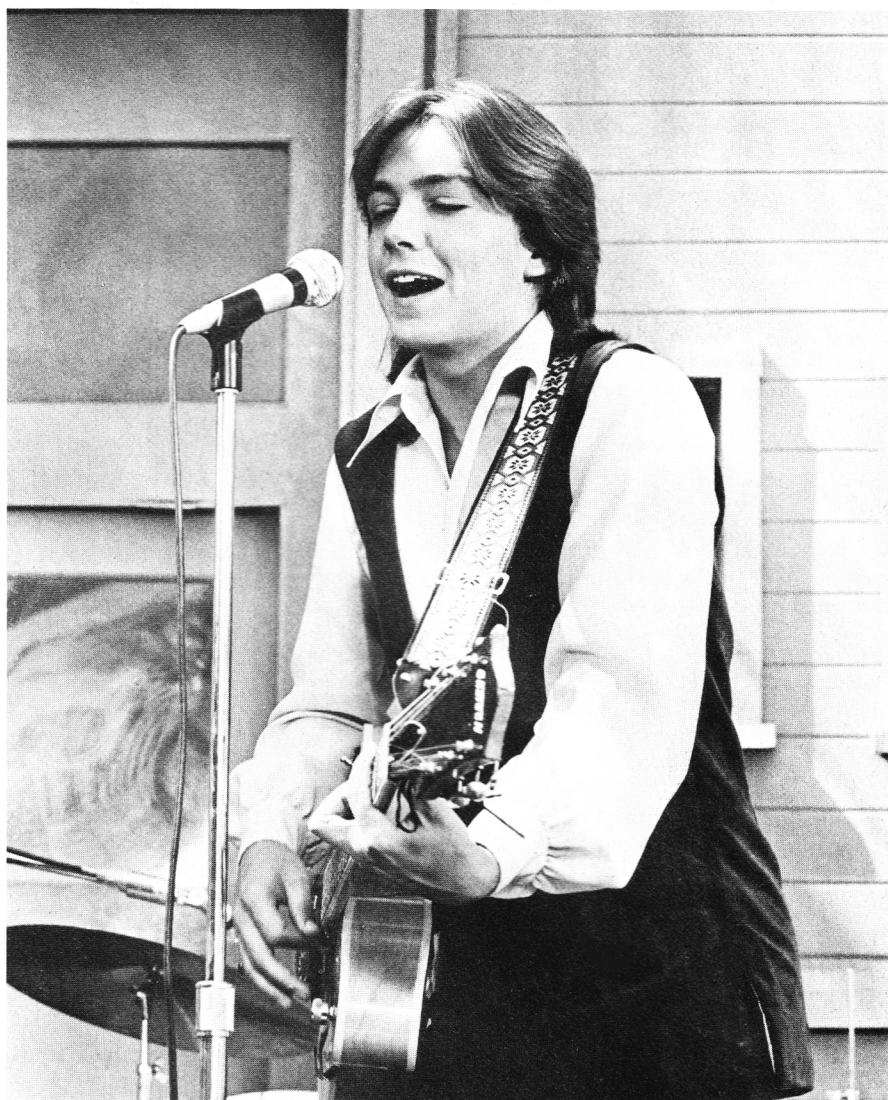


(Top) This is what swayed David's decision to accept a part in the PF series – the chance to play his guitar and make records.

(Below) Inspired casting! The producers cast Shirley Jones, David's real-life stepmother, as his screen 'mother'.



fixed him up with other parts in TV series like *The FBI*, *Bonanza*, and *A Man Called Ironside*. Nothing sensational, but all good experience for a budding actor of 19.

To celebrate the start of his new TV career David rented a small apartment, which he furnished with orange boxes and reject furniture from the Salvation Army! He also found himself a room-mate – a long-time friend called Sam Hyman who alternated between acting and film cutting.

Though blossoming as an actor, David continued to practice playing drums, and took lessons on the electric guitar. To be honest, he didn't really know what he wanted to be: a fully time actor or a singer and musician.

One day an agent phoned him and asked if he'd like to read for a part in a pilot film for a new TV series. The pilot film is the first programme a production company makes just to 'set the scene' as it were for the rest of the series. If a network likes the pilot and gives its approval the rest of the programmes can then be made.

David asked what the part was like and was told he would be playing a character called 'Keith Partridge' who was one of a singing family in show-business. The series was to be called *Family Business* at that time.

Frankly the idea didn't appeal to him at first sight. He thought the script was a bit 'icky'. In fact he said no to it. But when the agent told him – if he got the part – there'd be a chance of playing guitar and maybe even making a record, he relented enough to take the script home and learn it.

"That night I lay in bed, re-reading the part for the tenth time. Suddenly I knew that this was something I wanted more than anything else.

"When Screen Gems called me to audition next morning I was really nervous. I don't know how I got through the reading. They called me back for a second reading – then a *third!* After that they sprang the surprise of my life on me. Who should be playing my 'mother' in the story but Shirley Jones, my real-life step-mother who had married my Dad after his divorce!"

The producers of the series Paul Witt and Bob Claver, had wondered how Shirley herself would take this situation if David was cast as her 'son'.

