

Allen Lewis Fontenot

Allen Fontenot was born January 19, 1932 in Grand Prairie, Louisiana. His father, Adiluse Fontenot, was born in Washington, Louisiana, and his mother, Elizabeth Saucier Fontenot was from Anse Gris, Louisiana.

At the age of seven, Fontenot would listen to his grandfather, Ovide Saucier, play the fiddle on the Grand Prairie farm where he was raised. Unable to buy a fiddle, Allen fashioned one out of a cigar box and a screen wire, which he used for the strings. He then learned his first song, "The Spanish Two-Step", by Bob Willis. At the age of twelve, Fontenot's grandfather Ovide bought him a fiddle from the Sears & Roebuck catalog. Determined to learn the fiddle, Fontenot would go to the Fais Do Do dance hall in Ville Platte and sit on the stage with JB Fuselier.

Fontenot won his first fiddle contest on his way home from the Korean War in 1952. Later, he played the drums for the American Aces, a band formed with Gaynor Soileau and LeRoy Fontenot. In 1953, Fontenot moved to New Orleans and played the fiddle with a few country bands, and, for a short time, Nathan Abshire. He formed his own band in 1968 and named it, "Allen Fontenot and the Country Cajuns".

In 1969, Fontenot started the first Cajun music radio show in New Orleans on WSHO radio. He later hosted his "Cajun shows" on WSLA, KLEB, and WWOZ. He retired from radio in 1997. Fontenot recorded his first record, "Ville Platte Widow" and "Web Pierce Blues" in 1971. In 1974, Fontenot opened his own dance hall called, "The Cajun Bandstand" in Kenner Louisiana where he played for several years. He, with his band, has played engagements in over 40 states, touring with Rocking Sidney and Al Rapone's "Zydeco Express".

Allen Fontenot, a true pioneer of Cajun music, was one of the first musicians to bring Cajun music to New Orleans. Fontenot, and his band, has performed at the New Orleans Jazz Fest for the past 28 years. He also appeared in three movies.

Through an impressive musical vocation, Allen Fontenot has been an active and untiring ambassador for the Cajun French culture through the music. He is an active member of the Cajun French Music Association, winning its highest honor of "The Lifetime Achievement" award in 1990. He is known to many as "the King of the Cajun Fiddle" in the New Orleans area. His latest recording is "Arretes Pas La Musicque" on the Ralph Records label.