Miss Michigan pageant a 'learning experience'

Kristen Conley, 1988 Miss Farmington, didn't place in this year's Miss Michigan Scholarship Pageant, won by Margaret Jan McIntyre, Miss Monroe County, in state competition Saturday night in Muskegon. First runner-up was Miss St. Clair County, Michelle Kay Ebner.

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Miss Farmington, Kristen Conley, returned home defeated but upbeat following the Miss Michigan 1989 pageant Saturday night.

The event, held at Frauenthal Center in Muskegon, featured 31 contestants.

Although disappointed, Conley maintained an optimistic attitude.

"It was a stressful week but a real learning experience," said Conley, 19, Monday. "I think I did well. I made a lot of friends."

Conley said that some of the girls who had run before had the benefit of experience that she did not have. "They were real experienced and knew what to expect."

Pageant rules allow girls to participate up to three times, according to Sarah D'Ascenzo, Miss Farmington executive director.

"Kristin did a wonderful job," said D'Ascenzo.

ONLY ABOUT five other girls were as young as she, 18 or 19 years old, said Conley. "We were rookies," she said.

Age 22 was the average, Conley said.

Conley displayed her talent by performing a song called "Sweet As A Rose" while playing a guitar. She wrote the music and lyrics, which speak of her Tennessee boyfriend.

She drew inspiration from the environs of Tennessee where she spent the winter writing the song. Conley's grandfather, Joe Wilson, a well-known musical figure in Tennessee, was her coach, Conley said. He has sold a couple of songs to the television program, Hee Haw, she said.

Conley has sung at hospitals, rest homes and a radio station in Tennessee.

THE CONLEY family have been Farmington Hills residents for two years. Her father's job initiated many moves. "I went to 10 schools in 12 years," she said.

Dick Conley, her father, is a district service representative at the General Motors home office in Pontiac. Her mother, Joy, is manager of The Body Shoppe in Farmington Hills; Kristin is assistant manager.

"Its hard to say if I will run again this soon after the pageant," Conley said. "It's nothing I would rule out, though."

Kelly Garver, 1986 Miss Michigan and 1985 Miss Farmington, was a performer at this past Saturday night event, said D'Ascenzo, whose daughter, Roxanne, was the 1982 Miss Farmington. Garver, a Farmington Hills resident, went on to become the third runner-up in the 1986 Miss America pageant.

The Farmington area has had its share of winners.

Holly Schmidt Lichtman was 1976 Miss Farmington and 1977 Miss Michigan. Melanie Churella, 1986 Miss Farmington, was first runner-up in the 1987 Miss Michigan pageant. Both are Farmington Hills residents.

Minister leaves campus

Sister Rose Kopczenski, known for going to where the needs of the people are rather than waiting for people to come to her, is leaving her post as minister on Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College.

She was feted and wished Godpeed by faculty members who hosted a luncheon in her honor late in May.

Kopczenski leaves to become the assistant director of the Sisters of St. Francis in Pittsburgh, Pa.

She is known on campus for the work she begun through the Human Enrichment Center, which sponsors activities to develop understanding and awareness of social action and the injustice of human suffering.

When Farmington and Farmington Hills clergy sponsored CROP Walk early this spring, Kospczenski boosted participation by 25 percent from last year with her recruitment of student walkers.

Students also joined in her crusade to help the soup kitchen in St. Leo Catholic Church in Detroit.

Crisis intervention volunteers sought

In an effort to support patients and their families in times of crisis, the Skillman Foundation has granted financing for the establishment of a volunteer-staffed crisis intervention program for the pediatric unit and pediatric intensive care unit at Henry Ford Hospital.

Volunteers will work during prescheduled sessions and on an on-call basis during evenings and weekends to provide support for parents facing difficult situations. The project is expected to have a positive impact on parental anxiety and coping skills, and enable parents to provide needed support to their children.

The Skillman Foundation was founded in 1960 by Rose P. Skillman, widow of Robert H. Skillman, vice president and director of Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co.

The Detroit-based organization is a private, grant-making foundation with assets totaling $252 million. It makes grants in the areas of children, youths and young people, basic human needs, community-wide collaborative efforts, culture, arts and education.

Volunteers are being recruited from local communities and schools of nursing, social work, medicine and counseling. Individuals interested in participating in the program may contact Laurie Klemczak at Henry Ford Hospital, 876-1109.

Roz Greenberg, Friends president; Ron Asmar, Vineyard Wine Shoppe owner; Bev Papai, library director; and John Carlson, Friends treasurer, share a fun moment at the gala.

Gala salutes library Friends

About 150 Friends gathered to celebrate community spirit and honor contributors at their third annual gala.

This year's gala featured Jonathan Haglund, a comedian, magician and performer in pantomime. His clowning included audience participation.

The Farmington Friends is a nonprofit organization that promotes library services, facilities and needs. Its support funds services and programs not included in the regular library budget.

As in the past, Friends' membership applications were sent out in late March. This year's spring solicitation netted $10,000, the best membership drive in the organization's history. The drive added 361 new Friends, a 94 percent increase in individual, family and corporate membership, "ample testimony of the community's commitment to the libraries in Farmington and Farmington Hills," said Roz Greenberg, president.

Bev Papai, director of the Farmington Community Library, said "This growth in Friends' membership certainly parallels the continued increase in use of our library facilities."

ANOTHER FRIENDS' gala tradition is wine and cheese served each year by Ron Asmar, owner of the Vineyard Wine Cellar and Liquor Shoppe in Farmington Hills. In appreciation of Asmar's generosity over the years, Greenberg awarded him a plaque on behalf of the Friends.

This year, special desserts were supplied by Baker's Loaf in downtown Farmington.

John Carlson, the Friends' treasurer, presented Papai with a dozen long-stemmed roses in recognition of her leadership, constant enthusiasm and devotion to the libraries.

Greenberg also commended the Friends' board members for their assistance in making the gala successful: John Carlson, Bonnie King, Roe Fertig, Dorothy Stoutjesdyk, Ellen Ashcraft, Pat Brown and Jack Hurwitz.

Although this year's gala is past, it's not too late to become a Friend of the Farmington libraries. Call Sally Campbell at 553-0300 for information on how you can join the ranks of those interested in promoting the Farmington Community Library.

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