



STEPHEN MICHAEL SHEARER

is the author of *Patricia Neal: An Unquiet Life* and *Beautiful: The Life of Hedy Lamarr*. He has written for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* and is also a former model and actor, having appeared on stage, television, and in film. Shearer currently resides in Minnesota and New York City.

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She also collected a long line of lovers (including Joseph P. Kennedy) and married men of *her* choosing (including a French marquis, thus becoming America's first member of "nobility"). As a devoted and loving mother, she managed a quiet success of raising three children. Perhaps most important, as a keen businesswoman she also was able to extend her career more than sixty years.

Her astounding comeback as Norma Desmond in Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* catapulted her back into the limelight. But it also created her long-misunderstood persona, one that this meticulous biography shows was only part of this independent and unparalleled woman.