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Joseph Califano gives commencement speech at U-M's Hill Auditorium

for scientific or government officials to avoid public scrutiny in tackling complex moral issues.

However, he told the graduates, "Decision-makers in science and medicine must learn the hard lesson that politicians have absorbed in recent years: Closed doors breed distrust — even if what happens behind those doors is perfectly legitimate."

Emphasizing that the difficult decisions should be made in the open and not left to "mere experts," he said, "If we cannot guarantee right decisions, we can guarantee that we decide in the right way. This means decisions made democratically through wide consultation, not by special elites.

"Perhaps (citizens) cannot share in the making of every big decision — but they should at least see them made."

While conceding that consensus decisions are time-consuming, Califano stressed the importance of avoiding hasty decisions.

Kansas Graphic-News; 12/19

Minimum Wage Rise To Hike Hospital Costs

PAOLA — Hospital costs in Kansas will increase between $40 and $45 million next year. This anticipated increase is attributed to the federally-mandated increase in the minimum wage from $2.30 to $2.65 per hour, effective Jan. 1.

Robert Johnson, administrator of Miami County Hospital, indicated hospitals are in a "no win" position. Hospitals are pressured by the federal government to contain cost increases. At the same time they are faced with increased costs legislated by the federal government over which they have no control.

WHILE HOSPITALS don't want to deny their employees an equitable wage, the increased costs have to be passed along to the customer.

Hospitals are especially hard hit when labor costs rise, according to Johnson. Costs of hospital personnel are double those of industry. Hospitals must be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Miami County Hospital is better off than most small hospitals," Johnson said. "Our wages are right at or a little above the new minimum wage level. For most small hospitals, the new minimum will necessitate an immediate and sizeable increase," he added.

WHILE THE MINIMUM wage law applies specifically to those at mininum pay levels, employee wage levels are increased as experience and training are increased. These persons also should have increases if they are to retain the benefits of prior wage increases. This produces a ripple effect in raising labor costs.

By 1981, the minimum wage will be $3.35 per hour. This is the highest jump, $1.05 over the next three years, since hospital employees were included under the minimum wage law 10 years ago. At that time, the minimum wage was at $1 per hour.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat; 1/11

Alcohol returns as No. 1 drug

By BARBARA BUMGARTEN

Most parents would rather have their kids drink than use drugs. Unfortunately, condoning drinking may prove to be a fatal mistake.

Alcohol is a dangerous drug. Nearly 8,000 young Americans are killed each year in accidents involving young people and alcohol. Forty thousand more are disfigured.

Even if teen-agers don't drink, chances of their being the victim of someone who does are frightening. It's the sobriety of the individual behind the wheel that matters. And no adolescent can guarantee "it won't happen to me."

"The young drinking driver is more susceptible (to accidents) because he has less experience both with drinking and with autos, as opposed to the older driver who has had experience handling both," said Stephan Hall, public education officer for the Colorado State Patrol.

The New Year is a particularly appropriate time for parents to sit down with their children and realistically discuss the dangers of drinking and driving.

HAVING FACTS about teen-age drinking may prove helpful.

A survey conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicates 50 percent of all youngsters 15 to 19 said they had been in one or more situations in the past month where alcohol was present. Here's some information about these teens as recorded in the survey:

- 40 percent of these were girls.
- 25 percent were 15 years of age or younger.
- These teen-agers were just as likely to do well in school and take part in out-of-school activities as those who didn't find themselves in situations where alcohol was present.
- Three out of five admitted to having been drunk one or more times in the past month.
- The group who had been in situations where alcohol was involved said it occurred in a variety of places, most frequently at a friend's home. Drinking also was said to take place at parks, beaches or other outdoor places; bars or restaurants; school functions; or drive-in movies. Much of it occurred in teen-agers' own homes.

THERE ARE a number of myths (some even believed by adults) about alcohol. Parents and youngsters should know the facts.

Once one is intoxicated, coffee, cold showers, aspirin or whatever remedies one tries will not hasten recovery.

"The only thing it takes to sober up is time," stated Hall. "Alcohol comes out of the blood at .015 percent an hour and there is nothing one can do to change this."

MANY PEOPLE believe that a can of beer is less intoxicating than the average drink of liquor. But a 12-ounce can of beer, one ounce of 100-proof liquor and a six-ounce glass of wine are equal in their effect on the body.

It is estimated by the federal government that 1.3 million teen-agers between 12 and 17 have very serious drinking problems.

"PARENTS WOULD be wiser to train their children at home about alcohol than to forbid it," Hall believes, "but if youngsters are going to take on a mature privilege, they should take on the responsibility that goes with it."

