

# Judy Garland Database

<http://www.jgdb.com/index.html>

## When and where was Judy born?

Frances Ethel Gumm was born on June 10, 1922 in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Early MGM publicity material indicated she was born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee and that she was a year younger than she actually was. Why this misinformation was distributed by MGM is not clear.

Frances Ethel was named after her father (Francis "Frank" Gumm) and mother (Ethel Milne), former vaudeville performers who bought a theater and settled in Grand Rapids. She was the third of three girls: Mary Jane (nicknamed Susie, variously spelled "Suzy") was born in 1915, and Dorothy Virginia (nicknamed Jimmie) was born in 1917. Frances was nicknamed "Baby", and was known as Baby Gumm until 1934 when she changed her name to Judy.

## How did Judy get her start in show business?

There are many variations on the story, but apparently Judy made her show business "debut" during a Christmas show at her parents' theater in Grand Rapids on December 26, 1924 (she was 2½ years old). She sang numerous verses of "Jingle Bells" and thoroughly enchanted the audience. Susie and Jimmie were already performing as a song and dance duo at the time. The sisters became a trio shortly after Baby's debut. They were billed as The Gumm Sisters, and appeared at theaters and social functions in and around Grand Rapids.

In 1926 the Gumm family moved to Lancaster, California where Frank bought the local theater. The girls were soon taking dancing and acting lessons at various schools in the Los Angeles area. Ethel was the girls' agent and manager, and began finding bookings for the girls in theaters, night clubs and on radio. Within a few short years, the girls had a following of fans in the Southern California area, and were appearing regularly on local radio shows.

## When did Judy make her film debut?

The Gumm Sisters appeared in a Meglin / Associated Films short subject entitled *Starlet Revue* (aka *The Big Revue*) in 1929. Judy was seven years old. The girls also appeared in three Warner Brothers Vitaphone short subjects in 1929 (*A Holiday in Storyland*, *The Wedding of Jack and Jill*, and *Bubbles*). In 1935, they appeared in an MGM short subject, *La Fiesta de Santa Barbara*, billed as The Garland Sisters. Judy's first feature film appearance was in the 20th Century-Fox hit *Pigskin Parade* in 1936 - the only time MGM ever loaned her out to another studio.

## When did Baby Gumm change her name to Judy Garland?

The Gumm Sisters traveled with their mother to Chicago in 1934 to perform at the World's Fair. While in Chicago, they appeared at the Oriental Theatre where George Jessel (a well-known comedian of the era) was headlining the bill. When Jessel introduced the Gumm Sisters to the audience, he noticed some quiet laughter, and later suggested to the girls that they change their name to Garland. Frances took the name "**Judy**" some time later because she liked the peppy sound of it, and she liked the Hoagy Carmichael song of the same name. The rendition of the song heard here is from the Judy Garland biodrama *Rainbow*. (©1975 Ten Four Productions/NBC, taped off-air).

## When did Judy sign with MGM?

In 1935 Susie married, breaking up the act. Ethel began pushing Judy toward a movie career, arranging for auditions at nearly every studio in Hollywood. In September 1935, thirteen-year-old Judy auditioned for MGM and was signed immediately. She sang "Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart," accompanied by Roger Edens of the MGM music department at the piano. He would become the most influential person of her career (artistically), and would be closely associated with Judy throughout her tenure at MGM and beyond. Judy was said to be the only person ever contracted at MGM without a screen test, though the same claim has been made with reference to several other stars. Judy's contract officially started on October 1, 1935. Her starting salary was \$100.00 per week with options for seven years:

6 months \$100.00 per week, 20 week guarantee

6 months 200.00 per week, 20 week guarantee

1 year 300.00 per week, 40 week guarantee

1 year 400.00 per week, 40 week guarantee

1 year 500.00 per week, 40 week guarantee

1 year 600.00 per week, 40 week guarantee

1 year 750.00 per week, 40 week guarantee

1 year 1000.00 per week, 40 week guarantee

## How many movies did Judy make?

Judy was in a total of 43 films by my count. Five of these were short subjects she appeared in prior to signing with MGM. At MGM she was in a total of 31 movies, 27 of which were full-length feature films. Between 1939 and 1950 she made 22 feature films; an average of two a year. She was the reigning "queen of the musicals" during that period, appearing in more musicals than any other actress, though Alice Faye *starred* in more musicals. After leaving MGM, she made two films for Warner Brothers and several for United Artists. Her complete filmography can be found here on the Judy Garland Database, as well as extensive reviews of all of her films.

