



*A Healthy*  
**HEART**  
*Is The Rhythm*  
*of Life*

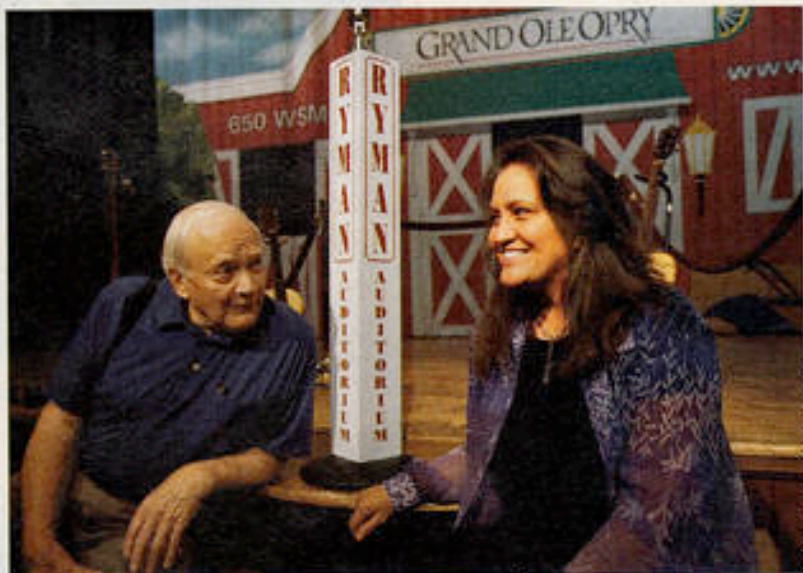
- Arthur J. Sutherland III, MD, FACC  
(Retired)
- Jack T. Hopkins, Jr., MD, FACC
- Steven L. Akins, MD, FACC
- Michael B. McDonald, MD, FACC
- Beverly Williams Danley, MD, FACC
- Keith G. Anderson, MD, FACC
- David G. Stewart, MD, FACC
- Bela B. Hackman, MD, FACC
- Claro F. Diaz, MD, FACC
- James J. Stamper, MD, FACC
- Galen G. Van Wyhe, MD, FACC
- Eduardo V. Basco, MD, FACC
- Antonio C. Quiroz, MD, FACC
- Ajay Dalal, MD, FACC
- James T. Litzow, MD, FACC
- Lisa J. Young, MD, FACC
- Maureen A. Smithers, MD, FACC
- J. Charles Lock, MSA,  
Executive Director

**Tell Your Doctor  
You Prefer Sutherland**



**901-763-0200**

Serving Baptist,  
Methodist and  
St. Francis Hospitals



PHOTOGRAPHY: ADAM RADNICK

Les Leverett served as the first official photographer for the Grand Ole Opry. His daughter, Libby Leverett-Crew, grew up backstage and followed in his photographic footsteps.

# Capturing Country on Film

**G**o ahead. Ask the first official Grand Ole Opry photographer how he landed that exalted gig. You won't get a skimpy how-and-when account from this natural-born storyteller.

As he chats in his daughter's Nashville home, surrounded by his family—wife Dot, daughter Libby Leverett-Crew, son-in-law and Nashville musician Larry, and granddaughter Alli—Les waxes eloquent. “Once I found out the photography job with National Life Insurance was going to involve photographing WSM radio, WSM television, and the Grand Ole Opry,” he says, “I hounded them to death until I got it.”

The Alabama native tells of heading out to a San Antonio photography school, GI bill in hand. He regales his audience with amusing anecdotes about his wife of 50-plus years and their move from Texas back to her hometown of Nashville. He glowingly describes Libby, the daughter who

**This father-and-daughter photography team recorded some of the music industry's finest performances and personalities.**

became his Opry photography sidekick. In between, the raconteur drops in titillating tidbits about his encounters with Nashville and non-Nashville royalty.

