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(F1B)

# Rompollo shows flowing, high society fashions

by RUSTLE SHAND

When Dominic Rompollo came home to Detroit for a visit at the B. Segel stores last week, he brought samples of his fall line, Christmas dresses, and a few gala designs from his holiday/spring collection to show 500 guests at Christ Child Christmas Luncheon at Southfield's Raleigh House.

Rompollo's presentation also gave the women an opportunity to see, first hand, some of the clothes the nation's first lady, Rosalyn Carter, will be wearing in the coming months.

Rompollo found himself (happily) in the fashion limelight following the presidential election in 1976, when all of New York's Seventh Avenue held its breath, waiting to find out the answer to "Who will Rosalyn Carter select as her signature designer?"

In the interim we have learned that Mrs. Carter enjoys a low-key fashion reputation. Some fashion pundits have called her dowdy. Bill Blass, who found much favor when the Ford's were in the White House, was so disconcerted at the thought of a Carter administration that he told me he was giving up peanuts, his favorite snack food.

But Dominic Rompollo, whom Mrs. Carter chose as her official designer, says of Rosalyn, "She has loosened up in her dressing. She likes things that travel well. She is somewhat on the conservative side and dresses with respect to the office." Her favorite colors, he said, are blues and greens.

As you might imagine, dressing the First Lady is not an easy task, particularly when she tries to come directly to the designer in New York City.

"A FEW TIMES, Mrs. Carter came to my studio in New York, but it involved a lot of security. The entire building and elevators had to be cordoned off and the place was filled with body guards." As a result, said Rom-

pollo, "I usually take a few things down to Washington for her. We usually work in the Lincoln Suite, trying on things and taking measurements."

"In November," continued the designer, "Mrs. Carter will want to see the spring collection. She is a perfect size six. She always tells me—bring along what you think I will like."

Detroit born Rompollo, whose parents used to operate a grocery store on the city's east side, graduated from Cass Technical High School in 1955. He

studied locally at Arts and Crafts before it became the Center for Creative Studies, and later graduated from the Parsons School of Design in New York City.

Rompollo also once worked for Hudson's designing floats for the annual Thanksgiving Day Christmas parade. His first job in New York was with Geoffrey Beene as first assistant, before he moved on to Teal Traina as head designer. Ultimately, he opened his own design house on Seventh Ave.

As a young boy, he said his interest was always with the arts, but it wasn't until he took a fashion illustration course that it occurred to him he could design clothes that would make an architectural statement on the body.

His designs reflect an admiration for such designers as Norell and Balenciaga. As he said "My clothes are not trendy—they go from year to year." His color palette for fall includes lots of beige combined with gray, winter whites and black, with reds for dinner dressing.

"Raisin" (this name for burgundy), reflects the trend toward earthy colors and is clearly his fashion statement for the season.

LOOKING AROUND the crowd of women who attended the fashion luncheon, was a fashion show in itself. It's obvious that Detroit area women have given up the pant suit for dresses and skirts. Some had even added this season's signature—the hat.

When Mrs. Bernard Walker, wife of the president of B. Siegel, and her daughter Françoise McQuigall, joined our table, they brought their own style to the festivities. Mrs. Walker's personal style reflects the chic of her native France. She wore a simple wool chills dress by Ted Lapidous, over which she casually draped a sable stole on one shoulder. As she moved the haunting fragrance of Cielenga by Balenciaga floated with her.



In the fashion show following the Merry Mart sale, designer Rompollo showed black silky pants—but they looked like a skirt.



## Bargain hunting at sale

By PATRICIA LACROIX

"Boy, these were going like hotcakes. I think I got the last one."

"I think I'm going to get this for Mandy's room. Isn't it cute?"

"We all have to keep moving or else we'll get trampled."

These were among the comments overheard at the Merry Mart Sale at the Raleigh House in Southfield last week. The sale was sponsored by the Christ Child Society, which uses the money raised to support their charitable activities for needy children.

The doors opened at 10 a.m. and five minutes later, the large room was swollen with people buzzing around the loaded tables.

They came in their designer originals, chills prints with matching shawls, high heels, stylish hats and fur stoles—the society is well-known for its wealthy membership—but they also came in blue jeans and painter's pants. Whatever their attire, they all came with one idea in mind—to buy.

There were plenty of items for them to choose from and most of the items were handmade by members of the society. The Christmas decorations table was circled six deep during most of the show. One of the most popular items was a Santa Claus face that could be hung from a door, his beard and mustache made from crumpled plastic wrap.

But if you didn't need Christmas decorations, there was plenty else to choose from:

Batman capes for Halloween, Cable knit sweaters for children at \$35 each. Dried flower arrangements. Clear plastic recipe boxes with 400 recipes inside, favorites of members of the society. Knit and crocheted hats, mittens, scarves and decorations. And food.

Jellies and jams, cookies, brownies, cheese cakes, regular cakes and brandy French dressing for salads.

