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New Season

BUENA VISTA TELEVISION'S

LIVE WITH REGIS & KATHIE LEE

CONTINUES AS TELEVISION'S FASTEST GROWING TALK SHOW

* * *

"LIVE" Heads into its Fifth Season in National Syndication

Buena Vista Television's popular morning talk show, "LIVE with Regis & Kathie Lee" kicks off its fifth season in national syndication in Fall 1992. Hosted by Regis Philbin and Kathie Lee Gifford, the show has become television's fastest growing talk show, vaulting +48% in household rating and +53% in the key daytime demographic of women 25-54 from its premiere season.*

"LIVE" has also continued to dominate in key markets around the country including New York, where the show consistently scores 30+ shares, and Los Angeles, where the show has made an immediate impact in its new KABC-TV slot, currently (May '92) improving the time-period by +36% (HH), +55% (W18-49) and +27% (W25-54) from the year-ago time period ("AM Los Angeles"). The show has climbed to #1 in the time period in W18-49, @18-34 and W25-54, beating "Donahue."** The show also consistently outperforms lead-in and lead-out programming in markets coast-to-coast, proving itself as true "appointment television."

Television personality Regis Philbin has just completed his 30th year in broadcasting and continues his ongoing success as co-host of "LIVE with Regis & Kathie Lee." A winner of one national and two local Emmy awards, Philbin was born only seven blocks from the WABC-TV studios in Manhattan from which "LIVE" broadcasts each weekday morning.

Kathie Lee Gifford is a veteran of more than 25 years in show business -- 19 of them in television. Despite her busy schedule, Gifford is actively involved in a variety of charities. She has been honored by a number of organizations and was the first recipient of the "Woman of the 90's" Award from the American Anorexia and Bulimia Association.

In addition to having a top-rated national talk show, Philbin and Gifford decided to combine their considerable talents as performers into a nightclub act five years ago. Not surprisingly, they have become so popular as entertainers that they regularly sell out major venues.

"LIVE with Regis & Kathie Lee" is distributed by Buena Vista Television, a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company.

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** NSI Los Angeles, May '92 and May '91

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Behind the Scenes

WITH

LIVE WITH REGIS & KATHIE LEE

"Tomorrow morning they will hunker down again on their little stools and Regis will read the morning headlines and Kathie Lee will talk about her most recent embarrassing moment and a viewer will answer a nuttily easy trivia question and Regis will go to the map and place a pin at the caller's home town. And he'll tease her, and she'll scold him.

"It goes on day after day, laugh after laugh, quarrel after quarrel. Like clockwork, like teamwork, like life. God, I love this show."

-- Tom Shales, *The Washington Post*
February 1992

And so do some 6 million daytime viewers across America who carefully plan their daily schedules so that they won't miss a single episode of "LIVE WITH REGIS & KATHIE LEE."

The recipient of two local Emmys and two national Emmy nominations, "LIVE" has found its niche in the annals of broadcasting history and a place in the mainstream culture of our times. And yet little is known about the elaborate preparations that go into making "LIVE" a seamless hour of entertainment and information, as well as a showcase for the unique talents of co-hosts Regis Philbin and Kathie Lee Gifford.

Michael Gelman, the 31-year-old executive producer who began his career as a "LIVE" production assistant in 1983 (six months after it originally debuted), is ultimately responsible for everything that happens on the air, though Gelman usually stays out of Regis' and Kathie Lee's popular opening segment known as 'host chat.' Most important, Gelman serves as "LIVE's" chief strategist and the team leader of a staff that is legendary in the industry for being the smallest of any national talk show.

Affectionately dubbed an "elite commando unit" by Philbin, "LIVE's" team of only eight people (including Gelman and a production secretary) produces a remarkable five hours of live programming a week, or over 250 hours per year. ("LIVE's" counterparts - including morning network and late-night - have the luxury of between 30 to 200 people doing the same job.)

"The bottom line is that 'LIVE' is still produced in the same lean fashion as a local show, for a very deliberate reason," says Gelman. "There's no bureaucracy. There's a very short line of command. We don't have 15 executives who have to mull an idea over. And there aren't 55 executives saying, 'Well, I don't know...'"

Unlike the other shows which can assign separate individuals to handle the myriad of time-consuming details that go into a single guest appearance - such as booking and pre-interviewing the guests, taking publicists' pitches, tracking down props and rounding up film clips, booking travel arrangements and limousines, writing up the background material and preparing the cue cards - "each of my producers does the job of six people," Gelman claims proudly, noting that they also hold their own cue cards during their segments and rotate turns in the control room.

The secret behind such efficiency, he confides, lies in the fact that most of them have been with the show for years, providing a day-to-day stability that is unique in an industry renown for turbulent staff turn-overs.

Beyond the never-ending workload, however, lies the biggest challenge of all for "LIVE's" tiny staff - coping with the inherent unpredictability of producing a daily, unscripted and unrehearsed 60-minute live broadcast.

"Every one of our shows is like a piece of work in development until the very minute it's on," explains Gelman, who notes that with a taped show you can time the pieces and keep re-editing until you've achieved a point of perfection. "With our show, it's really a work in progress until it's over and by then it's too late to change it."

