

# Crook & Chase

## Bridging Media

### Country Radio HALL OF FAME

Lorianne Crook and Charlie Chase first teamed in 1983 as TV personalities on TNN. In 1987, the Crook & Chase Minutes radio feature was launched nationally. Two years later, the Crook & Chase Countdown followed, and it's now entering its 26th year. Crook &

Chase have also hosted numerous events at CRS through the years, including the Super Faces Show, Music City Jam and seminar panels. They are the first radio team to be inducted into the Country Radio Hall of Fame, and Lorianne is the sixth woman to be inducted.



**Hannah Before Montana:** Welcoming Billy Ray Cyrus and daughter Miley when she was just a toddler.

**Lorriane Crook:** Our career started together in television. I was here in Nashville hosting my own show on the ABC-TV affiliate WKRN, channel 2. Charlie was my competitor and had his own show on WSMV, channel 4. An independent TV producer here, Jim Owens, who has now been my husband for 28 years, called Charlie and I in April of 1983 and said we should be national personalities. I didn't know either of them at the time.

**Charlie Chase:** And I had never met Lorianne or Jim either.

**LC:** By September of that year, we were on the air as a Jim Owens Production, doing This Week In Country Music. All three of us have been together ever since.

**CC:** My career started back in the Stone Age at radio in 1966 at WRGS/Rogersville, TN. They gave me an opportunity when I was in high school. By the time I was a sophomore, I was working 40 hours a week at \$1.10 an hour. It was block programming. You had Country in the morning, then Gospel, followed by Easy Listening toward the end of the day and Rock at night.

I moved to WMAK/Nashville in 1974 and replaced Pat Sajak at WSM-AM in 1976, working mornings and afternoons for 10 years. It was there that I got into TV, leading to my connection with Lorianne. She and I started doing radio with updates for stations in the late '80s. We had 700-some stations taking our updates every week.

**LC:** It was just such a natural thing between us right away. I still get such a kick out of Charlie's sense of humor. He really throws me zingers and goes way off script. That's how we started doing so many live shows because we thought, "These scripts are boring, it's much more fun to just talk." It was instantaneous.

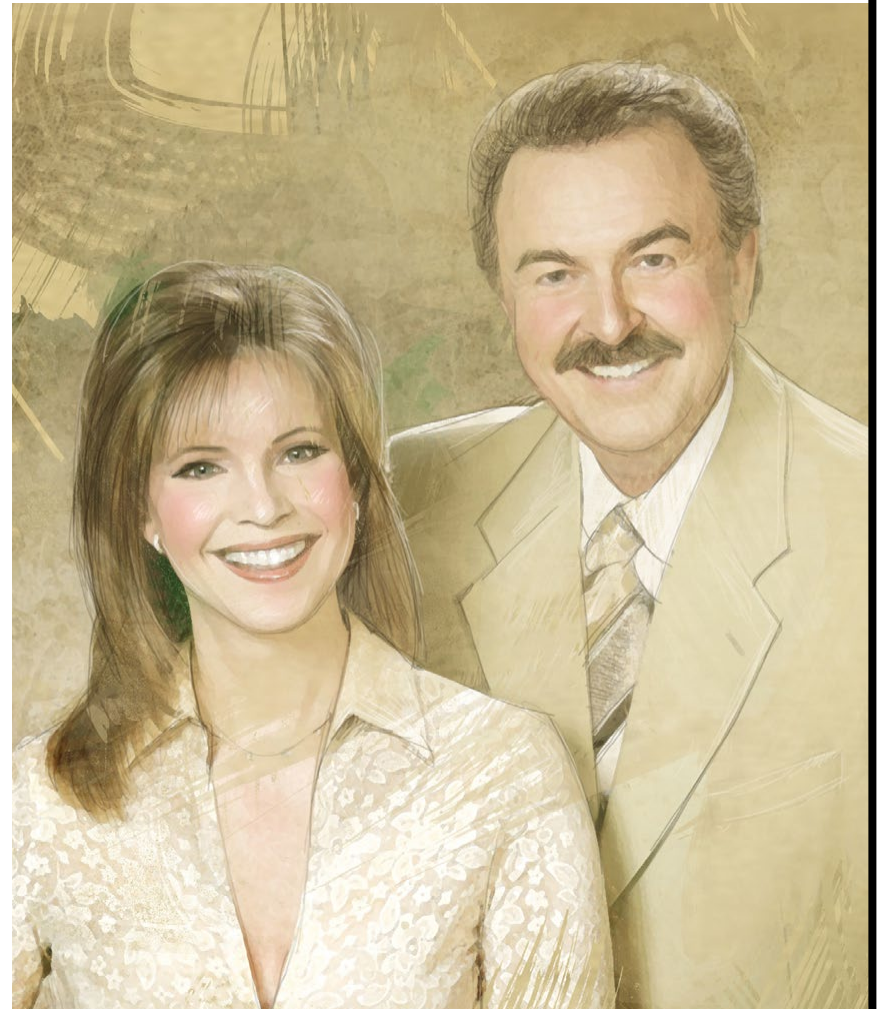
**CC:** It's just been a wonderful relationship; you're blessed when you find someone you can work with like that. We're kind of a brother-sister combination. We think it's healthy to agree and disagree with each other, but over the years, we have always been on the same page. I've had so many radio teams come up to me and say, "I wish I could find somebody to work with as well as the two of you do." That's the greatest compliment we can get. And we don't try to over-analyze it because we don't want to understand it and screw it up.

