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Grady Nutt a pacesetter for Christian comedy

PRINT EMAIL

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP)—Singer-songwriter Don McLean's 1970s hit record "American Pie" mourned the 1959 plane crash that killed rock-and-roll pioneers Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper as "the day the music died." For a generation of humor-loving Baptists, Nov. 23, 1982, marked a similar loss.



Grady Nutt

Grady Nutt, a Baptist minister who attained national fame as the "Prime Minister of Humor" in 1979 as a regular cast member of the popular television series "Hee Haw," was at the pinnacle of his career when he **died in a plane crash** after a speaking engagement in Alabama at age 48.

Nutt was a pillar of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., then the unofficial mother church of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, his alma mater and where he worked for a time as director of alumni affairs and assistant to the president. For many alumni who passed through there between his entry into the entertainment field in 1969 and his untimely death, Nutt was the gold standard for Christian comedy.

Speaking to 9,000 youth at a Baptist youth conference at a theme park in Hot Springs, Ark., just weeks before his death, Nutt introduced himself as an authority on young people.

"I've tried to be one most of my life," he quipped.

Nutt described asking once why Methodist kids were allowed to go to dances, while Baptist kids were not. The response, he said, was that once the Methodist kids started going to dances the next step was "the bushes," a euphemism for necking. The Baptist kids, he explained, just went straight to the bushes.

On a more serious note, Nutt advised young people to love others unconditionally.

"Jesus never told one person what they had

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to do the earn God’s love,” he said. “The healthiest thing that ever happens in a church happens when youth in a church become open to other young people.”

Nutt’s homespun storytelling style earned accolades including the **Grady Nutt Humor Award** presented in his honor by the Gospel Music Association, the Grady Nutt Endowment Fund at the University of Louisville and the **Grady Nutt Collection** of his works at Southern Seminary.

In his 1979 memoir, Nutt described his life’s journey with the joy of humor as “So, Good, So Far.”

“And I can hardly wait for the next turn in the road,” he concluded.

An unofficial reference page dedicated to Nutt is on the Internet at <http://www.the-cartoonist.com/Nutt/Nutt.html>.



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Grady Nutt

written by **clhess**, March 27, 2010

I had never heard of Grady Nutt until he was invited to speak at our church (FBC Lawton, OK) about a year before his tragic death. He sat across from my wife and I at supper before he spoke to the church. He was truly a great comedian but he ended his talk on a very serious note. We lost a great man.

GRADY NUTT

written by **UTHDOC**, March 30, 2010

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First met GRADY NUTT when he was a sophomore at Baylor. Our friendship continued til his untimely death. We used him with many of our youth activities at FBC, Cleburne. Later my ministry pardner, Rosemary Hoover & I worked in retreats, revivals and conferences. He was not only the greatest humorist of SBC life, but a uneqalled communicator. I once met his manager and told her my anger about Grady's death to which she replied her anger was at Grady for not taking the commercial return flight home after the engagement in Alabama. Souther Baptists have needed Grady during these last 30 years because his humor would have helped us through he "valley." Those of us who worked with him, knew and loved im miss him to this day! Even to this day my wife and our children loved to listen to the few recording of Grady and once again we roar with laughter and shed tears of delight and grief all the while thanking God for the gift of memories of Gray Nutt.

...

written by **feathers**, March 31, 2010



I remember Grady Nutt standing in our suitemates room and describing how he and his fellow cheerleaders were going to string up a dead hog on the goal posts, scald it, skin it, and cut it up for distribution to the poor at a home football game against Arkansas. We all laughed so hard that our sides hurt late into the night! Grady inspired my own Parker County comedy routine. Not up to Grady's caliber, but I usually make people laugh. We all miss him. Cy Fletcher, Baytown Baylor Class of '57, one of Grady's fellow 'angels sent from heaven.'

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