



Jeannie Seely - Miss Country Soul

By Ron Harman

Early in Jeannie Seely's career, music industry professionals praised her soul-inspired vocals which resulted in Jeannie being named "Miss Country Soul," a title still used today. In 2019, an honorary Doctor of Arts from Lincoln Memorial University was awarded to Jeannie for her many groundbreaking accomplishments in the music industry.

Born and raised in northwestern Pennsylvania, Jeannie received the "Most Promising Female Artist" award in 1964 from the Country and Western Academy which later became the Academy of Country Music. A year later Jeannie moved to Nashville where she signed with Monument Records, and her chart-topping hit "Don't Touch Me" resulted in Jeannie becoming only the third female country artist to receive a Grammy Award. After receiving the "Most Promising New Artist" awards from *Cashbox*, *Record World*, and *Billboard*, Jeannie subsequently went on to appear on *Billboard's* country singles chart for 13 consecutive years.

On September 16, 1967, Jeannie Seely was inducted as a member of the world-famous Grand Ole Opry. She was the first Pennsylvania native to become an Opry member, and then later became the first female to regularly host Opry segments. Widely recognized for changing the image of female country performers, Jeannie became the first person to wear a mini-skirt on the Opry stage. With fellow Opry member Jack Greene, Jeannie formed one of the most successful duets and road shows in country music history. In 2022 the Grand Ole Opry honored Jeannie for the most performances in the Opry's history, a record which will almost certainly remain intact forever.

A BMI-awarded songwriter, Jeannie's songs have been recorded by Country Music Hall of Fame members including Dottie West, Merle Haggard, Connie Smith, Ray Price, Willie Nelson, Faron Young, Ernest Tubb, Little Jimmy Dickens, and Hank Williams Jr. – as well as by artists ranging from Irma Thomas (the "Soul Queen of New Orleans") to Rhonda Vincent (the "Queen of Bluegrass"), from Chris LeDoux to Moe Bandy, and from Boys II Men to Seal. Jeannie's composition "Yours" was named "Song of the Year" at the 2022 Arkansas Country Music Awards.

The star of major stage productions including *Always*, *Patsy Cline*, *The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas*, and several others, Jeannie has served as a radio disc jockey on her own Armed Forces Network, traveled on military tours throughout Europe and Asia, and published her own book titled *Pieces Of A Puzzled Mind*. Recordings by Jeannie Seely have spanned seven decades from her Top 10 Billboard album *The Seely Style* to her Curb Records album *An American Classic* which includes her third duet with friend Willie Nelson. Jeannie appeared in Willie's movie *Honeysuckle Rose* and sang on the platinum soundtrack album. In 2018 Jeannie began hosting her own weekly show "Sundays with Seely" on the Willie's Roadhouse channel of SiriusXM.

In 2018 Jeannie was inducted into the Music City Walk of Fame which represents all genres of music. At the inaugural Influencing Women Awards Gala in 2019, the first "Standing Ovation Award" was presented to Jeannie – and then her name was added to the annual award. In 2022, Jeannie was the honored recipient of the Legacy Award at The Nashville Women in Film & Television WIFT ALICE Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner. In 2022 Jeannie was recognized on the nationally televised Country Music Association (CMA) Awards Show, in 2023 she received the CMA's prestigious Joe Talbot Award, and in 2024 she was honored by SOURCE with the esteemed Jo Walker-Meador Lifetime Achievement Award. Jeannie released her single "Suffertime" in 2024 accompanied by a music video and short documentary, and she established a new record as the vocalist with the longest timespan (60 years) between recording sessions at historic RCA Studio B on Music Row. Following Jeannie's 5,381st performance on the Grand Ole Opry in September 2024, the "Jeannie Seely Interchange" was dedicated at the Briley Parkway exit to the Grand Ole Opry House. In March 2025 Sony Music Publishing Nashville celebrated Jeannie during Women's History Month by releasing three reimagined versions of her songs as collaborations with rising female artists.

Throughout her career spanning seven decades, Jeannie has spearheaded efforts to support and enhance women's roles in the music industry. Instrumental in instilling an atmosphere of fellowship and camaraderie at the Grand Ole Opry – and in any music circle she enters – Jeannie connects with artists, musicians, songwriters, and industry personnel from all generations and backgrounds. As a trailblazer, an icon, and the oldest actively working female entertainer in country music, Jeannie continues her roles as a performer, songwriter, recording artist, producer, and host.