Long before each show airs, the juggling begins. With five to six segments to fill for each on-air hour, the guest line-ups shift constantly to accommodate such things as the sudden availability of a major celebrity or the loss of one due to a change in their personal schedule. The adjustments are necessary as Gelman searches for the perfect rhythm and balance that will "keep the show moving, keep it lively and make it appealing to a wide audience."

Even after the show run-down has been prepared, xeroxed and distributed on any given morning, "we're often still changing the show up to the very last second," he notes. "After we've met with the guests, we may find that one of them isn't that 'up' that particular day, or maybe something happened in the news overnight that places greater importance on one of our segments. Or one of our celebrity guests may be coming in on the red-eye and their flight's late. Of course, once we're on the air, we'll need to change it again."

It's the popular first segment of the show - Regis and Kathie Lee's celebrated, unplanned and unscripted banter - that presents the greatest uncertainty, since no one - including the co-hosts - knows how much time it will take each day.

"Sometimes Regis and Kathie Lee will have a lot to talk about and it'll be hysterical. Other times, they'll have less to talk about and you'll see that they're starting to run out of steam early. Sometimes they'll use 13 minutes and sometimes it'll be 20 minutes. So at that point, I have to start adding and subtracting quickly from every segment that follows," Gelman explains.

At the close of 'host chat,' when the show goes to its first commercial break, Gelman immediately gets on the floor phone to the control booth to tell them where to lengthen or shorten upcoming segments. Even so, as the viewers know, the show sometimes runs out of time before all the guests have appeared.

"Considering what we do, the fact that we don't run out of time more often is amazing," he says. "There's a tremendous amount of stress. There's a million things that go wrong every day and it always amazes me that more things don't. But we've all done so many thousands of live shows. Regis has been on the air for 30 years. Kathie Lee has been at this more than a decade herself. And very little throws them; because they're true professionals at ad-libbing and winging it."

But everyone - including the co-hosts - have also learned over the years that the entertainment value really rises "when things go wrong. It's even funnier and more spontaneous. That's the beauty of producing a live show. Anything can happen and it does. That's probably the reason why we're a success," says Gelman. "I think America's gotten jaded by the slickness of television."

One of the most difficult tasks confronting the production staff is the time required to sort through the mountains of packages and letters, as well as the hundreds of publicists' phone pitches that pour in daily. "Because they've all been here so long, they have a pretty good idea of what I'm looking for," assures Gelman.

Nonetheless, "a lot of it is just gut feeling," he says about the secret to successfully booking a show. "I mean, there's no science to producing a talk show. But through trial and error, you find out that certain people and things work. Just like Regis' and Kathie's chemistry works and it's hard to explain why. You know that certain guests work for and with Regis and Kathie.

Making the decision-making process easier is the "very collaborative rapport" he shares with the man whom he's worked for nearly a decade. "We are really of very like minds on most things. We both have the same goal in mind, a very similar vision of what this show should be."

Philbin credits Gelman with having expanded the show's demographics by booking performers who appeal to a younger audience. It was Gelman, for instance, who took the risk and gave up-and-coming stars Debbie Gibson and New Kids On The Block, among others, their national talk show debut. Most recently, he booked the very avante garde Blue Man Group, which has since appeared on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno."

In case anyone is fantasizing about a career as a talk show producer, they might consider this:

Tomorrow Gelman and his crew will arrive at the studio by 7:00 in the morning. They won't leave until at least 7:00 at night. Then they will fan out across the city, representing "LIVE" at film screenings, openings of new plays, concerts, cabaret acts, stand-up comedy clubs, awards dinners and industry events. That may sound glamorous until you've sat through a few hundred bad films or dead-on-arrival performances.

If they're lucky, they won't have to work this weekend. But if any one of them has a guest booked on Monday's show who is flying in from somewhere else - you can be assured that producer will be sweating it out until that guest is ensconced in their hotel. Worse yet, if there was no way of getting the pre-interview done earlier in the week, the poor producer may spend their two days off playing phone tag until it's completed.

Plus, being the conscientious executive producer that Gelman is, each night before a show, he calls Regis at home between 10 - 11 PM - just to review everything one last time.

"The life of a producer is a 24-hour job," sighs Gelman. "It's a lot to do and it's never ending. The pressure is constant and the stress is high. Most people can't take it for too many years - or don't want to take it. Which is why there aren't too many talk show producers over the age of 35."

Nonetheless, ask any member of Gelman's staff if they would have missed "LIVE's" first four seasons of national syndication - and the answer will be the same: nothing is as fulfilling as watching the show that you've toiled on for years become a major success nationally. Even if it means giving up your weekends.

Trivia

The Only Contest on National Television Where Viewers Talk Directly To Their Favorite Co-hosts While Competing For Terrific Prizes!

Every morning, from their studio in New York, co-hosts Regis Philbin and Kathie Lee Gifford call one of the lucky viewers whose postcard was randomly selected from the thousands that have been sent in. If that contestant doesn't have the right answer, then they go to the next one... and sometimes the next one.

It's all done live, on the air. And no one - including Regis and Kathie Lee - knows how many calls it will take to distribute the prize that day.

