

## **A Glimpse Inside the Collection of the Bruce Springsteen Archives & Center for American Music at Monmouth University**

by Melissa Ziobro, Curator  
Monmouth University

The Bruce Springsteen Archives at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey serves as the official repository for Springsteen's songs and other written works, plus photographs, periodicals, oral histories, recordings, films, and artifacts related to Bruce and the E Street Band. The Center for American Music produces museum exhibitions, seminars and educational workshops, concerts, and various other public programs to explore the many forms of American music and their impact on our culture and national identity.

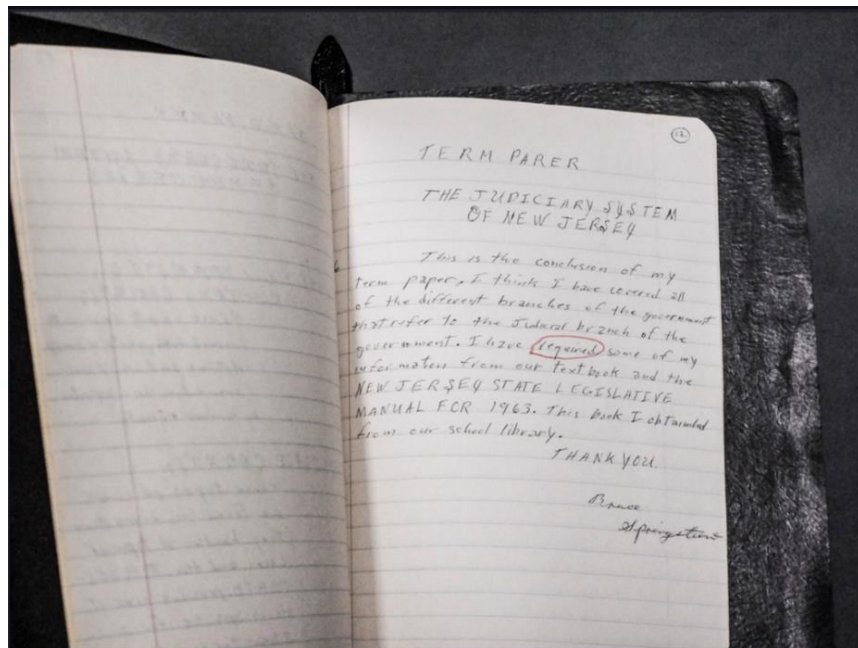
The current Archive traces its roots to a fan-based collection formalized in 2001 as "The Bruce Springsteen Special Collection." After originally living at the Asbury Park Public Library, that collection arrived at Monmouth University in 2011 thanks largely to the efforts of current Executive Director Bob Santelli and Director Eileen Chapman. In 2017, the University entered a partnership with Bruce himself, and The Bruce Springsteen Archives & Center for American Music was born. Springsteen, Monmouth County born and raised, lives in the County to this day. He played on the Monmouth campus multiple times over the years, noting in his autobiography that as his career grew, "First hundreds, then thousands came to impromptu appearances in parks, at the local armory, at the Monmouth College great lawn or college gymnasium and any other location that would hold our growing tribe."

The 2017 partnership with Bruce necessitated a new home for the collection, which was being housed in a small, formerly residential house on campus. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed those plans a bit, but in October 2023, the BSACAM announced a new 30,000 square foot building would be constructed to house the Archives, the Center for American Music, related exhibition galleries, and a 250-seat, state-of-the-art theater. Designed by the acclaimed New York-based architectural firm, COOKFOX, the building will be located on the University campus and is expected to open in the Spring of 2026. As Bruce noted at the formal building announcement:

I want to say how happy I am that my archives are going to have a home here in New Jersey, that means a lot to me. Believe it or not there are people who come from around the world for their vacations or pilgrimages to spend their hard-earned dollars in Asbury Park, or Freehold in search of from whence I hailed, and now they will have someplace to go other than my house. At 19, I played on these very steps out here and to stand here today is quite humbling knowing I'm going to be a presence here on this campus, which I really look forward to being ... It's deeply satisfying. I look forward to working with everyone to make this building and this endeavor a great success.

The collecting mission of the BSACAM is limited to Bruce and the E Street Band, though other items may occasionally be accepted based on specific needs and in careful consideration of space constraints. Access to the current facility is by appointment only. [Contact Director Eileen Chapman](#) to schedule an appointment. Here, in advance of our building opening, readers are treated to a glimpse behind the scenes at the types of items the collection holds, and the stories they tell.

