



## Summer/Fall Newsletter 2009



*Otha Young*  
*May 10, 1943-August 6, 2009*

Dear JNFC Members,

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Otha Young. Otha, as many of you are aware, sadly passed away August 6, 2009 due to cancer. Otha's legacy lives on in his music that he and Juice as well as many others have recorded.

**Otha's wonderful wife Brenda had this to say to all of you...**

"In this time of immense sorrow, Makena & I deeply appreciate the heart-felt comments, comforting cards and generous donations made by the sincere and caring Juice Newton fans. As we read over the sentiments compiled by Paul for us, our hearts are filled with gratitude to hear about how Otha had touched each of you-his warmth, caring and musical talents were so appreciated by you and it warmed our hearts, even in our grief.

Otha meant a great deal to many people which is no surprise to us. He was our lyric, our melody; the one who gave rhythm to our lives. We celebrate the impact he had on our lives and are blessed for the special, even though short, time we had together. We ask that your prayers and good thoughts continue for strength and healing for Juice, Makena and me and all those whose lives Otha touched. May his music continue to bring us joy."

With much appreciation,

Brenda & Makena

Thank you Brenda! All of us at the JNFC wish you and Juice and Makena our heartfelt support!

The loss of Otha has been felt by many. However, he was such a kind and humorous person, this newsletter will also serve as a celebration of his contributions not only to Juice but to all he knew.

### **A message from Juice...**

"Dear Fans,

Otha was my very best friend. All ups and downs were shared, loss of family and of friends were shared. Success with our children and some not so successful times with them.

The music will go on....and some of it will always be his music..... I hope I can share that wonderful music for years to come. I miss him so."

Juice

Thank you Juice, I know we all echo your sentiments.

### **Obituary**

AF of M release for October

(Robert) **Otha Young**, singer, songwriter and long-time musical partner of Grammy- winning country-pop artist Juice Newton, died August 6th in Los Angeles after battling cancer.

As a writer, Young was best known for Juice's 1980's top ten hit, "The Sweetest Thing (I've Ever Known). The song was #1 on both AC and country charts, and also appeared on the Top 40 pop charts reaching #7 for 18 weeks. He wrote primarily for Juice, winning various songwriting awards, though other artists cut his songs. A Christmas CD of standards and originals, "The Gift of Christmas" was recently completed on which Otha served as lead guitarist, writer, producer and vocalist.

Young was born in Northern California, moved to Lewisville, Texas for a short time, but later returned to his native state. Known as "Bob" in high school, he attended Los Gatos High and excelled in sports and class leadership. In 2008, he was honored when inducted into the Los Gatos High School Athletic Hall of Fame for his success in wrestling and football.

After graduating from San Jose State University he decided to learn to play the guitar. At age of 21 he borrowed \$50.00 from his mom and bought a guitar, a Sonora classic, he saw advertised in the newspaper. Years later, when interviewed for a guitar magazine, Otha told of his his favorite guitar which was a red Strat with a 64 body and a 57 neck that he bought for \$300.00 At Valley Arts in Laurel Canyon back in 1981. He said, "It was magical and still is." As he gained proficiency with his guitar he teamed up with a singer by the name of Juice Newton. Otha and Juice first performed as a folk duo, Dixie Peach, in Northern California. Their brand of progressive country rock developed as they went on to form the band, Juice Newton and Silver Spur, and later recorded for RCA and Capitol under Juice's name starting in the mid 70's. Otha's unique harmonies, guitar, mandolin and musical direction helped define the Juice country pop sound. Juice went on to win a Grammy and Otha sang, played on and helped produce all of her albums.

Young, 66, was touring through March of this year and has often been referred to as, "One of the nicest guys in the business," by all who knew and worked with him. Said Travis James of the Bobby Roberts Agency, "I've said it a million times and meant it every time, but Otha was undoubtedly my favorite manager to work with during the past 14 years I've been here."

He is survived by his wife, Brenda Young and daughter, Makena.

