

# Mary Jane Croft

*Muncie, Delaware County*

February 15, 1916 – August 24, 1999

Mary Jane Croft was an American actress best known for her roles as Betty Ramsey on *I Love Lucy*, Ms. Daisy Enright on the radio and television versions of *Our Miss Brooks*, Mary Jane Lewis on *The Lucy Show* and *Here's Lucy*, and Clara Randolph on *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*.

Mary Jane started her show business career on the stage with the civic theatre in her hometown of Muncie, Indiana. After briefly acting with the Guild Theatre in Cincinnati, Ohio, she joined the local radio station WLW and embarked on a career as a radio actress. She moved to Los Angeles in 1939 after her marriage to fellow actor, Jack Zoller.

During the 1940's and 1950's, Mary Jane became one of a company of in-demand voice actresses. Her best-known pre-Lucille role was as Daisy Enright, the nemesis of *Our Miss Brooks*, which starred Eve Arden and Gale Gordon (both on radio and then on TV). After the death of her first husband, she got married for the second time in 1960, she began using her newly married name for her character on *The Lucy Show* (1962), which was produced by new husband, Elliott Lewis. By 1965, Mary Jane had replaced Vivian Vance, who retired from the show, as Lucy's neighbor. For most TV audiences, Mary Jane will be fondly remembered as Lucy's cheerful ally and confidante in their various joint endeavors. Despite other changes in the cast, Mary Jane's role carried over into the next incarnation, *Here's Lucy* (1968).

After her death in August 1999, Lucie Arnaz eulogized her mother's friend, Mary Jane, as being the "antithesis of the dizzy blonde she portrayed on screen" and as a fun-loving and joyous spirit.



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