

coverstory

BY JAY BOBBIN

For Father's Day, TV dads who have had their own days



"Leave It to Beaver's" Ward Cleaver (Hugh Beaumont) was a memorable television father.

With Father's Day being celebrated on Sunday, June 19, it's a hugely appropriate time to give a salute to some of the most memorable dads in television history.

Ozzie Nelson (Ozzie Nelson), "The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet" (ABC, 1952-66): No one could have played David and Ricky's dad better.

Ward Cleaver (Hugh Beaumont), "Leave It to Beaver" (CBS, 1957-58; ABC, 1958-63): With sons like Beaver and Wally, you'd need the patience of a saint. Luckily, Ward had it.

Lucas McCain (Chuck Connors), "The Rifleman" (ABC, 1958-63): Tough when he had to be, rancher and widower McCain always turned tender when it came to son Mark (Johnny Crawford).

Ben Cartwright (Lorne Greene), "Bonanza" (NBC, 1959-73): The Ponderosa patriarch made a powerful father figure to his headstrong sons.

Sheriff Andy Taylor (Andy Griffith), "The Andy Griffith Show" (CBS, 1960-68): The plain-speaking widower's love for son Opie (Ronny Howard) was evident in every breath he took and every life lesson he taught.

Steve Douglas (Fred MacMurray), "My Three Sons" (ABC, 1960-65; CBS, 1965-72): A pipe, a sweater and a level head were trademarks of this parent with an ever-expanding clan.

Mike Brady (Robert Reed), "The Brady Bunch" (ABC, 1969-74): No matter how big

his hairstyle or architecture project, Mike was ever-ready with advice for his blended family.

John Walton (Ralph Waite), "The Waltons" (CBS, 1972-81): This patriarch of a large Depression-era brood let everyone know who was boss simply through silent strength.

Charles Ingalls (Michael Landon), "Little House on the Prairie" (NBC, 1974-83): Life wasn't easy in late 19th-century Minnesota, but if you wanted someone both rugged and compassionate, Laura Ingalls' dad was the man.

Howard Cunningham (Tom Bosley), "Happy Days" (ABC, 1974-84): "Mr. C." kept his home open to his kids' lively friends – i.e., Fonzie.

Jim Walsh (James Eckhouse), "Beverly Hills, 90210" (Fox, 1990-2000): Letting his twin children Brandon and Brenda learn about life on their own wasn't simple for doting dad Jim ... but he generally stayed out of their way.

Homer Simpson (voice of Dan Castellaneta), "The Simpsons" (Fox, 1989-present): Either in animation or live-action, there never has been another parent quite like Homer, for a bounty of reasons.

Sandy Cohen (Peter Gallagher), "The O.C." (Fox, 2003-07): Another of television history's coolest dads, this liberal public defender often had a hard time reconciling his modest past with his affluent present.

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