## Understanding the need of all those in grief

Those who don't know Harriet Sar-noff Schiff well listen in amazement to her. She frequently creates the impres-sion that here is an extremely macabre

rates the point, sae said emphati-cally, leaning forward on her elbows. "I want most to have this show pull ev-erything about death and dying out of the closet!"

the close!"
The conversation took place on "any day but Monday," which is "Reachout" day on radio station WCAR (1090 AM).
The 2-3 p.m. program, she said, is a call-in talk show where listeners share grief, problems, concerns and experi-

ences with her, her husband, announcer Sandy Schiff and guest speakers knowledgable on the subject of death and dying.

"This is not a suicide prevention ser-vice" she said.

"This is not a suicide prevention ser-rice," she said, "It's a sharing service. What worked for grieving people, he whey dealt with their grief, this is really what I love to hear. And, I do!" The tim, energized Birmingham resident is a former newspaper reporter, as uccessful author and a nationally recognized expert on the subject of death and dving.

ognized expert on the subject of death and dying.

In his best-selling autoblography, television personality Phil Donahue described their meeting as his most unforgettable experience.

The encounter took place on Donahue's syndicated show after publication of her book "The Bereaved Parent." That book detailed her responses to the death of her 10-year-old son.

Mrs. Schiff drew an audience, he said, nade up entirely of parents who lost children.

"I saw those people sitting there, the audience, and many of them were younger than me," Donahue said, "and - you know, I didn't lose it, but it's as emotionally involved as I have been or cere will be in a show. That show transcended the tube,"

THE COMPLIMENT pleases Harriet Schiff, but it doesn't overly impress her, or prompt her to think of an avalanche of dollar bills derived from exploiting her loss or those of others.

"You know, I made a lot more money as a newspaper writer," she said.
"However, since it did happen to me, and since I have the skills to work with basically, since this horrible thing happened to me, then others should benefit from it."

Her book is in its seventh printing, with editions in German, Datch and also printed in Great Britain. So the invitation to have a weekly radio talk show seemed an opportunity of expand and the considered it are considered it and it is show seemed to discuss it on the radio, she said, was prompted by the death of her son Robby a dozen years ago. Five years later, she found that she was able to face his death with the skill that was most natural, writing about it on paper. In retrospect, she said, she had no idea that she was beginning a new life when she wrok, "The loss of a child of any age — even an adult child—any age — even

"Death and the Law" or who should have the final say on the style of burial (the dead or the living?), each program will include personalities and experts conversant in the topic.

"I also begin every program — by explaining that I have a dead child. It seems to open people up."

LOOKING to the future, Mrs. Schiff sees no end to the list of subjects that should be covered during her program. Prominent on the list, she said, is a piece on suicide in Detroit.

"Economics and suicide are a very big issue," she said firmly.

big issue," she said firmly.
"For instance, there is the corporate mentality that can't deal with being, layed off and possibly never being able to return to what they were trained for. Or, the recent articles about the rate of suicide among policemen. I feel morally that something has to be done on this whole issue."

whole issue."

Leaning back in her seat, her arms draped over the arms of the chair, she looked at the ceiling, around the room, and then focused her attention straight ahead.

"There are so many things to cover that it's a question of what to cover next."

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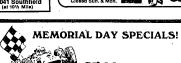
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