

THEY KEPT COMING!



And so, we come to the end of another *Elvis Week*, 9-17 August 2024.

Fans from all around the world and across the United States tick off 9 or 10 days on their calendar every year, to honour the life, music and legacy of – and to pay their respects to – the greatest entertainer and musical influence of all time, **ELVIS PRESLEY**.

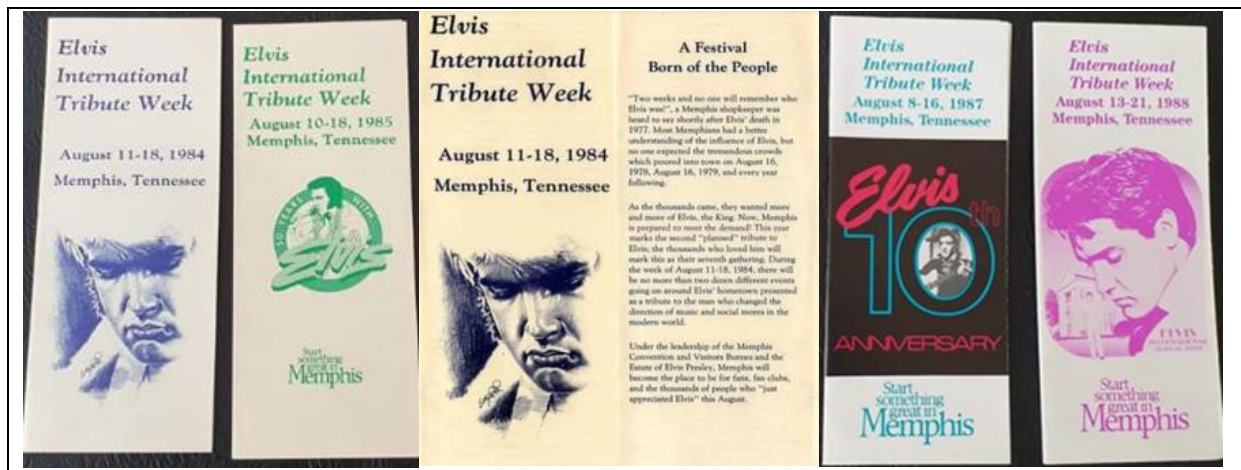
WHAT IS THIS PHENOMENON CALLED *ELVIS WEEK* AND HOW DID IT EVOLVE?

Like the assassination of JFK or the moon landing, just about everyone from that era will know exactly where they were and what they were doing on 16 August 1977 when the news of Elvis' death hit the world and left a trail of broken hearts in its wake!



The following year about 9,500 fans gathered outside the gates of Graceland on the first anniversary of Elvis' death, bearing flowers and tributes. Management was so touched by their loyalty and sincerity that they were allowed to visit the gravesite and lay their flowers and gifts. In addition, *'more than 100 fans, without a place to spend the night, were allowed to sleep on the grounds of Graceland last night'* the evening newspaper, the Memphis Press-Scimitar, reported on 17 August, 1978.

Every year the fans just kept coming. It used to be called *Elvis International Tribute Week*

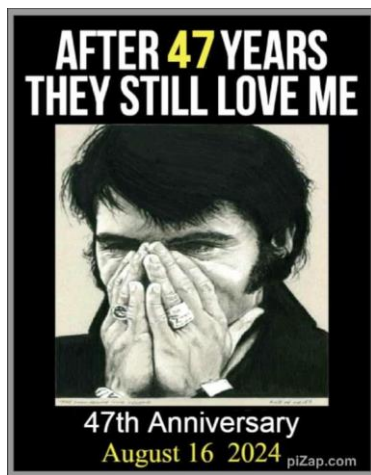


Artwork by Betty Harper

Graceland officially opened to the public in 1982. By 1983, now a tourist attraction and pilgrimage site, newspapers already were referring to the "annual" Graceland vigil prior to which all other events would take place. In that year, it was anticipated that 50,000 visitors would be welcomed to the city of Memphis.

1983 represented the first planned and coordinated tribute to Elvis Presley.

ELVIS WEEK 2024



Elvis Week annual festivities draw tens of thousands of fans from across the U.S. and all over the world to the home of the King for a mix of concerts, panels, presentations, fan events, meet and greets, film screenings and more, including of course the main event, the Candlelight Vigil.

