

# GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

## Marvine Loving (1925 – 2019) By Bobby Taylor

Marvine Loving of Cross Lanes (Kanawha County) passed away on February 7, 2019, at age 93. Marvine and John, her husband of 50 years, played music for decades across West Virginia and beyond. They were a wonderful addition to the stage acts, with a special blend of Carter Family songs performed in a first-rate manner. The Carters' soul and spirit were kept intact with the Lovings' beautiful personal touches. Marvine was a good guitar player, not only on the Carter songs but also on fiddle tunes. I loved her backup playing—tasteful with solid timing to make the fiddle sound its best.

Each time I visited with Marvine and John, I found a wealth of information. They had many recordings of musicians I thought either did not exist or had been lost in time. Along with the recordings was a vast knowledge of all the performers. Marvine was a quiet soul, offering a response only after everyone else had given their say. She would kindly present her additions to the conversation, and her recall of minute details was nearly 100%.

Marvine and John were personal friends with many of the top bluegrass stars. In the 1960s, Marvine became the first president of the Bill Monroe Fan Club. She offered Monroe advice on how to receive and treat fans. Some of the big stars remembered his first questions to them. Among the questions Marvine urged him to ask his fans were "How long have you been listening to bluegrass music?" "Which song do you like best?" (The answer was usually "Mule Skinner Blues.") "Do you play music?" "How long have you been playing?" "Who is the best fiddle player?" (The answer was usually Kenny Baker.) She helped Monroe receive a kind and positive reception from his fans, resulting in more record sales and greater popularity.



Marvine and John Loving, 1982 Vandalia Gathering.  
Photo by Rick Lee.

Marvine and John traveled regularly to shows and fiddle contests. They made a CD of their music and played several Vandalia Gathering concerts. They both shared their knowledge and talents wherever they traveled. A valuable part of West Virginia's culture, they have helped preserve traditional music for future generations.

Marvine had the cherished homespun skills of yesteryear. She was an avid crafter and a wonderful cook. She kept busy with her many projects. She had great love for her family and friends. She generously shared her knowledge, talent, skills, and hospitality with everyone she met. When I think of Marvine, I think of someone who made the world smile with her. She was an immediate friend to everyone. "Keep on the Sunny Side" was one of Marvine and John's favorites. I will fondly remember her for that very fitting and beautiful song.

# The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars



The West Virginia Mine Wars were a formative experience in our state's history and a landmark event in American labor history. GOLDENSEAL has published some of the best articles ever written on this subject. In 1991, former editor Ken Sullivan and Pictorial Histories produced a compilation of 17 articles, including dozens of historical photos.

The large-format 109-page paperbound book sells for \$12.95, plus \$2 per copy shipping. West Virginia residents, please add 7% state sales tax (total \$15.86 per book).

Please make check or money order payable to GOLDENSEAL. Send to:

GOLDENSEAL  
West Virginia Mine Wars  
The Culture Center  
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East  
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

Please provide a complete mailing address.

You may also order the book with a Visa, MasterCard, or Discover by calling the GOLDENSEAL office at 304-558-0220.

## Mark Payne (1956 – 2019) By Paul Gartner



Photo by Michael Keller.

Mountain State musician Roy Mark Payne died September 29, 2019, at Hubbard Hospice House of esophageal cancer. Mark was born August 17, 1956, to Roy Lee Payne and Ruth Barr Payne. Mark graduated from Winfield High School in 1974 and earned a bachelor's degree in political science from West Virginia University in 1978. Fiddler Bobby Taylor remembers meeting an 18-year-old Mark: "At that young age, he had impeccable timing and taste."

A few years later, Mark joined Bobby as a member of the Green Meadow String Band, fondly recalled by fans of the Vandalia Gathering. Mark played three-finger banjo. "He knew when to play and when to lay back. He was very focused," Bobby says.

