

Paul Regan Big Elk Feb 11-76 MT

Conversation

(This is the first of a series of conversations with women married to men in the public eye.)

Shirley Hunter has been married for 13 years to Tommy Hunter, star of the Friday night Tommy Hunter television show. Bettie Bradley visited with her in her own home and they discussed her feelings about her marriage.

BETTIE: Has marriage to a celebrity been more difficult than you expected?

SHIRLEY: Not at all. It really hasn't been any more difficult than being married to a businessman. I've known Tommy 22 years — we went together nine years before we were married.

BETTIE: Are other women a problem?

SHIRLEY: There are always glamour girls who are impressed by a celebrity. It bothered me when I was first married, but the life we have developed is essentially very private.

BETTIE: Have you done anything specifically to hang on to your own identity?

SHIRLEY: It hasn't been necessary. You must understand that Tommy enjoys his family. He tapes his shows six months of the year and is home for six months. We bought a motor home and we've been coast to coast in Canada with our three boys — twice! Last summer we travelled 7,200 miles in seven weeks, visiting Tommy's aunt in Costa Mesa in California and driving up the coast to Vancouver and then across Canada.

BETTIE: If Tommy's on tour, do you accompany him?

SHIRLEY: He doesn't tour anymore. If there should be an out of town date, we pile the kids into the camper and we all go.

BETTIE: Do you all watch his television show?

SHIRLEY: Tommy tapes Thursday. If we're home on Friday, we watch, but Tommy is his own severest critic. He likes my opinion, too. And the kids are so darned honest — they're so open about what they like or don't like about the show.

BETTIE: Do you always accompany him when he travels?

SHIRLEY: I really like to. When he entertained the troops in Cypress and another year in Germany I went along. Tommy would only go on the condition we fly home to have Christmas day with our own three boys. So we flew back from Europe on Christmas Eve, and he had to turn right around and fly back again after Christmas.

BETTIE: You both enjoy the traditional marriage?

SHIRLEY: Absolutely. Tommy enjoys his home and I prefer to be home when he's home.



Times photo by RON POZZER

Shirley Hunter

Shirley and Tommy Hunter have lived in Mississauga with their boys for six years. The Tommy Hunter television show can be seen every Friday night. Tommy spends six months taping the series and six months is devoted to his other interests. Inveterate travellers, the Hunter family plan one major cross country or cross continent trip every year in their camper.