

# BUFFY STAR'S ANGUISH OVER 'SUICIDE' DAD

## Now she'll never be able to patch up bitter feud

**S**ARAH MICHELLE GELLAR's long-estranged father has died, and she's heartbroken that she'll never have the chance to make amends.

Arthur Gellar, 60, was found dead at his home in New York City and stunned neighbors are saying he took his own life.

"Sarah is in shock," confides a pal. "For many years, she always dismissed the idea that she needed to have a relationship with him. But in the back of her mind, she knew he was there should her feelings change.

"Now it's too late. And I know Sarah is overwhelmed with sadness that she's lost the opportunity to make amends."

In the past, the 24-year-old star of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* has been extremely vocal about her bitterness toward Gellar, whom she says dumped her mother, Rosellen, when the actress was just 8.

"I might have been an immaculate conception - my father is not in the picture," Sarah once declared. "I'd never acknowledge him as my father."

But Arthur Gellar, who was a fabric salesman, recalled a rosier version of his relationship with his little girl.

"I was out of town a lot," he admitted in an interview this year. "But when I was home, we spent time together like any other father and daughter. I remember teaching Sarah how to ride a bike, and

taking her ice skating, to the movies and out for ice cream.

"Then just before Sarah's eighth birthday, I lost my job and started suffering from stomach problems and clinical depression. A few months later, Rosellen filed for divorce. It hurts me that Sarah claims I walked out on her and her mom. That's the furthest thing from the truth."

For a few years, Gellar saw his daughter every Sunday. But when Sarah was 13, she told him she didn't want to see him any more.

"I told her, 'You're a big girl now. I can't force you to see me,'" he recalled. "I didn't know it then, but that was the last I was ever going to speak to her. I'd give anything to have her call me 'Dad' and smile at me once more."

Gellar, who had been diagnosed with kidney cancer a week before his death, carried that wish to his grave.

"The poor guy died penniless and heartbroken," co-worker Howard Schwack tells GLOBE. "He had stacks and stacks of articles and photos of Sarah. He always hoped they'd reconcile. He never stopped loving her."

The official medical report is not out yet. But ironically, with Sarah's father's possible suicide, she and actor-fiance Freddie Prinze Jr., 25, now have a tragic family history in common. Freddie's dad, Chico and the Man star Freddie Prinze, shot himself to death in 1976.

And her friend says that like her beau, Sarah will probably be haunted by the tragedy. "She's completely broken up," says the pal. "For a long time to come, Sarah will feel the pain of having lost her father for good."

- ROBIN MIZRAHI

**'Sarah is overwhelmed with sadness'**

