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All Things To All People

By Annette Harris

Many women today have a career and a family, but some women feel that they can't handle both. They feel that they have to make a choice between the two. A woman who chooses a family has to depend on her husband financially, which isn't good because if they separate or if the husband dies, the woman is left without resources. She has no job, and she has no education to get one. As a result, how and where a woman was reared play a big role on her decision concerning a family, career, or a blend of the two. There's a woman in Western Oklahoma who has a family *and* a career and is successful in both.

Her name is Karen Howland. She was born on October 15, 1945, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. At age 13, she and her family moved to Mooreland, Oklahoma, a small town near Woodward. Karen enjoyed growing up in a small town because everyone knew everyone else or were related to one another. Karen feels that the pressure that kids feel in a large city wasn't felt in the small town in which she grew up. School in a small town was also different from that in a large city; there was a slow, comfortable pace. In grades one through three, Karen went to the same schoolhouse with a population of eight. These three grades were her favorite. She graduated from high school in 1963 with a

class of 31 from Mooreland High. During her high-school years, she was involved in choir, FHA, and basketball. She had one younger brother and no sisters. She and her friends had to entertain themselves. "There isn't much to do in a small town," she says. Entertainment had to be creative and involve people rather than things.

One type of entertainment that involved people was cruising, which was how she met her husband, Leroy. One night while taking a break at the Sonic in Woodward, Karen and Leroy were introduced by a mutual friend. Karen knew immediately that he was the one for her. He had the qualities she was looking for in a husband. They were married after she finished high school. By the time they were married six years, she had given birth to two children--Rick and Kim--two years apart. she held off on a career until her

children were old enough to take care of themselves. After eighteen years of marriage and two children, Karen decided to return to school to pursue a career in nursing. She decided on nursing because she had been working in the health-related field. She enjoyed working with people and gleaned a high amount of self-satisfaction from the teaching aspect of nursing. Her desire to follow a career in nursing was something she had had for several years, but her desire to have a family was greater; and her family supported her decision.

With her family's support, Karen graduated from O.U. in May, 1985. She began working at the V.A. Hospital in June of that same year. A year later she applied for the position of Head Nurse. During this time of application, she had to enter the hospital to have a kidney removed. However, her time off



Karen Howland

work didn't affect her chances of getting the position of Head Nurse; in fact, she began in her new position in September, 1986. She says that she likes her new job but finds it really stressful. She hopes that the stress level will decrease after she becomes better adjusted to the job.

Having a job and a family is very demanding--especially if a person is accustomed to the life of a small-town country girl. But Karen Howland is a prime example of a woman of the 80's being able to manage both a career and a family. It's extremely difficult unless all the family members cooperate. Some women set their goals too high by trying to be all things to all people--wife, mother, career person. Some of them fail. If a woman feels that she can be all things to all people, she should be given a chance. It can be done. Karen is a living example. ■

ANNETTE HARRIS is a SOSU junior in Elementary Education. Annette knows her subject well because she has plans of becoming Karen Howland's daughter-in-law.



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