FILED
OCT 2 0 1988
CLERK SUPREME COURT

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

IN RE THE MARRIAGE OF CRAIG HOLMSTROM AND DEBBIE HOLMSTROM

Upon the Petition of)
CRAIG HOLMSTROM,)
Petitioner-Appellee,)
And Concerning)
DEBBIE HOLMSTROM,)
Respondent-Appellant.)

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8-315
87-1677

Appeal from the Iowa District Court for Webster County (DM-4050), Albert L. Habhab, Judge.

Respondent wife appeals the provisions of the parties' dissolution decree awarding physical custody of the parties' two minor children to petitioner husband. **AFFIRMED.**

R. Thomas Price and Fredrick E. Breen of Price, Breen & Breen, Fort Dodge, for respondent-appellant.

Jerry L. Schnurr, III, and M. Gene Blackburn, of Law Offices of M. Gene Blackburn, Fort Dodge, for petitioner-appellee.

Considered by Donielson, P.J., and Schlegel and Hayden, JJ.

SCHLEGEL, J. 7-1

Respondent wife appeals the provisions of the parties' dissolution decree awarding physical custody of the parties' two minor children to petitioner husband. Upon our de novo review, we affirm the trial court.

Craig and Debbie Holmstrom were married in 1976 and are the parents of two minor boys, Cameron and Callahan, born in 1979 and 1981, respectively. In 1987, a dissolution decree terminating the parties' marriage was entered. The court awarded the parties joint custody and granted the primary physical care of the boys to Craig, with liberal visitation privileges to Debbie.

Debbie contends that the trial court erred in finding that Craig is willing to spend more time with the children than she is and that the children's long-term best interests would be better served by placing them in Craig's physical custody. Of paramount importance in determining matters of custody are the best interests of the children. The issue is ultimately decided by determining under the whole record which parent can minister more effectively to the long-range best interests of the children. In re Marriage of Bowen, 219 N.W.2d 683, 687-88 (Iowa 1974). In making our decision, we consider the evidence in light of the criteria set forth in In re Marriage of Winter, 223 N.W.2d 165, 166-67 (Iowa 1974), and Iowa Code section 598.41(3) (1987). Upon our application of these factors,

we believe the custody provisions were correctly decided and we affirm the trial court.

The trial court found, and we agree, that Craig has exhibited more interest in spending his nonworking time with the boys. The record shows that Craig has spent a great deal of time with the boys. He has taken a very active interest in Cameron's scout activities and participates in the boys' church and school programs. Craig regularly takes the boys skating and fishing and plays baseball and football with them. The evidence also shows that Craig has demonstrated his ability to care for the boys and the household in a more than adequate manner.

Debbie, on the other hand, leads an active social life outside the home, and seems to have little time for her children, especially since they have gotten older. She frequently bowls and enjoys bicycling. She plays tennis regularly and is a member of the local tennis association and serves on its board of directors. She is attending college. The record also shows that Debbie enjoys attending parties and socializing with her friends on a regular basis. While we do not object to a parent's need to spend time away from his or her children once in a while, we are not convinced from the record before us in this case that Debbie would be willing to set aside her interests for those of her children. The record is sorely lacking in evidence that indicates to us that Debbie's involvement in her children's activities has been anything more than minimal.

We do not doubt that Debbie loves her children and has been a good mother to them. We note that our task in this case, where we are forced to choose between two quite capable and caring parents, is not an easy one. We are, however, convinced from the record before us that the trial court was correct in awarding Craig physical custody of the parties' minor children.

We affirm the trial court in toto.

AFFIRMED.