FILED
OCT 25 1983
CLERK SUPREME COURT

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

IN RE THE MARRIAGE OF DAVID DALE OTTEN AND JUANITA OTTEN

UPON THE PETITION OF **DAVID DALE OTTEN,**	)	Filed October 25, 1983
Petitioner-Appellant,	)	3-308 83-118
AND CONCERNING **JUANITA OTTEN,**	)	
Respondent-Appellee.	)	

Appeal from Jackson District Court, Margaret S. Briles, Judge.

Petitioner-husband appeals from the decree dissolving the parties' marriage, which awarded sole custody of the parties' child to respondent-wife, a native of the Philippines who is now stationed there as a member of the U.S. Navy. AFFIRMED.

James J. Machowski, until his withdrawal, and Daniel L. Bray, Iowa City, for petitioner-appellant.

Robert R. Beckmann of McLaughlin & Beckman, Anamosa, for respondent-appellee.

Heard by Oxberger, C.J., and Snell and Hayden, JJ.

PER CURIAM

Petitioner, David Dale Otten and respondent, Juanita Otten, were married in 1979 in the Philippines. Juanita is a native of the Philippines and David was stationed there in the Navy. The parties' child, James, was born in 1981, and the parties separated in 1982. Juanita is now serving in the Navy and is stationed in the Philippines. David is living with his parents in Iowa; he has had custody of James since March 1982, when he took the child from Juanita.

The trial court awarded Juanita sole custody of James. It provided for David to have visitation with the child in Iowa for Juanita's entire annual leave while she is in the Navy, and for six weeks every summer and for a week every other Christmas when she is out of the Navy. David has appealed, asserting: (1) that the trial court should have provided for a joint custody arrangement giving David physical care of the child; (2) that if an award of sole custody was proper, it should have been given to David; (3) that in making its custody decision, the trial court improperly took judicial notice of the military leaves and benefits available to Juanita; and (4) that the trial court should have required Juanita to prove the child custody laws of the Philippines because it might be necessary for David to enforce the visitation provisions of the decree there.

Our scope of review in this proceeding is de novo. Iowa R. App. P. 4. We review the entire record and adjudicate the rights of the parties anew on issues properly presented and preserved. In re Marriage of Full, 255 N.W.2d 153, 156 (Iowa 1977). While we accord weight to the findings of the trial court, particularly when the credibility of witnesses is involved, we are not bound by them. Iowa R. App. P. 14(f)(7); In re Marriage of Novak, 220 N.W.2d 592, 597 (Iowa 1974); In re Marriage of Bowen, 219 N.W.2d 683, 687 (Iowa 1974).

We review the trial court's order in light of the factors enumerated in In re Marriage of Winter, 223 N.W.2d 165, 166-67 (Iowa 1974), bearing on the

determination as to which parent will better provide for the child's needs. As always, the paramount consideration in any custody dispute is the long-term best interests of the child. Iowa R. App. P. 14(f)(15); In re Marriage of Sparks, 323 N.W.2d 264, 266 (Iowa 1982); Schoonover v. Schoonover, 228 N.W.2d 31, 34 (Iowa 1975).

The characteristics of each parent seem to be relatively equal as far as their physical and mental health, and the relationship that each one has with James seems close. However, Juanita is employed; David is not. Furthermore, Juanita has training in secretarial skills and plans to complete her nurse's training; David has little training and has showed only sporadic attempts to go on to school. Juanita claims she intends to stay in the United States after she finishes her term in the service. David has held two jobs since his discharge from the service: one for one month, one for two months. He seems content to live on welfare. Although he argues that this allows him to be a full-time father and that women are often given custody though they are unemployed and receiving welfare payments, we feel that Juanita's training in two fields and apparent commitment to employment would afford a more stable financial situation and better role model for James.

Applying the operative facts under the Winter criteria leads us to believe that it is in James' best interests that his custody be with his mother. Our belief is bolstered by our rule giving weight to trial court's findings. In re Marriage of McDowell, 244 N.W.2d 238, 239 (Iowa 1976); In re Marriage of Ringus, 266 N.W.2d 805, 807 (Iowa 1975); In re Marriage of Callahan, 214 N.W.2d 133, 136 (Iowa 1974). David has not presented a sufficiently persuasive cause to modify the custody provisions of the decree. We affirm the trial court's resolution of the custody decree.

AFFIRMED.