

# **WINTER DANCE PARTY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

## **FEBRUARY 3, 1959 - THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED**

Three young musicians soared to the heights of show business on the rock 'n' roll craze that swept the 1950's. JP (Big Bopper) Richardson, Ritchie Valens, and Buddy Holly were major performers on what was termed the 1959 Winter Dance Party tour.

Following a performance at the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, Iowa, the three performers left on a charter plane for their next engagement in Fargo, N.D. On February 3, 1959, their small airplane crashed in a farm field about 15 miles northwest of Clear Lake, Iowa, killing all three performers and their pilot, Roger Peterson of Storm Lake, Iowa.

Each year, near the anniversary date of that final performance, a tribute show is held at the Surf Ballroom and thousands of fans from all over the world come to remember rock 'n' roll legends Ritchie Valens, JP(Big Bopper) Richardson, and Buddy Holly.

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Winter Dance Party, a 1999 tribute touring show was staged by Dennis Farland of Newton, Iowa. The eleven cities of the original tour were visited on exactly the same dates as the 1959 Winter Dance Party.

Following the completion of that tour, fans of these musicians established a scholarship program commemorating the lives and musical contributions of these artists, the pilot, and the late Darrel Hein, manager of the Surf Ballroom, who originated the winter dance party tribute shows in 1979.

All net proceeds from the 1999 Winter Dance Party tour have been used to establish this scholarship fund.