

began playing sold-out concerts on weekends while filming the series weekdays. "He was a really good guy," Brian Forster, who took over the role of Chris Partridge in the second season, tells *Closer*. "He was obviously really busy all the time." So busy that David needed to ask his assistant to buy Christmas presents for his castmates — and was appalled to learn that everyone received a bottle of scotch from him, even the children! "David was like, 'I am so sorry,'" says Brian, who was given a replacement gift of a Swiss army knife by the star.

But David's worldwide fame never impressed his father. "Jack would tell him, 'I earned my success,'" says Deffaa. "'You're only a success because a network puts you on TV every week. People see you whether they want to or not. You have nothing to do with it.' David believed that to a certain extent."

## HIS OWN MAN

Burnt out, David left *The Partridge Family* in 1974. "I have an image of myself in five years. I'm living on an island. The sky is blue, the sun is shining. And I'm smiling. I'm healthy, I'm a family man," he said.

His post-*Partridge* career would include more albums, stints on television, in Las Vegas and on Broadway — but it all sadly failed to make him happy. "If you saw him at the stage door after a concert or after a Broadway show, he would be cheerful and smiling with the fans," says Deffaa. "But there was a degree of unhappiness in him that he never got past." David sought solace in alcohol and drug use, which ruined his three marriages and caused his extended family to distance themselves. "I have not spoken to David in years. No one has," Shirley told *Closer* in 2016.

His daughter, actress Katie Cassidy, 35, was raised by her mother and stepfather. David had a closer relationship with son Beau, 31, an actor and singer-songwriter born during his third marriage. "When Beau wanted to be in Little League, David not only went to every game, he also became Beau's coach," says Deffaa, who adds that David never wished for his kids to become performers. "He had so many bad memories of the years when he was supposedly on top. He felt that show business had not been good to him in his youth and he didn't want that for them."

## A RARE LIFE



"I'll feel really good when it's over," David said about his early overwhelming fame.



He was married to actress Kay Lenz from 1977 to 1983.



"I am grateful for all the wonderful times we shared," Shirley, with Shaun, David, Patrick and Ryan, said.



Son Beau was born during his third marriage, to songwriter Sue Shifrin.



"I met David in 1993 and remained close friends until his death," says Gary Contessa.

David passed away from liver failure in 2017 at the age of 67. Per his wishes, his remains were scattered at New York's Saratoga Race Course, where he'd found a different kind of success as a Thoroughbred owner and breeder. "David tried hard to beat his demons," says his friend Gary. "He never stopped trying to be a stronger, better person."

—Reporting by Katie Bruno