



## Ex-Playmate rescues Haitian orphans

By Karen Middleton

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ATHENS, Ala.— Susie Scott Krabacher calls her first return trip to North Alabama in 13 years a “bittersweet thing.”

“The smell of falling leaves, I loved that so much,” said Krabacher. “I remember jogging up and down these same streets.”

Krabacher, 43, who lived here briefly in the late 1970s, was in town recently for a book signing. Her “Angels of a Lower Flight: One Woman’s Mission to Save a Country...One Child at a Time” recounts her life as a childhood victim of physical and sexual abuse to becoming a Playboy centerfold to founding a school and orphanage for abandoned children in Haiti.

“All the floods of memories,” she said of her life in Athens, most of which was spent in foster care. “I had such fears back then. We moved a lot. I had such insecurities.”

Krabacher also spoke at Athens State University.

Still striking in her 40s, Krabacher has lost the baby-soft pout of Miss May 1983. Twenty-four years ago, skilled Playboy photographers captured an aura of sexual innocence when she first posed as a teenager. But what no camera could record was the innocence lost to a pedophile grandfather from ages 4 to 8.

### Satan’s nursery

Krabacher first went to Haiti in 1995 at the urging of a man in her church who had seen the hellish conditions of the island’s abandoned children.

In her book, Krabacher recounts Haiti’s history from the time it was discovered by Columbus to all the cultures that came after, plundering, enslaving and eventually decimating the native population. She said according to local folklore, the enslaved inhabitants, who in time revolted, are said to have made a pact with the devil in which they promised to worship him forever if he helped them overthrow their oppressors.

Krabacher said that purported pact with the devil is the basis of voodoo, which is still widely practiced today in Haiti.

### One of Hef’s girls

Juxtaposed against her Haiti experience are scenes of opulence and decadence in Playboy empire founder Hugh Hefner’s Los Angeles mansion.

“I have dined with celebrities and shoveled hell with demons,” she writes in the forward of her book.

Still not out of her teens, then Susie Scott, she was chosen to become the May 1983 centerfold, and learned in “Hef’s” world nothing was off limits.

“There was no such thing as the word ‘no’—nothing you couldn’t have or do,” she said.

### Mercy and Sharing

The Krabachers founded the Mercy and Sharing Foundation, a non-profit organization that supports her work in Haiti. She travels to the island nearly every other month.

For her efforts, Krabacher has been honored by the World of Children, an international children’s advocacy group. She received The Humanitarian Rose Award from The People’s Princess Charitable

Foundation and the Gift of Life Award from Rotary International.

“Angels of a Lower Flight” might also become a feature film. Proceeds from the book go to her foundation.

Karen Middleton writes for The News Courier in Athens, Ala.

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### Photos



Former Athens resident and Playboy centerfold Susie Scott Krabacher cradles abandoned Haitian children. She started Mercy and Sharing, a foundation to help save the lives of the impoverished children of Haiti, and has written a book about her work, “Angels of a Lower Flight.” Courtesy photo



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