



**BBU Heritage Award Winners
32nd Joe Val Bluegrass Festival
February 17 - 19, 2017**

**Sheraton Framingham, Framingham, MA
Presented by the Boston Bluegrass Union**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**BOSTON BLUEGRASS UNION ANNOUNCES
2017 BBU HERITAGE AWARD WINNERS**

BOSTON – The Boston Bluegrass Union (BBU) is proud to announce the recipients of the 2017 BBU Heritage Awards. These awards are presented each year by the BBU to honor artists and those working behind the scenes who have made substantial contributions to furthering bluegrass music in New England. The awards will be presented during the 32nd annual Joe Val Bluegrass Festival, Presidents Day Weekend, February 17-19, 2017, at the Sheraton Framingham, Framingham, MA.

The 2017 BBU Heritage Award Industry Winner is Candi Sawyer

Since she was a child, **Candi Sawyer** has been immersed in the Vermont bluegrass community. For over twenty-five years, her grandfather, Fernan Parker, hosted the Weston Playhouse Concert Series. Candi continues this legacy as an active area concert presenter and host of the very popular Jenny Brook Bluegrass Festival, held the last weekend in June at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds in Tunbridge, VT. Now in its 17th year, the festival has grown to become one of the premier events on the national bluegrass calendar. Candi and her husband Seth, are also very supportive of other activities throughout the region and can be found on the bluegrass trail performing as the Seth Sawyer Band. Candi is a beloved member of the bluegrass community and it gives the BBU great pleasure in presenting her with the 2017 Heritage Award.

The 2017 BBU Heritage Award Artist and Industry Winner is Mike Kropp

Born in New York, where he learned to play banjo and took part in the folk music scene in the 1960s, **Mike Kropp**, went on to become one of the leading performers, teachers and music industry professionals in the Northeast before his untimely passing in 2015.

Mike was a long time Rhode Island resident with his wife Janet and their beloved dogs. He worked in the music business his whole life, starting out with Columbia Records in the late 1960s.

There he collaborated on projects with John Hammond, José Feliciano, and Carole King. Following that, he had his own music store in Connecticut, before embarking on a career as an independent manufacturer's rep, calling on music retailers in New England for Fishman, Remo, Hughes & Kettner, Modulus basses, and NS Design.

He was also a serious performer on the banjo, and a teacher of some note. He performed as a member of Northern Lights for seventeen years. They were at the forefront of progressive bluegrass in the 1980s and recorded several albums for Flying Fish and Revonah Records. He went on to lead two other bands, the Pegheads and The KroppDusters. Mike most recently was a part owner and director of Guitar & Mandolin Camp North and Banjo Camp North. He passed away on Nov. 10, 2015. He leaves behind a multitude of friends and admirers from all of his various efforts in the music business.

The Boston Bluegrass Union is a 501(c)3 non-profit, all volunteer organization, dedicated to preserving and promoting this original American music genre. Celebrating our 40th season, the BBU is the premier source for events, education, and information on bluegrass music in the Northeast. And, in 2016, the BBU received the prestigious **Distinguished Achievement Award** from the IBMA in recognition of its education mission and bluegrass performance events.

Additional Media Information: Contact Gerry Katz at gkatz@bbu.org or (617) 515-8383 for additional information, images, or interview requests. Visit www.bbu.org for details the BBU and the 32nd Joe Val Bluegrass Festival, including Main Stage and Workshop schedules, artist biographies, and more.



Candi Sawyer



Mike Kropp