### Bruce Springsteen's Term Paper



Photographed by Mark Krajnak

BOSS: The Biannual Online-Journal of Springsteen Studies 6 (2024)

Bruce Springsteen famously sings in 1986's "No Surrender":

*Well, we busted out of class  
Had to get away from those fools  
We learned more from a three-minute record  
Baby, than we ever learned in school*

And he's been as open about his struggles with formal education in his prose as he has been in his music. In his 2016 autobiography, *Born to Run*, he writes that the nuns at his Freehold elementary school, Saint Rose, were a source of mystery and terror. He didn't feel he fit in at Freehold High School and skipped his graduation ceremony (much to his parents' chagrin). His stay at Ocean County College was brief (though he did publish some poems in the school's literary magazine). This is not to say that Bruce didn't have an intense desire for knowledge. He just chafed at the rules of the classroom. After he escaped the confines of prescribed curriculums, he embarked on his own self-study regimen, voraciously reading history in particular. As he writes, "History was a subject that had bored me in middle school and high school, but I devoured it now. It seemed to hold some of the essential pieces to the identity questions I was asking."

So, to those students who are still struggling to find their place – take heart. And to the educators, as Bruce wrote upon his induction to his high school's Hall of Fame in 2006:

... It's kind of funny, really. I spent my years at Freehold Regional pretty much as an outcast and at best a very mediocre student. I would probably have been voted 'Least Likely to Succeed.' My only

advice to teachers and the administrators would be to keep your eyes on the ones that don't fit in. They're the ones thinking out of the box and reimagining this place we live in... You never know where they're going.

In case you were wondering, Bruce earned a B on this particular paper on "The Judiciary System of New Jersey." His teacher wrote, "Your writing not legible enough. Somewhat brief."

### Castiles Poster



Photographed by Mark Krajnak

The lineup for Bruce's first real band, the Castiles, was somewhat fluid, but key musicians included guitarist and lead singer George Theiss, bass player Frank Marziotti, drummer Bart Haynes, and, of course, guitarist

and singer Bruce Springsteen. The band often practiced at Tex and Marion Vinyard's home in Bruce's hometown of Freehold. As Bruce wrote in his memoir, "Tex and Marion seemed stranded between the teen world and adulthood, so they made a home for themselves and a surrogate parental life somewhere in the middle. They weren't your parents, but they weren't your peers either...Tex became our manager and Marion the house mother and seamstress to a team of misfit townie rock-n-rollers."

From 1965 - 1968 the Castiles played in school gyms, roller rinks, swim clubs, Elks lodges, trailer parks—most anywhere they could. Towards the end of their time together, they made their way into New York, playing at places like Café Wha. They performed a lot of covers, with a set list that was a mixture of pop hits, R&B, guitar instrumentals, and even some big band music. Original music was on occasion sprinkled in. Readers can find some of their recordings on YouTube.

Believe it or not, this incredibly vibrant, hand-drawn Castiles poster is an original and close to 60 years old. Keyboardist Bob Alfano, who joined the band in 1966, created it for a Castiles gig at the Left Foot coffee house in Freehold. It is the only known poster for this show in existence and was donated to the BSACAM by George and Diana Theiss in 2018, just months before George lost his battle with lung cancer. Bruce clearly remembers the Castiles fondly to this day. The band features prominently in the video for his 2020 song "Ghosts," in which he sings:

*It's just your ghost  
Moving through the night  
Your spirit filled with light  
I need, need you by my side  
Your love and I'm alive*

### Bart Haynes' Purple Heart



Photographed by Mark Krajnak

In a 1996 interview in *Newsweek*, Bruce Springsteen shared, “The drummer I had ... Bart Haynes, and this fellow Walter Cichon, they both died in Vietnam when we were in our teens. I can still see them in their [Marine and Army] uniforms. Those are very powerful images. It still finds its way into my work.” It wasn’t the first time Bruce had discussed Bart, and it wouldn’t be the last. Much has been written, in both the scholarly and popular realms, about the Vietnam War’s influence on Springsteen’s

work and his support of veterans' issues, but far less ink has been spilled on the specifics of Bart Haynes' short life and tragic death.