Sometimes they talk to the contestant only a couple of minutes. In the case of Roz and Rocky, it was to become one of the All-Time Hysterical Episodes in the history of "LIVE WITH REGIS & KATHIE LEE." And one of the reasons why the daily trivia quiz has become a viewer's daily addiction - because you never know what will happen after Regis and Kathie Lee introduce the lucky contestant!

We take you back to that memorable call on February 21, 1992:

REGIS

(pushing the button on the phone)

Let's go to Roz Micciulla in Staten Island.

ROZ

Hi, Regis. Hi, Kathie Lee. I'm so excited!

KATHIE LEE

Hi, Roz! What's going on over there in Staten Island these days?

ROZ

It's quiet. It's a regular day.

REGIS

What do you do?

ROZ

I'm a housewife, I stay home, do my own little thing.

REGIS

Do you have any little Micciulla's running around?

ROZ

No, no children.

REGIS

And what does Mr. Micciulla do?

ROZ

He's retired from sanitation.

REGIS

Ah, he's just LAYING AROUND THE HOUSE!

ROZ

No, he works. He has a side job.

REGIS

How do you like having him home every day?

ROZ

Well, it's okay. It has its ups and downs, as they say.

REGIS

In other words, it's three meals a day. RIGHT, ROZ!

ROZ

No - I don't cook.

Cheers erupt from the audience.

REGIS

(aghast, to Kathie Lee)

SHE DOESN'T COOK!

(Then to Roz, as if he can't believe his ears)

THE GUY HAS BROKEN HIS BACK OUT THERE FOR 20 YEARS WITH THE SANITATION DEPARTMENT - AND YOU DON'T COOK?

ROZ

It's not one of my favorite things.

The audience loves it! Roz is their new heroine!

REGIS

CAN'T YOU MAKE HIM SOME TOAST!?

KATHIE LEE

(laughing so hard tears are rolling down her face)
Roz, then what do you with yourself all day?

REGIS

Yeah, since you don't COOK!

ROZ

I have a back problem, so I'm not too well all the time.

REGIS

(throwing up his hands in despair)
Well, that kills me... I was just having some fun and now Roz lays that on me!

KATHIE LEE

Roz, we're real surprised - because you sound like a young woman. Your voice is very young.

ROZ

Yeah, I'm 36.

REGIS and KATHIE LEE

(at the same time)

THAT IS YOUNG!

ROZ

That is young, I know. But I don't feel good, every day. What can I do?

REGIS

(to Kathie Lee)

THIS IS ENOUGH TO MAKE THIS GUY WANT TO GO BACK TO WORK!

The audience roars in agreement.

REGIS

I'm just kidding!

KATHIE LEE

Poor Roz.

REGIS

Poor Roz!

ROZ

My husband is hysterical. He's listening to this.

REGIS

What's his name?

ROZ

Rocky.

REGIS and KATHIE LEE

(at the same time)

PUT ROCKY ON!

Rocky gets on the phone.

ROCKY

(real laid-back!)

Hi, Regis.

REGIS

Hey, Rock, how you doin', babe?

ROCKY

Okay, fine. How are you doing?

REGIS

Rock - THE WOMAN DON'T COOK?! COME ON!

ROCKY

(sighs)

Yeah, I know. I got a sign up in my kitchen and every day I come home and look at it. It says, 'You have two choices: Take it or leave it.'

The studio is filled with side-splitting laughter.

REGIS

(shaking his head in sympathy)

Poor Rocky... So - what do you do? You make your own fare in the kitchen?

ROCKY

No, I work part-time down at the bowling alley. I fill bowling balls.

REGIS

So you eat down there?

ROCKY

I eat down there most of the time.

REGIS

(hunching forward in his chair and practically yelling into the camera)

WHY NOT!

KATHIE LEE

(giggling uncontrollably)

What does Roz eat?

ROCKY

(after a moment)

Uh... I don't know.

REGIS

(sympathetically)

Now, Rock, when it gets to be nighttime and you're home from the bowling alley, what happens?

KATHIE LEE

Yeah, what do you two kids do?

Dead silence on the other end of the line.

REGIS

(trying again)

Hey, Rock, let me ask you this - what did you have last night?

ROCKY

We had chicken with pepper sauce.

REGIS

So, who made that?

ROCKY

I brought it home from the bowling alley.

REGIS

OF COURSE!

Regis is so agitate now that he leaps off his stool and accidentally disconnects the phone!

REGIS

I'VE LOST ROCKY! And we haven't even asked the trivia question yet! Gelman, get Roz and Rocky back on the phone!

REGIS (Cont'd.)

(while waiting)

Poor Rock - had to bring it home from the bowling alley.

KATHIE LEE

I'm sorry but that's classic. I love them!

REGIS

(to Kathie Lee)

You just like to hear about another woman who doesn't cook! You and Roz!

Back on the line, it's Roz this time:

REGIS

(in an aside)

Yeah, Rocky probably went to the kitchen to get a bite to eat.

KATHIE LEE

(to Roz)

What do you two kids do for fun? I know you have a bad back, so you can't probably go dancing...

ROZ

Oh, I can dance.

REGIS

(jumping up)

YOU JUST CAN'T COOK! Oh, I understand.

