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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Charleston, Illinois

news

ART TATE, Assistant Director, University Relations
Office: (217) 581-5981 - Home: (217) 348-7553

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU PLACEMENT DIRECTOR MAKES RETIREMENT PLANS

CHARLESTON, IL.-- As he sits proudly behind the desk that once belonged to Dr. Robert Buzzard, Eastern Illinois University's second president, Dr. James Knott, placement director, confesses that 1988 is indeed the year he is going to retire.

"It is somewhat of a joke around the office," said Knott, who initially planned to retire three years ago.

In the 31 years Knott has been at Eastern, he has worked for all of Eastern's presidents, except one, hired 60 Civil Service associates and counseled thousands of students, a significant number of whom he can remember by both name and face.

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Knott has played a significant role in the Illinois Collegiate Job Fair, Mid-America Teacher Placement Days and the St. Louis Area Collegiate Job Fair.

He has witnessed many changes since he came to Eastern, such as a reduction in the number of teacher education graduates, a growing number of students and faculty in the college of business and a renewed interest in career planning and placement as evidenced by the increasing number of career planning seminars now offered.

Placement services also have been improved, especially with the recent addition of a computer terminal necessitated by the large amount of paper work.

The placement center used to complete candidates' credentials detailing personal information, academic background and references. Now that an average of 2,000 students register for placement a year compared to 400 31 years ago, placement center personnel no longer prepare credentials--the students do, Knott said.

His trademark has become his blue canvas "briefcase" decorated with colorful souvenir buttons and pins from colleges and companies throughout the United States.

When he steps down as placement director March 1, Knott will launch a new career as a travel planner for the Charleston Travel Bureau and will continue taking tickets at University of Illinois football and basketball games.