



Lucy's husband, comedian Gary Morton, is her closest business adviser.

Lady millionaire, Hollywood-style

Last year Lucille Ball made ten million dollars. And she's decided to keep right on working

BY BOB THOMAS

Every once in a while, someone around the old RKO lot gets to wondering what Joseph P. Kennedy and Howard Hughes must think of what has happened. Their old office—the severe, oak-paneled suite each occupied when he was running the studio (Kennedy in the late '20s, Hughes in the '30s) is now resplendent in green and yellow Florentine cut velvet. The person sitting behind the huge irregularly shaped desk covered with push buttons is a lady—and a lady most famous for her career as a popeyed, shrimp-pink-haired, disaster-prone comedienne. She is most likely sitting there in a pair of tapered slacks and a silk shirt, having her nails manicured. And what's more, she's said to

be the richest woman in Hollywood.

Even Lucille Ball—who is the lady in question—occasionally wonders what Joseph Kennedy and Howard Hughes must think. But she doesn't wonder too hard or too long. After all, if she ever had to explain what's happened, she could always show them her corporate balance sheets. There they would read a story to warm the heart of any tycoon. Especially the last walloping entry—a matter of seventeen million dollars.

Things were different when Lucille Ball took over as president of Desilu Productions, Inc., in 1962. As she puts it, her previous business experience had consisted of running a lemonade stand in Jamestown, New York, and

in serving under Desilu president Desi Arnaz—her then husband—as vice-president "in charge of dusting."

In her first years as Madam President, Miss Ball never gave a clue to outsiders that she might know something about running a business. She just kept them all laughing.

"Did it really matter," she asked, in describing her initiation into corporate life, "if I thought an indenture had something to do with teeth, or if I needed a translator for the balance sheet?"

And once, before her first stockholders' meeting, she told a chuckling group of reporters about her usual behavior at corporate conclaves. "When I'm forced *continued on page 52*