

Sports & Entertainment

Remembering Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter and noted trailblazer Grand Ole Opry legend Jeannie Seely

Music Community Mourns
The Loss of Jeannie Seely
Colleagues share fond
memories of the star

NASHVILLE, Tenn. August 2, 2025— The country music community is mourning the loss of GRAMMY® Award-winning singer, songwriter, and trailblazing Grand Ole Opry legend Jeannie Seely, who passed away today at the age of 85.

Born July 6, 1940, in Titusville, Pennsylvania, Seely became a vital voice in country music’s evolution from the 1960s onward. With her 1966 breakthrough single “Don’t Touch Me”—penned by Hank Cochran—Seely earned a GRAMMY Award for Best Female Country Vocal Performance and established herself as a vocalist of deep emotional resonance and stylistic individuality. Affectionately nicknamed “Miss Country Soul,” Seely brought a new level of emotional intimacy and sophistication to the genre, paving the way for generations of female artists to follow.

In 1967, she became a member of the Grand Ole Opry, and later made history as the first woman to regularly host and emcee Opry segments—a major milestone in a traditionally male-dominated institution. Her presence and persistence helped usher in a more inclusive era for the revered in-



Jeannie Seely was one of a special few who became a legend in her own time. (Photo by Cyndi Hornsby)

stitution, and she remained one of its most dedicated and active members throughout her life. Seely found additional chart and touring success in the late 1960s and early 1970s with Jack Greene, forming a beloved duet partnership. Their hits, including “Wish I Didn’t Have to Miss You,” earned CMA nominations and solidified their place as one of country music’s most cherished vocal pairings. Over the course of her solo ca-

reer, Seely placed more than two dozen singles on the Billboard country charts, including enduring favorites like “Can I Sleep in Your Arms” (later famously recorded by Willie Nelson) and “Lucky Ladies.” She also enjoyed success as a songwriter—most notably penning “Leavin’ and Sayin’ Goodbye,” a Top 10 hit for Faron Young. Seely was also an outspoken advocate for artists’ rights and women’s equity in country

music. Her bold fashion choices, including being the first woman to wear a mini-skirt on the Opry stage, were emblematic of her unapologetic individuality and progressive spirit. In her later years, Seely experienced a career renaissance. She launched her own SiriusXM show, “Sundays with Seely,” and released several critically acclaimed albums, including

Written in Song and An American Classic, which featured duets with Willie Nelson, Ray Stevens, Steve Wariner, and Lorrie Morgan. Her recording “We’re Still Hangin’ In There Ain’t We Jessi”—featuring Jessi Colter and the late Jan Howard—was a testament to the enduring camaraderie and resilience of the women who helped shape country music.

Jeannie Seely’s legacy is defined not only by her artistic accomplishments but by her unwavering dedication to preserving and progressing country music. Her wit, wisdom, and warmth made her a beloved figure both on stage and off. She was a mentor, a trailblazer, a truth-teller, and a tireless performer—appearing on the Grand Ole Opry stage over 5,000 times, more than almost any other artist in history.

She is survived by many close friends, family members, her beloved cat, Corrie and the countless peers and protégés she inspired throughout her six-decade career.. She was preceded in death by her husband Gene Ward, parents Leo and Irene Seely, and siblings Donald, Bernard, and Mary Lou.

Her presence will be deeply missed, but her voice and spirit will live on in the music and memories she leaves behind.

Friends and colleagues share their fond memories of the star:

“I am praying for Jeannie Seely. I believe that she’s joined Jesus Christ, Gene Ward, Nora Lee Allen, Joe Bonsall, Rusty Golden, and all of our dear loved ones we’ve lost. She made a lasting impact on not only Nashville but the world. Her contribution to country music and the Grand Ole Opry will never be forgotten. Most don’t know, but the last date I had with my beautiful wife was a double date with Jeannie Seely and Gene Ward. My heart is breaking right now.” - Duane Allen / The Oak Ridge Boys

“We just lost one of the greatest singer/songwriter/entertainers of her generation. My beloved big sister, Jeannie Seely, has crossed over the river Jordan to be with Jesus. She will be in pain no longer. She was one of Sheila and my best friends and you could never hope to meet a better human being. She held the record for the all-time number of Grand Ole Opry appearances. She was a friend to everyone and had a razor sharp wit. The Opry won’t be the same without her. I’ll miss her terribly. No one will ever fill

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Entrepreneur Mike Repole joins the United Football League (UFL) ownership group ... from sports page 1

complishments are extraordinary, and his dynamic leadership will immediately elevate the league’s business and brand trajectory.”

Repole is a serial entrepreneur best known for co-founding vitaminwater, smartwater, and BOD-YARMOR, which collectively sold to The Coca-Cola Company for more than \$12 billion. He is currently the majority owner of NOBULL, the high-performance footwear and apparel company backed by Tom Brady; the owner of JUNKLESS, a better-for-you snacking brand; and founder of Repole Stable, one of the top horse racing stables in the world, home to six champions and multiple Breeders’ Cup and Belmont Stakes winners.

“Football has clearly established

“The UFL is thrilled to welcome a visionary like Mike Repole to our ownership group,” said Brandon. “Mike’s entrepreneurial accomplishments are extraordinary, and his dynamic leadership will immediately elevate the league’s business and brand trajectory.”

itself as America’s most popular sport, with tremendous momentum and demand,” said Repole. “There’s no better time than now to build a strong, sustainable spring league that unites players, teams, and fans. I’m honored to join the United Football League’s ownership group as we work to create something truly

lasting and game-changing.”

About the UFL

The United Football League (UFL) is the professional spring football league, born from the groundbreaking 2024 merger of the XFL and USFL. With the visionary backing of RedBird Capital Partners, FOX, Dany Garcia, Dwayne Johnson, ESPN and Mike Repole, the UFL is redefining the football landscape.

The UFL is committed to pushing the boundaries of the game and delivering an elevated experience for players, fans, and partners alike.

MEMPHIS, Tenn. August 5, 2025– University of Memphis running backs Greg Desrosiers Jr. and Sutton Smith have been named as preseason candidates for the 2025 Doak Walker Award, the PwC SMU Athletic Forum announced. The Forum annually presents the award to the nation’s most outstanding college running back.

Desrosiers Jr., a redshirt senior out of Lawrence, Mass., appeared in eight games for the Tigers last season while ranking third on the team in rushing attempts (31) and net yardage (228). In his breakout performance of the season, Desrosiers Jr. ran for 41 yards and caught eight passes for 84 yards with three touchdowns (1 rush, 2 rec) in the team’s 34-24 win over No. 17 Tulane.

Smith, a redshirt junior from Powder Springs, Ga., appeared in one game for Memphis before a season-ending injury last year.



Greg Desrosiers, Jr.

During the 2023 season, Smith appeared in all 13 games for the Tigers rushing 63 times for 305 yards with two touchdowns while adding in 18 receptions for 152 yards and another two scores. He had a season-high 115 yards on the ground on 18 carries and two touchdowns against Bethune-Cookman.

The PwC SMU Athletic Forum



Sutton Smith

Board of Directors will name ten semifinalists in November, and three finalists, as voted on by the Doak Walker Award National Selection Committee, will also be announced in November. The committee will cast a second vote in December to determine the recipient. The National Selection Committee will also be announced in November.

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