

Paralegals offer support service to attorneys

By SHIRLEE IDEN

Three suburban women who consider themselves part of the wave of the future have opened their own paralegal firm in Southfield.

Judie Rosenthal, Lois Berman and Roberta Gehrig opened a small office in Southfield last spring in an attempt to establish a "pioneering business."

"There's no question about it," Mrs. Berman said. "We are pioneers. We're the only ones offering an independent service of this sort in the entire area."

"Most paralegals go to work for law firms or banks."

The women are all graduates of paralegal courses taken at Oakland University in Rochester. They met doing a special project for Michigan Bell Telephone Co.

"We call our company Accredited Paralegal Services," Mrs. Gehrig said. "We work with attorneys, corporations, banks and utilities."

Mrs. Berman said the functions provided by the women are actually a support service for attorneys.

"We don't work in place of an attorney," she explained. "But we can do everything but go into court and sign legal documents, and our time is less expensive."

ATTORNEYS utilizing such a service avoid overtime pay for their staffs, avoid paying fringe benefits and can hire the service for special projects.

"It frees the attorney to work with his clients," Mrs. Gehrig said. Mrs. Rosenthal said Oakland University is one of only 30 schools in the country training paralegals that is recognized by the American Bar Association.

Asked whether they aspire to law school someday, the women all agreed it is a possibility.

"But paralegalling is not a stepping stone to law school," Mrs. Berman said. "There's a market for it."

A resident of Birmingham, Mrs. Gehrig is a native of Michigan but lived out of state for many years.

"I was interested in law school but heard about the paralegal course," she said. "I really think it's the wave of the future."

A divorcee, Mrs. Gehrig has two daughters, 14 and 16. Mrs. Rosenthal has a bachelor of science degree in education and taught school many years ago. Her more recent work experience was in a travel agency.

"I looked into court reporting and paralegal courses and decided that court reporting was more mechanical,"

she said. "Paralegal work has much more variety."

MRS. ROSENTHAL has three sons aged 18, 16, and 10 and lives in West Bloomfield.

Mrs. Berman, the third principal in the firm, also resides in West Bloomfield and has a son, 16, and a daughter, 18. She holds a B.A. degree in psychology.

"I believe paralegalling is a sophisticated concept in a conservative field," Mrs. Berman said. "But we've had a rough way to go in the business because we're a new idea. We're building, though."

Mrs. Rosenthal said the company can be of tremendous help to an attorney who doesn't require a paralegal full time.

"We charge \$15 an hour for filing papers, searching records and routine legal chores like that," she said. "It's \$20 for writing briefs and doing research."

"We can also work on a per project basis."

The women hope that someday the business will grow so that they can employ other paralegals.

"We'd hope to be able to give other women some flexible part-time work," Mrs. Berman said.

Other advantages to hiring the Ac-

credited Paralegals are that an attorney doesn't have to give them an office or a telephone.

"And we pick up the work and deliver it back," Mrs. Rosenthal said.

SINCE STARTING their business last April, the women have had a brochure printed up explaining their services, have put advertisements in legal publications and have called as many attorneys as they could contact.

"We're found that personal contact is the most advantageous way to interest attorneys in our service," Mrs. Rosenthal said. "But we have had some response from our ads and from the mailing."

Since their service is one of support for attorneys, the paralegals deal strictly with the lawyers and not with clients.

"And there's a benefit to the attorney's client they may not even be aware of," Mrs. Gehrig said. "Since we're cheaper, the attorney can bill the time used cheaper to his client."

Both Mrs. Rosenthal and Mrs. Berman have worked in personal injury and negligence work and all three women plan to take further courses in the fall to pick up skills.

"We don't practice law without a license," Mrs. Rosenthal said. "But we can augment legal services where required."



JUDIE ROSENTHAL

"We don't practice law without a license, but we can augment legal services where required."

— Judie Rosenthal

Mother and 2 daughters are State Fair winners

Mrs. Russell Dunbar of Farmington and her two daughters walked away from Michigan State Fair competitions with a host of many ribbons, many of them blue.

While Mrs. Dunbar took three blue ribbons for herself, she was most proud of the prizes captured by 10-year-old Autumn, who took the top prize in the Junior Flower Show and the top prize in the youth's art competition and a first prize for liquid embroidery she used to decorate her tennis shorts.

Theme for the flower arrangement, using chrysanthemums, was "My Favorite Person."

Autumn's favorite person is her grandmother. Her arrangement won her \$5 and a blue ribbon from the Greater Detroit Chrysanthemum Society.

In the same contest, Autumn's 5-

year-old sister took a pink ribbon, (fourth prize) with an arrangement for her favorite person, her baby sister Antonia.

Autumn captured \$25 and a blue ribbon for a drawing of Amy in the art competition, then placed as a runner-up in the fashion show, with points racked up for poise and confidence.

MRS. DUNBAR's blue ribbons came from her efforts in baking brownies, lemondrop cookies and old-fashioned blueberry jam.

"I was thrilled with the ribbon for the brownies," she said, "because there were so many entries in that category. That was really my biggest win."

Her applesauce captured a second place ribbon and her buttercrunch cake in fourth in the candy category. Autumn begins sixth grade at Woodcreek Elementary School this fall, and Amy starts kindergarten there.

m.m.memos

By MARGARET MILLER



I remember very well that visit to the pet shop. We were quite newly married, busy settling our new-old house, and I had just quit my job to await the birth of our first child.

But first, we had decided, we were going to get a dog. And we had him spotted the minute we stepped inside the shop.

He was a furry black and white bundle, and he separated himself immediately from the pile of brothers and sisters to come and lick my hand. He sold himself immediately.

But there were adoption problems. We were going away for a weekend and wanted to come back to pick him up the following Monday. The pet store suddenly wasn't sure she could hold him. How would she sell the others in the litter, she reasoned, when that one was so much livelier and brighter.

She finally agreed, through, and we paid our money and she put a sold tag on him. And we were back bright and early the next Monday to take home the first addition to our family.

He turned out to be just as delightful a bundle bouncing around our home as he had been in the store.

Being fans of the comic strip "Pogo,"

we named him for the noble dog therein, Beauregard Chalmers Montgomery de Frontenac Bugle Boy Miller. Quite a moniker for one so small, so, of course, it was Beau for short.

As time went on he was at home to help welcome four girl babies. We came to refer to him as our oldest child and only son. We enjoyed him, as only dog owners will understand, for 16 years.

And all this is coming to mind now because another small bundle of dog recently has joined our family — extended family, that is.

Our daughter and son-in-law called in great excitement a week or so back. They had been to the humane society and had taken home a dog. He was brown and white and five inches tall and seven inches long and wouldn't we like to come right over to see him?

This one is named Cory, short for incorrigible. He's equally delightful, and remarkably reminiscent of his black-and-white counterpart. He bounces around their house and does all the endearing things we remember with our little character.

Their first child and, well, it's hard to say.

But certainly we wish the two-footed and four-footed members of their clan a long and happy association. Dogs and people are good at that.

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