



WOMEN IN TEXAS MUSIC: STORIES & SONGS
By Kathleen Hudson



A Ray of Light on a Dark Journey

It was 2002, and I stopped by a small bar in Johnson City, called in by a voice I heard coming out of the open door. Then Catherine Powers and Lee Duffy told me to check out this young woman, **Pauline Reese**. I did, we talked the next night at the Broken Spoke with James White, owner, hanging around while a group of tourists from The Netherlands lined up to dance to some pure honky-tonk they expected to hear. And they, as well as I, were not disappointed.

First, I had an inspiring conversation that led to many other meetings, some accidental when Willie Nelson was playing at Floore's or a picnic. She had quickly fulfilled one dream by singing with Willie and opening for him. She credits Freddy Powers for his support and mentoring, as well as Redd Volkhaert for some great guitar mentoring. As a woman who also trained barrel horses once, I was thrilled to hear for her involvement in rodeo, her style of dress authentic and backed up by a lifestyle on the ranch, and her own experience riding a horse at a rodeo in France. They expected that of this cowgirl, and then the horse decided to buck. She rode him, than sang for the French audience.

What an inspiring young woman she was and is, and that interview is in my book published by UT Press in 2007. Lots has happened since then. Her life with a new husband, led to a life balanced with rodeo and music, as he traveled and competed. And now, in 2017, this inspiring beautiful spirit posted on Facebook the journey of recovery (still in progress) as her sweet husband broke his back and neck in a fall off a bucking horse. Facebook was a platform that allowed her to share her story AND inspire others with her faith.

"Filling everyone in at once. Bill (Herbert) had an accident tonight on a



bucking horse in Marble Falls. He has a broken neck... We are in the ambulance headed to the Temple Trauma Center. He is on heavy pain meds and doing pain management. Likely they will operate but won't know until a more extensive scan is done. I will fill everyone in as we get more information. The kids are taken care of with friends and family. Prayers are a must. Thank you all, we love you." She begins sharing with love and continues with gratitude as she goes through what must be a dark journey. At one point, she mentions that she has spent time helping out others, but this outpouring of love and support is overwhelming to her. And there is another way to help through gofundme as they have limited insurance. Not a negative word from her mouth, and this confirms what I felt around her the first time we talked. As of the time of writing this column, Bill has left the hospital and another journey of recovery begins. Her website shows that she is performing in August, has a 7th album out and a song on Willie Nelson's 2016 album. She is described as a woman blazing a trail in Texas music with her "no-holds-barred blend of alternative county, rock, Western swing, honky-tonk, folk and Tejano..."

See www.kathleenhudson.net for information on both my oral history books on Texas music. Working on a third book now, the Tex/Mex voices in Texas music. Ils sont partis. - KH