



BREAKING THE TIE THAT BINDS



This year more than 18,500 persons living in Franklin County will marry and at least 10,500 will divorce.

On an average day at the Franklin County Court of Domestic Relations, 18 divorce cases pass through the various stages of legal intricacies. Eight uncontested divorces are granted, five cases are slated for the drop list, and five contested divorces go before the court.

The divorce rate per 1,000 population in Franklin County has nearly doubled in the last eight years: from 3.43 in 1965 to 5.84 in 1973. That ranks Franklin County sixth highest among the state's 88 counties.

Franklin County's divorce statistics thus keep pace with national figures showing marriages breaking up at a disturbing rate across the country — this year more than 4.5 million Americans will marry, but 1.8 million will divorce.

More than 29,000 divorced men and women live in Franklin County, according to figures compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau. In 1970, the most recent year for which data are available, divorced persons represented 3.5 percent of the total population of Franklin County. Women accounted for two-thirds of the divorced residents.

Though statistics tell an over-all story of the general state of human affairs . . . love, marriage, and *divorce* happen to men and women—to people not numbers.

Whatever the individual circumstances, the experience of divorce has at least as much impact on a person's life as marriage.

Divorce often leaves a person with feelings of inadequacy and failure, periods of deep depression, and a sense of loss of lifestyle. Still, many individuals find that divorce can break ground for self-development and lead to more freedom to

pursue careers, make commitments to new goals, and explore new relationships.

Just as each marriage varies within a general framework, there is no typical or average divorce. The persons whose stories are told here are Columbus residents who have been through divorces or dissolutions. The names and some minor facts were changed to protect the identities. The people are real.

Boredom was Jackie's problem.

Jackie was two months pregnant when she married Tom. He had just graduated from college at 24. Five years later when their marriage ended, Jackie was shuffling from one employment agency to the next, with a 12th-grade education and no recent work experience. Tom, who had completed four years of law school by attending classes at night and working a full-time job, was beginning his career. His salary already was \$13,000 a year. Jackie wanted the divorce. Tom did not.

"We moved up the wedding date because I was pregnant," Jackie said. "We had dated almost a year, and I wanted to marry him anyway. I was insecure, and he was down to earth. I needed someone to take care of me because I was messing things up where I was. I had gone with a lot of guys, and my morals were really going down the

drain. I missed my family, and Tom was from Columbus which was where they were.

"I thought I was in love with him. He catered to me, babied me, and took me out to nice places. I thought it was nice being pregnant," Jackie said.

Tall, thin, and earthy-looking, Jackie said that in retrospect she thinks Tom married her to be an ornament. Tom's reasons for getting married were similar.

"My wife's pregnancy was irrelevant to my decision. I wanted to get married at the time. Going through life single had never occurred to me. I met Jackie when she was working in Chicago, and she and I hit it off at first. I taught her how to play the guitar. But I wanted to get married before I met her," Tom said in his curt, concise manner.

"Being married seemed to be the most common state, a partnership with love as the basis," he said. "I took the chauvinistic approach with the man over the woman who takes care of the child. We agreed to that beforehand."

However, what seemed plausible in theory apparently did not work so well in reality. Although Jackie felt a vague sense of unhappiness for a long time, she did not consider a divorce until the last eight months of their marriage.

"Let's build our life on my life' was Tom's attitude," Jackie said. "Boredom was the problem. I wasn't allowed to work, to go to school, to visit my mother except once a week. He was always like that, and at first I liked it." Listing her functions in their marriage as child caretaker, housecleaner, and sexmate, Jackie felt herself and her child to be little more than Tom's responsibilities. Tom paid all the bills, made the decisions, and insisted that Jackie not open