

Cassidy Roses at church honor pop star

By Maryanne Christiano-Mistretta
Correspondent

Two roses growing in the garden at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church have quite a story to tell.

The story begins with a 7-year-old boy singing in the church choir before becoming a teen idol, rock star and television icon.

David Cassidy, best known for his role as Keith Partridge on "The Partridge Family," spent his childhood in West Orange, being raised primarily by his maternal grandparents.

Cassidy's grandmother, Ethel, was the pianist and a soloist in the senior choir and David was a lead soloist in the junior choir for children ages 7 to 9 at Holy Trinity, where he also attended Bible School.

Cassidy's parents were singer and actor Jack Cassidy and actress Evelyn Ward. He lived with his grandparents because his parents were on tour for much of his childhood. His parents eventually divorced and his father married actress Shirley Jones, who played his mother on "The Partridge Family."

David eventually moved out of his grandparents home and in with his father and Jones in Irvington. Cassidy lived there working part time while trying to make it as an actor and musician.

Cassidy died in November of 2017 and two rose bushes were placed in the garden at the front of Holy Trinity around June 2022. They were donated by Camillia Hoare, a fan from the United Kingdom.

The Rev. Miguel A. Hernandez of Holy Trinity said he watched The Partridge Family on television in El Salvador, the country of his origin.

"I was surprised when I learned that David's grandmother and David were part of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. The roses represent the love that David and his grandmother gave to all of us," he said.

Hoare, in the United Kingdom, said that shortly after Cassidy passed away a new memorial yellow hybrid tea rose was



Photo Courtesy of the Rev. Miguel A. Hernandez

Pictured is the David Cassidy 'I Think I Love You' tribute rose bush at Holy Trinity Church in West Orange. Inset: A vintage publicity photo of Cassidy as he appeared in his 1970s heyday as the iconic singing star of 'The Partridge Family' television series.

procured with private funding. The rose was grown in a private nursery named after Cassidy's Partridge Family hit, "I Think I love You" as a tribute.

A Cassidy Rose fan page was started on Facebook to advertise this tribute and to keep fans informed of the progress of the rose, which would take at least a year to grow fully before they could go on sale.

Hoare and Sian Williams Harries copyrighted the rose and its name solely as their personal tribute to honor Cassidy.

Harries and her husband had met Cassidy during his 1985 Romance comeback tour. Cassidy played many venues in the United Kingdom and Europe and the couple were drivers for the company that transported Cassidy, his band and their equipment.

"Sian and I were in contact with David's son Beau Cassidy to keep him up to date with this tribute and others we consequently done in David's memory," said Hoare. "Beau knew about the rose from the beginning and gave us his blessing and that he was aware of the further tributes we did to honor his father."

Since the tribute page began, Harries had to take a step back because of some health and personal circumstances so Hoare is now running the tribute page herself. She initially contacted Hernandez about Cassidy's family connection to the church.

"The reverend was so very accommodating," said Hoare. "He happily agreed that this could be facilitated."

See CASSIDY, Page 3

Cassidy Rose has its own Facebook page

(Continued from Page 1)

Hoare arranged for the "I Think I Love You" rose to be delivered with a plaque for the church. Hernandez planted it, maintained it, and cared for it.

"During this time, we had named a red rose 'King of Hearts' after David as well," said Hoare. "And as a consequence, we asked if the red remembrance rose could be planted there also with a plaque to remember David."

That request was granted too.

The significance of the yellow hybrid tea memorial rose, "I Think I Love You," represents the friendship that Harries and her husband had with Cassidy for over 32 years.

When Harries' husband died unexpectedly, Cassidy sent her a bouquet of yellow roses.

"He was so kind to her in so many ways," said Hoare. "On the anniversary of Sian's husband's death, a bouquet of yellow roses would be delivered without fail. David was a kindhearted caring person."

When Harries heard the news of Cassidy's death in 2017, she was devastated and wanted something special to honor him and his kindness to her. In a matter of days, the idea of naming a rose after her special friend became a reality.



Photo Courtesy of the Rev. Miguel A. Hernandez

A red rose 'King of Hearts' has also been named after Cassidy.

"I don't believe David particularly loved roses," said Hoare. "It was the fact that a yellow rose stands for friendship and that is what he was being honored

and remembered for, by us."

Hoare has been a lifelong fan of David Cassidy, following his career since she was 13 years old, and like many others, watching "The Partridge Family" television show.

"David was a beacon of love, light, beauty, and talent like no other before or since," said Hoare. "He affected so many people in ways that cannot be expressed. He made so many lives brighter and better because he was in it. I just don't think he really ever grasped or understood the effect he had on the world and his love of his devoted fans. Even in his death he has brought people all over the world together in their love and admiration for him. I just wish the entertainment industry would honor him and give him the respect that he so richly deserves, that they fail to acknowledge. He was talented, hardworking; he gave us his all and then some more. Talented in so many ways. He was kind, so caring, and yet so humble about himself. It's my wish to let the next generation know what a massive impact he had and that his musical legacy will go on."

Visit The Cassidy Rose Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/ITILYLoveinBloom/>.