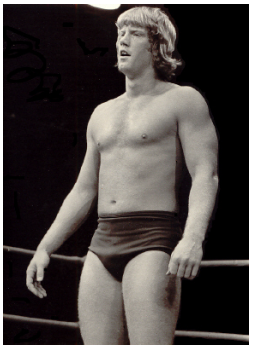
David Von Erich

David Von Erich	
	
Ring name(s)	**David Von Erich**
Billed height	6 ft 7 in (2.01 m)
Billed weight	250 lb (110 kg)
Born	July 22, 1958 Dallas, Texas
Died	February 10, 1984 (aged 25) Tokyo, Japan
Trained by	Fritz Von Erich
Debut	June 1977

David Alan Adkisson (July 22, 1958 – February 10, 1984) was an American professional wrestler who competed as "The Yellow Rose of Texas" **David Von Erich** (of the Von Erich Family). He was the son of Fritz Von Erich and the brother of Jack Jr., Kerry, Kevin, Mike and Chris.[1]

Early life

David was named after his mother Doris' brother David, who had died only months before David Von Erich was born in 1958. Doris' brother David had died of a brain tumor.

David, along with brothers Kevin and Kerry, loved to hunt and fish with their father; Fritz. Hunting on the Von Erich ranch was quite an event. Many of their relatives and friends would join in and sometimes the hunting group would be 20 or more. WCCW Referee David Manning and WCCW Announcer Bill Mercer were quite often among the group. David's first love in life was raising horses, which turned out to be very profitable for him. He raised and sold quarter horses and horses for show and made his own fortune that way, apart from the family business of wrestling.

Adkisson was a high school basketball star and a football player at Lake Dallas High School. He won a scholarship to North Texas State University to play basketball and football. David dropped out to pursue a wrestling career that he had started in June 1977, adopting the name David Von Erich.

Professional wrestling career

He was considered a breakout star of his family, as his fiery temper produced memorable interviews. His first major match was on August 15, 1977 when he wrestled NWA World Heavyweight Champion Harley Race to a 30 minute draw. David made his first appearance in Missouri in early 1979 and was an instant hit with the fans and the promoters. Due to his popularity at the time, on May 27, 1979, David wrestled NWA World Heavyweight Champion Harley Race in Missouri in a non-title match and defeated him with The Iron Claw.

In November 1979, David made his first and only appearance in the World Wrestling Federation (WWF), competing on a card against Davey O'Hannon at Madison Square Garden. In late 1981, David left Texas and struck out on his own, heading to Florida and competing as a heel until July 1982. In Florida, David was managed by James J. Dillon and was in the same stable as Kendo Nagasaki and Jimmy Garvin. David's mentor in Florida was Dory Funk, Jr. and those months saw David either teaming with Dory or Terry Funk or competing on his own. Memorable opponents in Florida that David had were Barry Windham, Mr. Wrestling II, Eric Embry, Sweet Brown Sugar, and Butch Reed. By July 1982, David was back in Texas.

Feud with Gorgeous Jimmy Garvin

During his stay in Florida, David met and became great friends with Gorgeous Jimmy Garvin, convincing Garvin to come to World Class Championship Wrestling (WCCW) in Texas in early 1983 and they created an angle for a feud between them, which culminated with David winning the held-up WCCW Texas State Title at The Tarrant County Convention Center on July 4, 1983. As a result of David's victory, Garvin and Sunshine were forced to serve as David's valets for one day, with the results of that day being broadcast on the WCCW weekly show. The whole angle was conceived by David and Jimmy. They traded the WCCW Texas Belt back and forth several times, then that belt was held up several times and when the feud reached its climax on July 4, 1983; it was time for both men to move on to the next part in their career (David continuing the Von Erich feud with The Freebirds and Garvin starting a feud with Chris Adams).

Feud with The Freebirds

In the fall of 1982, David was also working behind the scenes in WCCW and helped create several angles. He invited the Fabulous Freebirds to come to WCCW. Michael Hayes made his debut at the Sportatorium on Saturday, October 16, 1982 and Terry Gordy made his debut at the Sportatorium two weeks later, on October 30, 1982. Buddy Roberts did not show up. The Freebirds were initially booked as faces in the run-up to the Christmas spectacular "Wrestling Star Wars" card at Reunion Arena on December 25, 1982.

