



# The Sitcoms of Norman Lear

*Sean Campbell*

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## **The Sitcoms of Norman Lear** Sean Campbell

Archie Bunker, George Jefferson, Maude—the television sitcom world of the 1970s was peopled by the creations of Norman Lear. Beginning in 1971 with the premier of *All in the Family*, Lear's work gave sitcoms a new face and a new style. No longer were families perfect and lives in order. Mostly blue-collar workers and their families, Lear's characters argued, struggled, uttered sometimes shocking opinions and had no problem contributing to—or at least, acknowledging—the turmoil so shunned by 1960s television. Significantly, not only did Lear address difficult issues, but he did so through successful programming. Week after week, Americans tuned in to see the family adventures of the Bunkers, the Jeffersons, and *Sanford and Son*. With a thorough analysis of his sitcoms, this volume explores Norman Lear's memorable production career during the 1970s. It emphasizes how Lear's shows reflected the political and cultural milieu, and how they addressed societal issues including racism, child abuse and gun control. The casting, production and behind-the-screen difficulties of *All in the Family*, *Sanford & Son*, *Maude*, *Good Times*, *The Jeffersons* and *One Day at a Time* are discussed. Each show is examined from inception through series finale. Interviews with some of the actors and actresses such as Rue McClanahan of *Maude* and Marla Gibbs from *The Jeffersons* are included.

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