



"David's a good guy, and I love him," Shirley Jones (who wed Jack Cassidy in 1956) tells *Closer* of her stepson.



"My father instilled a very fantastic work ethic in myself and my brothers," David (with Ryan, Shaun and Patrick) once said.

Last December, as he promoted his first Christmas album in his 48-year career, David Cassidy was feeling incredibly thankful. "I have kids that are 6, 7, 8 years old who walk up to me [and start singing] 'C'mon, Get Happy,'" he said, mimicking how the youngsters perform the *Partridge Family* theme song for him. "How grateful could you be?" he pondered. "My fans are everything."



"I'm proud of her," David said of daughter Katie, though they've been estranged. Son Beau (whose mom is David's ex-wife Sue Shifrin, right) "is just one of the best people you'll ever meet."



Eleven months later, the singer-actor, 67, would need all the support they could give him after he was taken to a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., hospital on Nov. 15 with kidney and liver failure. His publicist Jo-Ann Geffen announced doctors put him in an induced coma, hoping to "keep him as well as they can until they can find another liver" for a lifesaving transplant, though David's family was reportedly told to prepare for the worst.

Still, fans clung to hope, as the former teen idol had survived so many battles in his past, from his triumphant but complicated rise to fame to his struggles with alcohol abuse and the onset of dementia, which he went public with earlier this year. "I give him credit," Chip Deffaa, David's co-author of his autobiography *C'Mon, Get Happy: Fear and Loathing on the Partridge Family Bus*, tells *Closer*. "David would always find a way to come back."

David was born the son of actor Jack Cassidy and Broadway star Evelyn Ward, but his parents weren't there for him much when he was growing up. "Fame happened so suddenly" for David, who was 20 when *The Partridge Family* premiered, Deffaa says. "He had the biggest-selling record of 1970, and there are fans who still to this day, he was their first crush. He had the biggest fan club and he couldn't go out in public without being mobbed. He had success, but a lot of his life was sad and lonely."

HIS ROUGH ROAD

Alcoholism ran on both sides of his family, but David said the disease didn't wreak havoc on his life until his mom started succumbing to dementia in 2005. "Her last week I was probably drinking 24 hours a day," he told *Closer* in 2014 about Evelyn's 2012 death. In the aftermath, his 23-year marriage to Sue Shifrin ended as their son, Beau, now 26, was "becoming a young man," David said. "It all hit me at the

same time. I felt very lost." (David had daughter Katie, 31, with model Sherry Williams, but the two "never had a relationship," he admits.) He racked up three DUI charges in a span of three years, but swore he was "64 days sober" at a March 15, 2014, concert. "Alcohol does not define me," he assured *Closer*. "It will no longer be a problem."

At press time, however, the star's former demons had left his body weak and his family clinging to hope that their idol had another comeback in him. "He was more talented than he realized," Deffaa insists, noting that while David's past few years have been challenging, his son had balanced the darkness with much joy. "Beau's a good kid who's building his career as an actor and singer. That gives David some satisfaction," Deffaa explains.

As David put it, "When you're responsible for a human being who is really good — caring, loving, sensitive — there's a lot to be proud of."

— Ron Kelly, with reporting by Katie Bruno