

Student hones political skills

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Business administration instead of government affairs is her ultimate goal, but for a few weeks this summer Sherri Robinson will be a political pro.

The North Farmington High School junior is one of two young women from Michigan who will travel to Washington D.C. on July 14 to begin operation of Girls' Nation.

Her stint in the mock Senate was preceded by a tour of duty as governor of Girls' State in Lansing earlier in the summer.

As governor, Ms. Robinson presided over 505 high school juniors who took over city, county and state positions.

"I like being governor. I had a really nice time but I don't want to go into politics," said Ms. Robinson.

Part of the enjoyment of the week-long event was based on the absence of party politics once election time passed.

"If you were really governor, you wouldn't have the unity we had. After the elections, party politics didn't matter. We wanted to get something accomplished."

Ms. Robinson concedes that in actual practice, party politics continues after the election results are posted.

During her governorship, the mock state senate passed 21 bills.

GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION and provisions for state-funded abortion were passed by the young legislators.

For good measure, the male counselors were required by Girls' State law to take drivers' tests.

Not all the girls were legislators, but each began her stay at Girls' State with a city position. From there, they could move on to a county post without resigning from the city job.

Persons with state jobs could resign from those positions to run for a government office. The best person from

each of the parties, Nationalist and Federalist, were chosen to run for governor.

Ms. Robinson won the backing of the Nationalist Party.

Others who wanted to become Supreme Court judges were given a book to study and were required to pass a bar exam before being appointed to the post.

The governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general selected their personal staff, pages, secretaries and aides.

"We had to have people to get our lunch for us, because we had no time," she laughed.

After the elections, Ms. Robinson, her lieutenant governor and a state Supreme Court justice were standing on a platform when an assassin aimed a water pistol at the officials and squirted the judge.

THE INTENDED target was the governor. The assassins, Siamese twins, were upset over the lack of a platform addressing Siamese twin rights.

They were eventually found innocent of attempting to murder the governor since the fatal squirt hit the judge.

Ms. Robinson was one of 30 women from North Farmington entered in Girls' State. They were recommended by school counselors for the event.

In preparation for the gathering, they were enrolled in government classes during their junior year and met with previous members of Girls' State.

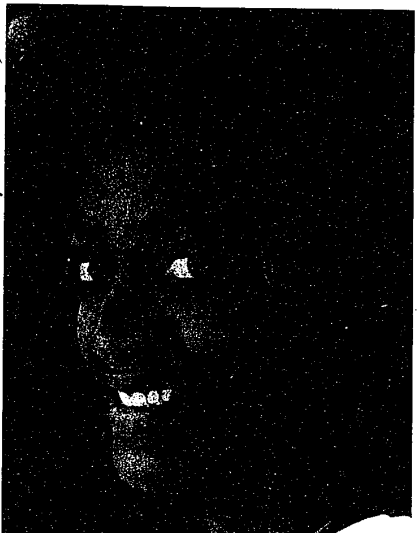
Nine women were interviewed for the position in Girls' Nation and two were chosen from the state.

As a member of Girls' Nation, Ms. Robinson, 16, will obtain a bird's eye view of national government when she spends a day with a member of the Senate. If she is elected president, she will

be able to observe the presidential staff in action.

When not occupied with Girls' State and Nation, Ms. Robinson is active in

such high school activities as volleyball, cheerleading, forensics and choir. She is president of the French Club and a member of the French Honor Society.



Sherri Robinson, 16, will wing her way to Washington D.C. July 14 to attend a session of Girls' Nation. The North Farmington High School junior was elected governor of Girls' State. (Photo by Randy Borst)

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