

Attorney charges prejudice

By MARILYN FRUMKIN

A Franklin attorney has accused circuit court judges of prejudice against women involved in divorce cases.

Judith Doran, speaking at a recent meeting of the National Organization of Women (NOW) in Bloomfield Hills, said, "A judge's personal values are immensely important concerning property settlements and child support payments."

"Judges hear that women are so independent now, they can take care of themselves. The judges don't look at the statistics that prove otherwise."

"Some judges — and all Wayne and Oakland County Circuit Court judges are male — figure a settlement is a gift from the husband. When a judge is in a position to award a payment that hurts the man, he can't separate himself from his male brother."

MORE THAN 300 women and five men jammed the Birmingham Unitarian Church to hear Mrs. Doran, attorney William Bradford of Southfield and John Houghton, Oakland County's Friend of the Court, speak on the practical aspects of divorce.

Bradford said he disagrees with

Mrs. Doran's viewpoint about judges' prejudices.

"Divorce cases are just lawsuits and most judges just treat them as such. Generally, the judge takes into consideration what each party brought to the marriage and splits what is left right down the middle," he said.

He said that often a case can be settled quickly and simply if husband and wife don't get "hung up on small things."

"I had a client who argued with his wife, in front of the judge, over who should get the photographs and who should get the proofs of their wedding pictures. The judge threw the case out," he said.

AS FOR ALIMONY, Mrs. Doran said it's becoming a thing of the past.

"Women should not expect to be supported for life," she said, adding that it is in the area of the divorce settlement when women "play the strategy game."

She said a wife has a better chance of earning a larger settlement if she is unemployed at the time of the divorce. She also advises her own women clients to find out exactly how much their husbands are worth financially.

Bradford suggested that chil-

dren are often used in the strategy.

"Nine times out of 10, the woman gets child custody. But if she says with what he's giving me, he can afford the kids better than I can," and tells her husband he can have custody — that's great strategy."

The husband will usually soon decide he doesn't want custody and offer her a better financial deal."

HOUGHTON SAID child support, visitation rights and custody problems are concerns of his staff as Friend of the Court.

Support payments are made through my office. The general rule of thumb, based on the father's net income, is 20 per cent for

one child, 30 per cent for two, 40 per cent for three and 50 per cent for four or more.

"Our biggest problem is trying to locate delinquent payers. Some owe as much as \$30,000," he said. Mrs. Doran and Bradford both agree that do-it-yourself divorces are feasible but only if there are no disagreements over any issues.

Even then, it's not such a bargain," said Mrs. Doran, citing one divorce package that costs from \$90 to \$120 and is advertised "for the man who has everything."

Bradford advises each party in a divorce case to engage his own attorney, especially if one party is fearful of a vendetta. He said lawyers' fees average about \$250.

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Noriko designs colorful spring

By CHRISTINE WALDEN

Noriko designs light, airy, sleeveless and almost short for spring '75. Dipping from her signature matte jersey and rolled hems, she designs spring by changing hemlines and adding cotton knit to the collection.

The traditionally rolled hems, still evidenced in some designs, are frequently replaced with a flatter, deeper hem. The new treatment, said Noriko, makes the clothes move differently.

"My whole line is softer," she said. "And for a softer movement I like the flatter hem better."

While cotton knits and polyester chiffons do creep in, matte jersey continues to dominate the line based on free and easy movement.

One jersey gown, shown recently at Saks Fifth Avenue, is striking with a blouse, open-back top and three tiered skirt in different colors.

ANOTHER, showed in baby pink, sports two tiers edged with flat hem and ends right below the knee.

That length, said Noriko, "is the

most feminine and shows more leg. Just below the knee or maybe two inches below is a good length. It's more lady-like."

Feminine looks continue when chiffons do creep in, matte jersey for a stunning night-time look. The floor length gown's strapless top blouses over the gathered skirt, and co-ordinates with a chiffon jacket.

A top with Kabucki sleeves, rounded neck and belted waist matches with its own skirt for a cocktail-hour ensemble.

Cotton knits constitute a selection of playful clothes. From red and white striped strapless sundresses and billowy, raglan sleeved chemises to simple tunic-like tops with drawstring waists to top any part, the cotton knits are practical and feminine.

Noriko plays with lots of colors for spring, from bright emerald green and chrome yellow combinations to more subtle matches of yellow, white and brown. Other solids such as mattisette blue, white, red, yellow and browns make the collection colorful and fresh.

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