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Alumnus Co-authors Brady Book

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Alumnus Co-authors *Brady* Book

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – During the 1970's, the Bradys were a household name in America and are now said to be indelibly a part of American pop culture. While the iconic family is best known for *The Brady Bunch*, few associate them with *The Brady Bunch Variety Hour*, a *Donny and Marie*-like show that aired soon after the Bradys did their last taping and said goodbye to their split-level ranch.

“Up until now, *The Brady Bunch Variety Hour* was Hollywood's best kept secret. People pretended like [it] never existed. But we brought this skeleton out of the closet and were shocked to find it was wearing sequins,” said Ted Nicholson, Illinois Wesleyan alumnus and co-author of the new book *Love to Love you Brady, The Bizarre Story of the Brady Bunch Variety Hour*. The book was written with the help of former Brady star Susan Olsen, who played the youngest daughter Cindy on the show.

After working towards his doctorate degree at Ball State University, Nicholson met Olsen through mutual friends. The two stayed in touch and a friendship was formed. Both wanting to collaborate on a project, Nicholson approached Olsen with the idea of writing a book about *The Brady Variety Hour*. Despite the popularity of the Brady franchise, Nicholson realized that very little information was available about the show. He became curious and wanted to learn more. Olsen agreed the project was a great idea, and it evolved from there.

Writing a book was no small feat. There were days where “there was seemingly no end in sight. I would be excited at times but then the drudgery of all the hours of work would wear me down,” said Nicholson, a native Normalite. From discussing the conception and production of the show, to delving into personal issues of the cast members, Nicholson and Olsen expose the true story

of an outwardly perfect family. After seven years and over 100 interviews, the book was released at the end of August 2009.

Although working on a book for several years may sound grueling, Nicholson is no stranger to hard work. He earned a double degree from IWU in business administration (BA, '93) and music performance (BM, '96), and went on to earn two master's degrees in music from Illinois State University and the University of Michigan, as well as a doctorate degree in music at Ball State University. Though there may seem to be no discernable connection between a degree in music and publishing a behind-the-scenes book on the Brady Bunch, Nicholson thinks otherwise. He remembers writing many extensive research papers for his music history courses and believes, "All historical writing is basically the same, in my opinion, whether it be music, sports, politics, or *The Brady Bunch*. The same basic principles apply."

He also remembers his days at Illinois Wesleyan. Nicholson said, "I don't think I could ever give Illinois Wesleyan enough credit or kudos for all the wonderful opportunities I've had and experiences that continue to influence me today. I'll always have that sense of pride and gratitude that all IWU alumni share."