

TV MOMS

They're not always perfect, but they'll never tell you to clean your room, either

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Even when you were in the dog house with your real mom, there was another special lady who would never turn you away. She was always there when you needed her. She always knew the right thing to say. And more often than not, she came with a pretty catchy theme song.

She's your favorite TV mom.

It's been 60 years since the first mom appeared on television, and it wasn't the hilarious Lucy Ricardo or perfect June Cleaver. The distinction falls to the little-known sitcom *Mary Kay and Johnny*, whose lead actress gave birth to a son in December, 1948 — in real life and in the show, according to *TV Moms* by Ray Richmond.

Since then they've been like part of the family, changing with us all these years. The uniformly flawless stay-at-home moms of the '50s gave way to a bevy of telemothering options, from the bluecollar wisdom of Roseanne Conner on *Roseanne* to the sisterly intimacy of Lorelai Gilmore on *Gilmore Girls*.

This Mother's Day, pick your favorite or celebrate them all. Curl up on the couch, warm up a TV dinner, and turn on the telly for some quality time together.

Oh, and don't forget about your real mom.

BEST MOM

Clair Huxtable (Phylicia Rashad): The spunky matriarch of *The Cosby Show* managed to be a successful working woman and a tough but loving mother of five. She was voted the best TV mom in a 2004 poll.

Runner-up: **Marion "Mrs. C" Cunningham (Marion Ross)**, who was so cool on *Happy Days* that she let Fonzie live over the garage.

WORST MOM

Peg Bundy (Katey Sagal): She couldn't — or wouldn't — do anything right. No cooking, no cleaning, no nothing. The gauche mom of *Married ... With Children* spent more time on her outrageous outfits than her dysfunctional family.

Runner-up: **Livia Soprano (Nancy Marchand)**, who put a hit out on her son Tony on *The Sopranos*.

MOST CONTROVERSIAL MOM



Lucille Ball, as Lucy Ricardo of the *I Love Lucy* show, was one of the first TV mothers. (BLADE ILLUSTRATION/WES BOOHER)

Murphy Brown (Candice Bergen): When she decided to have a baby without a husband on *Murphy Brown*, Vice President Dan Quayle said it was a reflection of the loss of morals that was affecting the country.

Runner-up: **Maude Findlay (Bea Arthur)**, who on *Maude* had an abortion, battled alcoholism, and started a campaign to elect Henry Fonda as president.

GROUNDBREAKING MOM

Julia Baker (Diahann Carroll): The first black character to have a leading role on a TV comedy, she was a widowed, single mom on *Julia*, which first aired in 1968 and lasted three seasons.

Runner-up: **Angie Lopez (Constance Marie)**, who became the first Latina mom on a major network TV series when she debuted on *The George Lopez Show* in 2002.

OLDEST MOM

Sophia Petrillo (Estelle Getty): Take a show about senior citizens and then add in one of their mothers — that's old. Good thing her wit and sarcasm stayed fresh through seven seasons of *The Golden Girls*.

Runner-up: **Wilma Flintstone (Jean Vander Pyl)**, who dated back to 10,000 B.C. on *The Flintstones*.

WEIRDEST MOM

Mork (Robin Williams): The only man on this list, the alien from the planet Ork actually expelled an egg from his navel that grew and grew until it cracked to reveal a full-grown Jonathan Winters on *Mork & Mindy*.

Runner-up: **Lily Munster (Yvonne De Carlo)**, who was a member of the undead as the vampire matron on *The Munsters*.

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