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## Memories Of A Washington Drag Legend: Lucille Ball

by Mame Dennis

Patrick E. Nicholson was found dead at his residence in Rehoboth Beach, DE on Monday, August 18, 2008. He was 69. Pat was a native of Washington DC. After high school graduation, he spent 4 years in the Franciscan Monastery.

He used the name "Rhonda Fleming" in his early drag experiences, but changed it to "Lucille Ball" in 1963 when he joined the Academy as Lady Charlotte's daughter.

For many years, he was employed by Woodward & Lothrop Department Stores as a member of the display department. He took great pride in his work with special attention to every details: windows at Woodies, elaborate Christmas displays in the store, the altar at Holy Rosary at Easter and Christmas, and set designs for the Academy.

Lucille was a charter member of the Henry Street Troupe when it was formed in 1972. She served as President of Henry Street and was their Best Actress of 1975 - *the 7th and Most Holy*, Miss Gilda of 1979, and Miss Cherries Preserve of 1981. Lucille was a ten year star of "Show Stoppers" and her extravagant costumes and high drag performances were a long-standing staple of the show. At the 2008 Miss Gaye Universe DC Ball, Lucille received the Fanny Brice "Show Stoppers" Acting Award. Her acting credits included appearances in "Funny Girl", "Night of Stars", "Scrooge", and her bid for Best Actress, "A Catered Affair".

Lucille's creative talents in the field of make-up were well-known in the Academy. Her willingness to hold make-up seminars and her assistance and guidance with both new and established drags was unlimited. At one time or another, Lucille had "painted" most of the faces in Washington; her record for one sitting was 12 people. Almost any Academy function, show, production, or ball could boast several Lucille Ball-painted faces in the ballroom. her make-up assistance with "Show Stoppers" and other Academy presentations plus her help with major shows for various other drag-oriented shows and plays won her the honor of an "Golden Boy" in her name: the Lucille Ball Make-up Achievement Award, and she was the first recipient in 1979.

Lucille served the Academy as First Lady in 1972. She received the Lady Charlotte Special in 1973 and was named Best Drag in a Series for 1974. She started her BA quest in 1975 as Best Actress In A Single, continuing in 1976 as Best Supporting Actress and the New York Drama Critic's Best Actress in 1977. She received the highest accolade of the Academy in 1978 when she was named Best Actress. Her color was yellow and John Gavin was her Best Actor.

Lucille's other "Golden Boys" included: Washington Achievement 1981, the First Golden Boy 1982, Golden Boy Achievement 1983, Chief of Protocol 1984, Comedy Role in a Series 1985, Miss Esprit de Corps 1987, Woman of the Year 1989, Drag ovation 1990, the Elizabeth Taylor Legend Award 1992, Set Design 1993, Outstanding Drag 1994, Drag Superstar 1995, and Thanks For The Memories 1977. During the 25th Anniversary of the Academy in 1986, she was on Protocol as Miss Academy Awards with Ken Dennis as Mr. Academy Awards, and she was on Protocol in 1988 as Empress of the Silver Screen with Pat O'Brien as her Emperor.

Lucille further served the Academy as Miss Gaye Universe 1969. She was President of the Universe Ball in 1977 and 2000. As Miss Iceland, she won the Unity Award. That same year, she received the Miss Congeniality Award at the Miss Gaye America Pageant. It is believed that she is the only person to hold these two prestigious awards during the same year. The Miss Gaye America Pageant further honored Lucille in 1974 with the presentation of the Peace Medallion.





In 1975, she received the Elizabeth Taylor's Founders Award at the Universe Ball, the STAR Award in 1996, and the Ricki Potter Universal Legend Award in 2005. Kim Novak, President of the Miss Gay America (DC) Pageant, presented Lucille the Lainie Kazan Freedom Award.

Lucille received the Beekman Place 1973 Mother of the Year Award. She received the Mother's Leadership Award in 1975, was named the Mame Dennis Woman of Achievement in 1976, the Family Participation Award in 1978, the Grandmother Award in 1979, the Leslie Gore Godmother Award in 1987, the Mother's Love Award in 1989 from Dyan Cannon, and the 1994 Beekman Place Appreciation Award.

At the 1973 St. Patrick's Day Party, Lucille received the first John E. Zimmerman Memorial Award for the Arts recognizing her dedication to drag and the contributions she has made to the drag community over the years. She was named Miss Bicentennial in 1976 with Patrick Dennis as Mr. Bicentennial.

During her drag career, Lucille was respectfully and fondly called the "Epitome of Drag In Washington". She prided her drag appearances with flawless makeup, fantastic gowns, large jewelry, high red hair adorned with baby's breath and flowers. You always knew when Lucille was in the ballroom! She was recognized as a dedicated leader in the gay community. Her talents, loyalty, drive, and hard work towards the betterment of drag truly made her a *DRAG LEGEND* in the history of Washington and the Academy.

## Lucille Ball Galleries

Click on each image to go to that particular gallery.