### Growing Up Country

Libby also exudes a winning way of telling tales—about her dad, her family, and her experience of growing up among the music industry elite. In *Saturday Nights With Daddy at the Opry* (Rutledge Hill Press, \$19.99), Libby conveys a funny, moving portrait of her unusual upbringing. In addition to her words, the book includes 200

### Antique Red & Black Hand Painted Table

LISA,  
 I purchased this  
 Fabulous Antique Red & Black  
 Hand-Painted Table at  
 Madison Lighting & Interiors.  
 It will go great with  
 the rug you found for me!  
 Love Always  
 John

# \$389

\*While Supplies Last

## MADISON

LIGHTING & INTERIORS

*...from front door to back door and every room in between.*

430 Carriage House Dr. Jackson, TN 38305  
 phone 731.661.0796

### Interior Design



10am - 5pm M-S 865.220.0253

200 Rutgers Avenue Oak Ridge, Tennessee

## The Keeping Room



black-and-white images of stellar Opry moments photographed by Les and Libby.

Dot remembers the time a 7-year-old friend invited Libby to the skating rink. When they returned to the Leverett home, the little girl's aunt asked about the big white Cadillac parked in the drive. "Libby said it belonged to Carl Butler and his wife, Pearl," Dot recalls. "The aunt said, 'The entertainer?' Libby said, 'Yes. Would you like to meet them?' The friend said, 'Oh, I couldn't do that.' Libby said, 'Why not? They're only people.'"

Libby laughs and says, "I grew up thinking everybody was ordinary." Les chuckles and adds, "By the time she realized they were celebrities, it was too late to be excited about it."

Les traveled a lot. His young daughter thought her daddy spent the days away from his family circling the sky in a plane. She says, "My friends from then would probably say, 'Do you remember that weird girl who waved to the airplanes all the time?'"

When Libby was a teenager, her dad asked her to help him with a shoot. It was with visiting artists Andy Warhol and Jamie Wyeth. "That night, he put the strap of a newly loaded camera around my neck..." she writes in her book. "I felt like he had placed an Olympic gold medal around my neck."

### The Art of Picture Taking

Les's demeanor served him well during his years as Opry's go-to guy for images. As he focused and fiddled with film, he called on the conversational black belt he possesses to quickly win over music performers, Hollywood stars, sports figures, and even the occasional U.S. president or two.

Luminaries passing through the hallowed halls of Ryman Auditorium couldn't resist Les's likability. If they landed in front of his lens, they gave up being stiff, irri-



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF LES LEVERETT

Les Leverett snapped the photos of Waylon Jennings (left) and Johnny Cash as they performed for a show on ABC-TV.

tated, or uncooperative. Under the spell of loquacious Les, intimate, natural-looking photographs resulted.

### Picture-Taking Philosophy

"It was photojournalism," muses Les about the career that won him a

Grammy in 1967. "But," he says of the Opry talents he met, "I'm proud to say we were and are friends too." Objectivity was never the goal of the Opry, onstage or off.

"It was more personal," Libby adds. "The photography was more intimate

## Art and Airplanes

The works of Les Leverett and Libby Leverett-Crew will be exhibited at the Nashville International Airport from September 1 to November 30. The display, arranged through the International Bluegrass Music Association, is part of the Arts in the Airport program. "Dad and I have never had an exhibit together," Libby says, "so I am thrilled."

Some things don't live up to your expectations

*Others are above and beyond*



Design and Installation by:

*Classic Cabinetry*

2525 Broad Street, Suite 101  
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37408  
(423) 266-0077

Plato Personalized Custom™

Any style, any color,  
any finish, any wood,  
any size, anywhere—  
anything less wouldn't be you.



Emmylou Harris performs with the guest of honor at Bill Monroe's 50th Opry anniversary in 1989. Les Leverett took the photo.

## Fred Remmers

RUG CLEANERS AND ORIENTAL GALLERY

*Serving the  
Mid-South  
since 1881*



- Investment Quality Semi-Antique and Antique rugs for sale
- Offering mothproofing, Scotchgarding, deodorizing, pads, and total restoration
- One of the top eight rug cleaners in the country recommended by *Oriental Rug Buyers Guide*

2186 Central Avenue • Memphis, TN 38104 • 901-278-3704 • Toll Free: 877-278-3704

because you knew the personality and you knew what you wanted to capture in the picture."

