

# Miss Nebraska receives Miss America talent prize

By Susan Cowick

Most girls are only able to dream about winning a beauty pageant, but Paula Mitchell fulfilled that dream.

The current Miss Nebraska recently returned from the glamor and excitement of the Miss America Pageant to the UNL campus.

"I know Linda Hallstrom who was Miss Nebraska three years ago. She encouraged me to try," Mitchell said. "I started thinking about it and decided to compete in the preliminary pageant."

Mitchell won the preliminary pageant two years ago and went on to the state pageant, where she placed second runner-up. She entered the preliminary pageant again, went to the state pageant and won the title.

"I just stood there and cried when I won," she said.

Mitchell was crowned on June 14, about 2½ months before she left for the Miss America Pageant on Aug. 30.

"It was crazy," she said. "The very next day after the crowning, I had to meet with the state board to start planning and I began working out to get in shape—running and lifting weights," she said.

Mitchell said that she went to Dallas to set up her wardrobe.

"Les Wilk designed my dresses and we exchanged



Paula Mitchell

ideas on what I should wear throughout the week," she said. "He has worked with girls in pageants for over 10 years."

She said a man in Chicago designed her swimsuit. It was hard to find matching shoes for the suit, she said. She finally dyed a pair to match, she said.

Fred Mills, from UNL, helped her with positive thinking and preparing for interviews, she said.

"The state chaperon accompanied me to the pageant," she said. "The contestants were never left alone. If my state chaperon

could not be with me, then one of the two hostesses assigned to me were. This was one of the precautions taken for our protection," Mitchell said.

"The first Sunday we were there, we were initiated into the Miss America Scholarship Sorority. This really formed a bond between us," she said.

Daily rehearsals accompanied morning pictures, she said.

"In the afternoons and evenings, they practised, while some girls had interviews and talent presentations."

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