

Suburban Life

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Oprah Winfrey, Oscar-nominated for her role in "The Color Purple," delivered one-liner last week.

She stays down to earth as her career takes off

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

OPRAH WINFREY, the portly celebrity sensation of 1986, addressed a packed house of mainly younger women attending the Second Annual Health Expo hosted by Michigan Woman magazine at Cobo Hall last week.

Winfrey, 32, shot to stardom after receiving an Academy Award nomination following her portrayal of Sophia in the film "The Color Purple." She is also a TV talk show host on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," now syndicated and scheduled to debut in Detroit on Channel 7 this fall.

There is little question Winfrey is already popular in Detroit. After being introduced by local TV anchor Doris Biscoe, Winfrey received a standing ovation before uttering a single word. She received another at the conclusion of her spirited remarks.

Part of the explanation for Winfrey's popularity is her image of a woman working hard to earn a dollar, searching without success for the perfect partner and fighting, as well as losing, a continual battle with weight.

Winfrey makes a conscious effort to maintain this image. On stage she removed the spiked heels that perfectly matched her designer dress and delivered her talk barefooted. She confided to the audience, "I thought about wearing pantyhose to Detroit, but just creamed my legs instead."

WINFREY'S DELIVERY tech-

nique is simple, yet decidedly professional, folksy homilies and sage advice laced with emotion and humor. They are one-liners, "Oprah-isms," and they abound on a good many subjects.

On being a woman: "We are all battered if we are anything less than what we can be."

On being black: "I was raised a Negro child. We didn't become black until the 1970s."

On being overweight: "I got my first broadcasting job when I was 17 — 62 pounds ago."

On the Academy Award ceremonies: "I didn't go to the parties afterwards. No way I was going to say how happy I was someone else had won."

On the 15-pound, bearded gown she wore to the ceremonies (it required four people to pull the skintight dress on Winfrey): "God told me, 'You aren't going to win. You can't walk up seven steps to get it.'"

On relationships: "Hey, I know what it means to throw car keys down the toilet to keep him from leaving."

On Phil Donahue (whom she has topped in TV ratings): "We're good friends and I wish him the best... just not in my time period."

On growing up: "I'm glad I learned certain lessons young. The stakes are bigger now, so I have more to lose."

On the future: "I haven't been white... yet."

On spirituality: "I'm God-centered, and I read a chapter from the Bible every day, especially Psalms. Some real short ones there."

On being bald (the result of hair-straightening treatments, requested

by her employer when Winfrey was a TV anchorwoman in the early 1970s): "It's a great time for self-discovery."

On achieving: "I believe everything that has happened in my life and in yours happens because we believe it can happen."

On knowing yourself: "Basic intuition is the same as spirit talking to you."

On people: "I am no different than you are no different than I am."

PART OF WINFREY'S presentation was two impassioned readings, each in the dialect of the times. The first was from an address by Sojourner Truth to a group of white women in 1850, in which Sojourner enjoined the women to "turn the world right-side up again." The second extolled the virtues of the "phenomenal woman," a passage from a poem written a generation ago by Maya Angelou.

Winfrey told a story about filming a scene in "The Color Purple," when her character, Sophia, slaps a white person and is surrounded by angry white men. To set the mood, director Steven Spielberg instructed the actors to hurl racial insults at Sophia.

Winfrey, who personally has never experienced the sting of racism, said she was caught unaware. "I lost it. They had to edit most of what I said. A woman definitely would not have said such things in public in 1980."

Winfrey concluded her remarks with a simple message: "I wish for you, for everyone, the power to climb."

advanced in a similar manner. Learning, borrowing ideas and revising others have resulted in a magazine art director Elaine Kozar describes as "now more upscale in format."

Sponsoring the expo came about, said Greenwald, when she realized "women are the primary health-care decision-makers in a family. They should be as well informed on health issues as possible." This year's event was scheduled to coincide with National Health Month.

Sponsoring the expo makes good business sense as well. Approximately one-fourth of the display ads in the May/June 1986 issue of the magazine are health-related.

But as Greenwald points out, if the magazine is not successful, women in the greater Detroit area simply lose one public forum option they now have.

Older women facing poverty, report says

By Julie Brown
staff writer

ALTHOUGH THEIR stories were different, there were certain common threads.

Older women are more likely than men to be living alone. They are more likely than their male counterparts to find themselves dependent on Social Security as their only source of income. Their years of homemaking and child-raising often mean that they find themselves without an adequate source of income in their later years.

