

# Pruett's roots firmly entrenched in Pell City

By SAM HOSTETTLER  
Editor

Jeanne Pruett packed her bags years ago and headed for the bright lights of Nashville's Opryland, but she hasn't totally left St. Clair County.

Ms. Pruett, a member of the Grand Ole Opry since 1973, tries to return to her roots in Pell City anytime she can free herself from her busy schedule. Today, her itinerary reads "Pell City," as she will serve as the grand marshal of the Pell City Christmas Parade for the second consecutive year.

Last year, Ms. Pruett had so much fun co-hosting the event with sportscaster Eli Gold that she jumped at the chance for a return engagement when she was asked.

Ms. Pruett attended Pell City High School until the 11th grade, when she decided to pursue her dream of becoming a singer. She fondly remembers her Pell City days, as this is where her music ca-

reer began.

"I was always involved in music in school," she said from her Nashville, Tenn., home. "I was always singing or performing at the junior and senior banquets."

The memories of two Pell City teachers are indelibly etched in Ms. Pruett's mind, as they influenced her decision to pursue a music career.

"My best memories are of Mrs. Iola Roberts. She was there at the beginning of my music career," she said. "Faye Whittle, who was a music teacher at Pell City High School meant so much to my early training."

A self-proclaimed memento keeper, Ms. Pruett still has a copy of the Saturday Evening Post and Life magazines which were placed on Mrs. Roberts' night stand. Ms. Pruett said she was upset when the city tore down Mrs. Roberts' home instead of moving and preserving it as a memorial to a great teacher.

In 1973, Ms. Pruett was named



Jeanne Pruett

the 63rd member of the Grand Ole Opry. She not only wrote and performed hit songs for herself, but she also penned songs for singing greats such as Marty Robbins,

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