

## Biography for Daryl Wood Gerber (Avery Aames)

When I was a girl, I loved to dress up and perform. Halloween couldn't come around fast enough. I created a song at the age of three. Of course, I don't remember the words to it, but my parents told me it was fabulous! [Don't you love doting parents?]

I also loved dancing in the rain at Lake Tahoe. I think that might be where all my great ideas come from...Lake Tahoe. Being there fills me with eons of inspiration!

At the age of seven, I wrote a short story about a giraffe. My mother said it was the best thing she ever read. I believed her.

At the age of nine, I became a reader. I got the measles, was stuck in bed for a week, and read the entire Nancy Drew series. Soon after, I wrote my first Nancy Drew mystery. It was three chapters about a lamp in the attic. I'm sure I borrowed the idea. It wasn't unique. My mother swears she put the story into my "baby" book, but it's not there. Honestly, I don't know if it was good or not. I remember devoting hours to writing it and loving every moment of the process.

At the age of eleven, I wrote a play based on '*Twas the Night Before Christmas*. I cast all of my friends in the play. We did little vignettes starting with the mice stirring a pot of soup. At that moment, I imagined myself as a playwright. writing...not riding...danged autocorrect]

But then an English teacher in eighth grade vilified me for even considering becoming a writer. I should never entertain the idea, he told me. Needless to say, I was impressionable and took his horrible words to heart. I thought I stunk as a writer and I never tried again.

Until college. I attended Stanford. I wasn't dumb. Around junior year, I considered writing ala Shakespeare, but I ran into another teacher who told me that one of my attempts was terrible, and I should consider other outlets. I gave up. I put all ideas of being a writer on the shelf. I would become a mother and teacher and that was that.

And then a door opened...or perhaps a window? I was given the opportunity to follow another path, one that seemed to be the answer to how I was as a girl. I moved to Los Angeles to become a singer, dancer, actress. Quickly I started working as a commercial actress. I did commercials for Milky Way, Diet Pepsi, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Wonder Bread. I even sang in a Wonder Bread commercial. [That rendition is on my voiceover tape.]

I was then lucky enough to score a few jobs on some regular TV shows including "Murder, She Wrote," "Hart to Hart," and "Matlock." I wanted more, so I started writing TV pilots and screenplays, hoping that I might carve a path for myself as an actress. I planned to write the "next best movie" and convince the powers that be that I should star in that vehicle. Yeah...well... that didn't happen. I won a few awards, and I was lucky enough to sell a TV show for which I created the "format", [*Out of this World*], but

the doors wouldn't open for me as a writer or actress via writing.

Along the way, my husband asked if I minded moving across country for his career. We have a fabulous, loving relationship, and we had a young son. I was not about to give up any of that life. We moved. I participated in local theater (which was fabulous!!) and I focused on writing the great American mystery or thriller. I always loved these kinds of stories. I took classes, I joined Sisters in Crime, I studied, studied, studied. I read everything I could in my genre and outside my genre. [I'm a slow reader, so I didn't read an entire library.] And I submitted manuscript after manuscript to agents. I won the respect of many of those agents, but none of the books that I wrote inspired them to take up the banner on my behalf.

Side note: A year before my family and I moved across country, my stepson, who is a screenwriter, was writing a screenplay and, for his research, he needed to craft astrological charts. He did mine and, to my dismay, asked for a sit-down with me to discuss his findings. He was distraught. He said, according to my chart, that no one would ever really "help" me in my career. [I had already learned this sad lesson as an actress.] He said I would have to be in charge of all sales. In so many respects, he was right. I never felt that I had the full support of anyone in the business other than my family...until I met an agent who finally stuck her neck out for me and introduced me to a publisher. That publisher gave me a chance with A Cheese Shop Mystery series written under the pen name Avery Aames. That sweet agent has left the business, but I owe her a huge debt of gratitude.

My lifelong mottos:

*Perseverance will out.*

*Believe you can.*

*Never give up.*

I hope they will become yours, as well. [Can you tell I've always been a cheerleader?]

By the way, my singing, dancing, acting...transferred to my son. This is 'us' when he's six. I know, I know. It's my fault. But he loves performing. At present, he's in law school. I think he got the love of proving a point from his father. LOL