

# Melanie Churella is Miss Farmington 1980

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

A dark-haired, blue-eyed beauty who was homecoming queen for Farmington High School last fall took the title of Miss Farmington 1980 in the pageant that launched Founders Festival last week.

Melanie Esther Churella, daughter of Robert and Esther Churella, took the crown and roses of victory in the gala staged in Vladimir's before a sold-out

house. She was sponsored by Focal Point Studio.

First runner-up was ballerina Mary Therese Jean, daughter of Alfred and Myrna Jean, whose family have lived in Farmington for almost 50 years. Her sponsor was Vittorio's Pizzeria.

Second runner-up was Kimberly Marie Thomas, daughter of Ron and Shirley Thomas, who doubled up on awards as "best talent" among the nine

contenders. She was sponsored by Farmington Elks Lodge 1986.

THE NEW MISS Farmington had never attended a pageant before, much less been a participant in one, but apparently has become so taken in with pageant goings-on said she would like to see the title-holder more involved in community activities.

"I want to be more places and do more things to promote the pageant," she said. "I want to do more than make an appearance and just sit there with my crown."

Miss Churella said her enthusiasm has stemmed for the most part from the title-holders who have gone on to the Miss Michigan Scholarship Pageant before her and who have gone out of their way to offer help with "everything from what to expect in interviews to how to sit," she said.

"Vickey Jean (Whinnery) wasn't too happy just sitting, and she has a few ideas on this she said she'd share with me," Miss Churella said of Miss Farmington 1979.

MISS CHURELLA will enter Michigan State University this fall with an eye on a degree in business, "but I will be back every weekend to do whatever I can to promote the pageant," she said.

While at Farmington High she was on the women's gymnastic team and the women's track team, and the only girl on the boy's track team during her junior year.

She has studied piano and gymnastics for three years, "plus a little ballet and a little tap," she said. She choreographed her own routine for the pageant.

Her jazz dance to "Dance at the Gym" from West Side Story in black satin tails and derby was a crowd pleaser.

The new Miss Farmington changed her hair-do three times for her walks down the runway for her bathing suit, talent and interview presentations.

Her pageant gown was an unadorned white cotton eyelet.

Mary Jean, a graduate of Harrison

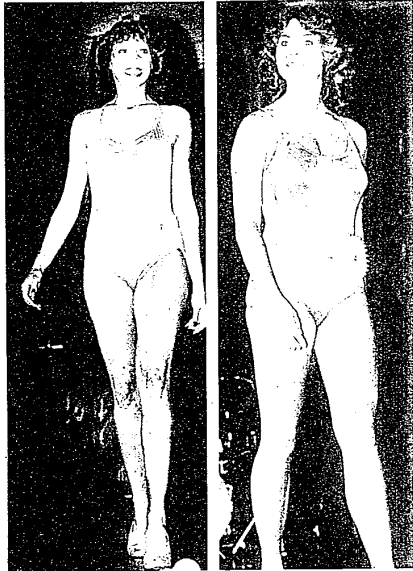
(Continued on Page 12A)



Melanie Churella, 17-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Churella and a June graduate from Farmington High School, will represent the Farmington area when she competes in the Miss Michigan

Scholarship Pageant next spring. The athletically inclined young woman said pressure from family and friends urging her to enter the pageant started in May.

Staff photos by Randy Borst



Down the runway in the bathing suit parade are Mary Therese Jean, named first runner-up in the Miss Farmington Scholarship Pageant (at left), and Kimberly Marie Thomas, second runner-up. Miss Jean is a spring graduate from Harrison High School; Miss Thomas a spring graduate from North Farmington. Both have studied ballet.

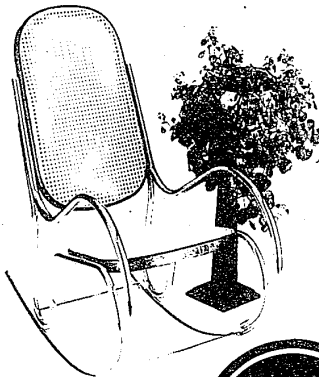


Named by the judges as "best talent" among pageant contenders, Kim Thomas designed her talent costume and evening gown and choreographed her talent presentation.

Her interpretative dance was performed in a gown of blue chiffon to Neil Diamond's "Flight of the Gull."

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