Virginia Gregg

Ed Sehlhorst, updated by Brian Kavanaugh

Virginia Lee Gregg Burket was born in Harrisburg, Illinois, on March 6, 1916, to Edward William Gregg, a businessman, and Dewey Alphaleta Todd, a musician. She moved west with her parents at an early age and enrolled in the Fremont grammar school in Long Beach, California. She played sports in school and excelled as a pitcher on the school's baseball team with her specialty pitch being the fast curve.

Trained as a musician herself, Virginia first appeared professionally as a member of the Pasadena Symphony Orchestra. In 1937 she joined The Singing Strings musical group on KHJ, playing the double bass. She transitioned into radio acting in the 1940s and her extensive radio career included roles in *Gunsmoke*, *Have Gun – Will Travel*, *Suspense*, *Dragnet*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*, and *Let George Do It*.

She was in significant demand as she had the ability to play almost any role. As was the case with many of her contemporaries, she transitioned into movies and then television as opportunities arose. Her first movie role was uncredited in the 1946 Hitchcock thriller *Notorious*. Her many subsequent appearances included *Dragnet* (1954), *The Fastest Gun Alive* (1956), *Operation Petticoat* (1959), and *Spencer’s Mountain* (1963). She also played the voice of Norma Bates, Norman’s mother, in the classic *Psycho* (1960), as well as the sequels *Psycho II* (1983) and *Psycho III* (1986).

Virginia had a long and distinguished television career, commencing in 1953 with *The Public Defender* and ending with *Dynasty* in 1983. In between she performed in one or more episodes of most of the major hit series of the 1950s, ’60s, and ’70s, including *77 Sunset Strip*, *Perry Mason*, *Ben Casey*, *Gunsmoke*, *The Virginian*, *Dragnet*, *Adam 12*, *Emergency*, *Streets of San Francisco*, *The Waltons*, and *Charlie’s Angels* to name just a few.

In 1948 Gregg married Air Force Major and Hollywood radio producer-director Jaime del Valle. Virginia and Jaime had three sons, Gregg, Jaime, and Ricardo. They divorced in 1959, and Gregg never remarried. Gregg was of average height and build (5'7” and 129 pounds in 1949) with light brown hair and blue eyes. Her favorite sports were tennis and swimming and she enjoyed gardening and the symphony as hobbies.

Gregg died from lung cancer in Encino, California on September 15, 1986, at the age of 70.

