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"The Late Show" host David Letterman (right), who had been hinting at retirement, re-signs his contract with CBS, keeping him at "The Late Show" through 2002.

Regis Philbin

host Rosie O'Donnell on

ABC's "The Rosie

talk show, which

and respect.

O'Donnell Show." The

premieres in 1996.

gains quick popularity

appears with

flash

Former NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle dies on December 6. Rozelle is credited with transforming professional football into America's top spectator sport, and with inventing the Super Bowl.

Basketball megastar Michael Jordan launches his own cologne: Michael Jordan Cologne. Demand for the fragrance is so high that manufacturer Bijan Fragrances limits sales to 12 bottles per customer.

The ever-present Cindy Crawford releases a book on applying make-up. *Basic Face* enjoys a long run on the best-seller lists.

The National Women's Hall of Fame opens in Seneca Falls, New York, inducting 11 women, including author Louisa May Alcott, and Oveta Culp Hobby, the nation's first female colonel.

Archbishop of Chicago, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin dies of pancreatic cancer in November. Bernardin was known for being a reconciler in churches torn between tradition and modern culture, as well as for speaking out against physicianassisted suicide. Mother Teresa, 1979
Nobel Peace Prize winner, suffers a heart attack in late
December. It is the 86-year-old
Roman Catholic nun's fourth serious illness in 1996.

AP/Wide World

In April 1996, singer Michael Jackson is seen escorting a woman later identified as Debbie Rowe, an employee of Jackson's plastic surgeon. In November, Jackson announces that he and Rowe are married and that she is carrying his child.



Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, and Prince Andrew, Duke of York and son of Great Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, are divorced in May 1996. "Fergie" subsequently goes public with TV appearances and an autobiography.



AP/Wide Worl

Music megastar Madonna gives birth to Lourdes Maria Ciccone Leon, a 6-pound, 9-ounce girl, on October 14. Madonna's big year continues when she wins a Golden Globe for her role in Andrew Lloyd Webber's on-screen rendition of the musical Evita.

In October, TV talk-show host Jenny Jones testifies during the Michigan murder trial of Jonathan Schmitz. Schmitz was accused of killing Scott Amedure, who revealed romantic feelings for Schmitz during a March 1995 taping of a "Jenny Jones Show."



P/Wide World



In a small, secret ceremony on an island off the coast of Georgia, John F. Kennedy Jr. marries Carolyn Bessette, a Calvin Klein publicist, in September. Kennedy, who dated Bessette for two years, had long been considered one of the world's most eligible bachelors.



New York Yankees fan Jeffrey Maier interferes with a fly ball during game one of the American League Championship Series on October 9. The hit is ruled a home run, tying the game 4 to 4 in the eighth inning and making Maier New York's hero for a day.



Legendary heavyweight boxer Muhammad Ali is the final athlete to bear the Olympic torch, lighting the Olympic flame at the opening of the Centennial Summer Olympics in Atlanta on July 19.

More than 4,000 items owned by former First Lady Jacquelyn Kennedy Onassis and President John F. Kennedy are auctioned off in April 1996, including a necklace of simulated pearls shown in this 1962 photograph. The fake pearls, valued at \$500 to \$700, sell for \$211,500, bringing the auction total to \$34.5 million.



Veteran comedian George Burns dies in March 1996, just weeks after reaching the age of 100. The legendary Burns won an Oscar, an Emmy and a Grammy Award in an illustrious career dating back to vaudeville.

As a stand against the invasion of his privacy, George Clooney, star of NBC's "ER," boycotts
Paramount's "Entertainment Tonight" after its sister show "Hard Copy" runs unauthorized footage of the actor's private life.



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Angela Lansbury
appears in her final
season as mystery writer Jessica
Fletcher on CBS's "Murder, She
Wrote." The hugely successful
show ran for 12 seasons.





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