This year fans enjoyed an Elvis Gospel Show, the Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist Contest, a Sound Stage concert: Elvis Back in Memphis, Conversations on Elvis with a panel of special guests including Linda Thompson (Elvis' former girlfriend) and Larry Geller, Elvis' hair stylist and spiritual mentor, and many more from the Elvis world.

Many congratulations to **Emilio Santoro**, winner of 2024's **Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist** competition.



Check out some of his videos here: -

https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=c14fbbbc00866f01&sxsrf=ADLYWlmoQ2j-jbuWAosJPGs0Ywmv8J6gg:1723654180536&q=Emilio+Santoro+America%27s+Got+Talent&a=X&sqi=2&ved=2ahUKEwiU2JWZ-PSHAXWe2gIHHfeCPYgQ1QJ6BAgwEAE&biw=1517&bih=674&dpr=0.9

The Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist Contest was launched in 2007 by EPE. They were in search of an ETA who 'best represents the legacy of Elvis Presley' in the area of Vocals, Style, Stage Presence and Overall Performance. Score card was and still is like this: Vocals count for 40% of the score. Style 20%, Stage Wear 20% and Stage Presence 20%.

To end this super-charged week of all things Elvis, fans gathered at those famous gates, lit their candles from the Eternal Flame, and while listening to a musical backdrop of Elvis' songs, walked silently and reverently up the winding, tree-lined drive to the Meditation Garden.

The annual Vigil starts on the evening of 15 Aug and usually continues into the early hours of the morning on 16 August. Gates close when the last visitor has left.

The thousands of visitors who come to Memphis throughout the year and especially over Elvis Week are surely testament to how much Elvis has touched the hearts of so many and how, even though sadly no longer with us, Elvis is very much still in the building!

For old and new fans alike, his music whatever genre, has touched the souls of millions including those of some other famous names from the music world.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **SHAWN KLUSH** of Pennsylvania was the first-ever Ultimate ETA title winner.
- **17 August, 1977**, the day after Elvis Presley died, more flowers were sold in the US than on any other single day. *"We were told 3,116 floral arrangements had been delivered to Forest Hill Cemetery"*, according to a spokesperson for CBS News. Memphis actually ran out of flowers that afternoon and had to order in from around the country.
- Graceland is the second most visited residence in America following The White House

- A group of Elvis' close friends and associates, including Jerry Schilling, Joe Esposito, Janelle McCombe, Felton Jarvis and Patsy Gambill to name a few, paid for the eternal flame that stands at the head of his tombstone in the Meditation Garden.



16 AUGUST 2024

- What was your reaction on hearing the news of Elvis' death back in 1977? What did you do for the rest of that day? How did you spend the day this year?
- How many of you watched the Candlelight Vigil? How many of you have personally experienced a Candlelight Vigil and in what year? Your comments, we love to hear from you.
- 47 years down the line, 16 Aug is still a very emotional day for all Elvis fans wherever you are in the world; the disbelief, the sadness, the longing, the questions, the doubts, the memories etc. Anyone also feel a degree of anger? Tell us why, what makes you feel that way?

Elvis thought he would never be remembered! That was so way off track! Let us enjoy his legacy, he left us so much and his music lives on. We should not shed tears because he is gone but smile and be thankful for the time he was with us.

That we believe, is what Elvis himself would want of us!

OUR BSH TRIBUTE

We loved you Yesterday until it was time for you to go

We love you Today like you have never been gone

We will love you Tomorrow, all our days rolled into one

References

- <https://www.graceland.com/ultimate-eta-contest>
- [https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMY78B Elvis Presleys Eternal Flame Memorial Memphis Tennessee USA](https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMY78B_Elvis_Presleys_Eternal_Flame_Memorial_Memphis_Tennessee_USA)
- https://www.aol.com/entertainment/guess-day-set-record-most-165800718.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuYmluZy5jb20v&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAE4omEQkjqWf9d3S-N7muyOh9eRc8svggXIP1AUg8sByEShoftQN7et90KkLoC_nlcntJMWpDoefaH9UpyiY2uCZKhAsvFvK2d_z3YY7X6ZCyEatJ3tJ7KJttshQkKw9ZzGtAzTiNJVmU6CkQK_SgbX55mt3FDYW6ceHiAxlMgP#:~:text=August%2017th%2C%201977%2C%20the%20day%20after%20%22the%20King,sold%20in%20the%20US%20on%20a%20single%20day.