

Shirley Returning In New Series

ALMOST A DECADE ago, Shirley Jones starred in the Partridge Family series and she loved the show.

"I liked the whole idea," she said when we saw her not long ago on the West Coast. "I liked the routine. I liked the money. I liked knowing where I was going to be for the day."

In the series, if you remember, she played a young mother struggling to raise a family of musically talented kids without a father.

Not surprising, therefore, considering this background, Shirley will return to television this fall as a widow struggling to bring up a growing family. But there is a difference.

"The Partridge Family was a situation

comedy. Shirley, (the name of the series) will have a different atmosphere. Partridge Family wasn't as problematic as what I'm getting into — an hour long drama show with elements of comedy."

PLAYING A MOM evidently suits Shirley to a T these days. She isn't complaining at all about being "typecast as the world's greatest mother." "It's the nicest thing for me to do. Police women and other roles are good for one shot, but I feel dealing with children is a good thing for me."

Still she admits to problems playing a Partridge. "The lack of privacy was really terrible," she explained. "All the little children thought the Partridges lived at my house. I had to change my telephone number eight times. I had to throw children off my lawn and call the police at times, which isn't much fun."

In Shirley, the actress will play a former schoolteacher whose husband decides to move West and spends all their money buying a house at Lake Tahoe. Then in the midst of this family upheaval, he dies. With very little choice, she (a city girl) moves West with her four children to fulfill his dream.

The family will be interesting. There are two youngsters and a teenage daughter who are the mother's children. The fourth, a handsome young man, is her late husband's son by a previous marriage.

Sound familiar? It is. Shirley has exactly the same relationship with former teen idol David Cassidy.

"David was raised by his mother," she explained. "Our relationship was an adult relationship. I didn't know him until the Partridge Family."

CASSIDY, SHE reports, is working on several film properties. Her own son Shaun is going on tour to promote his new album.

"Shaun was born old," she explained. "He is much more establishment than I am. I think he will become a businessman. I think he will leave performing for the business end eventually."

Even for the "world's greatest mother," having famous sons can be a problem.

Shirley recalls trying to reach Shaun on the telephone in New York. "I didn't have the password," she said with a chuckle. "I didn't get to talk with him. I kept saying, 'But I'm his mother, and they said, 'Sure, you are!'"

Patrick, 17, is the next in line for the Cassidy family success sweepstakes and Ryan, 13, is the baby of the family.

"Of all the boys, David is the most like Jack (the late Jack Cassidy)," Miss Jones said thoughtfully.

"The main thing I've tried to tell my children is that show business is full of unrealities, that they have to decide when the make believe ends. Some people view show business as a way of life. To me it's a job."

ALL THIS MATERNAL feeling is the result of maturity on Shirley's part. Twenty years ago when she was appearing in musicals like "Carousel" and "Oklahoma," she



SHIRLEY JONES
Will Play A Mother Again

once said, "I'm sick of portraying ingenues with sunny dispositions, high necklines and puffed sleeves who are girlishly aggressive about happiness being just around the corner."

At the same time, she wailed, "I look like what I'm not at all, a wholesome breakfast food."

Looking back she is proud of the Oscar she won playing a prostitute in "Elmer Gantry," although the TV version was so cut up her friends called her afterwards and said, "You won an Oscar for THAT."

Her career is active in other directions, also. She is a spokeswoman for Sunbeam appliances, appears on the Tonight Show and two summers ago toured in a summer stock production of "Sound of Music."

But, television she likes best at present for the previously mentioned reasons. And, who can blame her.