**LC:** One example about our relationship is when we got on camera recently with Tim McGraw. Charlie and Tim have a great sense of humor and love to tease each other in these interviews. At certain parts of that, when these guys have this back-and-forth going on, instead of being jealous of that and trying to jump in, I sit back and let it go.

**CC:** But let me add, the listeners know and I know, when we're done, she understands exactly how to go in and clean up the mess we've made!

**LC:** And Charlie does the same thing for me. It's a very lovely give and take. I had to get my mind around radio when we first started and Charlie helped me a lot. When I started in TV I went straight into celebrity interviewing and I had no script or teleprompter. It was all ad-libbed. With radio, obviously there are lots of reads you have to do. It took me a while to not sound robotic. I was so uncomfortable having pieces of paper all over the desk and making sure I picked up the right one to read. Also, in TV, if your co-host says something funny, you roll your eyes and mug into the camera. I was doing that on the radio until Charlie said, "This is radio, you have to react with words."

**CC:** I've said this so often, radio is the greatest training ground for TV there is. You have to develop a sense of ad-libbing and shooting the breeze within a certain timeframe. Once you can master that, you have it down. I am so proud to say I've been in radio since 1966. The other thing about a radio background is that when you sit behind the control board and that mic, what I've always tried to remember first is the trust so many people have put in you when they tune in.



**LC:** There is something about bringing an artist into a radio studio that is very intimate. The lights are low and the interviews are so much more revealing, intimate and personal. They feel more comfortable and relaxed.

**CC:** When we talk to an artist, we want them to trust us. We put the spotlight on them and if there's something negative coming out under that spotlight, we are going for a positive result. A lot of artists have said things to us they normally wouldn't and, when it's over, they feel good they said it to us. Over the years, we have become friends with these artists. We laugh and cry, we share stories on and off the air more so than you might realize. This is like a family.

**LC:** Here's something else Charlie has taught me: Instead of just sitting across from someone and starting a list of questions from the top, have an icebreaker. It can depend on the artist and what mood they're in. In a split second, Charlie knows what to say to start the interview on the right foot.

**LC:** Bill Mayne [from CRS] called me with the news about the Hall of Fame. He asked if I'd join him down at the Convention Center and I guess it was the end of a long day and I was exhausted so I said, "For what?" I hope it didn't sound rude, but he was being so secretive. When he told me we were going into the Country Radio Hall of Fame I screamed so loud he probably needs a hearing aid now.

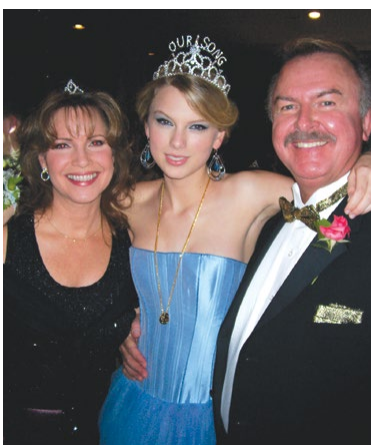
**CC:** I said, that's really cool Bill, but I'm busy. Could you mail the award to me? Seriously, I told him how honored and appreciative I am for this. This is an industry that is limited in the number of positions available. To have a position as long as I've had is indeed an honor, and to be recognized for your work in this way is really special.

**LC:** It's something you don't think of on a day-to-day basis. You're so covered up every day trying to get it right. If I'm not prepared, my palms sweat and it strikes fear in me not to do the best job. I'm filled with that angst all day. You never think such a group of illustrious people notice that you try hard to reach a level of excellence. And to know they not only notice you tried, but did it at a high level, it's just overwhelming. Looking at the list of people in this elite group, I think Charlie is shoulder to shoulder with them. Sometimes I think, "Do I deserve this?"

CAC



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