



Photo by Pat Kovanda

Mayor Helen Boosalis sits through a drizzly Thursday morning to play her hand in the Alpha Delta Pi/Delta Tau Delta Cardathon. Proceeds will go to the Ronald McDonald houses for the families of diseased children.

Mayor looks back on her term

By Jeff Goodwin

When Helen Boosalis ends her term as mayor of Lincoln next spring, it will mark the end of 24 years in city government.

Boosalis says she has no regrets about her experience as a government official.

"I've enjoyed it," she said. "I've gained a lot of experience. I've been fortunate enough to play a role in an important period of development in the city."

Boosalis has seen government from both sides.

"I've been involved in periods of government growth and also in times of government contraction. Obviously, it's a lot easier for government to operate when resources are plentiful."

Boosalis served from June of 1981 to June of 1982 as president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

"You're working at the highest levels of government so it's bound to be exciting," she said of experiences she had while holding the position, "But it's also a lot of work and there's quite a bit of stress involved in it."

As conference executive she worked closely with officials of the Reagan administration.

Critical of Reagan administration

Boosalis said she is critical of the Reagan administration's attitude toward America's cities.

"I don't think this administration is understanding of the needs of the cities," she said.

The effect of federal budget cuts on local governments is still uncertain, she said. "We've had to trim back on some programs, but we'll have to wait and see." Boosalis discounted her being a woman as an influencing factor in the success or failure of her government career.

"Generally speaking, I don't think the public judges

me on that basis," Boosalis said. "When I was on the council I never felt people judged me as a woman. They judged me on the basis of my performance as a member of the council. Of course, there will always be people who won't accept a woman as a leader under any conditions. But I can't do anything about that."

An optimistic person

It's natural to become frustrated at times by the burdensome problems often facing the mayor's office, but Boosalis remains in good spirit about it all.

"I'm an optimistic person," she said. "A little cynical sometimes, but optimistic on the whole. I'd hate to tackle this job and think I can't get things done. But you also have to be a realist."

Boosalis said she believes her administration has been effective and responsive to the needs of the people of Lincoln. "They know that if they call here, they can talk to the mayor," she said.

Boosalis said she thinks one of the accomplishments of her administration has been the revitalization of the downtown area.

"In a lot of cities you see the downtown area of a city dying out. That isn't true in Lincoln. We've done a good job of planning and we have a good Comprehensive Plan. And we've also had strong support from the private sector. That's very important."

Lincoln's attitude toward new and existing businesses has been helpful in keeping Lincoln's downtown viable, she said.

Our policies have been open to growth and business expansion," she said. "That's encouraged businesses to locate in Lincoln."

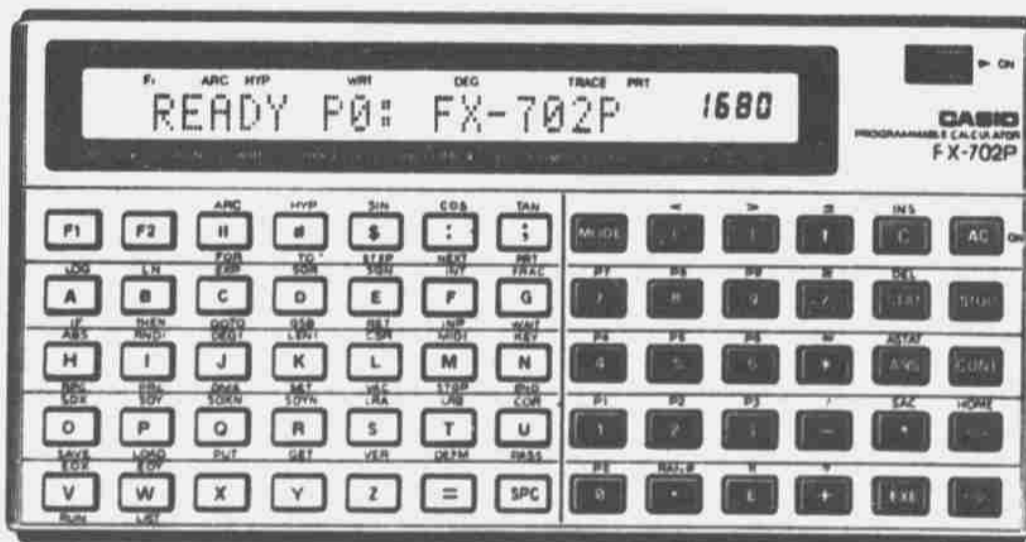
Boosalis said she has no specific plans for her life after her term as mayor expires.

"I'm not thinking that far in advance," she said. "But I don't think I'll retire to my rocking chair yet."

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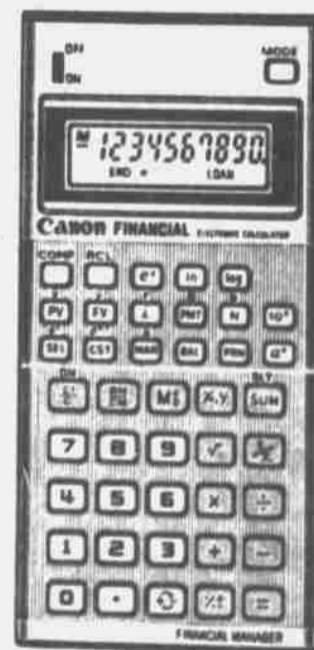


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