



Charles Edward Blackwell

AUG 19, 1940 - OCT 23, 2017



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FLORAL HAVEN

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Chuck Blackwell, a Tulsa Sound icon and drummer who provided the beat for many rock 'n' roll greats of the 1960s and '70s, died Monday. He was 77. Blackwell was inducted into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame in 2014. Over his two decades as a full-time musician, the Tulsa native drummed for such acts as Leon Russell, Joe Cocker, bluesman Taj Mahal, Little Richard and the Everly Brothers, among countless others, picking up three gold albums along the way. Together with Russell, his late friend from Tulsa and frequent collaborator, Blackwell was one of the musicians most commonly associated with the Tulsa Sound — the name by which their distinct form of laid-back, R&B-influenced rock 'n' roll came to be known. Blackwell grew up in Tulsa and attended Central High School. He started playing music around town at age 13. He later recalled having to carry a note from his parents to show at bars so they would let him play. After graduating from Central in 1959, Blackwell moved to Los Angeles with Russell and fellow Tulsans David Gates and Johnny Williams. There, he established himself as one of the top session drummers in the business, and went on to tour the world with the Everly Brothers. By the mid-1960s Blackwell was even playing the drums on television as a featured musician on "Shindig!," an ABC musical variety series. In 1970, he joined Russell on the famously wild Joe Cocker tour that yielded the "Mad Dogs & Englishmen" live album and concert film. Blackwell was also featured on Cocker's hit version of "The Letter." During that same era, Blackwell appeared in a television special that, although long shelved, would attain legendary status. Shot in London in the late 1960s, the Rolling Stones' "Rock and Roll Circus" included Blackwell as a member of Taj Mahal's band. The concert special finally premiered in 1996 at the New York Film Festival, drawing high praise from music fans and critics. Blackwell eventually tired of being a working musician and the lifestyle that went with it. By the late 1970s, he had moved back to the Tulsa area. Together with his wife, Romaine, he owned and



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operated a successful longtime business, Blackwell's Stained Glass & Doors in Broken Arrow. He fell in love with creating stained and leaded glass art. "It's almost like music," he told the Tulsa World once. "You have as many colors and designs to choose from as you have notes in music. ... So the arts shake hands with one another." An added bonus of having his own business was that it allowed music to become fun again, he said. Blackwell resumed playing publicly, and over the past 30 years appeared off and on at shows around the area, drumming for the Fabulous Fleshtones, Oklahoma Stew and other acts. He also enjoyed the occasional reunion with faces from his musical past. When the Rolling Stones film premiered in New York, Blackwell was flown in for the event, where he was joined by Stones guitarist Keith Richards, Yoko Ono, Taj Mahal and others. "It was just an extravaganza," he said. More recently, in September 2015 Blackwell joined other "Mad Dogs & Englishmen" alumni to perform at a Virginia tribute concert for Cocker, who had died the preceding December. Blackwell was preceded in death by a brother, Ronny. Survivors include his wife; three children; four grandchildren; and two brothers, Roger and Jimmy. A Memorial Gathering to be held at the Floral Haven Family Center on Saturday, October 28, 2017 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m..



Tribute Wall

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DB

Dave & Lori Burns posted:

So sorry for your loss. We are friends with Chuck's son Justin. Dave & Lori Burns

October 28 at 4:47 AM

AB

Andrea Deason (Blackwell) posted:

I will miss you uncle Chuck. I love you. But I know you n daddy are up in heaven playing some tunes for grandma and grandpa Blackwell and you're all feeling great! Until we meet again.

October 27 at 11:30 AM

JP

Judy C Paden posted:

Fly high my friend. Will be listening for your rythm in the thunder. Thank you for your kindness.

October 26 at 2:45 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Charles by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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