Hall stressed that it is extremely important for parents to set a good example.

He also believes that "overdoses of love" will help ease the pain in people's lives which he feels drives them to drink.

A booklet, "How to Talk to Your Teen-ager About Drinking and Driving," published by the U.S. Department of Transportation, offers points to help parents talk with teen-agers about drinking and driving. Parents need to:

- Honestly explore their own behavior when drinking and driving before talking with their teen-agers.
- Be honest in expressing their feeling and values, and encouraging the same from their children.
- Be calm, firm and consistent — and don't put the teen-agers on the witness stand or demand a confession.
- Keep to the point.
- Emphasize that they are not concerned with the car, but with the preciousness of the teen-agers' lives.

Naturally, sometimes teens may find themselves in situations where things are getting out of hand. Therefore, parents and their children need to design a plan of action for those occasions.

Stephan Hall recommends several possible solutions:

PARENTS CAN STRESS to their children that if they get drunk, or their driver is drunk, the children should call home and the parents will pick them up — with no penalty and no embarrassment.

Parents might also recommend their children consider making a sober driving pact in which they agree among their friends who is not going to drink that evening so that person can do the driving. Then rotate the responsibility.

Omaha World-Herald; 1/10

Age No Barrier to Child Abuse

By Dr. Saul Kapel

New York News Service.

—Abuse of children is not restricted to pre-adolescents, according to a survey by University of Rhode Island graduate student Martha Mulligan.

She found that 26 percent of the freshmen at U.R.I. had been on the receiving end of physical violence from parents the year before entering college. Half of the adolescents fought back, even striking their parents.

Excellent Tool

—Groups of parents, educators, guidance counselors, indeed anyone interested in designing programs dealing with child development and family life will find "A Selective Guide to Materials for Mental Health and Family Life Education," compiled by the Mental Health Materials Center, 419 Park Ave. South, New York, N.Y. 10016 ($45), an excellent tool for evaluating and obtaining the many books, pamphlets, films and audio visual items devoted to this broad subject.

Deficiencies

—From 20 to 25 percent of all babies born in the U.S. are born with less than perfect health

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THE GREEN SHEET

News About the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare

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Congress, fearing public interference in the laboratory. At a hearing in Houston, Dr. Bert O'Malley, an endocrinology expert at Baylor College of Medicine, said, "The public is primarily involved through Congress in that the distribution of funds is done on the basis of what diseases are killing people."

Dr. Stanley Dudrick of the general surgery department at the University of Texas Medical School disagreed. "We have to stop asking just the researchers and go back to the people, give them the facts but ask them for input."

But Kennedy also challenged the research community itself to play a more active role in setting priorities.

Consider the trip to Houston.

He toured portions of the M. D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute, an ultra-modern cancer center. He was impressed by an "air flow" unit where cancer patients with reduced immuni-

'We must ensure that our biomedical research effort remains relevant to the needs of the people.'

—SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY

ties because they are receiving chemotherapy are kept in isolated rooms so they will not be exposed to any bacteria. It is a depressing sight because the patients must stay in their glass-enclosed rooms, talking to relatives through two-way telephones. But doctors say this relatively new approach doubles the success rate of fighting cancer in these immuno-suppressed patients.

But at a meeting later with the hospital's top cancer researchers, Kennedy became impatient as the doctors seemed unable to focus on his questions about how they set priorities and how they interact with the public.

"We see an explosion of smoking among teenagers, especially young girls," Kennedy said. "Who's thinking about and planning for that?"

"I wish I could answer you," replied Dr. Robert Hickey, a director, during a luncheon in a plush cancer center conference room.

"Are you just following the grants?" Kennedy asked. "Do I go back to Congress and say they are pursuing x, y and z grants because they are available, or do you people tell us what you'd like to be doing, where you'd like to be going?"

Rocky Mountain News; 12/16

State delegation divided on Social Security vote

By CHARLES ROOS
News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — To the Colorado congressional delegation, the new multibillion-dollar funding bill for Social Security is a mixed blessing if it is any blessing at all.

Most of the Coloradans voted against the bill, which was passed in a conference committee version by both houses. It is designed to prop up financing of the ailing fund by raising Social Security taxes $227 billion from 1979 through 1987.

Voting "no" Thursday were: Democratic Sen. Floyd Haskell, Democratic Reps. Pat Schroeder and Tim Wirth and Republican Rep. James Johnson.

Democratic Sen. Gary Hart and Democratic Rep. Frank Evans voted for the bill.

Republican Rep. William Armstrong missed the vote. An aide said Armstrong was concerned about parts of the bill, but was unable to get back from Colorado to vote because of inadequate notice.

