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inside today

David and Goliath: In the game of "logo, logo, who owns the logo?" NETV files suit against NBC. p.2
Cornhusker Debate: UNL hosts a debate tournament this weekend for about 250 students from 30 Midwestern colleges p.9

Black leader cites new day in civil rights

By Sandy Mohr

A man who once fought in Alabama for the right to ride on buses, told an audience in the Nebraska Union ballroom Thursday night that "a new day has come."

Ralph Abernathy became president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) following the assassination of Martin Luther King. His speech was sponsored by the Nebraska Union Program Council's Black Activities Committee.

"We believe in ourselves," Abernathy said. Black people today "know that they are just as good as anybody else."

Abernathy said that the black man built this nation with "blood and sweat and tears." A black man was the first man to die in the American Revolution, and a black man, who navigated the Nina, guided Columbus to America.

The black man who discovered blood plasma and developed the concept of a blood bank died after a car accident when a white hospital wouldn't admit him, Abernathy recounted.

No bitterness

"We decided we weren't going to turn to bitterness," he said. "We decided we weren't going to turn to hate; we kept on loving."

Although Abernathy said his parents died "having not drank of the cup of freedom," he said that he would fight until he's "as free as a jaybird in whistling time."

"I am determined, tonight more than ever, that there will be liberty and justice for all, or there will be liberty and justice for none," he told the crowd.

However, Abernathy said that both blacks and whites must work together to straighten out the government because now they're "sinking on the same ship."

"I know a color more beautiful than black, and I know a color more beautiful than white," he said. "And that color is black and white together."

"No bills of his own"

Abernathy denounced President Gerald Ford's excessive use of the veto, saying, "the sad part is that he doesn't have any bills of his own."

Abernathy often let his voice take his words loudly and clearly to the back of the ballroom, bringing applause and cheers of "right on" from the crowd.



Photo by Steve Boerner

The Rev. Ralph Abernathy, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, spoke briefly at a press conference before his speech in the Union Ballroom Thursday night.

Abernathy said people who are against busing, are going against the law of the government as determined by the courts.

"Busing is the law of the land," he said, adding that the issue has shown that "America is a racist nation."

Busing is nothing new, Abernathy said. He said he doesn't want busing for the sake of busing.

Must work together

Although busing hasn't affected Nebraskans directly, Abernathy said blacks must work together for each other.

"You'll never be free here in Nebraska until your black brothers are free back there in Mississippi," he said.

"Black people have made up their minds today that we're going to have our rights," he said.

America, he said, treats every minority that comes to it better than it treats its black minority.

Because of this, America is "a nation in crisis," Abernathy said. He denounced U.S. involvement in Viet Nam and foreign aid to other nations.

"The way to defend democracy is not with guns on a battlefield," he said. "If you want democracy, then provide jobs and incomes for all Americans here at home."

Committee seeks input

Students, faculty members and taxpayers interested in the future of higher education in Nebraska are invited by Waverly Sen. Jerome Warner to attend a hearing Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon, in Nebraska Union 202.

The Nebraska Legislature's Study Committee for Post-Secondary Education will be seeking input on how the existing system is viewed and how it could be developed to meet future educational needs, according to Warner, committee chairman.

Warner said the hearing's purpose is to develop a coordinated plan for higher education to be presented both to the public and to the Legislature during its 1977 session.

Parity boosters' report outdated?

By Kim Shepherd

An outdated and misinterpreted report is being used by the supporters of parity for the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), according to a Nebraska legislative fiscal analyst, who refused to be identified because "anonymity is important" in his department.

Parity is equal financing for like programs at UNO and UNL, and UNO representatives asked the Nebraska Legislature's Appropriation Committee Jan. 28 for \$877,000 which they said was needed to reach parity.

University officials have asked the Legislature to appropriate \$100 million for NU, but Gov. J. James Exon recommended \$84 million and the Legislature has proposed \$88 million in LB690.

UNO's \$877,000 request is in addition to the amount the university requested from the Legislature. At the committee hearing, NU President D. B. Varner also requested \$200,000 in additional funds to equalize support for comparable programs at UNL and UNO and a supplemental appropriation for NU of \$8 million.

In determining parity levels, UNO used a report on Nebraska general fund support for each student for all 12 colleges and universities, the fiscal analyst said, which was prepared during the summer of 1974. Since Nebraska's cash income estimates were used, the 1974 figures may have fluctuated, he said.

In the amount of state general fund support for each student, the report showed UNL ranked eighth (\$1,348) and UNO 12th (\$960). All Nebraska's community colleges and Peru State College received more for each student than UNL and UNO. Metro-Community College received the most, \$1,978.

"In no way are those general fund dollars to be interpreted as the amount of money available for instruction," he said. The money also pays for the maintenance of the physical plant and administrator's salaries, he said.

UNL's general fund allotment includes money earmarked for Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Morrill Hall and agricultural research, which are costs UNO does not have, he said. The analyst said these funds are not related to the number of student credit hours taken, but are determined according to operational costs of each institution.



Photo by Ted Kirk

Heavyweight wrestler Dave Marr from Ralston High School soaks up some sun outside the Coliseum Thursday during opening day of the State High School Wrestling Tournament. About 6,000 persons watched the grappling inside. The tournament concludes Saturday evening.