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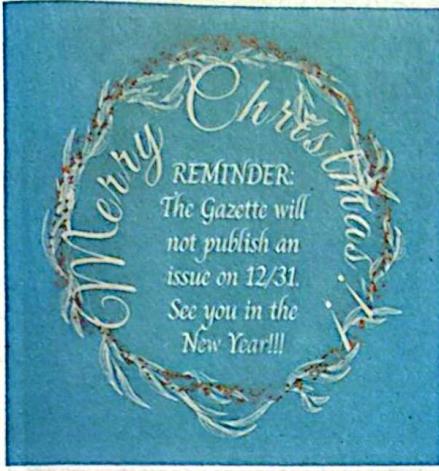
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Josie Birdsong: Jesus Boots and Bling

BY CAILEY PETSCH

Sixteen-year-old Josie Birdsong is a small-town girl with big stage dreams. The feisty redhead singer-songwriter living in Tipp City has just signed a distribution deal with CDX Records in Nashville, Tennessee. Josie's life has been full of recent and exciting new experiences as she's progressed in the music industry. Her story of how she's risen to local fame is equally thrilling.

Josie has been a performer since she was just four years old. Although she now dons glittery dresses and custom-made boots, Birdsong once wore costumes and morphed into different characters. Following her brother, Josie began her career in musical theatre. Her first show was Rapunzel. The once chorus member then grew to find a sense of style and personality that was completely and entirely her own.

If Joise had to describe herself in three words, she'd choose Jesus, Boots, and Bling. Josie enjoys creating music that relates to many audiences. Anyone who's ever been through a breakup can enjoy "Sure Do Miss His Dog." Others can find comfort in their longing when listening to "I Still Believe." However, the young artist prioritizes her faith and conveys Christian values and a love for her religion through her music and personality.

Birdsong leans into the country and

Christian style with her music and has always enjoyed female country artists. Country music is how Joise has built her presence on social media. Josie is now a frequent visitor to Nashville, but her first trip was in August of 2023. What she admired most about the exciting and thrilling "Music City" was its heart in country music. Joise says, "I saw what these country artists were doing on stage, and how they make people in the audience feel so seen, and I knew that's just exactly what I wanted to do."

Josie Birdsong makes her fans feel seen with each performance, but the up-and-coming musician had to work to be seen herself. Josie's rise began on TikTok and Instagram. Many of the teenage stars' fans are followers of Birdsong's daily vlogs, song covers, and other short snippets.

Josie's performed in many different venues and events since beginning her adventure as a solo artist. Her dazzling dresses and shimmering boots have made an appearance in and around Tipp City, as well as opened for other artists. One of Joise's largest performances to date was opening for her now good friend Maddox Batson. Maddox is a teenage artist himself and sings mainly country pop songs. Josie, being part of his main demographic, was a big fan and follower.

Josie decided to put herself out there and try her best to open for Maddox in the most innovative way that a Gen Z singer could. For around 22 days, Josie posted videos tagging Maddox and requesting to open for him on his tour. Her friends, fans, and even Maddox's fans reposted, tagged, and shared the videos to the point where Batson reached out to Josie and asked her to open for his show in Columbus.

In March 2025 Josie not only opened for one of her favorite artists at just 16 years old, but she also gave an entertaining and loved performance to a crowd of 12,000 people. Some of which were chanting her name and singing along by the end of Birdsong's three-song set.

Josie has always had confidence, but she now has experience that takes many artists her age years to develop. Her opening performance generated an influx of fans, and now Joise is on a steady climb to the top of the music industry.

Josie's sentences always either start or end with "when." The word "if" is eradicated from the determined teenage country artist's vocabulary. Her music career and impact on country music are just beginning, but from recording to college, to connections and shows, Josie Birdsong has an eventful 2026 ahead of her.

Be sure to read Part 2 of this story in the December 24 edition of the *Tippecanoe Gazette*.

McAlexander Fund established to assist Broadway Elementary

BY NANCY BOWMAN

A new Tipp City Foundation fund honoring a woman who taught 35 years at Broadway Elementary School will provide money for the school's principal to use to benefit students annually.

The fund was created by Don McAlexander in recognition of his late wife, Nancy McAlexander.

Tina Smith, principal of Broadway Elementary School, said the

our youngest learners."

Dedicated to elementary education, the fund allows the school/leaders to consider instructional materials, hands-on learning tools, literacy and math resources and enrichment experiences that go beyond the general operating budget.

"Our goal is to use these dollars to expand opportunities for students and strengthen the work happening in our classrooms every day," Smith said. "We're also eager

to use the fund to benefit students annually."