KATHIE LEE

(wiping away the tears)

You just can't bend over a hot stove - right, Roz?

ROZ

(suddenly very excited)

Kathie, you're one of my idols! I hear what you do every day and how you handle it, go out to dinner here and there. I love it! I want to be just like you!

REGIS

You know what you need then? You need a nanny for Rocky!... Now, listen Roz, enough fun. What actor starred in the 1985 film 'Hoosiers'?

After a long pause,

ROZ

I've never even heard of this movie!

Don't worry. Roz finally came up with the right answer and won her well-earned Trivia Prize - a complete camera outfit. As a bonus for putting up with all the ribbing, Regis also invited them to lunch.

A week later, Roz and Rocky showed up in the audience, so that everyone could meet the woman who doesn't cook - and her understanding husband. And afterwards, Regis took them to lunch.

And what sports they turned out to be! You see, the following day, Regis rolled a tape of the much-anticipated event: and on it we saw Rocky and Gelman, chatting amiably, *sans* Regis and Roz. Then the camera panned to the left... and guess what! Roz was draped seductively on Regis' lap... FEEDING HIM! (Naturally, it was staged for the viewers' delight!)

* * *

For your chance to talk to Regis and Kathie Lee, just mail a postcard with your name, address and daytime* phone number to:

LIVE Trivia Contest
Ansonia Station
P.O. Box 108
New York, NY 10023

*We'll need the phone number where we can reach you between 8:30 AM - 9:15 AM Eastern Time.

Biography

REGIS PHILBIN

Thirty-one years ago, Regis Philbin - who is affectionately known to his millions of fans as just "Reege" - stepped in front of the cameras with his very first talk show and began a career that has placed him firmly in the annals of broadcasting history. He has enjoyed more successes with more talk shows than possibly any other individual on television.

From that first Saturday night on Channel 10 in San Diego to his latest triumph with the national syndication of "LIVE WITH REGIS & KATHIE LEE," Philbin has created a very unique genre of talk and entertainment television that would have been sorely missed over the last three decades if he had not chosen to enter this particular field.

Among the many honors which Philbin has received from his peers and fans over the years are a national Emmy for his 1981 NBC network show, "The Regis Philbin Show"; two local Emmys for "The Morning Show" (prior to national syndication as "LIVE"); a 1989 national Emmy nomination as a talk show host; and a 1992 national Emmy nomination for "LIVE."

Philbin's present success includes a continuing role as the co-host (with Kathie Lee Gifford) of the annual international telecast of The Miss America Pageant; an acclaimed concert act with Gifford that has sold out every major venue at which they've appeared, including Atlantic City; frequent popular solo appearances as a nightclub performer; and a now-regular co-hosting role for the national broadcasts of such Walt Disney specials as their annual Christmas Parade.

Regis Francis Xavier Philbin was born in Manhattan and raised in the Bronx. After receiving a degree in sociology from Notre Dame University, he spent two years in the Navy, then worked as a page for NBC in New York, where his responsibilities included ushering guests to their seats for "The Tonight Show," then hosted by Steve Allen.

Moving to Los Angeles in the late 1950s, Philbin got his first job in the television industry working for KCOP-TV in the film shipping department.

It wasn't long, however, before he was promoted to writing the news as well, as the result of a prank. Philbin, it seems, had been penning tongue-in-cheek reviews of the station's programs, signing them The Phantom, and posting them around the premises.

"They were kind of funny," he recalls. "Of course, the general manager Al Flanagan found out about it, called me on the carpet, chewed me out, then gave me a job writing the news for Baxter Ward."

One night, Tom Duggin, the sportscaster, failed to show up for his shift and Philbin got his on-air break.

"There was no one to do the sportscast. So I threw a shirt, tie and jacket on, and sat down with my heart pounding and beating. I thought I was going to die right there," Philbin says. "I delivered the sports. My first legitimate on-air experience. And I almost didn't get through it, believe me!"

Although Philbin was functioning as a full-fledged news writer, Flanagan still had him doing his old job as well. "I would write the news copy. Mornings, I had to deliver the film - driving the truck around Los Angeles taking the film back to the producers. And that's what aggravated me.

"So one day, Al came by and he saw me packing the film and he said, 'What are you doing?' I said, 'You know what I'm doing. You could train a gorilla to do this job.' He said, 'Do you want to see me get one?' I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'Do you want to give me two weeks now or do you want to leave?' I said, 'I'll give you two weeks.' So that was a pretty abrupt ending."

Flanagan had a soft spot for the likeable young man and regarded him as a "very good news writer." "He was quite accomplished behind the typewriter. He could write some real clever stuff." Flanagan helped Philbin get his next job, as a news reporter for KSON Radio in San Diego.

So Philbin moved South and spent the next year driving "around early in the morning in this news wagon, seeking out news. There wasn't much going on in those days in San Diego, so I'd go to the police station, get the arrest report and make the most hilarious story out of it I could. I wanted it to be different."

After a year of working for KSON, Philbin's reporting style caught the attention of San Diego's Channel 8, which hired him as a feature reporter and substitute anchor and sportscaster.

Eighteen months later, in 1960, he was hired away by Channel 10, which made him a feature reporter on the 6 PM news and the anchor for the 11 PM news.

