

Rather be career right than rich

By VERNON SCOTT

HOLLYWOOD (UPI) — Kay Lenz, the actress wife of David Cassidy, would rather be right than rich as far as her career is concerned.

Kay is trying to balance a movie career with television by ignoring the blandishments of producers of situation comedy shows.

Cindy Williams and Penny Marshall earn in the (wealthy) neighborhood of \$30,000 a week for their stints in "Laverne and Shirley." The "Charlie's Angels" trio do just as well in their hour-long adventure series.

Kay has made eight feature films, including "Misty" with Clint Eastwood, and several television movies. The closest she's come to a series was a starring role in "Rich Man, Poor Man, Book II," a miniseries.

Still in her 20s, blonde and bright, Kay regularly turned down offers of \$25,000 weekly — to start — in a regular series with clauses that could bring her as much as \$40,000 after five or six years on the air.

To fight the temptation she has instructed her agent not to accept scripts or contractual offers involving series of any kind.

"It's a bit too tempting," Kay said. "They throw in 30-foot motor homes, color TV sets, Gucci luggage and a lot of extra little goodies."

"The money would be nice. I'd like to earn that sort of salary on a weekly basis. But, if I want to continue making movies and TV films, then I can't afford to get involved in a series.

"Other considerations aside, I don't know if I have the physical stamina to do a weekly show. On top of that I'd be bored to death doing the same character on the same sets month after month with those long working hours.

"My manager assures me a series would give me clout. Maybe so, but viewers won't pay money at the box office to see you if they've become accustomed to seeing you at home for free.

"John Travolta is an exception and I think that's because he plays the same kind of street kid in movies that he did in his TV series.

"Henry Winkler and Farrah Fawcett tried and they haven't done so well. Name me five actresses who have gone from a TV series to movie stardom.

"I don't want to have a five-year career in a hit series and then not work again. I did a TV movie with Mildred Dunnock who was about 80 years old. She was still fresh and lively and happy with her career. And that's what I want to do — work until I'm 80."

Kay said the economic security of her two-year marriage to Cassidy has nothing to do with her decision not to work in a weekly series. She made up her mind a long time ago to hold out for films.

"I might have done a series when I was 19 and just starting out," she said. "But now I'm prepared to wait for what I want.

"It isn't easy to hold out when you're not working. I spent five months this past year without a job. But I didn't get desperate. I've worked

rather steadily for the past eight years and I've saved my money.

"Sometimes I get down on myself, wondering why I don't get a particular part in a TV movie. I've got outside interests to keep me busy — yoga, horseback riding and, of course, my marriage.

"David has been very supportive. He's been up at the top and down at the bottom and he tells me to do what I think is right about my career. He thinks in terms of television but I prefer movies.