BEFORE THE VOTE IN the House on the bill itself, Mrs. Schroeder tried to jam the House machinery by leading a movement against a section of the conference committee report.

Her chief complaint was with one section put into the bill by the Senate and accepted by Senate-House conferees.

This section, she said, will mean that 150 provisional federal employees who work as judges, but have never proved they are qualified, will get lifetime tenure at $36,171 a year.

They may deserve it, she said, but how can you tell?

Those 150 persons are administrative law judges, appointed on a provisional basis to clear up a backlog of hearings in the Social Security Administration.

At the time of their authorization and appointment, it was understood they would have to prove their qualifications before gaining permanent status.

The bill passed Thursday by both houses automatically gives them lifetime status – at the next higher Civil Service grade.

IN TERMS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT and fair play, there was no reason to put them in the bill, Mrs. Schroeder said. She acknowledged there had been delays in upgrading some of the jobs, but said the Civil Service Commission was now prepared to deal with them.

A House staff aide described the action as "an unprecedented attack on the merit system" and as "an early Christmas present" for the 150 administrative judges – three of them in Denver.

Mrs. Schroeder got substantial support for her position, though many House members who joined in voting with her had broader objections to the bill.

The Democratic House leadership not only backed the bill, but insisted that there be no changes.

The House Ways and Means Committee chairman, Rep. Al Ullman, D-Ore., said passage of the whole measure, including the change in status for administrative judges, was necessary to preserve the efficiency and integrity of the Social Security fund.

In a preliminary test vote, the House leadership won, 170 to 145. In a later vote on the bill itself, the margin was about 25 votes.

In explaining his vote, Wirth said the bill will put an unfair tax burden on workers at lower pay levels.

The bill makes only short-term improvements in funding, Wirth said, and gives it no real stability.

JOHNSON VOTED AGAINST THE funding bill earlier when it went through the House and voted "no" on the Senate-House compromise Thursday, saying he can't endorse the sharp hikes in the tax which will hit workers and employers in 1979.

An aide to Haskell said the senator declined to serve on the Senate-House conference committee because he disliked both versions of the bill and felt action now was premature.

An aide to Hart said the senator simply felt something had to be done this year to begin replenishing the fund.

Topeka Daily Capital; 12/20

Defaults climbing on student loans

By SYLVIA PORTER

As year end '77 approaches, more than 344,000 young men and women who have received federally guaranteed student loans are in default — leaving the federal government with the job of collecting a huge half-billion dollars from debtors who have "skipped."

To collect the money, the Office of Education has hired 106 employes — and given these workers a staggering workload.

According to OE guidelines, each should be handling an average of 600 cases at any one time. In fact, the typical collector has a caseload amounting to more than 3,000 accounts, and this total is climbing.

Merely finding the debtor is more than half the problem. (The search for student loan defaulters is called "skip-tracing.")

To suggest the magnitude of the task, my Washington associate, Brooke Shearer, interviewed several loan collectors for this column. One, Judith Dickinson, a senior program official in the San Francisco regional office, described a case on her desk at that moment.

"This former student defaulted on his loan in July, 1970. The Washington office sent him a letter 17 days later. It was returned without a forwarding address. By October, the main office had traced him through his school. The school gave us two addresses, neither of them valid.

"In 1973, the case was transferred to our San Francisco office. At the time we had eight employes handling 50,000 cases, but we sent him three more letters. We got no response.

"In January 1975, we located his address again and sent two more notices. No answer. Finally, this October, we

Your money

sent him an additional letter at the address he used on his 1974 tax return. It worked.

"We received a cashier's check for the principal of his loan, $812, but he asked us to waive the more than $400 he owed in interest. He explained that he attended a trade school to learn to become an airline ticket agent, got top grades, but couldn't get a job.

"He felt the school had been a rip-off, and therefore, he shouldn't have to pay the interest on his loan. I doubt his request will be granted, but," she concluded, "we're considering it."

Why the massive student loan defaults?

—Dissatisfaction with the schooling they receive and subsequent unemployment — just two of the many reasons.

—Breakdowns in communication between students and lending institutions. A student may neglect to tell a lender if he drops out or moves; lenders may fail to contact the students, for although they are required "to exercise reasonable care and diligence" in locating students and collecting, the comparatively low interest rate on the loans (a maximum 10 per cent) and fact that loans will be made good by the U.S. government, reduces the lenders' incentive to pursue student defaulters.

Thus by the time a claim reaches a collector months, if not several years, may have passed since the default.

—Laws protecting an individual's privacy also compound the difficulties, say some collectors.