

# Lincoln women's forum: 'getting political'

By Mary C. Reilly

Self-worth, pay equity and political power were the major themes of the Womanpower Conference Saturday at the Cornhusker Square Convention Center.

More than 400 women and a handful of men attended the day-long event sponsored by the Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women and 21 other women's organizations.

Keynote speaker Nancy Perlman, founder and executive director of the Center for Women in Government at the State University of New York at Albany, centered her address on the importance of achieving pay equity for women.

Presently, women have "a lack of economic power," Perlman said. Establishing equal pay for comparable work will change this, Perlman said.

"Women with four years of college earn on the average as much as men with one to three years of high school," Perlman said.

In 1980, women in Nebraska earned an average of 60 cents for every dollar that men earned, Perlman said. Among Nebraska state employees, women earn about \$4,700 less than male employees, she said.

In 1970, Perlman said, white women earned 86 percent of what men earned

and in 1980, that gap had widened to 83 percent.

Evidence exists that shows bias in the salary-setting process, Perlman said.

Job evaluation studies can determine if wages of female-dominated jobs reflect the value of the jobs or the status of the women holding them, Perlman said.

Of 427 classified occupations, 10 are women-dominated.

Many of these have been undervalued by the job evaluation studies, she said.

LB700, which would establish a commission to do a comparable job study in Nebraska, was voted out of committee at the Legislature late Friday.

In a system where "a parking lot attendant earns more than a secretary, a sign painter more than a registered nurse, a dog catcher more than a nursery school teacher," Perlman said, "intuitively, I think we know something is wrong."

Perlman said myths concerning comparable work and equal pay for equal work exist in job evaluation systems. They are:

- Setting salaries can't be done by comparing dissimilar jobs.
- Establishing comparable salaries

would interfere with the free market system.

- It will cost too much to pay female co-workers what their jobs are worth.

Perlman rebutted these myths and said the evaluation systems should be redesigned to be free from bias.

Actually, she said, the cost of litigation to resolve pay equity suits "makes it much more expensive to the employer

than paying fair wages." This has been demonstrated in Minnesota and Washington, she said.

Perlman urged Nebraskans to "get political, educate, think broadly and build coalitions, build short and long-term strategies for achieving comparable work.

"It is important to become policy leaders," Perlman said.

## Strict rules apply to all text returns

By Chris Choate

The first week of the new semester began with a familiar sight — students waiting in long lines at crowded bookstores, buying needed books. The lines still exist, but now the students are returning books.

The time to make returns is now: the University Bookstore will accept returns through Jan. 27 and the Nebraska Bookstore through Jan. 28. The return policies for both stores are similar — both require sales receipts.

Cheryl Davis, text manager at University Bookstore, said the store checked the return policies of several college bookstores in other areas before adopting its present policy. For most, of course, the policy of taking returns during the first two weeks of a semester and requiring receipts worked best, Davis said.

The policy's problem: lost or discarded receipts.

Although the bookstore sometimes accepts canceled checks as proof of purchase, Davis said, it is best to save the receipt. This way, she said, there is no confusion and the full amount of the purchase can be returned.

Mark Oppgaard, general manager of Nebraska Bookstore, said the policy is fair. Oppgaard said students should know if they need the books. Also, he said, Nebraska Bookstore has a limited return time to its vendors.

Besides receipts, Oppgaard said students must return books in the same condition they were purchased to get a full refund. No marks should be made and the sticker should be left on if possible.

If students don't return books within the given time, both bookstores encourage them to save the books until the end of the semester. These books will then be considered used and students will receive partial refunds.

