



CONTACT:
Lee Hall, Great American Country
(865) 560-3853, lhall@scrippsnetworks.com

GAC Honors Barbara Mandrell, Country Music's "Consummate Entertainer"

GAC features beloved performer Barbara Mandrell in several programs, specials throughout the month

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- (September 15, 2006) -- Great American Country television network (GAC) joins a stellar array of country artists to honor Barbara Mandrell, one of country music's most beloved and accomplished performers. Throughout an illustrious career, Mandrell scored more than 75 major awards, recorded 30 albums, hosted a top-rated variety show and was the first artist to win back-to-back Entertainer of the Year awards from the Country Music Association. GAC will feature Mandrell's life and career in a number of specials and series during October.

"These programs will give GAC viewers the full, 360-degree view of a woman who's been called the consummate entertainer," says Sarah Trahern, GAC senior vice president of programming. "The sheer number of people who want to be a part of these tributes tells a lot about the high regard in which they hold Barbara Mandrell."

The tribute begins on October 14 (10 p.m. ET), when GAC presents "*Steppin' Out*," an Emmy-nominated special that features some of Mandrell's most memorable hits and showcases her diverse musical talents. During the two-hour extravaganza, captured at Nashville's Grand Ole Opry House in 1995, Mandrell sings, dances and plays a variety of instruments from guitar and banjo to saxophone.

On Sunday, October 15, a veritable "Who's Who" of top music stars comes together for "*She Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool: a Tribute to Barbara Mandrell*" (8 p.m. ET). More than a dozen artists tell their personal stories of how Mandrell influenced their careers, and why they decided to participate in a tribute album that includes many of Mandrell's signature hits. Featured performers include Kenny Chesney, Brad Paisely, Reba McEntire, LeAnn Rimes, Dierks Bentley, Sara Evans and many more.

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GAC devotes its entire primetime schedule to Mandrell on October 16. "Mandrell Monday" kicks off at 8 p.m. ET with an encore performance of *"She Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool: a Tribute to Barbara Mandrell."*

GAC's Lorianne Crook sits down with Mandrell for an exclusive one-on-one conversation in *"Barbara Mandrell: Best of the Best"* (9 p.m. ET), followed by a re-air of *"Steppin' Out"* at 10 p.m.

Host Bill Cody visits with Mandrell on the set of GAC's *"Master Series"* (Oct. 27, 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. ET).

The honors continue at the Grand Ole Opry the evening of Oct. 28 when Blaine Larsen, Terri Clark, Lorrie Morgan and others take the stage to shine the spotlight on Mandrell during *Grand Ole Opry Live* (8 p.m. ET / 9 p.m. PT).

"As a performer, Barbara Mandrell epitomized modern country music. She opened doors and exerted influence over many of today's stars," GAC's Trahern says.

Saturday, Oct. 14

10 p.m. ET / 11 p.m. PT

Steppin' Out

(Re-air: Oct. 16 @ 10 p.m. ET / 11 p.m. PT; Oct. 17 @ 6 p.m. ET)

GAC lets fans relive Barbara Mandrell's Las Vegas-style review in this two-hour Emmy-nominated special. First aired in 1995, the high-energy show includes some of the artist's most memorable hits. Mandrell sings, dances and plays a variety of instruments from the guitar to the saxophone.

Sunday, Oct. 15

8 p.m. ET / 9 p.m. PT

She Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool: a Tribute to Barbara Mandrell

(Re-air: Oct. 16 at 8 p.m. ET / 9 p.m. PT; Oct. 17 @ 4 p.m. ET)

The program documents the concept and production of a Mandrell tribute album, which hits the streets on Oct. 17. Featured artists include Kenny Chesney, Reba McEntire, Leann Rimes, Brad Paisley, Gretchen Wilson. Sara Evans, Dierks Bentley, Randy Owen, Terri Clark, Blaine Larsen, Lorrie Morgan and CeCe Winans.

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Monday, Oct. 16

9 p.m. ET / 10 p.m. PT

Barbara Mandrell: Best of the Best

(Re-air: Oct. 17 @ 5 p.m. ET)

GAC's Lorianne Crook sits down with Mandrell on the stage of Nashville's Ryman Auditorium for a one-on-one conversation about the artist's life and career.

Tuesday, Oct. 17

1:30 and 10 p.m. ET / 11 p.m. PT

On the Streets

GAC's *On the Streets* will include a segment on the release of the Barbara Mandrell tribute album that features more than one dozen performers from Kenny Chesney and LeAnn Rimes to Willie Nelson to CeCe Winans.

Friday, Oct. 27

10 a.m. and 3 p.m. ET

GAC Master Series

(Re-air: Oct. 29 @ 10 a.m. ET)

Barbara Mandrell guests on GAC's *Master Series* with host Bill Cody.

Saturday, Oct. 28

8 p.m. ET / 9 p.m. PT

Grand Ole Opry Live

(re-air: Oct. 29 @ noon ET; Oct. 31 at 9 p.m. ET / 10 p.m. PT)

The Grand Ole Opry joins the tribute to Barbara Mandrell in this special performance. Featured artists include Blaine Larsen, Terri Clark and Lorrie Morgan

About Great American Country

Great American Country is America's main street for the widest variety of country music, its artists and the lifestyles they influence. In addition to country music videos, GAC features original programming, special musical performances and live concerts, and is the exclusive television home of the Grand Ole Opry. GAC is available in more than 41 million households and online at <http://www.GACTV.com>.

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