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His difficult childhood has not been a secret. "When I was between 16 and 22," he said, "I lived in Slum Bangkae. Our treasure was the warmth of the family and the rest was nothing. My social status was 100 per cent under zero. However, I enjoyed my life and the struggle. My daily activities were selling lotto results, making farmers' hats, folding and selling paper bags and that sort of thing. I enjoyed life with nothing, and was happy with nothing."

Despite their poverty, the McIntyres managed to give all their children a proper education. While studying, Bird took a night job at the MGM discotheque, owned by Warayuth Milintajinda, a producer for Channel 3. Warayuth introduced him to showbiz with the television series *Namtanna Mai* (Burnt Sugar), in which Bird played a gay character.

He was nominated for the

Mekla Award as the best new actor. Not long after, Bird stepped into the music arena by participating in a singing competition held by the Siam Kolakarn Music Foundation. Though he did not receive the first prize, he won the award for best singing. More importantly, he won the heart of the late Raewat Buddhinan, a leading music composer and the co-founder of the then Grammy Entertainment. Raewat was one of the judges in the competition, and had spotted Bird's star potential. It was a turning point when Bird met Raewat at his office in Grammy.

It took Bird and Grammy two years to produce the first album, in 1985. A year later, he released his second album, "Sabai Sabai" (Easy going) and the lyrics became extremely popular. Since then, every Bird album has been a success.

Stardom launched Bird into related careers. He has worked as a presenter and endorsed numerous products and services including Fuji, Lay's and

most recently Namacha green tea. Bird has also starred in dozens of films and television dramas. One of his most popular roles was that of a Japanese soldier who falls in love with the Thai patriot student, Unqsumalin, in "Khoo Kam", which is based on a popular Thai novel of the same name. He plays this role for both the movie and the television series.

In late 1998, after the release of his album "Thongchai Service", Bird finally took a break. He spent some time in his homes in Thailand and Switzerland. He released three more albums after coming back from his sabbatical, the most recent being, "Rub Kaek".

Bird has won many awards but his biggest achievement remains rescuing his family, and especially his late mother, from poverty. Apart from that, Bird certainly treasures the love his fans have had for him for over two decades.

However, the superstar status comes with a price.

Bird does not have much privacy – he does not have the luxury of strolling along busy streets.

Perhaps missing out on the ordinary life indicates his superstar status – the fact that he has surpassed all other stars in Thailand. He has been living this life for two decades now. No wonder he recalls his childhood and says: "After all, I was happy with nothing."

