

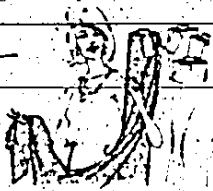
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(Continued from page 11)

"I honestly think women are influenced by other women," she said. "Women who are into clothes want to be like Babe Paley or Jackie Onassis or even, now, Betty Ford."

"We are at a point, economically, where it is important to look well dressed and affluent. We have to be well turned out, to give the impression of being elegant, and people are willing to bend over backward to dress right."

Men, she said, have only recently come into their own and are frequently influenced by their builds more than anything else.

"The really smart looking men's clothes are European. You can't have a tummy hanging out; you have to have the right build, and then you have to have an expert tailor." "It used to be that big business types wanted to look neat and presentable but did not want to be too fashionable," she continued. "Men have obviously come a long way and are taking great pride in the way they are turned out."

Ms. Coe divided men into two categories: "The ultra-conservative who still wears the same clothes he always wore, and the contemporary man—he likes to have a change because everybody in his group is doing it, whether it's his work group or play group."

In the Detroit area, fashion for both men and women is influenced not only by the auto industry but the whole big business attitude. John T. Molloy, a clothing tester,

reported that the success suit for men is charcoal grey and understated.

Designer Bill Blass last fall said that much of Detroit's fashion attitude centers around the auto industry, where the success circuit requires dressing properly (but not better than the boss or his wife).

However, Ms. Coe thinks Detroit is on a par with other Midwestern cities.

"Outside of New York, Dallas and San Francisco, Detroit is like most of mass America and the whole Middle West," she said, "though some women may stress down because of this corporate thing."

Added Brenda Rosenberg, "I really think it's a much more personal thing than really being influenced by corporations," added Ms. Rosenberg.

If the corporate game plan Blass describes does exist, it needn't. Phyllis Morrison pointed to Cristina Ford, estranged wife of tycoon Henry, as the only fashion leader or pace setter in the Detroit area.

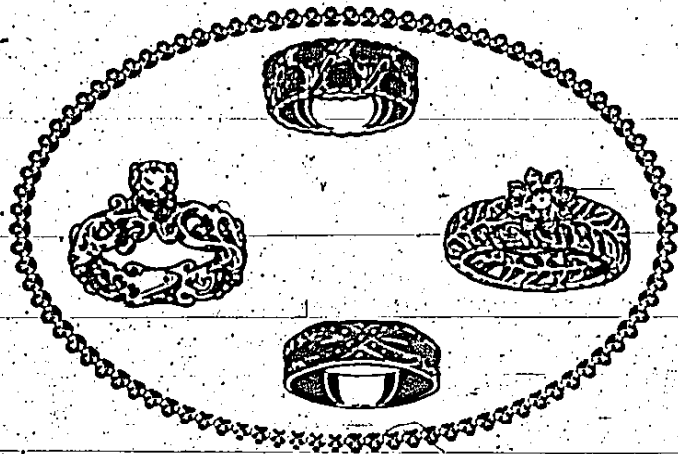
"She's the only one in this town anyone has ever heard of. There are other well dressed women, but they keep a low profile."

They are basically the women who shop the good stores, traveling the Somerset Mall and downtown Birmingham route or frequenting small but ultra chic boutiques. Their clothes are often costly, and, as Ms. Morrison said, they are not highly visible.

They are also, she said, in the minority.

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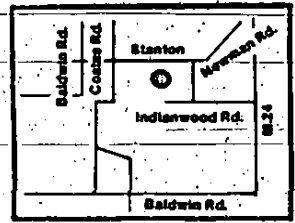
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