

Miss Nebraska grateful for pageant

By Kathy McAuliffe

For UNL student Shari Reimers, being Miss Nebraska 1978 made quitting school a reality this year.

Because Reimers' participation in the Miss U.S.A. pageant required her to be absent from school from April 12 through May 1, she opted to receive incompletes in all the courses in which she was enrolled.

Reimers, a second-semester freshman in pre-dental hygiene, said she will return to school this fall to complete the course work.

Even though she did not complete her second-semester work, she said she felt it was worth it.

"I was really lucky to experience what I did," she said. "It was really fun. I'll never forget it."

Reimers said some of the highlights of the pageant for her were "meeting a lot of new people and getting exposure and publicity." She said she also enjoyed the opportunity to meet the judges, many of whom were actors, actresses and models.

Promoters of the pageant also presented each participant with many free, valuable gifts, she said. These include bathing suits, dresses, make-up and T-shirts, she said.

Along with the fun of the pageant came the work of rehearsals each day, she said.

"It was a lot of hard work, but it was really exciting," she said. "There were a lot of long hours. We didn't get much rest."

What about the fairness of the pageant?
"Sometimes I had my doubts, but I think it was (fair)," she said.

During the early part of the week's competition, she said she felt that the pageant's host, Bob Barker, was coaching certain girls for the Saturday television appearance. But after the finalists were selected, she said it was apparent to her that the selection process had been

fair because the girls with whom Barker had rehearsed weren't necessarily among the finalists.

Reimers said she would have liked to see the judges more than the three times arranged for in the competition. On Tuesday during the week of competition, each girl appeared before the judges in a swimsuit, gown and state costume, she said. On Friday each participant was interviewed for five minutes by each of 11 judges.

On Saturday, the pageant was televised and the 12 finalists were selected, she said.

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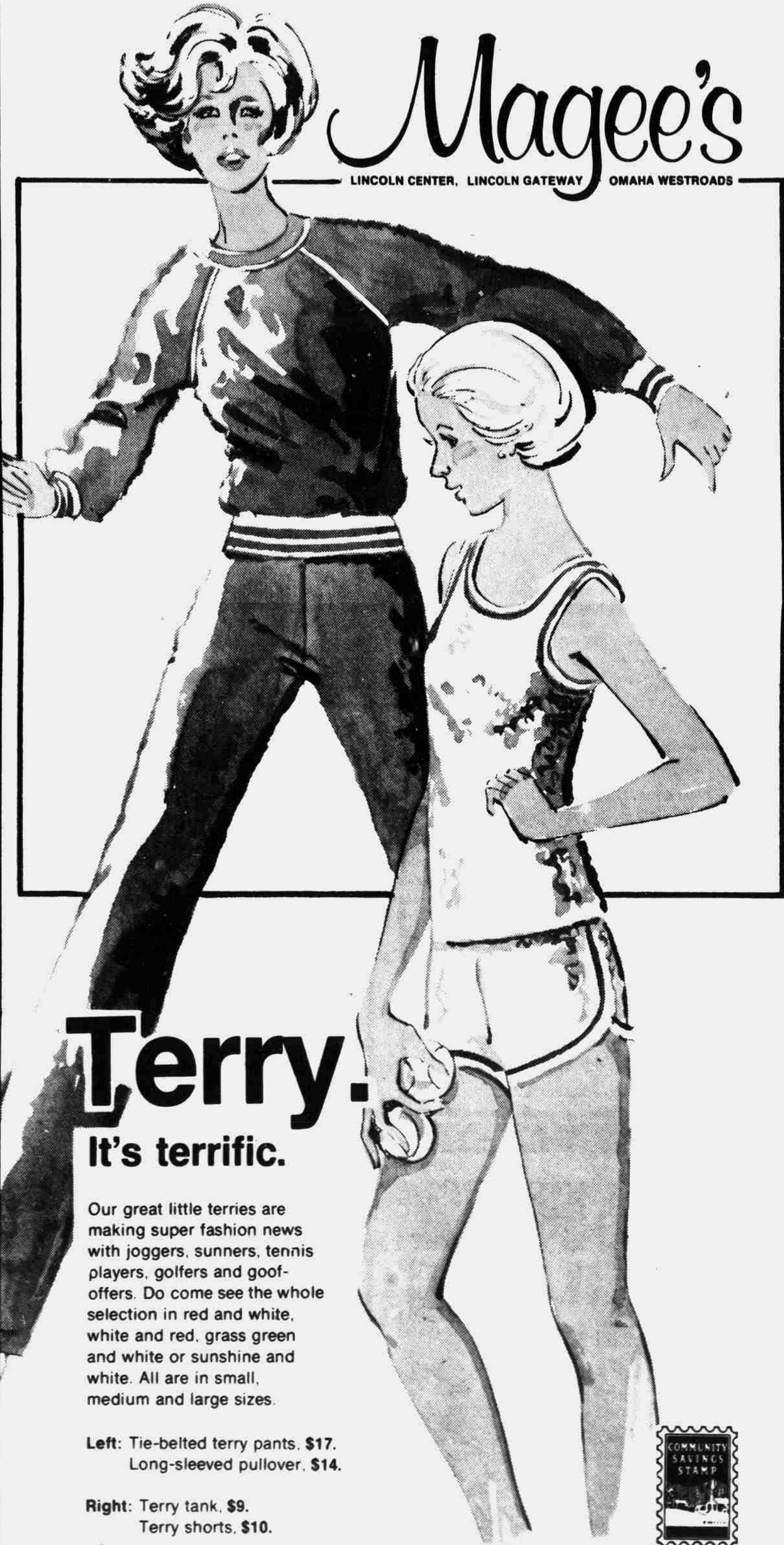
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