Timing was crucial. It became an art form to anticipate the instance when the face-covering mike would move away, or when the singer's countenance would lose its odd, distorted-from-singing expression.

That search for the optimum millisecond when all the faces in the frame looked good nearly led to disaster on one occasion. Les's eagle eye scanned a large gathering posed on a staircase, holding a sign. All eyes opened? Check. Smiles intact? Check! He clicked the shutter, satisfied. "It was a controlled shot," Libby says, smiling across the room at her dad. "What could go wrong? I went in the darkroom to make the first print," she says, "and their sign was upside down."

A sheepish Les admits, "I never noticed." Cropping and long darkroom hours corrected the situation. "It was the devil to print it," he says.

### These Days

Les, who retired recently, still works all the time, mainly providing stock photography for publications. His catalog of music industry greats prompts calls almost every week. Occasionally he shoots fresh images for CD covers and the like.

Libby still shoots occasionally, but lately she's focused on writing and raising Alli. She is currently searching for a publisher for her book, *Mother of an Angel*. The memoir details her infertility, miscarriage, and the open adoption of Alli. "She's very close to her birth family," says Libby of her daughter. The Leverett-Crew family often schedules events with Alli's birth mother, grandparents, and brothers.

The sixth-grader attends prestigious Harpeth Hall school (Minnie Pearl, Amy Grant, and Reese Witherspoon are among the school's alums). So far, Alli has shown an interest in photography, art, dance, acting, and especially music—she plays the violin and sings. "Alli

loves to go with Larry," says Libby, referring to her husband, a bassist and singer. Larry plays in the General Jackson Showboat orchestra and with his band, Club Fred/Manhattan Dance Orchestra.

"I told Alli I was going to make her the first African American young girl bluegrass fiddle player," Les says of his granddaughter. "She said, 'It's not a fiddle. It's a violin.' I said, 'It depends on whose playing it.'"

As usual, Les manages to get in the last word.

NANCY DORMAN-HICKSON

## Fame, Fortune, & Friends

Les Leverett and Libby Leverett-Crew understand how the razzle-dazzle of celebrity affects performers. "Recently I had to shoot a job with a Garth Brooks look-alike," Libby recalls. "He looked like the real deal. It was an experience to go with him from a building to a parking deck. He couldn't even get in his car."

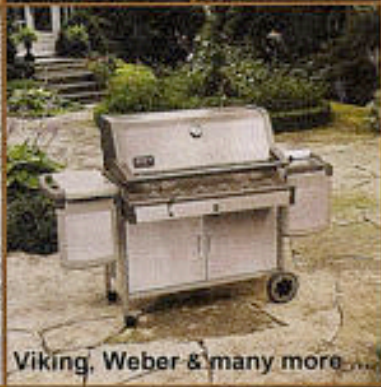
Neither photographer ever betrayed a friendship with performers by providing unflattering photos—although tabloids have waved big bucks in front of them to do so. "The *National Enquirer* called me one time, wanting a picture of Conway Twitty," says Les. "They said, 'We'll pay you well if you can find a picture of him and his girlfriend in front of a motel.' I said, 'I'm not going to do that.'" That wasn't Les the photojournalist speaking. That was Les, Grand Ole Opry family friend.

\* Glass Doors \* Grates \* Handmade Ornamental Ironwork \*

\* Buck Stoves \* Gas and Wood Burning Fireplaces \* Gas Logs \*



A vast selection of design styles!



Viking, Weber & many more...

\* Hearth Accessories \* Mail Boxes \* Mantles \* Outdoor Grills \*

\* Weather Vanes \* Umbrellas \* Screens \* Patio Furniture \*

**HAMILTON'S**  
Fireplace, Grills & Casual Furniture

4462 Summer Ave \* Memphis, TN  
Hours: Mon-Sat: 9 - 5  
(901) 683 - 6301

"We have everything your Hearth Desires"



## Picture your Perfect LVI Smile.



Picture yourself looking younger, more attractive and confident.

Don't trust your smile to just anyone. Dr. Beard takes into account your hopes and dreams to create the perfect smile for you!



423-476-6541

www.centerforcosmeticdentistry.com