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AIDS Epidemic Promises Woes For Hospitals

By Ed Kelley
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Accompanying AIDS as it spreads across the country will be a toll on hospitals in Oklahoma and other areas, where the epidemic — until now — has barely been felt.

By 1991, eight of every 10 new cases will be outside of New York and San Francisco, where Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is now concentrated, researchers say.

On Page 13-A:
• Infections Verified

In Oklahoma, 186 cases have been reported since 1983. But the rate doubles annually. AIDS, projections show, may have struck 1,600 Oklahomans by 1991 — 1,000 in that year alone.

Consider three likely consequences:

- Medicare and Medicaid costs last year for AIDS were estimated between \$1.2 billion and \$2.4 billion. In four years, it could be \$16 billion, a figure Sen. Don Nickles says may be too low.
- AIDS patients, most of them young and employed, have trouble keeping jobs — and private insurance — as the disease worsens.
- Finding enough beds may be hospitals' simplest problem. Exposure to body fluids contaminated by AIDS must be controlled. More intensive care means a demand for as many as 13,000 more nurses by 1991.

Then there's the emotional damage AIDS does on doctors, nurses and staff.

"We in the medical community ... are used to finding solutions," said Val Schott, a management analyst at Oklahoma Memorial Hospital in Oklahoma City. "We want people to get out of this place."

So far, AIDS won't cooperate.



Mum's the Word Bright beds of chrysanthemums provide a colorful display on the South Oval at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

Army General Ousts Tunisian President

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP) — Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, the prime minister and an army general, Saturday took power from Habib Bourguiba, saying the ailing and elderly president-for-life was no longer fit to hold office.

Ben Ali was quoted by Tunis radio as saying he removed the 84-year-old Bourguiba, the only leader this North African country has known in its 30 years of independence, under a constitutional provision allowing the prime minister to assume power if the president dies or is declared incapacitated.

Ben Ali, the 51-year-old former security chief, made the announcement in a statement read over Tunis radio at 6:30 a.m. In reporting the president's incapacitation, he cited a medical evaluation of Bourguiba signed by seven doctors.

Bourguiba, who named Ben Ali prime minister Oct. 2, has been plagued in recent years by arteriosclerosis and a heart condition. For months, there had been concern in political circles over his growing instability.

The transition of power, while abrupt, apparently occurred without violence. Reports from the capital said the pro-Western country was calm. Communication links remained open, but



flights leaving Tunis' main airport were temporarily canceled.

There was no indication as to Bourguiba's whereabouts. Police and two tanks set up a barrier outside his ornate palace overlooking the Mediterranean.

The official Tunisian news agency TAP said many of Bourguiba's closest associates had been placed under house arrest. Ben Ali was expected to be confirmed by Tunisia's Parliament in a special session called for this afternoon.

Both Algeria and Egypt, influential regional powers, quickly recognized the new government.

"I am happy to assure you that Egypt stands at your side in your legitimate effort to realize the hopes and aspirations of your people," President Hosni Mubarak was quoted by the state-run

Middle East News Agency as telling Ben Ali.

About a thousand people demonstrated early Saturday afternoon in support of the new government in central Tunis.

In October, Bourguiba named three new heads of the ruling Destourian Socialist Party in succession within a few days without giving any explanation. More recently, he delayed naming new ministers in Ben Ali's government to the point where officials speculated he might be preparing to fire Ben Ali after summarily removing the two previous prime ministers.

In conversations with The Associated Press on Friday, senior Tunisian officials, diplomats and members of Bourguiba's family said the president would never voluntarily relinquish power.

Ben Ali, an electronics engineer and army general with French and American training was responsible for Tunisia's internal security during a 1985 confrontation with neighboring Libya and agitation with Iranian-backed Shiite Moslems.

In his statement today, Ben Ali said he would be introducing new laws to broaden political participation and "put an end to chaos and laxity ... political favoritism and indifference which hurts the public good."

