



Rhonda Fleming

August 10, 1923 - October 14, 2020

Santa Monica, California

Rhonda Fleming, the red-haired leading lady whom Hollywood billed as the Queen of Technicolor, died in Santa Monica, California, on October 14, 2020, at the age of ninety-seven.

She was born Marilyn Louis in Hollywood on August 10, 1923, to Harold Cheverton Louis, an insurance salesman, and Effie Graham Louis, a model and actress who had appeared in Broadway productions. Discovered while still a teenager by the agent Henry Willson, she took the screen name Rhonda Fleming and began with uncredited bits before Alfred Hitchcock cast her as a mental patient in *Spellbound* (1945) opposite Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck.

Through the late 1940s and 1950s she starred in a run of adventure, Western and noir pictures that used her vivid coloring and poised manner: *Out of the Past* with Robert Mitchum, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* with Bing Crosby, *The Spiral Staircase*, *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* with Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas, and *Pony Express* with Charlton Heston. She held her own in melodramas and musicals alike and was a frequent guest on early television variety shows.

Away from the set she became a committed philanthropist. After losing a sister to cancer she helped found, with her later husband Ted Mann, the Rhonda Fleming Mann Clinic for Comprehensive Care at UCLA, focused on women's cancer treatment and support. She also supported hospitals and orphanages and remained a visible presence at classic-film festivals well into old age.

She married six times, including to Lang Jeffries and to Ted Mann of the Mann Theatres chain. In later

interviews she spoke with clear affection for the studio era without pretending it had been simple for actresses. She is buried at Hollywood Forever Cemetery. On a Technicolor print, that hair still looks like a special effect the lab invented just for her.

Services

Died in Santa Monica, CA, October 14, 2020, aged 97. Portrait: Studio publicity photograph (public domain), hosted by Notice Nearby.

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