

# NOTEBOOK

## PROFILE: Imo Brockett Is a Model Farm Wife

Once upon a time, a girl called Imo was growing up in the small north-central Texas town of Goree.

She was as tall, dark, and gangly as her classmates were petite, blond, and confident. The only way she could get clothes to fit her lanky frame was to use the sewing skills her mother had taught her.

She was the proverbial ugly duckling. But just as in the fairy tale, the duckling grew into a beautiful swan, or in Imo Brockett's case, into her 5-foot, 9-inch height.

With her dark hair and eyes and sculpted face echoing the heritage of her Cherokee, Choctaw, and Apache ancestors, Imo bears no trace of her ugly duckling childhood.

There's more to this woman than beauty, however. Perhaps the character that's so evident in her handsome face can be attributed to her humble beginnings.

"Daddy farmed a lot of acres, but he never owned any land," says Imo. "I've pulled bolls since I was little. Around here, you don't pick cotton; you pull bolls. I hoed, and I took care of the chickens and the pigs and did the milking."

Unfortunately, her farming experience wasn't the only thing Imo inherited from her father. She suffers from the same degenerative eye disorder that blinded him, her grandfather, and her nephew.

Her first bout with detachment of the retina came in the 1950's. In the space of a few months, she underwent two operations.

Now, she has prevention checkups every six months, during which doctors fix any beginning eye problems. Still, the spectre of blindness is an ever-present threat to Imo.

The last episode she had with the disease made her question what she wanted to do with the rest of her life. "I didn't want to sit around, waiting to go blind," she says.

She was nearing 50 years of age, and her children, Monica and Kim, were grown and out on their own. Being a grandmother to Kim's three

children was great, Imo says, but it wasn't enough.

For a while, she and her husband, Pete, worked on his family's 120-acre dryland cotton farm. Pete had retired as a paramedic from the Odessa, Tex., Fire Department, so he could farm again. They had moved to Munday, Tex., a town near where they both grew up.

But his second job as superintendent of the North Central Texas Municipal Water Authority began taking more and more of his time, so he rented the land to a friend. With no farming chores, Imo had more time on her hands.

At the tender age of 49, she decided to become a model.

PHOTO: WYMAN P. MENZER



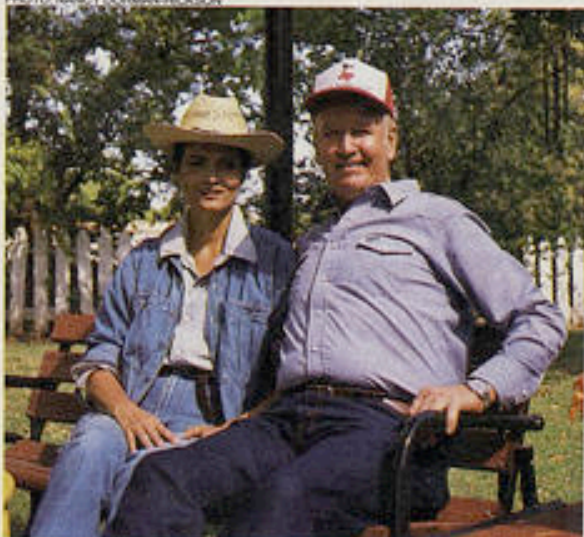
whether the school had any age limitations. "Well, we normally don't take children under five," she was told.

"I told her I was interested in the other end of the scale," Imo comments dryly.

Six months after completing the school's requirements, Imo traveled to New York to compete with other novice models, age 46 and above. "We're called contemporary models instead of grandmothers," she laughs.

She won the competition, which gave her the confidence to get in touch with *Lea*'s magazine. With the slogan, "For the woman who wasn't born yesterday," the magazine is

PHOTO: MAMCY DORMAN HICKSON



(Above) Imo and Pete Brockett have called each other "Mr." and "Mrs." for 33 years.

(Left) Imo says modeling is both glamorous and exhausting.

Three decades before, fiance Pete had objected to her traveling all the way to Dallas to attend modeling school. He didn't want them to be apart, so Imo had agreed to put her dream aside.

"This time, I never asked him if I could go to modeling school," she says. "I told him, 'I've decided to go to modeling school.' He was shocked because I hadn't said anything to him about it in 31 years."

Pete was supportive, however, when Imo placed a call to the Ruth Malm Modeling School in Abilene, Tex. The first question she asked was

geared toward women over 40. Imo has been featured in the publication three times and has appeared on the cover once.

"Everybody was so disappointed the first time I was in *Lea*'s because they wanted to see me looking like a glamorous model," says Imo. The magazine chose to feature her in her natural garb of jeans and cowboy hat. "There I was, looking like me!"

She has organized several modeling events for charities and area chambers of commerce and says, "I have as much fun doing a modeling show locally as I do anywhere else."

"I've been told that if I moved to New York I could work every day, but I'm not willing to do that," she says.

"My life is here in Munday. My roots are here; my heart is here."

*Nancy Dorman-Hickson*

## LETTERS

### Hats Off

We had a good laugh upon reading "The Problem With Hats" ("My Thoughts," December 1992.) The situation sounded just like our home. My husband has more than 50 hats of various colors and logos.

I tried to convince him that some of the older ones needed to be thrown away because he had new ones. That didn't work. I even tried putting them in a yard sale, but that didn't work. He just picked them out to bring back home.

