## Ex-first lady is happy with life — sans politics

No. Definitely, no.
Paula Blanchard says she is
flattered when her name is mentloned occasionally as Democrats
start musing about possible candidates in upcoming Oakland County
elections.

elections.

But Michigan's former First Lady says she is not interested.

"My years in politics seem so far away," said Blanchard, who moved out of the governor's residence in June 1987, when her 21-year marriage to then-governor Jamle ended in divorce. "I just can't imagine going back to that."

Paula Blanchard was mentioned as a possible candidate last month by County Democratic Chairman Donald Tucker, a Southfield attorney

A POPULAR NAME like Paula Blanchard would have instant voter recognition, said Tucker, who believes she would be a strong contender for the Michigan Legislature or Oakland County-Executive. "Paula's well known, bright and knowledgeable," said Tucker. "She'd be a great candidate. . even in a Republican stronghold like Oakland."

Republican stronghold like Oak-land."

Except for one thing ... Paula doesn't want anything to do with pol-itics.

"Public service is an admirable calling," said Blanchard. "But it's very consuming lifestylo. There's no such thing as private.

of politics when she was Mrs. James Blanchard — wife of a U.S. repre-sentative who was in Congress for eight years before being elected gov-ernor for two terms.

enging received governor for two terms.

She, too, was suprised when Jim Blanchard — then Mr. Dernocrat in Michigan — lost to Republican John Engler.—"I-though her Jim Blanchard) would be governor as long as he wanted," she saild."

Those times in Washington and Lansing were indeed heady, Paula Blanchard recalled, hobnobbing with politicians and heads of state. "But I like my life the way it is now," she saild. "It's very much focused on my career."

Blanchard joined Casey Communi-

said. "It's very much focused on my career."

Blanchard joined Casey Communications Management Inc. in May 1989, as an associate vice president. The firm is part of the Shandwick group, possibly the world's largest public relations company with 100 offices worldwide, including one on the seventh floor of the North Park Plara in Southfield.

Included among her cilents are R. L. Polk & Co. in Detroit, G.M. Bus & Truck in Pontiac, McLaren Regional Medical Center in Flint and the Ventures Group Inc. in Houghton.

"SOME PEOPLE THINK I got this job because I was the First Lady," Blanchard said. "That was certainly a plus. But my whole life has been involved in communicat-

ing. Paula graduated from Michigan State University in 1966 after which she taught school in Minnasota and Lansing. While living in Washington.

D.C., she spent about five years with the Animal Health Institute, a na-tional trade association for manu-facturers of veterinary medicine

tional trade association for manufacturers of veterinary medicine products. She has completed the coursework for a master's degree in telecommencations from MSU, although she has not completed the thesis. "I love the company... and the professionals here," she said, referring to her 20 coworkers at Casey Communications. "I really like the challenge associated with my job." With today's economic uncertainty, many companies — including her clients — are watching the bottom line, she said. "That means a bigger challenge... produce or else." Blanchard has received only the strength of the company. The ultimate proof of my ability sperformance." she said. "Not just (doing) a good job, but a great job. That's how I answer my critics." Blanchard said she is well on her way toward establishing her own professional credentials and removing any public perception — if it's still there — that she is anything less than a hard-driving executive.

IN TWO YEARS, she expects to be with the same firm, although at a noish or two up the ladder. Over the next decade, however, her plans are more flexible.

"I'd like to own my own company," she said. But that depends on a number of factors, including some that are beyond her control. "I'd have to be ready — personally and

professionally — and conditions would have to be right.

"I'm still learning ... and I've got a ways to go," she said. "But I'm on my way. I've got control."

Control means keeping a balance between the professional and personal life, Blanchard said. That in-

sonal life, Blanchard said. That in-cludes maintaining a close relation-ship with the roon, Jay, now a student at MSU.

She and Jay went to London in 1988, when he graduated from high school, part of a concerted effort to keep close control, and and do unsubcross things together.

Over-the Easter holiday, for ex-tample, they went to a movie, "Guilty By Suspicion."

FREE ESTIMATES

"I LOVE MOVIES and novels about politics" and political intrigue, she said. "I just from want politics in the said. "I just from the said the lab apply with a guasa-private life in Birmingham, where she bought a house in 1988. "People still recognize me when I go to dinner or when I'm out triding my bicycle," she said. "But they're nice non-intrusive." Blanchard said her social life is progressing nicely, even though home repairs cut into her free time.

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Paula Blanchard has a few trappings in her Southfield office that remind her of life as Michigan's First Lady. But that — like politics — is all history, she says.



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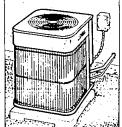
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