

# Education is key to equitable divorce settlements

Education, not liberation, is the key to more equitable divorce settlements for women, according to two lawyers who spoke before a group at the Farmington Community Library recently.

Dorothy Smith of the Women's Justice Center and Judy Doran of Birmingham discussed the ways in which children and discovering hidden property and savings can affect a divorce settlement.

No fault divorce law is important to key in on because it has a misleading title," said Ms. Doran. "It was meant to eradicate the

name-calling a split seems to spur," she said. "With the abandonment of adultery as grounds for divorce in Michigan, there isn't a need to state grounds for divorce."

"The trouble with that is that everyone gets the feeling that fault doesn't enter into it. This plays against feminist feelings. It's taken away a weapon that women have used to obtain a better property settlements," she said.

Children are often used as weapons to discourage women from seeking a bigger settlement, she said. "THE THREAT OF LOSING THE CHILDREN prevents the mother

from fighting for the dollars and cents that she should be receiving," Ms. Doran said.

This is especially true as men become more involved in raising children, she said.

"The Equal Rights Amendment won't change the child custody laws. If the mother is the prime parent, the court must take that into consideration. That's why mothers still get an increase in payment through child support," she said.

Many judges believe that the mother is closer to the child than the father, she said.

However, Ms. Doran predicts a change in that attitude.

"The day will come when the father will get custody or when there is an increased use of joint custody."

"The parents could live close enough together to share the children and still be careful that they aren't uprooting the children so that in effect, the kids grow up without knowing where their home is," she said.

Until that time, the system of one parent getting custody and the father paying child support continues.

In Oakland County, a father generally pays up to 20 per cent of his income toward child support with an ad-

ditional 10 per cent added for each child.

SOME FATHERS CAN FIND themselves paying up to 40 per cent of their income in child support.

"If the father makes \$20,000 a year and pays 40 per cent in support, he pays \$8,000 to the mother. What does this mean to the mother? She goes out to work. And if she hasn't worked for a while or was lucky enough to develop a job skill, then she takes a crummy job," Ms. Doran said.

"It takes a couple of years to develop job skills," she said.

Property settlements should allow the wife to live comfortably while acquiring job skills.

In some cases, the wife has helped the husband to advance in business through entertaining or by working with him, according to Ms. Doran.

"If property is acquired during marriage and if it doesn't have the wife's name on it, it is still a marital asset," she said.

"In the case of small businesses, where the wife assisted in acquiring the business, the wife has a title to the property but judges are hesitant to take a move that would possibly bankrupt a business," she said.

"In joint titles, the man can't liqui-

date the holdings because the wife has part of it."

"IF THE MONEY was there before the marriage, some judges are inclined to say that the wife is entitled to part of it after a long marriage."

"After a short marriage, of about five years, the judge is inclined to leave each party where they were financially, before the marriage," she said.

Both Ms. Doran and Ms. Smith encourage women to go after alimony. "Women are not better off in the job market now than they were 10 years ago," said Ms. Smith. "The

wage gap is widening. Women are channeled into low-paying jobs."

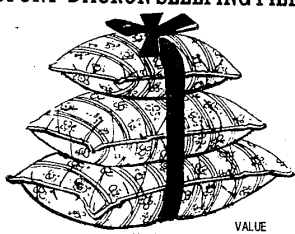
To insure that the woman is getting a proper settlement, Ms. Doran recommended that she ask her lawyer to conduct a search for hidden assets, generally called a discovery.

"The IRS uses the same procedure. It costs them \$10,000."

"Sometimes, with small businesses, the men lie or don't put funds in banks."

"It'll be hard for the wife to prove that the money is there. But if you can trace the money to the man, half of it is yours," Ms. Doran said.

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## Hills ophthalmologist dies in Ann Arbor

Dr. Ralph Pino, 88, a Farmington Hills resident died Feb. 17 at University Hospital, Ann Arbor.

A nationally known eye specialist, he was a former chief of the department of ophthalmology at Harper Hospital and served as medical director of sight-saving and braille in the Detroit Public School system for 20 years.

He established the first remedial reading program at Wayne State University and was past president of the Wayne County Medical Society and of the Detroit Ophthalmological Society.

He has been a delegate to Michigan State Medical Society for more than 30 years and was professor emeritus of Ophthalmology at Wayne State University of Medicine. He retired from active practice in 1959 after 40 years of private practice in the David Whitney Building.

He was a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, licentiate of the American Board of Ophthalmology, and a member of Wayne County Medical Society.

Dr. Pino was born on a farm in Clinton County. He taught rural schools after attending Central State Teachers College.

He graduated from Ferris Institute in 1911 and received his MD degree from the University of Illinois in 1916. Dr. Pino did post graduate work at the University of Vienna, and the universities of Colorado, Illinois and New York.

He was the author of numerous scientific articles, and the recipient of distinguished awards, including the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology Award of Merit and Honor Key for service to the academy in its educational and teaching program.

He also received a citation from the Michigan Health Council for establishment of the Health Careers movement and for being chairman of the Health Careers Committee and a long-time promoter of the use of medical technicians.

Blue Shield presented him with a citation in 1961 for 25 years of effort in this plan.



DR. RALPH PINO

He was also a member of the first board of directors of Blue Shield. In 1938, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree from Ferris State College. He has been included in Who's Who in America since 1938.

Survivors are: his wife, Grace; grandchildren, Karen Crandall, and Chris, Julie and Kelly Pino, of Franklin, and one great-grandchild, Laura Crandall.

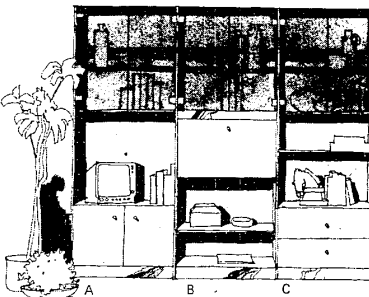
Burial was in Roseland Park.

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