It is certainly true that many Hollywood stars made more movies than Judy did, but it must be remembered that nearly all of Judy's movies were musicals, which are the most demanding of movies - requiring not only acting but also singing and dancing. And most of her movies were made in the relatively short 13 year period from 1937 to 1950. In fact, movies were only a small part of Judy's career. In addition to making movies Judy also cut records, made many public appearances, toured scores of army camps during WWII, appeared on hundreds of radio shows, appeared on dozens of television shows, and performed at over 1000 concert and nightclub engagements! But her films were an important part of her career. Nearly all of Judy's movies at MGM were major hits, and nearly all of them broke all box office attendance records (including her own).

## Was it *The Wizard of Oz* that made Judy a star?

Well, not exactly. Judy was officially elevated to star status by MGM in December 1938 while she was filming *Oz*. She had just completed her sixth feature film, *Listen, Darling*. Judy emerged from *Oz* as a *superstar*. After *Oz* was released, Judy was just about the most popular young actress on earth, receiving more fan mail than any star at MGM, and she was on the box office top ten actors/actresses list that year and had two films in the top ten: *The Wizard of Oz* and *Babes in Arms*. *Oz* is certainly Judy's best remembered film today (it has been seen by more people than any other film ever made), but many of her films have become classics and now rank among the best movie musicals ever made, including *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *Easter Parade*, *The Harvey Girls*, *A Star Is Born*, *In the Good Old Summertime* and *The Pirate*.

## **When did Judy record her first record?**

Less than a year after signing with MGM, Judy signed a recording contract with Decca Records. On June 12, 1936, just two days after her 14th birthday, she recorded "Stompin' at the Savoy" / "Swing Mr. Charlie" with Bob Crosby and His Orchestra for Decca in New York. This was the first Judy Garland record to be released. She would go on to record over 90 sides for Decca, and about a dozen albums for Capitol Records.

## **When and why did Judy leave MGM?**

Judy left MGM in 1950, after filming *Summer Stock*. She was working on a new film, MGM's screen version of Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun*. Her illness had become steadily worse since about 1947, and she was no longer able to function at the pace that MGM demanded of her. She was nearly constantly under medical supervision, but MGM executives were not overly sympathetic with her plight. She was suspended several times in 1950, and finally both MGM and Judy had all they could handle. L.B. Mayer and Judy both agreed it would be best to terminate her contract at that time. Judy's problems with MGM were front-page news. Judy wrote an open letter to her fans, which was published by *Modern Screen Magazine*. The text of the letter can be found right here on the Judy Garland Database.

## **What did Judy do after leaving MGM?**

After leaving MGM, Judy began her concert career under the management of Sid Luft, soon to become her third husband. In October 1951 she reopened the Palace Theater on Broadway and broke all attendance records with a one-woman show, which was held over for 21 weeks. In 1954 she returned to movies by way of a co-production contract with Warner Brothers to film a musical remake of *A Star Is Born*, her personal masterpiece of film work and certainly one of her best films.

During the remainder of the 1950s, she recorded albums for Capitol Records and continued her concert touring with many very successful tours in the US, England and Europe. She also appeared in several television specials.

In 1960, she renewed her film career, appearing in another series of films including *Judgement at Nuremberg* for which she received another Academy Award nomination. In 1963/64 she co-produced her own television series on CBS: *The Judy Garland Show*. The show was a critical success but did not score well in the ratings, primarily because CBS refused to move her spot which was across from "Bonanza" on NBC - one of the most popular series of all time.

After her TV series was cancelled by CBS, Judy found herself financially in ruins with her health failing rapidly. She continued to perform in concerts, at nightclubs, and on an occasional TV program. But her life seemed to spiral out of control as she married and remarried within a period of three years, broke many concert and night club engagements, and was often in court battling over lawsuits with night club owners and producers. Most of the money she did make was seized by the IRS for back taxes. Finally, her home was seized by the IRS, and she found herself homeless. She had to work just to survive, but she was really too ill to perform.

