



# TODD TAYLOR

## Biography

Todd “Banjoman” Taylor first fell in love with the banjo at just six years old. While on a family trip to Walt Disney World, he had wandered off. After a frantic search they found Todd on a steamboat ride -- mesmerized by the music of the banjo performer. His mom finally gave in to his pleadings and purchased his first banjo from a JC Penny catalog the following Christmas. Since then, Todd has enjoyed a music career spanning three decades.

As a teenager and young adult, Todd was at the *Grand Ole Opry* with music legends Roy Acuff and Bill Monroe, and TV shows like *Regis and Kathy Lee*, *Jerry Lewis telethon* and many more. Todd may be best known for using his unique style to elevate the banjo from the confines of bluegrass to build a bridge into all genres of music, especially rock 'n' roll. He was the first solo banjo musician to take the banjo as a solo instrument to the *Rick Dees Weekly Top 40* internationally-syndicated radio program in the 1980's for his groundbreaking arrangement and performance of Lynyrd Skynyrd's “Freebird.”

Although Todd has donated his time to various worthwhile charities during his career, the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) has a special place in his heart. In his twenties, Todd became increasingly ill and almost lost his life. Extensive testing revealed he had inherited a mitochondrial disease from his mother, and despite his doctor's prognosis, Todd was determined to recover. He performed on the MDA telethon with Jerry Lewis on more than one occasion; increasing awareness of the disease and helping to raise funds for the organization's tireless efforts.

In 2007, Todd was the first to set the Guinness World Record for Fastest Banjo by performing both parts of “Dueling Banjos” at a mind-blowing 210 beats per minute! He dedicated his record to everyone fighting to overcome a disease or obstacle in their life, and continues to encourage the power of a positive attitude to those who may be struggling. 2011 produced Todd's rock 'n' blues tablature book, *Pickin' Over the Speed Limit*, and a feature in the documentary *Breaking and Entering*, highlighting his Guinness World Record achievement.

But the pinnacle of his career came in 2012 when Governor Nikki Haley presented Todd with the Order of the Palmetto, the highest civilian honor in South Carolina, for his inspiring personal example and musical contribution to his home state. Todd says, “My life has been blessed in so many ways, and I have no plans to stop sharing the gift God has given me.”

In 2018 Governor Henry McMaster Bestowed A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2018, AND THE SECOND TUESDAY IN MARCH OF EACH YEAR THEREAFTER AS “SOUTH CAROLINA BANJO DAY” IN HONOR OF TODD “BANJOMAN” TAYLOR'S MUSICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

In 2020 Todd made his Grand Ole Opry Debut with his Heroes the Iconic Legendary “Oak Ridge Boys” Members of The Grand Ole Opry and The Country Music Hall Of Fame.

Even though Todd suffers with a very rare genetic muscle disorder he still continues to use his God given Talent to Help bring awareness to all sorts of rare Muscular Diseases to help others.