

Female law students face various problems

by Jane Owens

Only 36 of the 484 students at UNL's Law College are women.

At least four of these women are aware of problems facing the female law student. Finding jobs, gaining a client's confidence and being accepted in all aspects of the legal field are only a few.

"Some professors have the strange attitude that if you don't look at them (women) they'll go away, or at least they won't say anything," said senior Connie Wadhams when asked about the status of women in the Law College.

"I'm not so sure some law professors know how to handle an integrated class," freshman Robin Waller said. "Women seem to get called on more and have to be prepared to respond, but I'm not complaining."

Henry Grether, dean of the Law College, said he's heard both types of complaints.

"I don't know if you can prove them one way or another," he said. "If any discrimination (toward

women) does exist it's not a conscious effort. Women are most welcome here."

Enrollment figures show that the number of women entering the college is increasing. Of 148 seniors, four are women. Seven of the 154 juniors, and 25 of the 182 freshmen are women.

Grether said women are becoming more interested in law. He said he believes that the greater interest is partially due to the feminist movement.

The college has no female faculty members, although four of the 17 professors are married to lawyers. No courses dealing exclusively with women and the law are taught. According to Grether, that subject is included in constitutional and family law courses.

Scholastically, women are "doing about as well as men," Grether said. Freshmen men and women had almost identical scores on the Law School Aptitude Test. Average undergraduate grade point for freshmen women was 3.31; average for freshmen men was 3.10.

What are the job opportunities for women law students?

"I have a feeling that it's more difficult for a woman than a man to get a position in a law firm. However, I think this is rapidly changing," Grether said.

Jobs with Lincoln law firms are especially hard to find, according to senior Diana Bloss. "In big cities, a lot of firms are looking for their token woman. Lincoln hasn't reached that point yet," she said.

Female lawyers have an advantage in finding jobs, according to Waller, because many firms are "filling their quota."

"I see nothing wrong with playing on 'tokenism' if that's the only way you can get into a law firm," Waller said. "Once you're in, you can prove you're a competent lawyer," she added.

Women are capable of working in all fields of law, according to the students interviewed.

Waller said she couldn't go into divorce law because she's too emotional. "It might partly be because I'm female," she said.

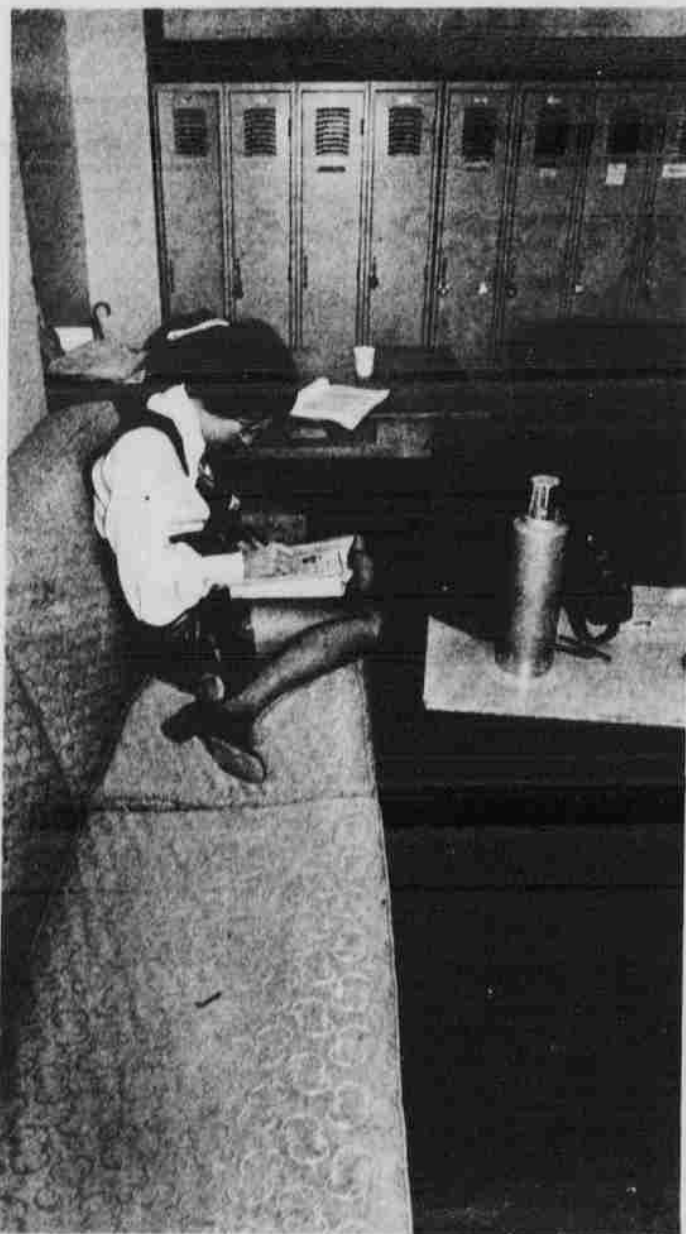
"There are definitely fields of law that people don't accept women in, such as trial work," Christi Wieland, a junior, said. But she added that people in the legal profession accept women more readily than the general public does.

