

## **Earnestly Independent** by Suzy Hopkins

Even though my father was a millionaire he had an aversion to buying shoes for his daughters. Of course he bought ski boots so we could ski all winter in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and naturally he bought boating shoes so we wouldn't slip on the deck of his boat which he kept at the Boston Yacht Club. However, he felt one pair of shoes was sufficient for daily use. I shamefully wore mine until they fell apart. Only then would he buy me a new pair.

When I was 15 years old I decided I needed my own money source to buy decent shoes. So, the summer I was 15.5 I applied for and received working papers. I had made arrangements with my best friend's mother for room and board at their house which was within walking distance to downtown Lexington, Massachusetts, my home town. I quickly got my first job in the local restaurant. They provided a waitress uniform which I washed and ironed every night. This was a hectic job since the town is the site of the first battle of the American Revolution and had many historical buildings and monuments. Tourists came by the busload. After touring the historic sights they would stop in the restaurant. I was a hopeless waitress, not being organized enough to handle the big groups. This is the only job from which I have been fired.

Since my family was gone for the summer on the boat, I was on my own, with a commitment for room and board. Immediately, I anxiously looked for another job. I found one as sales girl in the gift and souvenir shop in town. When I explained my situation the owner opened a shift for me. It was weekends and evenings, but I didn't mind. At least I could pay my room and board and buy some NEW SHOES.