Sometimes AIDS Is Beside the Point

July 14, 2011 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

Sherwood Schwartz, the creator of TV shows such as *Gilligan's Island* and *The Brady Bunch*, died recently. An interesting article in *The Advocate* raises an AIDS angle to the story.

The actor Robert Reed, who played Mike Brady, the dad on *The Brady Bunch*, died in 1992. He was HIV positive. However, it is unclear from media reports if he had AIDS or if the virus contributed to his death, which was initially attributed to colon cancer.

On the occasion of Schwartz's death, the rumors regarding the reasons for him not attending Reed's funeral have resurfaced. Schwartz allegedly was conflicted about Reed being gay and feared that knowledge of Reed being HIV positive would harm the franchise.

Two actors from the show try putting the kibosh on those rumors by claiming that the men just didn't get along:

Susan Olsen, who played Cindy Brady and coauthored the book Love to Love You Bradys: The Bizarre Story of The Brady Bunch Variety Hour, *tells* The Advocate, *"My understanding is that Sherwood and [son] Lloyd did not attend Bob's funeral because they felt Bob would truly not want them there and it would be in bad taste to attend. I think they were trying to respect Bob's wishes."*

Barry Williams, a.k.a. Greg Brady, agrees. "Sherwood

Schwartz didn’t skip on Robert Reed’s funeral because of AIDS and its potential impact on the popularity of The Brady Bunch*. He couldn’t have cared less that Bob was gay. By the time Bob passed away in 1992* The Brady Bunch *was established and popular enough that nothing would get in its way.*"

It’s sad that AIDS stigma is still so strong that it takes so much effort to make the case that AIDS, in this case, is beside the point.

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