

Women work for varied reasons

Women in black families and white families are almost equally likely to work, a University of Michigan study shows, but the circumstances which cause them to work are quite different.

In black families, the wife's education is the strongest influencing factor. The U-M social work Prof. Joyce O. Beckett reports, "The higher her educational level, the more likely she is to be employed."

For white wives, the most important predictor was the number and age of their children. In general, the larger the family, the less likely the mother worked outside the home, especially if one child was a preschooler.

Economic need, often cited as the primary factor motivating a wife to work, ranked second for white women and only sixth for black women, according to Ms. Beckett.

Her data was drawn from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, an annual survey of some 5,000 American families conducted by the U-M Institute for Social Research. Limiting her sample to husband-wife families with wives under 56 years of age, residing in the United States, Ms. Beckett analyzed data for 2,768 households, of whom 818 were black.

Statistics on working women have primarily reflected the employment pattern of white women since they comprise the majority of women in the United States," she explains. "But the labor force participation of black wives has always been distinct from that of white wives."

"BLACK WIVES have always been more likely to work, for example. In 1980, the proportion of black wives who worked was more than 10 times greater than that of whites."

Family variables proved the most influential factors for both races in determining whether wives entered the labor force, Ms. Beckett says.

Number and age of children was the most influential factor for white women and third highest for blacks. "The cost and availability of child care are very important considerations in a wife's

decision to work," Ms. Beckett notes. "Perhaps they are less of a deterrent among blacks because black women are more apt to rely on relatives or friends than on expensive institutional day care."

In general, the higher the family's economic level, the less likely the wife worked, the U-M researcher found. While economic needs ranked second in importance for whites and sixth for blacks, the data for both races suggest that wives were more likely to work if their employment might move the families across the poverty level or into middle class status.

"THE HUSBAND'S occupation proved the second highest predictor in black families in influencing whether the wife would work," Ms. Beckett reports. "The husband's occupation was expected to reflect his attitude about his wife's employment."

"For white wives, unexpectedly, the higher the husband's occupational level, the more likely the wife worked. Wives of professionals had an employment rate 21 points higher than wives of farmers."

Black wives were the group most affected by the county's unemployment rate: the higher it rose, the less likely they worked.

Other studies have shown that in periods of economic decline, black women's overall employment decreases while that of white women increases, Ms. Beckett continues. Black women already employed kept their jobs, but fewer entered the market. Increased unemployment caused no reduction in the hiring of white women.

"These findings suggest that in times of economic recession, employers are more selective. To the extent that they discriminate, they tend to discriminate against black wives," Ms. Beckett notes.

The racial differences in factors influencing why black women and white women work have important implications for policy makers, Beckett contends. "For example, since high unemployment has been shown to cause a marked decline in the hiring of black women, the government might promote affirmative action by placing higher priority on programs to reduce unemployment."

The fashion plate

Tennis garb flashes for 'Slims' spotlight

By RUSTLE SHAND

When the Virginia Slims of Detroit tennis matches are played at Cobo Hall Feb. 21-28, sparkling tennis dresses are what you will see in play.

Worn in the arena by such top contenders as Martina Navratilova, Billie Jean King and Virginia Wade, they are designed to be seen from the bleacher seats. Ted Tining, who has gained international fame for "creating a lifestyle for women who play sports around the world," is the designer.

Tining, courier to the tennis world and official designer for the Virginia Slims Tennis Circuit, recently showed his 11th collection of tennis dresses for the stars of the 1978 Virginia Slims Tennis Circuit in Detroit.

Worried lest some women, aspiring to be tennis title winners, might confuse his show biz designs with what is appropriate tennis court wear, Tining hastened to say "These designs are not meant to be worn at a hackers double at 9 a.m."

Sparkles, sequins and rhinestones have become an important part of the sport of tennis since it emerged from seasonal lawn play into year-round indoor tennis courts. The emergence of a whole new tennis economy and the tournaments are big business. Hence the Hollywood glitz approach, he explained.

"TENNIS HAS GONE from a sport to a spectacle," he said. "When the girls voted to play only in a large arena, I decided to use sparkles and sparkles to polarize people. But these designs are for this specialized area of tennis only."

Tining's own tennis tourney appearance is purposely designed to look "freaky," in direct contrast to the usual corporate image he assumes. He's "name designer" to the American Philip Morris tobacco conglomerate, manufacturers of, among others, the Virginia Slims cigarettes, which are synonymous with the slogan, "You've come a long way, baby."

"How many of the tennis players smoke?" he was asked. "I don't know," responded Tining, "but I do know that 45 per cent of our tobacco company employees do not (smoke)."

Tining, who left his native England in 1975 and

chose Philadelphia as his new home, strongly believes that a spectator sport requires dramatic and glamorous communication. In harmony with his stature of 6-5, Tining reached king-size in tennis fashions through a series of giant strides.

The first to wear a Tining tennis creation was French star Suzanne Lenglen. In her comeback to championship tennis, she wore a dress over the "new" shorts of her day.

MAUREN "LITTLE MO" Connolly of the United States was first to win a Wimbledon championship while wearing Tining fashions. For teenage Maureen, Tining created tennis dresses embroidered white-on-white with kittens, poodles or butterflies.

Some of the outfits for the upcoming competition are lush with ultra blue and silver brocade and lame—for what Tining calls "the theatrics of night-time tennis."



Volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau, a program of the Volunteer Action Center of United Community Services has weekly listings of agencies needing volunteers. Further information about these and over 200 agencies needing volunteer services may be obtained from the volunteer bureau, 642-7272.

MALE SWIMMING AIDS—The Royal Oak YMCA is looking for men over 18 to work in the swim program for mentally-impaired children, aged 8-12. Volunteers can help either in locker room or in the pool or both. Time commitment would be 9-11 a.m. Mondays.

HOSPITAL AIDS—Volunteers interested in any phase of hospital work are needed by St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac. Openings are available in such areas as obstetrics, care unit, gift cart, mail distribution and bookmobile.

COMPANIONS—The Men Companionship Program in Southfield needs men to serve as companions for substance abuse patients. The program involves meeting weekly with the client, planning social activities to encourage a friendly relationship and completing weekly progress report. Training is provided.

EMPLOYMENT COORDINATORS—An ability to work with people and an ability to organize and operate the employment service project are necessary for the volunteer interested in this job with the 5th District Court in Pontiac. The aim of the project is to provide employment for probationers. Duties of the coordinator include contacting and acting as a liaison with employment agencies, providing follow-up contact with employers, coordinating job developers and performing administrative tasks necessary to evaluate and operate the program. Training is provided. Commitment is for at least four hours a week.

Folkdance club sets schedule

Members of the Detroit Folkdance Club will be able to kick up their heels on two evenings this month in Brookside School of Cranbrook Academy in Bloomfield Hills.

A regular session will be held at 8 p.m. Friday. It will include lessons and request dancing. Admission price is \$1.

Admission is \$1.25 for party night which will start at 9 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24. The school is at the northeast corner of Lane Pine and Cranbrook.

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