Ten minutes after the doors opened, some of the tables were empty.

JAN SCHACK, who left the show with three bags full of merchandise, said most of the things were items she had ordered at a pre-sale show held this summer.

"But then, I bought some more stuff today. Everything is so cute," she laughed.

Pam Gillette said she was busy buying Christmas decorations for her house. Included in her two bags was one of the Santa Claus door hangers, since she says her children will "just love it."

She also bought a decorative ceiling mop for dusting away cobwebs.

Phyllis Hughes, chairwoman of the Merry Mart project this year, estimated that the

society would clear \$30,000 from the sale.

The money will be used to support the Christ Child House and School.

The Christ Child House is located at Joy and Greenfield in Detroit. It was established as an emergency care center for children between the ages of three and ten. The children are generally referred through the courts and various social agencies and usually come from broken homes.

A professional social worker and a staff of trained child care workers concern themselves not only with the physical well-being of the child, but also the emotional development.

A variety of new experiences encountered in the home bring the children into new activities and interests. There are currently 18 children in the home.

# Pro-abortion leader Baird challenges church's stand

By PATRICIA LACROIX

Bill Baird is fighting a war, but even he admits that he may be losing.

"War" is the word he uses to describe the tensions between the pro- and anti-abortion factions.

"The forces are in motion, and they are powerful ones," Baird said last week, speaking of the people who oppose the right to have an abortion. "We have almost reached the point of no return."

Baird was in Southfield under the sponsorship of the Northland Family Clinic in Southfield. He is nationally known for his challenges to restrictive birth control and abortion laws.

He has been involved in many U.S. Supreme Court cases, spoken his views before large gatherings at colleges and universities, and has been jailed eight times in five states.

He has been called names by the anti-abortion forces, names like "peddler of death" and "the sexual Pied Piper." He also has been called the devil.

Baird became involved in this volatile issue 15 years ago—long before, he said, it was really an issue. He was visiting a hospital at the time as a medical director for a pharmaceutical firm. Then a woman who had tried to abort herself died in his presence. From this time on,



he said, he has worked incessantly, trying to have "barbaric" laws overturned. This has taken him into the courtroom many times.

In 1972, he appeared before the Supreme Court in a case which legalized birth control for single people. The brief from this case was cited six times in a 1973 decision, which made some abortions legal in the United States.

More recently, he successfully challenged a Massachusetts law that required the signatures of both parents before an abortion could be performed on a minor. This case is now in the Supreme Court.

"Most of the teens that come into my clinic can't even tell their parents that they have had intercourse, let alone that they are pregnant."

"I just can't see a girl going to her mother and then to her father asking for their signature on the dotted line," he said.

"I know of nothing more basic than your right as a woman to control your own body."

The argument that a woman, having received an abortion, has also controlled the body of another person is not logical, Baird said.

"If I held up an acorn, anybody in their right mind would think you were really off the wall if you said that I was holding up a mighty oak tree."

"An embryo is just that, an embryo. That is what I tell everyone who asks that question," he said.

"The concept that a person is a person from the moment of conception is perverted."

Not everyone agrees, however, and the Catholic Church has often been cited as the leader of anti-abortion drives. Baird produced tax records from last year that he claimed showed that the Catholic Church in the Detroit area, under the direction of John Cardinal Dearden, has contributed \$7,500 to anti-abortion forces. Nationally, the Church had contributed more \$250,000 to combat the pro-abortionists, he said.

"I really object to some guy standing

up there in a little white collar and a black gown and saying 'This is God speaking: Our morality must be your morality,'" he said.

"They are absolutely hell-bent on denying women their basic human rights."

The Catholic Church is leading a drive to get states to call for a constitutional convention on the abortion issue, he said. The convention would draft an amendment prohibiting abortions. Thirteen states have agreed so far, 28 are needed for the convention to be called.

"This is really a scary thing, when you stop to think about it," he said. "I have no quarrel with them if they want to believe this, but they should not be able to change the U.S. Constitution so everybody, regardless of their religion, has to believe it."

Baird called the attitudes toward abortion in Michigan "just slightly backwards," because of the large amounts of money contributed by the Catholic Church and other developments in the state. Michigan is one of the key states to watch, he said.

But while Gov. William Milliken has been fairly supportive, Milliken chose member of the "Right to Life" group as a running mate.

Challenger William Fitzgerald has said that he is against legalized abortion, and his running-mate is noncommittal on the issue, Baird said.

But this coming election is something to watch for the future. In the meantime, Baird is busy with other projects. He is suing the Catholic Church for libel, for example.

In protest of his visit to Marlboro, Mass., a Catholic Church hung a black flag at half staff and posted a sign calling Baird a "peddler of death." He said that he believes anyone should be accountable for making such charges. Another Catholic Church, this one in New York, recently held a mass for the salvation of his soul.

"I attended. I wanted to see what they were going to do with my soul."

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—Bill Baird



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