J-Days to feature alumni speakers, awards and honors

By Stephanie Carter

Twenty-seven UNL alumni will speak to journalism students and their guests during J-Days, April 12 and 13.

The speakers were selected by each of the departments within the School of Journalism, said R. Neale Copple, dean of the School of Journalism.

"We chose alumni because they have accomplished the same goals many of UNL's students are hoping to accomplish," Copple said. "That makes a tighter bond because they are the same kind of folk."

J-Days is a way to identify with the college and people in the profession, Copple said. It also is a way for family and friends to get to know what the journalism students are doing, he said.

"This is the second year for J-Days," he said. "I don't know if that makes it a tradition yet."

Along with the guest speakers, J-Days festivities include a journalism honors convocation and the Kappa Tau Alpha journalism honorary induction. The 20-member honorary will induct 26 juniors and seniors, and six graduate studnets that have displayed high scholastic achievement.

The Distinguished Journalist Award will be presented to Gerald M. Sass, vice-president/education for the Gannett Foundation. Sass was chosen buy the J-School faculty for his contributions to the journalism profession and education.

James Neal, associate professor of journalism, will be awarded the Amoco Foundation Award for Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching. Jack Botts, professor of journalism, also will receive an award for Distinguished Teaching of Undergraduates.

A new award for the top scholar in the journalism college will be given to Dulcie Shoener, of Rising City, who is a senior news-editorial major.

Director of computing starts from scratch

By Noreen Niimi

Because most people will use computers by the end of the decade, universities will be put on the spot to provide students with better services, the director of UNL computing said.

Doug Gale, who began working at UNL in March, was the former director of Decentralized Computing Services at Cornell University in Cornell, N.Y. That position, he said, involved strategic planning, research and development, and the support of decentralized computing. Before that he was a professor of physics at East Texas State University, where he was also active in the computer science program. He received his Ph.D. in physics from Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kan.

Gale said that since UNL has not had its own academic computing service, he is essentially starting from scratch.

"It's a real challenge to develop the kind of computing environment that the students and faculty deserve," he said. However, he said, in many ways it will be easier to start from scratch since he will be unhindered by people who say they have "always done it this way."

So far, Gale has organzied a seminar with the physics department outlining projected goals for the next five years. Computing in general, he said, is changing rapidly: What computers do for how much they cost doubles about every 18 months.

Even though the general direction of computer technology can be seen for the rest of the decade, Gale said, two years is the outer limit for any detailed planning because of rapid technological changes.

"No one can ever catch up," Gale said. "There is no way to grow fast enough to provide all the services demanded." Universities will have no choice but to try to provide some sort of expanded computing services, he said. Otherwise, they will not be competitive in providing students with the necessary skills to succeed in their careers.

Gale said even now, by the time high school freshmen reach the university level, computing curriculum will have to be changed because most will already know about computers before graduating from high school.

"The computer is no longer just a tool for the scientist and the engineer, but a tool for everyone," Gale said. Computers will prove helpful in any field, he said, whether it be humanities, fine arts, or social sciences. For example, he said, an archeology professor used a computer system to date a piece of wood within five minutes, while it would have taken days before.

Gale said that the country is entering a period of traumatic change. The '60s was the era of batch processing, the '70s saw interactive processing, and now the '80s are moving toward a distributive network of computers, he said. This distributive environment is much more challenging to manage, he said.

"This distributive network is a hierarchy of different computers connected together," he said. While the use of main frame computers is rapidly growing, he said, the use of micro-computers is skyrocketing. Gale said the increase in the use of micro-computers will increase the use of the main frame computers.

Gale said in the future, main frame computers will be much larger than now to accommodate the greater number of micro-computers connected to the network.

At UNL, the plan for computer installations is going as planned, Gale said. Becasue of the details involved and unsolved issues, he said, it will probably be late fall before the facilities are in full operation, including those in the residence halls.

Gale said because he knows about the changes occuring in the computer field, he knows the present system will have to be replaced in the not too distant future. He is already looking for replacements for the CDC's now being installed.

"It's an unending task," he said, "machines constantly need updating and modification." But, he said, it was this challenge at UNL that appealed to him. Gale said he would also like to teach classes in the physics and computer science departments later.