

Miss America recommends: Concentrate on your goals

By Sharon Dargay
staff writer

DEBRA MAFFET seemed an unlikely candidate for the Miss America pageant.

As a teenager, the Texas native described herself as "dumb Debra" — hardly the self-assurance needed to tackle Atlantic City's runway and a chance at a \$35,000 scholarship.

The 26-year-old wasn't accomplished in any particular "talent" when she first began entering local pageants.

And she flunked out of the Miss America competition twice.

"I believe that if you see something you want and work at it, anything is possible," Maffet said.

The reigning national beauty queen was in West Bloomfield Township Monday, pitching for a personal development course taught through Genesis modeling and finishing school in the Orchard Mall.

Several dozen young women — their perfect coiffures and make-up belying Miss America hopes — attended workshops to hear Maffet's tips on beauty competition.

Mostly what they heard was an enthusiastic pitch for personal development, goal-setting, assertiveness training and self-assurance.

"I BELIEVE IN positive thinking," she told one group. "If you set a goal and are willing to work and sweat for it, you can achieve. The American dream is alive and working."

Maffet flirted with the pageant scene as a college student, then seriously set a goal for Atlantic City after a judge told her she could win beauty competitions only through hard work and preparation.

She brushed up on current events, took singing lessons and began working out, all while working at a bakery

night to help pay for her college tuition.

"So many people are treading water. They're not goal-oriented and they aren't sure what they want out of life," Maffet said.

"I didn't learn to set goals until I was 21 and involved in pageants. I wasted a lot of time. If I could have learned that much sooner I would have been farther ahead."

SHE CONTENTS that most youngsters don't learn about goal-setting until it's too late. Or they never learn and end up as unhappy adults in careers they dislike.

And she claims lessons in self-development are even more important for

women than the men with whom they'll compete for jobs.

"Young guys have sports and they learn the qualities needed to win and compete. Girls don't. I never learned until I got into pageants."

One reason why the Miss America pageant isn't passe, Maffet said, is because it gives young women a chance to compete for top scholarships.

"There are women walking around today with MA and PhD degrees that they otherwise wouldn't have had the opportunity to earn."

"If men can put on tight shorts and knock heads for sports, women can put on swimsuits and compete on their talents."



photos by JOHN STANDO/staff photographer

History buffs throw a bash

The Farmington Historical Society is throwing itself a birthday party at 8 p.m. Tuesday in the Botsford Inn. The public is invited.

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In addition to this group, the Psychology Clinic is offering a Weight Management Training Group, an Assertiveness Training Group, and a Smoking Cessation Group, each beginning in March, 1983, with evening sessions scheduled. Enrollment in each group will be limited, and fees are based upon a sliding fee schedule.

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