



Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.

May 16, 2017

Born and reared in Lubbock, Texas, from the time he was a little boy of eight, he wanted to either be in radio, a funeral director or a psychiatrist. Fortunately for the mortuary and medical fields at 15 he got a job in radio.

Neal ventured into the wide world of radio at Denver City, near Lubbock in November, 1961. The owner, Cal McAdams told him later that he, "...shouldn't have hired someone so young but doggone it you were good."

After stints at KBST in Big Spring and KECK, Odessa in 1963 he returned home to Lubbock and joined KLLL, one of the nation's first "modern" country stations. Neal replaced the guy who replaced Waylon Jennings. At KLLL, under the tutelage of his first mentor Sky Corbin -- one of the best programmers ever -- he learned how to mix music, balancing the styles and tempos and generally how to "talk good on the radio."

Neal took the nickname Moon from a comic strip character. At KLLL, all the deejays had nicknames except Waylon and he didn't because it sounded like "Wailin".

The major markets beckoned in 1966 and Ted Cramer hired him to do nights in Kansas City at KCKN, now KFKF. Working under Ted, another Country DeeJay Hall of Fame member, was like graduate school. Moon was named

music director in 1967 and from then on his life changed. He got acquainted with major record company executives and had the opportunity to meet many artists and actually help their careers launch or get a boost. In 1968 he was awarded two gold records for being the first to play HARPER VALLEY P.T.A. by Jeannie C. Riley and FOLSOM PRISON BLUES by Johnny Cash. Columbia Records Bob Johnston had plans to release THE FOLK SINGER by Cash as the primary "push" side. In those years Columbia would send him acetate recordings of their artists' releases before they pressed them to singles. When he heard the live version of FOLSOM, he immediately notified Johnston that was the side to chase. They did and he was happy to have played a quiet part in Johnny Cash's resurgence.

Two gentlemen whom he would always owe a debt of gratitude hired him as their first program director at KFDI in Wichita in 1969. Although he was there only four months he learned from two masters of marketing, Mike Lynch and Mike Oatman, about how you can merge a radio station's personality (referred to now as "stationality") with the listener so that they become almost one. It sounds metaphysical and it is.

While in Wichita he was contacted by Tom McEntee who published a Country music/radio column in the now defunct Cash Box magazine, a weekly trade. Tom and a few cronies were interested in starting a gathering of Country radio personnel and record folks to share ideas, problems and solutions. Moon gave his input and attended the very first Country Radio Seminar in 1970. Sixty people were in attendance and Tex Ritter was the keynote speaker. Today over 3,000 attend that annual conference.

WINN program director Dave Olson called from Louisville and asked him to come to Derby Town and be the morning guy. Sure! When he got there Dave was gone and he was made PD and Morning guy. Oh, they paid him \$5 a week more.

He was at WINN from 1969 - 1978, taking a two month vacation in San Diego and taking all his furniture with him. Yes, he was at KSON for a nanosecond. He was sure glad to get his old job back before they hired a replacement.

Moon had another mentor, Art Grunewald, the General Manager at WINN from 1974 to 1977. What a great guy. He helped him mature -- well as much as anyone could -- and taught him how to interact with people. Moon grew up in Texas and there if someone disagreed with you, well you'd just whip 'em. Not exactly the best way to get through life.

In April, 1977, he returned to Kansas City for a KCKN deejay reunion. Now, it was not at KCKN, but rather the 5K, non-direction behemoth WDAF which went on the air in February under Randy Michaels' brilliant direction and Ted Cramer's local input. While there Moon was asked by Randy and Ted if he would be interested in coming back there as P.D. They both had plans to go elsewhere in the company. Well, it took 15 excruciatingly long months but at last the call was placed in July of 1978 and on August 11 he started at WDAF. Under his tenure the station had over 27 straight number 1 Arbitron ratings.

Moon was the sixth programmer of WHN, New York. And, though it lasted only a year, the New York experience was invaluable in starting a consultancy. Moon and his wife Debra moved to Nashville where they remained for the next 13 years. In 1988 Moon was named one of the Country Radio's five most influential programmers. In 1991 he teamed up with Jeff Pollack of Pollack Media Group and eventually they had over 100 stations along with TNN and CMT as clients.

Two associates he learned so much from were Keith Hill, the penultimate professor of music scheduling and Michael O'Malley with whom he founded

FirstTrack of Nashville, the first firm to research and predict hits for the music industry. Among their proudest achievements were the successes of Shania Twain, Clay Walker, Tracy Lawrence and the resurgence of the career of Reba McEntire. Also they were the first to research a little fellow from Luttrell, TN. ... Kenny Chesney.

The opportunity to return to radio programming came in 1999 as Journal Broadcast Group purchased the radio empire of his old Wichita mentors, the original Mike and Mike. He was named Director of Country programming for Journal and spent six years with a great organization.

