Willie Buck

Chicago blues. Living tradition. Enduring soul.

Based in Chicago - Available for worldwide booking



Chris Day / The Commercial Appeal

Willie Buck is an enduring voice of traditional Chicago blues. Born in Houston, Mississippi, he made Chicago his home in the 1950s and developed a soulful vocal style rooted in the Muddy Waters tradition. A Chicago Blues Hall of Fame Master Blues Artist and the namesake of Willie Buck Way, he has taken his music to audiences around the world. His recordings, including Cell Phone Man, Willie Buck Way, and the new Walk On In, keep the classic Chicago sound alive.

Recognition

Chicago Blues Hall of Fame Master Blues Artist. Chicago street honor: Honorary Blues Legend Willie Buck Way. 2025 Blues Blast Music Award winner: Live Blues Album, Live at Buddy Guy’s Legends.

Full Biography

Willie Buck's music connects Mississippi roots with the electric blues tradition of Chicago. Born William Crawford in Houston, Mississippi, in 1937, he grew up surrounded by music, from relatives who played guitar to the blues records on his grandmother's wind-up phonograph.

He first came to Chicago in 1953 and settled there permanently in 1954, as the city's electric blues scene flourished on Maxwell Street and in neighborhood clubs. He became part of that scene, sharing stages with Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, singing, playing bass, and leading his own bands. His direct, soulful approach to singing grew out of the classic Muddy Waters school.

His early album, It's Alright, became a collector's item and was later reissued by Delmark as The Life I Love. Delmark went on to release Cell Phone Man, Willie Buck Way, which combines original songs with classic blues material, and Live at Buddy Guy's Legends. In 2025, he joined harmonica player Bob Corritore on Oh Yeah! His 2026 release, Walk On In, with The Secret 4 featuring Anthony Bruno, continues his work in traditional Chicago blues.

Recognized as a Chicago Blues Hall of Fame Master Blues Artist, Buck has also been honored by the City of Chicago with the street designation Willie Buck Way. He has performed at the Chicago Blues Festival and toured internationally, including Spain, Finland, Brazil, and Argentina. With repeated visits to Spain and Finland, he has built lasting connections with audiences abroad while maintaining his connection to Chicago's neighborhood clubs.

Today, Willie Buck continues to record and perform in Chicago and internationally.

Music & Selected Press

Watch Willie Buck

Pump Up the Night - watch on YouTube

Willie Buck: In His Own Words - interview on YouTube

Selected Recordings

Walk On In

Spotify | Album details

Cell Phone Man

Spotify | Apple Music | Album details

Live at Buddy Guy's Legends, Chicago, 2023

Spotify | Apple Music | Bandcamp | Album details

Selected Press

“His music is as fundamental as the masters with whom he first played.”

January 10, 2025

Don Wilcock - American Blues Scene

“Willie gives it his all here and then lets the harp take us home.”

October 14, 2024

Steve Jones - Blues Blast Magazine

Performance & Booking

Band

Willie performs primarily with The Secret 4. Full-band performances are the primary offering; other formats are available by arrangement.

Lineup

Vocals, piano or keyboard, guitar, bass, drums, and saxophone or harmonica. With The Secret 4, saxophone replaces harmonica.

Set length

90 minutes standard. From 60 minutes to engagements of up to three hours, with compensation, set structure, and breaks agreed in advance.

Travel

Available worldwide, traveling with a band or performing with a locally arranged ensemble.

Production

The band brings instruments and amplifiers when required. The venue provides microphones and a sound engineer. Stage layout, soundcheck, equipment, and travel arrangements are subject to advance agreement.

Press Photographs & Branding

Please credit the photographer. Download the original photographs and official transparent wordmark from the online EPK.

Performance photograph - Chris Day / The Commercial Appeal - 1170 x 780

Portrait - Howard Greenblat - 1200 x 1800

Official wordmark - transparent PNG

Booking inquiry

Online EPK: videos, biographies, photographs, and booking