



MISS GLORIA ROBBINS  
... broken homes are repaired ...

(Staff Photo)

## Many Homes Salvaged Here By Domestic Relations Work

By MAMIE H. BRADY

A soft-spoken young counselor who has a way of getting folks to tell her about their troubles was instrumental last year in patching up 106 families that seemed headed for a crack-up.

Approximately 470 cases were handled during the year by Miss Gloria Robbins, special liaison assistant to Municipal Court Judge Leroy W. Sams.

Serving as a domestic relations officer with full police power she investigates all complaints of non-support and some of the juvenile cases that come to the Police Department.

"The underlying emotional disturbances in non-support cases are not always directly connected with the economic status of a couple," said Miss Robbins. "Support may be withheld for many reasons."

### Four Basic Reasons

"Usually the factors contributing to a family breakdown may be placed under one of four types of problems," according to Miss Robbins. "These are behavior, health, economic and social-setting problems."

"Every possible effort is made to assist complainants in settling their differences without taking them to court," said the domestic relations counselor.

"In many instances this can be done by heart-to-heart talks with those who are involved, and by helping them to realize that marriage and raising a family is a partnership affair that requires working together."

In some cases, said Miss Robbins, her investigations revealed that assistance of one kind or another would help a family get on its feet and carry on. In those instances Judge Leroy W. Sams virtually always followed her recommendation in making referrals to social agencies that provided the needed assistance.

### Adjustments Made

Last year 60 complaints of non-support were settled without going to court. In addition to these, 16 cases were dismissed after a court hearing and in 30 cases judgment was suspended straight. In almost all of these, according to Miss Robbins, satisfactory adjustments have been made.

But, the domestic relations officer can be tough, too, when a father refuses without cause to

support his family as required in decisions of Judge Sams. In non-support judgments a man is given a sentence, suspended upon condition that he pay a specified amount for the support of his family. If he fails to do so, follow-up efforts are made to get him to comply. And if this does not bring results, he is re-arrested and unless immediate arrangements are made he is sent to the roads.

Ten men learned in 1949 that when Judge Sams put a condition in a judgment he is giving a man a chance. These men were sent to the roads for non-support.

### Can't Skip Easily

Leaving the State does not mean necessarily that a man can shake off his legal obligations to his family. Last year 20 men were returned to Winston-Salem from other states, one from as far as California, and after trial here were ordered to support their families. Five were brought back here from other cities in North Carolina.

However, the Police Department now holds warrants for 30 men who have left the city, probably the State, and have not been located.

Virtually all of the 97 men who were charged last year with non-support were ordered to provide for their children. Only in a few instances were men ordered to support their wives, and in those cases the women were either ill or elderly and unable to work.

Judge Sams repeatedly has frowned on the idea of a working woman without children demanding pay from a man she refused to live with. In some instances, when evidence was developed, the woman was making more than the man she was asking to support her.