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A LIFE ON THE AIR

Folk Fest honors WJLK pioneer

BY MAUREEN NEVIN DUFFY • CORRESPONDENT • MAY 4, 2008

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Despite an early rain and a distinct chill in the air, 15,000 music fans showed up April 26 for the 34th annual New Jersey Folk Festival at Rutgers University's Douglass Campus in New Brunswick. All eyes were on Jim Murphy, formerly of WJLK-FM in Asbury Park, as he received the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Murphy, who also performed at the festival with his band, The Pine Barons, started his music career in 1963 with the radio program "Country and Folk Concert" on WJLK-FM. A native of Brick, Murphy became New Jersey's first inductee into America's Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame in 2007. The festival's director, Angus K. Gillespie, presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Murphy, who told us he was "overwhelmed" by the ceremony. It took about 10 minutes, he said, to thank everyone who helped him over the years. "And, I'm sure I still missed a few."

Still a working musician, Murphy received a check for his band's performances before heading home.

Radio Somewhere dropped in on Gillespie at the festival and said hello to Rich Skelly, a Press music correspondent who hosts "The Low-Budget Blues Program" on WRSU (88.7-FM), 8-10 p.m. Thursdays.

Skelly directed us to WRSU's tent, from which Geoff Pape and the rest of the crew had been covering the festival live all day — all 30 acts on three stages. Pape and sidekick Jared Midgen very generously extended an invitation for us to join them on the air some night — maybe during "Jared and Geoff's Overnight Sensations," which glides through from 10 p.m. to midnight Fridays. Hey, we'll bring the coffee.

Maureen Nevin Duffy created and hosted "Asbury Radio — The Radio Voice of Asbury Park," a weekly public affairs talk show at the City's WYGG, 88.1FM station, for more than six years. Please send your comments and suggestions regarding Radio Somewhere to AsburyRadio@aol.com or 3 Deal Lake Court, Asbury Park, NJ 07712.

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