

## TV's Red Skelton was a beloved American comic

Posted on May 18, Posted by [Ken Beck](#) Category [Ask Ken Beck](#)

**Dear Ken: I used to love watching “The Red Skelton Show” with my grandparents when I was a child. What can you tell me about Skelton?**

The comic was born Richard Bernard Skelton in Vincennes, Ind., and he proved entertaining in vaudeville and on radio and Broadway as well as in movies and TV. While he made more than 30 films, it his “Red Skelton Hour” TV show, which ran from 1951 to 1971, for which he was best known and where he portrayed such characters as Clem Kadiddlehopper, Freddie the Freeloader, Junior the Mean Widdle Kid, Sheriff Dead Eye and told his jokes about two cross-eyed seagulls named Gertrude and Heathcliffe. The comedian was also quite a painter and love painting images of clowns which were sold for thousands of dollars. Married three times, he had two children. Skelton died of pneumonia in 1997 at age 84. His closing line at the end of each TV show was, “Good night, and may God bless.”

**Dear Ken: I love watching “Gunsmoke” and am a big fan of Ken Curtis, who plays Festus. I have heard that he was a great singer. Is that true?**

Indeed, he had a beautiful voice and was a kind man as well. Curtis sang with the Tommy Dorsey Band in the early 1940s and was a vocalist with the Sons of the Pioneers from 1949 to 1953. He acted in a number of director John Ford films and sings in some of them, such as “The Quiet Man.” “He was a fine actor,” says James Arness, who starred as Marshal Dillon on “Gunsmoke.” “I watch the old shows now and he gives great performances. He does some very serious shows actually and he was great. He was able to add pretty much all the comedic stuff that Dennis (Weaver) had, but in addition to that they had him doing, as I said, many more serious character things.” Curtis died in his sleep at his ranch in Clovis, Calif., of a heart attack in 1991. He was 74. His ashes were scattered in the Colorado flatlands where he was born.

**Dear Ken: Who is the good-looking hunk in those “The Man You Could Smell Like” Old Spice TV commercials?**

That would be Isaiah Mustafa, 37, who played football at Arizona State University with American hero Pat Tillman. He has appeared on such TV shows as “Ugly Betty,” “NCIS: Los Angeles,”

“Castle,” “Days of Our Lives” and “Chuck” and in the movie “Madea’s Big Happy Family.” He was under contract with four different NFL teams and played for a month on the Tennessee Oilers practice squad in the late 1990s. Mustafa will appear in the Jennifer Aniston movie, “Horrible Bosses,” this summer.

Dear Ken: What are the stars of “Cagney & Lacey,” Sharon Gless and Tyne Daley, doing these days?

Gless, 67, continues to co-star on the TV series “Burn Notice” as Madeline Weston and several months ago performed onstage in the play “A Round-Heeled Woman.” Daley, 65, also performs onstage and starred as Maria Callas in “Master Class” last year at the Kennedy Center.

**If you have a trivia question about actors, singers, movies, TV shows or pop culture, e-mail your query to Ken Beck at**