

# TV GUIDE

## Class Acting

**SEASONS OF LOVE** Sunday, 9/8c, Lifetime

GLADYS KNIGHT RARELY takes on dramatic acting roles, but when she does, she makes them seem effortless. Case in point: the Lifetime holiday movie *Seasons of Love*, in which she plays Angie, the gracious matriarch of an affluent family, whose husband of 35 years dies on New Year's Eve. The Grammy-winning R&B icon swears that singing and acting are as different as, well, Knight and day. —ML

**Word is that you've never taken an acting class. Are you born to this?** Not at all!

I'm really very private with my emotions, except for the fact that I love everybody. I never hold that back, especially when I sing. But acting? That's so hard for me. I relied on Taraji P. Henson, who plays Angie's sister, Jackie, to get me through it, especially when it came to my big grief scene. She really helped me let it go.

**You're playing yourself in the upcoming Fox hip-hop drama series *Empire*. Is that any easier?** That scares me, too, though it

was a little better because they allowed me to do it in my own words. I guess I'm just hopelessly old-school! I even had trouble when it came time to kiss Richard Portnow, who plays my husband in *Seasons of Love*. I'm married! I've never kissed another man outside of my husband. [Laughs] So I said to Richard, "Look, about this kiss thing. No open mouth. No tongue. Even getting that close to your lips is hard for me!" He said, "Guess, what? This is my first screen kiss, too!"

**In the film, you are the head of a huge family that's multiethnic—blacks, whites, Latinos—yet race has absolutely nothing to do with the plot. A sign of the times?**

Yes! There has been fantastic progress! Angie's husband is Caucasian, and there was a time when that would have been considered controversial, even scandalous. Thank God we're past that. Now we have *Scandal*, where Olivia Pope is in love with a man but the moral issue isn't that he's white—it's that he's president!



"I love that we show a marriage between people who truly treat each other with respect," says Knight (right, with Henson). "Those seem to be few and far between these days."