1957

A Well-Groomed TV Personality

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It Takes Lots of Hard Work to Be A WELL-GROOMED TV PERSONALITY

by Jan Anderson
Education Junior

APPEARING ON TELEVISION requires more than arriving at the correct time with a well-prepared script or demonstration. Considerable thought must be given to dress and grooming.

Carolyn Smith, a junior in textiles and clothing and television workshop, sent questionnaires to 10 women in television inquiring about their special problems and needs in clothing. The results of this problem in fashion illustrate proved that it takes lots of hard work to choose the correct clothing, accessories and makeup necessary to be a well-groomed television personality.

Little Fabric Design

The camera has a way of “making a mountain out of a molehill,” and for this reason, the smallest detail must be considered. The women questioned generally agreed that fabric design must be kept to a minimum. Betty Furness, Westinghouse representative, says designs appear to wiggle on the screen and she wears only plain clothing.

Miss Furness deviates from the widely accepted rules of television dress in that she wears only black and white. She says that colors appear grey on screen and do not offer enough contrast with the background. Black usually burns an image into the camera lens and white is apt to give a halo effect. However, Miss Furness works in New York where television equipment is so highly sensitive that black and white contrast is possible.

In smaller stations where such equipment is not available, performers shy away from black and white. Green is the best appearing hue on color television, but many actors are superstitious and feel the color is unlucky.

The questionnaires revealed that open collars and cutout necklines are the most satisfactory because they are more flattering to necks which may appear short on high-angle shots. Three quarter length sleeves avoid unsightly arm bulges.

Miss Bernice Hulin, WOI-TV's Women's Editor, says if the equipment is good and an experienced cameraman is on the job, there is little figure distortion.

Type of fabric is important, too, Carolyn found. Satin is smooth and reflects too much light; soft wool fabrics absorb much of the light and televise better. Lightweight fabrics keep the performer cooler under extremely hot studio lights. If programs are of the “sit-down” type, wrinkle resistant fabrics are necessary.

Most women questioned prefer a basic dress that can be changed with accessories. It should be simple so it does not distract from the program material. Care must also be exercised in selecting jewelry. Bright or sparkling jewelry causes undesirable glare, while pearls televise best.

Buy Own Clothing

Some women, when beginning television careers, must buy their own clothing and find this a large item of expense. They try to buy clothes which can be worn in everyday living. Arle Haebeler of WCCO-TV in Minneapolis attempted to enter the money spent for clothing as a business expense deduction on her income tax, but “Uncle Sam” objected.

After a show is well-established, says Miss Huline of WOI-TV, department and clothing stores are willing to lend clothing for the advertising they receive. When Miss Huline first began at KSTP-TV in St. Paul, she had to buy her own clothes. Later stores allowed her to borrow clothing and accessories. The cost of appropriate television clothing varies much as it does in everyday buying.

The next time you tune in your television set, observe closely the details that make for a smooth program. It's all for you!

Carol Koch, '56, mirrors the essentials of good television grooming.