

## ***Earl Scruggs: Banjo Icon* at the 2017 International Bluegrass Music Association Conference Special Awards Event**



Authors Gordon Castelnero and David Russell travelled to Raleigh, North Carolina, as nominees for the International Bluegrass Music Association Print Media Award. The conference ran the last week in September, culminating in a superstar bluegrass fan fest on September 30. The categories for the 2017 Special Awards and Momentum Awards included Broadcaster of the Year, Bluegrass Event of the Year, Best Graphic Design for a Recorded Project, Best Liner Notes for a Recorded Project, Bluegrass Songwriter of the Year and Print Media Person of the Year.

Gordon and Dave met in Raleigh the day before the Special Awards luncheon (September 27) with high hopes of their book, *Earl Scruggs: Banjo Icon*, winning the print media award. While they were squeezed out by John Lawless and his fabulous website [Bluegrasstoday.com](http://Bluegrasstoday.com), Dave and Gordon were thrilled to have been nominated and had a

wonderful time meeting fans of their hard work.

Walking around the IMBA conference, Dave and Gordon were delighted to hear bands from as far away as Norway, Ireland, and Japan jamming in the halls. They carried copies of *Earl*



*Scruggs* and were stopped by countless musicians (many of whom they'd interviewed for the book) to take photos and sign autographs.

At the IBMA Music Awards show at the end of the conference, Gordon, Dave, and Dave's wife felt like celebrities as they walked a red carpet into the event. Dave explains:

*We were slowly making our way up the red carpet runway like Hollywood celebrities, sandwiched between the best of the best musicians in the bluegrass world, when it was finally our turn to be interviewed by the guy with a TV camera. "So tell us all the name of your band," to which we said that we were not in a band, but that we did have the first ever biography of Earl Scruggs. As soon as we lifted our books, a bunch of paparazzi-like*

*journalists (and curious fans) stepped up the fence line parallel to the red carpet runway, and began snapping photos. It was surreal, to say the least.*

Throughout the conference and awards show, musicians, historians, and industry professionals came up to Dave and Gordon to recognize *Earl Scruggs* as a ground-breaking work. Gordon and Dave feel incredibly grateful for the enthusiasm of the bluegrass community, especially the support of the Earl Scruggs Center, Béla Fleck, and Earl Scruggs' family.

Image captions:

1. Left to right: David Russell, J.T. Scruggs (Nephew of Earl Scruggs and Chairman of the Earl Scruggs Center), and Gordon Castelnero
2. Radio and TV host Cindy Baucom interviews Gordon Castelnero (left) and Dave Gordon (center).