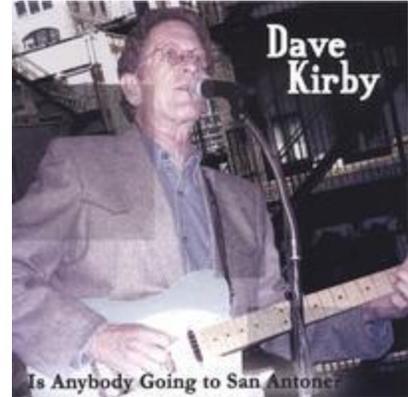


Dave Kirby

Dave Kirby was born in Brady, Texas, on July 10, 1938, into a musical family. His talent was apparent at an early age, and was nurtured most notably by his uncle, Big Bill Lister. Lister was a professional touring musician, who played with Hank Williams in addition to recording and performing under his own name. Recognizing young Kirby's talent and dedication, Lister began to teach him guitar and songwriting when the boy was barely eight years old. Kirby was a natural, and when Lister played close to his home, he would bring the prodigy up on stage to play.



In 1955, Kirby moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where began his professional career by taking a job performing on a local radio station. Influenced by the music of Carl Smith, Mac Wiseman, Ernest Tubb Merle Travis, Kirby began to develop his own style, and to compose his own songs. His first effort, "Down by the River," met with great success. Buck Owens recorded it in 1963, and again shortly thereafter as a duet with Rose Maddox, who also recorded it herself, as did Porter Wagoner. His prowess on guitar landed him a job in Willie Nelson's band. Nelson, along with Hank Cochran, became a great supporter of Kirby's songwriting, and encouraged him to move to Nashville. Kirby took their advice in 1967.

In Nashville, Kirby immediately found success as a session guitarist, playing on records by Dolly Parton, Merle Haggard, Janie Fricke, Ringo Star, Emmylou Harris, Don Williams, Kenny Rogers, Willie Nelson, Crystal Gayle, Wynn Stewart, Ray Price, Moe Bandy, Ronnie Milsap, Connie Smith and Kenny Price. Although in frequent demand, Kirby continued to write songs, and was hired by Ray Price's publishing firm, Pamper Music, joining such songwriting legends as Nelson and Cochran as well as Roger Miller and Harlan Howard.

In 1967, Kirby and Glenn Martin wrote "(Is Anybody Going To) San Antonio," but it was not recorded and released until 1970, when Charlie Pride took it to number one on the country charts, where it stayed for two weeks. This marked the beginning of an enormous run of success as a songwriter. Kirby penned over three hundred songs, including hits for Merle Haggard ("Sidewalks of Chicago"), George Jones and Tammy Wynette ("God's Gonna Getcha [For That]"), Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings ("There Ain't No Good Chain Gang"), George Strait ("Leavin's Been Coming For A Long Long Time"), and Gene Watson ("Memories to Burn"). Among the countless others to record Kirby's compositions are Ray Charles, Moe Bandy, Norma Jean, Porter Wagoner, Johnny Russell, Texas Tornados, George Jones, Faron Young, Charley Walker, Johnny Rodriguez, Cal Smith, John Anderson, Kitty Wells, Razy Bailey, Jo-El Sonnier, Curtis Potter, and Hank Thompson.

Throughout his astounding success as a session guitarist and hit songwriter, Kirby continued to record as a solo act for labels such as Boone, Capitol, and Dimension. On Monument Records in 1969 Kirby had a minor hit with "Her and the Car and the Mobile Home." Dot Records released his album *Writer, Singer, Picker* in 1973.

In 1985 Kirby wed Leona Williams, who had previously been Mrs. Merle Haggard, and together they entertained throughout the country while still maintaining a heavy writing schedule and session work. They eventually settled in Branson, Missouri. Dave Kirby died April 17, 2004, with his first new album in two decades, *Mr. Songwriter*, appearing posthumously a few months later.