I can sympathize with Mrs. Eaton because our home is just like hers, hats everywhere!

As yet, I have found no solutions either.—*Jane Downey, Hustonville, Ky.*

My daughter-in-law came up with a way to at least get my son's caps out of the way. She put a pegged hatrack on one wall all the way down the hall (a rather long hall), and she hangs one hat or cap on each peg. My son seems to be pleased and helps keep them organized.

As for the dirty, filthy ones, I think she hangs them at the far end of the hall.—*Lottie Stokes, Akron, Ala.*

I just put unwanted caps in a yard sale with a "For Free" sign on them.—*Joyce Vann, Ahsokie, N.C.*

I gave my hats and caps to a missionary from Peru. Now they are being worn by the Culina Indian women in the jungles. I don't know why, but the men won't wear them.—*Mrs. Paul L. Dasher, Marion, Ohio*

Please tell Ms. Eaton that I'll be glad to take as many (clean) hats as she wants off her hands. I'll even pay for the shipping.

I know you probably got a couple of hundred letters like this, but I just couldn't resist.—*Richard M. Jack, Eldorado, Ill.*

When my husband comes in with a new cap, he is like a teenager with a shiny new red car. He has caps that have never been worn, caps that are worn plum out. But even a broken or torn one can't be thrown out.

I have even seen my husband sleep in a cap. If he leaves without a cap, he will get a headache.

We found a way to store the caps safely. We use the zippered plastic bags that comforters are sold in. He folds the caps and stacks them inside each other.—*Wendy De La Cruz, Elfrida, Ariz.*

I could tell the article on "The Problem With Hats" was written by a woman even without seeing a picture of the writer. If this subject had been on women's shoes or purses, she would feel different.—*Jearl Knighten, Allen, Okla.*

### He'd Cook Cook

I read with concern the article on Environmental Watchdog Ken Cook. (See "Washington What's New," December 1992.) I wonder how such animals come into existence and survive.

He is pushing two organizations that are already strapped financially to fine farmers so that they can continue their part in the total harassment. This is a good trick if it works.

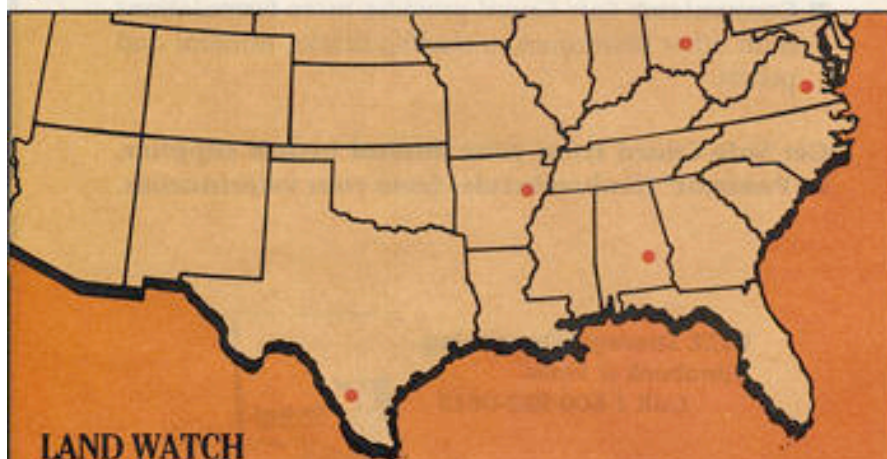
I think a better solution would be to eliminate Ken Cook and his organization and turn his operating funds over to the Soil Conservation Service and the USDA.—*Raymond Langston, Laurel Hill, N.C.*

### Familiar Nightmare

The story "This Nightmare Came True" was very timely and comes close to fitting our family. (See "Farm Forever," November 1992.) The article prompted me to make the information available to the executors of my mother-in-law's estate.

As a practicing tax preparer, dealing mostly in income tax returns for individuals, including farmers and small businessmen, I will share your story in any situation in which the subject of gifts to family members is being considered.

Scott Thomas's situation is one that could have been avoided, as he is evidently well aware.—*Orville R. Stutzman, Hesston, Kans.*



### LAND WATCH (Actual Sales)

- *Southeastern Virginia.* 130 acres. 120 acres tillable. No buildings. Sold for \$127,790, or \$983 per acre.
- *Southeastern Alabama.* 260 acres. Improved pastureland. Fenced and crossfenced. Sold for \$155,000, or \$596 per acre.
- *South-central Ohio.* 414 acres. 378 acres tillable. Sold for \$365,000, or \$882 per acre.
- *Eastern Arkansas.* 1,720 acres.

Rice farm. Shop and grain bins. Sold for \$1,398,360, or \$813 per acre.

- *South Texas Brush Country.* 14,230 acres. Livestock and hunting ranch. Sold for \$2,703,700, or \$190 per acre.

Sources: Mike O'Field, Farm Credit Banks, Baltimore, Md.; Spencer Swan, Federal Land Bank Association of South Alabama, Montgomery, Ala.; Robert P. Abbott, The Travelers Realty Investment Co., Plano, Tex.; Dean Glock, Farmers National Co., Omaha, Neb.; Charles T. Adams, Jr., Equitable Agri-Business, Inc., Memphis, Tenn., region.