"Not a lot of people know that Regis was the number one anchorman in San Diego," says Tom Battista, who served as his stage manager, then later as the director of his Saturday night talk show. "He was a fabulous, fabulous anchorman."

"Back then, anchor people would write 80% of their own copy. As talented as Regis is on his talk show, he is equally as talented as a writer. He had a writing style that was conversational, but yet had a staccato kind of rhythm to it. He used wonderful, every day words and there was an energy, a sense of emergency, that he was always projecting, like: 'Don't touch this set. This next story I have for you is the biggest thing in San Diego.' And it was very exciting."

After a year of doing the news, Philbin was finally given the go-ahead by Channel 10's management to host a talk show - his first ever. Called "The Regis Philbin Show," it aired on Saturday nights at 11:15 PM with an open-ended format. On average it closed down around 1:30 AM. But one night, just as Philbin was about to say goodnight to his viewers, Jerry Lewis walked in unexpectedly and stayed until 3:30 AM.

Philbin brought Tom Battista aboard to direct and co-produce. "We had literally no staff," Battista recalls. "It was Regis. It was me. Regis did most of the bookings. I would make some phone calls. We would sit down on Fridays in the cafeteria, in between the news, and block out the show for Saturday night.

"I mean, it was really like a Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland movie - 'Hey, you get the paint and I've got this and we'll do that and we'll do a show!'"

Out of necessity, Philbin developed and refined what would become his trademark as a talk host - "Host Chat." "I had no writers, no band even to sing a song with. I would just talk to the audience about what I did that week. I'd sit on a single stool and talk about whatever I saw or experienced that week and that's how this whole dialogue began. It wasn't a monologue, it was a dialogue between me and the camera - and I guess it became a trialogue when co-hosts started joining me later."

The guests ranged from politicians to stand-up comics and included some of the hottest entertainers of the day, including Jayne Mansfield, Paul Anka, Pat Boone, Richard Nixon (playing the piano), Bill Cosby, Andy Williams, Lorne Green, Jimmy Dean, Liberace, and Nancy and Ronald Reagan.

"It was absolute, wonderful fun. And the show was a smash. We often did a 63 share and it was the talk of San Diego," says Battista.

"Little doubt exists that 'The Regis Philbin Show,' in its seven months on the air, has truly caught on," wrote TV critic Don Freeman of the San Diego Union at the time. "Philbin has obviously made his mark on local television."

Known for his boundless energy even then, Philbin continued to work for the news department - while doing the talk show - spending his weekdays chasing down feature stories, then anchoring the 11 PM news every night.

Soon after appearing on Philbin's talk show, the late Walter Winchell announced to the world through his syndicated column that he had discovered a noteworthy new talent:

"Att'n network execs on both coasts: His name is Regis Philbin. No. One Rating-Getter in Southern Calif. Via Channel 10 (San Diego to Santa Barbara). He is show-biz from head to toenails. Plus style, class, dignity. The only late-show personality around, we believe, who matches Johnny Carson's way with a guest or a coast-to-coast crowd."

The publicity Philbin received from Winchell and Variety's roving correspondents brought him to the attention of the Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, which was looking for a "new, bright, talented personality" for a live show.

With an offer from Westinghouse, Philbin departed his three-year-old San Diego show and returned to Los Angeles to launch "The Regis Philbin Show" in national syndication with a 90-minute format. Pitted against the venerable "Tonight Show" institution, the show lasted less than one season. Nonetheless, Philbin was being recognized as an important new talent by star-makers such as columnist Earl Wilson, who declared him one of the "top overnight new personalities" of 1964.

It was while doing another local show, "The Regis Philbin Show," for KTTV-TV in 1966 that Joey Bishop spotted him interviewing controversial talk host Joe Pyne, and hired him as the announcer for his soon-to-debut ABC network show.

While Philbin was still working on "The Joey Bishop Show" (which went off the air in December 1969), he began hosting a local Saturday night show, "Philbin's People," on KHJ-TV. The Emmy-winning effort was uniquely designed as a round table free-flowing discussion between a potpourri of entertainment, political, sports, literary and other personalities who were spontaneously engaged in any subject that interested them or that was in the news.

A unique concept, the premiere show featured Phyllis Diller, producer Chuck Barris, LA Mayor Sam Yorty, author Adela Rogers St. Johns, and Boston Celtics basketball star Bill Russell.

"I hope you get a chance to watch 'Philbin's People,'" Rick DuBrow, then a syndicated columnist for UPI wrote. "The outing I saw in Los Angeles this past weekend was one of the best talk shows I have ever seen on television... It was what video should be."

When the host of KHJ-TV's daily 3-hour live morning show - "Tempo" - left in 1970, Philbin stepped in for the next three years. Ruta Lee and then Stan Borman co-hosted, but mostly it was Philbin all alone for three hours a day. "After three years, I couldn't take it anymore and left," he says.

In 1972, Philbin received an offer to do another Saturday night show - this time in St. Louis - from his old friend and first talk show director, Tom Battista, who had become the general manager of KMOX-TV (now KMOV-TV).

