

# Affirmative action officer does work one-on-one

By Patti Gallagher

Last Wednesday was the 26th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision mandating integrated schools. The Civil Rights Act, which established the Equal Opportunity Commission to enforce fair employ-

ment practices, was passed in 1964.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson created, by executive order, the requirement for all federal contractors to have and fulfill written affirmative action plans.

The first affirmative

action officer at NU arrived in 1970. The first written affirmative action plan for the university was presented in 1974.

And perhaps more significantly, an Affirmative Action office for the State of Nebraska was created July 1, 1979.

The delay in creating and implementing an affirmative action plan both at the university and in the state is due in part to the small minority composition of the state, according to Brad Munn, UNL affirmative action officer.

Munn was interviewed recently, in observance of Affirmative Action Week, Oct. 6-10, to pause and look at UNL's problems, progress

and promises in affirmative action.

Much of the progress in Munn's one-man, one-secretary office is accomplished on individual basis, he said. Gaining a victory for affirmative action might require Munn to go to an employer one-on-one to resolve a case of wage discrimination between a male and a female.

Or it may require a few phone calls to provide a handicapped person with transportation. Or it may require some "persuasive talking and table pounding," Munn said, to see that the university adheres to its affirmative action plan.

Much of Munn's job involves cases concerning hir-

ing of administrative and faculty personnel, he said. In the past three months, a black woman filed a major-line administrative position and the agricultural department hired two racial minority faculty members, but the numbers still are not satisfactory, Munn said.

This is due in part, Munn said, to a lack of qualified minorities available to hire, and partly because some of those in hiring positions are not truly committed to affirmative action.

"Some of the people who make most of the decisions haven't done an about-face," Munn said. They have a verbal commitment to affirmative action, he said, that is not carried

out in hiring practices.

One insurance against discriminatory hiring was initiated this year, Munn said. Now included on each new employee's Personnel Action Form is a portion stating that affirmative action and equal opportunity guidelines have been followed in the hiring of that individual.

Munn must approve the form before the person is hired. He has yet to reject one, he said.

"The track record is not impressive" as far as the number of minority persons employed by UNL, Munn said. The atmosphere of the state—"what some would call lily white"—is one factor hurting minority hiring, he said.

"For some racial minorities this isn't a place they would like to be. The concerns of minorities are not a part of the daily mealtime conversation," he said.

The university population consists primarily of persons from two metropolitan cities and rural areas—none of which are very racially diverse—and the composition of the faculty and administration reflects that, Munn said.

However, the affirmative action plan requires the number of minority faculty and administration people employed to be proportional to the number available nationwide, he said.

Another insurance for affirmative action, Munn said, is a requirement that all departments submit yearly goals and timetables to the Affirmative Action office.

Munn then monitors those goals to determine whether they are met. If they are not?

"I can't urge a department to hire someone who's not available," he said. And affirmative action is not a law, he said, but an executive order.

Also causing low statistical representation of minorities, Munn said, is a lack of openings for all persons. As positions become vacant, he said, many are eliminated.

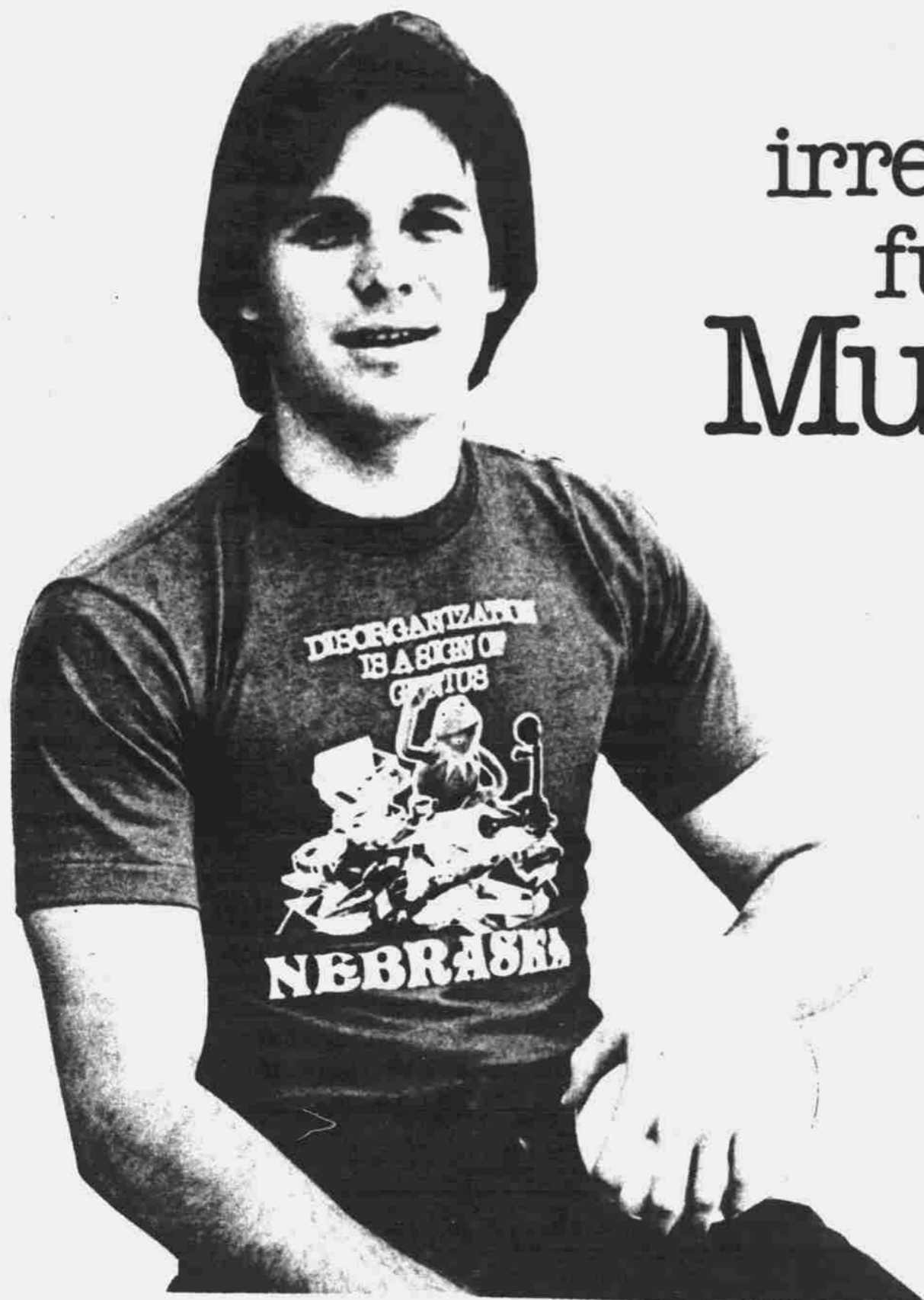
For each minority person hired, two may leave, he said.

In recognition of Affirmative Action Week, which was declared by Gov. Charles Thone, UNL's Affirmative Action office is sponsoring a luncheon Monday featuring William English in the Nebraska Union.

English is director of equal opportunity for Data Control Corp. of Minneapolis.

No other activities are planned for the week, Munn said, because "affirmative action is an ongoing process, not something you focus on one week a year."

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