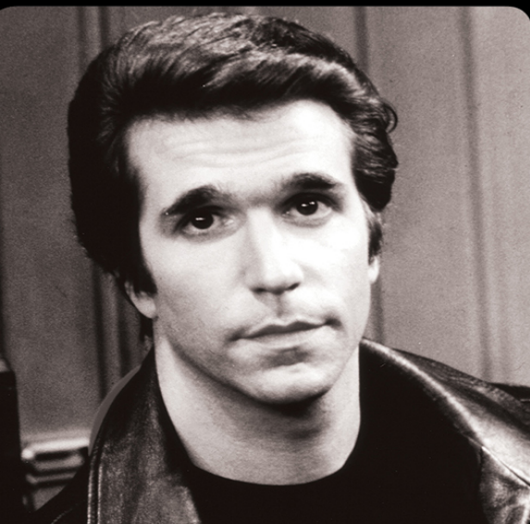




DASHING, DARING, AND DEBONAIR

TV's Top Male Icons
from the
50s, 60s, and 70s

HERBIE J PILATO



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David Cassidy

The Partridge Family

Everything in my life was about performance when I was doing
The Partridge Family.

—David Cassidy

There is no prettier example of a classic male teen icon in TV history than David Cassidy, who played oldest sibling Keith Partridge on ABC's *The Partridge Family* (1970–1974). The son of Jack Cassidy and stepson to his *Partridge* costar Shirley Jones (married from 1956 to 1974 to Jack who died in a fire December 12, 1976), David once shared his thoughts on his relationship with these two very special people in his life:

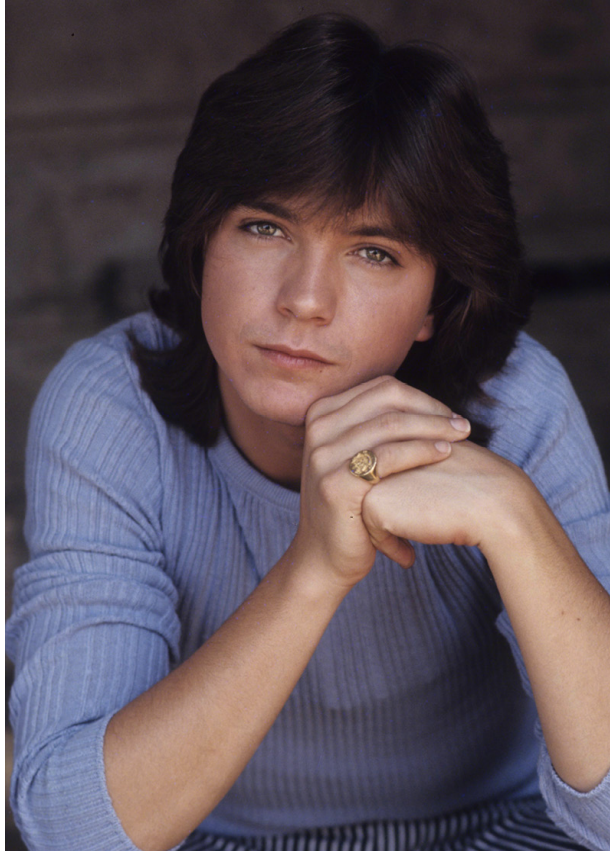
[Shirley] was a great help to me in my difficult relationship with my Dad and served as a great buffer. In the end he found it more and more difficult to cope with my fame and success and he was very tortured by her fame and success . . . and that he had not achieved a higher level. I loved him and admired him but I just couldn't find a way to have it be okay for him. It was a rough one for us. I forgive him for all of it. We are all flawed. Somehow or another, we all get through it. I worshipped him and loved him and I loved all of the things he gave me in my life as a human being.

Born David Bruce Cassidy to actor Jack and actress Evelyn Ward on April 12, 1950, in New York City, David attended Rexford High School, in Beverly Hills, California. His stepbrothers, born to father

Jack and the Oscar-winning Jones, are fellow male TV icon Shaun, and the younger Patrick and Ryan. David was married to actress Kay Lenz from 1977 to 1983, later wedded to Meryl Ann Tanz from 1984 to 1986, and, in 1991, married Sue Shiffrin (from whom he filed for divorce in 2014). His children include actress Katie Cassidy (with model Sherry Williams Benedon), and Beau Devin Cassidy.

Because his actor parents were often touring, David, in his early years, was raised by his maternal grandparents in a middle-class neighborhood in West Orange, New Jersey. In 1956, he found out from the neighbors' children that his parents had been divorced for over two years. They hadn't told him because they were gone so much they thought he was better off not knowing. He made his acting debut in the Broadway musical *The Fig Leaves Are Falling*.

David moved with his father and Jones when they came to Hollywood, and Jones, more than Jack, became his mentor. Beginning in 1969, David had featured roles in *Ironside*, *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, *Adam-12*, and *Bonanza*. The producers of *The Partridge Family* cast him because of his good looks, and at first, weren't interested in his singing. He lobbied to be the lead singer and convinced the producers to give him the chance.



Globe Photos

The first Partridge Family single, “I Think I Love You,” went on to be a #1 hit in 1970—the first season of the series. Playing solo, Cassidy sold out arenas in the United States and all over the world. In 1974, a gate stampede at a show in London’s White City Stadium injured 650, thirty were taken to the hospital, and one girl, fourteen-year-old Bernadette Whelan, died from her injuries. In 1978, Cassidy received an Emmy nomination for an episode of *Police Story* titled “A Chance to Live.”

In the January 23, 2005, issue of *TV Guide*, David was ranked #1 in “TV’s 25 Greatest Teen Idols.” In 2011, he was one of the contestants on *Celebrity Apprentice*, on which his daughter Katie made a brief appearance.

Besides *The Partridge Family*, David starred in a short-lived, very well made, if oddly titled, one-hour crime-drama called *David Cassidy: Man Undercover*, which aired on NBC from 1978 to 1979. The show was nowhere near as popular as *The Partridge Family* and camouflaged Cassidy's key appeal, which Cassidy family friend Roger Hyman succinctly now sums up as follows:

The Partridge Family was a very fresh and welcomed face for TV in the early 1970s, and the face of David Cassidy helped to secure a place for the show in classic television history. The show had an eternally appealing ensemble cast, masterfully written and impeccably acted. . .and sung, producing nine hit albums in just three years' time. The smart and forward-thinking decision to cast David as Keith Partridge was tremendous and impactful. The character was mostly played as a straight man and fall guy for the antics of his TV kid brother Danny. . .played by Danny Bonaduce, and band manager Reuben Kincaid portrayed by Dave Madden. The comedic timing was second to none and David's Keith fell for everything. Where David stole the show, and the hearts of every teen girl in America at the time, was the lead singer for the Family. This helped launch him to become one of pop-culture's most sensationalized teen idols and pop-singers of the '70s. David was every girl's dream man with a voice to swoon into the sunset. He had an energy, wit, and charisma that put *The Partridge Family* and him not only on TV's most watched list—but at the top of the pop charts.