

The Future For Miriam? A Husband And TV Lights

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COLUMBIA, S. C.—An announcer says, "And now we bring you South Carolina's own Miriam Stevenson." The cameras flash to the star seated before the microphone on her set. Lights bring out the sparkle of her engagement ring.

Miriam looks happy—and is. This is her answer to the often-repeated question: What happens to "the most beautiful girl in the world" when she prefers studies to studios, home to Hollywood?

Decision Hard To Make

THE FORMER MISS UNIVERSE is not surprised things have worked out. She expected them to when she came home. "When I made up my mind I was sure I was right," the blonde beauty explained. "Sometimes decisions are hard to make but once I do decide something I feel sure."

Miriam, brought up a staunch Presbyterian, believes thoroughly in predestination.

When she went to the Miss Universe contest in California two years ago the airline lost her luggage. Upset, her family phoned to console her. She told them not to worry. She'd win if she was supposed to.

The title carried with it a movie contract. The contest had followed her junior year at Lander College in Greenwood. Her family felt she should finish her education. But who turns down a chance at Hollywood?

Miriam tried the movie mecca for a summer. In the fall she came home and re-entered school. The decision brought a flood of publicity but she was firm. Once the shock passed friends and fans commended her level-headedness.

"I expected more criticism. People were awfully nice. But I was positive it was the right thing to do," she recalls now.

Graduation, with a degree in home economics, found her nearly worn out. Personal appearances, advertising picture contracts and other commitments, combined with senior events, had taken their toll. She had others to do and still

had to go back to Long Beach to crown her successor. Then she was free for awhile.

The rest of the summer and into the fall she rested at her family's dairy farm near Winnsboro with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard O. Stevenson.

Finally, she made the announcement. She was going on television here—on WIS-TV. She would have a daily show and a weekly night show Mondays.

The daily show is still on, the Monday night one off for the summer.

But before it left the air the evening show had a big effect on Miriam's life—perhaps the biggest of anything ever.

On it with her was the station's weatherman and chief announcer, Don Upton. He found time to help her in the new medium and they became good friends. As time and shows went on they began dating regularly—or as regularly as two people with wildly different working hours can. He works nights, she works days.

In the process they feel they've come to know each other well. "We know how we act under strain, when we're happy or sad—or mad. You just CAN'T know anybody better than by working with him," Miriam points out.

Now the two plan to be married in September. They get up earlier these days to hunt apartments before their studio stints begin. They hope, soon, to find time to buy some furniture. And they are subject to good-natured ribbing from the whole studio staff.

Now It's Wedding Bells

MIRIAM HAS PLANNED HER WEDDING. She will be married in Lebanon Presbyterian Church where she grew up. But so far she hasn't had time to think of her trousseau or wedding gown.

"I just don't have time to shop," she explained. As soon as she's through breakfast she heads for the studio where, with a co-producer, she works up her own show. On it she interviews VIPs, teen-agers and other interesting people and lets experts teach her audience their tricks.

First come telephone calls to next week's guests. Then there's a conference with her director. The YWCA wants to put on a charm course and will need a dress rack and dressing tables. They figure a way to handle it.

Then Miriam makes her way to the announcers' room to find their notebook and big-lettered typewriter. Slowly, painfully—she hates typing—she copies her commercials. The completed copy is pasted to a cardboard base so it can be held beyond camera range for her to read during the show.

Some more checking and Miriam phones Don she's ready for coffee. He arrives with three cups in a saucepan he found to serve as a tray.

"Remember that church party for tonight I told you about? Do you want me to call and tell them you're too busy to go?" she asks. "No," Don replies, "We can't stay for the whole thing but I'd like to go." Both make time for church activities.

The Show Must Go On

WHEN PRE-SHOW TIME COMES Miriam heads for the dressing room to make up. As she spreads cream base and curls her eyelashes she explains, "I don't like make-up and Don just hates it. So I don't wear much except on the show."

Miriam checks out the show but doesn't rehearse. Sometimes spontaneous answers to her careful questions take her breath. "But most people are fine, and I enjoy it. I've quit worrying."

With the show over she checks for emergency phone calls, rings Don to say it's time to eat—at 3 p. m.—and leaves the studio.

Both order hamburgers, Don with coffee. But Miriam is still a milk drinker. When Don teases her about it she retorts, "I always will be."

She doesn't get buttermilk which she caused a sensation by ordering in Hollywood. "But I still like it—real buttermilk, that is, with butter in it."

Miriam means to stay on in TV after marriage. "There's no reason not to. With his hours we'll see more of each other at the studio than any other way." If there are children? "That would be different."



"A TOAST TO THE FUTURE . . . WHAT ELSE"
. . . Don and Miriam share mid-morning coffee-break.

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