

Sheryl Lee Ralph

Sheryl Lee Ralph is an acclaimed veteran of film, television and the Broadway stage. She created the original role of Deena Jones on Broadway in the landmark musical *Dreamgirls*, which earned her both Tony and Drama Desk Award Nominations for Best Actress. After *Dreamgirls*, Ralph turned her attention to television, music and film.

On television, Ralph has starred in *It's a Living*, her own series *New Attitude*, the George Foreman series *George* and the hit comedy *Designing Women*. She also was voted one of TV's Favorite Moms for her portrayal of stepmom "Dee" on the No. 1-rated television series *Moesha*. She broke new ground in the Showtime series *Barbershop* as the popular, post-operative transsexual, Claire. Ralph brought a new face to the sufferings of war in the NBC hit series *ER*.

Musically, Ralph scored a Top 10-selling dance hit in the mid-Eighties with the infectious anthem "In the Evening" and again in the Nineties with her remake of "Here Comes the Rain Again."

Her extensive film credits include *Sister Act II* with Whoopi Goldberg, *The Flintstones* with Rosie O'Donnell, *The Mighty Quinn* with Denzel Washington, *Mistress* with Robert De Niro, and Eddie Murphy's *Distinguished Gentleman*. Ralph's performance with Danny Glover in *To Sleep with Anger* won her the Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Actress.

Ralph found new success in writing and directing with her film short, *Secrets*. Featuring an all-star cast that includes Oscar nominee Alfre Woodard, Tina Lifford, Victoria Rowell, La Tanya Richardson, Robin Givens and Ralph herself, *Secrets* was a finalist in the HBO Film Short Competition, Showtime Filmmakers Series, Acapulco Black Film Festival, Hollywood Film Festival, Pan African Film Festival, Urban World Film Festival and an audience favorite at the OUTFEST Film Festival. She also created "The Jamerican Film & Music Festival," which in five years has given birth to five Showtime Filmmakers finalists.

Besides her award-winning body of work, Ralph is an AIDS activist. She is the celebrity spokesperson for the National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), a national nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the challenges of HIV/AIDS. Ralph also created and produced the critically acclaimed "Divas Simply Singing," an evening of song and entertainment that has become one of the most highly anticipated AIDS benefit events in Hollywood.

Ralph later wrote, directed and performed a one-woman play *Sometimes I Cry* about the heartbreaking yet inspiring real life stories of culturally diverse women whose lives unravel as they cope with their HIV/AIDS reality. The performance, which debuted at the National Black Women and HIV/AIDS Conference in Los Angeles in 2005, continues to be performed in the U.S. and abroad.

Ralph was the first and youngest female graduate of Rutgers College at the age of 19. Now a mother of two, Ralph loves every moment of raising her children. She recently married State Senator Vincent Hughes of Pennsylvania in what Entertainment Tonight called, "The most elegant and romantic wedding of the summer." Ralph acknowledges that love is the greatest gift to be given and shared.

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