FILED
SEP 2 1 1982
CLERK SUPREME COURT

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

IN RE THE MARRIAGE OF JANET DIANNE HALFHILL AND STEVEN DUANE HALFHILL

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UPON THE PETITION OF
JANET DIANNE HALFHILL,

Petitioner-Appellant,

AND CONCERNING
STEVEN DUANE HALFHILL,

Respondent-Appellee.

Filed September 21, 1982

2-254
3-66835

Appeal from Wayne District Court, James W. Brown, Judge.

Petitioner-wife appeals from the decree dissolving the parties' marriage, asserting that the trial court should have awarded custody of the parties' child to her. AFFIRMED.

Mark Pennington, Des Moines, for petitioner-appellant.

Gary D. Ordway of Patterson, Lorentzen, Duffield, Timmons, Irish & Becker, Des Moines, for respondent-appellee.

Considered by Oxberger, C.J., and Donielson and Snell, JJ.

PER CURIAM

Petitioner-wife appeals from the decree dissolving the parties' marriage, asserting that the trial court should have awarded custody of the parties' child to her. We affirm.

Justin Cory Halfhill, the only child of the parties, was born on February 19, 1976, and was almost five years old at the time of trial. The trial court concluded that although either parent could properly care for Cory, custody should be awarded to Steven, the father, because of the relative stability and economic security he would provide Cory as compared to that Janet would provide. The evidence presented at trial indicated that while Steven was engaged in farming the 200-acre farm the family lived on prior to the separation, Janet's employment plans were uncertain and could lead her to Des Moines or to Jacksonville, Florida. The trial court also concluded that Janet's disappearance with Cory in December 1980, during the pendency of the final trial, thereby taking the issue of child custody into her own hands, indicated her emotional instability and her unwillingness to cooperate with the father in scheduling visitation times.

We review this equitable proceeding de novo. Iowa R. App. P. 4. Our paramount consideration in child custody cases is the best interests of the child. Iowa R. App. P. 14(f)(15). The factors to be considered in making a proper determination of custody are set forth in In re Marriage of Winters, 223 N.W.2d 165, 166 (Iowa 1974). Applying these factors, we conclude that the trial court properly awarded custody of the child to Steven. In reaching this result, we find particularly applicable the following factor considered by the Iowa Supreme Court in Hobson v. Hobson, 248 N.W.2d 137 (Iowa 1976):

> [The] mother's conduct in depriving these children of their right to see and know their father, is a most serious reflection on her capacity to retain custody. We have repeatedly said the best interests of children require a continuing association with their father unless the contrary is clearly shown.

Id. at 143 (citation omitted). We also note that awarding custody to Steven would provide a more stable atmosphere for Cory's upbringing. See In re Marriage of Moorhead, 224 N.W.2d 242, 244 (Iowa 1974).

AFFIRMED.