

## The sojourn ends for a man of God--but his musical legacy lives on

JOEL P. SHEMPERT  
Feature Editor

We are gathered here today to mourn the loss of one of America's dreamers.

Actually, to put a finer point on it, we are mourning the loss of America. When Richard Wayne Mullins, eclectic singer, prolific songwriter and man of God was struck and killed by a tractor trailer on the road to Wichita, Kansas September 19, he left all earthly concerns behind him. It is we who feel the loss.

Rich Mullins, 42, was a unique voice in the "Contemporary Christian Music" scene. Never conventional, always accepted—never pretentious, always brilliant—he was a somewhat anomalous artist of unparalleled poetry, profundity, and poignancy. Though he was best known for "Awesome God," a powerful and straightforward song now sung in churches across the country, an appreciation of that song merely scratches the surface of Rich's body of work.

Take, for instance, this excerpt, from "The Land of My Sojourn," a song that gains particular weight in the light of his death:

"Nobody tells you, when you get born here, how much you'll come to love it and how you'll never belong here.

So I call you my country, but I'm lonely for my home, and I wish that I could take you there with me."

It is our bent as humans to venerate our heroes, and never more so than in the case of our dead ones. However, that's not what Rich Mullins would have desired of his life by any means. From his own lips came these

words: "My feeling is that if my life was driven by an ambition to leave behind a legacy, then what I would leave behind is a legacy of ambition."

Rich Mullins didn't want Rich Mullins to be remembered. He wanted his God to be remembered. That being said, what are we to make of his death? It is this question which I hope to answer, both for myself and for you.

One of the keys to this issue is understanding the way in which Rich's life and work, much like the Savior he served, reaches people wherever they are. Out of a realization of his own myriad shortcomings, he was able to look past those of others. A person hardly has to be a Christian to appreciate the value of such an outlook, but one does perhaps have to be a Christian to understand the source of that philosophy in Rich's life. This source was Jesus Christ.

Rich's social conscience was born not out of any humanistic attempt to elevate mankind or even the simple, natural impulse to relieve the suffering of others, but rather out of a desire to communicate God's love. As Rich said in a magazine article recently: "The disease that is most devastating to us is... the disease that comes about because we live in ignorance of the wealth of love God has for us. What a great message we in the church have. It's relevant to people with AIDS and people without AIDS. It's relevant to homosexuals and to homophobes. It's relevant to Republicans and Democrats, to abortionists and anti-abortionists. It's relevant across the board."

So what does this all mean to us, the living? Rich

Mullins is dead, yet we go on. I would implore that we not venerate him in his death, but that neither would we ignore him. Instead, let us learn and grow from it. As Christians and perhaps admirers of his work, let us not only admire but learn from it, using Rich's life as a blueprint for our own. When we hear a Rich Mullins song it should become more than just pretty music to us, but a challenge for us to reevaluate our own faith.

Those who are not Christians need deeper still, in all likelihood, to find relevance in this man's passing. Always remember, this is more than the death of a poet, it is the death of a priest. May Rich's demise serve to open the secular world's eyes to a facet of Christianity seldom seen—sensitive, poetic, tolerant, and open-minded, but still deeply, reverently Christian. I urge every reader, Christian or no, who has not heard Rich's honest, soulful work to seek it out. Learn from it, grow from it, let it nurture and challenge your soul. Savor the beauty of the music, and always remember the God who produced it.

Godspeed, Rich.

"Here is my song; listen if you will,

But I have no heart for it anymore.

I have just half a mind to cut it loose,

And if it sails off into the blue, then I'll just let it soar.

And the sky is better keeping, and I won't be any poorer

For giving it its freedom,

And here's one for freedom."

—Richard Wayne Mullins 1955-1997

## Club Calendar

The Clubs Council will be held today from 11-12 in CC126. A representative from each club will attend. Attendees are advised to bring club meeting dates and times, upcoming events for the term/year and any ideas of how clubs can be better promoted on campus.

Club	Contact Person	Extension
Raquetball Club	Kathie Woods	2418
Rally Club	Amy Lundy	2250
Rodeo Club	Amy Lundy	2250
Ski Club	Bob Misley	2376
	Jennifer Porter	2926
Baptist Student Ministries	Alan Jefferis	2543
Chrysalis	Kate Gray	2371
CCC Campus Cat Colony Club	Gary Nelson	2587
German Club	Dick Stones	2392
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	Kathie Woods	2418
Galab	Kate Gray	2371
H.E.E.L. (Environmental Club)	Jack Scrivener	2490
LDSSA	Dick Stones	2392
Native American Students Club	Jan Godfrey	2552
Ornamental Horticulture Club	Elizabeth Howley	2389
Pagan Ministries	Mike Kepler	2334
Phi Theta Kappa	Dave Arter	2210
Spanish Club	Carlota Holley	2381
Speech Club	Kelly Brennan	2726
Tai Chi	Judy Himes	2848
Writer's Club	Allen Widerburg	2359
Circle K Club	Carlie Deham	654-7102

For more information contact ASG at ext. 2247. If you have any other interests besides the ones listed here and would like to start a new club, contact ASG Vice President Erika Strowbridge at ext. 2247 or CC140.

### The Clackamas Print Staff

19600 S. Molalla Ave. Oregon City, OR 97045  
(503) 657-6958 ext. 2309 cccprint@clackamas.cc.or.us

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### Edible Plants in the Wild: A Harvest Workshop

Herbs, berries and other foods are found naturally all around us. But which are safe to eat, and how best can they be prepared and used? A workshop on "Wild Edible Plants: Native American Harvests" is being offered at the John Inskip Environmental Learning Center at Clackamas. Scheduled Oct. 18, the workshop will feature the foods and storage practices of Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest. Preparation and storage of such foods as pemmican, fruit leathers and berries will be discussed during the workshop, as well as foods caches and collection techniques. The course is scheduled from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Environmental Learning Center. There is a \$15 fee. For more information on the course, contact the E.L.C. at 657-6958, ext. 2351. To register, contact the College at 657-6958, ext. 2270.



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