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'Little Miss' hits big time

Imlay grad featured on upcoming segment of 'The Doctors' tv show

by Catherine Minolli

write the author



Imlay City native Dr. Karen Stewart went from the Little Miss Blueberry stage to the television screen where she'll appear on 'The Doctors' on Jan. 5.

December 31, 2008

IMLAY CITY — Dr. Phil says the best indicator of future behavior is past behavior and in Karen Stewart's case, the good doctor appears to be right on.

In 1984, six-year-old Karen was crowned Imlay City's first 'Little Miss Blueberry.' Today, Karen— Dr. Karen, that is—is in the big leagues. Dr. Phil's league, to be exact, and she's appearing on a popular show produced by the famed psychologist and his son called 'The Doctors.'

The show featuring the grown-up first-ever 'Little Miss' will air at 10 a.m. on January 5 on WXYZ-TV, channel 7. Stewart will demonstrate on a live patient techniques used in 'Freedom Laser Therapy,' a Los Angeles-based clinic that helps smokers kick the habit.

With a treatment site in Southfield, Michigan, Freedom has in the past drawn a lot of press. But since appearing on the show, the media attention has increased, and maybe even opened some new doors for the successful clinical psychologist.

"It was great to be on The Doctors —Freedom has received a lot of media coverage but this was the biggest thing we have ever done," Stewart says. "Appearing on The Doctors was a great experience and I hope I have many more

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opportunities—maybe even my own show."

Stewart says she's currently working with producers who have generated ideas for two different reality shows. She also recently signed on with an agency for a book series so there's obviously more in store for the former Little Miss Blueberry.

"I'm excited to see what my future will bring," she says.

Stewart's 'bring it on' attitude and goal-oriented nature is no surprise to her mom, Joanne Stewart.

Joanne, an aide with the Imlay City School District, says her daughter's always been determined.

"She always had a drive, always knew what she wanted to do," Joanne says.

And one of those things was to compete in the first-ever Little Miss Blueberry pageant.

"That was her idea, she was very outgoing and knew what she wanted so when it came to my husband and I, we were always supportive."

Joanne says Karen dreamed of going to California and after earning a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University, she hit the road for the golden state. Karen completed her education at the California School of Professional Psychology, where she earned a psy.D in clinical psychology. In addition to her work at Freedom, Karen runs a private psychology practice in Santa Monica, California.

While she's living her dream, Karen says she's still very fond of her hometown.

"I love to return home to Imlay City," Karen says. "I live in Los Angeles and it's so busy and there are so many people everywhere that it's nice to be in a familiar, relaxed place even if it is just for the weekend or for a holiday."

Since Joanne still lives in Imlay, Karen says she keeps up on all the local happenings and news of her high school friends.

"Moving away from my friends and family to a big city like Los Angeles was a huge, scary step for me but I have never regretted it," she says. "Of course I miss everyone and even the four seasons, but I know that I needed to move to achieve my career goals."

That "knowing" has brought a lot of satisfaction into Karen's life, and even a little fun for her family.

"I love being a psychologist and truly feel I picked a career path that will suit my career, life and personal goals," Karen says. "And my family loves the opportunity to have a warm place to visit!"

Catch 'Dr. Karen' on 'The Doctors' on Monday, January 5 at 10 a.m. on channel 7.

Karen grew up in Imlay City with her proud parents, Joanne and the late John Stewart, and her sister Cheryl Stewart (Verner).

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