## Divorce is way out of 'till death do us part'

By Sallie Jo Simmons Staff Reporter

In 1970, Lancaster county granted 631 decrees for divorce, according to Lancaster County district court records. By 1982, the number of decrees granted soared to 1025. As of 1984, the decrees granted slumped down to 967 in Lancaster County.

"It's not a shameful thing anymore," attorney Jim Harris said. Changing lifestyles influence society's ideas, he said. Living together, as well as divorce. have greatly affected society's opinion on marriage and its success, Harris said.

Harris said the hardest part about obtaining a divorce is getting the client to agree to settlement proposals. A lawyer can only make recommendations to his client, he said. The client has the final word on proposals, Harris said.

"She filed for the divorce," Scott, a UNL graduate student, said. But he said that he wanted it just as much.

Their divorce was filed in February

1984. Their court date was in April, and

## Divorce: where, how and how much

The fee for filing for a divorce in the district court is \$56. The form requires the petitioner's name, general information, and then the spouse's name, otherwise referred to as the respondant. The petioner must have resided at least a year in the county before filing a divorce in the county.

The fastest court date would be in 60 days, but it could take longer, depending on the court schedule. Then the respondant may appear at court voluntarily, or the sheriff will issue a subpoena.

Anytime before the trial, the couple may sign a property settlement agreement. If not done before the trial, it can be taken care of during the trial.

Nebraska divorces are all "no-fault." A divorce is granted when the marriage is "irretrievably broken.

Divorces can be uncontested or contested. Uncontested divorces mean the petitioner and the respondant both agree with the settlements. Contested divorces signify that the couple doesn't agree with one of the following: alimony, child support, child custedy, visiting rights, division of property, attorney's fees or court costs.

The trial may last anywhere from two minutes up to several weeks. If the divorce is contested, several court hearings may be arranged later to settle everything. Once the divorce is granted, neither one of the couple may re-marry for six months. After that period the divorce is finalized.

An uncontested divorce will cost about \$300 in legal fees. A contested divorce, generally being more expensive, costs between \$40 and \$100 per hour, depending on the lawyer.

the diverce was finalized by October agreement, it's better than giving them parents how to relate to themselves can do more damage than help for a

1984, he said.

"I was just in there (court) last because of continuing re-arrangements for child support.

five and two, that he supports with the 300 a month his ex-wife receives.

21 when I got married," he said. He and his wife bought a new car and a new home, Scott said. Then, they started a family. And yet, divorce crept its way hard to get in touch with, she said. into their home in less than five years.

"Divorce is disappointing." Scott said. "But it takes two for a marriage."

children, Scott said. He got the house and assets. The court requires a 50-50, or 'equable distribution of assets,' and the couple agreed on the split-up of things beforehand, he said.

Divorce is expensive. Just for an uncontested divorce, Scott said he paid about \$2000 in lawyer's and court

One thing Scott didn't pay for prior to, during, or after his divorce was marriage counseling. Not longer than a year ago, Nebraska required couples filing for divorce to see marriage counselors, but this rule recently changed.

Pat Farnsworth, a marriage counselor for Family Services of Lincoln, said if is children, Farnsworth said. A program

Farnsworth said divorce requires Tuesday, again," Scott said. "And I'll five things: child support, spouse supbe back in two months," he said, port, property settlement, child custody

The biggest problem with divorced Scott said he has two children, ages couples is the man's non-compliance with child support, she said. Too may times the woman will get custody of the "They're great kids," he days. "I was children, while the man goes off to live his own life, Farnsworth said. Sometimes the men are forgetful of payments, they don't have the money or they're

Divorce proceedings create very emotional times for people, Farnsworth said. People cry, yell, and steam, she said. "Just give me another chance," is So, she got the new car and the commonly heard in her office, Farnsworth said.

> "Once the feelings are gone, the marriage is over," Mrs. Farnsworth said. Then, people expect marriage counselors to "perform magic" and put their marriages back together, she

> Any case involving divorce induces heavy overtones of non-communication, Farnsworth said.

> "We don't pretend to be lawyers at all," she said. Divorce counseling encourages the couple to come together to work out their differences through positive reinforcement, she said.

A key element in divorce counseling she can get couples to make their own called divorce mediation teaches

and their children for the future, she troubled relationship, she said. said. The sconer the parents can agree said. This will also eliminate continual visits to court, Farnsworth said.

Some people use divorce as a threat Farnsworth said. Such empty threats with the couple.

Paul Monkowski of the Catholic on how their children will grow up, the Social Services in Lincoln said his easier it is for the entire family, she organization works with troubled couples of any religious faith and try to keep the marriage together.

Monkowski said in the end, the to correct a troubled marriage, decision to stay together really rests



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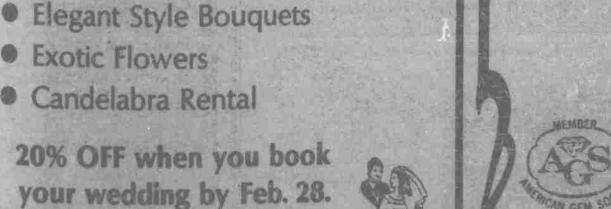
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