Called "Regis Philbin's Saturday Night in St. Louis," the show aired for three years on Saturday nights, between 10:30 - 11:30 PM. An immediate success, the show gave the CBS affiliate the ratings that allowed it to beat out "Saturday Night Live" on NBC.

"That show went through the ceiling," says Battista. "Double-digit ratings. Demographically correct. We blew a hole right through the time period. And we got a lot of positive press because of Regis."

While continuing to live in Los Angeles, Philbin would fly to St. Louis one weekend a month, tape a show on Friday night, tape the second one early Saturday evening then do a live show at 10:30 PM, and finally tape the last one on Sunday afternoon. Each show had a studio audience, which allowed Philbin the comfortable ambience that had worked for him so well in San Diego.

"That show was a polished version of what we did in San Diego. But because several years had passed between San Diego and St. Louis, he had gotten better and better," says Battista.

Despite its blockbuster ratings, KMOX-TV was forced to cancel the show when CBS underwent major budgetary cutbacks.

During 1974, while still doing his St. Louis show, Philbin was hired by KABC-TV in Los Angeles to serve as its entertainment reporter and film reviewer for the 6 PM and 11 PM news. A year later, he was given "A.M. Los Angeles" as well - working first with Sarah Purcell, then with Cyndy Garvey as his co-hosts.

Philbin made "A.M. Los Angeles" a major rating force on KABC's daytime schedule, first beating giant "Donahue," then winning the pennant as the highest-rated local talk show in the country. The show became so popular and influential with its viewers, as well as the Hollywood industry, that when publicists put together their stars' publicity schedules, "A.M." was treated with the same deference as a national talk venue.

Amazingly, even though Philbin was putting in long hours at KABC-TV between 1975 - 1981 doing "A.M." - then covering film screenings and premieres, as well as taping celebrity interviews for the evening news shows - in 1975 - 76 he also hosted the ABC network game show, "The Neighbors," and during 1976, served as the field reporter for ABC's "Almost Anything Goes" live Saturday evening on-location show. The latter required him to fly to different parts of the country each weekend.

In 1981 - after seven years with "A.M. Los Angeles" - Philbin received an offer from Grant Tinker, who had just taken over the ailing NBC network, to do a daily talk show. Slotted for the 9:00 AM time period, "The Regis Philbin Show" replaced David Letterman's morning show which had been cancelled for poor ratings. Unhappy about NBC's weak daytime line-up, many of the network's affiliates refused to take Philbin's show, which did little to help it succeed. It lasted a mere 18 weeks, but won the Emmy that year for outstanding daytime variety series.

Within months, Philbin was back on the air- for the Cable Health Network (which later became Lifetime Cable) - with "Regis Philbin's Health Styles." As the daytime show grew in popularity, it changed to "Regis Philbin's Lifestyles" - then moved to primetime to become "The Regis Philbin Show," which became the highest-rated show ever for that network.

While continuing to do the cable show, Philbin was invited by WABC-TV in 1983 to move to New York to rescue its 9:00 - 10:30 AM time period which had been a ratings Death Valley for WABC-TV for at least six years. Joined again by former "A.M." co-host, Cyndy Garvey, Philbin's "The Morning Show" debuted on April 4, 1983 with a 90-minute format that changed to 60-minutes a year later.

A two-time local Emmy-winner, "The Morning Show" soon knocked-off "Donahue" (Philbin's second victory over the syndicated program) and later "Geraldo" and "Joan Rivers." It also became the #1 rated morning program in New York - consistently out-performing "Good Morning America" as well as the others.

In June 1985, Kathie Lee Gifford joined Philbin as co-host. The chemistry of their salt-and-pepper, vinegar-and-honey personalities is regarded by many to be one of the best pairings ever on television.

On September 5, 1988, "The Morning Show" debuted into national syndication as "LIVE WITH REGIS & KATHIE LEE." Following the same steady upward build as it had done earlier in New York, "LIVE" reigns today as the #1 program in its time period in the majority of its 200+ stations.

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Biography

KATHIE LEE GIFFORD

The phenomenal success that **Kathie Lee Gifford** has enjoyed during the last four years would seem to place her in the category of an overnight sensation. The truth, though, is that her latest career achievements are merely the direct result of 26 years of hard work in show business - 20 of them spent primarily in television.

As with many performers, it simply took the right showcase to spotlight Gifford's considerable talents as a television personality and entertainer. That showcase turned out to be "LIVE WITH REGIS & KATHIE LEE" - which set the ratings on fire as both a local and nationally-syndicated talk and entertainment program.

When Gifford became Regis Philbin's permanent co-host in June 1985, it was undeniably the major turning point in her career. One of the most acclaimed on-air pairings in broadcast history, the combination of their vinegar-and-honey personalities and perfectly-matched intelligence and wit has produced a magical chemistry that has made them the daytime darlings of some 4 million avid viewers every day.

Their joint efforts have also been distinguished with two local Emmy Awards and two national Emmy nominations, as well as the admiration and respect of their peers and fans.

Furthermore, what makes Gifford's on-air talents so rare is her gift for handling the unexpected on a live, unscripted, unrehearsed 5-day-a-week show. In a format that would give most performers an ulcer, Gifford thrives by sharing her one-of-a-kind personality, which is unique for its refreshing candor, self-deprecating humor and obvious caring for the happiness of others.

