

Troy Milburn Hatcher Obt.

b. 22 September 1925, Knoxville, Knox Co., TN – d. 27 June 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN. Troy Milburn Hatcher, s/o **Pvt. Luia M. Hatcher** (1889-1954), ((Pvt. Co C 26 Infantry), buried in Knoxville National Cemetery, Knoxville, Knox Co., TN, plot B-5315, Row 19 md on the 26th of December 1915, Knox Co., TN to **Delia Katie (Sebier) Hatcher Gilmer** (1896-1986), she also md on the 4th of January 1958, Anderson Co., TN to **Roy C. Gilmer** (1889-1973), both buried in Berry Highland Memorial Cemetery, Knoxville, Knox Co., TN.

(1930 census Akins St., Knoxville, Knox Co., TN: Dwl: 429 – **Luia Hatcher** is head of household, 40 yrs. old, TN, (age at 1st marriage 27), md to **Katie D.**, 33 yrs. old, TN, (19 yrs. old 1st marriage). Children: Carl L., 11 yrs. old; **Troy M.**, 4 6/12 yrs. old & Cecil D. Hatcher, 1 5/12 yrs. old. All born in TN. Also living in the household: Willis J. Hicks, roomer, 25 yrs. old, TN & Edna M. Anderson, roomer, 25 yrs. old, TN).

Troy Milburn Hatcher, age 94 of Cookeville, passed away Saturday June 27, 2020 at Cookeville Regional Medical Center. He was born September 22, 1925 in Knoxville, TN to the late Louis M. Hatcher and Delia Katie Sebier Hatcher.



Troy was an accomplished drummer. The following is an article published in the Classic Drummer Magazine: The late, great guitarist Chet Atkins is credited with creating what became known as "The Nashville Sound" in the early 60s. This 'sound', new and controversial at the time, was a mix of standard country with a prominent drum sound. It was more than just a simple beat to accompany the bass and rhythm guitar or the piano player's left hand common in country music of the late 50s and early 60s. The Nashville

Sound was actually birthed in 1957, and used this new and innovative approach to drumming in country music. Atkins credited this new sound not to a known Nashville drummer like Buddy Harmon, but to a relatively unknown drummer from Knoxville named Troy Hatcher.

Atkins had heard a demo of a couple of songs by Don Gibson, who was to become a famous songwriter and Country Music Hall of Fame inductee. The drummer used on the demo had a different sound with a different beat and Atkins wanted that sound. He invited Gibson and Hatcher to Nashville and made the first recordings of two songs that were to two giant hits for Atkins who was the newly appointed producer for RCA. The songs later went on to become global musical standards recorded by the likes of Ray Charles and Neil Young. Those songs were Oh Lonesome Me and I Can't Stop Loving You. Troy still has the two original 45 rpm demos framed along with a receipt dated 12/3/57 for a total of \$54.02 for what he likes to call his work as Gibson's "side man".

This was Atkins' first session as a full-fledged producer. With Gibson and Hatcher in the RCA studio, Atkins went against the conventions of country music and had his recording

engineer Jeff Miller place the microphone directly in the kick drum rather than rely solely on ambient or overhead microphones. Rather than using one of the session regulars at the time. Atkins recognized the innovative talents of Hatcher, favoring the more aggressive drumming that Hatcher had brought to Gibson' demos. It was a bold move for the time, considering that country music and especially the Grand Ole Opry still frowned on using any drums at all.

Hatcher met Atkins and Gibson years before as the studio drummer for the Midday Merry-Go-Round, a live show from WNOX, a radio station located in Knoxville. Atkins was a regular on the show; this is where he perfected his special and fingerpicking style he became known for. The show launched stars such as Kitty Wells, The Everly Brothers, Archie Campbell, Bill Carlisle, Homer and Jethro, and many others. During his time at WNOX, Hatcher also played with Atkins' jazz group, the Dixieland Swingsters and his side band, The String Dusters (which included Homer and Jethro and Doody Burns) doing local and regional jobs and promoting Chet's early recordings. And even though he backed up Gibson, Atkins, and others, and played country and western music on the Merry-Go-Round until its demise in 1962, Hatcher's first love and musical influence was big band.

Troy Hatcher had been an innovator long before he played with Atkins, Gibson, and the many other county stars he backed up as a sideman. For example, in the mid 40's, after a short stint with the Don Grimes Orchestra, he found himself in Jackson, Mississippi with a 10 piece band and a girl singer with no front man (Grimes had recently left on short notice for New York). So, having the most experience of all the band members, he emerges as a real innovator by becoming one of the first drummers to actually front a big band. The Troy Hatcher Orchestra played clubs, dinner theatres, dances, and shows for several years throughout the southeast and southwest.

It was during this time that he obtained the three original Zildjian cymbals he was to play and capture a very special sound from for the next 50 years. The cymbals had been originally purchased directly from Avedis Zildjian III, called "the Father of Cymbals" by Ray McKinley (who had played with Glen Miller and Dorsey Brothers). Hatcher had many firsts in his long career as a sideman. For example, in late 1949 Troy played a job with an accordion player at a benefit in Gatlinburg, Tn. The top billing that night was singer Patty Paige. During the break, the accordionist, also a songwriter asked Paige if she would like to sing a score of his new song, which she did. After the job she told them, "I am going right back to Chicago and record this song; I love it." The writer was Pee Wee King and the song was The Tennessee Waltz, a platinum selling hit for Paige and still a worldwide classic.

On another occasion, Hatcher accompanied Smilin Eddie Hill to Nashville for an audition on WSM, the radio station associated with the Grand Ole Opry. As soon as they backed up to the loading dock, the stage manager ran out of the dock and told them, "No drums on the Opry!" So, as Troy relaxed across the street at a local lounge, Eddie won a job as MC for WSM where he stayed for many years.

In 1953, the movie premier for So This is Love, the life story of Tennessee-born opera

singer Grace Moore was held at the Tennessee theatre in Knoxville. The movie's star Merv Griffin was to play piano and sing as part of the festivities, but the pit band had no trap drummer and Griffin said he would not go on without one. Troy, who was a member of the musician's union was quickly called in and accompanied Griffin who later remarked "best drumming I've had...thanks Troy!"

There were many other special moments in Troy's 60-plus year career, moments that had influence on many famous and not so famous musicians singers, songwriters, and stage acts. He was one of the fortunate 'unsung heroes' of classic drumming who played continuously for his entire career, and up until just recently could still burn up a trap set' at age 80!

Young drummers of today should know about and learn to appreciate on whose shoulders they stand; whether those shoulders are famous drummers like Buddy Harmon or Eddie Bayer or unsung Pioneers like Troy Hatcher.

Troy is survived by two sons, David (Lori) Hatcher of Cookeville, and Tim Hatcher of Wilmington, NC; two grandchildren, Alexander Hatcher of Nashville, and Katie (Alex) Ortiz of Murfreesboro; and great-granddaughter, Lucy Ortiz.

No services are planned. In lieu of gifts or flowers, please consider making a donation to the School of Performing Arts at Stevens Street Baptist Church, 377 Short Street, Cookeville, TN 38501 or the Knoxville Jazz Orchestra. www.knoxjazz.org

Hooper Huddleston and Horner Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. (931)526-6111 Share your thoughts and memories at www.hhhfunerals.com.

*Read more about the people & places in Putnam Co., TN & surrounding areas at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>