In 2005, Bob Moody, an old compatriot from the Louisville days and the consulting world notified him of an opening at WBKR, in Owensboro, KY. Regent Communications, headed by Bill Stakelin and the late Fred Murr, both Kentucky broadcasters from "back in the day" welcomed him warmly into their broadcasting fold there in the Big O.

Wow, every day he got to go and do what he got into radio for in the first place. Be on the air and have fun. Just what God intended.

In 2009 Moon was inducted into the Country Music DJ Hall of Fame. The Country Music DJ Hall of Fame is dedicated to the recognition of those individuals who have made significant contributions to the country radio industry over a twenty-five year period.

Moon leaves behind his wife Debra, his daughters, Kylie and Rene, brother Don, sister Betty and their families.

Tribute Wall



“ *Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.*

July 20, 2022 at 05:14 PM

DS

Moon Mullins was the man who gave me my first full-time gig on radio. WINN - Louisville. He did much more than just be a great P.D. He helped me with so many personal issues and always found time to give time to you when you needed it. RIP my old friend.

David Straub - November 27, 2024 at 04:41 PM

PY

“ *I speak for everyone from WDAF 61 Country in Kansas City when I say Moon was the best. Every single person at the station liked and respected him. He will live in our memories forever.*

Phil Young

Phil Young - July 30, 2021 at 07:36 PM

JM

“ *Jim Millican lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.*



Jim Millican - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

GR

“ I've known Moon for a long time. Since his days at WINN radio. I lost contact with him after he left Louisville but fofound him at WBKR in Owensboro. I even got to go to his retirement party. We still kept in touch after that.

Gail Applegate Rayborn - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

GR

“ Gail Applegate Rayborn lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



Gail Applegate Rayborn - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

GC

“ We are so sorry for your loss! Neal was a Wonderful Man! He always seemed to have a smile or grin on his face. I never saw him in a bad mood.He will truly be missed by everyone who knew him! May God bless y'all with peace and comfort!

Gary H Cloud - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

GC

“ Gary And Jane Cloud lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



Gary and Jane Cloud - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

LG

“ *Lurlene Glidewell lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.*



Lurlene Glidewell - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

MD

“ *Mike DeMarco lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.*



Mike DeMarco - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

DG

“ *Don Greathouse lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.*



Don Greathouse - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ *It's hard to write this. Moon was a mentor. He was a friend. Really, in the time we worked together he was almost like a father to me. For a few short years at KVOO in Tulsa, Moon Mullins was my boss and teacher. He taught me everything I know about*

Scott Woodson - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ Scott Woodson lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



Scott Woodson - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ Like so many radio personalities, Moon was very important to me as a mentor. I had worked for PD Ted Cramer, and been consulted by Moon, both at WKY in OKC. Two people who I respect more than anyone in radio. I was fortunate to have been tutored by the be

Joe McIntosh - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ Joe McIntosh lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



Joe McIntosh - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ I went on to become a news anchor/reporter and worked at the network level for many years before retiring and working in the corporate world. But before transitioning to news, starting out as a DJ, WINN and Moon Mullins as my first PD - giving me my fi

Dave "Jacob" Straub - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ Dave "Jacob" Straub lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



Dave "Jacob" Straub - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JJ

“ Jim Jordan lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



Jim Jordan - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

BS

“ Brandon Stein lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



Brandon Stein - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

FC

“ Faye Cloud lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



Faye Cloud - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ We never knew "Moon", but, we know and love his daughter and son-in-law, Rene and Herb. You were lucky to have him as a close relative.

Love, Mickey and Judy

Judy and Mickey Grnre - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

FB

“ Moon was my step brother for over 25 years. Our family's were friends and neighbors before that. I remember when he came back to Lubbock and joined KLLL and listening to him. He will be missed, I pray for his sister Betty and brother Don at this time of s

frances Bilbrey - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

FB

“ Frances Bilbrey lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



frances bilbrey - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

BS

“ I met Moon just owe 4 years ago. He quite literally saved my radio career. After a year of being, "on the beach", the industry term for bing fired, Moon through me a life line. From that point on, untill he retired from WBKR, Moon and I talked weekly on h

Brandon Stein - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

TE

“ Debra we have never met but I hope you have heard my name. Neal and I have been friends for 71 years he was the best friend I could ever ask for. I miss him so much and will keep you and the girls in my prayers

Tommy Edwards - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

AJ

“ Aubrey Johnson lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



Aubrey Johnson - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

TE

“ Tomm Edwards lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.



Tomm Edwards - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

KH

“ Moon was one of thee most important people in my radio career. I had the pleasure of working with him and sharing offices at Pollack Mullins Nashville in the 90s. Moon believed in God and more than this mortal life. I'm assuming he's in heaven ... "no one

Keith Hill - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

KH

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Keith Hill - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM

KH

“ *Keith Hill lit a candle in memory of Emmett Neal Mullins Jr.*



Keith Hill - August 08, 2018 at 12:00 AM