While he is best known as the drummer in early Bruce band, The Castiles, Bart was also a caring young man who helped raise his younger sister as his parents struggled with alcoholism. He was a resilient young man, who threw himself a 16<sup>th</sup> birthday party because he knew his parents wouldn't. He soon after volunteered for the military, like so many others with limited choices, seeking some control over their own destinies.

Springsteen wrote about the last time he saw Bart in his memoir, remembering, "Rushing in one last afternoon, a goofy grin on his face, he told us he was going to Vietnam. He laughed and said he didn't even know where it was. In the days before his ship-out, he'd sit one last time at the drums, in his full dress blues ... taking one final swing at "Wipe Out," the drum piece of which he'd never quite mastered. And he never would. Bart was killed in action in Vietnam on October 22, 1967. One has to imagine he was on Springsteen's mind when he later wrote the lyrics to 2014's "The Wall," which includes the lines:

*I remember you in your Marine uniform laughin', laughin' at your ship out party  
I read Robert McNamara says he's sorry*

Artifacts like this Purple Heart, on permanent loan from the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation in Holmdel, New Jersey, help us to understand both Bruce's work and the impacts of broader societal conflicts like the Vietnam War. May Bart, and all the 58,220 US military men and women killed in the Vietnam War, rest in peace.



## Castiles Mention in *The Monmouth Message*

give in advertising public relations.

### TEEN CLUB

By PAT VAN DE WALKER



Hi gang,

Well our Grand Opening of the new wing was terrific. Everybody had a ball including General and Mrs. W. B. Latta who showed us up with their dancing. Colonel and Mrs. George Kurkjian were also on hand to help us with our festivities.

Ribbon cutting, cake cutting and door prizes and also the great music of the Castiles kept the evening really bouncing along. Coil Ferguson deserves a lot of the credit for a great night for the way he organized and coordinated the festivities with General and Mrs. Latta.

— Last Friday, the Shadows were on hand and this week's winner of the Friday night door prize was: Jimmy Smith (lucky you). Our chaperones for the night were MSgt and Mrs. Consillio (Danny's parents)

and they were simply terrific. Sgt. Consillio deserves a medal for bravery and diplomacy for the way he drank Shari Saylor's coffee.

We've had a change of officers, unfortunately. Our club manager, Chris King, has resigned for personal reasons. Shari Saylor has been appointed as temporary club manager. We are all behind you, Shari, and lots of luck.

Guys and dolls, a reminder that we are not to use the old section of the club on Saturdays and Sundays except for movies and auditions.

Band of the Week: The Purple Dynasty (They are in great form I hear).

SWIMMING TEAM: The initial meeting for the Fort Monmouth Swim Club will be on Monday night, 5:15 p.m. at the Post Field House in the pool area.

CHOW!

PAT

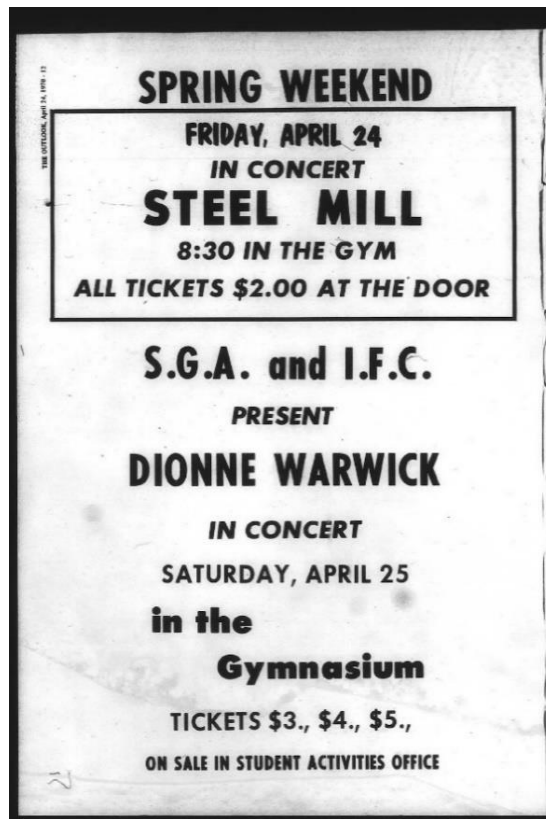
WATERVLIET ARSENAL.

