



One of the first prizes received by Mrs. Helen Giese after being named Mrs. America was a congratulatory kiss from Bill.

What it's like to be wed to MRS. AMERICA

**Their way of life
was changed radically
when William G. Giese
ignored his
wife's wish
for a new stove.**



Billy, 9, and Susan, 5, like Mommy's new title, but Bobby, 1, reserves judgment.

by Al Ostrow

IT WAS A WIFE'S dream come true—but a husband's nightmare.

Radiant with triumph, Mrs. Helen Giese was escorted to a throne of flowers and crowned "Mrs. America."

Her husband, William G. Giese, sat numbly silent in the cheering audience that packed the gaily decorated Memorial Auditorium in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. He experienced the same mixed emotions he had known when he survived a wartime mid-air collision of four Flying Fortresses over Frankfurt, Germany.

What did he think?

"I thought I'd been hit by a freight train. I wondered what would happen next. Helen . . . the children . . . my own life . . . How would all this affect us?"

Giese felt a friendly tug at his sleeve. It was the cheerful husband of a previous Mrs. America.

"Listen, fellow," the predecessor soothed, "I know exactly how you feel. You're disturbed. You're afraid your whole life is going to be disrupted. It will be. But don't worry—it won't be as bad as you think right now."

Now that his beautiful wife has completed about half her one-year reign, Giese is prepared to pass that same solace along to whoever is the husband of the next Mrs. America.

He can also chuckle at the thought that flashed through his mind when Mrs. Giese was crowned: "Why didn't I buy her that stove when she asked for it?"

If he had, their five-year-old daughter, Susan, might never have had occasion to

inquire, "Mommy, why don't you wear your crown all the time?"

"Helen wanted a new stove," Giese recalled. "Being the usual kind of husband, I let her request go in one ear and out the other. Then she read that a new gas range was one of the prizes for the local Mrs. America contest."

Bill Giese was busy changing jobs—he's an advertising agency account executive—when his wife was chosen "Mrs. Cleveland." He was still absorbed in the problems of his new clients when a telephone call from Columbus told him Helen had just been named "Mrs. Ohio."

The new stove arrived at their neat white three-bedroom home in suburban Mayfield Heights, along with a new refrigerator, a \$500 wardrobe, and a new way of life. Absorbed in preparing an advertising campaign and coping with his problems as a member of the Mayfield Heights city council, Giese didn't feel the full impact of the change until that fateful night at Fort Lauderdale.

"My wife is a celebrity!" The thought hit him like a bolt of lightning.

Since then, Bill Giese has heard himself introduced hundreds of times as "Mrs. America's husband."

"I don't dislike it or enjoy it," he says frankly. "It's a wonderful achievement for Helen—something that will always add sunshine to her life. But we both realize that it's not the most important thing that ever happened to us."

Both are looking forward rather eagerly to the day next May when a new Mrs. America is crowned, and the Giese family can resume normal living.