Judy finally found the ultimate peace on June 22, 1969, less than two weeks after her 47th birthday. She was found dead in her bathroom by her latest husband, Mickey Deans. Judy made one last "comeback" as more than 22,000 people paid their respects at her final appearance at Campbell's Funeral Chapel in New York on June 27, 1969. She was laid to rest at Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale, New York.

One of the world's most beloved personalities had come and gone in less than a lifetime of most of her fans, but she had left an indelible mark on show business history. There would never be another Judy Garland.

## **The Garland Legend**

By the 1960s Judy Garland had become a true living legend. When she was working on *The Judy Garland Show* at CBS during the 1963/1964 season, the sign on her dressing room door read, "The Legend." She was one of the most loved and most popular personalities of all time. A legend has grown around Judy which shrouds much of the truth about her, especially with respect to her personal life. Below are some of the questions I have often been asked with regard to her personal life. My answers to these questions are not necessarily fact - just my own personal opinion. It is doubtful that we will ever know the answers to these questions with absolute certainty.

### **When and how did Judy die?**

Judy died on June 22, 1969, less than two weeks after her 47th birthday. The official cause of death was listed as an accidental overdose of sleeping pills. However, some people maintain that Judy died of anorexia. She did have a bad case of hepatitis in 1959, and it is also possible that the resultant liver damage led to her demise. She was apparently quite ill during the last years of her life.

Judy's memorial service was at Campbell's Funeral Chapel in New York on June 27, 1969, and she was laid to rest at Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale, New York (see photo above).

Judy Garland death passed away die died buried dead

### **Did Judy have any children?**

Yes, she had three children: Liza Minnelli (by Vincente Minnelli, her second husband) and Lorna and Joey Luft (by her third husband, Sid Luft). Liza was born in 1946, Lorna in 1952 and Joey in 1955. Liza is, of course, a legendary actress and concert singer. Lorna is an actress and concert singer, though she is not as well known to the general public as Liza. Joe is currently working as a freelance photographer. Check the JGDB Links page for links to Liza and Lorna's web sites.

### **Is it true that Judy was a drug addict?**

It is apparently true that Judy used Benzedrine and sleeping pills at various times throughout her life. She used Benzedrine to help her maintain her weight, and also to help her through her busy schedule. The Benzedrine kept her awake at night, so she used sleeping pills to help her sleep. Exactly when this practice began is not certain (and is a very controversial subject), but it was apparently during her tenure at MGM. She did manage to break her habit many times, but often started up again when the pressures of a new film came along. It should be noted that Benzedrine was considered to be the new miracle appetite suppressor of the period, and that these drugs were prescribed by doctors. It should also be noted that many actors and actresses of Judy's era used these drugs as well. The vision of Judy standing in a dark alley late at night to "score a fix" is hardly appropriate.

### **Is it true that Judy was an alcoholic?**

I don't think so, though there are certainly many who do. She did drink some, but seldom to excess. She did seem to drink more in her final years, but apparently just to calm her nerves. However, combined with the Benzedrine she used, the alcohol was often more than she could handle. But there is no hard evidence that she was an alcoholic. There is evidence to the contrary however - many of her friends and associates have stated that she did not drink very much and was not alcoholic.

### **Is it true that Judy was mentally ill?**

No. It is apparently true that Judy had emotional problems, possibly including depression (much has been written on this subject). Such is often the case with truly gifted people. Judy was a genius in every sense of the word. She was extremely intelligent and extremely gifted. Depression and other emotional instabilities are quite

common among the truly gifted. However, it may be that Judy's emotional problems were caused by the drugs that she used. This is a very controversial subject, and we will probably never know the truth.

### **How many times was Judy married?**

Five. In order, her husbands were David Rose (1910-1990), Vincente Minnelli (1903-1986), Sid Luft (1915 - 2005), Mark Herron (1928 - 1996) and Mickey Deans (1934 - 2003).

David Rose was a successful composer and orchestra leader, best remembered for his hits "Holiday for Strings" (1943) and "The Stripper" (1962). Vincente Minnelli was a legendary director during the 1940s, '50s and '60s. He directed many first-rate films, including "Cabin in the Sky" (1942), "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944), "Father of the Bride" (1950), "An American in Paris" (1951), "Gigi" (1957), "The Sandpiper" (1964) and many more. Click here for [complete filmography](#). Sid Luft was a producer, Mark Herron was an actor, and Mickey Deans was a nightclub owner.

