



By MARGARET MILLER
Women's Editor

Joan Neff of Farmington combines the roles of full-time law student, part-time law office worker, wife of a minister, mother of two little boys and homemaker.

She does it with varying degrees of concentration on the various roles but to the satisfaction of all concerned. Because, for Joan and her family, it's the reasonable way to function at this time in their lives.

"I'm going to law school," said this holder of bachelor and master's degrees in history from the University of Chicago, "because the education I had had up to now just was not worth much on the job market."

"I'd mention my master's degree to prospective employers and they'd ask if I could type. A law degree will open up a lot more possibilities."

Joan entered Wayne State University law school in the fall of 1972 after some assorted employments that included social work, research, part-time office work and teaching sociology at Schoolcraft College.

The latter job came shortly after Joan and her husband, Rick, moved to Farmington when he became pastor of the Universalist Unitarian Church there. It was also before the birth of their second son, Jeremy, two years ago.

"I taught sociology because they didn't need history teachers," Joan said. "There were no full-time openings at all."

Though law school seemed a big step, Joan said that "really, the only time I ques-

Women on the Go

She's student and employee and wife and mother and...



JOAN NEFF takes a moment away from law school studies to enjoy her two-year-old son, Jeremy. (Evert photo)

tion my decision is during exam week, and then I've been known to wonder what in the world I'm trying to do."

She must have felt reassured after her first year, in which she took top scholastic honors in a class of more than 200.

She won the West Publishing Co. Hornbook award for the highest scholastic average, the Corpus Juris Secundum book award from the American Law Book Co., the

bronze scholarship key and the Harry B. Keidan memorial scholarship.

"I rather hesitate to tell people, though," she said. "Then they expect me to do it again this year, and I'm not sure I will."

For Joan, a day at school means first taking four-year-old Joshua to St. John's Nursery School and Jeremy to stay with a sister, then reversing the process when she's through classes.

One day a week her sched-

ule runs late, so Rick picks up the boys and then gets dinner.

"I really love that," his wife said. "Rick has backed me all the way in my decision to go back to school. Anyone trying to do it without the full support of her husband would have a terribly difficult time."

For this family, "the fact that we've learned to increase our tolerance" about the state of the house has been a big help.

"Last year," Joan said, "I'd wander around the house worrying about all the things that had to be done but still not having time to do them. This year I've learned not to worry as long as things are reasonably clean and we're healthy."

"Of course, we've had to make some sacrifices. We don't go out as much or entertain as much. I used to bake bread and make a lot of my own clothes, and I just don't have time now."

She did get in some bread-making last summer when she was working full time, which she finds easier than a full school program.

"When you're going to school, you're never really free," she explained. "There's always something you should be doing, and that's a frustrating feeling."

Joan's decision to return to school came when she realized that in staying home with the little boys all the time "Sesame Street was getting to be the high point of my day."

Getting back to more scholastic pursuits seemed to make more sense.

"I know a lot of women," Joan mused, "who don't want to work or go to school because they have small children, and yet they do a lot of volunteer work. That doesn't seem to count, though it too takes them away from home."

"There's no question that we need volunteer workers. But that's not my style. I like to get credit for what I do, school credit or wages."

Mothering as she does it now also makes sense to Joan.

"I think I spend more time now BEING with the kids," she said. "When I was home with them all the time, it seemed I rarely gave them full attention, I was always doing something else too."

"Now I make a special time to be with them. I think for our family it's better."

After completing her three-year law course, Joan isn't making predictions for the future.

"There are a lot of options—continuing to work in a law office, business, politics, governmental work. The more I learn about law the more I find that interests me."

Northwest YW elects

Mrs. Edwin Liddle of Detroit was named chairman of the board of management when the Northwest Branch YWCA held its annual meeting this month in the Y building, 2540 Grand River, Redford Township.

Mrs. Liddle will serve on the new board with Mrs. Homer Tolan, of Birmingham, vice chairman; Mrs. Thomas Sawyer of Detroit, secretary; and Mrs. Harold Hanson of Livonia, recording secretary.

Newly elected and re-elected members of the board are Mrs. Willard Baker, Mrs. David Brado, Mrs. William Butler, Mrs. Douglas Christenson, Mrs. Eugene Fuxa, Mrs. Frank Hayball, Mrs. Howard Linsky and Mrs. Richard Nevins. Mrs. C. E. Engwall, Mrs. Joseph Ehardt and Mrs. Olson Hensley were appointed to fill unexpired terms.

The Northwest branch of the Y serves Northwest Detroit, Farmington, Southfield and Livonia. More than 14,000 men, women and children were members in 1973.

YW offers brush-up

The Northwest YWCA, 2540 Grand River, Redford Township, will offer brush-up typing courses in cooperation with Temporary Staff, Inc., beginning Feb. 5.

Advance registration is needed for the course, which has been given several previous years.

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Widowed meet

The West Side chapter of NAIM, a non-denominational social club for widows and widowers, will meet Friday, Feb. 1, at 8:30 p.m. in St. Maurice Catholic Church hall, 32801 Lyndon, Livonia. There will be refreshments and a program.



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