

**'Succeeds on own merit'**

**Blind law student wins oral argument award**

By Pat Carraher

Russell Bloemker, a blind law student from Fremont, has been named the outstanding oral argument person for the senior rounds at the UNL Law School.

Bloemker and his partner, Bruce Stephens, finished first after competing in the tournament finals Sept. 29.

Bloemker said senior rounds are not a required activity, but are open to any law school senior. He said nine two-person teams entered this year.

According to Bloemker, before teams started debate, they submitted legal briefs based on their arguments. The week-long competition consisted of a series of debates with area attorneys serving as judges, he said.

Because of his blindness, Bloemker said he was unable to prepare for rounds in the same way others did. He said

he gathered evidence for his argument by having other students read material to him.

Bloemker said these "readers" are essential for him because many legal works and texts change so often, making it too expensive to produce up-to-date Braille editions.

Nevertheless, the use of Braille is still important to Bloemker.

He said he uses Braille to take notes in class. To do this, he uses a small device made of two pieces of sheet metal. Called a "Braille typewriter," it punches Braille letters into the note paper. These notes, Bloemker said, along with some personal literature, make up most of his Braille material.

Bloemker admits that his blindness has given him a number of problems which he has had to overcome.

Bloemker said that during high school he made up his mind to take up the challenge of learning to be a lawyer.

"I feel like I have received no special treatment while in law school, I've been allowed to succeed or fail on my own merit," he said.

As for the future, Bloemker said there is nothing definite waiting for him after graduation. He did say, however, that he has no preference as to which direction he will go.

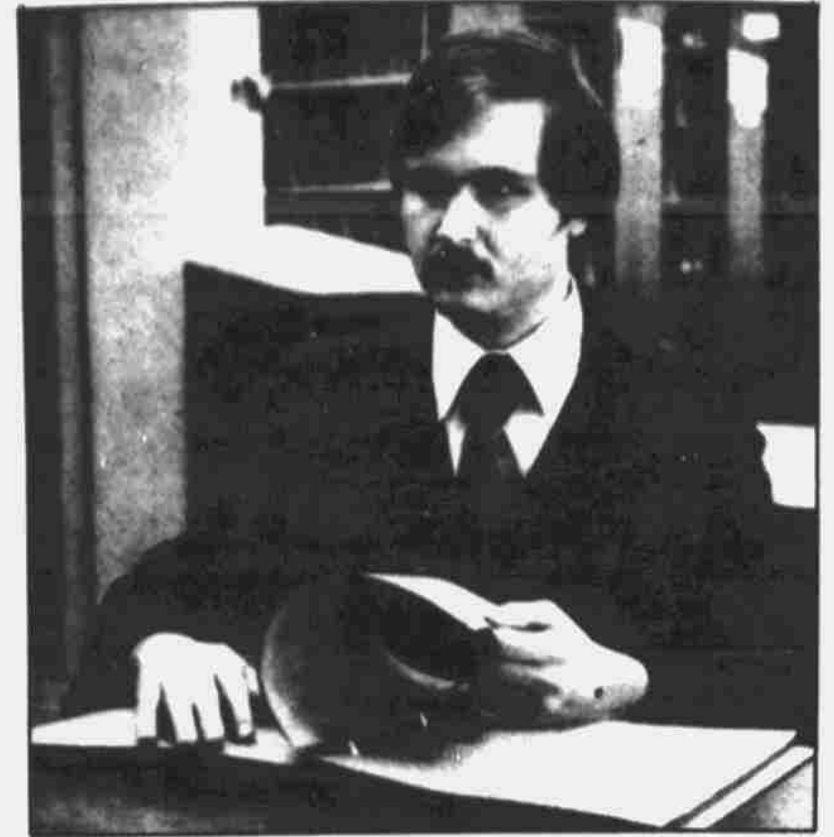


Photo by Kent Morgan Olsen

UNL law student Russell Bloemker recently won the oral argument person award.

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**Better relations is fraternity goal**

By Laure Perlinger

It has been said that tradition is big at UNL. Tradition, however, ranges from wearing red to football games to continuing a feud with neighbors. Such is the case with two UNL fraternities that have a reputation of intense rivalry.

The two houses are Phi Delta Theta, 1545 R. St., and Theta Xi, 1535 R St.

Dan Spellman, Phi Delta Theta president, and Mike Morris, Theta Xi president, said they are trying to get things resolved by getting the executive councils of both houses together.

Spellman said there is no rivalry between the two houses. Instead, it is just yelling back and forth and an occasional broken window, he said.

Morris said he feels that it's the principle, not the minor expenses that are important.

"This is my fifth year here and this is the worst it has ever been," Morris said.

"The relationship between the two houses is poor. They say it's tradition, but it can only go so far."

He said some Phi Delta members went into the Theta Xi house and sprayed red paint in a pledge's hair and shirt.

On Monday, Morris said, several Theta Xi members participated in the Great Greeks exchange dinner. They

went next door to the Phi Delta Theta house but the reception wasn't very hospitable, he said.

"I'd like to see it stop. SO would our guys and probably some of their guys too," he said.

"The past couple of weeks have been pretty quiet. Things are starting to look better."

Spellman said he heard about the spray paint incident, but wasn't sure it involved members of his house. He said the Theta Xi pledges were going on sneak, so the Phi Delta pledges got in on the fun and kidnapped one of them.

"The Phi Deltas had nothing to do with the red dye," Spellman said, referring to the red dye dumped into the makeshift swimming pool at the Theta Xi Driftwood party in September.

"We've had a reputation for doing some pretty crazy stuff," he said. "Yet, it seems like everything gets blamed on us."

"Sure, we deserve some of it. We deserve the same as everybody else."

Spellman said in the last six or seven years Phi Delta Theta members have become more conservative. If damage is done to property, the individual responsible must pay damages to the property owner and apologize.

"We really stress to people not to do anything to anyone," Spellman said. The Interfraternity Council stresses good relations between fraternities and also helps to solve any problems that may arise between houses on campus, he said.

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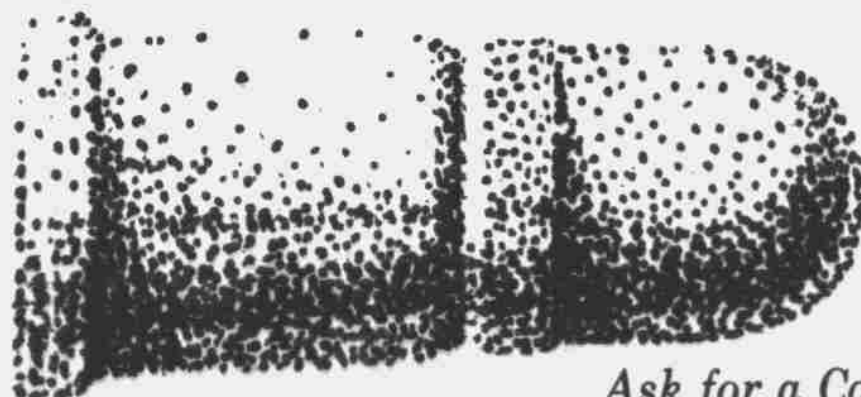
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