

In good humor

Kiwanis Club hosts 'fabulous' community roast for Laurie Cadden

It takes a brave woman to agree to be the subject of a community roast in front of family, friends and colleagues.

And, make no mistake, Scranton's Laurie Cadden is ready for her big night. Friends will roast Cadden on Thursday, April 12, at the Scranton Cultural Center, as part of an annual fundraising tradition for the Kiwanis Club of Scranton. Celebrating its 95th anniversary this year, club members are working diligently to ensure this year's celebration is extra special. (And by working diligently, we mean staying up late at night drafting delightfully funny copy to tease their friend).

There's a fine art to the roast, you know. One must not be too timid or the jokes will put the audience in snooze mode, but one must also not cross that fine line from funny into rude or tasteless. We are certain that roasters Brenda Bisticchi, Wendy Wilson and Mayor Patrick "Nibs" Loughney will strike that perfect balance as they take center stage next week, and keep us all in stitches.

Will they mention her famous grand entrances? Her flair for talking on her cell phone 90 percent of the day? (Some sources tell us this is a conservative estimate, by the way). Will they discuss the origins of her many nicknames, such as Diva and Scranton's Oprah Winfrey?

Sworn to secrecy about what they might be teasing Cadden about next week, the roasters remain tight-lipped about their program. So we turned to a few non-roasters who know her best for some clues. As we prompted and pried, we heard a recurring theme, one that is, in all seriousness, quite nice. All described Cadden as a generous and giving person who has a wonderful way of dealing with others, is funny and fun-loving, active and energetic and a savvy business woman.

Such attributes serve her well as the owner of a fundraising, public relations and special events business, Laurie Cadden Enterprises, LLC, which she launched in 2010. Prior to that, she served as the Community Development Director at the Scranton Cultural Center. Before joining the staff at the Cultural Center, she served as the Assistant Executive Director at the Everhart Museum in Scranton, a position that helped her transition from a career in the banking world into the arts.

A well-known personality in the greater Scranton community, Cadden grew up in West Scranton, the oldest of four children of James and Ann LeBoutillier Cadden. A proud graduate of West Scranton High School, she attended Robert Packer School of Nursing in Sayre, Pa. After seven months, she realized

The Kiwanis Club of Scranton will host a community roast for Laurie Cadden on April 12. Known for her vibrant personality and great sense of humor, Cadden is involved in numerous civic organizations. She also appears on television regularly and you can hear her on the radio, too. For these reasons, her friends call her the Oprah Winfrey of Scranton. We think Oprah would like to know how much they have in common, including a love of cocker spaniels. Cadden is shown here with her sweet Phoebe.



PHOTO BY JULIE JORDAN

that nursing wasn't the right field for her, and began her career in banking. She completed courses offered by the American Institute of Banking working towards an associate degree at Lackawanna College and earned paralegal certification and completed coursework in preparation for the Pennsylvania Real Estate exam from Penn State University.

Dr. Michael Illuzzi, now a research scholar at Rutgers University, worked with Cadden at the Everhart Museum. "We had four unbelievable years together," he said. "We forged a friendship that lasts to this day. If you ask her to do something, she will do it. And she will find four or five different ways to ensure that it's done and she does it in her own unique way."

While there was serious work at hand, Dr. Illuzzi said they always had fun. "We were like a family and Laurie was the glue around which that family circulated and operated." As families often do, they would tease each other with nicknames. Illuzzi often greeted her with a "Good Morning, Diva!" to which she would reply, "Good morning, Frances Ford Illuzzi" — a jab at his interest in movies. "We never really called each other by our real names," he said,

laughing. "I miss her. She's a wonderful person. There are very few people I've met in my life who light up a room the way Laurie does. You just feel better after being with her."

Her fiancé, Myer Moskovitz, would agree with those sentiments. "She's a very giving person, and very community oriented. She volunteers all over the place, and she has a great heart." If he were among the roasters, Moskovitz said he may tease her about the amount of items on her to-do list for any given day. "There's not enough hours in the day for Laurie Cadden to accomplish what she sets out to do. She's just too busy being fabulous," he said, chuckling.

Fabulous indeed. It's a compliment that came up in almost every conversation we had with those close to Cadden. Longtime friend Marcie Griffin, who has known her for 32 years, said she has always enjoyed her friend's energy, humor and big heart. "She's a great mom and she has a wonderful sense of style and she's a fabulous business woman," she said. "She's well liked and admired."

In her spare time, Cadden enjoys spending time with friends and family, especially her sons, Thomas

J. Foley IV and Sean Cadden Foley. She enjoys quiet evenings at home cooking and the company of her fiancé, Myer Moskovitz, and her dogs, Phoebe and LuLu.

—julie imel

The Kiwanis Club of Scranton presents a Community Roast for Laurie Cadden on Thursday, April 12, at the Scranton Cultural Center. A cash bar opens at 5:30 p.m. with dinner at 6 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by Doug Smith/Marko Marcinko Ensemble and Ballet Theatre of Scranton. Tickets are \$50 per person and proceeds benefit Kiwanis Club charities. For tickets and more information, call 347-5616.

A VOLUNTEER SPIRIT

It seems that everyone in the Electric City knows Cadden, and this may be attributed to her long history of community service in the area. Cadden serves on nine non-profit boards, including Voluntary Action Center, Friendship House; Chairman of the Board, Greater Scranton YMCA; First Vice President, Community Intervention Center, Scranton Tomorrow; Secretary, Neighborhood Housing Services of Lackawanna County, Lackawanna Historical Society; Second Vice President, Electric City TV, and Lackawanna County Commission for Women.

Her past volunteer leadership positions were with Jr. League of Scranton, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Scranton Community Concerts, Lackawanna Lawyers Auxiliary, Ballet Theatre of Scranton Advisory Board and founding member the Society of Irish Women and the Scranton Jazz Festival.

She also volunteers with the Koman Foundation as co-chair of Pink Elegance Fashion Show and is the Project Director for the Scranton Jazz Festival. For the first time this year, she was Mistress of Ceremonies for the Dress for Success Fashion Show.

Cadden co-hosts WILK'S "Live with Laurie and Lynn" show every Saturday morning and serves as a moderator on ECTV for "Health Talk with Laurie Cadden" and hosts "Talk of the Town with Laurie Cadden, Exposed: 'It's Your Business.'" Plans for a ballroom dance show are also underway.