



## Stellar musician

Jenee Fleenor's childhood prediction to be a famous fiddler came true. – Profiles, 1D



(Photo courtesy of Downtown Springdale Alliance)

“Jenee should be extremely proud of the career she’s built for herself. And more importantly the reputation she has built for herself in the industry, not just as a stellar musician, but as a wonderful human being.”

— Barry Bales, longtime member of Alison Krauss and Union Station, 15-time Grammy winner and now member of Wood Box Heroes

# Jenee Keener Fleenor

Jenee Fleenor’s childhood prediction to be a famous fiddler came true. Friends call her one of the best at her craft and praise her for her humility and gratefulness.

APRIL WALLACE  
NWA DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

It was the mid-1990s, at a girls’ sleepover, when 10-year-old Jenee Keener began making predictions for her grand future. She put her promise down on paper, writing: “I will grow up and be a famous fiddle player when I am 20 years old.” She signed it, sure that this was one of many autographs she would give, folded the note, taped it

up, and then gave it to fellow fourth-grader and friend Bethany to keep. On the outside it bears the date, the time — 3:58 a.m., the prime hour for making grave promises — and warns: “Don’t open until [this] year.” Bethany took those rules seriously and abided by them. When she opened it up in the 2020s, Jenee Fleenor was the first female to win Musician of the Year at the Country Music Association Awards, a title she has won five

consecutive years, 2019 to 2023, so far. The Springdale native — then Jenee Keener — has played on the road with Martina McBride and Terri Clark, previously spent a decade in Blake Shelton’s band and spent more than seven years playing on “The Voice.” Fleenor also earned ACM Specialty Instruments Player of the Year twice, in 2020 and 2023, CMA Touring Musician of the Year in 2015 and three MusicRow Top 10 Ablum All-Star Musician Awards

in 2019, 2022 and 2023. Last week, Fleenor’s bluegrass band, the Wood Box Heroes, released a new album and kicked off with a performance at the Mountain Arts Center in Prestonsburg, Ky. “As a female, she inspires other (women) in our male-dominated industry for sure,” said friend Trent Willmon, a hit songwriter

See *FLEENOR*  
on Page 3D

