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Designing Women addresses the AIDS epidemic in prime time



Actor Tony Goldwyn recalls his role in the groundbreaking sitcom episode

“**D**esigning Women was one of my first TV jobs. I remember reading the script—where this young man named

Kendall hires the ladies of Sugarbaker’s to redo the room to be used for his funeral—and realizing, ‘Wow, this is a great part.’

Sometimes in series television, you sort of plug your cog into the factory wheel. But here, I knew that this episode in particular meant so much to Linda [Bloodworth-Thomason, the show’s creator], whose mother had just died of AIDS. [The TV movie] *An Early Frost* had aired, but other than that, no one on TV was ever talking about the disease.

Designing Women became the first sitcom to tackle it.

No one advised me not to take the role, but I do remember discussions with my agent saying, ‘Is this something we should be concerned about?’ Here I was, a young guy trying to start a career, and I was playing a gay man with AIDS. As it turned out, *Designing Women* had only a positive impact on my career, because the episode got a lot of awards and people noticed me.

What’s amazing to me is, even today, I get a lot of thanks for it. More than 23 years later, people still come up to me about this episode. I feel so lucky to have been a part of it and glad that over the years, it has endured.”

— Tony Goldwyn

CATCH UP

An episode-by-episode guide to all eight seasons of *Designing Women* is online at TV.com.