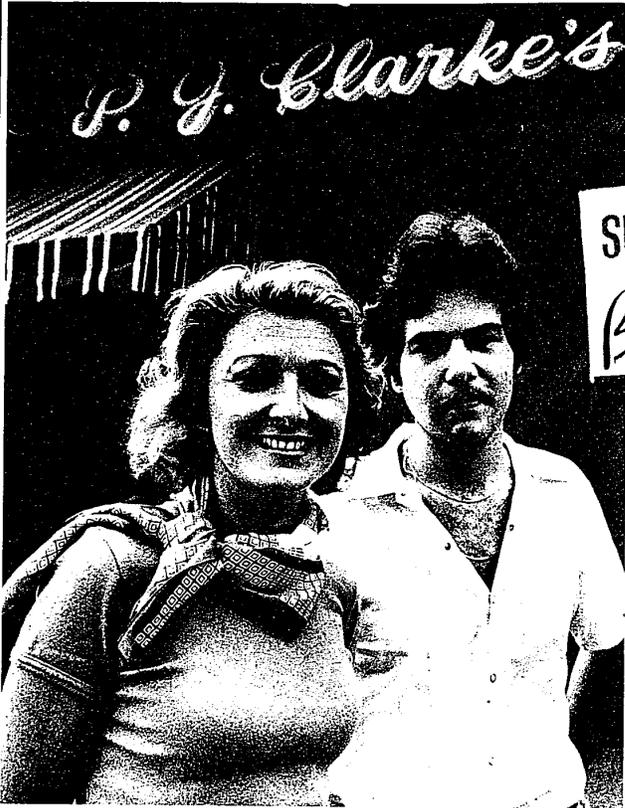


Psychologist relates careers

She finds 'a place in the sun' may cause blisters



By **SONYA FRIEDMAN**
 I always knew it wouldn't be easy—breaking the stereotype of what's expected of a woman. Particularly if one begins to step into what's known as a Man's World.
 The potential rewards are great, but so is the price.
 My first sojourn outside the enclosure of a professional office was about 10 years ago when I approached John Reddy, then-editor of the Birmingham Eccentric, about the possibility of writing a psychological column.
 "What's your writing experience," he asked.
 "How about a Ph.D. dissertation?" came my rapid reply.
 "That and a dime," he quipped.
 "Write six columns, send them to me and we'll see."
 That was the beginning of a five-year association with The Eccentric. I remember walking down the street in Birmingham shortly after my first columns were published.
 "I saw your column," a casual friend said. "Don't you think that's a tremendous responsibility?"
 It was a responsibility, and I took it to heart. At the same time, it was an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas, even the common anguish we all share.
 But there was the possibility that it might create some thoughts, identification and options for others.

I've ALWAYS felt that people have a responsibility to themselves—to read a variety of formats and then select out philosophies and solutions that make sense to them.
 I remember putting that gal's comments into my emotional carry-pack, and wondering if I had already gone too far.
 One of the columns caught the attention of a local television station, and I was asked to appear on its morning show. Within six months, the station offered me a regular spot on that show.
 I was the guest psychologist. There was an opportunity for me to learn something new since I researched a new topic each week.
 There was an opportunity to learn new skills; responding succinctly to questions, becoming at ease in front of an audience and particularly coming to terms with the fact that if you have a place in the sun, you're going to get some blisters.

'I've never regretted taking the risks, falling flat on my face, picking myself up and trying again.'

—Sonya Friedman

I experienced my first hate mail, had people tell me how deeply they disagreed with me, and had the beginning experiences of what it was to be a public person willing to speak out and take a position.
 If people have need to have everyone like them or have difficulty dealing with criticism, public exposure is out of the question for them.
 In addition, females are traditionally supposed to be compliant. So, standing toe to toe with an adversary on an issue in a public forum may be seen as less than acceptable feminine behavior.

was out of my field and made the decision to resign.
 It was the first time I ever asked for an exit interview. I was a painful decision.
 I remember feeling heady about having the courage to terminate something where I felt it wasn't up to my standards, but tortured that it didn't work.
 Yet, I've never regretted taking the risk, falling flat on my face, picking myself up and trying again.

"WHY DON'T YOU just stay in your office?" people ask me. "What are you trying to prove?"
 Must I live up to others' stereotype of a psychologist, too? Life is short—there are so many things people can do.
 I've never understood why they just stick to one thing. It's too easy to get burned out.

THE WKYC television spot was the catalyst for invitations to be a guest psychologist in Cleveland, Chicago and New York. Having traveled very little in my lifetime, I welcomed the opportunity.
 In addition, I met a variety of interesting people who were also appearing on the respective shows. The experiences required the learning of additional skills—traveling alone, eating in restaurants alone, and feeling at ease, talking comfortably to people in a variety of circumstances.

To be sequential or have concurrent careers makes life more interesting and contributes to growth. The only proof of life is growth and change.
 And now there's P.J. Clarke's. It was born of a concept I saw in New York, a place where people continue to go because of a basic sense of camaraderie.
 I want to create the same kind of atmosphere—a place where the embrace is warmth and friendships, where you can feel comfortable if you come in alone or with others.

When AM-America, ABC's original network morning show was born, I was invited aboard. It was a wonderful experience—a continuation of what I had been doing over the last five years with the additional privilege of meeting national dignitaries.
 Six months later, the show went off the air.
 ABC offered me another network opportunity. Then-president of ABC network news, Bill Sheehan, offered me an experimental post.
 I was to bring psychological and social issues to the attention of the public on the news. I worked for ABC News as a special correspondent for two years covering stories that I felt were newsworthy and psychological in nature.

Food is part of our psychological as well as physical life. When a woman is involved with food in her home, it's expected. When she does it as a business, it's questioned.
 What have I learned in the 11 years of being on my own in a career—from

While the work was exciting and I was learning about television production, writing and film editing, I felt I

her restaurant of warmth and camaraderie. (Staff photo by Dick Kelley)

Sonya Friedman, with chef Jim Dahlke, says she's trying to create an atmosphere at her restaurant of warmth and camaraderie. (Staff photo by Dick Kelley)

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