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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KERRVILLE— The Texas Heritage Music Foundation is proclaiming the weekend of September 23 – 25, 2005 as Texas Heritage Living History Weekend.

Plans are already under way for the ninth edition of this very unique and hugely popular community education event billed as "Another Way of Learning: Using Stories and Songs." Produced by THMF since its 1997 inception and originally presented as a one-day event on the banks of the Guadalupe River at Kerrville's Louise Hays Park, Texas Heritage Living History Weekend is now held on the campus of Schreiner University and has grown into a three-day celebration of Texas heritage and history through story and song.

Thousands are expected for the Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> opening event at the Robbins-Lewis Pavilion on Schreiner University campus that will be featuring more than forty performers, presenters and educators. Beginning at 9 a.m. and lasting until 3 p.m., the unique and varied line-up will include Old West and Native American demonstrators; Texas history re-enactment groups; chuck wagons and teepees; noted cowboy storytellers and poets; Texas heritage demonstrators and educational exhibits; numerous staging areas for musical performers; horse shoeing demonstrations; a Native American Education component; and central to the event, a noon tribute to the songs and stories of music legend Jimmie Rodgers, as performed by local actor Tony Navarra.

Since 1997, Navarra has shared the stories of Jimmie Rodgers and his association with country music, Texas and specifically, Kerrville, based on his exhaustive interviews with various

Rodgers' family members. Rodgers, hailed as the "Father of Country Music," resided in Kerrville during the last years of his life and was one of the three original inductees into the Country Music Hall of Fame. He is also a member of the Blues Hall of Fame, and of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Texas Heritage Living History Weekend's primary goal is to teach children from rural *and* inner city schools the rich historical heritage of Texas, its varied peoples and cultures, and its traditions in literature, music and storytelling. It is an especially unique opportunity to expose at-risk youth to the arts, culture, and music of early Texas pioneers, settlers, immigrants and indigenous peoples. It is the foundation's belief that exposure to arts, culture and history will provide youth with opportunities to develop creativity, learn the tools of communication and create multiple solutions to contemporary problems. The event offers a universal language that cuts across disciplines and cultural diversity to bring more coherent meaning to their world. The foundation's goal is to help instill pride and self-assuredness in today's youth, at-risk or otherwise, with a continued education about the diversity of our heritage, culture and people.

Currently, Texas Heritage Living History Weekend is the *only* cultural educational programming of its type in the central Texas/Hill Country area that is (a) *open to the general public*; (b) *provides funding to schools and agencies for transportation to and from the event*, (c) *places performers and oral historians in schools to give lessons on Texas' diverse culture, heritage and history*; and (d) *charges no admission*. Since 1997, the Texas Heritage Living History programming has impacted over 15,000 youths from throughout the Hill Country and central/south Texas.

Each year's lineup of performers is listed on the Texas Heritage Music Foundation's website, [www.texasheritagemusic.org](http://www.texasheritagemusic.org). The foundation's website also contains downloadable educational materials, including classroom discussion topics and activities, suggested readings and recordings.

Dr. Kathleen Hudson, Executive Director of the Texas Heritage Music Foundation, states, "With a track record of success beginning in 1987, THMF is not interested in just *repeating* a successful event such as Texas Heritage Living History Weekend. We are committed to creative

*innovation* and *growth*. Each year, we find new ways to bring stories and songs to the community, to the educational system, and to children and young adults who are deemed 'at risk'. She goes on to add, "THMF is committed to the belief that telling stories and singing songs do make a difference in the lives of everyone, especially our youth".

Texas Heritage Living History Weekend will continue on Saturday, September 24th with a *Texas Heritage Seminar*, to be held at the Cailloux Center from 10 a.m. to noon. The discussion panel will be made up of Texas scholars and will focus on *Texas Folklore: The Power of Stories in Education*. The seminar will be free and open to the public.

Texas Heritage Living History Weekend will wrap up with a *Literacy and Learning Benefit Concert* on Sunday, September 25th at Schreiner University's Dietert Auditorium at 3 p.m. Proceeds from the concert will benefit both the Wayne Kennemer Scholarship Fund and Families and Literacy and group discounts will be available. The featured performer will be announced at a later date. Previous benefit concert performers include Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Little Joe Y la Familia, Terri Hendrix with Lloyd Maines, Ruthie Foster with Cyd Cassone, and The Bells of Joy.

Thanks to local funding support, the Friday and Saturday events will be free and open to the public.

All schools are invited, and educational packages will be available to teachers. Transportation grants to rural schools and schools with predominantly at-risk enrollments will be available, on a limited basis, upon request.

The event's website is [www.texasheritagemusic.org](http://www.texasheritagemusic.org).