

Well-known radio personality Ray Sonin passes away at 84

Broadcaster, journalist, novelist, composer, script- and songwriter. And a gentleman among gentlemen. Ray Sonin was all these – and more.

The oldest member of the CFRB Radio staff and one of Mississauga's best-known radio personalities, Sonin died yesterday afternoon at the age of 84. He passed away suddenly after saying he didn't feel well and was taken to hospital by his wife, June. The cause of Ray's death is believed to have been a heart attack.

Born in London, England, in 1907, Sonin carved out a remarkable career for himself in a variety of fields and earned a reputation many dream of, but few ever achieve.

He grew up in England in an atmosphere of sawdust and music, his father being a small cabinet-maker and amateur musician. From a very early age, he had only one ambition – to be a journalist. He became a reporter at the age of 17, landing a job on the *Bournemouth Daily Echo* in the seaside town of Bournemouth in the south of England.

He joined the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as a writer in 1940 and during the Second World War years produced scripts for some of the most memorable shows of the war years by such notables as Edward G. Robinson, Noel Coward and Tommy Handley.

He also wrote the lyrics for a number of successful popular songs and the music for others. His song "Lonely Woman" was recorded by Sarah Vaughan and his "Homecoming Waltz" and "Best of All" by the legendary Vera Lynn.

Sonin emigrated to Canada in 1957 and the following



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year walked into the CFRB studios with a proposal for a radio show. The rest is Canadian broadcasting history. His Saturday afternoon show "Calling All Britons" made its debut in September of that year and continued until his death. His second program, "Down Memory Lane" (also on CFRB), had a run of 19 years until 1987. He prided himself on introducing on his programs some of the biggest stars to the North American audiences, including the Beatles, the Dave Clark Five, ABBA and Petula Clark.

Over the years, he has been honored in a variety of ways for his contribution to the music industry and for his humanitarian work. In 1984, Sonin was bestowed the biggest honor of all, the MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) by Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace.

Sonin moved into Mississauga in the early '70s and did a lot of his work out of his home where he had what's believed to be the largest private record collection in the world.

Involved in the community, for a number of years he acted as a co-host for *The Mississauga News* Christmas Bureau Fund Over-the-Top Telethon on Cable 10 TV.

Funeral arrangements were yet to be completed at press time.