

## Jim Stafford

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Jim Stafford is a country music legend. That is the only way to describe a man who has made standards out of such songs as "Swamp Witch", "Spiders & Snakes, &ldquo;Meditations,&rdquo; and "Wildwood Weed". Born in 1944, Jim Stafford first started playing guitar with his father, on the porch of their Central Florida home during the fifties. Coming from a musical family did not hurt in getting him into show business, and he was playing in his first band at age 14. While still in his teens, Jim put together a band, the Legends, with his friend, Gram Parsons, now heralded as one of the creators of the country-rock sound that came out of the late 1960s. When he graduated from high school, Stafford took off for Nashville, where he was a backup musician for Jumpin' Bill Carlisle.

It was in Nashville that Jim started his famous one-man band act, when during a session, his drummer suddenly quit. He also continued to improve his songwriting skills, focusing on novelty songs because he felt his singing voice was not very good. He started out playing dance clubs, where he offered humorous running commentaries on the skills of the go-go dancers. Clearwater, Florida was where Jim Stafford got the big break every performer looks and dreams about. He reunited with boyhood friend Kent LaVoie better known as Lobo. Stafford asked Lobo to perform his song "Swamp Witch", but he was convinced to perform it himself. The song eventually made its way to Mike Curb, who signed Stafford to MGM Records. By 1975, Jim Stafford was a minor celebrity and got the opportunity to host a networked summer variety show, The Jim Stafford Show, from Los Angeles, which featured Mel Blanc. Although Stafford's original songs brought him fame, the show also gave him a chance to also display his exceptional ability as a guitar player. He also served a stint as head writer on the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour. Following a divorce from singer Bobbie Gentry in 1980, Jim Stafford appeared in Clint Eastwood's Any Which Way You Can and penned the song "Cow Patti," which made the Top 70 on the country charts in 1981. The following year, he hosted Nashville on the Road with Rex Allen, Jr. and Sue Powell, and composed three songs for Disney's animated feature The Fox and the Hound. During the rest of the eighties, Stafford performed in Las Vegas and at small concerts and county fairs. Now Jim Stafford has his own theatre in Branson, Missouri where he performs regularly. This review sums up the man and his music best: "Jim Stafford is an all-American entertainer whose unique talents, wry sense of humor, and professionalism have made him a multi-faceted entertainer and international entertainment personality. His wit, charm, and natural ease make him an adept host and a star performer".