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Presenting Barbara Knapp

Miss Iowa Homemaker

Last spring you selected an outstanding student in your department. Then it was our job—and a tough one—to select one as "Miss Iowa Homemaker." We think Bobbie Knapp, a child development major, pretty well fills the bill as a top-notch home economist. Here's her story.

by Barbara Parsons

FROM THE time she clutched the hand of her doctor father and looked wide-eyed at the hospital babies, Bobbie Knapp has wanted a career in child development.

Of course, at that young age she didn't have any definite plans; in fact, like a typical youngster she wanted to be a nurse—until she discovered that nurses do other things besides taking care of babies.

By the time Bobbie was in sixth grade, baby-sitting took up a good many of her free after-school hours. Then is when she really made up her mind that she'd never be satisfied unless she was working with children.

And since that time, she's seldom passed up a chance to do just that. During the summer after she was graduated from high school, Bobbie helped a homemaker in the daytime and had charge of four children.

Her outlook broadened from an interest solely in children to an interest in family life, for as she says, that woman was a "wonderful mother," and an example of all Bobbie wanted to be.

Experience, it is said, is one of the main things employers look for and experience is one thing Bobbie has quite a bit of behind her. Every summer, for the past 6 years, she has taken care of children at the church nursery school in her hometown, Wichita, Kansas. Coming to Iowa State College didn't interfere with her church nursery school work, though. Last year Bobbie helped with the 2 to 7-year old children of Unitarian Church members on Sunday morning.

She's done volunteer work in a war nursery for children of working mothers, too, and as a student at Stephens College in Missouri, she volunteered to play once a week with children in the Children's Hospital at the University of Missouri. Those youngsters, from the ages of 1 to 12, were crippled or bed-ridden for some other reason.

Bobbie's visit to that hospital must have been a looked-forward-to event for those children because her steady companion was "Clippo," her clown puppet.

Clippo, 10 inches tall with a white felt hat, painted clown face, ruffled collar, big white hands and feet and a red and white polka-dot clown suit, originally came from a Chicago department store. He has delighted many a child, including those at the Children's Hospital, with his antics as he shakes hands, talks and rides on stuffed animals. Clippo has gone along with Bobbie to entertain the children in both nursery schools on this campus as well as to such meetings.
as parent's night in elementary schools near her home.

At one such meeting, Clippo was going through his act of learning to rollerskate (Bobbie explains that it's easier to tell the children that Clippo is just learning than to make them understand that it's hard to control a puppet so that it can rollerskate to perfection.) After the performance, a child remarked to Bobbie, "The last time I saw Clippo, he was just learning to rollerskate then, too." Other children often wonder why Clippo can't turn a somersault.

Summers have been no exception to Bobbie's apparent plan to work with children whenever she has free time. As a counselor at the YWCA camp for 7 to 12-year old girls near Wichita, she helped with nature studies, singing and evening programs.

This past summer she spent a week attending a Kansas Health Workshop at Kansas University. Those who were at this workshop studied the child from birth to 6 years of age through discussions and consultations with over 50 specialists.

**Child Talk**

Bobbie's enthusiasm for child development and family life relationships never stops at the end of a classroom day. In fact, her friends frequently accuse her, good naturedly of course, of monopolizing the conversation with child-talk. After-school hours usually find her at the YWCA where last year she was chairman of the Marriage and Family Group and head of the Bridal Workshop. She's active too in her departmental child development club. Last year she was vice-president of that group and chairman of her department's Veishea Open House. As for other activities, Bobbie was a member of the home economics curriculum committee last spring and is now a member of Phi Upsilon Omicron, professional home economics fraternity.

Almost everyone who works with children has a favorite remark they've heard a child say. Bobbie is no exception. Her last name, "Knapp" is often confusing to children who usually call her either "Mrs. Knapp" or "Miss Snap." One child even asked, "Are you sleepy?" when she told him her name was Barbara Knapp. Others often remark, "But Bobbie's a boy's name, isn't it?"

**Merrill Palmer**

Next winter quarter, Bobbie heads for Detroit and Merrill-Palmer, a special school for family life and child development study. She was selected as one of three to attend as representatives of Iowa State College for winter quarter. In an atmosphere much less formal than the home economics classroom here, Bobbie will observe the Merrill-Palmer nursery school and will take work in parent education—one of her major interests. She's also particularly interested in the emotional and social phases of child development—all of which will have its place when she obtains the position she's aiming for—a nursery school teacher. Right now she has March marked as graduation time.

Perhaps Bobbie's success so far is largely due to her belief that child development and family life are really important. It's an unlimited field, she says, pointing out that wherever a woman is, whatever she is doing, she's trained to be a help to many people—in church work, youth groups, Red Cross, orphanages and other community organizations. It's a way to better understand and help people of all ages, not just children. Perhaps, as she says, it's idealistic, but Bobbie believes that the family is the basic core of our culture and that by teaching children to get along with others and to become well-developed, it can be a starting point in creating a better society. And Bobbie wants to have a part in that venture.

**FAMILY LIFE** research is a new field which many of you home economists—like Bobbie Knapp—may find challenging. Dr. Gertrude Chittenden, head of the child development department at Iowa State College, described this new field at an annual meeting of the American Home Economics Association. She explained that so far, most of the research in family life has been done on the economic and physical aspects of the home. There are indications that the attitude of family members may have an even greater effect on the general atmosphere of home life than the amount of money or type of home the family has, she pointed out. She emphasized the need for studies to show how the interactions of adults in the family may influence the interactions of other family members.

For further information on this new field you may wish to read Dr. Chittenden's complete speech in the September issue of the Journal of Home Economics.

All eyes light up, including those of dark-haired Bobbie, when she puts Clippo, her clown puppet, through his paces for nursery school children.

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