Miss Universe



Miss Bicentennial



Best Actress



Miss Academy Awards



Empress of the Silver Screen



Miscellaneous  
(updated 09-21-2008)

Interested in printing or downloading a copy of all of the Lucille Ball Memorial pages? Click [here](#) to download these pages in Adobe Acrobat pdf format which you can then save to your computer or print. If you don't have the free Adobe pdf reader, click [here](#).

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## Lucille Ball Gallery

1969-1970 Miss Gaye Universe (DC)





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## *Lucille Ball Gallery*

1976 Miss Bicentennial

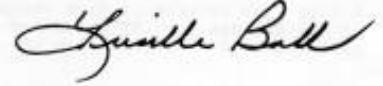


A Message from Miss Bicentennial -

I am very pleased that the Academy has honored me as a part of its heritage.

With the landing on the Moon, and now Mars, I am further inspired with the greatness of our country. When I was a child we read about these things in comic books and thought of it as science fiction. Today we hear of close cures for cancer and think of it as science fiction, who knows, maybe in the year of the Tricentennial that will be as much a reality as the landing on the Moon and Mars.

I hope that our organization lives to present another 100 years of service to the gay community and in 2076 another lucky queen will have the honor of being selected as Miss Tricentennial to reign over that 100 years till the Quadcentennial and on to infinity.



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## Lucille Ball Gallery

1978 - Best Actress  
with her Best Actor John Gavin



The Academy Awards  
Of Washington, Inc.

Presents  
The 18th ANNUAL  
ACADEMY  
AWARDS  
"OSCAR"  
PRESENTATIONS



Honoring  
JOHN GAVIN  
and  
LUCILLE BALL  
The Best Actor  
and  
The Best Actress

The Academy Awards  
Of Washington, Inc.  
Presents  
The 18th ANNUAL  
ACADEMY AWARDS  
"OSCAR" PRESENTATIONS  
Loews L'Enfant Plaza Hotel, S.W.  
Saturday \* April 21st, 1979 \* 8 P.M.  
\$10.00

\*\*\*\*\*

Honoring



JOHN GAVIN  
and  
LUCILLE BALL  
\*\*\*\*\*  
The Best Actor  
and  
The Best Actress



[Return to "Memories of a Washington Legend: Lucille Ball"](#)

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## Lucille Ball Gallery

1986 - Miss Academy Awards  
25th Anniversary Oscars



*Miss Academy Awards Lucille Ball, Miss Gaye America (DC)  
Eve Harrington, Miss Oscar Mame Dennis, and Miss Gaye Universe (DC)  
Ella Fitzgerald (left to right)*



*Miss Academy Awards Lucille Ball, Miss Oscar  
Mame Dennis, Mr Oscar Patrick Dennis, and Mr. Academy Awards  
Ken Dennis (left to right)*



*With Mr. Academy Awards, Ken Dennis*



*With Mr. Academy Awards Ken Dennis*



*With Mr. Academy Awards, Ken Dennis*



*Holding her portrait done by Eve Harrington*

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## Lucille Ball Gallery

1988 Empress of the Silver Screen  
with Pat O'Brien, Emperor of the Silver Screen





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## Lucille Ball Gallery

Miscellaneous Images



*Lucille's 50th Birthday Party at Ziegfelds  
From left to right: Lana Turner, Elizabeth Taylor, Lucille Ball, Fanny Brice, and Mame Dennis*



*At the 1973 St. Patrick's Day Party, Lucille receives the first John E. Zimmerman Memorial Award for Arts.*



