

**MOLLIE  
GENE “BEE”  
BEACHBOARD  
1939-2009**



**CHILD  
STAR TO  
COUNTRY  
SINGER**

Hattie Beachboard believed that her daughter was so talented that she hoped someone would discover her. Molly was born in 1939 in Oklahoma City and grew up in Tennessee, where she began singing and yodeling on the family farm. While living in Tucson, she performed at children’s shows, recitals, and churches.

At a grammar school performance, “singing cowboy” Rex Allen heard Molly sing “Lovesick Blues”. He liked her rendition so much that he had her sing it on his popular radio show a few days later. She soon became a featured singer on the radio show.

The family’s next stop was Los Angeles, where the eleven-year-old blond girl with the sweet-honey voice became a regular on “Hometown Jamboree”. She was so popular that the program was occasionally called the “Molly Bee Show”. Signed by Capitol Records in 1952 at age thirteen, Bee became famous with her number one hit “I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus”. It charted almost as highly as Jimmy Boyd’s more famous version.

She also was a regular on the Tennessee Ernie Ford daytime variety show, where Ford coaxed her to yodel, which became a feature in most of her early appearances. She also appeared on “The Ford Show” during its five-year run on the NBC network from 1956 to 1961. She said that her nine years with Tennessee Ernie Ford were the most enjoyable years of her life.

Molly Bee made her film debut in 1954 with Ford in “Corral Cuties”, but she felt she was too shy for an acting career. In 1958, she starred in her last film “Summer Love”, with teenage idols Troy Donahue and Shelley Fabares. She continued to guest-star on television and worked with stars like Roy Rogers, Jackie Gleason, Ed Sullivan, and Jack Benny.

During the 1960’s, Bee was a Las Vegas headliner and toured with Bob Hope’s USO troupe. In 1966, she starred “Swingin’ Country” with Roy Clark. The Armed Forces Radio and Television broadcast it to over 250,000 military personnel worldwide. In 1966, she was nominated as Best Television Personality by the Academy of Country Music Awards.

By the end of the 1960s, Bee retired due to drug problems. In the 1970s, she attempted a comeback by playing small country venues, very different from the large concert audiences that she had attracted early in her career. Bee was married five times, calling herself the “Zsa Zsa Gabor of the country music set”.

By the 1990s, she settled in Oceanside, California. "I've done it all, and lived to tell about it. I have worked with incredible people and wouldn't trade it for the world. Mine has been like six lifetimes rolled into one." Bee died at age 69 in February 2009.

Singer Molly Bee enjoyed an amazing 50-year career. From the age of eleven, Molly’s life and career was constantly in the fast lane of show business. Along the way, she was a child star, a teen idol, and a successful country music singer.