

Outstanding Nebraskan Schrekinger leader of youth suffrage movement



John Schrekinger (third from left), Outstanding Nebraskan Student, meets with the coordinating committee of Nebraskans for Young Adult Suffrage, including Tom Morgan, Jane Ross, Dave Piester, Margo McMaster, Mike Gottschalk, and Bob Beckman.

by Jan Parks
Senior Staff Writer

John Schrekinger, a young man who deserves much of the credit for the State Legislature's approval of lowering the voting age, is the Outstanding Nebraskan undergraduate selection.

Classifying himself as a "behind the scenes man," Schrekinger was one of the originators of the Nebraska for Young Adult Suffrage organization.

"I like to help in the planning and in being an organization's consultant," he said.

While Schrekinger is not usually in the limelight, he has made many speeches promoting Amendment I (lowering the voting age in Nebraska). "I'm enough of a 'ham'

to enjoy making speeches," he noted.

Schrekinger explained that action toward lowering the voting age began in May two years ago when he presented the idea to the Nebraska Committee for Children and Youth.

Research chairman

The NCCY appointed Schrekinger chairman of a research committee on lowering the voting age, "and I was given permission to present my findings to the State Legislature during the fall of 1966," he said.

"I don't really know if I'm the originator of the idea or not," he said, "because many people in Nebraska started thinking about lowering the

voting age at the same time."

The research chairman explained that the original goal to lower Nebraska's voting age 18 was amended to age 19 by the legislature.

"Action for lowering the voting age really started in the fall of 1966 when we joined forces with Senator Eugene Mahoney who was planning to introduce a bill to accomplish this purpose," he explained.

The final legislative vote passed by a vote of 37 to 11, he explained, and will be on the ballot in November.

"The issue has broad support," he continued, as he justified his optimism about the passage of Amendment I by Nebraskans in November.

He pointed out that the issue is not a partisan issue, but a personal issue.

"Next fall we will give Amendment I our big push,"

he explained. "It will be a dignified campaign for a dignified issue."

During his freshman and sophomore year Schrekinger was a member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, serving as treasurer his sophomore year.

"This was before Black Power," Schrekinger said. "Black Power confused me and I didn't understand it."

"The organization collected over \$1200 when I was a sophomore," he explained, "which was sent to Mississippi to help support various projects in voter registration and freedom schools to educate Negroes about citizenship."

Schrekinger explained that four University students — Eugene Pokorny, Jane Bredenberg, Jo Ellen Williams and himself spent their spring break in Jackson, Mississippi in 1966 working on a voter

registration drive.

"We went door to door encouraging Negroes to register, explaining registration procedures, and assuring them that they would not be harassed," he explained.

The Mississippi trip sponsored by the Young Women's Christian Association, was "one of the most valuable educational experiences I have ever had," he said.

Explaining that the University students lived in the homes of Negroes for their week's stay, Schrekinger said, "We didn't change the world, but we were appreciated by the people there and we got a small glimpse of the real situation in Mississippi."

Asked whether he felt that the students should take an active part in racial problems, Schrekinger said, "Anything that happens in this country is everyone's problem."

The pre-medical student said that he agrees with Rabbi Ragan who, at a memorial service for Martin Luther King, contended that the Constitution and Declaration of Independence contain only goals to strive for, not descriptive facts of the American system of government.

Schrekinger, a member of Farmhouse fraternity, said that fraternities "are missing the boat by not pledging all kinds of people — including people of other races and other cultural backgrounds."

"It's important for a man to meet as many kinds of people as possible," he said, "because that's the way the world is."

The Greek system by nature is selective, Schrekinger said, but discrimination by race or any other than a personal basis is wrong.

"The Greek system must act fast to keep in the step with the times or it may die," Schrekinger predicted.

Speaking on possible progressive changes in the University's educational system, he said, "I don't go so far as to say that grades should be abolished."

Remarking that he likes to

study, the first semester senior explained that "grades provide an incentive and a reward for studying."

He stressed the importance of having a good balance between studying and activities. "It's important to learn by reading," he added, "but also to learn by doing."

He said that students such as Bob Ginn, who is working on projects promoting open housing laws, are using activities as a valuable educational experience.

Explaining that decision making, on an individual basis, should also be a part of the University's educational program, Schrekinger said, "I think every student — except maybe freshmen — should be free to decide where they want to live."

"Students, by the time they go to college, are mature enough, and should be as free

as students who are not in college," he said.

"I can understand the University's financial problems," Schrekinger said, "but it's sad if student's freedom of choice has to be cramped by the University."

Schrekinger was a member of the ASUN Student Court as a sophomore, and was appointed as an associate justice again this year.

The main accomplishment of the court has been to initiate a more fair way of reapportionment for college senators to Student Senate, he said.

A pre-med and political science major, Schrekinger was one of the two students sent by the University to a political science conference, the annual conference on U.S. affairs, at West Point, N.Y., this spring.

"All aspects of U.S. foreign

affairs were discussed by students from colleges all over the country," he said.

Schrekinger noted that West Point Military Academy financed a large part of his traveling expense, as he expressed his hope that the University would sponsor student trips to this conference and other similar conferences in the future.

Schrekinger, who holds an upper class Regents scholarship, served as president of Phi Eta Sigma, a freshman men's honorary.

Active in church work, he served as president and vice president of Student Religious Liberals. He has also written occasional columns for the Daily Nebraskan.

He has been initiated into Delta Phi Alpha, a German honorary, and is a member of Theta Nu, a pre-medical honorary.



Outstanding Nebraskan, John Schrekinger, senior member of Farmhouse, is a pre-med and political science major.

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