Aviator Serves Amazon People's Needs

By James Johnson

There's no leisure time in the jungle, says Oklahoma-born aviator Jerrie Cobb.

"Every daylight hour is spent looking for food," she said during a brief visit to Oklahoma City during one of her rare emergencies from the jungles of Amazonia along the Amazon River in the interior of the South American continent.

Cobb is changing her base of operations temporarily and was back home to deliver to the museum of the 99s, an international women's flying organization, the honors and memorabilia which she has collected during her aviation career.

She flew her collection into Will Rogers World Airport in the same

twin-engine Britain-Norman Islander plane which she flies on missions of mercy in an Oklahoma-Texas sized region on the borders of Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil.

"This is everything I've gotten in 40 years of flying," she said. "The Smithsonian has talked to me about it and the museum at Dayton wanted it. But I wanted it to be in Oklahoma. I am an Okie and I always will be one."

When the space program was hiring only men test pilots for astronaut training, Cobb was the first woman to pass the National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronaut testing program.

In 1964 she resigned as the most widely known pilot in Rockwell's Aero Commander division. Forsaking the

pursuit of distance, speed and altitude records, Cobb went to the jungle.

Since then her flying skills have been at the service of people in need.

The Amazon jungle is so thick, she said, "that it takes a whole tribe a year to carve out a short landing strip." Such a strip is surrounded by 200-foot-high trees, meaning a pilot must dive over the treetops to the threshold and pull out in time to touch down. On takeoff, the problem is to pull up fast without stalling.

"We live like the Indians do," Cobb said. The Indians mainly live on cassava, a starchy root and staple of the tropics, and so do Cobb and her copilot, Ruth Loomis, a retired California schoolteacher.

An entire village of 60 to 80 Indians

will live in a single communal house, a palm-thatched maloca. "We don't have any privacy in the maloca," Cobb said. "And no one goes out at night because that's when the tiger will attack you."

Cobb said she has trouble now getting used to some trappings of civilization. A bed feels hard and uncomfortable if for years you've been sleeping in an Indian hammock, she said.

Cobb will leave from Miami, Fla., Monday for Ambergris Island, Belize. She will be flying from the Wings of Hope base, returning Miskito Indians displaced by the fighting back to Nicaragua. "We'll be watching the cease-fire closely," Cobb said. "If it doesn't hold, we'll pull out and go back to Amazonia."

To Our Readers:

Oklahoma's 80th birthday is approaching and much of our state's history will return to life in the Nov. 15 special section produced by The Sunday Oklahoman. Beginning today, and each day this week, The Oklahoman will present a story based on some part of Oklahoma's fascinating heritage.

Sooners Leaving City For Country Pleasures

By Ben Fenwick

It happened in the years between World War II and the Korean War.

In 1950, the gradually growing number of Oklahomans living in cities surpassed the state's dwindling rural population.

But now, while the state's urban population is still increasing, census figures indicate the downward trend in rural population is changing back.

"We know generally that people are moving to the outlying edges of metro areas," said David R. Morgan, who directs the Bureau of Government Research at the University of Oklahoma.

In a recently completed study, Mor-

gan found Oklahoma's rural population increased in the 1970s, after dropping steadily for more than 40 years. His figures show a 23.3 percent increase in rural populations from 1970 to 1980, from 819,692 to 1,010,649. At the same time, the state's urban growth slowed, from 18.8 percent to 15.8 percent.

Morgan said people are moving into rural areas close to cities.

"These people are not farmers," Morgan said. "They're people who want to be away from the problems we associate with living in an urban area. They don't want to be completely removed."

Rural population in Oklahoma be-
See POPULATION, Page 12-A



Emerson students Melissa Barger, left, and Nicola Porter, with daughter Dylshia, are determined to finish school, despite starting families.