A longtime regular at Vandalia, Mark went on to play banjo and guitar on more than two-dozen recordings with old-time music greats such as Wilson Douglas, Elmer Bird, Bobby Taylor, Glen Smith, and Woody Simmons (all Vandalia Award recipients). He was a member of the traditional bluegrass band Gold Rush and, more recently, the old-time string bands Gandydancer and High Ridge Ramblers. "Mark's rock-solid timing on guitar was as good as it gets," Bobby says.

Mark served as program officer and developed statewide programs for the West Virginia Humanities Council. He also was executive director of Museum in the Community in Hurricane and arts-in-education coordinator for the West Virginia Commission on the Arts.

He helped take West Virginia music around the nation and world, with performances in Gainsborough, England; California; New York City; the Kennedy Center; the Library of Congress; and the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes in Port Townsend, Washington. He also performed at the state memorial service for U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd.

A supporter of musicians young and old, he helped judge competitions at the Appalachian String Band Music Festival, the State Folk Festival, and the Mountain State Forest Festival. Mark is survived by his wife, Lois Alexander Payne, and siblings Beverly Hill and Steven Payne.

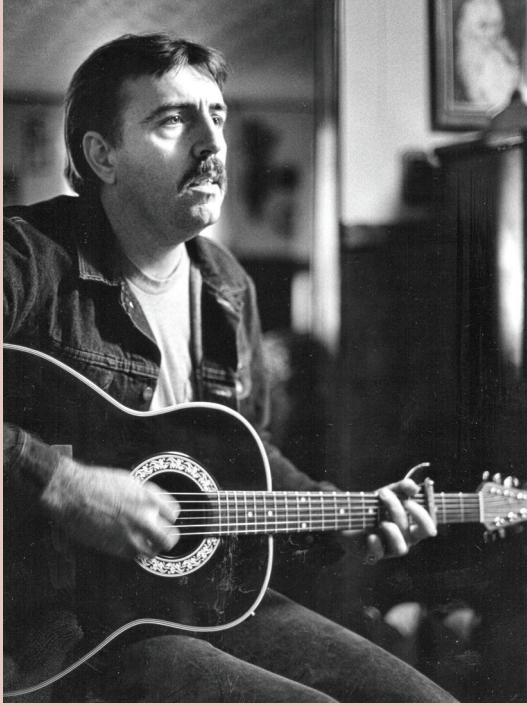


Photo by Michael Keller.

## Edgar Napier Jr. (1950 – 2019)

Edgar passed away August 25, 2019, at age 68. A resident of East Lynn (Wayne County), he was featured in a Spring 1986 story about his gospel-singing mother-in-law, Letha Blankenship (written by Tim R. Massey). Edgar played guitar and wrote music for Letha's family group. One of his compositions, "Heaven's Hymn," was inspired by a sermon. "It took me about five minutes," Edgar recalled. "It wasn't me, it was God. He gave me the words, I just wrote them down." When he wasn't playing or writing music, Edgar was working for Pilgrim Glass and then the Department of Highways. In recent years, he and his daughter Angie Sutherland started performing informally as the Front Porch Singers. His son Clinton says, "He and my sister started singing songs on his front porch, and my sister started putting them on Facebook so she would have memories of him." One of their songs, "Lighthouse," currently has nearly four-million views on Facebook. Angie and Clinton plan to continue ministering in their father's memory. You can check out her YouTube channel. Just go to YouTube and search for Angie Sutherland. -ed.



Doris Jean and Bill Browning. Courtesy of the family.

## Doris Jean Browning (1931 – 2019)

Doris Jean of Hurricane (Putnam County) passed away October 17, 2019. She was the wife of Bill Browning, best remembered for his classic bluegrass song "Dark Hollow" and Teays Valley music studio [see "Bill Browning" by Paul Gartner, Winter 2017]. After the song became a chart topper for Jimmie Skinner and others, Bill formed a new group, The Dark Hollow Boys, with Doris singing backup. After their touring days ended, Doris helped Bill build and run the Midway Recording Studio, only a stone's throw from their house. Doris often operated the studio on her own and raised four children while Bill was driving a truck to pay the bills. After Bill's death in 1977, Doris took great joy in driving a school bus, relishing her time with the young people. -ed.