

## ALL IN THE FAMILY 1971–1979, CBS



## Remembering the Bunkers

NORMAN LEAR'S *All in the Family* celebrates its 40th anniversary this week with the eighth season due January 11 on DVD. In the 1970s, the taboo-busting sitcom starring Carroll O'Connor, Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner and Sally Struthers was so politically incorrect that much of its material—not to mention Lear's other '70s classics like *Maude*, *Sanford and Son*, *Good Times*, *The Jeffersons* and others—might not get on the air today. Now 88, the legendary TV producer and social activist spoke to TV GUIDE MAGAZINE in an exclusive interview.

**Why isn't CBS planning anything to commemorate the 40th anniversary of *All in the Family*?** I don't know, but they never approached me about a retrospective. I actually called Sony Entertainment, which now owns the rights to my shows, because TV GUIDE called me for this interview!

**What would Archie Bunker and his son-in-law, Mike, be doing today?** Mike would probably be feeling everything I'm feeling about the world's problems today and be protesting. Archie would be protesting because he'd be listening by way of the

media, and he might think the real Republicans are the Tea Party. **I'm sure Archie would also have plenty to say about having an African-American president.** Archie's take on President Obama would be a question of which side of the president's mixed heritage was preeminent—and he'd mispronounce the word “preeminent.”

**You and Carroll O'Connor had a number of well-publicized disagreements when *All in the Family* was on the air. Would you care to elaborate?** No, but the fact is there would have been no Archie without Carroll, even though he sat down to every new script afraid. Once he became the character, he was better than all of us. **Why were you allowed to be so controversial, and was there anything you couldn't get on the air?** We were allowed because we were successful and nobody messes with success. The only episode I ever had trouble with was the abortion show on *Maude*, and it wasn't even with getting it on the air initially, but later during

the summer reruns, that the trouble happened. That's when we started getting angry letters from anti-abortion protesters and women's rights groups.

***Good Times* came from *Maude*, which was criticized over the J.J. Evans character being lazy and saying the catchphrase “Dy-no-mite” too much.** That was a really important part of TV history because J.J.'s roots were his art, and we did a wonderful show in the first season where he painted a black Jesus. It was the black press in the second year that started talking about “Why does J.J. have to say ‘Dy-no-mite’ all the time?” and “Why must the father hold down two jobs and sometimes three?” That's what triggered *The Jeffersons*.

**The *Jeffersons* also received its share of flak about George Jefferson being an uneducated black Archie.** George Jefferson was educated in the American tradition, which is moving on up in the world and making money, not just having a f---ing college education.

**What's your take on the current state of TV?** This is the golden age of television drama. Some of the best dramatic writing that has ever been done for television is on today. I also think *Modern Family* is terrific.

**What are you doing now?** I'm trying to sell a new sitcom about people living in a retirement village, but I haven't had any takers because no one wants the older demographic. I'm also very involved in my record label,

Concord Music Group, and writing my memoirs. **Besides your sitcoms, how do you want to be remembered?** As someone who felt he mattered and cared.

**FAMILY TIMES Season 8 includes Edith's 50th birthday and the story of Mike and Gloria's first date**

