

## PAYING TRIBUTE TO CHARLIE LOUVIN

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute one of the great voices in American music and a resident of my hometown of Nashville: Charlie Louvin.

Charlie just celebrated his 79th birthday at a day-long celebration held at the Louvin Brothers Museum in Nashville last weekend. Folks from around the country came to wish Charlie well and to thank him for his many great musical accomplishments on stage as a performer, and to recognize his extraordinary songwriting achievements.

Charlie Louvin's career has spanned more than six decades and earned him a following that cuts across all music genres and generations.

Charlie Louvin was born Charlie Loudermilk in Alabama in 1927. Along with his older brother Ira, he grew up listening to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio at night and dreamed of a career on the stage of Opry.

Changing their name to Louvin, the brothers made their first musical performance on July 4th, 1940, playing background music for the merry-go-round at a country fair. From that time on, the Louvins became known for a distinctive style of harmony singing that blended gospel harmonies with country influences. They performed regularly across the South, particularly in Alabama and Tennessee, building a following that would earn them attention -- and a recording contract -- in Nashville.

From the mid-1950s through the early 1960s, the Louvin Brothers had over twenty entries on Billboard's country chart, including "Cash on the Barrelhead" and "You're Running Wild." The Louvins would achieve their childhood dream, invited to join the Grand Ole Opry in 1955. Ira Louvin would die in a tragic automobile accident in 1965 but Charlie would continue on his own to record, perform and win the hearts of music lovers everywhere.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, groups like The Byrds and country rocker Gram Parsons introduced rock fans to the Louvins' talents, recording some of their classic songs. In 2002, Charlie was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame and, the following year, artists as diverse as James Taylor, Patty Loveless, Merle Haggard and Dolly Parton joined together to pay tribute to the Louvins. The result was a special CD: "Livin', Lovin', Losin': Songs of the Louvin Brothers" that became a must-have recording for country and rock fans alike. Even today, Charlie is apt to be found on stage performing alongside the likes of Cake, the popular rock band he recently toured with, or on stage at the Opry.

As one of Nashville's most highly respected musicians and writers, I congratulate Charlie Louvin on his 79th birthday -- and for creating music that is just as relevant today as it was 50 years ago.

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Jim Cooper

Member of Congress