



CNN's latest embarrassing mistake: "That's not Dolly Parton!"

CNN managed to botch its tribute to country music legend Dolly Parton by putting a Las Vegas impersonator on screen instead of Parton herself, forcing the network to apologize to the singer's family.

The mistake [aired](#) during "Laura Coates Live" as CNN covered Parton's death, which had been announced earlier in the day. During the segment, viewers were shown an image of Kelly Vohnn, a 58-year-old Las Vegas tribute performer, apparently under the impression they were looking at Parton.

The error quickly drew attention online.

"We regret the error and apologize to the Parton family," CNN said Thursday.

Vohnn said she had no idea her photograph had been used until friends began sending her messages telling her she was appearing on CNN.

"I started getting all these texts in from friends saying that I was on CNN, and I couldn't believe it," Vohnn told the California Post.

Vohnn said the mix-up was especially strange because she was already grieving Parton, whom she credited as an important influence on her own career.

"I was already heartbroken at losing Dolly because of how much she has given to me as a woman and an artist," she said. "But then to see these images of me on screen was just weird."

She was less forgiving about how the mistake happened.

"Somebody at CNN really messed up and didn't do their research," Vohnn said, noting that Parton's decades-long career left the network with no shortage of authentic photographs to choose from.

Vohnn also stressed that she has never tried to pass herself off as the country music superstar.

"To be clear, I have never represented myself as being Dolly ever in my life," she said. "I have always been known as a tribute act for her and many other stars."

Parton died this week following what her representatives described as a brief battle with cancer. Her family did not disclose the specific type.

“After bravely facing a brief battle with cancer, Dolly departed her Earthly life today at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center surrounded by loved ones,” the family said.

The statement remembered Parton not only for her music but for the enormous charitable footprint she built over decades, including her Imagination Library literacy program and financial support for medical research.

“Our beloved Dolly Parton spent her life and career bringing joy, laughter, hope and integrity into everything she touched,” her family said.

Parton’s death was formally announced by her nephew Bryan Seaver, who also served for years as her head of security.

“I am representing the Parton and Owens family today, announcing the passing of my Aunt Dolly Rebecca Parton Dean,” Seaver said in a video message.

He said Parton had asked him years earlier to make the announcement when the time eventually came.

Parton had been dealing publicly with health problems since last year, when she canceled a planned six-show residency at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. The concerts had been promoted as a major return to the stage for one of country music’s most recognizable performers.

Parton died at 80 after a career that stretched across generations and made her one of the most recognizable entertainers in America, which made CNN’s inability to recognize her in its own tribute all the more remarkable.