

# Farewell To A Couple Of TV Parents

This week, fans of 50s and 70s television lost two beloved character. On Saturday, Barbara Billingsley who played June Cleaver on *Leave it to Beaver* passed away. Throughout the 1950s Ward and June were the parents of Wally and Theodore "Beaver" Cleaver. It is almost inconceivable in today's world to have a mother who wore a pretty dress and apron all day long and would have a plate of cookies and a pitcher of milk waiting for you when you got home from school. It seems that some of the biggest problems she had to deal with was the Beaver's refusal to eat Brussel Sprouts. Of course, there was the time when Beaver and his pal Larry Mondello were stuck in the giant coffee cup on the billboard. Not to mention enduring the frequent visits by one Eddie Haskell and his "My that's a very lovely dress you are wearing, Mrs. Cleaver." Not only did she later reprise the role of one of tv land's favorite mothers, Ms. Billingsley also was the voice of "Nanny" on the animated Muppet Babies series.

Tuesday, Tom Bosley who played hardware owner/father for eleven years on *Happy Days* lost his life. Week in and week out, Howard Cunningham leant and ear and sage advice to Richie and Joanie. Not so much to Chuck... who wasn't around long enough but maybe to bounce a basketball during the first handful of episodes. Long after Fonzie "jumped the shark" on skis in his trademark leather jacket, Howard and Marion watched their children grow, move out, and (in their daughter's case) move back in. Years after the series ended, Mr. Bosley originated the role of another father, Maurice (Belle's father) in the Original Broadway Cast of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

AH... simpler times with simple problems. Rest in peace June and Mr C.

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# TV to Movie

One of the strangest trends in movies for the past several years has been to turn television shows of days gone by into big screen extravaganzas. For the most part, I do not see them as being over successful. Probably, the most profitable venture into this phenomenon has been the Star Trek series. This is primarily because there was a built-in audience of fans who wanted to see the further voyages of Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy, and company. However, several other television shows have attempted to cross over and most have failed.

*The Flintstones* tried twice with live-action versions of the classic cartoon. While the first movie was relatively entertaining, *The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas* was a disaster. It featured a ridiculous looking computer generated version of the Great Gazoo (voiced by Alan Cummings). Even Ann-Margaret (reprising her role as Ann-Margrock from the original series) could not save the movie. Perhaps the *Jetsons* live-action movie (which has been in pre-production for about 5 years) will do better. Or maybe it is better to leave animated series as they are... animated.

Several classic television comedies have also tried to become big screen movies. *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Leave It to Beaver*, and *Bewitched* to name a few. Does anyone even remember them? Nicole Kidman attempted to portray Samantha in a movie whose plot was a convoluted mess. *Beaver* tried to be a movie centered around plot devices audiences could watch on TV and reruns that were considerably better (for example, Beaver stuck in the giant coffee cup on top of a giant billboard). I think I have seen *The Beverly Hillbillies* once and remember NOT laughing at the hicks trying to integrate themselves into

Beverly Hills life.

This summer audiences will be delight in two television comedies coming to the big screen. *Sex and the City* will star Sarah Jessica Parker and the rest of the cast of the original series. *Get Smart* brings the tremendous Steve Carell to the iconic role of Maxwell Smart, agent 86 of CONTROL.