

Shut-ins' teacher hangs up her phone

She began teaching in a one-room school house when she was 18. Now 47 years later, she's leaving a one-room school that is as large as Oakland County.

That's Mildred Williams, telephone teacher at Oakland Schools who will retire next week from a distinguished career in the education of home bound children.

In 1967 she inaugurated the telephone teaching system that multiplied by six the teacher time with such students. Since she sat down to her first class linked by a telephone console to a dozen students, she's taught 350 teenagers a wide range of high school subjects. Fifty of them graduated from high schools under her tutelage alone. Her telephone class is unique in Michigan, and one of 25 in the United States.

In 1953, when the County Schools later to become Oakland Schools,

enlarged its role in special education, she was asked to become a teacher of the homebound. For 14 years, she met her students twice a week at bedside, over the kitchen table, and traveled some 100,000 miles over the back roads of northern Oakland County to do it.

At the 1967 meeting of the International Council for Exceptional Children in Toronto, she saw a demonstration of homebound teaching through a conference call system. Homebound students had been linked to their regular classrooms through telephone, but this system had its drawbacks since the classroom presentations are planned for students who are there, who can see what is on the blackboard. And the student on the telephone necessarily missed a lot of the conversation, and even teacher instruction if the teacher moved away from the microphone.

Mrs. Williams convinced the admin-

istration and the Board of Education of the merits of the telephone classroom and equipment was installed and put into operation in the summer of 1967.

"The kids get individual instruction," she explained, "or occasionally two or three of the group are at the same level in the same subject. I can put them in touch with each other and they study together. They have voice contact with others of their own age. It works against the total isolation of the homebound."

Before tele-teaching, I taught one boy for eight years. He had no contacts, except me, outside the family. I've thought about him a lot as I assign telephone students to talk something out for 15 minutes and report back.

Mildred Williams' world has not been confined to the small office which houses her telephone console in the

lower level of Oakland Schools.

Last year she culminated more than two decades of work with the Council for Exceptional Children as vice president of the international organization. She was president of the Michigan Council for Exceptional Children in 1971-72 and has served on its governing board and executive committee.

She's a past president of Region 7 of the Michigan Education Association and has served on the MEA state commission on teacher education and professional standards. She was a member of the original advisory committee to the state board of education on learning disabilities in 1971-72, and from 1973 to 1975 was secretary of the National Division of Teachers of the Physically Handicapped and Homebound. For 15 years she was a Michigan delegate to the Representative Assembly of the National Education Association.

Mercy will host discussion on area air pollution control

A major air pollution control planning program may be in the winds for the metropolitan area.

The program will be kicked off Friday, Feb. 2 when the State Department of Highways and Transportation holds a public meeting in Detroit.

It will explain "the need for local involvement in a federally ordered planning effort for air quality maintenance," according to a department announcement.

The session will be begin at 9:30 a.m. in the Student Conference Center of Mercy College, Outer Drive at Southfield.

to designate specific agencies or groups to be responsible for planning, implementing and enforcing measures to achieve nation air standards.

Milliken said the public meeting was scheduled "to explain the need for these planning activities and how Michigan intends to approach the problem."

OCC's head count is record for winter

Oakland County Community College (OCC) recorded its largest winter enrollment in its history this term.

In January 18,089 students signed up for courses, 1,000 more than enrolled last winter. Despite the increase, there was a decline from the preceding fall term. A total of 18,825 students signed up for fall classes which began last September.

"We always lose students between the fall and winter quarters," said an OCC spokesman. "It happens at every school and its has happened for all time, and we don't know what we can do about it."

The headcount may be up, but the increasing number of students are taking fewer courses. The average number of credit hours per student once again declined—7.46 credit hours per student to 7.03. Last year the college recorded a smaller decrease.

According to the college, more and more students are attending OCC for business courses. These students, however, tend to have full-time jobs and are part-time students.

"Our average student is 28 years old and holds a full-time job," said Betty Setz, a college spokesman.

"In general, our approach will be to provide for maximum involvement of local units of government."

Other hearings are scheduled for Feb. 2 in Flint, Feb. 3 in Lansing and Feb. 3 in Grand Rapids.

Local officials and anyone interested in air quality may attend the meetings.

She said women who are returning to school are making up an ever-increasing segment of OCC's student body. They, too, are taking fewer courses than before.

Of the college's four campuses, the Orchard Ridge and in Farmington Hills are the largest. Its enrollment is 6,380. The Auburn Hills campus in Auburn Heights near Pontiac ranks second with 5,613 students.

The expanding Southeast Campus System, with campuses in Oak Park and Royal Oak, enrolled 3,373 students.

The Highland Lakes Campus in Union Lake, traditionally the smallest of the OCC system, enrolled 2,723 students.

The Southeast Campus system is scheduled for further physical expansion. OCC administrators hope the new Southfield campus could be completed by 1979 and a new Royal Oak campus be completed by 1980. The college's board of trustees are also considering building a new campus in Madison Heights.

The Madison Heights campus would house the college's county police academy.

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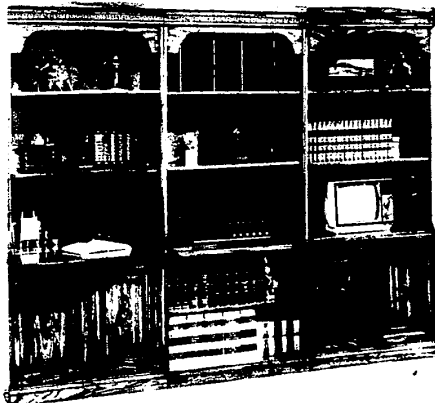
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