PS1 for 11/12/87#WHAT'S HAPPENED TO FEMINIST ROLE-MODELS?

Hard times have hit the feminists. The more visible their successful role-models become, the more visible they are when they don't behave like ideological feminists.

Congressperson Pat Schroeder was the feminists' best hope for a female on a national ticket in 1988. She had campaigned in 50 cities and 30 states and raised the respectable sum of $800,000, with the National Organization for Women chanting "Run, Pat, run!''

It wasn't pulling out of the race that demoralized the feminists. It was that Schroeder cried and fell apart in her husband's embrace when she announced that she would not run.

The feminists were acutely embarrassed because Schroeder's emotional performance confirmed the fears that many people have about a woman being President, namely, that she isn't ""man'' enough for the job. ""What happens when she sits down at a table with Gorbachev and he won't give up his missiles?'', asked one Democratic consultant.

The Schroeder exit came hard on the heels of the resignation of Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole, the highest ranking woman in Republican officialdom, in order to campaign for her husband Bob Dole for President. The feminists can't accept that a successful woman would put her own career second to her husband's.

Just how bitter the feminists are on this point was dramatically brought home to me several years ago when I debated before the student body at West Point. When I suggested that a male cadet select a wife who would put her career second to his, some 25 female cadets got up, slammed their seats, and noisily stomped out of the auditorium in a remarkable display of discourteous protest.

But the Schroeder and Dole setbacks were doubled in spades by the smashing success of two new movies: ""Fatal Attraction'' and ""Baby Boom.'' The feminists must be burning the midnight oil trying to

figure out how to cope with the dilemmas posed by these box-office wonders.

The resident male feminist at the (BF)Washington Post(end BF), Richard Cohen, manifested his frustration in a column headlined ""A New Stereotype: The Crazy Career Woman.'' He is beside himself with anger that audiences lining up to see ""Fatal Attraction's'' steamy sex scenes find themselves watching a movie that shows a career woman who is a psychopath while the wife is ""bright, educated, and totally fulfilled'' as a fulltime homemaker, and whose character exhibits serenity and ""formidable strength.''

Diane Keaton's new movie, ""Baby Boom,'' poses an even greater challenge for the feminists. It is the tale of a female Yale undergraduate/Harvard MBA, high-pressure management consultant, earning six figures at a top corporation, wearing designer fashions and enjoying a live-in lover, who chucks it all to live with a baby and a small-town husband, and develop a cottage industry making baby food.

The idea of baby displacing briefcase, and home work displacing the board room at a Fortune 500 corporation, are anathema to the feminists, so their friends feel compelled to engage in social commentary complaining that ""Baby Boom'' is based on an improbable theme from the 1950s.

Diane Keaton's own life is the archetypical feminist success story; she is sophisticated, never married, childless, has a career that earns a million dollars per movie, and famous lovers Woody Allen and Warren Beatty. It is unlikely that she ever spent evenings in front of the fireplace reading Dr. Spock.

Now, approaching age forty with neither husband or baby, she took on a movie script which makes a statement that there is a lot more to life for a woman than a successful business career. Keaton admitted

off camera that ""The movie says you can't have everything -- everybody has to compromise,'' and when a baby comes into the picture, ""everything gets out of control, but her life gets a lot better.'' (BF)U.S.A. Today(end BF) quoted Keaton as admitting in an interview that she herself would like to have a baby.

A few years ago, the movie ""Kramer v. Kramer'' presented the dilemma of the wife who walked out on her husband and child in order to follow the siren call of women's lib. The result was that husband, wife and child were all left unhappy and lonely.

Now we see the other side of the coin: the successful business woman who walks out on her career and discovers that life is better with old-fashioned marriage and baby, and career as a sideline.