



## Pete Finney

September 9, 1955 - February 7, 2026

Steel guitarist Pete Finney, who died Saturday, February 7, at age seventy, was a widely admired Nashville musician. He exemplified how top instrumentalists can adapt to a remarkable range of styles and settings, whether in a recording studio, a concert stage, or the corner of a small nightclub.

On America's biggest stages, Finney backed the Chicks, Vince Gill, the Judds, Reba McEntire, and Patty Loveless, among others. He toured with Loveless for more than twenty years. He was touring with McEntire when eight members of her band and two crew members lost their lives in a plane crash in 1991; Finney survived because he flew on a second plane, with another musician and crew members.

Michael Nesmith, who made the pedal steel guitar an essential element of his solo work and his First National Band Recordings, recruited Finney in 2017 to tour with him, which included a final tour with the Monkees prior to Nesmith's death in 2021.

A native of Maryland, Finney performed with Washington, D.C., mainstay Liz Meyer (ex-roommate of Emmylou Harris) until moving to Austin in the late 1970s to join Doug Sahm's band. Relocating to Nashville in the mid-1980s, he toured with Foster & Lloyd and later contributed to the solo careers of Rodney

Foster and Bill Lloyd.

Along the way, Finney recorded and performed with a diverse array of artists including Beck, Jon Byrd, Shemekia Copeland, Justin Townes Earle, Jon Langford, Jim Lauderdale, Allison Moorer, Ron Sexsmith, and Candi Staton, among scores of others. He frequently performed in pickup bands in small Nashville clubs, where he might be seen with top-flight players such as Mac Gayden, Jen Gunderman, Jimmy Lester, Chris Scruggs, Kenny Vaughan, and others.

Finney also gained a reputation for his extensive knowledge of American music history, fueled by his own deep research. He co-curated the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's 2015-2018 exhibition "Dylan, Cash, and the Nashville Cats: A New Music City." The idea for the exhibit came from Finney's research on the many non-country artists from North America and England who came to Nashville in the 1960s and 1970s to record with the city's talented and fast-working studio musicians.

The accompanying exhibit book, co-written by Finney, won the Chet Flippo Award for excellence in country music journalism from the International Country Music Conference. Finney remained a close friend of the Museum, frequently hosting programs and participating in panel discussions at the Museum over the years.

The Museum and Finney's wife, Carol Tully, invite friends and family to a remembrance gathering Sunday, February 15, at 5pm at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's Ford Theater, with a reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Music Health Alliance at <https://www.musichealthalliance.com/donate-to-heal-the-music/>

# Previous Events

## Gathering

FEB **15**. 5:00 PM (CT)

Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's Ford Theater  
222 Rep. John Lewis Way S  
Nashville, TN 37203

# Tribute Wall

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“ Great neighbor. He helped us catch a feral kitten about 9 years ago. Randy and now Black Bart has moved in and occasionally smacks us. Pete told us the other day yes he had an encounter with him. Meaning he probably got scratched. We will miss seeing you.  
Sharon and Jimmy

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**Sharon Wayman** - February 11 at 03:35 PM