

Jobs in state at 6-year high

Employment in Michigan reached its second-highest level in history during 1985 as the number of workers with jobs averaged more than 3.9 million.

"During 1985, the average number of employed workers in the state rose by 63,000 to a six-year high of 3,934,000," said Richard Simmons Jr., director of the Michigan Employment Security Commission.

"Michigan's employment peaked in 1979 when it averaged a record 3,979,000," he said.

ALTHOUGH unemployment in Michigan increased among blacks and black teens in 1985, labor force conditions for all groups in the state have improved since 1982, Simmons said.

As employment improved, so did the state's jobless rate, which fell to an average of 9.9 percent last year. That was more than a full percentage point below the 1984 average of 11.2 percent and 5.6 percent below the 1982 peak average of 15.5 percent.

It was the first time that Michigan's annual average unemployment

rate has been in single digits since 1979, when it averaged 7.8 percent.

SOME DETAILS of the MESC report for 1985:

- The largest job gains occurred among men as their employment total grew by 45,000 to 2,255,000.

- Employment among women rose at a slower pace to 1,709,000, an increase of 18,000.

- The number of women in Michigan's work force actually declined by 3,000 to 1,909,000.

- Among whites 16 years of age and older, unemployment declined from 9.1 percent in 1984 to 7.6 percent in 1985.

- Among blacks in the same age group, unemployment increased by 0.9 percent to 27.8 percent from 26.9 percent in 1984.

- Overall teen-age unemployment fell in 1985 to 22.5 percent from 24.5 percent in 1984.

- The jobless rate for black teens in the state increased to 57.7 percent from 51.6 percent in 1984. Black teens in the work force grew by 2,000 to 52,000.

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Occupational therapists do well

Students in this line of work often spend time in the kitchen, spin a potter's wheel, or travel to different parts of the country. But they aren't cooks, clay workers, or travel guides.

They are occupational therapists. They help disabled people learn to help themselves.

They teach both physically and mentally handicapped people to adapt their lifestyles so they can use them, to make crafts to build muscles and improve coordination, and to make whatever other changes are necessary to live with their handicaps.

ACCORDING to Karmen M. Brown, assistant professor and field work coordinator at Wayne State University's occupational therapy program, the WSU program turns out some of the best occupational therapists in the business.

One major reason is the comprehensive internship program. "Our students are exposed to a variety of patients," she said, "and there are a lot of hospitals that prefer to train Wayne State students because of their sophistication with patients."

"We may be the only university in the nation that has a senior seminar preclinical class," Brown said. In senior seminar, each student selects the area in which he or she feels weakest and spends 18 hours a week for seven weeks in a facility that provides the exposure they need.

Senior seminar occurs in the final stage of the occupational therapy professional program. It comes only after the students have completed all other hands-on programs.

"THERE ARE three levels of field work including senior seminar," Brown said.

"All level one field work is called preclinical. The students go to occupational therapy departments in hospitals to observe and when possible, help the occupational therapists with patient treatment."

"This practical experience helps to desensitize the

students to the hospital setting and familiarizes the students with the patients and their diagnoses."

Level two field work consists of three months in psychiatric setting and three months in a medical or rehabilitation setting. "They put in 40 hours a week, and sometimes more than that," Brown said.

During this six-month internship, the students first work under an occupational therapy supervisor and later begin taking on their own patients.

"By the end of the three months, they should be just about totally independent and carrying a full patient load," Professor Brown said.

Brown administers the field work. "I'm always soliciting for internship reservations at health care facilities," she said. "In fact, I'm already scheduling or 1990 at one facility."

When she sees the results of her work, she knows it was worth it. "Our kids," she said, "do very well on the national boards and the job market welcomes them."

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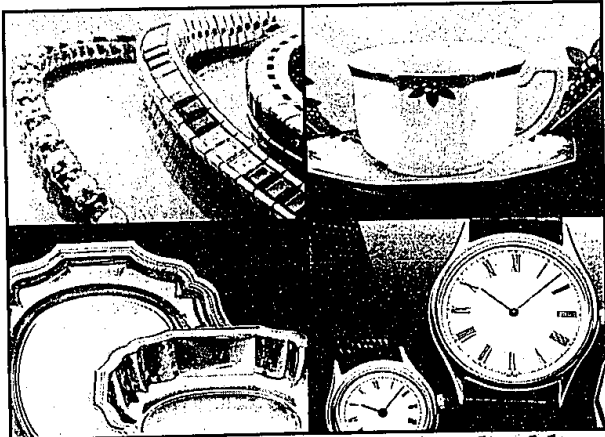
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