*Lucille Ball: "The Epitome of Drag in Washington"*



*Mame Dennis and Lucille Ball at the 1973 St. Patrick's Day Party*



*Lucille Ball and Rock Hudson at the 1986 Holiday Show*



*Lucille At the 1971 Emmys*



*Lucille at the 1987 Cherries Jubilee show*



*Lucille at the 1981 Newman-Gill Awards in Richmond, VA*



*Lucille with her trademark hair at the 1981 Newman-Gil Awards*



*Lucille with Kenny Rogers at the 1981 Newman-Gill Awards.*

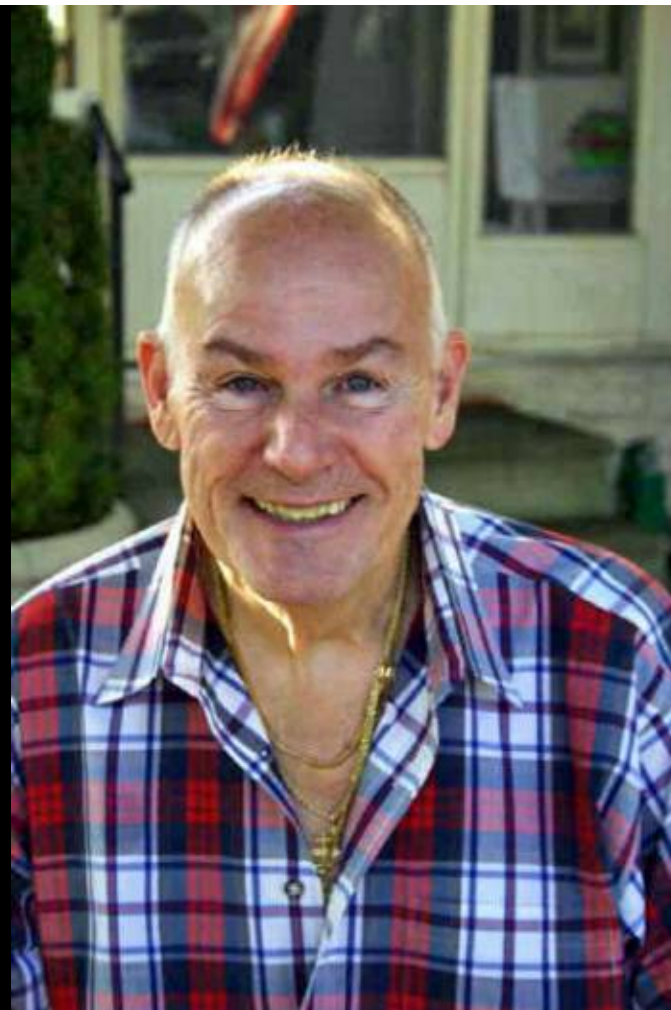
*Photo courtesy of Ron Sanders and Bryan Don*



*Photo courtesy of Ron Sanders and Bryan Don*



*Lucille and her drag daughters Alexis Colby, Susan Anton, Suzanne Sugarbaker and Dyan Cannon.  
Photo courtesy of Ron Sanders and Bryan Don*



*Pat at home in Rehoboth, DE.  
Photo courtesy of Ron Sanders and Bryan Don*

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## **Memorial Service For Pat Nicholson (Lucille Ball) Transcript** *Remarks by Mame Dennis*

The Best Actor ...

Former Best Actors and Best Actresses ...

Academy Members and Friends ...

It is my privilege to stand before you as President of the Academy of Washington, Inc. to share and extol the memory of Pat Nicholson's involvement with the Academy.

First, I would like to thank Veronica Blake for the excellent posting of Lucille on our website.

Pat used the name "Rhonda Fleming" in his early drag experiences, but changed it to "Lucille Ball" in 1963 when he joined the Academy as Lady Charlotte's daughter.

Lucille was a charter member of the Henry Street Troupe when it was formed in 1972 by Fanny Brice. She served as President of Henry Street and was their Best Actress of 1975 - *the 7th and Most Holy*, Miss Gilda of 1979, and Miss Cherries Preserve of 1981. Lucille was a ten year star of "Show Stoppers" and her extravagant costumes and high drag performances were a long-standing staple of the show. At the 2008 Miss Gaye Universe DC Ball, Lucille received the Fanny Brice "Show Stoppers" Acting Award. Her acting credits included appearances in "Funny Girl", "Night of Stars", "Scrooge", and her bid for Best Actress, "A Catered Affair".

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During her drag career, Lucille was respectfully and fondly called the "Epitome of Drag In Washington". She prided her drag appearances with flawless makeup, fantastic gowns, large jewelry, high red hair adorned with baby's breath and flowers. You always knew when Lucille was in the ballroom!

On a personal note, Lucille hated to pin her wig on. At Lord North and Judy Garland's wedding on a hot summer day, Lucille leaned over the potato salad and off came her high-piled red hair - she uttered her famous expletive "God Damn Good", brushed off her hair and stirred the potato salad. On another occasion, on a Saturday evening at dusk after an Academy function at Oscar's Eye, Lucille managed to lose her wig in a tree on Pennsylvania Avenue. This time a double-expletive and she gave a parked bus-load of mid-western tourists a story to relate back home. Lucille loved to don her nun's habit - in full face. Thus attired after a Universe Ball along with Natalie Wood and a car full of other Academy beauties, they were pulled over by a cop and escorted over to the local police precinct. Lucille had to make a visit - and she couldn't fit into a booth, so he used the urinal - to the astonishment of several policeman who had a story to relate that evening.

Pat was my friend since my involvement with the Academy in 1965. He was the only Academy member to have vacationed with me in New Hampshire - not once but twice. He knew all my Italian relatives! After my mother moved here and knew Carl's story, she once asked me if Pat and I were lovers. He and I both had many laughs over that because we were in a sisterly way.

Lucille was recognized as a dedicated leader in the gay community. Her talents, loyalty, drive, and hard work towards the betterment of drag truly made her a *DRAG LEGEND* in the history of Washington

and the Academy. She will be deeply missed by those of us who knew and loved her.

Now would you please stand ...

Lucille is now with Liz, Fanny, Rusty, Phyllis, and the other BA's no longer with us.

Will you join me now for a moment of silence in her memory ...

It has become an Academy tradition that Rock started with Lainie Kazan to honor departed "Stars" with a final standing ovation ... Lucille certainly deserves that final tribute.

From us this evening ...

**BRAVO Lucille!**

*Click [here](#) to return to the Lucille Ball Memorial pages.*

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