

his and his father's careers—Jack might particularly resent any personal questions from David.

Shirley was more readily accessible on the set, willing to talk freely with her stepson and even confessing to close friends that she was still very much in love with Jack and wanted nothing more than to work things out. But heartbroken or not—with Jack still maintaining a moody silence and sparks flying whenever the two tried to have a pleasant dinner together—Shirley had kept her chin high and started dating others. For a while there, during this long, disturbing separation, David's beautiful stepmother was out almost every night with some attractive man, a doctor, a tennis pro and a producer among others.

David was more than willing to try to effect a reconciliation but had to admit he wasn't sure just how much influence he could have on his father

and stepmother at this point. He didn't even know what solution would work out best for them. Perhaps Jack would like to have Shirley give up her career, so that when the two went out together he wouldn't imagine people were saying, "There's Shirley Jones and her husband." Perhaps he was going through a stage in his professional life that he had to think out.

Brotherly Concern

One thing sure, David was deeply concerned about his kid brothers, that day on the set. No one knew better than he what it's like to be in the middle, with love tugging at a child from both sides. As *The Partridge Family* took a hiatus from filming, all the stars involved in this real-life crisis were going their separate ways—even the children. David, of course, had his own concert commitments. Shaun, 14,

accompanied his father to Philadelphia where Jack was starring in a play. Patrick, 10, was in camp for part of the summer. Ryan, 6, would be with his mother, as she toured with her big new Shirley Jones stage revue.

"This is no way to have children grow up," David said somberly. "It happened to me. I had to live with one parent at a time, six months here and six months there, and I don't mind saying *I didn't like it*. Perhaps my dad will see the light before it is too late. I'd hate to see my brothers grow up that way. It just isn't fair."

He had no way of foreseeing then how unexpectedly the Cassidys would be reunited, what a happy "homecoming" Shirley herself was to find in Pennsylvania. But that's another story—one told in picture-packed detail on the pages immediately following the introduction of David's interview in this very issue! —PATTY DOCTORS

SHIRLEY JONES

(Continued from page 39)

"girl next door" in her hometown. *The Shirley Jones Revue* was to be the climax of the 1972 season for Pittsburgh's Civic Light Opera. This was the same company with which, many years ago, Shirley had gained her first starring role in *On A Clear Day*. Now the backers of the Light Opera were banking on her tremendous popularity to be the keystone of a particularly productive season. They were not disappointed.

It soon became evident that the whole city had carried on a love affair for years with Shirley, and the citizens were eager to have this opportunity to welcome her home. Long before the show opened, steel workers in T-shirts waited in line for tickets with well-tailored businessmen, ladies dressed in the height of fashion, and the jeans-clad youngsters who represent a whole new generation of Shirley Jones fans.

Since this was Shirley's first visit back to her hometown in more than three years—when she had stopped for only a day on a promotional tour for her TV series—it also provided an opportunity for a gala family reunion. The Jones family is a large one. (As Shirley points out, her grandmother—who lived to be 97—had ten children.) One of her uncles, Gordon Page, purchased 300 tickets for opening night! Forty of them were taken by members of the Jones family and the remainder went to residents of Smithton, the tiny (population 600) suburb of Pittsburgh where Shirley was raised.

Of all those in attendance, none could have been prouder than Shirley's mother. It was she who had taken Shirley, as a little girl, to her singing lessons in Pittsburgh. And it was she who had most closely watched her progress toward stardom. However, despite her pride in Shirley's accomplishments, the quality most important to her mother has always been how Shirley fulfills her real-life role as a woman.

"Shirley is a lovely person," says her

mother. "She has all the qualities of a lady, and she's a good mother and wife. If she weren't, I'd be the first to admit it—and do something about it! But she has always made us so proud of her."

If there was any sad note in the week's otherwise festive mood, it was the fact that Shirley's father had not lived to share it. He died during an operation for lung cancer at the untimely age of 47. More than a dozen years have passed since then, but Shirley remembers as though it were only yesterday.

"My father's death was the only thing in my life that had endowed me with a sense of loss," she explains. "I loved him very much, and I was very close to him. . . . Actually, everything else in my life has gone remarkably well—I have found contentment in my career and in my personal life. That's why his loss stands out so much. I do miss him." Undoubtedly, her thoughts were very much with him during this otherwise happiest of weeks.

Although a casual observer might suspect that it would be to a performer's advantage to have an audience filled with family and friends who would respond enthusiastically to everything Shirley did, it didn't work out that way with the Joneses! That first night, they were overly cautious not to applaud too much for Shirley, obviously bending over backward to be proper and polite. Shirley didn't receive the standing ovation she so richly deserved until the performance was over. Then the audience laughed warmly when she remarked how pleased she was with her reception—"even though all of you are my family."

Jack had planned to join Shirley in Pittsburgh, but was unable to do so because he was signed to star in a big made-for-TV movie. However, Shirley's and Jack's three young sons were on hand. "They would keep asking me, 'Mom, are these *really* all my cousins and aunts and uncles?' They just couldn't believe it," she laughs. "It was such a tremendous experience for them."

Had Shirley ever dreamed when she was performing as an apprentice in

Pittsburgh's Playhouse and Light Opera, that she would someday return as the star of her own show?

"I suppose that down deep it is the kind of thing everyone thinks about," she admits. "However, although I had this tremendous drive to perform, to sing and to make people happy, I didn't think much about someday returning with my own show. I just knew, even as a young girl, that I always wanted to be an actress."

"Everything that has happened in my life is what I always wanted," Shirley adds. "I was fortunate enough to be helped by so many wonderful people, and to have had the opportunity to be in the Playhouse when it was really an apprenticeship for young performers." A former "Miss Pittsburgh," she fondly recalls attending classes during the day at the Playhouse and then performing that same night, putting to practice the classroom techniques learned earlier in that day.

However, she confesses now that she does not have the "drive to perform" that she once had.

"It was difficult to prepare this stage show while the *Partridge* filming was still going on. I had been invited to sing at the White House, and an illness forced me to cancel. So, as long as I had worked up a program, I decided to work it into a show. And when I did, I knew I wanted it to come to Pittsburgh, where I could perform in front of my family and so many old friends.

"But," Shirley avers, "I've done everything now in my career—stage, movies, television. I don't feel any compulsion to work so hard anymore."

Does this mean that Shirley is about to begin a gradual withdrawal from her career?

"Definitely yes," she answers. "That doesn't mean I plan to drop off *The Partridge Family*. I hope—and believe—it might go on for five more years. Of course, that might mean the show would change, with David dropping out in the not-too-distant future. But change is quite common in television."

Why, in Shirley's opinion, has the series enjoyed such success?