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Before Oprah: Ruth Lyons, the Woman Who Created Talk TV
New Book from Orange Frazer Press and author Michael Banks
on Sale Nationwide Beginning April 14th

Before Oprah there was Ruth Lyons, a pioneer of broadcasting who invented daytime talk television. In a new book scheduled to go on sale April 14th, author Michael Banks reveals how Lyon's groundbreaking work influenced the future careers of David Letterman, Jane Pauley, Phil Donahue and one of television's most notorious personalities, Jerry Springer.

Before Oprah: Ruth Lyons, the Woman Who Created Talk TV is the first comprehensive biography of this pioneering broadcaster and successful businesswoman. To her legions of fans, Ruth Lyons was a beloved entertainer, but she was also a mother, homemaker, and philanthropist. From Lyons' beginning in the 1920s as a pioneer in radio, a time when most women were confined to the home or narrow careers, *Before Oprah* recounts the improbable rise of a path-setting talk-show host and the growth of radio and television broadcasting during the 20th century.

With the debut of her successful TV show in 1955, the *50/50 Club*, Ruth Lyons attracted a loyal audience of millions. With a mix of sentimentality and caustic commentary, she ad-libbed her way through commercials and interviews with Hollywood stars and notable personalities, and her mere mention of a product could turn it into a household name. At the height of her fame, national magazines labeled Lyons "the most influential housewife in America."

A woman of immense determination and character, Lyons often clashed with network executives and advertising men more used to giving orders than taking them. Her views were far in advance of the time and she bravely deplored the racism and intolerance so commonplace in 20th century America. *Before Oprah* follows Ruth Lyons' rise from humble beginnings to the tragic death of her beloved daughter in 1967 that led her to end a broadcasting career at the height of her popularity.

Ruth Lyons' role in the history of broadcasting is now largely forgotten, but Banks' new book restores the fame of this once-celebrated television pioneer and lifts her to a rightful place among the pantheon of entertainment giants of the 20th Century.

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