



all about

Dorothy

By Gisele MacKenzie

When TV Star Parade asked me if I would like “to do a story on Dorothy Collins,” I was a little hesitant at first. And then I remembered what a schoolteacher of mine once said: “Composition comes easier if you know your subject well.” As a subject in this case is Miss Collins, whom I think I know fairly well, I gave the editor an affirmative answer. So with not much typewriter talent, but with much affection, I will attempt to give you “the word” on Dorothy.

To begin with, she’s the *greatest!* That expression is pretty overworked in show business, I guess, but it just has to be used in talking of the gal I share music and lyrics with on *The Hit Parade* every week.

When you work closely with someone day in and out, especially in the hectic world of television, you learn a lot about that person. I’ve been on the show for three years now, and I can truthfully say Dorothy is one of the finest girls I have ever known.

Her sincerity and friendliness are two of her nicest qualities. When I was signed, I knew nobody on the program and I was really terrified to go to rehearsal the first day. As I walked into the studio there were at least forty people there, and they seemed like four hundred. They all looked in my direction. The producer was about to introduce me. But before he did, I saw Dorothy coming toward me. She grasped my hand firmly, and with that warm smile of hers said, “Hello—I’m Dorothy Collins. I’m so glad to meet you and so happy you have joined our cast.”

Dorothy made me feel completely welcome, and the situation was no longer strained for me. From that moment on we have had a wonderful relationship.

One thing Dottie does every week—about 30 seconds before the opening music, usually—is to turn around to the cast and say, “Good luck, everybody.” And she always calls out an extra little wish to one of the Hit Paradeers or dancers who has a solo that night.

Dorothy certainly gets my vote for a Grade A sport. I could give lots of examples, but I think this is the best illustration: I hadn’t been on the show more than a few weeks when my two little Dashshunds, Wolfgang and Brunhilde, chewed up a couple of pairs of Dorothy’s shoes. While Dottie and I were on the air, the dogs went to work in the dressing room she and I shared. The shoes they selected were brand new, and one pair had been ordered to match a new outfit. Dorothy was so nice about it that I felt doubly horrible. Of course I replace the shoes.

The following week Bruney and Wolfie went to work again. This time they did away with one of Dorothy’s lovely cashmere sweaters. And you know how a girl feels about a pet cashmere. Once more Dorothy was gracious, and once again I feel terrible and went shopping for a replacement. To solve the problem, Dorothy suggested we hang our loose clothes over the chandelier so the pups couldn’t get at them. It worked for a while. Then one night Dorothy was invited to a big posy party after

the show. It was a formal affair, and Dorothy had a beautiful gown to wear, with matching shoes...You guessed it. During the program the devilish pups fund the shoes and chewed the heels off completely. The shoes couldn't possibly be worn, and there was no way to replace them. It was 11:30 p.m., and Raymond was waiting impatiently to go to the party. He couldn't imagine why Dottie wasn't ready. I was frantically trying to figure out what to do, when our wardrobe mistress came forth with a pair of slightly used rehearsal dancing pumps, and Dorothy wore those. Naturally they looked awful with her gown, and I felt as bad as the shoes looked.

I said, "Listen, kiddo, you've been nice long enough, putting up with those shoe hungry canines of mine. Let's change dressing rooms."

Dorothy protested, but I insisted. The next week we did change—Dorothy sharing a room with Raymond, and my pups and me in another.

Dorothy is really a little girl at heart. For instance, she's a great one for birthday cakes. Just let her find out that someone on the show has a birthday coming up—and next thing you know, Dorothy brings in a big cake, complete with candles and decorations, and we all have a party!

Sometimes the kids on the show tease Dottie about being prissy—which she isn't, really. She just doesn't go for swear words or naughty sayings or things like that. But she's one of those people who can always take good-natured kidding, and she can also laugh at herself.

When she returned to *Hit Parade* after her baby, Deborah, was born, Dottie just talked about nothing else. She did the complete motherhood bit—baby pictures, the "guess what she did today" stories, and all the rest. At rehearsals we got to calling her "Mother Scott," and we'd ask her fascinating questions like "Which eyelid did Debbie open first this morning?" Of course, the baby is cute as a pumpkin, and a most popular visitor whenever she comes to rehearsal. She looks like Raymond, but she has Dorothy's blond coloring.

I think Dorothy is completely contented and happy with her family and her career. She adores her husband, her baby, her home, and she loves singing on *Hit Parade*. If some little thing ever does trouble her, she keeps it to herself. She isn't one of those people who want everyone to share their problems.