It's a media-generated myth that large numbers of older people are extremely well-to-do, said Virginia Nicoll, president of the Farmington chapter of the Older Women's League.

"Well, of course that isn't true and it especially isn't true of older women."

Older women "are in extremely dire straits," Nicoll said. "It's a disgrace that a country that's as rich as ours should allow such a condition to exist."

NICOLL WAS one of those who appeared Thursday before members of the Michigan Women's Commission's Task Force on Older Women's Issues. In addition to her comments, Nicoll, who is a member of the task force, also submitted a formal report on poverty as it relates to older women.

The task force members came to UAW Local 735 in Canton Township to conduct a hearing on the economic status of older women in Michigan.

At the Canton Township hearing, Nicoll told task force members that the median income for women age 65 and older is \$6,020, compared to \$10,450 for men in that age group. Income in retirement for women is 58 percent of that for men.

That figure shouldn't be a surprising one, Nicoll said; it corresponds to the share of men's income that women who are in the labor force receive.

In order for the problem of older women's poverty to be addressed, women need more money during their working years, she said. They also need credit under the Social Security system for their years of homemaking and child-raising.



BILL DRESLER/staff photographer

Testifying before the Michigan Women's Commission, Virginia Nicoll reports that elderly women are more likely to find themselves grappling with poverty and struggling without health insurance instead of enjoying retirement. Nicoll is president of the Farmington Chapter of the Older Women's League.

The hearing at UAW Local 735 in Canton Township was the last of five such hearings held throughout the state. Similar hearings were held in Lansing, Grayling, Detroit and Marquette.

The hearing in Canton Township was held to gather testimony from the surrounding area, said Earlene Neal, director of programs for the Michigan Women's Commission.

THE HEARINGS have focused on three economic areas as they relate to older women: the availability and impact of pension systems, employment and training programs, and health insurance. The testimony given at UAW Local 735 last Thursday varied, in-

cluding both the personal stories of older women and statistical information on their economic problems.

"Several" women "spoke" on the health insurance issue, both from a personal perspective and from a more general one.

"It's a different world," said Patty Clare, who serves on the task force and is the founder of a support/information group for those who get divorced at age 60 or later. "You gave everything for your husband's career."

Women who become divorced in their later years often find themselves without adequate health in-

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Antique Sevres vase, J. 3591



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Meissen 18th Century Porcelain lion body figure, H. 16", L. 30"



Polychrome bronze Arab lamp, inv. H. 19 1/4", 14 1/4"



Antique German Biedermeier Marquetry drop front desk, 19th C. "Das Meerwunder" (The Sea 1900) gouache, pencil initialed, boxed, c. 1903, L. 6' 6", H. 29"



Albrecht Dürer (Germany 1471-1528)



Jack Thoburn (Polish/American) Backwood (Kearney) pottery, dated 62, 35" x 20"



1900 gouache, pencil initialed, boxed, c. 1903, L. 6' 6", H. 29"

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Celebrating successful women

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

LAST WEEK'S Health Expo at Cobo Hall in Detroit was an ambitious affair. An estimated 8,000 women viewed the wares of nearly 50 exhibitors, listened to nationally known speakers and attended a dozen or more seminars.

The event was sponsored by The Michigan Woman, a bimonthly magazine that has been published little more than a year in Farmington. The two-day expo was an enormous undertaking for the new magazine.

Enormous undertakings, however, do not seem to unnerve the magazine's founder and publisher, Glenda Greenwald of Bloomfield Hills. Using her own money, she started the publication after noticing "terrific" women in the greater Detroit area.

"I realized there was no public forum especially for women, no place to voice concerns and ideas of importance to them, no place for networking," Greenwald said. After seeing a magazine in Washington, D.C. aimed primarily at a female audience, Greenwald formed up her ideas.

Publication began in March 1985. Other than the same number of pages, 56, there is little similarity between the end product then and now.

GREENWALD IS SELF-TAUGHT, both in journalism and publishing. She began writing nearly 20 years ago, art reviews for an English language daily in Argentina. She accompanied her husband on employment assignments abroad for 15 years, expanding her writing experience in each new location. Development of the magazine has

advanced in a similar manner. Learning, borrowing ideas and revising others have resulted in a magazine art director Elaine Kozar describes as "now more upscale in format."

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