### **How tall was Judy? How much did she weigh? (etc.)**

Judy was about 4 feet 11 inches tall ("...just a smidgen under five feet," as Mickey Rooney says). Her weight varied from around 85 pounds to about 155 pounds, but she was "officially" 4'11" and 98 pounds, according to various sources I've seen.

"Esquire" Magazine had this to say in the June 1944 issue:

Vital Statistics: *Hair*: red-brown; *Height*: 5'3"; *Weight*: 110 lbs; *Bust*: 33¼; *Waist*: 22½; *Hips*: 34

These were, I assume, MGM-supplied statistics. MGM was always trying to make Judy appear to be taller than she really was (because they thought that would make her more glamorous, I guess). So, anyway, we must take these stats with a grain of salt.

## **Some significant dates in the life of Judy Garland:**

**February 28, 1903** - Vincente Minnelli born

**June 15, 1910** - David Rose born

**September 24, 1915** - Mary Jane Gumm born (Judy's sister, aka Janie, aka Susie or Suzy)

**November 2, 1915** - Sid Luft born

**July 4, 1917** - Dorothy Virginia Gumm born (Judy's sister, aka Jimmie)

**June 10, 1922** - Frances Ethel "Baby" Gumm (Judy) born

**July 8, 1928** - Mark Herron born

**September 24, 1934** - Mickey Deans born

**October 1, 1935** - Judy started work at MGM

**November 17, 1935** - Judy's father, Frank Gumm, died of meningitis

**May, 1938** - Judy's only niece, Judy Gail Sherwood ("Judalein") born (Jimmie's daughter)

**July 28, 1941** - Judy married David Rose

**June 7, 1944** - Judy filed for divorce from David Rose

**June 15, 1945** - Judy married Vincente Minnelli

**March 12, 1946** - Liza Minnelli born (Judy's first daughter)

**1950** - Judy's contract at MGM terminated

**March 1951** - Judy began divorce proceedings against Vincente Minnelli

**June 8, 1952** - Judy married Sid Luft

**November 21, 1952** - Lorna Luft born (Judy's second daughter)

**January 5, 1953** - Ethel Gumm (Judy's mother) died

**March 29, 1955** - Joey Luft born (Judy's son)

**September 28, 1962** - Judy filed for divorce from Sid Luft

**May 1964** - Mary Jane (Susie) Gumm died

**November 14, 1965** - Judy married Mark Herron (they separated within 6 months)

**March 15, 1969** - Judy married Mickey Deans

**June 22, 1969** - Judy died

**May 25, 1977** - Virginia "Jimmie" Thompson (Dorothy Virginia Gumm) died

**July 25, 1986** - Vincente Minnelli died

**August 23, 1990** - David Rose died

**January 13, 1996** - Mark Herron died

**July 11, 2003** - Mickey Deans died

**September 15, 2005** - Sid Luft died



The Gumm Sisters  
(Susie, Jimmie, Baby), ca. 1924



The Gumm Sisters  
(Susie, Baby, Jimmie), ca. 1934



Baby Gumm in her first film, 1929



First publicity photo of Baby Gumm  
as "Judy Garland," Chicago, 1934



Early MGM promotion, 1937/38



Judy and Sid Luft with Lorna and Joey (far left foreground is Johnny Luft, Sid's son by previous marriage)



The Judy Garland Show, 1963/64

Judy and David Rose



Judy and Vincente Minnelli with Baby Liza



Judy and Mark Herron



Judy and Mickey Deans

Academy Awards, USA

Year	Result	Award	Category/Recipient(s)
<a href="#">1962</a>	Nominated	Oscar	Best Actress in a Supporting Role for: <a href="#">Judgment at Nuremberg</a> (1961)
<a href="#">1955</a>	Nominated	Oscar	Best Actress in a Leading Role for: <a href="#">A Star Is Born</a> (1954)
<a href="#">1940</a>	-	Juvenile Award	For her outstanding performance as a screen juvenile during the past year.

BAFTA Awards

Year	Result	Award	Category/Recipient(s)
<a href="#">1956</a>	Nominated	BAFTA Film Award	Best Foreign Actress for: <a href="#">A Star Is Born</a> (1954) USA.

