

15 Realtor Points To Women's 3-Point Operation In Home

One out of three of today's modern matrons not only plays a key part in populating and selecting her home, but in paying for it as well. And in all three capacities she is one of the potent forces in improving the standard of the American home.

This point was advanced today by Thomas H. Brenna, president of the Real Estate Board of Rochester, on the basis of current national figures highlighting the importance of the working wife in the nation's expanding economy and real estate industry.

"The working wife has had a part in boosting the average family income 30 per cent—from

\$4,000 in 1946 to \$5,200 in 1955," Mr. Brenna said. "This is one of the most striking developments in the American economy since World War II, and promises to be even more important in the future."

Mr. Brenna cited U. S. Census Bureau figures showing that almost one of every three married women had a job outside her home last year. He said that the percentage of wives gainfully employed was 29.5 per cent—the result of a steady increase since 1947 when it was 21.5 per cent. At the peak of wartime employment in 1944 it was 25.6 per cent, which was considered phenomenal.

Paralleling this increase in the number of working wives has been a striking growth in the rate of home ownership which may not be unrelated, Mr. Brenna observed.

In 1955, 60 per cent of the American families owned their own homes, a substantial increase over the 55 per cent of 1950.

Another clue to the relationship between increases in home ownership and the contribution of the working wife toward that end is found in the assertion of

the Federal Housing Administration that a "large percentage" of its home mortgage loan insurance has been extended in view of the adequacy of family income—to which the wives contributed to sustain mortgage payments. And the federal housing agency is currently studying the matter

also—that as homemakers, and mothers they are also interested in obtaining adequate family housing accommodations.

"For years Realtors have noted that the wife plays a major part in selecting the house," he added, "although we used to say that the husband passes on her choice from the standpoint of family finances. Now it appears that working wives, because of their key contribution to family finances, may have a larger voice in the spending of joint funds.

"Perhaps it's true that it's becoming more of a woman's world—if so, there are some redeeming features from a male viewpoint," the realtor concluded.

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Hardwood flooring is famed for its durability... Often outlasting the life of a home. Also, hardwood flooring is still the accepted standard of quality in home construction. Today the manufacturing and ingenuity of the hardwood industry has reduced costs, so that hardwood flooring can be used in even the most modest priced homes.

Oak is the most widely used hardwood. Hard maple, beech, birch and pecan rank next.

attach even greater significance to wives' incomes.

The second is a key contribution to what has been called "the drastic upward revision in living standards of the past few years" based on a 50 per cent increase since 1947 in the number of families with \$4,000 to \$7,500 cash income.

The Rochester Realtors' executive then quoted Dean Arthur K. Uppgren of Dartmouth College as estimating that in less than 10 years—given a continuation of an expanding economy and the participation of married women in it as wage earners at the current rate—the average family will have an annual income of \$6,700.

"According to Dean Uppgren's estimates," Mr. Brenna said, "this will bring one million families a year across the \$5,000 income level. This is most meaningful in terms of the drive of American families—already noted in surveys made by our National Association of Real Estate Boards—for better housing."

In support of this contention, the real estate board president noted that economists generally look on the \$4,000-\$5,000 income band as the dividing line between essential and optional family spending. Below this level, a family spends most of its money for the bare necessities of life. Once subsistence needs are met with income to spare, spending stress falls on satisfying tastes and gratifying preferences.

In crediting working wives with this greater ability of the average family to better its residence, Mr. Brenna pointed out

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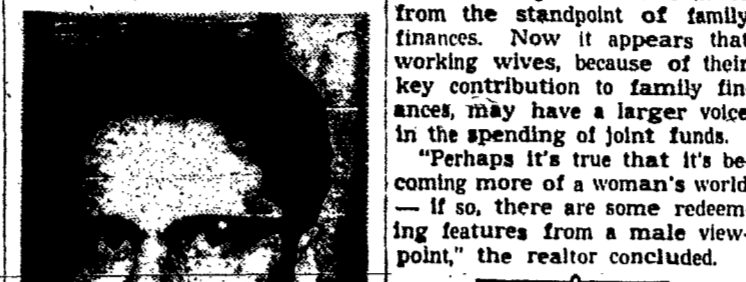
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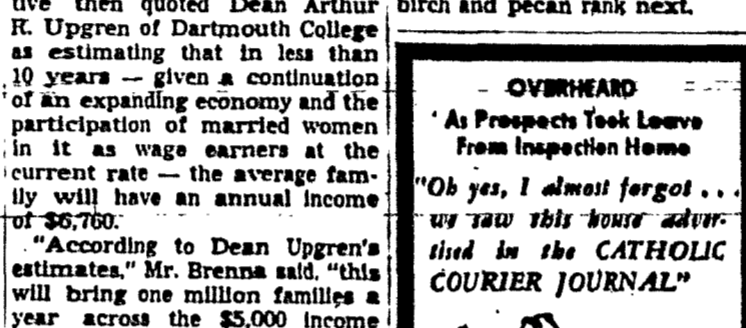
THOMAS H. BRENNA

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