



Mark's first DJ photo, circa 1979



Mark with Michael (on LP cover) and friend, 1983



With wife, Tina, at the 2003 American Disc Jockey Awards.

## From Disco to Today, Mark Evans Has Seen It All

Long-time Detroit DJ uses his positive attitude and his visual proficiency to make others shine.

**Ryan Burger:** ...We are here with another one of our Pro DJ Files, this time centering on the Detroit, Michigan area, with Mark Evans DJ

*Entertainment. Mark is known for being a disc jockey for more than a couple years, but also because of all his involvement in the work he does for Mobile Beat and for Pro DJ, especially at the conventions. So let's tell everybody all about you.*

**Mark Evans:** What do you want me to say now? You just said it all. That's it. Interview done.

**RB:** Pretty much. Tell us how you got into this whole mess, with business going on, what, 30 years now, from what I understand.

**ME:** Yeah. This is my 30th year. I started in 1979. I was actually a dancer back in my teen days, and we used to go to the teen discos and I thought it was so cool to watch the DJs spin the discs up there...I started watching them and one guy decided to pull me aside and teach me how to do it. Then from there, I started working in roller rinks; got into the club business in the eighties; started into weddings in about the mid-eighties, and kind of never slowed down from there.

**RB:** Thirty years. I didn't know that dancer stuff; okay. I thought I really knew you.

**ME:** Oh, you thought you did. I actually have a trophy somewhere buried in the basement for a dance contest back, probably about that timeframe, '79-'80 or something like that. Nowadays, I dance more like Michael Jackson.

I think I was a little tough on the knees back in the day.

**RB:** You're in mobile DJ service currently. What kind of events do you do? What do you consider your target niche within the big market that is Detroit?

**ME:** My area of expertise, I guess—I do family parties. That would be weddings, anniversaries, birthday parties. I really don't do a lot of corporate events other than maybe a holiday party here or there. But I really focus on the family events, my primary market being weddings.

**RB:** Okay. And you enjoy doing weddings? When it comes down to it, it sounds like you really want to be kind of involved with the group. You're not just there to play tunes and disappear.

**ME:** Oh, absolutely. I am there to make sure people have a good time. I'm pretty interactive, though not as much as Scott Faver...

**RB:** You're not out there spinning on the dance floor. I got you.

**ME:** I don't wear the flashy coats and spin around on the dance floor, no. But it's whatever it takes to get people out in the dance floor, to make sure they're having a good time, to make sure you acknowledge. One of the first things

I learned actually back in the disco days was getting to know your people. You know, when you walk into an event you don't have a lot of time to do that. You have to react fast to your clients, your crowd. Of course, when you have meetings with your clients, that also helps to get to know them a little bit. When you're not picking on people, but picking out people and having fun with them, they have a good time. They like to be acknowledged when they're doing something fun on the dance floor. You

and Web marketing over the years. [Check out Mark's site at [www.djmarke.com](http://www.djmarke.com). -Ed] But word of mouth is still the most important. That wedding came because I had DJ'd his two other brothers' weddings on this side of the state.

**RB:** *What kind of equipment do you like to use? Do you get into lights? Tell me a little bit about that side of things.*

**ME:** You know, it's funny about lights...I have

and I was on the Internet, and I found a site called Pro DJ.com. So I signed up and I kind of liked what it was, and I got a special e-mail from a gentleman by the name of Ken Heath [a lead moderator in the Start.ProDJ.com forums]. And he made me feel all nice and warm. Then it was probably 2001, the first time we went to the Las Vegas show for *Mobile Beat*, and have been hooked ever since.

**RB:** *Well, I know your graphical work, your video work, which a lot of people see at the Vegas show in some of the commercials, some of the different stuff you've done has been fantastic for us. I imagine that your stuff's just growing with what you're doing for your own local service, getting into the montages and all that kind of stuff. Where do you see yourself going? Where do you see yourself, your business in the next, say, five or 10 years?*

**ME:** I would love to do more of the video stuff; something more visual...You know, everybody knows that a disc jockey can play music, can mix music; they can read a crowd. It's the extra little things that you're going to start being able to do for the client, video being one of them, one that I like; probably some different type of lighting effects; got to get that "wow" factor.

You know, I started out with 45's and albums...

**RB:** *...and 8-tracks, right?*

**ME:** I'll ignore that remark. Actually, I never owned an 8-track.

**RB:** *Except for the one in your truck, yeah, okay.*

**ME:** Except for the one in my truck. My sister did, and I loved the fact, in the middle of a song that it would switch tracks on you. Or you hit the wrong button and you'd have to wait 20 minutes to hear your song. It's amazing, the difference in technology: Now we're all computerized, of course, after going from CDs. It's becoming more instant. It's going to get to the point where you're at a show and you will never have to turn down a request. You'll never have to forget a song because you'll be able to access it right online and be ready to go in a matter of a minute.

**RB:** *What should someone remember if they meet DJ Mark Evans of Detroit, Michigan?*

**ME:** A lot of people say my enthusiasm is contagious. I have fun in everything I do. I believe in a positive, spirited lifestyle. I love to help other people, as evident in being a moderator on Pro DJ. This past November I was elected the president of the Michigan chapter of the American Disc Jockey Association, so that's going to be another chapter in my life that I've got to learn how to do. I just hope that people remember me as somebody that's fun to be around, and I'm actually pretty laid back most of the time. And I have a good time.

**RB:** *Very cool. Thank you for joining me!* **MB**



Mark's current setup

can kind of say something about it. You don't have to draw attention to them if they're being dumb, but you want to make sure that they're looking good, they're dancing, doing something. If a guy's out there trying to breakdance, say, "Here's a piece of cardboard I'm going to throw out to you," that kind of stuff.

**RB:** *Yeah, just a little—it's the job of the DJ not to be the center of attention, but to direct the attention to somebody. It sounds like that fits with you perfectly.*

**ME:** You want to make them feel involved.

**RB:** *Detroit's got plenty of people so you probably don't have to travel a ton, but where's somewhere that you have traveled that's a good distance from there?*

**ME:** Oh, the other side of the state. Two years ago in May of 2007 I drove to the home of Gerald R. Ford, as a matter of fact, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the other side of the state, to do a country wedding out in a park. It was a beautiful day, beautiful setting. It was about a three and a half hour drive, but it was well worth it.

**RB:** *How did they hear about you? Had they been to a local wedding? Is that how people hear about your company or do they hear about you on the Web? How do they find you?*

**ME:** Actually both. A lot of it has to do with—well, with your help: learning how to do websites

not done a show in years without lights. I've always had lights. I think your market will determine that. I know a lot of guys and gals that say they don't use lights, they don't need them, they never needed them; but in our market it's always been there. For some reason, people assume you will have a light show there. Of course, we're getting lighter and lighter lights with the LEDs, lightbars, uplighting, that kind of thing.

I also like to do video. I love to offer video, as a matter of fact. I haven't done a lot of it, but I love to put together photo montages for people, and that is a real seller, especially in this area right now.

**RB:** *Fantastic. Moving into what you've done in the national industry...How long has it been that you've been around ProDJ.com? You started as just a regular on the site, then we kind of pulled you into the mess of things that go on, and started to take over increasingly more and more of your time. How did you find your way to the national disc jockey industry?*

**ME:** Well, there's a funny story about that, actually, because I had gotten out of the DJ business in 1995. And then in '99, I believe it was, out of the woodwork I just started getting a lot of calls; people wanting me to DJ whatever event. And I did like 10 that year, but it was also the year that I had nose surgery done. And I was sitting around for a couple weeks