

Career in politics spans almost 30 years

# Boosalis: A woman ahead of her time

By Lynne Bomberger  
Staff Reporter

In an era that emphasized traditional women's roles, Helen Boosalis became involved in politics because of citizen responsibility.

As former mayor of Lincoln, recent Democratic gubernatorial candidate, past city council member, mother,

she received from her husband, she said.

Despite her long standing interest in politics, Boosalis' political career didn't start until shortly before the 1959 Lincoln City Council election. She ran and won against four incumbents.

"I ran and have been running ever since," Boosalis said.

Boosalis served 16 years on the city council and eight years as mayor. While mayor she developed the Lincoln Lancaster Commission on the Status of Women, she has worked on issues

in creating over 12,000 new jobs in Lincoln making it the city with the lowest unemployment rate in the country. She also developed the downtown beautification project.

Boosalis doesn't take all the credit for the accomplishments made during her terms as mayor though, saying "nobody does it alone."

Citizen responsibility is what led Boosalis into politics and it's what will keep her in it, she said.

"Citizen participation is essential for a democracy to work... you must

**'People should have the opportunity to do what they want — they should have choices.'**

**Boosalis**

concerning women, and she supports the Equal Rights Amendment. Though she has worked for women's rights, Boosalis said she wasn't following trends, just trying to fill needs.

Boosalis has seen women's roles changing for the last 20 years, with more women getting degrees and training, but women are still the primary homemakers and caregivers, she said. The important thing, Boosalis said, is that "people should have the opportunity to do what they want — they should have choices," Boosalis said.

It is important to note however, that Boosalis did a lot for the city while mayor, than just developing women issues and commissions.

Boosalis also increased the number of businesses in Lincoln at twice the national average. She was instrumental

understand democracy and believe in it," Boosalis said.

Since her loss to Gov. Kay Orr, Boosalis has had more time to devote to family and friends but she also has made many plans for the future.

One plan is to explore the interest of starting a non-partisan citizen policy network.

The network would help keep citizens informed of issues and candidates important to Nebraska and if necessary — to take action, Boosalis said.

Another Boosalis goal is to write a book about her experiences. A collection of articles about her, as well as taped and written personal notes will aid her in this endeavor, she said.

"You can accomplish what you want if you work at it and believe in what you're doing," Boosalis said.

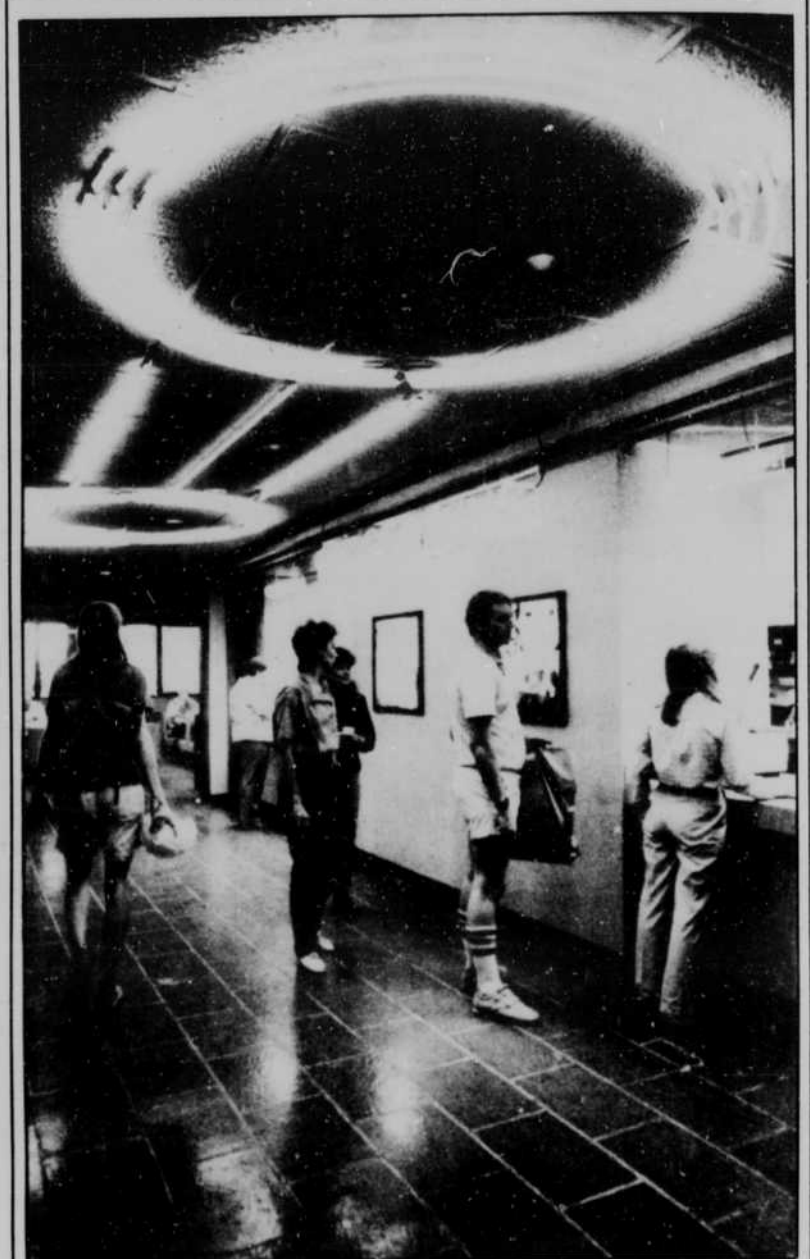


**Boosalis**

wife, grandmother, past president of the United States Conference of Mayors, and an active citizen, Boosalis is considered a role model for many women.

Boosalis married in 1945 after attending the University of Minnesota for two years until her husband, Michael, accepted a job at UNL, she said.

Feeling a loyalty to the traditional women's roles of mother, volunteer, and housewife, Boosalis never returned to finish her degree in political science and law, despite the encouragement



Andrea Hoy/Daily Nebraskan

## Hot Lights, Fast Food

Opening day at Burger King in Nebraska Union. Burger King replaces the Union Square generic fast food operation. The restaurant's bid was chosen over Hardee's, Runza and Taco del Sol last January by the Union Board. It was approved by the Board of Regents in April.



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**Editor's Note:**

With the impending confirmation of Robert Bork to the U.S. Supreme Court looming, now is a good time to review some of the progress made in women's rights.

Our feature story outlines some of the important legal decisions regarding women, from the 17th century to this year.

A story about a well known, not self-proclaimed, feminist, Helen Boosalis, who in her political career, that has spanned nearly 30 years, has fought for women's rights as well as freedom of opportunity for everyone.

In two stories about salary differences at UNL, our reporters found that no significant inequities exist, when taking into account rank, number of years in the department and other factors.

Due to space limitations we, obviously, did not cover all the issues regarding women. Many inequities, of course, still go on, especially in the areas of domestic violence and sexual harassment. We can all hope that now that the laws are changing people's attitudes will change as well.