

## **CULTURAL MOMENT FOR FEBRUARY 10, 2025 CELEBRATES "SAUCY" SYLVIA CADESKY**

"Saucy" Sylvia Cadesky, born on July 27, 1920 in Owen Sound and raised in Mount Forest, had the potential to become a professor of German at any university, but she chose a different path. While completing her degree in modern languages in the late 1930s, Sylvia sang in Toronto clubs on weekends to earn extra money. This experience opened up another avenue for her. When she received a full scholarship to study German for her master's degree at Ohio State University, Sylvia accepted it but continued to perform in clubs and hotels in Akron and Cincinnati.

An irresistible offer soon came her way. Radio WLW in Cincinnati, known as the "Nation's Station" and a "Star Maker," offered Sylvia a position as a staff vocalist. Following in the footsteps of singers like Rosemary Clooney and Doris Day, Sylvia accepted the offer and embarked on a 70-year career in entertainment. Her mother, Tillye Cadesky, who had given Sylvia her first piano lessons while growing up in Mount Forest, must have been both proud and thrilled.



*"Saucy" Sylvia Cadesky in 1962.*

By 1946, Sylvia was hosting a coast-to-coast broadcast eight times a week. She played her own piano accompaniments and chatted informally with her radio listeners in a charming manner. Her bubbling laughter traveled along the airwaves into people's homes, endearing her to many.

Radio brought Sylvia into the company of legends like Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington. Invited by Ellington to join his orchestra, she accepted and performed with them for five years. During her time in Arizona, a promoter billed her as "Saucy Sylvia" on the marquee, a name she has used ever since. Sylvia also discovered her natural talent for comedy. Despite receiving international offers, she chose to stay close to her family and home.

Sylvia experienced two loving marriages and, although she did not have children of her own, she was surrounded by children and grandchildren who adored her. In 2002, Sylvia Cadesky was inducted into the Newport Jazz Hall of Fame, alongside Ella Fitzgerald. In 2014, she was inducted into the Rhode Island Radio Hall of Fame. Sylvia passed away on May 25, 2017, at the age of 96.

Sylvia's journey from a potential academic career to a celebrated entertainer is a testament to her versatility and talent. Her ability to connect with audiences through her music and humour left a lasting impact on the entertainment industry. Her story is one of passion, dedication, and the pursuit of a dream that brought joy to many.