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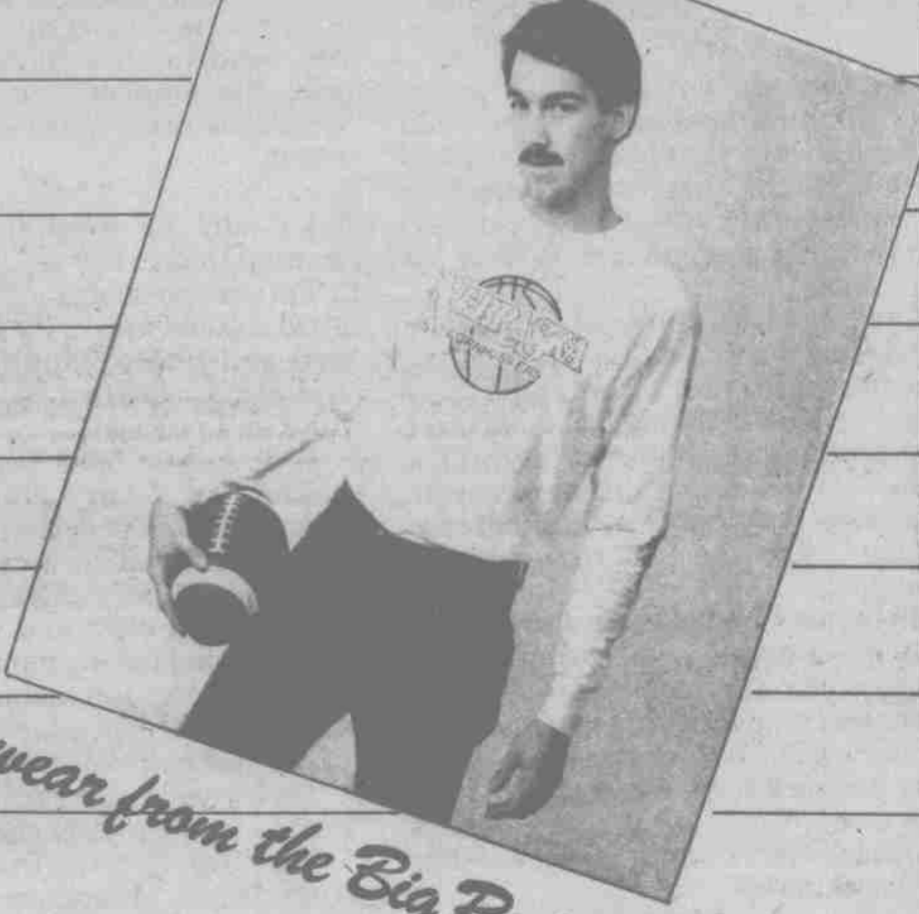
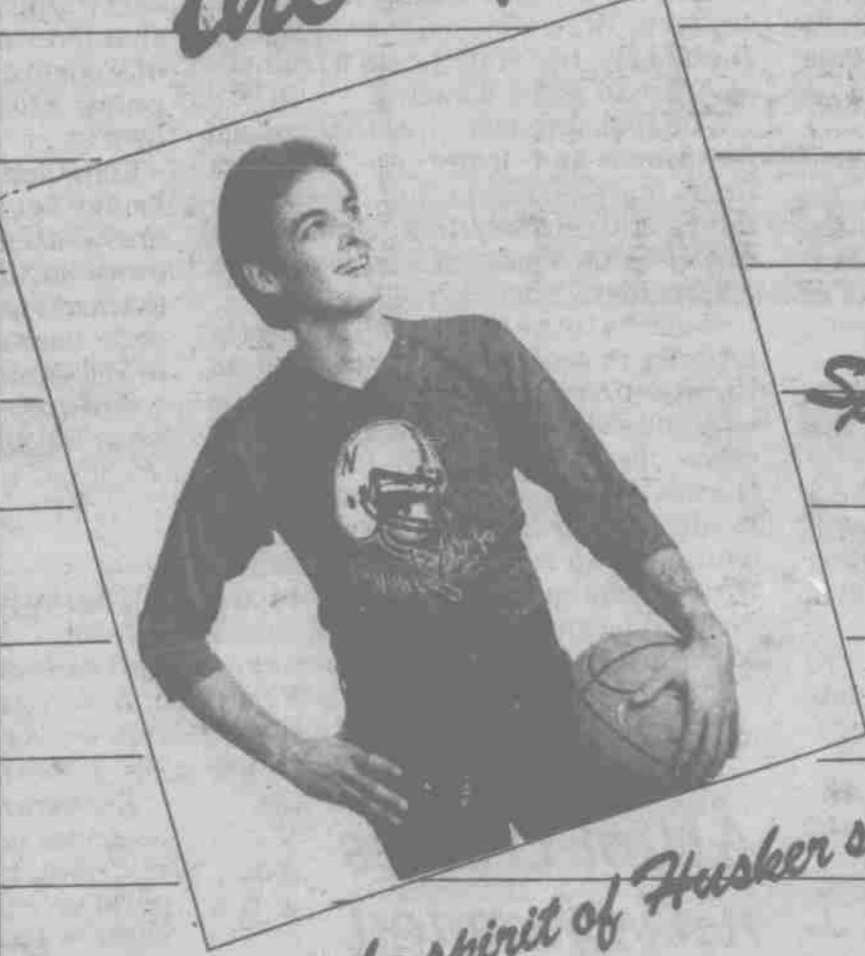
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