

Diahann Carroll

Diahann Carroll (/daɪˈæn/; born **Carol Diahann Johnson**; July 17, 1935 – October 4, 2019) was an American actress, singer, and model. She rose to stardom in performances in some of the earliest major studio films to feature black casts, including *Carmen Jones* in 1954 and *Porgy and Bess* in 1959. In 1962, Carroll won a Tony Award for best actress, a first for a black woman, for her role in the Broadway musical *No Strings*.

Her 1968 debut in *Julia*, the first series on American television to star a black woman in a nonstereotypical role,^[1] was a milestone both in her career and the medium. In the 1980s she played the role of Dominique Deveraux, a mixed-race diva, in the prime time soap opera *Dynasty*.

Carroll was the recipient of numerous stage and screen nominations and awards, including the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress In A Television Series in 1968. She received an Academy Award for Best Actress nomination for the 1974 film *Claudine*. She was also a breast cancer survivor and activist.

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Early years

Carrol Diahann Johnson was born in the Bronx, New York City, on July 17, 1935, to John Johnson, a subway conductor, and Mabel (Faulk),^[2] a nurse.^[3] When Carroll was an infant, the family moved to Harlem, where she grew up. She attended Music and Art High School, and was a classmate of Billy Dee Williams. In many interviews about her childhood, Diahann Carroll recalls her

Diahann Carroll



Carroll in 1976

Born	<div>Carol Diahann Johnson</div> <div>July 17, 1935</div> <div>New York City, U.S.</div>
Died	<div>October 4, 2019</div> <div>(aged 84)</div> <div>Los Angeles, California, U.S.</div>
Education	Music & Art High School
Alma mater	New York University
Occupation	<div>Actress</div> <div>Singer</div> <div>Fashion model</div>
Years active	1950–2015
Spouse(s)	<div>Monte Kay</div> <div>(m. 1956; div. 1963)</div> <div>Fredde Glusman</div> <div>(m. 1973; div. 1973)</div> <div>Robert DeLeon</div> <div>(m. 1975; died 1977)</div> <div>Vic Damone</div> <div>(m. 1987; div. 1996)</div>

parents' support, enrolling her in dance, singing, and modeling classes. By the time Carroll was 15, she was modeling for *Ebony*. "She also began entering television contests, including "Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts," under the name Diahann Carroll."^[3] After graduating from high school, she attended New York University, majoring in sociology, "but she left before graduating to pursue a show-business career, promising her family that if the career did not materialize after two years, she would return to college."^[3]

Partner(s)	Sidney Poitier (1959-1968) David Frost (1970–1973)
Children	1
Awards	1969 Golden Globe Award for Best TV Star – <i>Julia</i>

Career

Carroll's big break came at 18, when she appeared as a contestant on the DuMont Television Network program, *Chance of a Lifetime*, hosted by Dennis James. On the show, which aired January 8, 1954, she took the \$1,000 top prize for a rendition of the Jerome Kern/Oscar Hammerstein song, "Why Was I Born?" She went on to win the following four weeks. Engagements at Manhattan's Café Society and Latin Quarter nightclubs soon followed.^[4]

Carroll's film debut was a supporting role in *Carmen Jones* (1954) as a friend to the sultry lead character played by Dorothy Dandridge. That same year, she starred in the Broadway musical, *House of Flowers*. In 1959, she played Clara in the film version of George Gershwin's Porgy and Bess, but her character's singing parts were dubbed by opera singer Loulie Jean Norman. She made a guest appearance in the series *Peter Gunn*, in the 1960 episode "Sing a Song of Murder". She starred with Sidney Poitier, Paul Newman, and Joanne Woodward in the 1961 film *Paris Blues*. In 1962, Carroll won the Tony Award for best actress (a first for a black woman) for the role of Barbara Woodruff in the Samuel A. Taylor and Richard Rodgers musical *No Strings*. In 1974, she was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actress for the film *Claudine*. The role of Claudine had been written specifically for actress Diana Sands (who had made guest appearances on *Julia* as Carroll's cousin Sara), but shortly before filming was to begin, Sands found out that she was terminally ill with cancer. Sands attempted to carry on with the role, but as filming began, she became too ill to continue, and recommended her friend Carroll take over the role. Sands would not live to see *Claudine*. She died in September 1973; *Claudine*, starring Diahann Carroll and James Earl Jones, was released in April 1974.



