

*Obituary*

## **Juno Award sandwich lady dies at 95.**

Renowned for having made the sandwiches at the first Juno Awards at Toronto's St. Lawrence Hall, Sabina Klees died in Toronto's Wellesley Hospital on Thursday August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1998, three months short of her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday.



**Sabina Klees**

Her son, RPM's Stan Klees, created the Juno Awards which he and co-founder Walt Grealis made a reality in 1970.

The Juno Awards came of age in 1972, and it was only fitting that

recognition should be given to Mrs. Klees, who financed those early Juno Awards. Toronto Star entertainment writer Marci McDonald covered the awards that year and in the Feb. 29 edition, acknowledged the "Juno sandwich lady" with "It was Mrs. Sabina Klees, mother to the associate editor of RPM Weekly, who seemed to best sum up RPM's Juno Awards – the kind of mini-Grammies of the Canadian recording industry at the Inn on the Park's Centennial Ballroom last night."

McDonald went on to quote Mrs. Klees verbatim in her delightful usage of broken English. "Last year, I was making all the sandwiches in my kitchen. Chicken, eggs – I make everything I can think of. Sixty loaves I used. And now this year all I can say is that the Canadian recording business has come pretty far."

McDonald described the enormous spread that had been laid on for the awards, and which held Mrs. Klees in awe. "She stood agape at the glittering buffet of drink, bubbling copper chafing dishes, silver trays full of caviar that stretched clear round the room attended by gold-coated waiters, and shook her head."

Mrs. Klees was always very proud of the role she played in the Juno Awards gaining national recognition and it was

Marci McDonald's coverage of the 1972 awards show that many believe initiated that recognition.

It was obvious the recording industry had come pretty far, and as McDonald further wrote, "If nothing pointed up that fact more, it was the Juno Awards which last night graduated from a folksy sophomore affair. It was a ceremony that lasted not quite an hour, lagged not a second and was carried off with such simple panache and despatch that it made all those interminable big-time glory shows, the Grammys and the Oscars and even the Canadian Film Awards, look like amateur night at the high-school gym" an even greater acknowledgement to this kind and gentle matriarch of the Juno Awards, without whose financial assistance bolstered by her proud feeling of being so much a part of this country's cultural mosaic, the Juno Awards might never have come to be.

Mrs. Klees watched with great anticipation each year as the Junos went to television, and after viewing the awards this year she said "I liked very much . . . the noise and the lights and I looked to see my son."

Mrs. Klees is survived by her son Stan; in lieu of flowers and cards donations may be made in her name to the Variety Club (Tent 28) by calling 416-367-2828, extension 226.