

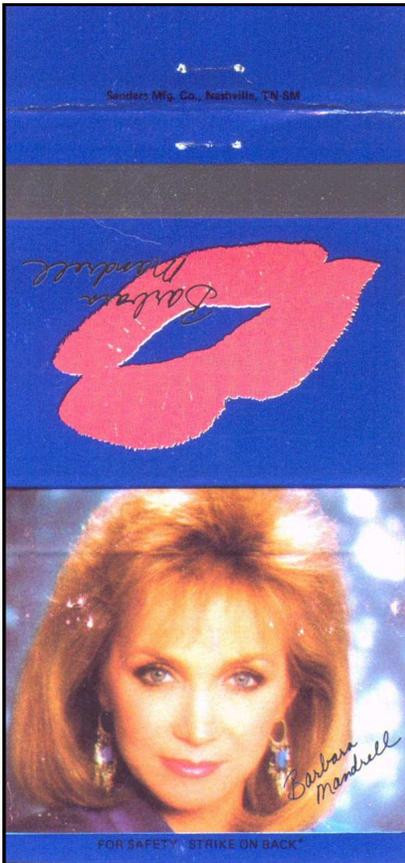
# Texas Personalities

## Barbara Mandrell

Thanks to a string of hit singles and a popular television variety series, vocalist Barbara Mandrell was arguably the biggest female star in country music in the late '70s and early '80s. Born the oldest daughter into a musical family in Houston, TX, on Christmas Day, 1948, Mandrell was already reading music and playing accordion by the age of five. When Mandrell was 14, her family formed its own group. The band also included drummer Ken Dudney, whom Mandrell would eventually marry. The Mandrells toured the U.S. and Asia before Barbara made her first recordings in 1963. Mandrell briefly retired in order to become a housewife, but she soon grew restless and returned to the music business. After signing with Columbia in 1969, she notched her first chart hit, a cover of the Otis Redding classic "I've Been Loving You Too Long." In 1970, Mandrell scored the first of many Top 40 hits with "Playin' Around With Love."

After a series of successive hits, she earned her first number one with 1978's "Sleeping Single in a Double Bed," which was immediately followed by another chart-topper, "(If Loving You Is Wrong) I Don't Want to Be Right," in early 1979. Later in the year, "Years" also reached number one, as did three more singles. Between 1981 and 1983, Mandrell received numerous industry awards and accolades. In 1980, the TV program 'Barbara Mandrell and the Mandrell Sisters' premiered on NBC. In 1982, Mandrell released her own inspirational album. As a result of her busy schedule, she began suffering from vocal strain, and on doctor's orders pulled the plug on the television program in 1982. In 1983, she premiered 'The Lady Is a Champ', a Las Vegas stage show, and released two LPs, 'In Black & White' and 'Spun Gold'.

Tragedy struck in 1984 when Mandrell and two of her children were involved in a car crash that left the other driver dead. Though Mandrell and her kids survived, all three faced a long period of recovery. When she finally returned, the country music landscape had changed, with the "new traditionalist" movement gaining dominance while the glitzier, more pop-influenced music Mandrell favored began falling out of favor. She began focusing almost exclusively on live performing, where she remained a significant draw; at the same time, she also published her autobiography, *Get to the Heart: My Story*. ~ Jason Ankeny, All Music Guide.



Courtesy of <http://www.mp3.com/barbara-mandrell/artists/1421/biography.html>