School Dropouts Remain Tough Problem for State



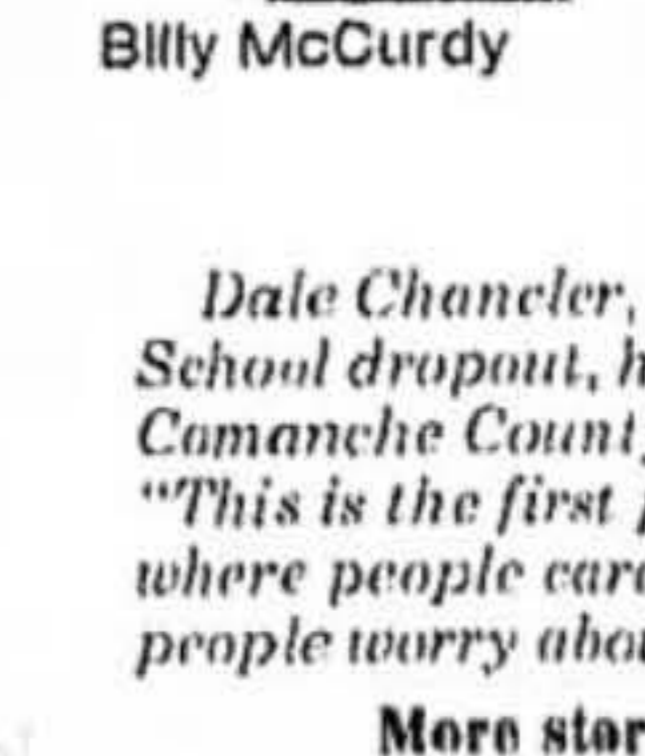
Lawton teen-ager Gina Vanover holds her squirming daughter in her arms, sighs deeply as she ponders the status of her life and then utters a rhetorical question.

"Would you like to end up like me?"



Billy McCurdy, 17, got 'fed up with school.' He left Lawton Eisenhower High School for a life of 'staying home, getting high and rippin' off things.'

"If I went back to my old school, I'd just be wasting people's time."



Dale Chanler, twice a Lawton High School dropout, has found a new life at a Comanche County alternative school.

"This is the first place I ever came to where people care about me ... where people worry about me."

By Jim Killackey
Staff Writer

The frustrations and bewilderment of being a high school dropout are commonplace experiences for thousands of Oklahoma youngsters, whose stories mirror those of Gina, Billy and Dale.

Dropouts remain one of the state's most perplexing and exasperating educational problems.

Each year, between 7,700 and 8,600 Oklahoma adolescents who should be in grades 9 through 12 drop out of school.

Oklahoma's cumulative four-year high school dropout rate is 18 percent.

That means nearly one out of every five high school freshmen doesn't make it through the 12th grade.

Nationally, the problem is worse. The high school dropout rate is 25 percent and 800,000 students will drop out this year before graduating.

"When kids leave us and hit the streets, they're in for a real struggle," said Ron Poole, principal of Oklahoma City Douglass High School.

Said Tulsa educator Farryl Stokes, "Not everyone is interested in school.

"But they've got to realize that they're going to be better off with a diploma."

In recent years, Oklahoma schools have made noticeable gains in attacking the dropout dilemma.

During the 1979-1980 school year, the dropout rate reached nearly 25 percent.

But many educators are pessimistic about getting it any lower than last year's 18 percent — and fear that negative factors are in place for the

See DROPOUT, Page 2-A

Good Morning

Weatherline
Call 524-3377 for local reports, forecasts.

Skies will be mostly cloudy across the state today with scattered thunderstorm. Highs will range from the 40s to the near 70. — Page 11-A

331,429
Paid Circulation Last Sunday

John Baker chuckles at the reaction of people who walk into his dry goods store. — 18-A

Niagara Falls is a magnet for suicides and park police are doing their best to stop them. — Page 8-A

The superpowers play a sort of grand-scale chess beneath the ice of the arctic. — Page 4-A

Prayer for Today

Each day, dear Lord, we can have your great gift of friendship, fellowship and faith. We need only to listen, look and reach out to receive your many wonders. Amen.

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