

# As population ages

## Adult education to continue growth

Education for the aged, an almost unknown concept 10 years ago, will be a top priority by the year 2000.

University of Michigan Prof. Emeritus Howard McClusky based this prediction on a number of factors including rising education levels, earlier retirements and the increasing proportion of older people in the population.

"But the most decisive factor is that of rapid social change. By the year 2000, the myth that a person can learn enough in 12 or 16 years of schooling to last a lifetime will be thoroughly exploded," he said, "as will the collateral myth that youth is best period in which learning can take place."

"Adult education will have moved from the margin to the center of educational practice, and the elderly will be ready to claim their share of these resources."

"People 65 and older will not only be greater in number but healthier, better educated, better organized and more financially secure."

"THEY WILL be served," McClusky said, "by an extremely well-trained

and sophisticated profession.

"Within the next two decades, practically every higher education institution in the country is expected to have established comprehensive programs in gerontology instruction and research."

"Their mission will be two-fold: To train the personnel to staff agencies and service programs, and 'gerontology' education in general."

"It is our hope that subject matter related to aging will become incorporated in all academic curriculums, from math and geography to political science."

While these higher education programs will mostly attract younger people who are beginning or changing careers, they will also have an obvious appeal to retirees seeking a second career involving work with their peers, McClusky said.

"In fact, with or without the gerontological component, more older people will be returning to school. Colleges and universities will come to them to fill the vacancies left by a decline in the enrollment of traditional students."

"SOME SCHOOLS are already experimenting with programs designed especially for the elderly and considering model residential projects where the older students can live while attending classes," McClusky said.

All of these trends delight McClusky, long regarded as a national pioneer in the field of adult education. Retired from the U-M school of education in 1970, he was the first president of the Adult Education Association of the U.S. and co-chairman of the section on aging of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging.

His proposed "Designs for Learning" are a chapter in the recently published book, "Aging Into the 21st Century."

"The climate is becoming extremely favorable for the development of a wide range of educational programs in diverse types of agencies," he said. "Nursing homes, health clinics and recreation centers all have the potential of becoming instructional communities for the elderly."

"They offer what the educator calls 'teachable moments,'" he said. "A low-cost meal at a senior center provides an occasion for instruction in good

nutrition. A routine medical examination is an opportunity to advise the client in good health maintenance."

"WITH SUCH technical advances as mobile teaching units, video-tape players and cable television, nursing homes and senior residential units for the elderly may lose their custodial image and be regarded as small 'campuses' for a diverse instructional program."

But the most fundamental development that will take place by the year 2000 is the recognition of the importance of the quality of life in later years, McClusky said. To bring this about, education for and about aging must begin in elementary school and continue through adulthood.

"Society cannot afford to be burdened with an albatross of a growing mass of dependent elderly persons," he said. "The propositions I've made are entirely feasible, probable and 'oughtable.' Each represents trends which are well under way."

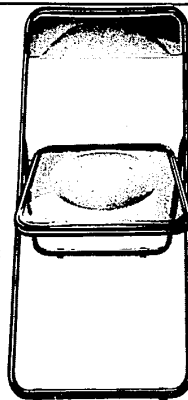
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## OU professor designs 'more human' machines

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

In the age-old battle of Man versus Machine, Oakland University associate engineering professor Ron Mourant is shooting for a negotiated peace.

Mourant's field is "human factors" and he tries to design machines that "take man's capabilities into account."

"Machines should be designed by keeping human limitations in mind. Industry should certainly be doing a better job in that regard," said Mourant, who holds degrees from the University of Florida and Ohio State University.

"It's fascinating," he added. "There's a whole lot to be learned about how people and machines interface."

Human factors, he said, is the combination of engineering, biology and psychology. Badly designed machines, he said, can cause "a lot of human frustration, injury and millions of dollars."

AS AN EXAMPLE of how "human factors" can eliminate needless frustration, injury and expense, Mourant pointed to the difficulties the U.S. Air Force had in training its pilots to fly B-29 bombers during World War II.

"They were having a lot of crashes," he said. "It turned out that the sticks that controlled the flaps and the throttle were side by side."

"Many pilots were mistaking the throttle stick for the flap controls. Instead of lowering the flaps and coming in for a smooth landing, they were hitting the throttle and crashing," he said.

More recently it was Mourant's studies that led to General Motors equipping its new cars with right-side mirrors that are convex. The convex mirrors, he proved, afforded the driver more visibility and made right turns and lane-changes easier and safer.

THE 39-YEAR-OLD Mourant is currently working on a new mirror system

that will improve rear vision for van drivers. The study is being conducted with the aid of an \$80,000 GM grant.