Carroll and Sammy Davis Jr.
on *The Hollywood Palace*,
1968

Carroll is well known for her titular role in the 1968 television series *Julia*, which made her the first African-American actress to star in her own television series where she did not play a domestic worker. That role won her the Golden Globe Award for "Best Actress In A Television Series" in 1968,^[5] and a nomination for an Emmy Award in 1969. Some of her earlier work also included appearances on shows hosted by Jack Paar, Merv Griffin, Johnny Carson, Judy Garland, and Ed Sullivan, and on *The Hollywood Palace* variety show. In 1984, Carroll joined the nighttime soap opera *Dynasty* as the mixed-race jet set diva Dominique Devereaux, half-sister of Blake Carrington. Her high-profile role on *Dynasty* also reunited her with schoolmate Billy Dee Williams, who briefly played her onscreen husband Brady Lloyd. Carroll remained on the show until 1987, simultaneously making several appearances on its short-lived spin-off, *The Colbys*. She received her third Emmy nomination in 1989 for the recurring role of Marion Gilbert in *A Different World*.

In 1991, Carroll played the role of Eleanor Potter, the wife of Jimmy Potter, portrayed by Chuck Patterson, in *The Five Heartbeats*, a musical drama film in which Jimmy manages a vocal group. In this role, Carroll was a doting, concerned, and protective wife alongside actor and musician Robert Townsend, Michael Wright, and others. In a 1995 reunion with Billy Dee Williams in *Lonesome Dove: The Series*, she played Mrs. Greyson, the wife of Williams' character. In 1996, Carroll starred as the self-loving

and deluded silent movie star Norma Desmond in the Canadian production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical version of the classic film *Sunset Boulevard*. In 2001, Carroll made her animation début in *The Legend of Tarzan*, in which she voiced Queen La, an evil sorceress and ruler of the ancient city of Opar.

In 2006, she appeared in the television medical drama *Grey's Anatomy* as Jane Burke, the demanding mother of Dr. Preston Burke. In December 2008, Carroll was cast in USA Network's series *White Collar* as June, the savvy widow who rents out her guest room to Neal Caffrey.^[6] In 2010, Carroll was featured in UniGlobe Entertainment's breast cancer docudrama titled *1 a Minute*, and she appeared as Nana in two Lifetime movies: *At Risk* and *The Front*, movie adaptations of two Patricia Cornwell novels.^[7]

Carroll was present on stage for the 2013 Emmy Awards, to briefly speak about being the first African American nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award. She was quoted as saying, "talented Kerry Washington better win!" Washington erroneously stated that Carroll was the first black performer ever to be nominated for an Emmy. Actually, at least three black performers were nominated before Carroll, who was first nominated in 1963.^[8] These performers include: Ethel Waters for a guest appearance on *Route 66*, in 1962; Harry Belafonte, nominated in 1956 and 1961 and winning in 1960; and Sammy Davis Jr., who was nominated in 1956 with Belafonte.

Personal life

Carroll was married four times, first to record producer Monte Kay in 1956. Her father boycotted the wedding ceremony which was presided over by Adam Clayton Powell Jr. at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. The marriage ended in 1962.^[9] The union produced a daughter, Suzanne Kay Bamford (born September 9, 1960), who became a freelance media journalist. In 1959, Carroll began a nine-year affair with married actor Sidney Poitier. She claimed that Poitier persuaded her to divorce her husband and he would leave his wife to be with her. When Carroll got her divorce, Poitier did not keep up his end of the bargain,^[10] yet the relationship continued until 1968. Carroll dated and was engaged to British television host and producer David Frost from 1970 until 1973. In 1973, Carroll surprised the press by marrying Las Vegas boutique owner Fred Glusman. Several weeks later, she filed for divorce, charging Glusman with physical abuse. In 1975, Carroll married Robert DeLeon, a managing editor of *Jet*. She was widowed two years later when DeLeon was killed in a car crash.^[11] Carroll's fourth marriage was to singer Vic Damone in 1987. The union, which Carroll admitted was turbulent, had a legal separation in 1991, reconciliation, and divorce in 1996.^{[12][13]}

Death

Carroll was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1997. She said the diagnosis "stunned" her because there was no family history of breast cancer and she had always had a healthy lifestyle. She underwent nine weeks of radiation therapy, and had been clear since. She frequently spoke on the need for early detection and prevention of the disease.^[14]

Carroll died of cancer on October 4, 2019, in Los Angeles.^[15]

Charitable work

Carroll was a founding member of the Celebrity Action Council, a volunteer group of celebrity women who served the women's outreach of the Los Angeles Mission, working with women in rehabilitation from problems with drugs, alcohol or prostitution. She helped to form the group along with other female television personalities including Mary Frann, Donna Mills, Linda Gray and Joan Van Ark.^[16]

