

Court tries to keep families together

BY RALPH R. ECHTNAW

STAFF WRITER
The following article is the first in a series on the Oakland County Probate Court, which rules over many important aspects of people's lives, from sentencing juvenile delinquents to granting name changes and guardianships to committing people to state hospitals.

Tuesday mornings are motion days for Judge Barry Grant. A vast parade of citizens and attorneys pass before his bench proposing and opposing conservatorships, will resolutions, guardianships and name changes.

Boring? Perhaps at times, but don't tell that to the people who heard this story:

A well-dressed and attractive woman leaned tentatively over the microphone and asked Grant that she be permitted to give up as co-guardian of her 13-year-old son, who lives with his father.

The noisy courtroom quickly turned quiet. "I haven't seen him since September," she told Grant. "I haven't been very well, and I've had some financial setbacks."

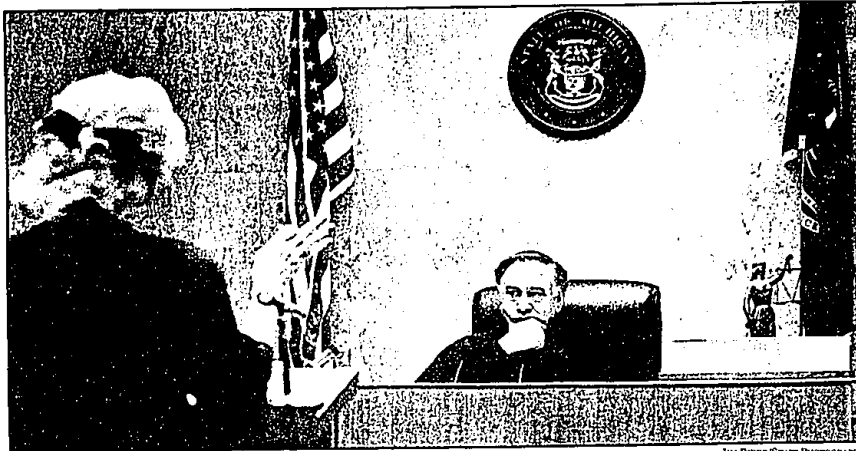
Grant was surprised that this woman, near tears at times, would forfeit the right to see her son.

"Do you miss your son?" he asked. "Yes, I do," she replied.

Grant talked the woman out of waiving her co-guardianship and asked her ex-husband to "do everything within your means to have your son see his mother, go out with his mother for lunch."

The boy, Grant said, might be psychologically harmed if his mother gives up on him.

Later, in his office, Grant said, "A lot of times, when you try to keep these families together, it's very difficult. I try to encourage them to communicate. That's the key."



JIM RIEBER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Listening: Probate Judge Barry Grant listens carefully as a woman brings her concern before the court the day our photographer visited. She was not mentioned in the accompanying story.

psychologically harmed if his mother gives up on him.

Another case that morning was equally poignant. A husband and wife appeared in court requesting guardianship of their granddaughter, whose mother died last December and whose father is facing a charge of sexually abusing the girl.

The father has pled innocent to the charge, and through his attorney, tried to block the grandparents' request. Grant gave temporary guardianship to the grandparents, and the fight will likely

See PROBATE COURT, 6A

DOLL LOVERS
Sale extended thru 2/14/94
due to the cold weather.
Don't Miss Savings
Up to 30%
Madame Alexander • Porcelain • Enamel • Corolla • Dolls • Zook • Dolly • Robin Woods • Fabrics, Stuffed Animals & More!
Plus an Enormous Selection of Antique Dolls.
Exquisite Dolls Not Included.
The Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop
2947 Mt. Pleasant Rd. • East Lansing, MI 48823
M-F 10-6:30 P.M. • (517) 543-3115

**BUY 6 SHIRTS
PAY FOR 5**
Only between Feb. 1, and March 15.
With this ad only.
**Executive Custom
Shirtmakers &
Tailors, Inc.**
223 South Woodward Avenue
Birmingham, Michigan 45209
Just South of the Birmingham Theatre
(510) 642-0460
New Times • MON. SAT. 10-5 • SUN. 11-5 • THURSDAY

**We've got
green no
matter what
color you want
to paint
your house.**

No matter what it is that needs to be done, undone or redone, we can help.

Our home improvement loans are fast and affordable. And, we have almost as many kinds of home improvement loans as there are home improvements. We have special loans sponsored by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. You may qualify for a loan that will give you lower monthly payments, at reduced interest rates, that are tax deductible. Or, you may choose to get a conventional bank loan that may be better suited to your needs. We'll also work with you to come up with a payment that fits into your budget.

For more information, stop by any one of our offices. But if it's more convenient, you can always call us at 281-5085.

Apply today for a home improvement loan from First of America. It'll paint a smile on your face.

FIRST OF AMERICA
A bank for life.™

Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender. ☐
Hearing impaired, TDD line available from 9-5 EST at (800) 289-4614.

KENSINGTON ACADEMY

A co-ed, independent Catholic day school
Pre-Kindergarten through 8th Grade



COME TO OUR OPEN HOUSE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1994,
1-3 p.m.

- Small class size
- Individual attention
- Nurturing of self-esteem
- Academic excellence
- Foreign language
- Competitive athletics
- Before/after school programs
- Transportation
- Tuition Grants
- Summer Program

**Montessori Program for 3, 4, and 5 year olds
(Half and Full Day)**

Contact: Julio Oldani, Director of Admission
647-8060

1020 East Square Lake Road • Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
(Between Opdyke and Adams near the I-75 Adams exit)

Will wonders
never cease.

Isn't it
time you
experienced
how wonderful
fur can be?



**The Winter Fur Clearance
Up to 50% off**
at Westland and Briarwood.
February 5 through 7

Experience the wonder of winter in a fur from Hudson's. During our Winter Fur Clearance, you'll find an unprecedented gathering of the season's most stylish looks in rich, wintry shades. You'll also find updated versions of the classics, an exciting range of fur and leather, fur outerwear and a huge collection of beautifully designed mink coats all at incredible savings.

And as always, we will make shopping easier with special services tailored to your needs.

Take advantage of our extended credit terms. Ask your sales associate about special payment plans using our Home account or our interest free 6-Month Club Account. Protect the beauty of your fur. Allow us to enroll you in our exclusive fur maintenance, storage and insurance program: "The Platinum Advantage." It works.

Salon Furs. Total units available at Hudson's: 402. All furs labeled to show country of origin of imported furs.

HUDSON'S

Valentine's Day is Monday, February 14th



Discover our outstanding collection of fine gold and diamond designs. With a 68-year tradition of quality, craftsmanship and superior value, you will find the perfect gift for every occasion.

GREENSTONES
CREATORS OF FINE JEWELRY SINCE 1925

528 North Woodward • Birmingham, MI
4 Blocks North of Maple Rd. • 810-642-2650

marmi

Last 3 Days



40% to 70% off
Shoes, Accessories and Handbags during our
Final Clearance Sale.

Though the selection is extensive, shoes may not be available in every store from 4 to 12:
SOMERSET COLLECTION • 637-3069 • AND ATLANTA, DALLAS, HOUSTON, ST. LOUIS, SAN ANTONIO