

Women's Commission fights for rights

By NATALIE HALPERN

"Women need to learn from labor unions the value of working in coalition," exhorted Patricia Silea. Ms. Silea addressed a meeting of the Oakland Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

The Michigan Women's Commission, created in 1968, got initial funding in 1972, and consists of 15 members appointed by the governor.

The Lansing based commission is primarily an advocacy agency for women's rights.

It acts as an educational arm in defining and eliciting response to issues of concern to women, as well as being an administrative state agency.

"The women's rights movement has a hard time contending with labels," Ms. Silea said.

"It's time we laid to rest who 'one of them' is. We are being burdened by guilt by association.

"In some minds the terms feminist, libber, bra-burner, can't-get-a-man and lesbian are equal.

"The difficulty in getting support for programs comes with various methods of working toward that goal. That's where we could learn from labor unions about working in coalition."

The commission deals with the major areas of public information, the Equal Rights Amendment, health, sex discrimination in state government and employment.

One of the aims of the commission is to build a directory of women's organizations in the state. "Once you get a directory of such organizations, it gives women a handle on political power. Politicians will answer a mandate of voters in their districts," she said.

She reminded her listeners that "women make up 50 percent of the population of Michigan, 53 percent of the registered voters and 58 percent of the voters in the last election."

Ms. Silea noted that Michigan is the only women's commission that has put out publications and is one of the few which is funded.

To date 30 of the 38 states needed to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment have done so. She predicts the measure will receive the necessary voters nationally.

"The State of Michigan has over 2000 laws now on the books which differentiate as to sex. The task force recommends changes in the statutes and proposes new legislation."

A statewide, state-sponsored conference projected for this fall will deal with Michigan laws as they will be affected by the Equal Rights Amendment.

In the health field, concerns involve a woman's right to make decisions about her body, the care of her children, and the right to live out her life in dignity.

"Women are 60 percent of the



Michigan Women's Commission Director Patricia Silea

population over 65 years of age, and they are discriminated against by social security, pension, insurance and credit laws.

"They have a right to a voice in policy decisions as to how they will live, in terms of health delivery systems," Ms. Silea said.

"There is sex discrimination in state government. Not enough women are appointed to boards and commissions."

"It's like a Chinese water torture — it changes one drop at a time." "The commission seeks to eliminate sex role stereotyping in the public schools, particularly in terms of text books."

In 1973 a precedent setting class suit was filed in Kalamazoo under Title 9 of the Federal Education Act which enjoined funds to the Kalamazoo school board to the tune of \$2 million. Since then, 5 other suits have been filed around the country.

Other major areas of interest are the granting of credit to women, establishing a talent bank of qualified women, and the educational and rehabilitation rights of female offenders.

She dismissed the protests of those who feel the ERA will undo existing protective labor legislation, declaring,

"That legislation doesn't exist. There's no law on the books in

Michigan that has to do with the work break."

"As for weight lifting, the only law on the books in this state says a woman may not lift anything that is disproportionate to her weight, detrimental to her morals or interfere with motherhood."

"If you're talking about work hours, the law applied only to companies with fewer than 15 employees, and since the wording was fuzzy, the law has been repealed."

"It becomes important for women to be involved in women's rights," she said, "because they will reach a point in their lives when they realize 'it's happening to me, I'm the victim.'"

"Why doesn't someone do something? There's no one to do it unless we do it for ourselves."

Problem-solvers are ready to help

Helpful programs in child and maternal health, family planning, environmental health, VD control, nutrition, alcoholism and nursing home inspection are among the services offered by the Oakland County Health Department.

The department's problem-solvers may have the answer to your health and environmental questions. In this area, contact the health department at 27725 Greenfield, Southfield.

Services are set

"Who is to Blame for our Troubles" is the sermon planned by Rabbi Israel I. Halpern for services on Friday and Saturday in Beth Abraham-Hillel, 5075 Maple Road, West Bloomfield.

Friday services will begin at 6:30 p.m. and Saturday services will begin at 9 a.m.

The congregation will observe the bar mitzvah of Eric Alan Wal-lack.



Bouza - Koths

Dr. and Mrs. Manuel A. Bouza of Farmington Hills announce the engagement of their daughter, Marly Maria-Cecilia, to Kerry Ray Koths, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Koths of Taylor.

The bride elect is a 1971 graduate of Our Lady of Mercy High School and attended Michigan State University. Her fiancé is a graduate of Missouri Military Academy and attends Michigan State University.

A summer wedding is planned.



Van Meter - Lysinger

Mr. and Mrs. Howard J. Van Meter of Farmington announce the engagement of their daughter, Therese, to John Robert Lysinger, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lysinger of Taylor.

The bride elect is a 1971 graduate of Farmington High School. Her fiancé was graduated from Kennedy High School in 1967. Both are employed by Michigan Bell Telephone Co.

The couple plan to be married in May.



Konola - Free

Mr. and Mrs. William Konola of Farmington announce the engagement of their daughter, Sally Ruth, to Stewart John Free, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Free of Freeport, Minn.

The bride elect is a graduate of the Grace Hospital School of Nursing, now employed at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor. Her fiancé is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, now employed by General Motors.

The couple plan to be married in July.



Coffman-Williamson

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Coffman of Farmington Hills announce the engagement of their daughter, Heidi, to Douglas M. Williamson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Williamson, also of Farmington Hills.

The couple plan to be wed in April.

Both are graduates of North Farmington High School. The bride elect attended the University of Michigan and her fiancé was graduated from U of M in December, when he received a teaching degree in secondary education.



Satterfield-Birkam

Mr. and Mrs. E. Gene Satterfield of Farmington announce the engagement of their daughter, Sue Ellen, to Stephen F. Birkam, son of Dr. and Mrs. Fred Birkam of Big Rapids, formerly of Farmington.

The couple plan to be wed in June.

The bride elect was graduated from Central Michigan University in 1972 and is a teacher at Gill School in Farmington. Her fiancé will graduate from Ferris State College this year.



Ritchie-Kost

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ritchie of Farmington Hills announce the engagement of their daughter, Elizabeth Ann, to William John Kost, son of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Kost of Windsor, Ont.

The couple plan a May wedding in the First Lutheran Church of Windsor.

The bride elect attends the University of Guelph, in Guelph, Ont., and her fiancé attends the University of Western Ontario, in London, Ont.

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