

Tradition still governs membership

Service clubs still rule out women

Women may be finally infiltrating the business world, but when it comes to service clubs, tradition is still strong.

The Lincoln Jaycees and Sertoma Club both exclude women, although one has another club for women and the other is trying to change its bylaws.

The Jaycees, which calls itself a young man's training organization, has 400 members, including minorities, but no women.

President Chuck Greenway said the local chapter is bound by national rules and those rules do not allow women members.

Greenway said that he did not feel this is particularly a problem, however, since he has never personally encountered a woman who wanted to be a Jaycee.

Greenway said he feels comfortable about the exclusion, because of a group called Jaycee Women, an all-female club that works closely with the Jaycees.

"We have common philosophies and goals, while retaining our own identity," he said. "They are very supportive of us, and, we in turn, support them."

Greenway explained that Jaycee Women began as a group called Mrs. Jaycees, which limited membership to only wives of Jaycees. The group changed its name a couple of years ago and no longer has this limitation.

Not bound

Jaycee Women are not bound by traditional roles when working on joint projects with the Jaycees.

"We don't have cut-and-dried traditions when working together," Greenway said.

"We do what we feel we do best on projects and so do they. There are, however, some things females just can do better. We pool our resources," he said.

Another Lincoln group, the Sertoma Club, has recently voted to urge a change in international bylaws that prohibit women from joining their group.

Club President Dennis Bongers said the local board voted to urge the international board, the regional director and the district governor to promote the bylaw change at the next International Sertoma Convention, which is scheduled for May in Houston, Tex.

"It's time to open up service organizations and civic clubs to all people in the business community," Bongers said.

June Davis, women's athletic director at UNL, recently applied to be a member of Sertoma. She said she thought the board's action in voting for the bylaw change was

"fantastic and says a lot for the club and the city of Lincoln."

Davis applied

Davis said she applied for membership after she was invited to speak to the club about women's athletics. Bongers brought up the subject of women members at that time. She said her response was, "Hey, I want the first membership."

"Men are accepting the fact that women are part of the working world. It only makes common sense that civic groups function the same as business," Davis said.

The International Sertoma Convention defeated a proposal last year to allow women members.

Moira Ferguson, chairwoman of the Women's Studies Department, said she thought it was about time women were included in the memberships.

"I think any form of discrimination is offensive," she said. "It's difficult to deal with medieval attitudes in the 20th century. In this era, to talk about excluding women is out of step with reality—out of phase with the time—and it makes no sense," the chairwoman said.

"It is an old network," said one woman who did not want her name used. "Elitism encourages sexist attitudes. We need to reform these attitudes. We are all living together."

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