For over 90 years, the Fort Monmouth military base was a fixture in Monmouth County, where Bruce Springsteen was born, raised, and currently lives. The Fort's history began in May 1917 when, as part of its World War I mobilization, the Army authorized four training camps for signal troops. One camp would be located in central New Jersey—that which would eventually be known as "Fort Monmouth," in honor of the soldiers of the American Revolution who fought and died at the nearby Battle of Monmouth. The Army Signal Corps trained thousands of men for

war there and built laboratories that worked on pioneering technologies like air to ground radio. Though the base was supposed to be temporary, it wound up outliving the war. It was for decades known as the “Home of the Signal Corps,” and, until its closure in 2011, the base was still innovating some of the most significant communications and electronics advances in military history – many of which would save lives on the battlefield and also be adapted for civilian use.

Bruce would play at Fort Monmouth multiple times over the decades, first as a teenager and later as a global superstar who appreciated the privacy a secure military facility could offer when one wanted to rehearse undisturbed by the general public. This November 16, 1967 article from the Fort’s newspaper casually mentions that Bruce’s first real band, the Castiles, played “great music” that “really kept the evening bouncing along” at the grand opening of the teen club’s new wing. Bruce was only a few years removed from playing in the teen club when in 1973’s “Lost in the Flood” he first sang:

*The ragamuffin gunner is returnin’ home like a hungry runaway  
He walks through town all alone  
“He must be from the fort,” he hears the high school girls say*

Steel Mill Advertisement in *The Outlook*

It's a common misconception that the BSACAM lives at Monmouth University because Bruce is a Monmouth alum. He's not, but his relationship with Monmouth's beautiful campus stretches back decades — as illustrated by this 1970 advertisement for early Bruce band, Steel Mill, in the Monmouth campus newspaper, the *Outlook*. The website *Brucebase* gives the setlist for this show as follows:

1. "Funky Broadway"

2. "He's Guilty (The Judge Song)"
3. "Goin' Back to Georgia"
4. "The Wind and the Rain"
5. "Resurrection"
6. "Garden State Parkway Blues"

Bruce actually played at Monmouth multiple times from 1969 – 1974, with Child, Steel Mill, and the E Street Band. He was often performing on campus for events organized to protest the Vietnam War (in which he had recently had close, personal friends killed). Whichever band Springsteen was at Monmouth with—they were popular. As a 1969 review in the *Outlook* noted:

Child, the most popular group of the afternoon, produced a wild, mind-bending show, which combined the antics and musical talents of the Stones and Iron Butterfly. They literally rocked and blasted out the entire area with their dynamic sound. There was even a complaint from a Norwood Ave. resident that there were too many decibels being emitted and [it] was disturbing.

As the BSACAM prepares to open its new building in 2026, the staff will endeavor to ensure that, although there will certainly be plenty of music in both the 250-seat indoor theater and the outdoor amphitheater, noise is kept to a reasonable level for the neighbors!

### Early Concert Photographs



Photographed by Jack Schwartz

Readers of a certain age will remember the days before cell phones when informal, amateur concert photographs and footage were relatively rare. Fortunately, more and more such intimate photos of Springsteen shows are being donated to the BSACAM regularly. This photo is part of a series captured by fan Jack Schwartz during Bruce's October 4, 1974 show at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center, New York. As Jack recalls, "I took my little range-finder camera. The show was moving and magical with some interesting elements....Bruce had a female violinist, Suki Lahav, who

played a lilting transcendent opening to the intro of 'Jungleland' as Bruce spoke the lyrics..."

*The Rangers had a homecoming  
In Harlem late last night  
And the Magic Rat drove his sleek machine  
Over the Jersey state line*

Jack continued, "At the end of the show the crowd was so intense they rushed toward the stage, like a wave, collapsing the orchestra pit cover. Bruce literally brought the house down...With my little camera which I snuck in, I was able to get close to the stage a few times and snap a couple of moments from this show. I was using 35 mm Ektachrome 160 lowlight color slide film with no flash..."

Reflecting on the experience some 50 years later, Jack shared, "Without hyperbole when I think about it, the many shows I experienced with Bruce with the E Street Band (and on his own) – they represented some of the best moments in my life. When my world was faced with intense challenges, there was always his music, those shows, his gutsy soul blazing guitar sound, his deep reservoir of hope and longing, that incredible bone crushing E Street band, as well as the sadness and joy which has longed carried me through my many trials and tribulations."

Photos – and testimonials – like Jack's help the BSACAM to document Bruce's career and, importantly, his storied relationships with his legions of devoted fans.

**Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the U.S.A.* Outfit**

Photographed by Jay Godwin

Springsteen's seventh studio album, *Born in the USA*, remains his best-selling. Released in 1984, it has sold over 30 million copies worldwide. As Bruce tells it in his autobiography, *Born to Run*: "*Born in the USA* went nuclear. I knew I had a real runner in the title cut but I didn't expect the

massive wave of response we received. Was it timing? The music? The muscles? I dunno, it's always a bit of a mystery when something breaks that big."

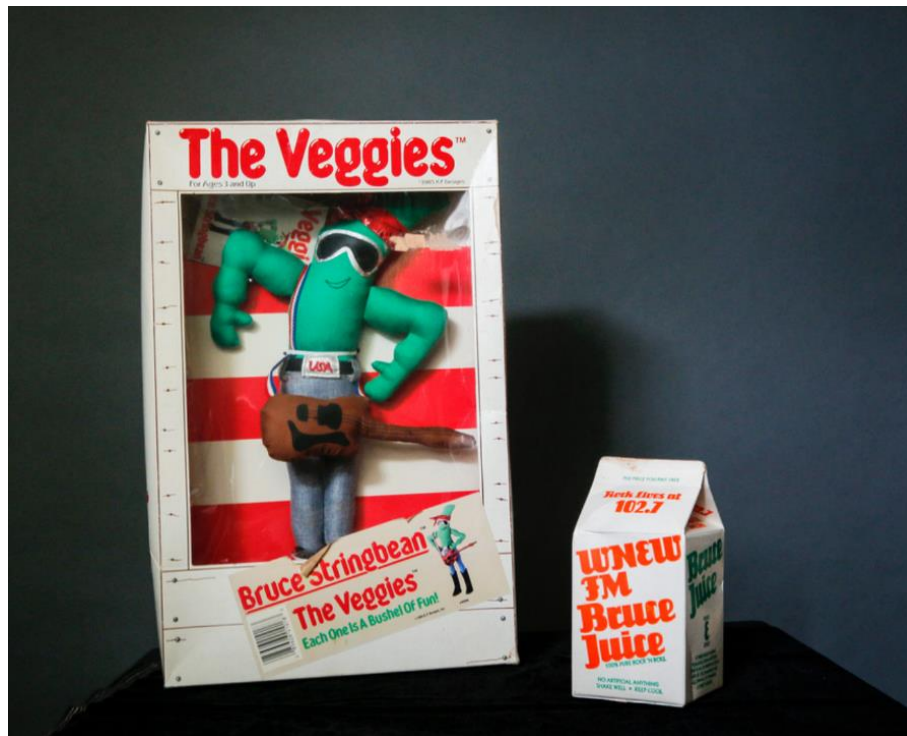
One of the album's tracks, "Dancing in the Dark," is Bruce's best performing single ever, landing at number two on the Billboard charts. Then, there's the anthemic title track, the one Bruce called "a real runner." It has often been misinterpreted as an unabashed celebration of America exceptionalism, when it in fact bemoans the plight of Vietnam veterans and the elusiveness of the American dream. Part of the confusion comes from the song's upbeat synthesizer, pounding drums, and chorus:

*Born in the U.S.A.*  
*I was born in the U.S.A.*  
*I was born in the U.S.A.*  
*I was born in the U.S.A.*  
*Born in the U.S.A.*

Also adding to the confusion is the album's visual imagery. For the cover, photographer Annie Leibowitz captured Bruce in front of a huge American flag. His back is to the camera, he's wearing blue jeans. He has a red ball cap in his back pocket. The image contributed to the belief that the title song was filled with pro-American lyrics, when it really criticized the nation's care of Vietnam veterans. As Bruce observed, "*Born in the USA* changed my life, gave me my largest audience, forced me to think harder about the way I presented my music and set me briefly at the center of the pop world."



