

Probably best known as the efficient Nurse Lydia Wright on NBC's "ER"; having actually spoken the first line of that historic show, Ellen Crawford began honing her acting skills here in Normal. While attending U High, Ellen starred in many theater productions. She has fond memories of her time with drama director Mr. Lawrence Connolly and fellow student actors Pat Brymer, Phil Shaw, Angie Shaw, Leslie Manning, June Thomas and others.



Fresh out of U High in 1969, Ellen was selected for the Chicago company of "Hair" for which she was named "Notable New Face" of 1969 by the Chicago Tribune. She attended Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, graduating with honors with a B.F.A. in acting. The West Coast Drama Alumni honored her by presenting their 1997 acting scholarship in her name.

After college, East Coast and Midwest regional theaters became Ellen's proving ground. Fulfilling her dream to work on Broadway, she hit the Great White Way in the production of "Do Black Patent leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?" - gaining critical acclaim for her role as Sister Lee.

Ellen moved West after she realized the magnetic draw of film when she was cast on the Chicago-based television series "The Chicago Story." Within twenty- four hours of arriving in L.A., she was cast in the feature film "Stitches." Ellen went on to appear in such top television series as "Diagnosis Murder," "Tales From the Crypt," "Murder, She Wrote," "China Beach," "thirtysomething," and "Night Court," among others.

Telefilms include "Twice Upon A Time" (as Molly Ringwald's mother) and "The Story Lady" (as Jessica Tandy's acting teacher!). Her many feature films have provided her with very diverse roles, including a space pioneer in "Soldier" with Kurt Russell, an industrial spy in "Ulterior Motives," and, beginning her faux health care career, a nurse in "War of the Roses." Ellen's work on NBC's "ER" has helped to earn the series The Screen Actors Guild Award • Outstanding Performance By An Ensemble In A Drama Series • "ER" in 1994 and 1996. Ellen, and husband Mike Genovese, who plays Nurse Lydia's husband Sgt. Al Grabarsky in "ER", have also starred together in the internationally acclaimed film, "Cries Of Silence," and the AIDS awareness telefilm, "Porchlight."

"ER" has offered Ellen the opportunity to work with the health care community, and because of this involvement, she is proud to have been honored with awards from the American Nurses Association, the American Red Cross, and the Illinois Emergency Nurses Association.