The study, which will be similar to Mourant's earlier mirror experiments, will examine the eye movements as each test driver seeks the rearview information needed to make right-hand turns or lane changes.

Van drivers have particular problems, Mourant said. "Their vehicles lack an inside rearview system and they are wider than cars. As a result, drivers must turn their heads a considerable distance to obtain the vision information needed to make right-side maneuvers safely," he said.

In his earlier study, Mourant found that conventional right-side mirrors on passenger cars did not give the driver enough information. The driver many times was forced to turn his head before he attempted lane changes.

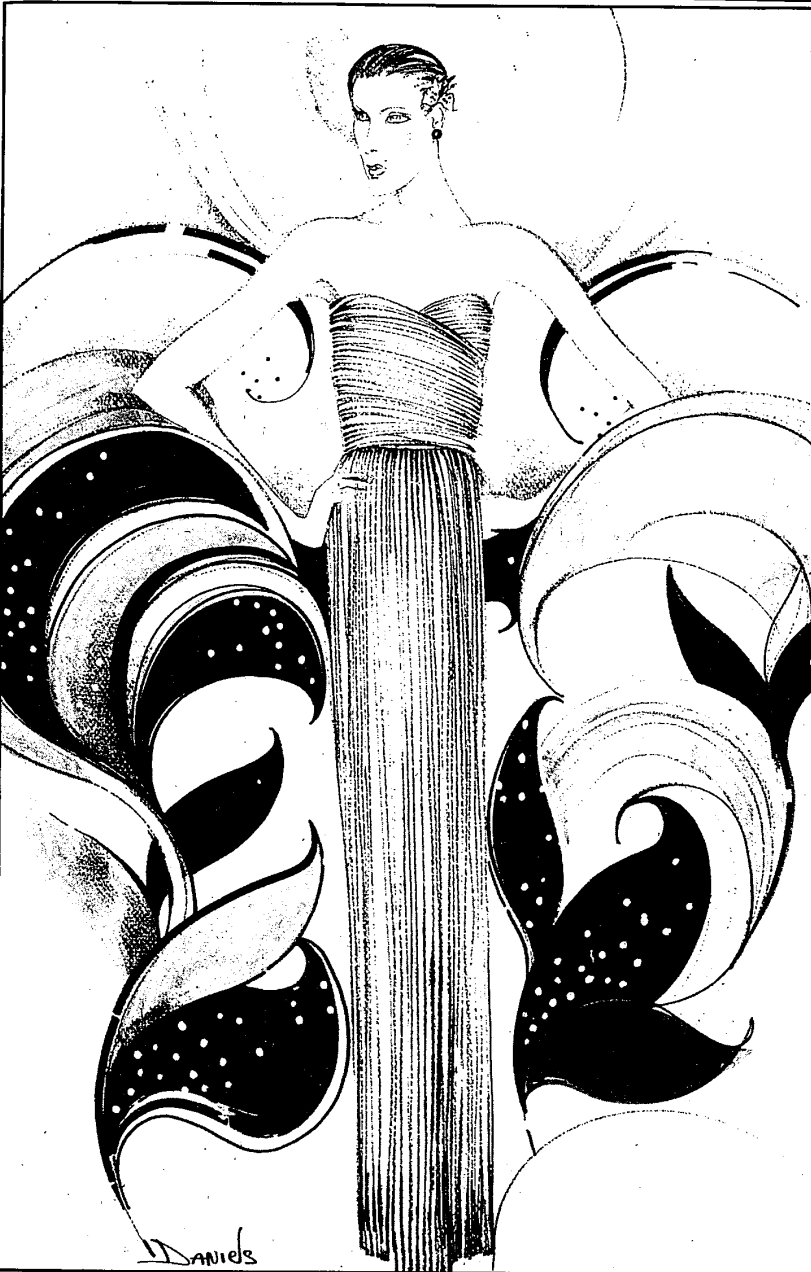
Mourant's test van will be outfitted with special cameras that will film each driver's eye and head movements as they maneuver a course that has been set up along Interstate 75, Woodward Avenue, M-59 and Crooks Road.

MOURANT'S EYE movement experiments may affect more than mirror systems on vans and cars.

The experiments' results, he said, could result in a major change in obtaining driver's licenses, driver training and highway design.

"The way people learn how to drive is by driving," he said. But under the present licensing system, a driving examiner makes a "kind of qualitative judgment" about a person's ability to drive.

"If persons were issued licenses based on scientifically-measured performance," Mourant said, "there'd be a lot fewer drivers on the road."



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