



INTERNATIONAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC ASSOCIATION

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## [Behind The Scenes At IBMA: Doyle Lawson's School of Bluegrass](#) <sup>[1]</sup>

Any longtime fan of Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver knows how many exceptional musicians and singers have passed through the Quicksilver line-up. And beyond all those who have shared the stage with Doyle, there are countless people who have been inspired, bought instruments, pored over albums and become passionate about bluegrass because of his band.

I am one of those people!

My Dad discovered Doc Watson sometime in the late 70's, I guess. He bought an Ovation guitar and learned to play a little bit. Eventually he started taking his family (I'm the youngest of three girls) to local shows and festivals. My parents become active in the regional bluegrass associations, he bought a camper, and alas? our summers were planned for the next 10-15 years. We headed out somewhere nearly every weekend. Among the regional events, we also would attend three or four big festivals, featuring all the bluegrass headliners of the day. One particular event was a festival in eastern Indiana called Stone Valley.

I was about ten years old and had been on this bluegrass parade for a couple years at this point. While Mom and Dad went to the stage, my focus was on finding the other kids, hitting the playground or fishing hole and cruising my bike all over the grounds. "Check in every two hours!" was my parental instruction, and I knew from past experience that I had better make it every hour and a half.

That pivotal afternoon, my punctual check-in led me to the stage area while the 1982 line-up of Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver was on stage: Doyle, of course, plus Terry Baucom, Jimmy Haley and the new guy, Randy Graham, on bass. My "check-in" turned into actually watching the whole set -- and that's when I caught the bluegrass bug for myself. I was an instant fan and the *Bluegrass Unlimited* magazine became my best friend. I would pore through it wishing I could go to every festival they played, search for dates when I could see them again, and save my money to buy the next album. Everyone in my family got tired of hearing the *Rock My Soul* record, but I didn't care!

One unsuspecting day I was leafing through the pages of *BU's* annual talent directory issue, and there it was: Doyle Lawson's mailing address! I proceeded to write to him several times, send pictures I colored (one of them was an owl, I think), tell him what show I would be at next, let him know which songs were my favorite, etc. I even let Doyle in on the latest in pre-teen fashion? *the friendship pin*. You remember them, right? The standard safety pin loaded with colorful beads and charms? If your tennis shoes were not covered in them, well, obviously, your poor soul just didn't have that many friends.

Granted, I never saw Doyle Lawson wear tennis shoes, but I'm sure he had a pair at home, and I imagine he placed that friendship pin proudly on his sneaker for all the world to see! Or more likely he thought, "What the heck is *this*???" and passed it on to his daughter, who no doubt would have been able to explain.

I eventually moved on to other bluegrass loves, crushes, and professions, but I often wonder how my life might be different if I had not timed that parental check-in so perfectly. I have



been blessed to be a part of this community for more than 30 years, as an artist, worker, leader and -- always -- as a passionate fan. I count myself among Doyle Lawson's students -- not because I played in his band, but because his music spoke to me.

I have never known if Doyle remembers the kid who sent him friendship pins and badly-colored pictures, or if he knew it was me. I guess he might now.

Join me in honoring 2012 Hall of Fame Inductee Doyle Lawson for ALL that he has inspired!

***Jill Crabtree, IBMA Convention Services Director***

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