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Richie McDonald to perform at SPC Scholarship Gala Feb. 28

LEVELLAND – Former lead singer/songwriter and country music recording artist Richie McDonald will provide the entertainment during the South Plains College annual Scholarship Gala slated for 6 p.m. on Feb. 28. The event will be held in the Physical Education Complex on the Levelland campus.

For more than 12 years, McDonald was the voice of the platinum-selling country group, Lonestar. As lead singer for the CMA and ACM Award-winning group, McDonald's vocals repeatedly propelled such Lonestar classics as "Amazed," "I'm Already There," "Everything's Changed," "Smile," "No News" and others to the top of the charts making Lonestar one of the most successful bands of the 1990s. McDonald provided material for each of Lonestar's 10 albums on BNA Records. He garnered both Songwriter and Song of the Year honors from BMI.

McDonald left the band to pursue a solo career in 2007. His decision to leave Lonestar was based primarily on BNA's decision not to renegotiate the band's contract and McDonald's desire to spend more time writing songs and spend more time with his family.

"I always thought that BNA Records and the band was a place I would be forever," McDonald said. "I just thought it was one of those partnerships that would never end.

"One of the very first songs I wrote when I came to town, and my first number one for Lonestar, was a song called 'Everything's Changed,'" he said. "Life is all about change, and these things happen for a reason."

McDonald and his wife, Lorie, are the parents of three children – Rhett, Mollie and Maisie.

In examining what he wanted to do with his life, McDonald said that he wanted to continue to move people with his songs and make a difference in lives through music. As a singer and a songwriter, he had already experienced the life-changing power of a song when lyrics he penned as a result of a phone conversation with his son while he was on

the road, "I'm Already There," was embraced so movingly by the military and their families that it became almost an anthem for U.S. troops serving in the Middle East.

McDonald said that today's world needs good, wholesome music, and he wants people to know him by the songs he sings and writes. With that goal and a new 10-year plan in mind, he decided to embark on a solo career, performing the kind of music that would touch people and bring them hope.

"I just want fans to be exposed to all sides of me," McDonald said. "I feel like the opportunities are endless, and with no one to answer to but myself, I have the freedom to try whatever I want.

"Even though my career has gone through an upheaval, some things have not changed," he said. "Music is still my priority, but so is my family. With a little creativity in touring, maybe I can still have a successful career and the kids won't feel robbed of any more Daddy time."

This year's annual gala will feature a five-course tableside meal and live entertainment by the SPC Creative Arts Department and Fine Arts Department. The evening also will include a live and silent auction of unique treasures along with recognition of the recipients of the 2009 Pacesetter Awards.

Individual benefactor tickets are \$100 per person and can be obtained from the SPC Development Office. Various levels of sponsorship and participation are available to interested businesses and individuals. The table sponsorship levels include a Diamond Level, \$2,000; Platinum Level, \$1,000; Gold Level, \$800; and Silver Level, \$400.

For more information about table sponsorships or tickets, contact the SPC Development Office at 716-2020.

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