

(First attempt at explanation of Edith's & my marriage
for Carol's annulment)

The "situation" here is a marriage that ended eight years ago in divorce. The respondent - Edith Bennington - remarried about 5 years ago and has had a child. They live in Olympia, Washington, where Edith is the director of the Olympia County Department of Social Services.

a) I was born 9-23-42 in South Haven, Michigan. My father farmed and my mother taught school, but her teaching occurred before I was born and after I graduated from high school. They are both still alive and still living on the farm I was brought up on. I have a brother who is four years older than I and 3 sisters, the oldest of whom is 5 years younger than myself. All are married. I have been married 3 times. The first occurred when the summer before my senior year in college at Michigan State University. We had known each other only 2 months, although I knew of her, both of us having attended the same high school. She became pregnant after we had sex in the front seat of my pickup truck. It was the first sexual experience for either of us. I did not want to get married. We investigated the possibility of abortion, but it was illegal at the time and not easy to obtain. I consulted a friend of my brother who was an attorney and a Catholic and he suggested that I just marry the girl. He said her father would probably make it pretty rough on me if I didn't, and marriage at least guaranteed me frequent sex. I finally went to my parents and told them I was dropping out of school to get married, because Kathy was pregnant. Telling them was one of the most painful experiences of my life. My mother groaned in agony, but later told me they would help me financially if I would stay in school. We were married by a justice of the peace in East Lansing a day or so before the fall term started, with two former fraternity brothers as witnesses.

Son Tom was born June 6, 1965. Soon after, we moved back to South Haven, where I had run a roadside fruit market since the summer before my senior year in high school. I returned to MSU in the fall and graduated in December. I had graduated with a degree in Spanish and no idea what I was going to do with it. I didn't know what I wanted to do for a living; Spanish was just the quickest route to a degree. But I took some State civil service tests and landed a job with the department of social services in Ludington, working as a caseworker. My marriage to Kathy was never good, but we apparently thought it was good enough to have another child. Amy was born 11-7-67 in Ludington. We remained in Ludington about 2½ years, and near the end I began suffering from depression. I was finding it difficult to get going in the morning and was having minor physical symptoms. I wasn't challenged by my job and wasn't satisfied with the marriage. I was attracted to other women. Finally, I transferred back to Lansing to Ingham County Department of Social Services. After only 2 or 3 months, I was given the job of intake supervisor. One

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of my intake workers was a woman fresh out of college named Edith Keith. She had graduated from Oberlin College in Ohio, but her home was Seattle, Washington. She was about 5 years younger than I. The Ingham county office was much larger than the Mason county office, and there were a lot of young people there to socialize with. I began to feel tied down to a family in which I had little interest. There was little communication or affection between me and Kathy, and our sex life was poor. I wanted to be free of them, and I finally got up the courage to tell her I was leaving. Rather than stay in Lansing where she had few friends, Kathy decided to take the children and return to South Haven to be near her fami

I had relationships with two woman in the next year or so and then began seeing Edith, who was no longer working for me. I think she was more attracted to me than I was to her, but she was adventurous and interesting. At one point a theoretical discussion of marriage gave her the impression that I was proposing, and I allowed it to slide in that direction. We moved into an apartment together and were married about 6 months later. My divorce from Kathy was granted only a week or so before the wedding.

The wedding was at a Congregation church in Charlotte where Edith worked as the organist. My family and some mutual friends attended, but none of her family made the trip from Seattle.