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Sheryl Lee Ralph – Emmy Award-Winning Actress, Activist, and Advocate for the Arts

Sheryl Lee Ralph is an Emmy Award-winning actress, singer, producer, and humanitarian whose career spans over four decades of excellence on stage, screen, and television. Beloved for her portrayal of the no-nonsense yet compassionate Barbara Howard on ABC's hit series *Abbott Elementary*, Ralph made history in 2022 by becoming only the second Black woman to win the Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series.

A graduate of Rutgers University and one of its youngest-ever alumni, Ralph first rose to prominence for her iconic role as Deena Jones in the original Broadway production of *Dreamgirls*, earning a Tony Award nomination. Since then, her dynamic performances in *Moesha*, *Sister Act 2*, and *Abbott Elementary* have made her a beloved figure in American entertainment.

Beyond her artistry, Sheryl Lee Ralph is a passionate advocate for education, women's empowerment, and HIV/AIDS awareness. She is the founder of The DIVA Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting health equity and raising awareness about HIV/AIDS through arts and entertainment. Her annual *DIVAS Simply Singing!* benefit concert is the longest-running HIV/AIDS fundraiser in the country.

As a speaker, Ralph combines wisdom, humor, and authenticity, inspiring audiences to embrace resilience, purpose, and self-belief. Her message, rooted in service, excellence, and love, encourages students and professionals alike to live boldly, give back, and always “walk in their light.”

She is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.