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Music icon honoured at Deadly Awards

27 September 2011

Music legend Col Hardy, OAM was presented with the Jimmy Little Lifetime Achievement Award at the 17th annual Deadly Awards, held at the Sydney Opera House on September 27.

Northern Territory singer/songwriter Shellie Morris presented the Jimmy Little Lifetime Achievement Award.

"Col Hardy has been a guide for me and so many other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians over many years. Today, we have the ARIA award winners like Dan Sultan and Jessica Mauboy, but without our pioneers such as Jimmy Little and Col Hardy and others where would we be?" Shellie said.

"Col was among the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices we heard on radio. He broke preconceptions and pushed through barriers at a time when blackfellas just didn't get gigs."

Col grew up with music all around him. As a Kamilaroi man from a large family of 11 children growing up in Brewarrina NSW, he would listen to the radio at night inspired by the distinctive and powerful voice of one of his favourite singers, Roy Orbison.

Once dubbed the 'gentle giant of country-soul', Col was the first Aboriginal person to win a Golden Guitar at Tamworth. With his rich, deep voice and strong interpretative qualities, he paved the way for future generations of Indigenous singers.

A music industry veteran of 40 years, he has released a total of five records including his landmark debut, *Black Gold*, in 1973.

Col was part of the Opals, a country outfit and sometime house band for Jimmy Little's travelling All-Coloured Review in the early 60's. By the early 70's he was winning over all-white audiences at Tamworth. Over the years, he has toured Australia extensively and performed with some of the biggest names in country music.

His willpower and strong determination to succeed in the music industry has led to his success and the respect of his peers, both young and old.

He was inducted into the Country Music Hands of Fame in the 70's and, in 1990 during NAIDOC Week, he was voted NSW Aboriginal Artist of the Year.

When not sharing the gift of his voice with other people, Col works at Taronga Park Zoo where he tells stories and sings.

Col received his Order of Australia medal in 2007 for service to the country and music industry as a singer and recording artist, and to the community through the delivery of outreach zoological education programs in regional areas. He is an inspiration to young

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