The product of an old-fashioned, close-knit family, Gifford credits the loving environment in which she was raised as the continuing source of her success. "There wasn't a day that I didn't know that I was loved," she remembers fondly. "And when a person's loved, it gives them a tremendous foundation to fly."

Born in Paris, where her father was stationed in the Navy, the former Kathie Lee Epstein was five years old when her family moved to Annapolis, Maryland, then settled permanently in Bowie, Maryland.

The three Epstein children were always encouraged to explore their creative talents. Inspired by a father who played jazz saxophone professionally (while supporting the family as an insurance agent) and a mother who once sang on the radio, they were exposed to the cultural arts from the moment they were born. "Music was a big part of our household, plus Mom and Dad used to take us to plays all the time. There's a place called Shady Grove Music Fair in Maryland and every summer they'd take us to see the shows that toured through there. So I really grew up loving Broadway shows. My sister and I could sing all the scores. We took turns playing the roles and acting out the scenes."

The Epstein backyard was also the site of a succession of Barnum-and-Bailey-like productions. "We were always putting on carnivals and plays," she laughs. "We had a dog named Zorro that we dressed up in more outfits than Spuds McKenzie. I mean, this poor dog did not know what he was going to be from day to day. My parents really encouraged that kind of creativity in us. And I'm glad they did."

Vocally-gifted and encouraged to be resourceful, it's not surprising that Gifford would start her show business career early. At the age of 14, she and her sister formed a folk music group known as the Pennsylvania Next Right, booked their own engagements, arranged the music and even made the costumes. "It was 1967 and everybody was doing Bob Dylan's, Joan Baez' and Peter, Paul and Mary's music," she says. "They had a major impact on my generation and we performed a great deal of their material."

At the age of 17, Gifford would become Maryland's Junior Miss and receive her first commercial offer by winning the national competition's Kraft Hostess Award.

Following high school, she studied communications, drama and the arts in college, then headed straight to Los Angeles at the age of 20, just a few credits short of a degree. As luck would have it, she was visiting a friend on the set of the daytime soap, "Days of Our Lives," when a producer walked by and asked if she could act. For the next year, she played a minor character known as Nurse Callahan, taking imaginary pulses and screaming "Dr. Horton, Dr. Horton!!!"

Because of her singing talents, she was able to support herself on commercial work, while spreading her wings as an actress with a never-ending number of television pilots and guest spots.

In 1977, Gifford became a featured singer on the game show, "Name That Tune," and later a co-star on the musical situation comedy, "Hee Haw Honeys," a spin-off of "Hee Haw."

As a result of her exposure on "Name That Tune," she was able to launch her nightclub career as the opening act for mainliners Bill Cosby, Rich Little, Bob Hope and others.

In another stroke of fate, Gifford was spotted by one of the producers of "Good Morning America" while guest-hosting on "A.M. Los Angeles" (after Philbin had departed the successful talk show). Some time later, while opening for Bill Cosby in Reno, she received a call asking if one of the "GMA" producers could fly out to meet her. No one was more surprised than Gifford, who says: "I couldn't understand why, because the only thing I'd done remotely similar to 'GMA' was the three days I'd filled in on 'A.M.' I thought they were crazy, quite frankly. I had only done 'A.M.' as a lark."

Hired as Joan Lunden's substitute anchor and the show's special correspondent, Gifford spent the years 1982-85 logging some half-a-million air miles a year in pursuit of human interest features.

When the position of Regis Philbin's co-host on "The Morning Show" became available, Gifford auditioned with a bevy of others. But it was obvious from the first moment that she sat in the stool next to the veteran talkmeister that Gifford was the natural choice for the job.

Beginning in June 1985, Gifford spent the next year doing both on-air jobs. Each morning, she would appear on "Good Morning America," then literally sprint down the street to the WABC-TV studios for an hour with Philbin, then return to ABC to continue her correspondent duties for "GMA."

It was a schedule so gruelling that she found herself doing only one thing in life - work. Then came one of the hardest decisions an on-air performer can face - deciding which job to give up. The industry wisdom, naturally, was that you should never voluntarily leave the exposure of network television for a local show. But she knew that the happiest she had ever been in her career was the last year spent with Philbin. "Regis is the main reason I left 'Good Morning America.' Everybody thought I was crazy because Regis was doing just a local show in New York and I was already on network.

"But I'd always felt extremely confined at 'Good Morning America.' Because of the format, I just wasn't allowed to be myself. And the fact is that I've never once regretted leaving. It turned out to be the best thing I ever did."

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Gifford's and Philbin's spontaneous charisma has also been translated into a critically acclaimed concert act that sells out every major venue in which they've performed, including Atlantic City's Trump Plaza, the Westbury Music Fair and the Garden State Arts Center in New Jersey.

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On September 19, 1992, Gifford and Philbin, will again co-host "The Miss America Pageant" as the result of a recent multi-year agreement.

For Gifford, the on-going relationship simply adds a new chapter to a long and happy association with the Pageant. Prior to her co-hosting duties last year, she appeared as a special guest star with then-host Gary Collins on the 1984, 1985 and 1986 telecasts.

