

**DORALYN
“LYNN” EMMA
CARTWRIGHT
1927-2004**



**CHARACTER
ACTRESS
1950s to
1990s**

Lynn Cartwright was a character actress, appearing alongside her actor/writer husband for fifty years. She is best remembered for one of her early screen roles as the brusque, Brooklyn-accented switchboard operator in the cult horror film “The Wasp Woman” in 1959 and her touching final screen appearance as the older-World War II-era baseball player Dottie Hinson in the final scenes of the 1992 comedy “A League of Their Own”.

Her father’s great-great uncle Peter defeated Abraham Lincoln in an Illinois legislative race. Her grandfather Jackson Cartwright moved to Wapanucka in 1903, where he was a Baptist preacher for over fifty years. He served in the Oklahoma House between 1929 and 1932. Patriarch of the Cartwright political family, he also served as chaplain for the Oklahoma House. His sons Wilburn, Keith and Buck also served in elective office. Nephew Jan Eric was the Oklahoma Attorney General from 1979 to 1983.

Her father Wilburn was a lawyer, educator, and politician. The town of Cartwright is named after him. After holding political offices during seven decades, U. S. Representative Wilburn Cartwright called himself “the most elected man in Oklahoma government”. He served in the Oklahoma House (1914-18), Oklahoma Senate (1918-22), Krebs Superintendent (1922-26), U. S. House of Representatives (1927-1943), Oklahoma Secretary of State (1947-51), Oklahoma State Auditor (1951-55), and Oklahoma Corporation Commission (1955-73).

Doralyn “Lynn” Emma Cartwright was born in February 1927 in McAlester. She studied drama at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri and American Academy in New York in the late 1940s, where she met ex-con and World War II veteran Leo Gordon, who had served five years in San Quentin Prison after he and a friend robbed a bar in southern California. After his release, Gordon used his G. I. Bill to take acting lessons at the American Academy. For a time, two-time Oscar winner Jason Robards was his instructor.

The couple were married on February 14, 1950 and moved to Los Angeles after Gordon landed an agent. At 6’2” with the scariest, fierce stare, he appeared in 170 film and television productions. For his role of a convict in the two-episode The Madman in the television drama “The Defenders”, Gordon received an Emmy in 1964. In 1997, he received the "Golden Boot Award" for his many years of work in Westerns.

Cartwright had smaller roles in largely forgettable films including Queen of Outer Space (1958) with Zsa Zsa Gabor, The Wasp Woman (1959), The Girls on the Beach (1965) and All the Loving Couples (1969). The willowy, auburn-haired performer with the highly distinctive cheek bones also appeared in the early films of director Roger Corman, often in tandem with her husband. She began finding more roles once Gordon parlayed his acting career into a successful writing career as well. In the 1970s and 1980s, Cartwright frequently appeared on episodic television shows. For fifteen years, the couple participated in the Group Repertory Theatre Company in North Hollywood, which was founded by actor Lonny Chapman.

Cartwright ended her career on a sentimental high note after being cast as the senior version of Geena Davis’ character Dottie Henson who revisited her baseball-playing alumni at the end of the 1992 comedy hit film “A League of Their Own”. Cartwright was enthusiastic about the filmmaker’s decision to use older actresses instead of aging makeup. “I hope it starts a whole new trend. We older actors would appreciate it. It would mean a lot of work for older actors.”

The 65-year-old Cartwright was cast because her mannerisms matched Davis’. The facial resemblance between the two actresses was so extraordinary that people assumed it was Davis herself wearing old-age makeup. Part of this mistaken belief had to do with dubbing in with Davis’ voice because Cartwright’s voice was so different and deep. Though considered a gamble, it did work as many believed it was Davis made to appear older.

After Western star Gordon died in 2000 at age 78, ending their fifty-year marriage, Cartwright was never able to overcome her grief and her health quickly declined with the advancement of dementia. She died in January 2004 at age 76 after a fall resulted in a hip fracture.