In the final match to crown the first-ever Six-Man Champions, David took Buddy Roberts' place in the Freebirds against Tom Sharpe, Mike Sharpe & Ben Steel. It was David who won that match and the title, but in a ringside interview right after the bout, David gave his third of the title to Buddy Roberts. Later that evening, David's brother Kerry battled NWA World Champion Ric Flair in a Steel Cage with Michael Hayes and David Manning as the referees. During the match, Hayes knocked out Flair and attempted to hand the pin (and World Title) to Von Erich, but turned on Kerry when he refused the tainted victory and as Kerry tried to leave the cage, Gordy slammed the cage door on Kerry's head. Thus the Von Erich/Freebird feud was born.

David took part in many matches against the Freebirds in 1983 and early 1984. Notable bouts include David vs Terry Gordy in a Handcuff Match on April 1, 1983 at "Wrestling Star Wars", David, Kevin & Kerry defeating the Freebirds on July 4, 1983 in Ft. Worth at "Star Wars" and what would be David's next-to-last match was against Terry Gordy on February 3, 1984.

Feud with Ric Flair

David won the NWA Missouri Heavyweight Championship from Ric Flair on September 16, 1983, holding the championship until losing it to Harley Race on January 6, 1984. Many within the industry believe that David's reign with the belt was his final step to winning the NWA World Heavyweight Championship, as the NWA Championship Committee supposedly voted in January 1984 for David to win it from Ric Flair in March or April of that year. An angle between David and Ric Flair was started when David battled Flair at Reunion Arena on December 25, 1983 and Flair retained the NWA World Championship. Immediately afterward, on December 31, 1983, on the NWA television broadcast, Ric Flair did an interview where he commented on how Mike Von Erich was not a good wrestler and he could beat Mike in 60 seconds with one hand tied behind his back.

In an interview in Ft. Worth on January 9, 1984, David did possibly his most intense interview ever, telling Flair that he had heard Flair's comments about Mike and that he had a proposition. Mike would wrestle Flair in a "10 Minute Challenge Match" and if Flair beat Mike in that 10 minutes, David would never again ask for another shot at the NWA World title, but if Flair did not beat Mike in those 10 minutes, David would get to name the place, the time and every stipulation for his match against Ric Flair. The "10 Minute Challenge match" between Ric Flair and Mike Von Erich was held at *WCCW Wrestling Star Wars* at the Tarrant County Convention Center in Ft. Worth, Texas on January 30, 1984. Flair was unable to pin Mike in the 10 minutes and as a result, David won the challenge. A week later on February 6, 1984 in Ft. Worth, in what would turn out to be his last interview, David Von Erich expressed his happiness over Mike lasting 10 minutes with Ric Flair and said that now he (David) would get to name every single stipulation in David's return match with Flair. The big match was to be held sometime in about April 1984, after David was to return to Texas at the end of February and he and Flair would have a chance to build the match up even more.

Personal life

David was married on June 8, 1982 to Patricia A. Matter, known as Tricia.[2] The couple remained married until David's death. Tricia was interviewed for the June, 1984 edition of "The Wrestler" magazine, which was a tribute to David. She spoke of how she loved the fans, and thanked them for their support. Tricia has remained out of the public eye since that interview.

David was previously married to Candy L. McLeod. The couple were wed on June 26, 1978 in Denton, Texas. Together they had a daughter, Natosha Zoeanna Adkisson (born October 19, 1978).[3] Tragically, she died as an infant on December 29, 1978 and is buried beside her father in Grove Hill Memorial Park in Dallas, Texas. Soon after their daughter's death, David separated from his wife; they were officially divorced on July 12, 1979.[4]

Death

David died during a tour with All Japan Pro Wrestling on February 10, 1984, with many theories about what caused his death being proposed for many years after. The most popular theory suggests that David died of a drug overdose, as Ric Flair had mentioned this theory in his autobiography, claiming that Bruiser Brody (Von Erich's long-time friend) removed the evidence. However Bill Irwin who was on that tour with David would say it was not drug related at all. The Von Erichs however claimed that David's death was a heart attack, caused by ruptured intestines resulting from acute enteritis. In the documentary *Heroes of World Class: The Story of the Von Erichs* and *The Triumph and Tragedy of World Class Championship Wrestling*, Kevin Von Erich and former referee David Manning both attested to the heart attack theory, as they claimed that the autopsy supported the myocardial infarction. Manning and Kevin also claimed that David had been complaining about a pain in his stomach prior to his excursion to Japan. David had been taken to the emergency room at Spohn Hospital in Corpus Christi, Texas less than two weeks before his ill fated trip to Japan. He had complained of dizziness and flu like symptoms and been put on an antibiotic at that time. David was buried at Grove Hill Memorial Park in Dallas.

