

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lynn Sterling

PERSON

Sterling, Lynn, 1954-

Alternative Names: Lynn Sterling; Rita Lynn Brown

Life Dates: July 18, 1954-

Place of Birth: Dayton, Ohio, USA

Residence: New York, NY

Work: New York, NY

Occupations: Actor;

Biographical Note

Stage and film actor, dancer, singer, and voice actor Lynn Sterling was born on July 18, 1954 in Dayton, Ohio, to Mattie Gullatte Brown and Sterling Brown. She graduated from Julianne High School and attended Wright State University, both in Dayton.

At age sixteen, Sterling joined Theatre West, starring in Clarence Young III's The System. In 1974, she worked as a secretary for Theodore Roosevelt Hagans II in Washington, D.C. In 1975, Sterling became a principal dancer with the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. In 1976, she worked as a secretary for the City of Dayton Division of Youth and Manpower and studied with Alvin Ailey and Dance Theatre of Harlem. In 1979, Sterling joined the American Dance Machine, where she worked with Katherine Dunham, Agnes de Mille, and Gwen Verdon. On and off Broadway, Sterling performed in Louis in 1981, Evita in 1982, the Sophisticated Ladies touring company from 1983 to 1984, the Sweet Charity touring company in 1987, Anything Goes and Can-Can in 1988, Cats from 1992 to 1996, Ain't Misbehavin' in 1992, Pal Joey in 1995, The Life in 1997, the Fosse touring company from 1992 to 2002, West Side Story in 2002, and the one-woman show Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill as Billie Holiday in 2006. On the screen, Sterling performed in the 1992 Spike Lee film Malcolm X, the 1995 animated film The Land of the Four Winds, and the 1997 animated film The Ten Commandments. In 1988, she became one of the first three black Radio City Music Hall Rockettes. Sterling also directed five companies of Smokey Joe's Cafe and helped train Deborah Cox as a dancer.

Sterling has appeared on the television broadcasts of the 41st and 51st Tony Awards, the tenth annual Kennedy Center Honors, the sixth annual Essence Awards, and on the

Rosie O'Donnell Show, Late Night with David Letterman, The Late Show with David Letterman, and The View. Sterling was honored by her fellow performers in The Life with the Gypsy Robe Ceremony in 1997.

Sterling lives in New York City.

Lynn Sterling was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on December 12, 2021.

Related Entries

Julienne Catholic High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Wright State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Theatre West [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1970 to 1975]

Actor

Theodore Roosevelt Hagans II [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1975]

Secretary

Dayton Contemporary Dance Company [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1975 to 1977]

Dancer

City of Dayton Division of Youth and Manpower [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1976 to 1976]

Secretary

Alvin Ailey [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1976 to 1976]

Dancer

Dance Theater of Harlem [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1976 to 1976]

Dancer

American Dance Machine [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1979 to ?]

Dancer

Broadway [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1979 to ?]

Actor, Dancer, Singer

Radio City Music Hall Rockettes [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1988 to ?]

Rockette

Film [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1991 to ?]

Dancer, Voice Actor

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