

Carl Reiner hosts 'Sunday Best'

New NBC program looks at television past, present

By Mary Ann Townsend

Comedy legend Carl Reiner has been humoring television audiences through five decades ever since he was a regular on 1949's "The 54th Street Revue."

He's at it again as host of NBC's new series "Sunday Best," which looks at funny broadcasting moments since the beginning of television through the present.

While he got his start on television as the photographer in a 1948 series called "Fashion Story," he gained fame for two other roles: his regular spot on the 1950's variety program "Your Show of Shows" and his writing and producing role on "The Dick Van Dyke Show." In fact, the tall, balding Reiner looks the same as he did when he played on the latter show as Alan Brady from 1961 to 1966.

The '60s brought another claim to fame for the comedian. His comedy routine, "The 2,000 Year Old Man" with Mel Brooks, had several incarnations on television and on records.

In the early 1970s he worked for a while on "The New Dick Van Dyke Show," and in 1976 he played Mr. Angel in the short-lived series "Good Heavens." Later in that decade he took his talents to feature films, directing movies like "Oh God" and "The Jerk."

He got his chance to play drama in the 1981 TV movie "Skokie." But he has also continued creating com-

edy vehicles for others as a writer, producer and director.

As host of NBC's "Sunday Best," Reiner will be guiding viewers through events in television history.

"He's really the father figure who guides you through, and he really is strictly the host. He may do an occasional comedy bit, but we will have other comedy bits on the show," explained Garth R. Ancier, executive producer of "Sunday Best."

Those other comedy bits are provided by an eclectic group of television aficionados including syndicated columnist and TV satirist Linda Ellerbee, actor-comedian (and original Eddie Haskell) Harry Shearer, co-creator of David Letterman's "Late Night," Merrill Markoe and comedian Jeff Cesario. Executives on "Sunday Best" include former CNN managing editor Cissy Baker and former "SPY Magazine" features editor Bruce Handy.

On the premiere episode of "Sun-

day Best," the contributors paid tribute to Reiner through a segment of clips of his classic shows, including his toupee run on "The Dick Van Dyke Show," "The 2,000 Year Old Man" and skits from "Your Show of Shows."

Each week "Sunday Best" will be divided into various segments, from a look at the previous week in television to highlights excerpted from a week at some other point in television's history. There's a theme segment, a viewer video mail segment, and lots and lots of miscellaneous clips.

"It continues to be molded and shaped. That's the nature of a show like this. It's never been done before, so the whole thing keeps molding as we go along," Ancier said. "We're just having fun with it."

TV comedy king Carl Reiner hosts NBC's new weekly series "Sunday Best." The series takes a look at humorous broadcasting moments from the beginning of television up to the most recent week's shows. "Sunday Best" is broadcast, appropriately, on Sundays.



Handsome Woody Harrelson is part of the reason NBC's hit comedy *Cheers*, airing Thursdays, is top-ranked. Harrelson plays the naive bartender Woody Boyd.



Fred Dryer plays a no-nonsense detective on the police drama *Hunter*, Wednesdays on NBC.