

Donna Mills

BIOGRAPHY

Timeless television icon Donna Mills began her television career in the mid-1960's with a recurring role on "The Secret Storm," and in the same year appeared on Broadway in the Woody Allen comedy *Don't Drink the Water*. Mills made her film debut the following year opposite Beau Bridges, Martin Sheen and Ed McMahon in *The Incident*. She then starred for three years in the Emmy nominated soap "Love is a Many Splendored Thing," before her star-making turn as Tobie Williams, the girlfriend of Clint Eastwood's character in the 1971 cult film *Play Misty for Me*. Mills was born Donna Jean Miller in Chicago, the daughter of Bernice, a dance teacher, and a market researcher father. She attended Garvey Elementary School and Taft High School. After being double-promoted at Garvey, she graduated from Taft at an early age.

From there, Mills attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she was a member of Delta Gamma sorority. She completed one year of course work, then left to pursue a dancing career, gaining some early stage experience when she danced in summer stock productions. Her first professional acting role was in a production of *Come Blow Your Horn* at the Drury Lane Theater in Chicago. She later was cast in a touring production of *My Fair Lady*, which brought her to New York City.

Mills spent much of the 1970s appearing as a guest on top-rated television shows such as "The Six Million Dollar Man," "Hawaii Five-O," "The Love Boat," "CHiPs," "The F.B.I.," "Quincy, M.E.," the UK's Thriller series, "Police Woman," and "Fantasy Island," as well as many made-for-TV movies. Mills landed her most notable and iconic role of the scheming and manipulative vixen Abby Cunningham on the long-running primetime soap opera "Knots Landing." *Interview* magazine stated that Mills made, "one of the strongest and most fascinating characters in pop history. Mills gave Abby intelligence, wit, grace and style." After her incredibly successful series run, Mills launched her own production company, which was a rarity for a woman in the late eighties, and she began executive producing and starring in numerous TV movies exploring controversial social issues including *False Arrest*, *In My Daughter's Name*, *Dangerous Intentions*, *The Stepford Husbands*, and *Ladies of the House*.

In 2014, she joined the cast of long-running daytime soap opera "General Hospital," for which she won a 2015 Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Special Guest Performer in a Drama Series.

Continuing to work steadily as both an actor and producer in recent years, David O. Russell personally sought her out for a role in his Academy Award nominated film *Joy*, which was released in December 2015.

Outside of acting, Mills released *The Eyes Have It* in 1986, an instructional video for achieving several different make-up looks. She went on to release her own line of cosmetics of the same name. Mills currently resides in Los Angeles and is a prominent activist for causes such as environmentalism and reproductive rights.