

King Sister Yvonne Burch dies at 89

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Yvonne King Burch, who gained early fame as one of the singing King Sisters during the big band era before launching her entire extended musical clan into show business as the King Family, has died. She was 89.

Burch died in a Santa Barbara hospital Sunday, where she was taken for injuries she suffered in a fall last week, said her daughter, Tina Cole.

Burch was the matriarch of the King Family, a popular and enduring show business dynasty.

She spent three decades singing and recording with the King Sisters, one of the most popular vocal groups of the 1930s and 1940s. A Grammy nomination for their Capitol Records album "Imagination" capped the group's career in 1959.

In 1963, Burch conceived and produced a benefit concert with her sisters and three dozen relatives including brothers, husbands, wives, aunts, uncles and children that marked the debut of the King Family.

The King Family appeared on "The Hollywood Palace" before headlining their own TV special. Strong fan response led to two variety series and 17 specials during the 1960s and 1970s. The family appeared on "The Ed Sullivan Show" and performed with entertainment legends, including Bing Crosby and Dean Martin.

Besides landing a national concert tour, the clan recorded five albums for Warner Brothers. The family showcased its multigenerational talent with performances by the King Cousins and the King Kiddies.

The King Sisters performed and toured with big bands led by Horace Heidt and Artie Shaw before starting their own orchestra with Luise King's husband, Alvino Rey. They made it big in the 1930s and 1940s with jazzy, four-part harmonies on a series of hits, including "Mairzy Doats," "Miss Otis Regrets" and "The Hut-Sut Song."

Burch was married for 39 years to William Burch, a longtime radio and TV producer who died in 2005.

She had two children with her first husband, musician Buddy Cole, who died in 1964.

Information from: The Sacramento Bee, <http://www.sacbee.com>