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Decision seen as setback

By Mike Sims
Of the Emerald

Bean McFadden, University director of affirmative action, sees a recent court ruling on affirmative action programs and “last-hired-first-fired” policies as another setback for women and minority men.

“It simply means that their chances, their hopes, are shot down again,” McFadden says of women and minorities. And she further asserts that persons currently holding positions of seniority in the workplace have “benefitted doubly” — from the ruling, as well as past discriminatory policies.

The U.S. Supreme Court decided June 12 that the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects racially neutral seniority systems. The court held that courts may not deprive white employees seniority rights in cases where minority workers failed to prove they were victims of actual discrimination.

The decision was made in response to a federal district court ruling that prohibited the city of Memphis, Tenn. from implementing a last-hired-first-fired layoff plan for firefighters during a 1981 municipal fiscal crisis.

Affairs board tabs 1984-85 officers

The Student University Affairs Board has elected its chair and vice chair for the 1984-85 school year.

Sara Tenney, a senior psychology major, will chair the 18-member legislative branch of student government. Selected as vice chair is Jeff Pennington, a senior finance major.

In addition, SUAB member Larry Sebring has been elected 1984-85 vice chair of the University Senate, a deliberative and advisory body of 36 faculty and the 18 SUAB members.

SUAB members, representing each department, school or college at the University, hold joint appointments on the University Senate and the University Assembly. Members are selected during the spring student body elections and serve two-year terms.

The lower court said that the plan would affect a disproportionate number of blacks hired under a recent affirmative action program. The Supreme Court overturned that ruling in a 6-3 decision.

McFadden couldn't predict what outcome, if any, the Supreme Court ruling would have on the University. “We'll examine each particular area (of occupation) and do what needs to be done to preserve the University's affirmative action policies,” McFadden says.

McFadden says that University policies dealing with hiring, firing and seniority differ according to areas of occupation. She explained that circumstances differ with regard to administration, faculty, Graduate Teaching Fellows and classified staff.

Peggy Nagae, assistant dean of the law school, took the issues of affirmative action and seniority a step further. “The problem is much larger than any seniority system — it's our society's whole attitude toward work,” she asserted.

“We need to learn as a society that people at the bottom of the work structure are as valuable as those at the top,” Nagae says.

University to host Women's League

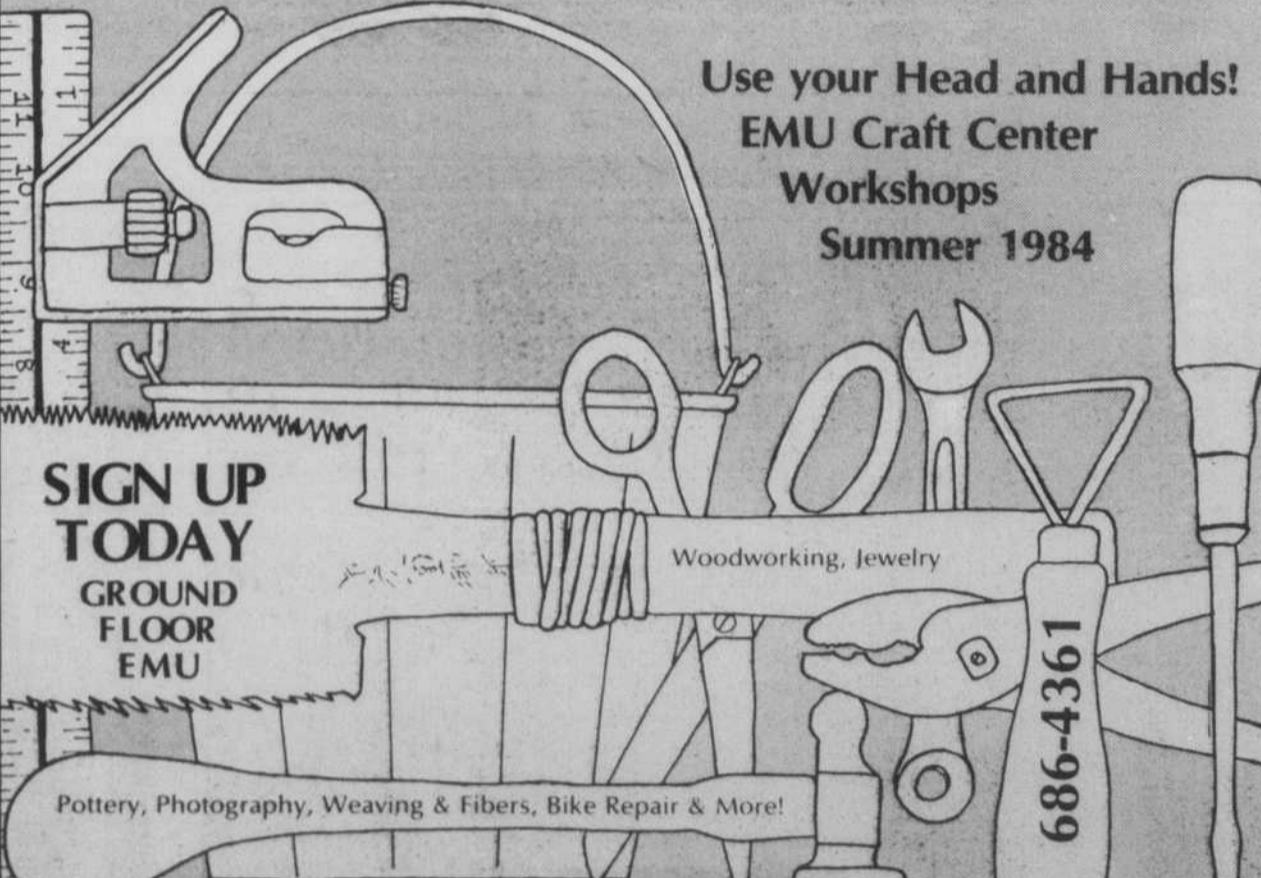
The Older Women's League will hold its first state conference at the University on Sunday.

Laurie Shields, the co-founder and national vice president of OWL, will give the keynote address at the conference, speaking on how “Middle Aged and Older Women Begin to Advocate for Themselves.”

Founded three years ago by Tish Sommers and Shields, OWL is a rapidly growing advocacy organization for middle-aged and older women. In the mid-1970s, Sommers and Shields initiated the national displaced-homemakers movement by founding The Alliance for Displaced Homemakers.

The conference is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m.; admission is free.

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The summer edition of the Oregon Daily Emerald is published Tuesdays and Thursdays, except during exam week and vacations, by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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News and Editorial 886-5511
Display Advertising and Business 886-3712
Classified Advertising 886-4343
Production 886-4381
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