

Mortar Board votes to include men

By Theresa Forsman

At an emergency meeting in Kansas City last weekend, delegates from the 167 chapters of Mortar Board, Inc., a national women's honorary, voted to admit men into the society.

Under Title IX of the Health Education and Welfare (HEW) Act of 1972, no state college or university can receive federal funds if they support an organization which discriminates on the basis of sex. The act becomes effective July 21.

Chris Evans, president of the UNL Mortar Board chapter, said the university contributes money and cooperates with Mortar Board and Innocents, the UNL men's honorary, in sponsoring the annual Masters Week at UNL. But Mortar Board receives no direct cash funds from the university, she added.

The university provides meeting space, access to university records, mail delivery and other services for the honorary, Evans said.

The 32 members of UNL's Mortar Board now raise cash for the chapter through fund raising activities.

Evans said other alternatives discussed at Kansas City that deal with the threatened fund loss include disaffiliation with the university, consolidation with Omicron

Delta Kappa, a national men's honorary and a court challenge of Title IX.

Consolidation rejected

The consolidation choice was rejected because Mortar Board delegates did not want to risk losing the name of their 60-year-old organization, Evans said.

Since Mortar Board comprises college seniors, she said, members thought that becoming independent of the university eventually might dissolve the organization.

Mortar Board has been on the UNL campus since 1905, Evans said.

A court challenge would be expensive and time consuming. She said the society's lawyer advised the delegates that building strong arguments against Title IX would be difficult.

Since social sororities and fraternities are exempt from the law, UNL's chapter discussed Panhellenic recognition, Evans said, but decided there would be no basis for the request since Mortar Board is not a social sorority.

The decision to admit men will become effective this year after official ratification by individual Mortar Board chapters, in time for induction of new members next spring.

Mortar Board's goal, Evans said, is to promote the status of women through scholarship, leadership and service to the

university and community.

Goal unchanged

The society's goal will not be changed with the admission of men, she said. Members hope that Mortar Board can become a forum where both sexes will work toward improving the status of women.

Dick Blunk, president of the locally-based Innocents men's honorary, said their society also is obliged to comply with the HEW regulation.

Blunk said no action has been taken yet because the chapter was waiting to hear Mortar Board's decision. He said he was pleased with Mortar Board's decision to induct men into the society.

Innocents' 13 members will decide this year how they will comply with Title IX, Blunk said.

Blunk said he was not sure if Innocents would decide to allow women into the honorary, but said that a precedent for that decision was set in 1972 when a resolution unsuccessfully was introduced to allow women.

Order at football games

Formed in 1903, Innocents originally was established to maintain order at football games, but has become more university and state service oriented.

Ken Bader, vice chancellor for student affairs, said his office will canvass offices of UNL's academic community to identify



Photo by Steve Boerner

Chris Evans, Mortar Board president

other organizations which discriminate by sex.

Departmental honoraries and UNL pep organizations which are closed to one sex will have to make changes to comply with Title IX, Bader said.

Bader has asked and HEW has granted an extension on the effective date of the law for UNL to July, 1976.

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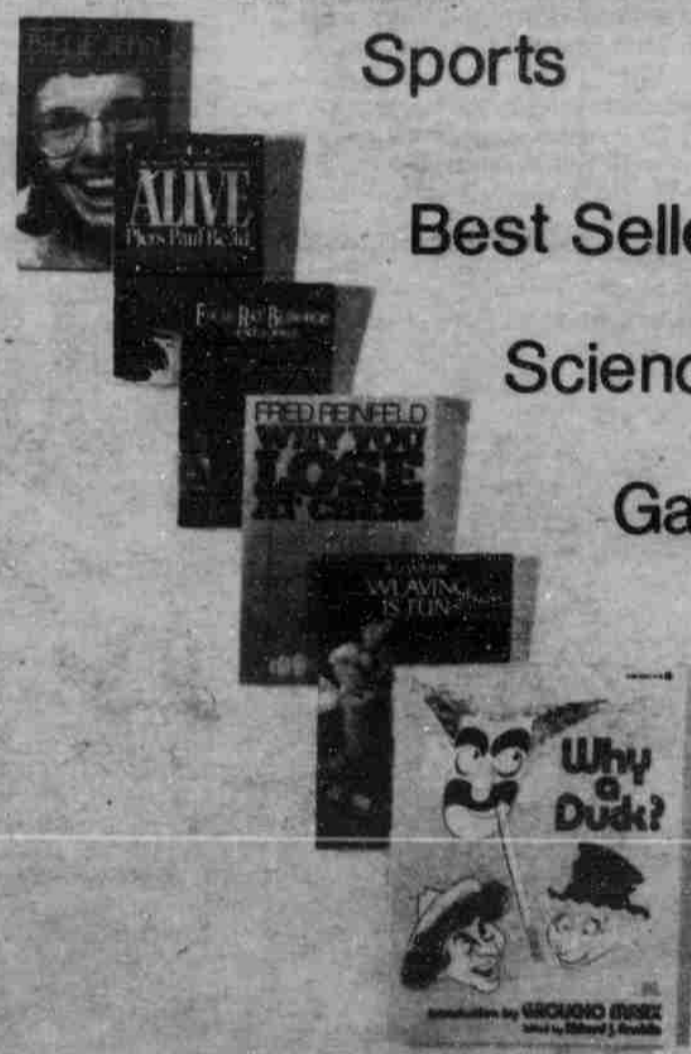
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