Emmy Awards

Year	Result	Award	Category/Recipient(s)
<a href="#">1964</a>	Nominated	Emmy	Outstanding Performance in a Variety or Musical Program or Series for: " <a href="#">The Judy Garland Show</a> " (1963)
<a href="#">1962</a>	Nominated	Emmy	Outstanding Performance in a Variety or Musical Program or Series for: " <a href="#">The Judy Garland Show</a> " (1963) 25 February 1962.
<a href="#">1956</a>	Nominated	Emmy	Best Female Singer

Golden Globes, USA

Year	Result	Award	Category/Recipient(s)
	<b>Won</b>	Cecil B. DeMille Award	
<a href="#">1962</a>	<b>Nominated</b>	Golden Globe	Best Supporting Actress <b>for:</b> <a href="#">Judgment at Nuremberg</a> (1961)
<a href="#">1955</a>	<b>Won</b>	Golden Globe	Best Motion Picture Actress - Musical/Comedy <b>for:</b> <a href="#">A Star Is Born</a> (1954)
<a href="#">Laurel Awards</a>			
Year	Result	Award	Category/Recipient(s)
<a href="#">1962</a>	<b>Nominated</b>	Golden Laurel	Top Female Supporting Performance <b>for:</b> <a href="#">Judgment at Nuremberg</a> (1961) 5th place.
<a href="#">Walk of Fame</a>			
Year	Result	Award	Category/Recipient(s)
<a href="#">1960</a>	-	Star on the Walk of Fame	Motion Picture At 1715 Vine Street.

## Actor Roles:

1. [I Could Go on Singing](#) (1963) .... Jenny Bowman
2. [A Child Is Waiting](#) (1963) .... Jean Hansen
3. [Gay Purr-ee](#) (1962) (voice) .... Mewsette
4. [Judgment at Nuremberg](#) (1961) .... Mrs. Irene Hoffman Wallner  
... aka Judgement at Nuremberg
5. ["Ford Star Jubilee"](#) .... Dorothy (1 episode, 1956)  
- [The Wizard of Oz](#) (1956) TV Episode .... Dorothy
6. [A Star Is Born](#) (1954) .... Vicki Lester (Esther Blodgett)
7. [Summer Stock](#) (1950) .... Jane Falbury  
... aka If You Feel Like Singing (UK)
8. [In the Good Old Summertime](#) (1949) .... Veronica Fisher
9. [Easter Parade](#) (1948) .... Hannah Brown  
... aka Irving Berlin's Easter Parade (USA: complete title)
10. [The Pirate](#) (1948) .... Manuela
11. [Till the Clouds Roll By](#) (1946) .... Marilyn Miller
12. [Ziegfeld Follies](#) (1946) .... The Star in 'A Great Lady Has An Interview'  
... aka Ziegfeld Follies of 1946 (USA: poster title)
13. [The Harvey Girls](#) (1946) .... Susan Bradley
14. [The Clock](#) (1945) .... Alice Mayberry  
... aka Under the Clock (UK)
15. [Meet Me in St. Louis](#) (1944) .... Esther Smith
16. [Girl Crazy](#) (1943) .... Ginger Gray
17. [Presenting Lily Mars](#) (1943) .... Lily Mars
18. [For Me and My Gal](#) (1942) .... Jo Hayden  
... aka For Me and My Girl (UK)
19. [Babes on Broadway](#) (1941) .... Penny Morris
20. [Life Begins for Andy Hardy](#) (1941) .... Miss Betsy Booth
21. [Ziegfeld Girl](#) (1941) .... Susan 'Sue' Gallagher
22. [Little Nellie Kelly](#) (1940) .... Nellie Kelly/Little Nellie Kelly
23. [Strike Up the Band](#) (1940) .... Mary Holden
24. [Andy Hardy Meets Debutante](#) (1940) .... Betsy Booth
25. [Babes in Arms](#) (1939) .... Patsy Barton
26. [The Wizard of Oz](#) (1939) .... Dorothy Gale
27. [Listen, Darling](#) (1938) .... 'Pinkie' Wingate
28. [Love Finds Andy Hardy](#) (1938) .... Betsy Booth
29. [Everybody Sing](#) (1938) .... Judy Bellaire
30. [Thoroughbreds Don't Cry](#) (1937) .... Cricket West
31. [Broadway Melody of 1938](#) (1937) .... Betty Clayton
32. [Pigskin Parade](#) (1936) .... Sairy Dodd  
... aka Harmony Parade (UK)
33. [Every Sunday](#) (1936) .... Judy

