

It's necessary, expert says

# Affirmative action is defended

Some critics maintain that the current practice of preferential hiring of women and minorities is a form of "reverse discrimination," but a University of Michigan legal scholar says the measure is both legal and necessary to resolve today's social ills.

Theodore J. St. Antoine, specialist in labor law and dean of U-M law school, said in a recent speech that there is little doubt the government's "affirmative action" programs—requiring minority hiring "goals" or "quotas" among institutions or businesses receiving government contracts—have led to "race-based and sex-based hiring in industry and education."

But St. Antoine argued that, considering the social implications of continued widespread employment discrimination, affirmative action should not be held in violation of the constitution of 1964 civil rights legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment.

"AFTER A DECADE of federally enforced non-discrimination in employment, minorities are still twice as likely as whites not to have jobs," St. Antoine pointed out.

"Minorities continue to occupy a disproportionately low percentage of the more attractive positions. The employment situation of women in relation to white males is similarly skewed."

"If we are to secure genuine equality of opportunity for the races and the sexes in the job market," said St. Antoine, "something more is plainly needed than the mere prohibition of positive acts of discrimination."

St. Antoine made these points in a recent address at Tulane University Law School in New Orleans.

He said he believes "if preferential treatment is a needed step toward a more fully integrated work force and toward genuine equality of employment opportunity, then no constitutional barriers should stand in the way."

He noted that while the constitution has been described as "color blind," the constitution itself "says no such thing." All it requires, he said, is "the equal protection of the laws."

Referring to the possible constitutional challenge that affirmative action fosters unequal treatment, St. Antoine said, for example, that "the black who is preferred as a teacher or a policeman, or the woman who is preferred as an employee or a police officer, is not being favored as an individual."

"It merely so happens," he went on, "that at this moment in history, such persons are endowed with qualities that must be distributed throughout a wide range of positions in industry and the professions if we are to solve two of our most pressing social problems."

St. Antoine acknowledged that "such an approach is profoundly at odds with our cherished traditions of individual merit and group neutrality." But, he said, "I believe it accords with the realities of the 1970s."

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## Volunteers

This column describing volunteer needs in Oakland County is cosponsored by the Junior League of Birmingham and the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau.

Inquiries regarding volunteer needs listed here should be made to the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau at 642-7272. Requests for volunteer listings should also be made through the Volunteer Bureau.

**FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES** of Oakland County, Berkley, needs volunteers interested in legislation to keep track of pending federal and state bills which might affect the family. Volunteers are also needed to transport children to and from appointments.

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land County Unit, Southfield, needs volunteers in three areas: Public education includes presenting cancer education programs to organizations, schools and businesses. An intensive anti-smoking program will involve many jobs including distribution of written material. Volunteers are also needed to transport cancer patients to therapy appointments and to help with office work. Hours are flexible and training is provided.

**BOTSFORD HOSPITAL, Farmington,** needs volunteers to work one day each month at the hospital. Volunteers work at the information desk, assist nurses in emergency and physical therapy, sort and deliver mail, package supplies and more. Training is provided.

## Farm and village project under way

A new park project—costing about \$2.3 million and covering nearly 100 acres bordering the Huron River in Kensington Metropark—will take a historic barn and transform it into the Kensington Children's Farm and Village.

David O. Landau, authority director, said the project will be developed by a group of private investors who have entered into a 25-year contract with the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority.

Landau said this is the first venture where the Huron-Clinton metropark system and private business are cooperating to supply additional recreational facilities for area citizens.

With the land acquisition program under way to meet the needs of the region by the 1980s, the Huron-Clinton funds for capital improvements are limited, said Landau. He noted that the authority has selected this course of action to supply and operate new recreation facilities.

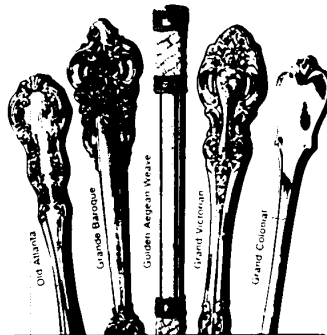
Restoration of the barn has begun and footings have been poured for another building. The project will consist first of development of the farm and then construction of an old time village.

The project also includes restoration of the existing barn, construction of a farm house, smoke house, chicken coop, corn crib, wagon shed and sugar house plus the addition of farm animals and farm implements. Pony and wagon rides might be available later and the development may include a train of the late 1800s vintage. Operations may begin sometime later this year.

Lincoln Friend of Southfield will be general manager of the Children's Farm and Village. Paul Shoemaker, formerly with the Bedford School District, is the educational advisor.

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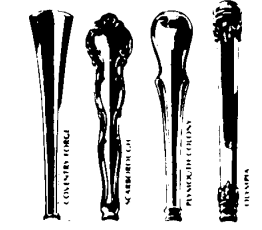


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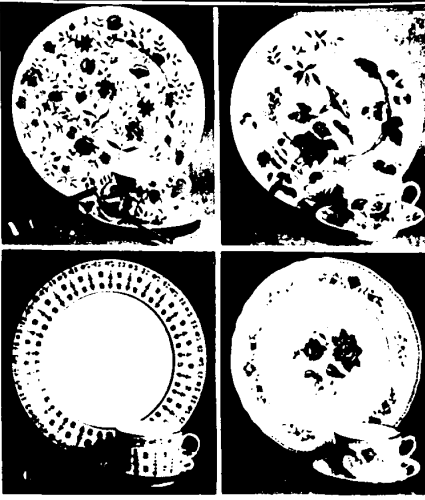


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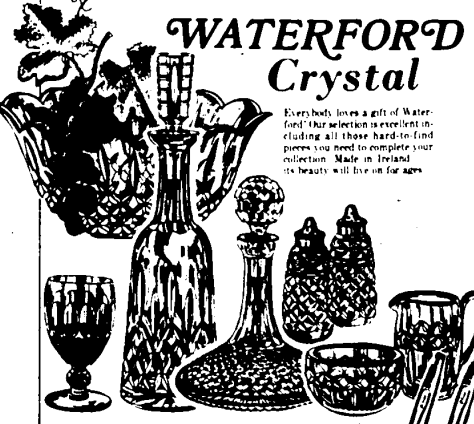
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