

Cue Up the Shirelles: Cousin Bruce Is Back at WABC-AM Radio

Bruce Morrow, who some fans thought would retire after leaving SiriusXM this month, is returning, at age 84, to the station where he worked in the 1960s.



Bruce Morrow, center, with the Midtown Men at Cousin Bruce's Palisades Park Reunion VI in 2018. Mr. Morrow is headed back to WABC to round out his career....John Palmer/MediaPunch/IPX, via Associated Press

By Julia Jacobs

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When Bruce Morrow, the octogenarian disc jockey, announced recently that he was leaving SiriusXM after 15 years, his fans mourned the loss, filling his Facebook page with memories of how his booming voice has entertained them since childhood.

Many assumed he was retiring, putting a cap on a career that lasted more than 60 years.

Not so fast.

Mr. Morrow — or Cousin Brucie, as he is more often called — has decided, at 84, that there is time for another gig. So he is returning next month to his roots, to WABC-AM (770), where [he worked for 13 years](#) starting in 1961 when John F. Kennedy was president and D.J.s used turntables.

“I needed a new adventure, something to tickle me a bit,” Mr. Morrow said in a phone interview from his home in Ulster County, where he has been living during the pandemic.

“Some people think, My gosh, at this age aren’t you going into retirement?” he added. “I have more energy than anyone I know!”

The man who hired him, John Catsimatidis, the supermarket mogul whose media [company bought 77 WABC radio](#) for \$12.5 million last year, has his own nostalgic memories of Cousin Brucie.

“I grew up with the guy,” Mr. Catsimatidis said in a phone interview.

He still knows the words to [one of the jingles](#) for Palisades Amusement Park in New Jersey, where Mr. Catsimatidis brought a first date and where Mr. Morrow hosted live concerts for over a decade. Mr. Catsimatidis, owner of the Gristedes grocery chain, proved it by singing into the phone: “Skip the bother and skip the fuss. Take a Public Service bus.”

He went on, happily, singing some more.

Mr. Morrow adopted the persona of Cousin Brucie at one of his first radio jobs, at WINS in New York. During his first stint at WABC, he experienced one of the highlights of his career, introducing the Beatles at Shea Stadium along with Ed Sullivan in 1965.



Bruce Morrow, better known as Cousin Brucie, on the air at WABC Radio in New York City in 1966....
Phillip Harrington/Alamy

Cousin Brucie went on to occupy the airwaves at WNBC and WCBS. In 2005, he moved to SiriusXM after WCBS's owner abruptly shifted from an oldies format to a new formula aimed at attracting younger listeners.

In recent years, Mr. Morrow said, Mr. Catsimatidis had called in to his radio show on satellite while listening to his program in the car with his wife. He said that conversation established a personal connection that would later turn into a business deal after Mr. Catsimatidis bought the radio station.

Mr. Morrow's new show starts on Sept. 5. It will be called "Cousin Brucie's Saturday Night Rock & Roll Party" and will feature music from the 1960s, '70s, '80s — plus a "little touch" of the '50s, he said. The company will allow him to do the show from home because of the coronavirus pandemic, Mr. Morrow said, but he plans to do at least his first and second shows from the studio.

"There's nothing nicer or more homey to me than the radio studio, surrounded by the equipment and my telephone," he said.

Mr. Morrow also looks forward to getting back to delivering commercials, which SiriusXM's music channels are largely free of. He noted his audience is older and more affluent than during his last tour at WABC.

"I don't think," he said, "I'll be selling pimple creams anymore."