

Dream come true helps handicapped visit Sheldon

By Betsie Ammons

A four-year dream was realized for Grace Ames with construction of a ramp for handicapped and elderly people at the south entrance to Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

Mrs. Ames, a 94 year-old former member of the Nebraska Art Assoc., said her interest in a ramp began four years ago when she had difficulty climbing the steps at Sheldon with her walker.

She said when she was told there were no funds for construction of a ramp, she offered to pay for it. UNL constructed and

financed the ramp this year.

"I had given up entirely," Mrs. Ames said. "I was surprised when they did it."

Mrs. Ames said her son and daughter came to her home on a recent Saturday and "said they had something for me to see." Mrs. Ames previewed a new exhibit at Sheldon and was the first person to use the ramp.

Before construction of the ramp, disabled and elderly persons had access to the gallery by a stone slope next to the front steps, according to a Sheldon employee.

Mrs. Ames said the slope was dangerous

because there were no railings.

The new ramp is concrete with copper railings on each side, Duane Burham, chief design engineer at the UNL Physical Plant, said. It is electrically heated with outdoor thermostats to keep ice off in winter.

Burham said building the ramp was a "complex little project" because it is suspended over an existing-air intake shoot.

Plans for the ramp began about a year and a half ago, Burham said, and it was completed the first week in December. He estimated the cost at between \$5,000 and \$7,000.

Jane Anderson, director of education at Sheldon, said the ramp is used "quite a bit." In addition to helping elderly and handicapped people, it is also used as a loading dock, she said.

She said people from the Madonna Home for the Aged visit Sheldon two to three times a year. People from the home have commented on how much easier the ramp will make their visits, she said. Many elderly people on the Nebraska Art Assoc. also visit Sheldon, she added.

"We're hoping that as people learn the ramp is there, they'll come more often," Anderson said.

Economist: less often expected of women

Women are often paid lower starting salaries than men holding the same position because employers generally expect low productivity from them, according to James Cook, Economics Dept. chairman at Illinois State University.

Cook, who spoke Wednesday night to a UNE economics honorary, said that the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission emphasizes seniority and length of service as measures of productivity in determining an individual's salary. He said this is in accordance with the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which states that there should be equal pay for equal work.

"The Equal Pay Act also allows pay differentials for differential productivity. In other words, if I produce more than you do, then I can get paid more," Cook said.

"A problem lies in trying to determine a fair evaluation of one's productivity, or how much he or she is worth," he added.

Cook suggested implementing affirmative action salary programs designed to eliminate any inequities in the pay structure, hiring, firing or fringe benefits of a business.

The UNL Home Economics and Agriculture Departments had recently used this program in determining their faculty salaries. Cook said that when the female faculty members' wages were raised to equal that of male faculty members in comparable positions, the evaluating committees also neglected to raise the pay of male faculty to the level of their female coworkers. The men brought suit for discrimination last August in the 8th circuit Court of Ap-

peals, decision pending.

Cook said that a rating system for male and female employees needs to be designed that would take all variable factors into account in order to justly evaluate an employee's wages.

"If you use one set of criteria for females, it must be equally implemented for males," Cook said.

"The main reason female educators are expected to have lower future productivity is that many begin families and leave their profession permanently," Cook said. Cook said their lower starting pay is not discriminatory, but a measure which is done to achieve maximum economic efficiency within a pay structure.

Band nearing donation goal

The University of Nebraska Foundation has collected \$30,271 in its fund raising drive to send the UNL Marching Band to the Fiesta Bowl in Tempe, Ariz., according to Genny Bok, NU Foundation bookkeeper.

Bok said the drive ends Friday.

"It looks like we're going to go over," she said.

The May Broadcasting Company, owners of KMA Radio in Shenandoah, Iowa and KMTV in Omaha, contributed \$1,000 Wednesday, Bok said.

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