On May 6, 1984, David's brother Kerry defeated Flair to win the NWA World Heavyweight Championship at Texas Stadium. It was a tribute to David, who himself had been scheduled to win the NWA title at that particular showcase. For the match, Kerry wore a blue ring robe which had the quote "In Memory of David" on the back, but didn't wear it again after he lost the title. The NWA only allowed a brief title reign for Kerry, as he lost the title back to Flair 18 days later during an All Japan Pro Wrestling show in Yokosuka, Japan on May 24, 1984.

In wrestling

- **Finishing moves**
  - High knee
  - *Iron Claw*
  - Sleeper hold
- **Nicknames**
  - "The Yellow Rose of Texas"
  - "The Iron Nail"
- **Entrance Themes**
  - "La Grange" by ZZ Top
  - "Texas (When I Die)" by Tanya Tucker

Championships and accomplishments

- **All Japan Pro Wrestling**
  - AJPW All Asia Tag Team Championship (1 time) – with Kevin Von Erich[5]
- **Championship Wrestling from Florida**
  - NWA Florida Television Championship (1 time)[6]
  - NWA North American Tag Team Championship *(Florida version)* (1 time) – with Dory Funk, Jr.[7]
  - NWA Southern Heavyweight Championship *(Florida version)* (1 time)[8]
- **NWA Big Time Wrestling / World Class Championship Wrestling**
  - NWA American Tag Team Championship (1 time) – with Kevin Von Erich[9]
  - NWA Texas Heavyweight Championship (8 times)[10]
  - NWA Texas Tag Team Championship (2 times) – with Kevin Von Erich[11]
  - NWA United National Championship (1 time)[12]
  - NWA World Six-Man Tag Team Championship *(Texas version)* (2 times) – with Kevin Von Erich and Kerry Von Erich[13]
  - NWA World Tag Team Championship *(Texas version)* (1 time) – with Kevin Von Erich[14]
- **Pro Wrestling Illustrated**
  - Stanley Weston Award (1984)
  - PWI ranked him **#58** of the top 500 singles wrestlers of the "PWI Years" in 2003
  - PWI ranked him **#23** of the top 100 tag teams of the "PWI Years" with Mike, Kevin, and Kerry Von Erich in 2003
- **St. Louis Wrestling Club**
  - NWA Missouri Heavyweight Championship (1 time)[15]
- **World Wrestling Entertainment**
  - WWE Hall of Fame (Class of 2009)
- **Wrestling Observer Newsletter awards**

- Match of the Year (1984) with Kevin and Kerry Von Erich vs. the Fabulous Freebirds (Buddy Roberts, Michael Hayes, and Terry Gordy) on July 4

Notes

[1] Foley, Mick. Have A Nice Day: A Tale of Blood and Sweatsocks (p.129)
[2] Texas Marriages (http://www.familytreelegends.com/records/25456?c=search&first=david&last=adkisson)
[3] Texas Births (http://www.familytreelegends.com/records/20902?c=search&first=natosha&last=adkisson)
[4] Texas Divorces (http://www.familytreelegends.com/records/31992?c=search&first=david&last=adkisson)
[5] All Asia Tag Team Title history (http://www.wrestling-titles.com/japan/alljapan/asia-t.html) At wrestling-titles.com
[6] NWA Florida Television Title history (http://www.wrestling-titles.com/us/fl/fl-tv.html) At wrestling-titles.com
[7] NWA North American Tag Team Title (Florida) history (http://www.wrestling-titles.com/us/fl/nwa/fl-na-t.html) At wrestling-titles.com
[8] NWA Southern Heavyweight Title history (http://www.wrestling-titles.com/us/fl/nwa/fl-south-h.html) At wrestling-titles.com
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[10] Texas Heavyweight Title history (http://www.wrestling-titles.com/us/tx/tx-h.html) At wrestling-titles.com
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[12] NWA United National Heavyweight Title history (http://www.wrestling-titles.com/japan/alljapan/un.html) At wrestling-titles.com
[13] World 6-Man Tag Team Title (World Class) history (http://www.wrestling-titles.com/us/tx/wccw/am-6.html) At wrestling-titles.com
[14] National Wrestling Alliance World Tag Team Title (Texas) history (http://www.wrestling-titles.com/us/tx/tx-world-t.html) At wrestling-titles.com
[15] NWA Missouri Heavyweight Title history (http://www.wrestling-titles.com/us/mo/mo-h.html) At wrestling-titles.com

External links

- "David Von Erich" (http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=1734). Find a Grave. Retrieved August 28, 2010.

Article Sources and Contributors

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