### Promotional Materials and Whimsical Tributes



Photographed by Mark Krajnak

Fans purchase *stuff*. As Bruce's career went from strength to strength in the 1970s and 1980s, he sold more and more official merchandise to fans at his shows and all manner of other unofficial Bruce-related ephemera emerged on the market. The BSACAM preserves much of it. "Bruce Juice" dates to the late 1970s. WNEW's Dave Herman would play a Springsteen song each morning on his radio show to wake people up and call it "Bruce Juice." Eventually, these faux juice cartons were made to further the gimmick. The carton reads:

*BOSS: The Biannual Online-Journal of Springsteen Studies* 6 (2024)

- A three minute serving from Dave Herman between 7 and 8 am on WNEW-FM equals 100% US recommended daily allowance of vitamins B, E Street, and R&R.
- Grade E Street.
- 100% Pure Rock 'n Roll.
- This Ride is Free, Rosie!
- Rock Lives at 102.7.
- No Artificial Anything. Shake Well. Keep Cool.
- Contents: Roy Bittan, Clarence Clemons, Danny Federici, Bruce Springsteen, Garry Tallent, Steve Van Zandt, Max Weinberg.

"Bruce Stringbean" was distributed by K. F. Designs in 1985. He was a part of a line of stuffed, anthropomorphic vegetables known as "The Veggies." A quaint comic on the back of the box notes, "Veggie Village is as special as the magic it takes to get there. Veggies. Veggies, you can't live without your Veggies.... each one of good for you, plus they have a personality, too!" Coming at the peak of "Born in the USA" mania, it would have been clear to all that Bruce Stringbean was meant as an homage to "The Boss."

## Pins



Photographed by Mark Krajnak

Buttons and pins aren't wildly popular today, but as the American Institute of Graphic Arts notes, "from the campaign trail to the rock tour, the pin-back button occupies a fascinating, wide-reaching, and largely undocumented place in American popular history. Social media is today's most popular platform for self-expression, but the button preceded it as a way to tell others what was on your mind or as a tool to help spread an idea." The BSACAM has scores of buttons that would have allowed fans to publicly declare their love for Bruce.

Some of the pins promote a particular album or show. At least one promotes an exhibit: the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark hosted “Teenage New Jersey, 1941 – 1975” in 1997 and 1998. Bruce and fellow New Jerseyan, crooner Frank Sinatra, were highlights. Some of the pins are a little more creative and fanciful: see “Bruce Juice,” “Springsteen for President,” and “It’s Always Time for Bruce.”

A bit of fun pin history fact, while on the topic: Bruce himself has an Elvis fan club pin affixed to his guitar strap on the 1975 *Born To Run* album cover. Even rock stars have their idols!

### Adele Springsteen's Scrapbooks



Photographed by Mark Krajnak

Bruce Springsteen enjoyed a very close relationship with his mother, Adele, writing in his memoir, *Born To Run*:

My mother showered me with affection...All I know is she always had my back. When I was hauled into the police station for a variety of minor infractions, she was always there to take me back home. She came to my countless baseball games, both when I stunk up the place

*BOSS: The Biannual Online-Journal of Springsteen Studies* 6 (2024)

and the one season lightning struck and I turned into a real fielding, hitting player, with my name in the papers. She got me my first electric guitar, encouraged my music, and fawned over my early creative writing. She was a parent, and that's what I needed as my world was about to explode.

And as Bruce's world exploded, like any doting parent, Adele was there to document it. Her scrapbook collection contains newspaper clippings, photos, correspondence, and more. It's a rare look behind the scenes at the growth of a global superstar, from the moment Bruce releases *Greetings from Asbury Park, NJ* and *The Wild, the Innocent, and the E Street Shuffle* in 1973. Sales might have been slower than the record company would have liked, but Adele is positively giddy that her son actually has not one but two albums out.

Then, as *Born to Run*, bursts on the scene in 1975 to enormous success, the scrapbooks include more and more news coverage, with journalists even writing to Adele and Bruce's father, Doug, to ask **them** for interviews. For example, a typed November 6, 1975 note to from a *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter reads, "I am very interested in talking to you for a story I would like to write." Adele's handwritten annotation at the bottom reads, "Wants to write a story on how it feels to be the parents of a rock star."

Bruce never forgot the role his mother played in his success. As he sings in the first lines of 1998's "The Wish":

*Dirty old street all slushed up in the rain and snow  
Little boy and his ma shivering outside a rundown music store window  
That night on top of a Christmas tree shines one beautiful star  
And lying underneath a brand-new Japanese guitar*

The song concludes:

*Last night we all sat around laughing at the things that guitar brought us  
And I layed awake thinking 'bout the other things it's brought us  
Well, tonight I'm takin' requests here in the kitchen  
This one's for you, ma, let me come right out and say it, it's overdue*

Adele Springsteen died January 31, 2024.