Long before her professional involvement with the Pageant, Gifford was a staunch supporter and advocate of the annual event because of her "tremendous respect for these women and the enjoyment the Pageant provides every year for an awful lot of people."

She notes that the contestants are not only "very intelligent and extraordinarily talented" but that the Pageant serves a very important role in society as "the largest scholarship program in the world for women. A lot of these women would not be able to go on to become lawyers, doctors and other successful professionals if it weren't for the Miss America scholarship money.

"I have nothing but the greatest respect for what the Miss America Organization strives to achieve and for the 50 terrific young women whom we need desperately as role models today."

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Gifford's latest solo accomplishments include the release this Fall of an album of standards and her autobiography, I Can't Believe I Said That.

The album, "Sentimental Journey," is the first of a six-record commitment through Warner Bros. and marks the realization of a long-time dream for the popular entertainer whose recent solo singing engagements have included a record-setting two-week appearance at New York's prestigious Rainbow and Stars Room.

"Basically it will be the music I learned as a child when my father was in a band called the Five Moods," she says, adding that each future album will feature a different theme.

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If there's one thing that fame has given Gifford, it's the means that it provides for her to use her name to help others less fortunate. Which is why the creation of her own signature fashion label, called KATHIE LEE FOR PLAZA SOUTH, remains dearest to her heart of her various professional endeavors outside of "LIVE."

Being able to provide her favorite non-profit charity with a continuing source of funding finally led Gifford to accept Halmode, Inc.'s offer to establish her own clothing line - after years of turning down other opportunities. A share of Gifford's proceeds from the sale of each garment is matched dollar-for-dollar by Halmode, Inc. (her manufacturer) and contributed directly to VARIETY CLUB - THE CHILDREN'S CHARITY. Within that organization the funds are specifically targeted for THE VARIETY HOUSE FOR CHILDREN WITH AIDS in New York, "a home on the upper east side of Manhattan that is run by an incredible, modern-day saint who takes care of crack babies and children with AIDS."

Per Gifford's request, Variety House will also share each donation from the collection with Paul Newman's Hole In The Wall Gang camp, which helps kids coping with terminal illnesses.

Gifford's commitment to Variety Clubs International, which consists of 52 locally-based "tents" (chapters) throughout the world, began nearly 15 years ago when she co-hosted and entertained for local fundraising telethons throughout the country.

With her permanent move to New York and an increasingly-demanding career, she became closely involved with the New York tent and its many state-of-the-art medical facilities for children coping with everything from cancer to amputations to craniofacial rehabilitation. "They're unbelievably courageous people, these children. And their families, I'm in awe of.

"I always feel the more blessed you are in your life - and I am blessed to the max in every area - the more you need to give back," explained Gifford. The problem is that I now have less time than I've ever had, so this is my way, on a consistent basis, to keep giving. And as long as the clothing line continues, it will help fund Variety in one form or another."

She chose Halmode as her manufacturer because of the integrity of the company and the fact that she could be integrally involved in every aspect of the design and manufacture of the garments. "Having control over the quality is a big concern of mine," she relates. "Everything has my approval - every button, every collar, every hem."

Each outfit retails through finer department stores for \$90 - \$125. "I've always gotten a lot of mail and phone calls about the clothes that I wear on 'LIVE,' but the problem is that they're just too expensive. The average person can't go out and buy \$500 suits.

"There's a whole need in the country right now for affordable, attractive clothing. Women, traditionally and historically, put themselves last if they have a family. Whatever extra money there is goes to the kids and the house first.

"With this line, they're able to buy a nice, attractive, affordable outfit and also know that it's going to help a needy child as a result."

In the near future, Gifford will create a line of children's clothing as well, which will feature Cody on the hangtag with some of his Variety Club friends. "It'll have Cody with a child who may have no arms or is in a wheelchair or has dwarfism - just as a little reminder that these children are absolutely every bit as precious as my child is and deserve our love and our care and our respect."

"It's not that I'm doing such a big, wonderful thing," Gifford insists. "What I get back from Variety Club is so much more than what I give. And Frank feels the same way.

"I mean, I've watched Variety do their work for all these years and I've seen the fruits of their labors. It's very, very rewarding to be involved with these people.

"And besides, I have a selfish motive. Cody is not getting the benefit of growing up in a "normal" environment like Frank or I did. I came from a modest upbringing. My husband came from dirt-poor poverty. Both of us had the luxury of learning the value of things because we had to work hard for them. The only way Cody's going to learn compassion for children, for the world, is by our example.

"That's why I want him to see these children from a very early age. I want those children to be his friends. And if I raise my child right, who knows... Every parent dreams that their child will have an impact for good on the world. I'm no different."

She and her husband, ABC sportscaster Frank Gifford, have also established The Cody Foundation - named after their son, Cody Newton Gifford - to administer the distribution of their donations from various professional commitments. And Gifford continues to help her husband in his primary charitable commitments on behalf of the Multiple Sclerosis Society and the Special Olympics - just like he does on behalf of Variety.

The Giffords, with their Bichon Frises, Chardonnay and Chablis, live in a 1760 farmhouse in suburban Connecticut that requires constant care and reconstruction. "It's a work in progress," Gifford laughs. "Just like I am."

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