Filmography

Film

Year	Title	Role
1954	<u><i>Carmen Jones</i></u>	Myrt
1959	<u><i>Porgy and Bess</i></u>	Clara
1961	<u><i>Goodbye Again</i></u>	Night Club Singer
	<u><i>Paris Blues</i></u>	Connie Lampson
1967	<u><i>Hurry Sundown</i></u>	Vivian Turlow
1968	<u><i>The Split</i></u>	Ellen "Ellie" Kennedy
1974	<u><i>Claudine</i></u>	Claudine
1991	<u><i>The Five Heartbeats</i></u>	Eleanor Potter
1992	<u><i>Color Adjustment</i></u>	Herself
1997	<u><i>Eve's Bayou</i></u>	Elzora
2008	<u><i>Over the River...Life of Lydia Maria Child, Abolitionist for Freedom</i></u>	Narrator
2013	<u><i>Tyler Perry Presents Peeples</i></u>	Nana Peeples
2015	<u><i>The Masked Saint</i></u>	Ms. Edna

Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1954	<i><u>Chance of a Lifetime</u></i>	Herself	Four consecutive weeks as a contestant
1954	<i><u>The Red Skelton Hour</u></i>	Herself	
1955	<i><u>General Electric Theater</u></i>	Anna	Episode: "Winner by Decision"
1960	<i><u>Peter Gunn</u></i>	Dina Wright	Episode: "Sing a Song of Murder"
1960	<i><u>The Man in the Moon</u></i>		TV movie
1960	<i><u>The Garry Moore Show</u></i>	Herself	Recurring for several weeks
1962	<i><u>What's My Line?</u></i>	Mystery Guest ^[17]	
1962	<i><u>Naked City</u></i>	Ruby Jay	Episode: "A Horse Has a Big Head – Let Him Worry!"
1963	<i><u>The Eleventh Hour</u></i>	Stella Young	Episode: "And God Created Vanity"
1964	<i><u>The Judy Garland Show</u></i>	Herself	Episode 21
1965–1971	<i><u>The Dean Martin Show</u></i>	Herself	
1968	<i><u>Francis Albert Sinatra Does His Thing</u></i>	Herself	
1968–1971	<i><u>Julia</u></i>	Julia Baker	86 episodes
1975	<i><u>Death Screa</u></i>	Betty May	TV movie
1976	<i><u>The Diahann Carroll Show</u></i>	Herself	
1977	<i><u>The Love Boat</u></i>	Roxy Blue	Episode: "Isaac the Groupie"
1978	<i><u>Star Wars Holiday Special</u></i>	Mermeia Holographic Wow	
1979	<i><u>Roots: The Next Generations</u></i>	Zeona Haley	
1979	<i><u>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</u></i>	Vivian	TV movie
1982	<i><u>Sister, Sister</u></i>	Carolyn Lovejoy	TV movie
1984–1987	<i><u>Dynasty</u></i>	Dominique Deveraux	74 episodes
1985–1986	<i><u>The Colbys</u></i>	Dominique Deveraux	
1989	<i><u>From the Dead of Night</u></i>	Maggie	
1989–1993	<i><u>A Different World</u></i>	Marion Gilbert	9 episodes
1990	<i><u>Murder in Black and White</u></i>	Margo Stover	
1991	<i><u>Sunday in Paris</u></i>	Vernetta Chase	
1993	<i><u>The Sinbad Show</u></i>	Mrs. Winters	Episode: "My Daughter's Keeper"
1994	<i><u>Burke's Law</u></i>	Grace Gibson	Episode: "Who Killed the Beauty Queen?"
1994	<i><u>Evening Shade</u></i>	Ginger	Episode: "The Perfect Woman"
1994–1995	<i><u>Lonesome Dove: The Series</u></i>	Ida Grayson	
1994	<i><u>A Perry Mason Mystery: The Case of the Lethal Lifestyle</u></i>	Lydia Bishop	

