

Russell Thornberry

Russell Thornberry wears many different hats in a variety of roles that combine for a most unique and interesting life. He is a renowned author and master storyteller, a gifted songwriter and singer, a seasoned television personality, a professional outdoorsman, an ordained minister, and a devoted family man.

Biographical Information

Russell is a native to the Lone Star state where he was raised until his late teens. In the summer between his freshman and sophomore year of college, an errant bullet fired in a hunting accident customized Russell's right foot, thus ending his intended football career. Soon after, the native Texan was captivated by musical interests and within a short time began a songwriting career that continues to this day. In his early musical days he performed with several folk/pop groups in the U.S., including the New Christy Minstrels. Russell then launched his solo singer/songwriter career and while on a vacation in Canada, he was offered a recording contract, a national musical TV show and concert tours with such names as Dusty Springfield, Kenny Rogers and the 1st Addition and Bill Cosby. In Canada he met Sharleen Gibson, an Alberta girl who captured Russell's heart and became his wife. After settling in Alberta, Russell won nine BMI awards for his original songs and had three No1 hit records on songs that he wrote and performed.

Unlike most musicians, Russell has a passion for hunting and fishing, which he found in abundance in the wilds of western Canada. His love of the outdoors eventually led Russell to overlapping careers. In addition to his musical efforts, he operated a guiding and outfitting business for hunters and fishermen. Russell literally pioneered the trophy whitetail hunting industry in western Canada because he recognized the value of the great trophy deer, which Canadians simply took for granted. Over an 18-year period, his guide service offered American hunters opportunities to hunt for trophy white-tailed deer, black bear, moose and elk. In addition, he pioneered the first commercial fly-fishing guide service for the big rainbows and brown trout on the famous Bow River in southern Alberta. As he gained prominence for producing giant Alberta whitetails for his clients, he was also establishing himself as one of North America's prominent outdoor writers and authors, contributing to virtually every noteworthy hunting magazine in North America.

Simultaneously, Russell was offered the opportunity to host a national outdoor television series on Canada's CBC network called "The Canadian Great Escape," which he produced and directed. Thornberry applied his understanding of the outdoors with his easy on-camera manner gleaned from years of music TV and concert experience and the series was a hit. Subsequently, he was asked to produce a series of hunting videos, two of which won acclaim both in Canada and the U.S. *Monarchs of Alberta*, featuring trophy whitetail hunting in that province, is still hailed as the one of the best whitetail hunting videos ever produced.

In addition to his contributions to every noteworthy outdoor magazine in the U.S. and Canada, Thornberry has also written and published numerous books on outdoor topics, including *Trophy Deer Of Alberta*, *The Art and Science Of Rattling Whitetail Deer*, *Bucks, Bulls, and Belly Laughs*, *Hunting The Canadian Giant*, *Buckmasters Whitetail*

Trophy Records and, most recently, Trophies of the Heart.

Although he has hunted countless species of big game throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Africa, Asia and New Zealand, his interest and influence in the whitetailed deer hunting world led to an invitation to develop a whitetail hunting magazine for a fledgling company called Buckmasters 25 years ago. Russell accepted the challenge and served as Editor in Chief of *Buckmasters Whitetail Magazine* – the largest whitetail hunting magazine in history with a circulation of 360,000, exceeding the combined circulations of the two largest competing whitetail hunting magazines in the market. Russell also developed two other successful magazine titles for Buckmasters: *Rack Magazine*, an all-species trophy hunting magazine, and *GunHunter Magazine*, a more technical firearms magazine for gun hunters. Russell's whitetail hunting seminars and lectures are in constant demand all over North America.

Thornberry also established a nationwide antler measuring system for white-tailed deer. His "Full-Credit Scoring System" has been widely adopted across North America and is considered the most equitable scoring concept for white-tailed deer in existence today. In Thornberry's system, all antler is measured and included in the total score, allowing each deer full credit for every inch of antler grown. Buckmasters has adopted Thornberry's system and, in 1996, published the first edition of *Buckmasters Whitetail Trophy Records*, based upon Thornberry's "Full-Credit Scoring System." The fourth edition, containing more than 9,000 trophy whitetails, will be published in the fall of 2005. At present, approximately 1,000 official scorers have been trained across North America to officially score whitetail antlers for Thornberry's full-credit scoring system.

While Russell's career in the outdoors has been largely recognized as hunting-related, his passion for fly-fishing has not gone unnoticed. Always seeking a challenge, Russell decided to pursue the Holy Grail of saltwater fly-fishing, the Atlantic permit, found primarily on the shallow flats of the Caribbean Ocean. He was so smitten with the challenge and the thrill of fly-fishing for permit that he established The Distinguished Order of Permit Angling Purists, the first and only organization for other permit fly-fishing aficionados.

Russell appears regularly on several national hunting television shows aired on the Outdoor Channel, including Buckmasters Magazine TV, The Jackie Bushman Show and he hosts Sportsmen Afield, Wild Encounters and Adventures Abroad..

Russell formed **Russell Thornberry Outdoors (RTO)** to guide hunters and fishermen to the highest quality outdoors experiences and he personally takes groups of hunters and fishermen with him to favorite haunts in the U.S.A. Mexico and Canada each year. RTO also organizes sportsmen's retreats and seminars on all facets of outdoor involvement.

Russell is in constant demand as a public speaker and entertainer. He travels all over North America to address sportsmen and, in many cases, to entertain with his original music, which has majored of late in humorous, self-penned songs about the hilarious side of the human condition. Thornberry originals like "I've Got Hemorrhoids on My Heart from Loving You" typically leaves his audiences in tears of laughter.

In addition to his involvement in the outdoors and his music, Russell is active in numerous other aspects of ministry, preaching and speaking at churches, men's retreats and sportsmen's outreach events all over North America. He is an ordained minister and has served as a cell church pastor in the U.S. and Canada, and as the Chaplain of Buckmasters.

He serves on the board of Chattanooga based Forgotten Children Ministries (www.forgottenchildrenministries.org) a ministry centered in Honduras and dedicated to providing hope and a future and salvation to the epidemic numbers of forgotten street children of that nation. Russell and his wife Sharleen host annual mission trips to Honduras.

Russell and Sharleen, minister powerfully together in couples retreats and conferences where they demonstrate through their own experience, God's power to heal and restore marriages. They reside in Woodland Park, CO for six months of the year and in Alberta, Canada for the remainder of the year.. They have three married children and 10 grandchildren.

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