



(TRIBUNE Staff Photo)

GOING OVER BLUEPRINTS- Mrs. Don Kerbis, architect, checks the blueprints of the indoor tennis club she designed in Highland Park. Her husband manages the club.

Woman Architect Works to Improve Our Surroundings

BY SEL YACKLEY

[Thirteenth in a series on women in a man's world.]

"People must have an experience when they enter a house, a restaurant, or a skyscraper. They must be impressed with what surrounds them," said Mrs. Don Kerbis, an architect.

Mrs. Kerbis has been practicing architecture in the Chicago area for 20 years. She has won a number of awards, including one for the circular restaurant at O'Hare International airport, one for the Skokie public library, and another for the dining hall at the Air Force academy in Colorado Springs.

Mrs. Kerbis works with C. F. Murphy and Associates, build-

ers of the airport and Chicago's Civic center.

Only 36 in Illinois

She is one of about 36 women architects in Illinois. "When I first entered the field, there were even fewer of us," she said, recalling the times when she would sign projects with only her initials to conceal the fact that she was a woman.

Mrs. Kerbis conceded that there is prejudice against women in architecture, but added, "Women fit very well in this field because they work well with colors, materials, space, and a number of other phases."

"I am the idea person. After I get the idea for design, the company puts a team of engineers and other designers to work on it," she said, "and all this has one goal in mind: to give people an experience."

Inspired by Wright

The petite brunette decided to become an architect during her sophomore year at the University of Wisconsin. "One day I was looking for adventure so I hitchhiked to the Frank Lloyd Wright estate in Spring Green, Wis.," she said. She was so awed by that place that she decided to study architecture. She received a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois. She also took a design course at Harvard for a year. Later, she received a master's degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Mrs. Kerbis' husband, Don, is a tennis pro and a former teacher. They have three children, ages 3, 7, and 14.

About 5 years ago, the Kerbis family decided to build an indoor tennis club at Highland Park, "and we nearly killed ourselves doing it," Mrs. Kerbis said. "We exhausted all our finances, energies, and patience."

However, the club, at 1660 Skokie Valley rd., Highland Park, was opened a year ago and "has been terribly successful," according to Mrs. Kerbis.

[Sunday: A company president.]