

Young Miracle Worker

Ellen Herman could have been a professional model, but instead she chose a career helping youngsters regain the use of their crippled limbs

ELLEN HERMAN grew up in a large, closely knit family full of laughter and love. Life for her has always been comfortable. She is engaged to a handsome medical student and could easily settle down to a contented life dedicated solely to homemaking. She is also pretty enough to be a model—in fact, she has been one. But Ellen is no average American girl. To her, “living happily ever after” means being part of a profession she has had her heart set on ever since she can remember: physical therapy.

Back home in Madison, Wis., Ellen turned to modeling to help pay her college expenses, but when professional offers came her way, she declined. “Modeling was never for me,” she says. “As a model, you can never fool yourself into thinking you are really helping anyone.”

At 21, this rare young woman has fulfilled her goal. She is on the staff of Boston’s famed Children’s Medical Center, where she gives hope to the disabled. With the aid of the National Foundation, which handles the largest scholarship program for physical therapists in the country, she was able to complete the training she needed. And from the beginning it was apparent to her instructors that she possessed a unique gift for working with handicapped children.

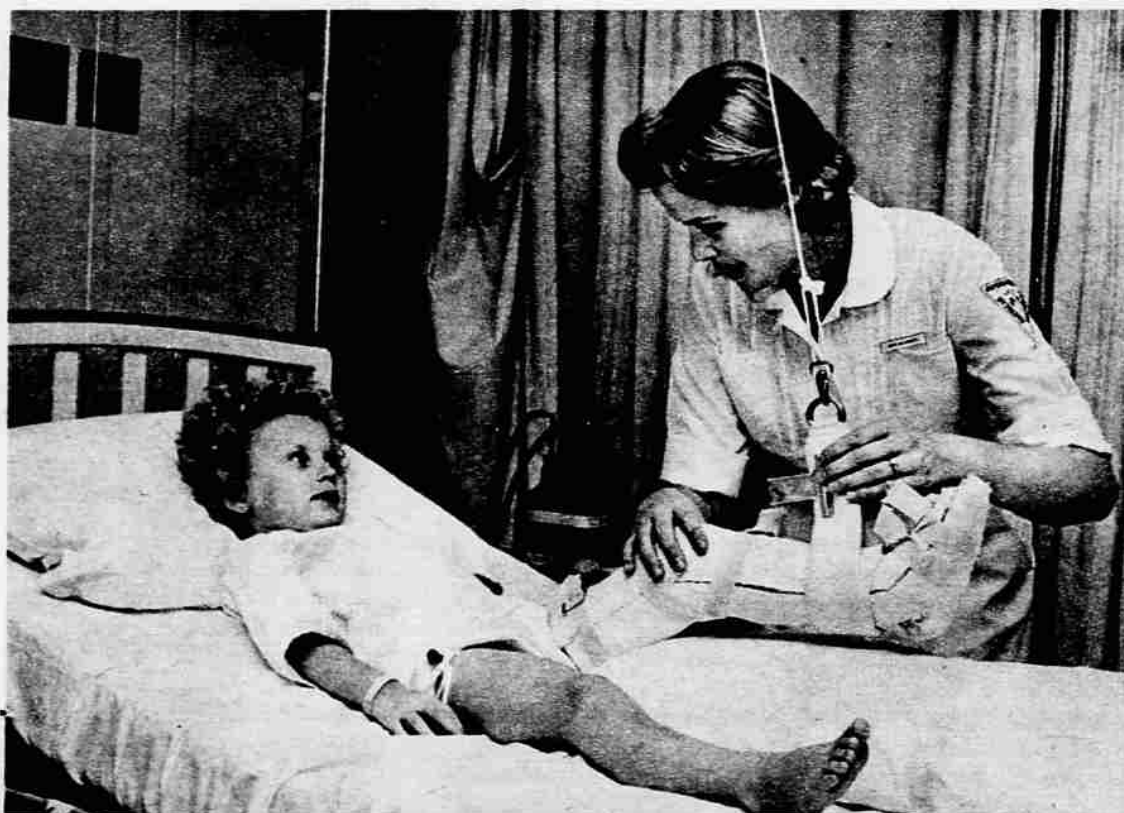
She says simply: “You can help a child because he is seldom defeated. Maybe it’s because a child doesn’t realize what illness and disability may mean in the future. Children want to do everything, and they never stop trying. The first time you see a child overcome a disability, you know that being a physical therapist is a wonderful thing. In a sense, it’s like being a teacher, opening the doors, training others to take part in life again.”

Does she ever regret the glamorous life she might have had as a model? “Not me! I wouldn’t turn in this uniform for anything Dior ever designed.”



With Ellen’s help, eight-year-old Billy Weibrecht learns to walk on parallel bars.

During vacation, Ellen plays golf with fiancé John Stephenson, a Boston medical student.



Polio victim Lynn Esperance has her leg sling adjusted by Ellen as part of post-operative physical-therapy treatment.

Before going out for an evening date, Ellen pauses for a chat about her day’s work with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Herman.

