

# Editorial

## GOP abandons ERA on Democratic doorstep

Judy Goldsmith isn't keen on the suggestion that NOW may be turning into NODW: The National Organization for Democratic Women. Equal rights is the sort of idealistic all-American notion that is supposed to be above party labels.

But as the head of the largest woman's rights organization in the country, Goldsmith is at the center of two political moves destined to bring

But at the same time, NOW is about to support a Democratic candidate. Indeed, when asked if she had to choose which was more important for women, defeating Ronald Reagan or passing the ERA, Goldsmith replied, "There's little question in my mind that it's more important to defeat Ronald Reagan. I doubt that the ERA can pass while he's president. It would take a long time to repair the damage he could do women in four more years. If we had to choose one of the two, I would choose the defeat of Ronald Reagan. The ERA can wait one more year."

So the question is whether NOW has already turned into NODW. Are women's rights advocates in the 1984 Democratic bag? From what I can see, the answer is a qualified "yes."

But before we wring our hands worrying about the evils of turning equality into a partisan issue, take a moment of calm. If women's rights have become basically a one-party issue, it's because the other party has turned them down.

Consider the ERA for a moment. It would be lovely if the ERA crossed party lines in a great surge of justice. It began life supported by Republicans. But in 1980, the Republicans took it off the platform. In the recent House vote, 85 percent of the Democrats were for the amendment while two-thirds of the Republicans were against it.

Then there is the No. 1 Republican, Ronald Reagan, who has personally opened a gender gap the size of a canyon. As Goldsmith concludes, "It would be naive to pretend that there is genuine bipartisan support for women's issues. Are there Republicans who support women? Of course."

It is one thing to use party politics to support women's issues and quite another to use the issues for party politics. We don't know whether the House ERA vote would have changed if O'Neill had played the rules differently. But we do know that the amendment would never have left Congress in one piece.

It would be nice to be wooed by competing suitors. It would be nice if both parties were dueling for the honor of equality. But the reality is that women haven't left the Republican Party, the Republican Party has left women. It's up to the GOP to come back.

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## Thank men behind the Huskers

For Nebraska football fans, last weekend was a time for celebrating a long list of accomplishments.

Friday, more than 3,000 people gathered at Pershing Auditorium to honor two Nebraska coaches — Bob Devaney and Tom Osborne — who each have more than 100 victories to their name.

Saturday, to no one's surprise, Husker I-back Mike Rozier was named the winner of college football's most prestigious award, the Heisman Trophy.

The accomplishments of the three men honored during the weekend are phenomenal. They go beyond the world of sports and are a source of pride for many Nebraskans.

Rozier's record as a Cornhusker is staggering. In three years, he has broken countless school, conference and national records. He has helped lead the team to three straight conference championships and, this year, has played a large role in the team's 12-0 record and No. 1 ranking.

Rozier has had a season most players can only dream about, but through

it all he has maintained his poise and kept things in perspective.

Even more impressive is the impact these two coaches have had on their players. Former wingback Johnny Rodgers, also a Heisman Trophy winner, had some run-ins with the law in the early part of his career.

But Devaney did not succumb to public pressure to release him from the team. Rodgers, who now is a successful publisher in San Diego, said being able to remain on the team probably set his life straight.

Osborne, too, has gained a nationwide reputation for much more than his winning football teams. He is known for his integrity and honesty, attributes that seem to be a rarity in sports these days.

Nebraska football fans have a lot to be thankful for. Like it or not, the Cornhuskers are the state's biggest source of pride. But without men like Mike Rozier, Bob Devaney and Tom Osborne, you can bet the record over the last 22 years wouldn't be nearly as impressive.

## Chauvinistic talk serves a purpose

I have a friend named Holly. I haven't changed her name because she would figure out whom I was writing about anyway, and there is no one to protect or criticize in this article.

I love Holly. One of the great assets to being human is being able to love many people in many ways.

Holly and I get in big arguments at



Bill Allen

times over the plight of women in our society. Holly calls herself a humanist, though I still say she is a feminist. She is caught up in this idealistic view that women will soon be equal in society with men. This won't happen soon. It won't happen in 50 years.

I would love for things to be as Holly visualizes them being.

I would like to know that every person, be they man, woman, black or white, could strive for what they want without handicaps like social restrictions or prejudice.

I would like to see a woman be

president, if she were qualified. And I would like to see everyone vote for her because she is qualified. Not a case of women voting for her because she is a woman, and men voting against her because she is a woman.

I would like to see a culture where men and women take an equal part in raising a child. I would like to see them raise that child according to its needs and interests and not impose societal and cultural stereotypes on him or her.

I would like to see a society where husband and wife each strive for their own career goals within the framework of a working, growing marriage.

Realistically, I see things aren't that way. I personally strive to make people think of things in those terms, but I realize that society probably never will be that way, at least not for several generations.

As a whole, husbands make the money and wives raise the kids and stay home. When women do work it is usually to supplement the husband's income.

The first woman president will always be the first woman president. It will be a long time before a woman will be thought of as simply the pre-

sident in the eyes of the press and in the minds of the people.

Attitudes change slowly.

I occasionally make a comment to Holly that goes totally against my own personal wants or beliefs.

I might say that a woman, because of society, can't be as aggressive as a man in the business world. I might stereotype women by saying things like "All women want from men is money and security."

I want Holly to know why I bait her with this kind of stagnant thinking. It's certainly not because I feel those things are intrinsically true.

I do it because I want to challenge Holly. I want her to fight what I say and prove me wrong.

Realistically, she can't. Reality is society and the attitudes shaped by a thousand years. But on another level Holly can always beat me. That's the thinking level. I love to lose on this level when I make statements like the previous ones.

In 10 years I can see Holly calling me to say she is frustrated because she knows a woman who has been beaten by her husband repeatedly and still goes back to him. She is frustrated

because some man with an equal degree is making twice as much money as she because he has a wife and kids to support.

And if this happens I hope with all that's inside of me I have the strength to say something like "Well, Holly, you know a woman needs to depend on a man."

I don't believe that. It will hurt me to have to say that to Holly, just as it does now.

But I hope she gets so mad at what I say that she rededicates herself to the ideals she believes in, because someone, anyone, who thinks like she does can make a difference.

Where would the civil rights movement be now if Martin Luther King Jr. had known that in 1963 blacks would still be second — no, third-class citizens, and because of his knowledge he had said "I give up?"

King knew that as one man he couldn't change a whole culture and a whole way of thinking in 15 years. As an intelligent man he knew this.

But he had a dream. Deep down inside Holly knows that a lot of my pessimism is well founded. I hope she has a dream.