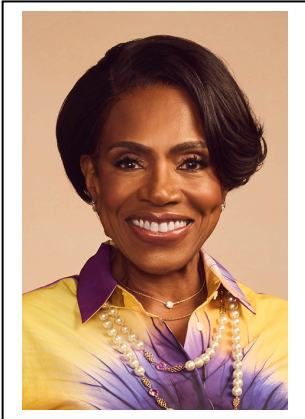




BIOGRAPHY



SHERYL LEE RALPH

Barbara Howard on ABC's "Abbott Elementary"

Sheryl Lee Ralph has become a staple in the entertainment industry; and for her acclaimed career spanning more than four decades, she recently received a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Ralph can currently be seen starring in the hit comedy series "Abbott Elementary," which will return for its fifth season in October. For her portrayal of Barbara Howard, Abbott's veteran teacher on the series, she won the 2022 Emmy® Award for Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Series, as well as the Critics' Choice Award for Best Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, Ralph received her second, third and fourth Emmy nominations for

this role.

At 20 years old, Ralph made her feature film debut opposite Academy Award® winner Sidney Poitier in Warner Bros. "A Piece of the Action," which Poitier also directed. Following this breakout performance, she went on to work with more of Hollywood's other top leading and award-winning men in films including "The Mighty Quinn" opposite Denzel Washington; "Mistress" with Robert de Niro; "To Sleep with Anger" with Danny Glover, for which she won an Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Actress; and "The Distinguished Gentlemen" with Eddie Murphy. She also appeared opposite Whoopi Goldberg and Lauryn Hill in "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit." She recently starred in the independent feature "Ricky" from filmmaker Rashad Frett, which premiered at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival.

Ralph first made a name for herself on television starring alongside GRAMMY® Award winner Brandy in over 100 episodes of UPN's "Moesha." She received five NAACP Image Award nominations for her work on the series. Ralph also had a lead role opposite Tia Mowry in three seasons of Nickelodeon's hit series "Instant Mom." Her other television credits include recurring roles on Showtime's "Ray Donovan" opposite Jon Voight; Freeform's "Motherland: Fort Salem" as the president of the United States; "Claws"; "Barbershop"; "One Mississippi," created by Diablo Cody and Tig Notaro; CBS' Emmy-nominated "Designing Women"; "New Attitude" and "It's a Living."

On stage, Ralph is well known for her award-winning work and creating the role of Deena Jones in the legendary Broadway musical "Dreamgirls," which earned her Best Actress nods for Tony® and Drama Desk Awards. In 2002, she originated the role of Muzzy Van Hossmer in "Thoroughly Modern Millie" alongside Sutton Foster. The show won six Tony Awards and five Drama Desk Awards, including the winning for Best Musical at both. Ralph most recently appeared as Madame Morrible in "Wicked," becoming the first African American actress to take on the classic role.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

HOMETOWN: Waterbury, Connecticut

BIRTHDATE: December 30

-- 2025-2026--