

NAME: ~~DOE JOHN~~ **DIANNA**

SEX: ~~MALE~~ **FEMALE**

The Canadian Man who became a **Woman**

On April 20, 1970, at the Toronto General Hospital, he underwent Canada's only sex-change operation and became "Dianna." Why did Dianna want the operation? What was done to her and how has it changed her life? Dianna tells her story in this exclusive interview with writer Felicity Cochrane

Although there have been several sex-change operations performed around the world, Dianna, at the time of going to press, is still the only person to have had the surgery performed in Canada. The operation took place on April 20, 1970, at the Toronto General Hospital, in conjunction with the Gender Identity Clinic of the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry.

When did you discover you were different from other boys?

I think an awareness was brought about by other children, more than coming from within myself. It was they who initially sensed I was different, and with childlike cruelty did not hesitate to bring it to my attention — never minding the depth of the hurt, nor trying to spare my feelings.

This really began in earnest when I was about ten years old and attending a co-educational school run by nuns in Rainy River. This is the age when there is de facto segregation of the sexes in schools — no self-respecting boy demeans himself playing with girls, although later I am told his attitudes change drastically. I was very small for my age, and felt insignificant among my more rough-playing athletic classmates. They spent recess practising hockey in the winter and football in the summer, forming gangs, wrestling and fighting with each other.

I much preferred playing with girls,

who seemed decidedly more gentle. I still played with dolls at home, and really thought my behavior was not unusual when I joined the girls in games of playing house.

I was completely accepted by them, they never made fun of me and thought it perfectly normal that I should choose to play with them. I was usually delegated to the role of the daddy, to which I acquiesced but didn't really enjoy; sometimes, though, I was allowed to be the aunt or sister.

The boys wasted no time in noticing that I never played with them, was always trying to avoid gymnastics (which were segregated by sex) and was utterly hopeless at any type of sport. I was nicknamed "Skirts and Pants" and became the prime target of ridicule, not only of the boys in my own grade, but of many older boys, several years my senior.

My reaction was to withdraw within myself — it was only then I slowly began to realize that I was not just a nonconformist but I was different. Why or how I was different I just didn't know at that time — it was to be years before the answer was supplied.

When and where was your operation performed and how many operations similar to yours have been done in Canada?

Mine was a first for Canada. There are, to my knowledge, a couple of sex changes

in Canada, living anonymously, whose surgery was performed either in Casablanca or Mexico. Mine was the first operation of its kind performed anywhere in Canada.

I was operated upon by a team of three leading surgeons, aided by numerous assistants, at the Toronto General Hospital on April 20th, 1970. The team of doctors consisted of a gynecologist, a urologist and a plastic surgeon.

At the time of the surgery an announcement was made to the press by the hospital and headlined across Canada, but my true identity was not revealed.

On September 15, 1970 I held a special press conference at the Constellation Hotel in Toronto to identify myself and explain the procedure to a cross-section of the media and, through them, the public at large.

When did you first dress as a woman?

At about the age of sixteen. My parents had gone away on a summer vacation. I felt their absence would afford me a good opportunity to experiment with cross-dressing as a woman. I didn't have any intention of leaving my family, I just wanted to spend a couple of weeks in a large city like Winnipeg where no one knew my real identity. I felt this would be a real test to see if I could actually pass myself off as a woman. I had spent several months saving my money to acquire a basic female wardrobe — I had *Continued on page 68*

Dianna's story will be told in the book, Behold I Am A Woman, as told to Felicity Cochrane, to be published by Pyramid Publications, early in 1972.