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AN ACQUISITIONS & PRESENTATION PROJECT
DOYLE LAWSON AND QUICKSILVER
BLUEGRASS AND GOSPEL MUSIC FROM BRISTOL, TENNESSE



Wednesday
September 13, 2006
12 NOON - 1 PM
Coolidge Auditorium
Ground Floor,
Thomas Jefferson Building
Library of Congress
10 First Street, SE
Washington, DC

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TO THE PUBLIC**

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DOYLE LAWSON AND QUICKSILVER

BLUEGRASS AND GOSPEL MUSIC FROM BRISTOL, TENNESSE

"I love the sound of music and I love to sing harmony. That's my thing, just putting four voices together or five. To me there's nothing any sweeter to hear than a church choir singing, you know, or a church congregation with everybody lifting their voice up in song and praise. There's a beauty to that and a feeling like no other."

Doyle Lawson

The American Folklife Center is proud to present Doyle Lawson, recipient of one of this year's National Heritage Fellowship Awards from the National Endowment for the Arts. Lawson will be playing with his trailblazing Bluegrass/Gospel band, Quicksilver.

Doyle Lawson has redefined traditional gospel music and its role in bluegrass music. Beginning with the Country Gentlemen and J.D. Crowe, and continuing today with his own group, Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, Lawson has taken the white and black gospel quartet singing traditions of the South and integrated them into bluegrass music. In doing so, he has created a new standard of excellence and pushed this venerable art form to a new and different level.

Lawson grew up in Ford Town, Sullivan County, near Kingsport, Tennessee. His mother, father, and sister all sang gospel music and the family listened faithfully to the radio broadcast of the Grand Ole Opry. By the time he reached his teens, he could play mandolin, banjo and guitar, but, captivated by Bill Monroe's playing, he specialized in the mandolin. By the time he was 19, Lawson decided that he wanted to be a professional musician. He got his first band job with the incomparable Jimmy Martin. In 1966, he began an association with J.D. Crowe, first playing guitar but soon moving to mandolin. He joined the Country Gentlemen in 1971 and remained a member until 1979. During this time, he toured in Japan and Europe, recorded 10 albums with the group and also recorded a solo mandolin instrumental album.

Lawson established his own group, Quicksilver, in 1979. They quickly moved to the forefront of the bluegrass scene, releasing a series of acclaimed albums-including the pioneering all-gospel *Rock My Soul* in 1980-and influencing generations of younger musicians with a sound that blended traditional bluegrass and gospel elements with progressive material and superb execution. Many brilliant singers and instrumentalists have been a part of Quicksilver over the past twenty-five years, and alumni have gone on to play for Illrd Tyme Out, Mountain Heart, Continental Divide, and Ricky Skaggs' band Kentucky Thunder. Lawson once commented, "I jokingly tell folks that Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver is the farm team for bluegrass.... While the sound changes a bit with the introduction of a new band member, it is important to me

that people hear what they expect to hear when we take the stage, no matter who is in the group." This continuity in the group's sound has always been the result of Lawson's meticulous attention to detail and gentle leadership.

Although the band has released numerous recordings of the classic bluegrass repertoire, the group's emphasis has always been on tight quartet singing of gospel songs. Drawing on the bottomless well of material contained within his father's shape-note hymnbook collection and on the sounds of African-American gospel quartets and southern gospel groups he heard as a youngster, Lawson has made a powerful statement with more than 15 all-gospel bluegrass albums featuring a wide range of styles, including influential a capella quartets. It might also be said that Doyle Lawson's efforts have resulted in a renaissance of tight harmony bluegrass singing. Every year for the past five years, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver have received the International Bluegrass Music Association's Vocal Group of the Year award.

Lawson's career since 1979 has not been limited to leading Quicksilver. As a member of the Bluegrass Album Band, for example, he helped to bring the repertoire and musical approaches of the music's early giants to new generations of musicians and fans in a series of acclaimed albums made between 1980 and 1996. For all these reasons, Lawson was selected as one of eleven NEA National Heritage Fellows for 2006.

The NEA National Heritage Fellowship is the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts. Representing a cross-section of cultures and art forms, awardees are chosen for their artistic excellence, cultural authenticity, and contributions to their field. Fellowships recognize lifetime achievement, and are therefore awarded to an artist only once. For more information on the NEA National Heritage Fellowships, including biographies, photos, and audio interviews with the fellowship recipients, please go to <http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/>.

The American Folklife Center was created by Congress in 1976 and placed at the Library of Congress to "preserve and present American Folklife" through programs of research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, public programs, and training. The Folklife Center includes the Archive of Folk Culture, which was established in 1928 and is now one of the largest collections of ethnographic material from the United States and around the world. Please visit our web site at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/>.

