

NEWS RELEASE

Orange Frazer Press

Contact: Sarah Hawley, (937) 382.3196

sarah@orangefrazer.com

URL: www.orangefrazer.com

March 25, 2009

For IMMEDIATE Release

Before Oprah: Ruth Lyons, the Woman Who Created Talk TV
Launch of New Book from Orange Frazer & Author Michael Banks
Features Reunion of 50/50 Club Cast & Actor Playing Ruth Lyons

(CINCINNATI) - Former members of the cast of the Ruth Lyon's 50/50 Club will reunite in April to launch Orange Frazer's newest book, *Before Oprah: Ruth Lyons, the Woman Who Created Talk TV*. Scheduled to go on sale nationwide on April 14th, the book by 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.

As part of the month-long events to promote the book, actor Shelley Bamberger Bailey will play the part of Ruth Lyons and make numerous scheduled appearances at bookstores in the Cincinnati and Dayton area interviewing Banks, singing songs and recreating a brief version of the 50/50 Club.

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."

Cast members from the show including Mickey Fisher, Dick Murgatroyd, Colleen Sharp, and Bill Myers will participate on a panel at 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 29 at Joseph-Beth Booksellers in Cincinnati discussing what it was like to work with Lyons during the 12 years she hosted the 50/50 Club. At 7 p.m. on the same day, Bailey will debut in her role as Lyons during an appearance at Joseph-Beth.

Before Oprah is the first comprehensive biography of Lyons, a pioneering broadcaster and successful businesswoman. To her legions of fans, 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.

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.

PLEASE NOTE - The following is a listing of appearances at area bookstores by Banks who will lead a discussion about the book including audience questions. Bailey, the actor playing Ruth Lyons, will appear alongside Banks ONLY at events in Cincinnati at Jo-Beth, Newport, Beavercreek, Wilmington and Centerville:

Cincinnati - 11am and 7pm, April 29, *Joseph-Beth*, Rookwood Pavilion, 2692 Madison Rd.

West Chester - 7 p.m., April 30, *Barnes & Noble*, 9455 Civic Centre Blvd.

Newport/Levee - 7 p.m., May 1, *Barnes & Noble*, 1 Levee Way

Kenwood/Cincinnati - 7 p.m., May 5, *Barnes & Noble*, 7800 Montgomery Rd.

Beavercreek/Dayton - 7 p.m., May 6, *Books & Co*, The Greene, 4453 Walnut St.

Wilmington - 7 p.m., May 7, *Books N' More*, 28 W. Main St.

Madeira/Cincinnati - 2 p.m., May 9, *The Bookshelf*, 7754 Camargo Rd.

Centerville/Dayton - 1 p.m., May 10, *Barnes & Noble*, 2619 Miamisburg-Centerville Rd.

Mason/Cincinnati - 2 p.m., May 16, *Barnes & Noble*, 9891 Waterstone Blvd.

#####