Memorial Services will be held Saturday, August 22 at First Presbyterian Church of Encino, CA, 4963 Balboa Blvd. at 2:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers, friends have created an education fund for his beloved daughter Makena at Otha Young Memorial Fund c/o P.O. Box 230850, Encinitas, CA 92023.

## **A Flashback**

As I think back on the years, I clearly remember looking for the author of a song that made me an instant fan for life. The lyrics read, "You're my sunshine, you're my rain" and this was of course part of the chorus of "The Sweetest Thing (I've Ever Known)." When I saw the name Otha Young I thought, wow this person knows how to compile words to a deep meaning.

Once I purchased the album "Juice", I noticed his name again on another song called "River of Love" and I loved the easy acoustic sound. I found myself a fan of a man who had written such great music.

Then as "Quiet Lies" and "Dirty Looks" were released, I saw the name again on such great songs as "Love Sail Away" and "Adios Mi Corizon" and "Don't Bother Me."

You cannot be a Juice Newton fan without being an Otha Young fan! I believe that is how everyone feels.

## **Meeting The Young's**

In the early 1990's, I met Maxine Young. Maxine was the first President of the JNFC and Otha's mother. Maxine and myself had lunch in Texas and we enjoyed each other's company. How could we not? We shared so much in common.

Maxine told me of her pride in Otha. She was glad that her son had so much God given talent and high standards as a human being. She told me that she raised him to have respect for everyone. She did a fine job in everybody's opinion.

Maxine had given me a backstage pass to meet Juice in 1991. She told me that I needed to find Otha Young and he would arrange the meeting.

I knew what Otha looked like from being a long time fan. Once I found him, I approached him without knowing what to expect. He was so kind and helpful and told me that he would definitely get me back to meet Juice.

That was the first time I had met Otha and Juice. Otha shook my hand and he made me feel like I mattered to him and to Juice. I was so excited, that I wrote a "Thank You" note to Maxine and told her all about it.

Sadly, Maxine passed away a few years ago. However, she lives on through Otha's and Otha's family and the many Juice fans she "adopted."



### **Juice's Long Time Career Partner**

As I have stated earlier, you cannot be a Juice Newton fan without being an Otha Young fan. That is due to the fact that they have performed together for so many years. Otha was with Juice from the very beginning of her career. Otha's writing is very prominent in the Juice Newton & Silver Spur recordings and Juice's first two solo albums. Otha's career had mostly been that of supporting Juice and what she wanted to accomplish as a recording artist. The Los Angeles Times referred to Otha as "Longtime Juice Collaborator." It was easy to see why. Otha would sing back up, write songs as well as serve as musical arranger, manager and producer. Juice and Otha made . . . . Some members have written in that they saw Juice during Otha's absence from the stage. The message conveyed was he was missed.

## **Otha's Memory**

Otha would want us to go on and enjoy life and Juice's music. We must remember that he was a man of great integrity and talent. His music will live on as will our admiration for him as a human being.

## **NEW CD**

The new CD that Juice has been working on will be delayed in release. This CD is a children songs compilation. As soon as a new release date is determined, I will be sure to convey this information via the JNFC website and or newsletter.

## **Dystonia Benefit**

Saturday October 3, 2009 at 7:00 PM Juice will help raise funds for dystonia research by performing at the Joan B. Kroc Theatre in San Diego CA. Tickets are \$25.00 and \$40.00. Tickets may be purchased at [www.showboxoffice.com](http://www.showboxoffice.com). You may order tickets by phone at 858-922-8309.

## **THANK YOU**

Again, Brenda and Juice and Makena all wish to say "Thank you" to everyone who has offered their condolences. I want to thank all members who have offered their condolences to the JNFC itself. I really appreciate it.

## **Message from Paul**

I have lost a friend and when you lose a friend, they may have passed away but your respect and admiration do not. I will continue to honor those qualities I have mentioned about Otha.

Living in a world where there is nothing constant but change, I can only offer everyone the same advise I have given myself along with Brenda and Juice. That is...

"Don't cry because it's over, smile because he was here."

Until the holiday newsletter, take care everybody and may your dreams come true.

All the best,

Paul & Juice

