

# EP songwriter Ballard dies at age 77

By Doug Pullen

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EL PASO — A memorial service is scheduled on Wednesday in Denton, Texas, for an El Paso native who wrote some memorable pop songs of the 1960s and '70s.

Clinton Conger Ballard Jr., better known as Clint Ballard Jr., wrote myriad songs, but two topped the charts.

Linda Ronstadt had a No. 1 hit in 1975 with "You're No Good," which was included on her "Heart Like a Wheel" album.

The song was recorded before that by R&B singers Betty Everett and Dionne Warwick.

Johnny Cash, Reba McEntire, Michael Bolton, Jose Feliciano and Little Milton are among dozens of artists who also recorded it.

His other signature song was "Game of Love," which was a No. 1 hit in 1965 for Wayne Fontana and the Mindbenders and later featured in the Robin Williams movie "Good Morning Vietnam."

Ballard, 77, died "peacefully in his sleep" on Dec. 23 in Denton, according to friend Jacqueline Martinez.

He was born and raised in El Paso, graduated from Texas Western College (now the University of Texas at El Paso) and received a bachelor

of science degree in radio production, according to a biography supplied by Martinez.

"He was a highly successful composer of popular songs and Broadway musicals," she said via fax.

"As early as the age of 3, Clint's musical ability was recognized and he played the piano for KTSM, a local radio station," according to the biography.

"At age 11, he attended a musical program for gifted students at North State State Teachers College (now the University of North Texas), in Denton."

After a stint in the Army, Ballard moved to New York

to pursue a career in music. He became a successful pop song writer and a composer of musicals, including "Come Back Little Sheba."

His song, "Hey, Little Baby," was recorded by band leader Mitch Miller and used as the theme of the 1958 World's Fair in Belgium.

Ballard wrote more than 550 songs and musicals, according to his biography. All Music Guide lists recordings of his songs by Rick Nelson, Connie Francis, the Hollies, the Zombies, Billy Eckstine, Louis Prima, Patti Page, Jan & Dean and Frankie Avalon.

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