According to Wadhams, a client's willingness to hire a female lawyer "depends on the age and financial status of the client."

Most clients would automatically think a woman lawyer was less competent than a man until "they talked with you awhile," Waller said.

None of the students interviewed are strong advocates of women's lib. "I prefer to say I support 'human liberation'—liberating everyone from their hangups," Wadhams said.

"I'm never going to throw the Women's Lib thing up in men's faces," Waller said. "I just want them to treat me as me."



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Indians' education funding uncertain

The possibility that 40 UNL Indian students may not be able to come back to school second semester hasn't changed, according to John Twobirds Arbuckle, Indian student advisor.

But spokesmen for the UNL Financial Aids office don't agree.

A \$17 million cut in funds to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, (BIA), is the reason, he said.

Arbuckle said letters written to foundations and organizations have not produced any response yet.

"We have to be optimistic, but it is bad," he said.

Private loans are not feasible because it's difficult to back them up. Indians' parents generally don't own land, "so we're left in a lurch," he said.

Indian students are planning to have an auction next month to raise some money. The auction, which will be held in front of the Nebraska Union, will offer some Indian arts and crafts, but the majority of items hopefully will be donated by Lincoln merchants, according to Arbuckle.

"The auction will be organized by students. One of the premises we try to teach our people is 'Indian determination' and this could be called 'student determination.'"

Arbuckle said he has no idea when students will know if money comes through for them. He added they won't have any alternative except dropping out if funds are not found.

Lovie Irions and Ron Fritz of the Financial Aids office apparently see the problem differently.

"All of our students have been funded for first semester. We don't want to jump the gun for second semester," Irions said.

She said if money does not come through for any reason, each case will be looked at individually. Some students have a greater need than others, she said.

While Arbuckle said 40 Indian students need full funding, Fritz said only four or five are in that category. He added that many of the students who need financial aid many not have applied.

"As far as we're concerned, there is no need to worry, but Arbuckle may know something we don't."

Fritz also said some of the 40 students may be "no shows," students who apply, but never come to school.

Fritz and Irions both stressed that the department must have applications before money can be granted to a student. The department controls federal money that cannot be given away with an application, he said.

When asked about the financial aids department, Arbuckle said the department "gives me the runaround every day."

He said Indians traditionally are orally oriented, not form oriented. "By the time you get everything on paper, it's too late," he said.

The real problem has been the cutback of funds for the BIA, however, because they can give complete funding in some students' cases, he said.

"By treaty we've been guaranteed health, education and welfare monies. The government is not honoring their goddamn treaty."

ASUN supplies notaries for absentee balloting

ASUN is providing people to notarize absentee ballots in the downstairs conference room of the Nebraska Union through the rest of this week, according to ASUN President Bruce Beecher.

Beecher said the notarization is free.

Students voting by absentee ballot should bring their unmarked ballots to the Union between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Beecher said there will be places for students to vote after the ballots have been notarized.