

Livin' Like a Millionaire – One Song at a Time ...

Livin' Like a Millionaire One Song at a Time

by Emerald Butler

The graphic features a blue header with the text "VOTED BEST RADIO PERSONALITY 5 YEARS IN A ROW". On the left is a circular seal from "THE MONROE NEWS" dated "2020" that says "BEST OF MONROE COUNTY" and "PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY'S CHOICE AWARDS". The main title "Bluegrass Time" is written in a large, blue, cursive font. Below it, in white, is "WITH JEFF TUTTLE AND FRIENDS". A cartoon illustration of Jeff Tuttle, a man with a grey beard and hair, is shown holding a white mug with the "NASH ICON" logo. The name "Tuttle" is written in white cursive on his black jacket. The background is a warm, golden field of tall grasses under a bright sun. On the left side, there is a vertical strip showing a close-up of a banjo's head and neck.

NASH ICON Saturdays 8am-Noon & 8pm-Midnight
presented by: Monroe Superstore, Milan Bluegrass Festival and KC Campground

Jeff Tuttle has so many stories, but to share them all, he

would have to write a book. "I would seriously like to have that done some time," Jeff mused. The 59-year-old radio DJ and entertainer acquired many of these stories during his tenure in Nashville and Ireland singing songs and shooting the breeze with country music legends like Waylon Jennings and Grandpa Jones. I suppose he paid for a few of them; like the time he ate two bowls of June Carter Cash's homemade tomato soup after meeting Johnny Cash in an Ace Hardware store. "I hate tomatoes," Jeff chuckled. Though perhaps nothing cost him quite as much as the phone calls to his mom back home in Monroe, Michigan. Especially during his two years stay across the pond. Today though, Jeff has brought his love for music back to his hometown and shares it with his neighbors through his Bluegrass, Country, and Gospel radio shows on 98.3 Nash Icon in Monroe.

"My dad played guitar, my brother, my aunt, and uncles. There was always music in our family, but it wasn't until my early twenties that I started singing country music locally for the first few years until I moved to Nashville and lived there for over 27 years. I first moved out to Ashland City and I immediately got into a band. We were playing down in Printers Alley for the first couple of years. Then after a couple of years, I started doing some tours playing casinos, festivals, and opening gigs. I came back and settled down in Nashville with a couple of house gigs like Tootsies, Legends Corner, The Wheel, and all the downtown Honky Tonks while doing some recording. I'd take any tour I could get." Jeff was first managed by legendary boxing trainer Emanuel "Manny" Steward.

"We were kind of like Charlie Pride and his story, but in reverse. People thought that Emanuel was bringing in this black country singer, but it was a white boy. I was with him for 37 years. He always told me and anyone he worked with that you can do whatever you determine to do."

In 2009, Jeff got an invitation to go to Ireland with Randy Travis and Martina McBride to do

the Irish Country music awards and three shows there in Ireland. "I went, and I ended up staying there two and a half years." Jeff had just finished a CD with Larry Butler and Steve Thomas. "It was like perfect timing." The record hit the charts, Larry got in with some good management, they let him stay in a brand-new house on the ocean, and he toured the country. "At first it was 'go, go, go!' and it's like 'wow it's working for him over there'. Then the last year my mom said 'hey, it's time to come home.' I went on a big guilt trip the first three months I was back like a big depression. It was challenging even though we did a skype every day."

When Jeff first moved back home, he started getting phone calls from family telling him that they were playing classic country music on the 98.3fm radio station. After so many phone calls, Jeff finally took a ride in his truck and searched out this station playing old and new country together.

"After a couple of months, I got an interview. They hired me in sales. I was in sales for probably the first 9 months then I talked them into giving me a Saturday evening show, and it was country. I asked them if I could play some gospel music on Sunday morning and they said, 'why don't you just do a gospel show?' I said I'd love to! So, I started the gospel show 5 years ago playing southern gospel, bluegrass gospel, and country gospel, and it snowballed like nothing I imagined!" Jeff's gospel show grew and grew then skyrocketed after he did an interview with Reba McEntire to debut her gospel album *Sing It Now: Songs Of Hope & Faith*. "It's crazy, I'm on the air 7 days a week. I do the morning show live Monday thru Friday. I play the traditional country music during the week, then I do the Bluegrass show on Saturday and the Gospel show on Friday."

Jeff shared that he's been in Nashville again this year recording a new album, and he plans to release the project next year. Until then, fans can hear his 2007 album *Livin' Like a Millionaire (ain't got a dime)* online, and he's live on-air every week at 983NashIcon.com.