, in Dry Ridge, Kentucky. She was the first of seven children, her nickname "Skeeter" (short for mosquito) came from her grandfather. He thought she had a lot of extra energy, hence the name Skeeter.

Skeeter's family moved to Erlanger, Kentucky in 1947, where she met Betty Jack Davis and Wanda Rose Rader at Dixie Heights High School. They performed together at the church where Wanda's father was pastor. There they formed the group, The Davis Sisters. They started out performing on a Detroit radio station program called Barnyard Frolics. The Davis Sisters group began to travel but could not take Wanda so Skeeter and Betty made their way as a duet. They were signed to RCA Victor in 1951.

RCA Victor Producer Steve Sholes offered the Davis Sisters a recording contract in 1953 where they recorded their most successful release "I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know". The Single spent eight weeks at No. 1 on the country charts in '53. It also made it to #20 on the pop charts.

Shortly after the single began climbing the charts, the Davis Sisters were in a devastating car accident, fatally injuring Betty Jack Davis and seriously injuring Skeeter Davis. After Davis recovered, she and Betty's sister, Georgia, continued to perform as the Davis Sisters. They brought out more records together with no major hits, so Skeeter decided to leave the music industry and got married in 1956.

Fortunately, Davis's break from the world of music was short lived. She decided to re-enter the industry as a solo act in 1958. She toured with Ernest Tubb and returned to RCA Victor, and worked with guitarist and producer Chet Atkins. There, she recorded the song "Lost to a Geisha Girl" which was her first solo hit

reaching the top 15.

In 1959, Davis had a top 5 hit with "Set Him Free" and a top 20 hit with "Homebreaker". That was also the year that she joined the Grand Ole Opry, and was nominated for a Grammy Award for "Set Him Free," making her the first female country singer nominated for a Grammy.

From 1960 to 1962, Davis had several top ten hits with the songs "(I Can't Help You) I'm Falling Too", "My Last Date (With You)", "Where I Ought To Be" and "Optimistic". In 1960 "(I Can't Help You) I'm Falling Too" was her first hit on the pop charts as a solo artist. The song went all the way to the top 40, which was unheard of for a female country singer at the time. "My Last Date (With You)" was the second pop hit that she had as a solo artist, and it made it even further to the top 30. Both songs did very well on the country charts hitting no.2 and no.5.

Davis's biggest country pop crossover hit came in 1963, with "The End Of The World". The song barely missed the top of the country and pop charts, but it did top the adult contemporary charts. The album reached the top five on the R&B charts. The single sold over one million copies and was awarded a gold disc. "The End of the World" became Davis's signature song. That year, Davis also had another hit that reached no. 7 on the pop charts and no. 2 on the easy listening charts with "I Can't Stay Mad at You". During this time she also made several appearances on American Bandstand.

In 1964, Davis' had continued success with "I'm Saving My Love" and "Gonna Get Along With Ya Now" which was an updated cover of a 1956 hit by Patience and Prudence. These hits both made the top 10 country and made the top 50 Billboard pop charts. In '65, she recorded a duet with Bobby Bare called "A Dear John Letter" and also recorded quite a few albums. These albums included two tribute albums, I Love Flatt and Scruggs and Skeeter Davis Sings Buddy Holly. In '67, Davis made it back to the top 10 with "What Does it Take? (To Keep A Man Like You Satisfied)". Davis also achieved two more hits during the 60's with "Fuel to the Flame" and "There's a Fool Born Every Minute".

Davis received five Grammy Award nominations, including four for Best Female Country Vocal Performance with 1964 "He Says The Same Things To Me", 1965 "Sunglasses", 1967 "What Does It Take", and 1972 "One Tin Soldier". Davis was also an accomplished songwriter with almost 70 songs, which gained her two BMI awards for "Set Him Free" and "My Last Date With You".

In 1970, Davis had another hit with "I'm a Lover (Not a Fighter)", and another Duet with Bobby Bare with "Your Husband, My Wife". In '71, she had a hit with "Bus Fare To Kentucky". She received major success in Canada with "One Tin Soldier" hitting no. 2 on the easy listening charts and no. 4 on the country charts. Davis also began to tour many foreign countries in the '70's such as Barbados and Sweden where she was a big success. In 1973, she had a top 20 hit with "I Can't Believe it's All Over". She returned to the recording studio in '76 and briefly recorded with Mercury Records producing two singles including "I Love Us". In '78, Davis recorded the first of several albums for smaller labels which she did occasionally until the 1990's.

Sadly in 2004, Skeeter Davis passed away, but her legacy will live on in the hearts of music fans forever.