

Wilkes Community College's



MerleFest®

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ON THE CAMPUS OF WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WILKESBORO, NC

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MerleFest 2013 to Feature Special Tributes to Doc Watson

All-star tribute on Saturday evening among the many ways that the festival will celebrate the life and music of the late Doc Watson

WILKESBORO, N.C. (March 5, 2013) — When **MerleFest**, presented by Lowe's and slated for **April 25-28, 2013**, kicks off on Thursday afternoon, it will be a bittersweet moment. The four-day event, an annual homecoming of musicians and music fans, will once again take place on the campus of Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. But for the first time in its 26 years, MerleFest will take place without beloved music icon Doc Watson, who passed away on May 29, 2012.

"From the beginning, Doc Watson has been the artistic center of this festival," says Ted Hagaman, director of the festival. "So for MerleFest 2013, we will come together as a family to pay special tribute to the man and the musician who meant so much to us all."

In fact, one of the most talked-about events of the festival will surely be Saturday evening's Celebration Jam. The Jam will be hosted by Sam Bush and will feature many of Doc's closest musician friends as they tell stories and play some of Doc's favorites tunes. The Jam's core band will consist of Sam Bush (mandolin/fiddle), Jeff Little (piano), T. Michael Coleman (bass), Jack Lawrence (guitar), Bryan Sutton (guitar) and David Holt (banjo.)

"No matter if it was Carnegie Hall in New York City, a packed theater in Tokyo, Japan, a venue in Southern France, or on a flatbed truck somewhere in Georgia, Doc was always just Doc," said Coleman. "No pretense, no inflated ego, and no set list. He invited the audience into his living room, and they felt right at home."

"Doc personified the 3 T's: tone, taste and timing. Getting to play alongside him at the past 25 MerleFests has been a true privilege and a lesson in how it's done," agreed Bush. "He was a musical mentor and a really good friend to me. It's an honor to have known Doc, RosaLee and Merle."

Additionally, the life and music of Doc Watson will be honored in other ways during the festival:

- A special section in the MerleFest program (20,000 copies to be given free) will pay

- tribute to Doc, with quotes and remembrances from fellow artists and friends;
- Video vignettes throughout the festival of Doc, which will include videos of him performing, talking about his family, telling stories, etc.;
- Throughout the weekend, artists will be reminiscing about Doc and the impact he had on them;
- A new display will be introduced in Lowe’s Hall with a bust of Doc and memorabilia of his life and career; and
- A student emergency fund in Doc Watson’s honor will be announced at Wilkes Community College. This fund will be used for student emergency needs, to allow students to continue their education.

“Although I learned from many of the old timers, Doc was the main musical mentor in my life,” said Holt. “I was always struck by his ability to bring an older style of music to a modern audience. As a musician he deeply influenced my sense of timing and tone. I marveled at the way the fingers of his right hand danced on the strings. He never just plodded through a tune, but rather brought it completely to life every time he played it.”

Tickets for MerleFest 2013 can be purchased at www.merlefest.org or by calling 1-800-343-7857. **An early bird ticket discount is available through March 10, 2013.** Additional details about this year’s festival lineup and other MerleFest information can also be found at the website.

MerleFest, considered one of the premier music festivals in the country, is an annual homecoming of musicians and music fans held on the campus of Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. MerleFest was founded in 1988 in memory of the late Eddy Merle Watson, son of American music legend Doc Watson who passed away May 29, 2012. MerleFest is a celebration of “traditional plus” music, a unique mix of music based on the traditional, roots-oriented sounds of the Appalachian region, including bluegrass and old-time music, and expanded to include Americana, country, blues, rock and many other styles. The festival hosts over 90 artists, performing on 14 stages during the course of the four-day event. The annual event has become the primary fundraiser for the WCC Endowment Corporation, funding scholarships, capital projects and other educational needs.

PHOTOS:



Caption: The “My Friend Merle” set at MerleFest 25 featured (left to right) Jeff Little, Richard Watson, Bob Hill, David Holt, T. Michael Coleman, Doc Watson, Mitch Greenhill, Sam Bush, John Cowan and Joe Smothers.

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