

'Black Is Beautiful' Article Not Pretty

"The black community is tired of making millions for whites out of 'black is beautiful. To the white agencies, black wasn't beautiful until it was profitable," said Ophelia DeVore at a recent press conference.

"We want to get into that market for black models. But if we don't, we want to make it pretty uncomfortable," she said.

Miss DeVore, well known pioneer in the black modeling agency business, has launched a 3.5 million dollar law suit against Life magazine for printing the article "Black is Busting Out All Over" in their October, 1969 issue. Also included is Betty Furay of Black Beauty, Inc.

According to Ben Wright, of the National Association of Market Developers, the demand for black models has gone up "almost 100 per cent,

and DeVore's calls have gone down." Mr. Wright feels that the article is the main reason.

All white Agencies

"Here is an obviously racist move on the part of Life magazine and the newer, white owned-black modeling agencies. All of the agencies that were mentioned were white; not one was black. Ophelia was mentioned, but they misquoted her," he said, speaking of the article in dispute "they (Life) have had a reference file on black model-

(Continued on Page A10)

—Black Beautiful

(Continued from Page A1)

ing agencies for the past ten years, and not until now, after all the groundwork has been done, are they even mentioned," Mr. Wright said. "Again, they weren't important until white agencies came on the scene."

"If you are a racist, you act in a racist way," said Miss Florynce Kennedy, one of Miss DeVore's attorneys. "This, to me, is a conspiracy by people who are supposed to know better." "A tort is an injury to another person, and that's what that article was in an indirect sense. So, if they say that they didn't know, they've got to be taught. We are entitled to fair coverage."

Florence Rice, of the Harlem Consumer Education Council—which is also supporting Miss DeVore's fight, regarded the article as another typical move by "the oppressor".

"If we go back to slavery, we'll see the same thing. Black people, slaves, would develop and invent things and the white man would take all of the credit," Miss Rice said. "We've got to stop this."

The brief, that went to court yesterday, included the following complaints:

—that the defendant, Betty Foray, doing business as Black Beauty, Inc., and her agency were less well established and had been operating for less than a year at the time of the publications appearance;

—that the article was an exercise in unfair competition in that the effect of the article was to degrade black owned and operated model agencies in the form of a straight news story;

—that all three agencies mentioned by "Life" in the article in question were white owned

agencies and were such so Black Beauty could dominate the field;

—that as a result of that article, Ophelia DeVore and associates have been damaged in their business and reputation in the sum of \$150,000.00.

"Time-Life Corporation is trying to get this thrown out of court, especially after the new decision the Supreme Court made concerning the New York Times and the Pentagon papers. But we're going to fight it," Miss DeVore said.

"It's important to remember that images are important. Life didn't have it in their heart to hurt Blacks, but to help whites," Mr. Wright said. "But that is really the same thing."

The article established Black Beauty, Inc., as an expert which disenfranchised the DeVore complex in reference to ability, according to Miss Kennedy.

"I don't think I can over-emphasize the effect that article has had on us. For the first time in 25 years, we've had to make a \$50,000 bank loan," Miss DeVore added.

"As consumers, we—black people—made demands on the media to bring in black models, and the power structure had to go along with it. Now that they're accepted, the credit won't be placed where it should—on the black community. 'Black is beautiful' did it."

Charging "journalistic racism" and "disguised advertising", Miss DeVore, founder of the Ophelia DeVore School of Charm and Grace Del Marco modeling agency, has also gained the support of Operation Breadbasket of Greater New York and Floyd McKissick Enterprises among others, in her fight.