There aren't too many folks who can be considered living legends, but Willie Nelson is definitely one of them. He's a true Texas icon and we'll be taking a look at his life on *Jon Garrett's Live in Texas*
!

Nelson is a living country legend.

Born April 30th, 1933, in Abbott, Texas, Willie Nelson learned his first guitar chords at the age of six and joined his first band by nine. In high school, he raised pigs for the Future Farmers of America and played halfback for the local football team. Meanwhile, he sang and played guitar for local dance halls and honky-tonks.
After high school, he joined the US Air Force, briefly, and then became a DJ for local radio stations in central Texas.
He attended Baylor University for two years to study agriculture, but he left to pursue his career in music.

Nelson has been recording music for over 50 years.

In 1956, Willie moved to Washington to become a country star, but success evaded him. Sever al of the songs he wrote ended up becoming hits, but they were performed by other artists such as Claude Gray and Patsy Cline.
He had his lucky break in 1961 when he was signed by Liberty Records and finally made the charts with his singles “Willingly” and “Touch Me”, both of which made the Top Ten.
His first album,
And Then I Wrote
, was released in the fall of 1962.
By 1965, you could find him on the world famous Grand Ole Opry show, broadcast out of Nashville, Tennessee.
In 1972, Willie moved down to Austin, Texas, to be part of the hippie music scene and became a staple at the iconic Armadillo World Headquarters.
During this time, he became Atlantic Records first country artist and recorded the acclaimed
Shotgun Willie
album. Shortly after, he released another album,
Phases and Stages
.
Later, he moved to Columbia Records and, with complete creative control, recorded another fantastic album,
Red Headed Stranger
.

Willie, Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter, and Tompall Glaser recorded and released country music’s first album to go platinum in 1976, *Wanted! The Outlaws*. The rest of the 70s saw success after success for Willie, including the albums
Waylon & Willie
and
Stardust
. Both went platinum.
By 1980, he was performing duets with President Carter’s wife Rosalynn on the White House

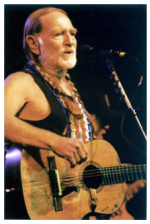
lawn.
The 1980s saw some involvement with other major music artists of that time, including Ray Charles and Johnny Cash, but also saw the beginnings of the activism which would be such a big part of his life. During this time, he toured alongside Kris Kristofferson, Jennings, and Cash as the Highwaymen.

Nelson was 40 when *Shotgun Willie* was released.

Beyond his music work, which includes sixty-seven studio albums, he has appeared in over thirty movies and television shows. He has written five books, including an autobiography where he infamously recalls the story of smoking a marijuana joint on the roof of the White House in his typical “outlaw” fashion.

Currently, Willie resides in Hawaii in a mostly self-sustaining community powered by solar energy. He still tours and plays, but is also busy with his activism which includes supporting bio-diesel fuel, animal welfare awareness, and the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Law, or NORML. He also works with Farm Aid, an organization dedicated to saving the American family farm.

Willie Nelson is not only a Texan icon, but an American one. He was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1993 and the National Agricultural Hall of fame in 1998.
In 2010, he was inducted into the Library of Congress’s National Recording Registry.
Austin renamed its Second Street to Willie Nelson Boulevard and plans to honor him with a life-sized statue at the entrance of the
Austin City Limits
studio.



Nelson has released over 60 studio albums.

With such a history, it's no surprise we're featuring Willie on the December 20th installment of *Jon Garrett's Live in Texas*
! The starts at 7 PM, so be sure to tune in! Don't forget to check out Nelson's website here
.