

High school fashion show leads to 'Supermodel' status for city teen Kelly Collins

By STEVE PECAR
Staff Reporter

A few months ago Kelly Collins took part in a school fundraising fashion show because she believed in the cause and organizers needed some models.

Today, Collins is the darling of the local fashion industry as the Toronto area winner of the Ford Supermodel contest.

And this may be only the beginning as Collins will now go on to represent this area in the Canadian level of the competition, and possibly even join the ranks of fellow Canadians Tricia Helfer and Monika Schnarre in being named Supermodel of the World.

The 17-year-old Erindale Secondary School student said she never dreamed of modeling as a career before she was "discovered" at the school show.

"No, I never gave it much consideration," says Collins. "Because of my height people always asked if I did some modeling but that was about the extent of it."

Even though she lacked experience, a scout for a talent agency spotted Collins in her school show and recognized the potential.

For the next couple of months Collins took a

few crash courses in modeling and when she entered the Supermodel contest, she felt she didn't stand a chance at competing — especially since she was up against 1,400 other entrants.

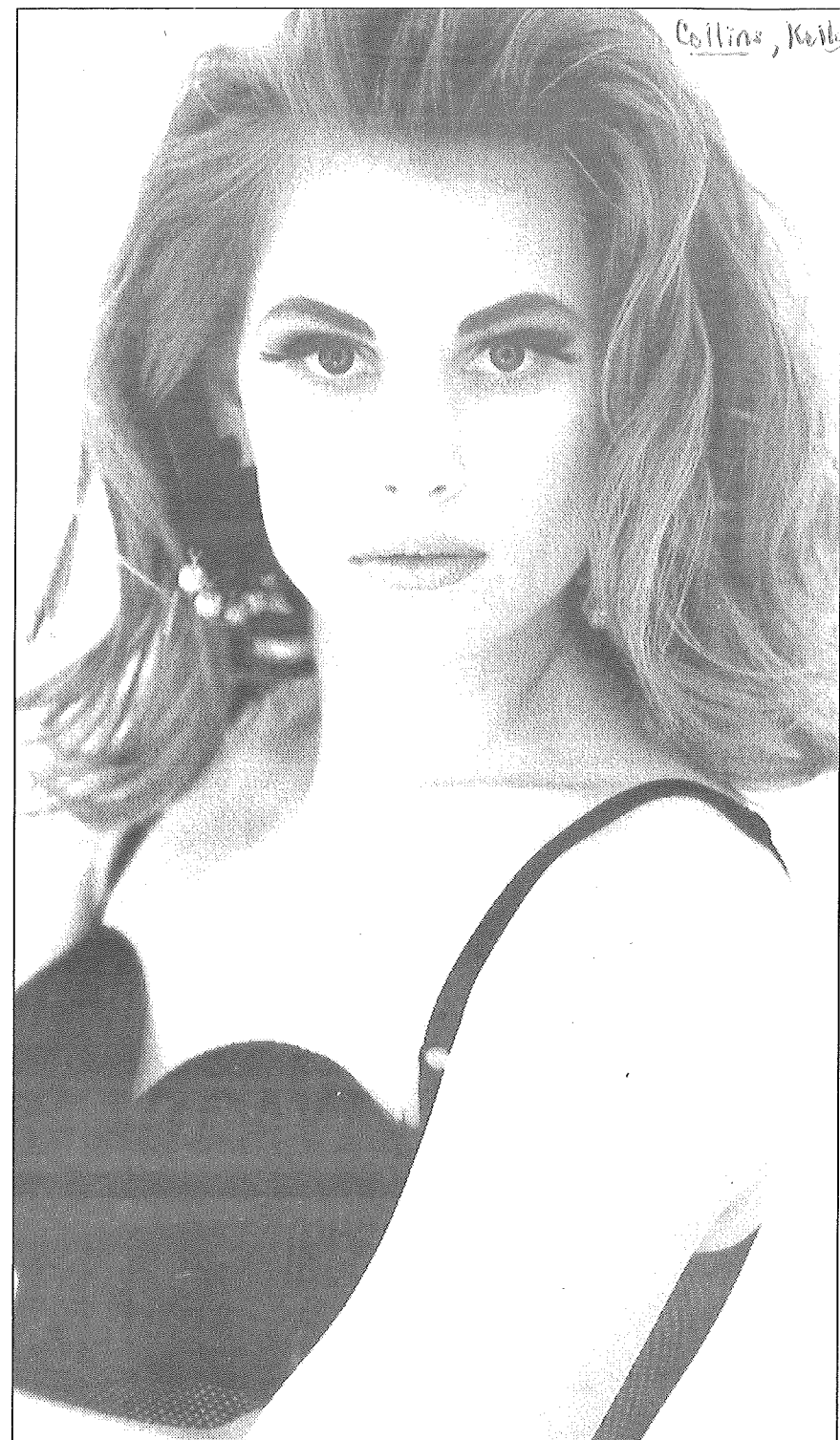
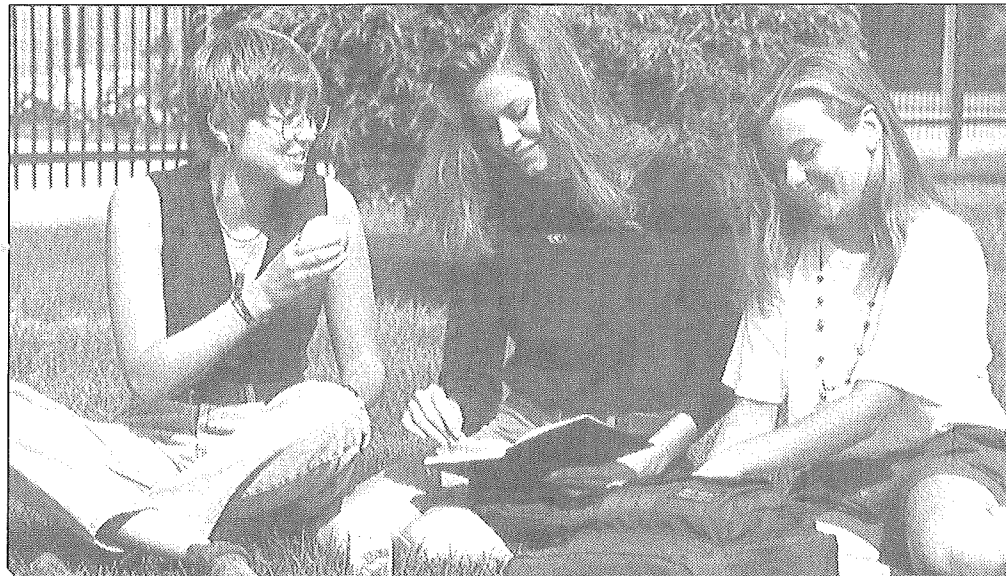
Cindy Taylor, co-owner of the Mannequin Model and Talent Agency, which now represents Collins, said, "For a person with so little experience, what she did at the contest was astounding."

"Ever since she won, whenever anyone calls looking for a model, the first person they ask about is Kelly. She is a natural."

Although the skills have come easily to Collins she says modeling is tough work. "You find out pretty early that is not all fun and glamor," she said. "It is a job just like anything else and if you want to be successful, you have to work at it."

While she has been working quite steadily recently, Collins expects to take on larger jobs in the new year after she finishes high school.

That seems to be a sure thing too, as Alan Thomas, executive producer of Ford Supermodel of Canada, put it after the Toronto show, "Kelly has star potential and a bright future."



At left, Kelly Collins enjoys a lunch-hour break with Erindale Secondary School classmates Angie Duke and Shannon Foster. Above is Collins as the glamorous and sophisticated supermodel she has become.