

Gene Lockhart

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Edwin Eugene Lockhart was born July 18, 1891, in London, Ontario, Canada to John and Ellen Mary Lockhart. An actor, singer, and director, Lockhart was a veteran of stage, radio, film, and television. His career spanned more than 60 years, and he had more than 300 movie credits to his name.

Lockhart made his professional debut at the age of six with his father in the Kilties Band, a then well-known Scottish band and choir based in Belleville, Ontario. The Lockharts accompanied the band to England, where Gene studied at Brompton Oratory School in London while his father toured. When they returned to Canada, Gene began singing in concerts, often in the same program as Beatrice Lillie.

At age 25, Lockhart moved to New York at the encouragement of his mother to pursue an acting career. He made his Broadway debut September 1917 as Gustave in the musical *The Riviera Girl*. He also began writing for stage. His first production was *The Pierrot Players*, in which he also starred. A song from that, "The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise", became a popular ballad.

His first big break as a dramatic actor was in 1923 in Lula Vollmer's *Sun-Up*, first in a Greenwich Village little theater, then in a larger house for an additional two years. While performing in *Sun-Up*, he married Kathleen Arthur in 1924, and they had a daughter, June, a year later.

He had a long stage career acting and directing. Some of his notable appearances include Uncle Sid in *Ah, Wilderness!* (1933), Fortesque in *Virginia* (1937), and *Death of a Salesman* as Willy Loman in 1949. He also directed several others, including a revival of *The Warrior's Husband*. Additionally, he wrote articles for theatrical magazines, a weekly column for a Canadian publication, and taught drama at the Junior League and the Julliard Musical Foundation.

In 1930, he and his wife starred in the syndicated radio series, *Abroad with the Lockharts*. They often appeared together on radio and in film over the next two decades. The couple had agreed to not let acting separate them, and for several years both declined offers from Hollywood while the other was still under contract in New York. Among his many radio credits were *Lux Radio Theatre*, *Tonight in Hollywood*, *Suspense*, *The Nebbs*, *Family Theatre*, *Cavalcade of America*, and *The Forty Million*.

Lockhart, however, is best remembered for his film performances. His debut was in the silent picture *Smilin' Through* (1922), and his first sound film was *By Your Leave* (1934). Some of his best-known roles were as Bob Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol* (1938), *His Girl Friday* (1940), *Leave Her to Heaven* (1945), *Foxes of Harrow* (1947), *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947), *Joan of Arc* (1947), *Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956), and *Carousel* (1956). For the role of the treacherous informant Regis in *Algiers* (1938), he received an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor.

Gene Lockhart died unexpectedly of a heart attack March 31, 1957, in Santa Monica at the age of 65. He had been filming an episode of the television series *20th Century-Fox Hour*, "The Great American Hoax", only a few hours earlier. That evening he complained of being unable to sleep because of severe pain and was taken to St. John's Hospital. He died shortly afterwards with his wife, Kathleen and daughter, June at his side. He was honored with two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for his film and television work in 1960.

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