

Beat: Vips

King of the Countdowns; DJ Casey Kasem dead at 82

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USPA News - Casey Kasem, who counted down pop music hits on radio shows that were broadcast across the United States for decades and who also lent his distinctive voice to Shaggy in the animated cartoon franchise 'Scooby-Doo', died in Washington state on Sunday. He was 82. Kasem died at 3:23 a.m. at St. Anthony's Hospital in Gig Harbor, Washington, said publicist Danny Deraney.

He said the legendary radio personality was surrounded by his children Kerri, Mike and Julie as well as other close family and friends at the time of his death. The cause of death was not immediately known, but Kasem had long suffered from Lewy body dementia and had been in a critical condition from a wound infection relating to a bed sore. "Early this Father's Day morning, our dad Casey Kasem passed away surrounded by family and friends," his children said in an e-mailed statement. "Even though we know he is in a better place and no longer suffering, we are heartbroken. Thank you for all your love, support and prayers. The world will miss Casey Kasem, an incredible talent and humanitarian; we will miss our Dad." One of the most recognizable voices in radio and television, many in the United States find the name Casey Kasem synonymous with musical countdowns. Kasem stepped down as the host of 'American Top 20' and 'American Top 10' in 2009 after hosting countdown shows for nearly four decades. Kasem set the gold standard for music programming with 'American Top 40,' a radio show he continued to host until 2003. His friendly "crackling" voice style took him to the top of his profession, which earned him a place in the Radio Hall of Fame, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the first-ever "Lifetime Achievement Award" from Billboard magazine in 1997, and the first-ever "Radio Icon" award at the Radio Music Awards in 2003. "It's a sad day for the broadcasting community and for radio listeners around the world," said Ryan Seacrest, who has hosted 'American Top 40' since 2004. "When I was a kid, I would listen to Casey Kasem's AT40 show every weekend, and dream about someday becoming a radio DJ. So when decades later I took over his AT40 countdown show, it was a surreal moment." Seacrest added: "Casey had a distinctive friendly on-air voice, and he was just as affable and nice if you had the privilege to be in his company. He'll be greatly missed by all of us." Kasem, who at first dreamed of becoming a baseball player until he ended up as a radio sports announcer, also worked as a character actor in film and television throughout his career. Most notably, he lent his voice to hippie Shaggy Rogers on the popular animated cartoon series 'Scooby-Doo.'

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