



# Musicians of the Midnight Sun

Thank you for visiting the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website. Even though these blogs are being posted many weeks after the launch of the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website, my hope is that they will remain as a document along with the website itself with the intention to give a little bit more of a personal story of my relationships with these featured artists.

## Archie Loutitt: (1937 – 2018)

This is a tough one for me to write because my relationship with Archie started me onto a few life changing musical projects. The song "Calling Archie" came to me like an arrow back in the early 2000s. It was a lament of sorts to the loss of my occupation as a live musician and how I wished it was like it was back in Archie's time. I was singing about his life but also my own.

Getting to know him better over the years and sitting down to get this interview, I recognized even more of a kinship with him as a musician than I could have imagined. He was the window for me to look back into a time that I felt like I had missed out on and the closest I could get to that time was to keep asking him and others of that lineage for more stories.



"Northbound Freeway" L-R Archie Loutitt, Frenchy Cyrenne, Roger Regier, Gary Duherst (Photo courtesy of Derek Woodward)

That led to me talking with other musicians from the 60s and 70s and this project. I felt compelled to provide a venue for these musician's stories and reflections of life and music in the north. I've been a musician up here for 40 years and I didn't know all their stories. So I thought how cool would it be if all those stories could be put together in one place and their musical lives recognized and celebrated. How Archie could be acknowledged for the music he played in his youth and be known for that as well as for being the grumpy security guard at the museum.

Archie was a creative guy. As a young man, he volunteered at the community radio station, CFYK, hosting shows, spinning records and playing along with musical guests. Later on, he became known for his guitar playing and for his band, "Northbound Freeway". After he packed up his guitar for the last time, he took up photography and painting as an outlet of his self-expression. Although I'm sure he would just shrug at this lofty term and say it was just something to do.

Whenever I bumped into Archie or had a visit with him, I always left smiling or chuckling and I was not alone there. Many people remember him for his practical jokes, his sense of humour sometimes a little off color or the exaggerated facial expressions that accompanied the story. He has been described as a jester, a comedian but I think he felt that he had to leave people smiling about something even if it meant taking the brunt of the joke himself or the risk of being politically incorrect.



Archie Loutitt at CFYK . Yellowknife, NT, circa 1950s



Archie Loutitt at farewell gathering at the Elks Club, Yellowknife, 2014

They don't make them like Archie anymore. Not that they broke the mold but now the edges are smooth and shiny, somehow less entertaining and endearing.