

Look Behind The Unemployment Rate, Says Economist

NEW YORK -- Commissioner of Labor Statistics Janet L. Norwood urged economists "to look behind the current 9 percent unemployment rate" to gain a fuller understanding of what is happening in the labor market.

An Inspiration To All . . .

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from you. He is a thoughtful man. After each question he pauses for a moment, thinks it through and then answers. Slowly, almost deliberately.

"It was never my goal to become general," he says as he leans back in his executive style chair. "My goal was to be a well respected officer and to do the best I could at any task I was assigned. Over the years I have realized that people only expect you to do your best. They usually don't care if you are Black or White, male or female, as long as you are doing the job. I don't believe in making excuses because you are a minority or having a chip on your shoulder."

Turner's advice to young Black officers is to know your job, perform every task to the best of your ability, and communicate with your supervisor. Communication is vital. "Let your supervisor know that you want to do an outstanding job. Find out what he or she expects of you and let them know that they can always expect the best from you," he said.

Turner's youngest daughter, Karen, will attend West Point, the Army's military academy in the Fall. At seventeen, Turner said she exhibits the potential to become a successful officer, but she will have to work hard at it.

"We want our children to be suc-

cessful and happy. It is often hard to get across to them that they have to work hard. They are more concerned about being accepted by their teenage companion," he said.

Kim, a graduate of the University of North Carolina, remembers that her father used to call her often while she was away at school to see if she was studying. "Now it is kind of amusing because my younger brother Kevin is attending the University of Virginia and I overhear my father asking him the same thing all of the time," she said.

"I try to impress upon my children the value of time. To use time wisely, in a productive manner," Turner said.

Turner is in the last phase of his military career. "I have been in the military for almost 30 years. I don't think the adjustment to civilian life will be that difficult. You work with people and they are basically the same everywhere," he said.

"The Army has given me the opportunity to meet some fine people, broaden my background and increase my usefulness. Blacks entering the military today have no specified role. They are free to go where their talents and efforts take them. They will discover, as I did, that hard work and a positive mental attitude are the keys to success."

Addressing the meeting of Industrial Relations Society, she said:

"The overall unemployment rate is an important statistic. But to understand what is really happening, we need to look behind it--to find out who is working and who is not, who has earnings and who does not, and to learn what we can about the employment and income of others in the families with whom they live.

"We need to examine the information that lies behind the overall unemployment rate, and beneath the headlines of the daily newspapers."

In her prepared remarks, Norwood noted that:

Black workers represent only about 10 percent of the population, but they account for 20 percent of the unemployed. In March, the jobless rate for Black workers was 18 percent, a great deal higher than the 7.9 percent for Whites.

Blacks also represent a disproportionately high share of those too discouraged to look for work and of those unemployed for long periods of time.

Hispanic unemployment rates fall between those of Whites and Blacks. But, as with other groups in the population, there is a great variation among the various Hispanic groups. For example, persons of Puerto Rican origin typically have had the highest jobless rate of all Hispanics.

Norwood cited these statistics to help explain who the unemployed are:

About 45 percent of the unemployed

are adult men, 35 percent adult women, and 20 percent teenagers.

The total number of persons with some unemployment during the course of a year is 2½ to 3½ times larger than the number in a single month.

Most unemployed persons have relatively short spells of joblessness. In March, about 40 percent of the unemployed had been jobless for less than 5 weeks. But nearly 3 million had been out of work 3 months or more.

Unemployment is not always associated with low family income. The earnings of other employed family members as well as unemployment insurance reduces the economic distress of joblessness. The median family income of persons with some unemployment during 1980 was \$16,646. Nevertheless, 17.5 percent of those with some unemployment during 1980 lived in families with median incomes below the official poverty level.

The most serious financial distress caused by unemployment occurs in families maintained by a woman with no husband present. One of every six families is maintained by a woman, and 18 percent of all children live in such a family.

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