



STORIES THAT INSPIRE

Life Lessons from Older Adults

In each *CSA Journal* we will present a story or two about individuals who have shifted the way we think of older adults. We hope you will enjoy these insights and share them with others. Each story will attempt to provide a link or QR Code connection to further information or videos on these inspirational stories.

BY ERIKA T. WALKER, MBA, MSSED, CSA

Seasoned Celebrity Singers Making a Difference

This column will focus on inspiring older adult celebrity singers. The baby boomers often think of themselves as the “music generation” who introduced the world to new genres, artists, and styles that stand out from previous generations. As they age, clearly their music icons are doing the same. Some might say many of these artists, whether from the Greatest Generation or the Baby Boomers, have been lucky and at the right place at the right time—not really inspiring. Perhaps the following stories will lead you to re-evaluate that viewpoint.

Tony Bennett: Eighty-nine and Still Strong

Born in Astoria, Queens, New York on August 3, 1926, Tony Bennett (Anthony Benedetto) grew up in a poor family and started his career as a singing waiter. After serving in the Army infantry during World War II, he took advantage of the G.I. Bill and studied singing and acting at the American Theatre Wing. During this period, his vocal coach, Mimi Spear, offered some advice that he took to heart: Don't imitate other singers. Emulate instrumentalists instead.

Bennett led a troubled life at times with bouts of substance abuse, but overcame their influence and has become one of the most unexpected “rock stars” of our time. Clearly, his success is evidenced by his eighteen Grammy Awards, and career hits including his signature song, “I Left My Heart in San Francisco.” Now with his career rebounding, he is currently known for appearances on *The Simpsons*, and performances with leading artists such as Lady Gaga and Michael Bublé.

Like other successful performers wanting to make a difference, Tony Bennett has given back through creation of the Exploring the Arts Foundation (ETA) which he began in 1999. Concerned by the reduction in support for arts education, he and his wife, Susan Benedetto, also helped to develop the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts in Queens, a public high school dedicated to teaching the performing arts, which opened in 2001 and has a very high graduation rate.

The ETA Foundation works collaboratively with public high schools throughout New York City and Los Angeles to help them build high-quality, school-day arts program, and to provide additional, out-of-school arts opportunities for their students. At the heart of ETA's work is a vision to provide more equitable access and opportunity in the arts to underserved youth. As Bennett states in the Exploring the ARTS website, “We are helping students understand the value of the arts one step at a time through truth and beauty.”

YouTube: Tony Bennett Brings Music into the Classroom. NBC News, October 4, 2013. <http://www.nbcnews.com/video/nightly-news/53190215#53190215>.



Annie Lennox: Committed Political Activist, Philanthropist, and Singer/Songwriter

Born in 1954 in Aberdeen, Scotland, Annie Lennox has proven to be a long-term major international success as a singer, songwriter, political activist, and philanthropist. She first achieved international fame as the singer with David Stewart of the British music duo, Eurythmics, in the 1980s, winning Best British Female Artist six times. Over time as a lead singer and solo artist, she has collected four Grammy Awards, an MTV Video Music Award, a Golden Globe Award, the Billboard Century Award, and been defined as one of The 100 Greatest Singers of All Time by *Rolling Stone*.

Lennox began her music studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she studied the flute, piano, and harpsichord for three years, living on student grants and part-time jobs. She was not always sure of her career path, working as a waitress, barmaid, and shop assistant, but clearly found her way. “Many years I questioned myself daily,” she says. She talks of not coming from money and having to earn everything she has. However, Lennox wants all to know it is not about the money. The basic thing is to do what you feel passionate about.

What does Lennox feel passionate about? Combating HIV and AIDS infection. It all started in 2003

when she was asked to do a concert in South Africa. She says she was moved to begin her work after hearing South African leader, Nelson Mandela, address the problem as “a genocide” on his people, with women and children as the frontline victims. This was a turning point in Annie Lennox’s life. She firmly believes that far too many fortunate people in the world forget that there’s a whole other world of those less fortunate and in need.

As someone who is helping those in need combat HIV and AIDS infections, the legendary musician says the more global attention is placed on the problem, the more it can effectively be addressed. And when it comes to fame and the music industry—something that could be used in good ways to help others around the world—Lennox says the incessant focus on celebrity and fame instead is a blight on our culture.

In 2007, Lennox founded SING, a campaign to raise advocacy, awareness, and funds, working towards the global commitment to an AIDS-free generation. She started the campaign by writing a song about HIV and invited twenty-three of the most internationally acclaimed female artists to record their voices on “SING.” The SING campaign provides financial support for organizations working to ensure access to treatment for HIV-positive women and children. This financial support comes from money raised by Lennox’s performances, income from the SING record, and public donations to the campaign through the SING website.

SING Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRIIm5ufzMd4>.



Glen Campbell: Alzheimers Diagnosis and Celebrating Life at Seventy-nine Years old

Glen Travis Campbell has spent fifty years in show business and is well-respected as an American country music singer, guitarist, songwriter, television host, and occasional actor. Best known for his television series, *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour* in the 1960s and 1970s, he has also sold forty-five million records, accumulating twelve Gold albums, four Platinum albums, one Double-Platinum album, and won four Grammy Awards. In 2012, Campbell won the

Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.

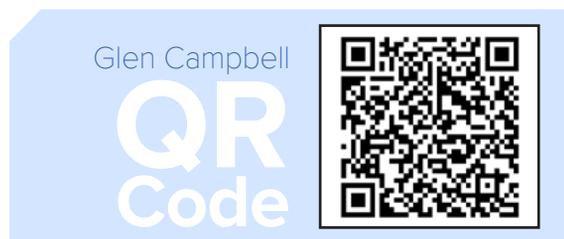
The seventh son of twelve children, Glen Campbell was born in a small community in Billstown, Arkansas, where his dad was a sharecropper. He talks of his family being migrant workers, picking tomatoes and selling them for “...ten cents a hamper.” Playing the guitar while a young boy, taught by his Uncle Bo, he learned to play lead. Campbell had a time of hard living when he was under the influence of alcohol and drugs. However, he pulled himself out of that experience and went on to become the first country versus contemporary music crossover success of his time.

Glen Campbell has been in the limelight quite a lot lately due to his unfortunate diagnosis with Alzheimer’s disease, which he announced publicly in 2011 at the age of seventy-five. Most recently, in 2014, he starred in the film, *Glen Campbell: I’ll Be Me*. With the goal of educating the population on Alzheimer’s, the movie follows Campbell throughout his farewell tour, 151 shows over fifteen months. The movie highlights the joys and challenges of his performances and dealing with the disease. “The more we learned about Alzheimer’s, the more we wanted to shine a light on it, and the more we became aware of the potential of this movie to be a catalyst for change,” said his wife, Kim, a former Radio City Music Hall dancer who met the singer on a blind date in 1981. “It turned into something bigger than we had imagined.”

To further give back, the *I’ll Be Me Alzheimer’s Fund* was developed as a result of the movie. Spearheaded by James Keach, director and producer of the movie, the fund was developed to create programs to restore the spirit of caregivers, fund research for a cure, and raise awareness. Two dollars off of every sale of the movie is donated to the I’ll be Me Alzheimers Fund (<http://www.ibmaf.org>).

One line in the movie shows Glen Campbell’s persistent spirit in the midst of this adversity. When asked by the interviewer, “How’s the Alzheimer’s coming along?” Campbell responds, “It’s fine.... yea...gave it a left hook.”

I’ll Be Me Movie Trailer Link: <https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=ill+be+me+movie+trailer&ei=UTF-8&chspa rt=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-001>.





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