

Pioneer Women

Woman finds courage to speak out for others

By Shirlee Iden  
staff writer

For a kid who "never opened her mouth," Marcia Robinson made quite an impression at a recent community event.

The 28-year-old Southfield woman presided over a luncheon for the Pioneer Women at a Southfield hotel. More than 100 guests were charmed by her poise and calm in the face of that responsibility.

"Only her mother, Blanche Robinson Tychman, also of Southfield, knew what an accomplishment it was for the young woman to speak before that large group, overwhelmingly older and more experienced than her daughter. It was Mrs. Tychman who described the chairman of the day as "a kid who never opened her mouth."

Ms. Robinson explains that she moved to Southfield at age 16 from New York.

"In New York, I was active in clubs and student government and was always making speeches," she says.

"When I enrolled at Southfield High School they assigned me to a speech course. At the time I thought it would be a good way to lose some of my east accent."

She worked very hard in the course, especially on preparing her final speech.

"My topic was Martin Luther King and I thought it went over well," she recalls. "One girl in the class was so moved, she cried."

"MY DIRECTION" gave me an E on the speech and an E in the course. He said I hadn't tried to improve. I was

devastated and went into a shell, completely.

"After that, even raising my hand in class was too much. I was afraid to speak out or talk publicly."

Looking back, Ms. Robinson says she was severely traumatized by the experience, one that handicapped her through high school and beyond.

After graduation at Southfield High, she attended Eastern Michigan University where she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology.

"I was employed at a hospital briefly after graduation, but shied then worked at Irving's Restaurant in Southfield as a cashier," she says.

Although many office jobs have come her way, she has always chosen to stay at the restaurant because she loves meeting the public. "Also my employers, Irving and Rose Gutman, are like part of my family now."

At the July 16 luncheon, dedicated to "spiritually adopting" Israeli children in need, Ms. Robinson's employers donated a three-month adoption in her honor, a surprise which visibly moved the red-haired, freckle-faced young chairman.

EVEN THOUGH her audience didn't know the whole story, she told them what Pioneer Women has come to mean to her.

"Five years ago, my mother paid my first year dues to the Pioneer Women, and that gift has come to mean more than anything to me," she told them.

One in the audience, she learned, involved in the work of the women's in her "Zionist" group in this country. She helped raise funds for building, educational and social services for women,

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—Marcia Robinson



youth and children in Israel.

Ms. Robinson was the first president of a new Pioneer Women chapter in this area, Shalomani Chapter, a group for young women in their 20s and 30s.

"Last year seven Shalomani ladies were born," she says. "Most were girls. Future Pioneer Women, you know."

Like most fund raising groups, they have their art auctions, tribute cards, Jewish New Year's cards, and commit to drives.

In this Ms. Robinson excels. As part of a committee campaign this year, she spent from 2 a.m. to 9 p.m. one Sunday outside the Southfield restaurant where she works, approaching people and asking them to donate to help these needy children.

each year have sponsored a full Spiritual Adoption for \$300.

TAKING ON the chairmanship of the 1981 Spiritual Adoption Luncheon was not an easy thing for Ms. Robinson to do.

She had already become treasurer for the council. When the luncheon came up, council leaders asked her to chair, and she demurred. But they were insistent.

"I had kept myself in the background all those years since the high school speech, but I made up my mind those people weren't there to judge me," she

explains.

And she held her own, greeting guests, introducing officers and chairmen and even National President Frieda Leeman, a resident of Farmington Hills.

"What an ego boost that luncheon was," she says now. "Customers from the restaurant came just because I was chairman."

Looking ahead, she plans to go back to school for either a computer science course or a master's degree in business administration. And of course, continue to work for Pioneer Women.

Theories still abound on sudden infant death

No tragedy is more heart-wrenching than the crib death of an infant. One minute there is life and breath; the next, the child is lifeless. Known as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the disease is just one of the pediatric illnesses fought by the American Lung Association of Southeastern Michigan (ALASSEM). The Lung Association supports research in search of a cause for SIDS.

OTHER CAUSES cited are suffocation, allergic reaction to cow's milk, metabolic disorders, change of climate and apnea or closure of the larynx. Whatever the cause, or causes, medical scientists are studying and theorizing over this infant threat which takes the lives of some 10,000 children a year in the U.S.

For more information about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, call the American Lung Association of Southeastern Michigan, 961-1097.

These researchers believe that insufficiency may leave an infant in a weakened condition where SIDS can be triggered by mild stress, an infection, a mild cold or even excessive heat or cold.

Diet supplements might provide the needed boost, but by no means is the infant insufficiency theory accepted by all scientists studying SIDS.

THEORIES about SIDS abound, but no single cause has been discovered. Theories are sometimes labeled "definite" or "maybe."

The newest "definite maybe" is reported to be a liver deficiency of biotin, a member of the vitamin B complex. Two doctors, one from Australia and the other from England, report that 35 SIDS victims had significantly lower biotin levels than 165 infants who died of other problems.

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