Lawrence, Vicki (1949-) Encyclopedia Article

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Versatile television personality Vicki Lawrence won her show business break at age 18 thanks to her resemblance to comedienne Carol Burnett. Burnett was looking for a young comedy actress to play her kid sister in sketches for *The Carol Burnett Show,* a variety program that ran from 1967 until 1979. Born in Inglewood, California, in 1949, Lawrence, who had been singing in a group called the Young Americans, got the part and soon was playing an array of skit characters on the show. One of her ongoing roles—the hilarious, purse-lipped, irascible Southern matriarch Thelma Harper, the character for which she is best known—later evolved into the series *Mama's Family*, which aired between 1983 and 1985.

In 1973, Lawrence topped the charts with her only hit single, "The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia." Three years later, she won an Emmy Award for Best Supporting Actress in a Variety Show for her work on the Burnett series. In the mid-1990s, she added to her coterie of fans as hostess of the daytime talk show *Fox After Breakfast*, later renamed *The Vicki Lawrence Show.*

Further Reading:

Lawrence, Vicki, and Marc Eliot. *Vicki! The True-Life Adventures of Miss Fireball.* New York, Simon and Schuster, 1995.