



Baton gives Diane a twirl

PHOTOS BY TED KIRK & GAIL FOLDA



By Deb Gray

Her baton has taken her to Europe, given her a part in a movie and helped her win the title of Miss College Majorette of America.

Now after six years of fronting the Cornhusker Marching Band, Diane Tangeman has returned to her native Omaha to teach baton lessons.

Tangeman said she graduated last May with a double major in English and psychology. She will probably not pursue a career in either field, she said.

Tangeman mentioned two high points of her six years. One, she said, was the band's trip to Europe this summer.

"Everyone was astonished at the size of the band and its sound," she said.

Another was the Orange Bowl trip in 1971. There, Tom Laughlin, the star of the "Billy Jack" movies, saw her in the Orange Bowl parade and asked her to lead a parade in "Trial of Billy Jack," she said.

In 1973, Tangeman competed at Notre Dame for the title of Miss College Majorette of America. She won on the basis of baton twirling and strutting exhibitions, evening gown competition and interviews, she said.

Tangeman said her routines changed in nature in recent years. When she

began, she said, she did strictly twirling routines. Lately, the band has played jazzier numbers, allowing her to do as much dancing as twirling, she said.

When the stadium changed from grass to Astroturf, Tangeman said she stopped doing routines with flaming batons.

"I was told the Astroturf was flammable, so I had to quit," she said. "But the turf is really better for routines because it's not as bumpy."

Tangeman began twirling with fire when she was 7 years old. She has also studied jazz, tap and ballet, she said.

Tangeman admitted that at first it was a "little scary" being the only woman in a band of about 200 men. Now, with women members, "the band's attitude has changed somewhat," she said.

"Some like it and some don't."

Tangeman has seen many changes in her twirling career: Astroturf has replaced grass, Tom Osborne has replaced Bob Devaney and David Humm has replaced Jerry Tagge. Does she have any regrets now that she doesn't have to attend the 8 a.m. band practices?

"It's going to be nice not having to get up that early," she said, "but I think I am going to miss it a little."

