

first. It's wonderfully progressive and terribly modern to be a friend of your child's—but it's more important to be a parent. That's my role when they come to me with their problems. They trust me and confide in me—and that's what I'm happiest about."

Shirley is stepmother of David Cassidy and mother of Shaun Cassidy (star of ABC-TV's "The Hardy Boys"), two of the hottest young properties around today. She spoke freely of the effect their stardom has had on her:

"It's all very exciting, but it has also been very troublesome. Up until a couple of months ago when Shaun lived with me (he now has his own house), the lack of privacy was impossible to live with. Doorbell constantly ringing at two, three, and four in the morning. The phone never stopped. Girls hanging around the house. It got to be a nuisance. But I'm thrilled about what they're doing, because it's what they have always wanted to do.

The Cassidy boys are reputed to be wholesome, talented, and well-adjusted. What was her winning formula? "Pure luck," she shrugged. "These days, in this strange world, you take your chances at raising children. I don't know what I did that was right, or where I went wrong—as I must have done somewhere along the way.

"I can't take too much credit for David, because David lived with his mother, actress Evelyn Ward until he was in his late teens." Neverthe-



Stepson David Cassidy calls Shirley "the nicest human being I've met."



Surrounded by trophies, Shaun Cassidy is the newest family member to strike gold with his singing and acting. Shirley backs his career all the way.

less, there's a terrific bond between David and Shirley, and he was quoted as saying "she's the best actress and the nicest human being I've ever met. She sets the tone for all of us."

About Shaun, 19; Patrick, 16; Ryan, 12, Shirley said: "The things that both Jack (actor Jack Cassidy who died tragically last year in a fire that swept through his apartment, burning his body beyond recognition) and I tried to give them was a lot of love and self-respect. I don't believe in putting children in a mold and hoping they'll turn out like this or that model. We wanted them to be individuals. We let them express themselves. I also think we have been more than overly affectionate and frank in our relationships with them. I never banished my kids from the room, or hid them.

"But, on the other hand, I did not have them around at adult parties; and by no means were they included in all our functions. They were very disciplined. Children need boundaries. They have to be told and shown. They don't know how far they can go, and are curious to find out."

She added: "There's no magic in turning out a good kid, and no blame in turning out a bad one. The hardest thing in the world in raising kids is the fine borderline between 'yes' and 'no.'"

The first thing that Shirley tried to instill in her boys was a sense of value, even though she often felt she was batting her head against a brick wall. "It was quite difficult, Jack and I were very successful, and

earned lots of money. We live among affluent people in a wealthy section of Beverly Hills. Try teaching kids the value of money, when most of their friends don't know the difference between one dollar and ten! Getting them to appreciate the value of money wasn't the easiest thing in the world." What the Cassidys did was put the boys on an allowance: "Each year, as they got older and more financial demands were made on them, we'd sit down and show them how to budget."

A couple of months ago, when Shirley returned from her tour in "The Sound of Music," she found Shaun waiting on the doorstep. He rushed her right over to see his new house, fifteen minutes away. "He's getting it all together, and right now is knee deep in furnishing and decorating it. It's so funny to see him weighing blues against browns, brass against chrome . . . He's taking odds and ends from here, and is always popping in and out—especially when he needs a good meal!"

How did Shirley react when Shaun showed signs of wanting to follow in his parents' footsteps?

"Even though the inclination was always there, I was more discouraging than encouraging. Show business is unstable and unless you're successful, you can have a very unsettling and insecure life. The other end of it—writing, producing, directing—is much more meaningful. Acting, though, is in the hands of the gods. For a man to spend his whole life waiting for a good role to

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Lady's Circle