1995	<i><u>Touched by an Angel</u></i>	Grace Willis	Episode: "The Driver"
1998	<i><u>The Sweetest Gift</u></i>	Mrs. Wilson	
1999	<i><u>Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years</u></i>	Sadie Delany	TV movie
1999	<i><u>Jackie's Back</u></i>	Herself	TV movie
1999	<i><u>Twice in a Lifetime</u></i>	Jael	2 episodes
2000	<i><u>The Courage to Love</u></i>	Pouponne	TV movie
2000	<i><u>Sally Hemings: An American Scandal</u></i>	<u>Betty Hemings</u>	Miniseries
2000	<i><u>Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales for Every Child</u></i>	Crow	Episode: "Aesop's Fables: A Whodunit Musical"
2000	<i><u>Living' for Love: The Natalie Cole Story</u></i>	<u>Maria Cole</u>	TV movie
2001	<i><u>The Legend of Tarzan</u></i>	Queen La (voice)	
2002	<i><u>The Court</u></i>	Justice DeSett	6 episodes
2002	<i><u>Half & Half</u></i>	Grandma Ruth Thorne	Episode: "The Big Thanks for Forgiving Episode"
2003	<i><u>Strong Medicine</u></i>	Eve Morton	Episode: "Love and Let Die"
2003–2004	<i><u>Soul Food</u></i>	Aunt Ruthie	
2004	<i><u>Whoopi</u></i>	Viveca Rae	Episode: "Mother's Little Helper"
2006–2007	<i><u>Grey's Anatomy</u></i>	Jane Burke	
2008	<i><u>Back to You</u></i>	Sandra Jenkins	Episode: "Hug & Tell"
2009–2014	<i><u>White Collar</u></i>	June	25 episodes
2010	<i><u>At Risk</u></i>	Nana	TV movie
2010	<i><u>The Front</u></i>	Nana	TV movie
2010	<i><u>Diahann Carroll: The Lady. The Music. The Legend</u></i>	Herself	Filmed live in concert in <u>Palm Springs, California</u>
2010–2011	<i><u>Diary of a Single Mom</u></i>	Therapist	7 episodes

Discography

- *Diahann Carroll Sings Harold Arlen Songs* (1957)
- *Best Beat Forward* (1958)
- *The Persian Room Presents Diahann Carroll* (1959)
- *Porgy and Bess* (1959) (with the André Previn Trio)
- *Diahann Carroll and the André Previn Trio* (1960)
- *Fun Life* (1961)
- *Modern Jazz Quartet — The Comedy* (1962)
- *Showstopper!* (1962)
- *The Fabulous Diahann Carroll* (1963)
- *A You're Adorable: Love Songs for Children* (1967)
- *Nobody Sees Me Cry* (1967)
- *Diahann Carroll* (1974)
- *A Tribute to Ethel Waters* (1978)

- *The Time of My Life* (1997)

Theater

- *House of Flowers* (1954)
- *No Strings* (1962)
- *Same Time, Next Year* (1977)
- *Black Broadway* (1979) (benefit concert)
- *Agnes of God* (1983) (replacement for Elizabeth Ashley)
- *Love Letters* (1990)
- *Sunset Boulevard* (1995)
- *Bubbling Brown Sugar* (2004)
- *On Golden Pond* (2004) (replaced by Leslie Uggams before opening)
- *A Raisin in the Sun* (2014) (replaced by LaTanya Richardson before opening)

Awards and nominations

Awards

- 1962: Tony Award for Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Musical — *No Strings*
- 1969: Golden Globe Award for Best TV Star — Female — *Julia*
- 2011: Inducted into the Television Academy Hall of Fame

Nominations

- 1963: Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Single Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role — *Naked City*^[8]
- 1969: Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Series — *Julia*^[8]
- 1970: Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in a Comedy/Musical Television Series — *Julia*
- 1975: Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in a Comedy/Musical Motion Picture — *Claudine*
- 1975: Academy Award for Best Actress — *Claudine*
- 1989: Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series — *A Different World*
- 1992: Women in Film Crystal Award.^[18]
- 1998: Women in Film Lucy Award^[18]
- 1999: Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Performance in a Children's Special/Series — *The Sweetest Gift*
- 2000: NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Mini-Series/Television Movie — *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years*
- 2005: NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Television Drama Series — *Soul Food*
- 2008: Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series — *Grey's Anatomy*

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External links

- Diahann Carroll (<https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/034679>) at the *Internet Broadway Database*
- Diahann Carroll (<http://www.lortel.org/Archives/CreditableEntity/9284>) at the *Internet Off-Broadway Database*
- Diahann Carroll (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0140792/>) on *IMDb*
- Diahann Carroll (<http://tcmdb.com/participant/participant.jsp?participantId=029686>) at the *TCM Movie Database*

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- [Diahann Carroll at Discogs \(http://www.discogs.com/artist/Diahann+Carroll\)](http://www.discogs.com/artist/Diahann+Carroll)
- [Diahann Carroll's oral history video excerpts \(http://www.visionaryproject.com/carrolldiahann\)](http://www.visionaryproject.com/carrolldiahann) at The National Visionary Leadership Project
- [Diahann Carroll \(http://www.makers.com/diahann-carroll\)](http://www.makers.com/diahann-carroll) Video produced by *Makers: Women Who Make America*
- [Diahann Carroll \(https://interviews.televisionacademy.com/interviews/diahann-carroll\)](https://interviews.televisionacademy.com/interviews/diahann-carroll) at [The Interviews: An Oral History of Television](#)

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