

Daily Nebraskan

November 2, 1989

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Vol. 89 No. 48

Thursday

WEATHER:

Thursday, partly sunny, high in the low-40s, winds increasing to 10 to 20 miles per hour. Thursday night, low in the mid-20s. Friday, partly sunny and warmer, low in the 50s. Extended forecast, little or no participation, highs in the 50s, lows in the 20s.

INDEX

News 2
Editorial 4
Divisions 5
Sports 17
Classifieds 18

Visser testifies on events leading to firing

By Victoria Ayotte
Senior Editor
and Laura Smith
Staff Reporter

Mary Jane Visser, fired from her job as an adviser in the UNL Division of General Studies in September 1988, testified Wednesday that her "unjust" termination destroyed her health and mental state and prevented her from finding further employment.

"It's hard to get going again when you lose your job," Visser said in U.S. District Court, "especially if you loved it as much as I did."

Visser testified that she applied for 64 jobs without getting hired. She also said she became depressed and sought medical help during and after her last months of employment at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Visser wants her former job back, damages for emotional distress, back pay and compensation for attorney's fees as retribution for what she says was an unjust firing.

Visser, in her suit against general studies Director Donald Gregory, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen and the NU Board of Regents, alleges she was fired for uncovering academic irregularities of athletes.

The university cited poor work performance as the reason for her termination.

Her testimony recounted the events that led to her dismissal Sept. 2, 1988, as she attempted to prove that she had a good work record and was fired because university officials were concerned about her investigation of student athletes' academic standards.

Visser said that while she was an adviser she became concerned with students, including many athletes, who were constantly on probation and dismissed because of academic reasons.

"I felt sorry for the athletes," she said. "The same ones got dismissal letters over and over. They had to compete with the cream of the crop of Nebraska students."

Visser testified about specific irregularities she found concerning athletes, including one athlete who was frequently on probation, dismissed and readmitted. Visser said that when she looked at his high school transcript, she found that he had been a special education student.

She said she asked then Director of Admissions Al Papik how a special education student was admitted to the university and he said it must have been an oversight.

Another case involved an athlete who was

dismissed from UNL and asked for readmission. She said she denied his readmission request, but Papik worked out a contract with the student with the cooperation of an athletic adviser.

Visser read aloud a letter written by Papik about this student which stated that the athlete was offered "more opportunities than afforded the general student body."

Visser said she asked Papik about a third case in which an athlete had a grade point average .05 below the required minimum GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.

After finding out about his dismissal, the athlete went to a professor who raised his grade in a course so the athlete's GPA would be 2.0.

In a meeting in December 1987, Visser and Gregory discussed an athlete who had failed all his classes during the academic year, but took 24 credit hours during the summer, Visser testified.

During the fall of 1987, Gregory talked to Visser about spending too much time looking at academic irregularities. She said that after this, she concentrated on general studies advising, but continued to bring up new concerns about academic irregularities as they happened.

In the summer of 1987, Visser said she

found out that many athletes with low GPAs were enrolled in the same health class.

She said she sent a list of students enrolled in this class to Fred Wagner, then chairman of the Faculty Senate Grading Committee. She also sent Wagner a student's high school transcript that she found irregular, she said.

The transcript, she said, showed a lot of C's, D's and F's for the student's first three years of high school. The senior year showed significant changes in the athlete's grades, including A's. Although the grades for the first three years were typed, the grades for the senior year were handwritten, Visser testified.

In a March 1988 meeting, Visser and Griesen discussed this transcript, the kind of education UNL athletes were getting and the constant "recycling" of students where they are placed on probation, dismissed and readmitted, she said.

Visser said that during this meeting, she talked with Griesen about athletes who were enrolled in 13 hours but passing only their football class. Students earn one credit hour for playing varsity football.

In March 1987, she told Griesen that new academic standards would be harder on ath-

See **VISSER** on 2

Williams: Today's students need to deal with racism

By Roger Price
Staff Reporter

Racial problems still are the most challenging issue in today's society, and it is up to students, the future leaders of the United States, to deal with them, Juan Williams said Wednesday.

Williams, a political reporter for the Washington Post, told an audience of about 100 in the Nebraska Union that it is easy to rationalize apathy on racial issues by not seeing oneself as someone who can start the civil rights movement again.

Williams, author of "Eyes on the Prize," a book chronicling the movement, said that when today's students talk about the civil rights events that occurred 30 to 40 years ago, they probably think they're "talking about another time, another planet."

The people who were involved in the movement may seem bigger than life, he said.

By saying it was Martin Luther King who started the civil rights movement, Williams said, some people are able to look at the movement as a "dead piece of history."

Instead, Williams said, the civil rights movement should be looked at as people trying to make a change.

"I don't believe there is one person in this room who has less in the way of political power than the people who made that civil rights movement," he said.

Williams said college students

helped the movement succeed by participating in rallies, marches and protests.

Students today should compare themselves to these students and realize they can make a difference, Williams said.

"You, I, we are the people who make history, the people who make a difference," Williams said.

'You, I, we are the people who make history, the people who make a difference.'

—Williams

In addition to racism, he said, homelessness, hunger, poverty and AIDS also threaten society.

All of these problems can be solved, Williams said, if people get involved.

People must say, "We have the power to deal with this, if only we want to stand up," Williams said.

Williams encouraged the audience to start its own fights, to see what the problems really are, to make a difference, and to make a mark on society.

ASUN passes beer resolution, discusses information day plan

From Staff Reports

ASUN senators voted 23-1 to pass a resolution Wednesday supporting an application for a license to sell beer in the food court area of the Reunion.

In other action, senators discussed plans for ASUN Information Day.

Devi Bohling, first vice president of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, said ASUN senators and members of college advisory boards will set up booths on City and East campuses to promote student awareness on student government.

Bohling said most senators will set up booths in buildings where many

students in their respective colleges have classes. For example, College of Business Administration senators will have a booth in the CBA building.

Other colleges such as architecture, criminal justice, general studies and graduate studies will have representatives in Nebraska Union on City Campus, Bohling said. There also will be a booth in the East Union, she said.

Bohling said senators and advisory board members will distribute information on ASUN, including a list of senators' names and phone numbers, as well as information on student fees, Government Liaison Committee, Student Legal Services and the Student Information Center.



David Hansen/Daily Nebraskan

Ronald Roskens gives a press conference at the University Club Wednesday.

U.S. agency needs director

Roskens says nomination pending

By Jerry Guenther
Senior Reporter

Ronald Roskens confirmed Wednesday that President George Bush intends to nominate him to head the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The former president of the University of Nebraska made the announcement Wednesday morning at a press conference at the University Club where he also announced that he will work as a spokesperson for the Nebraska Cable Communications Association.

Roskens said he was told Monday by Chase Untermeyer, the White House official responsible for clearing presidential appointees, that Bush intends to nominate him to head the U.S. agency, otherwise known as AID.

Roskens said he is elated about the nomination and is familiar with the agency through some AID programs in which UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources has participated.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is involved in several AID projects as part of the Mid-America International Agricultural Consortium, including a dry-land agricultural project in Morocco.

AID also is responsible for economic and foreign aid to more than 70 developing countries, Roskens said, but he is unsure what duties he would perform.

"You have to remember this is a new proposition," Roskens said. "And I'm learning along with you."

The next step in the nomination process is for the FBI to perform background and security checks, which probably will take at least two months, Roskens said.

The U.S. Senate also must confirm his nomination, Roskens said, and he expects the entire nomination process to take about three months.

The previous head of the agency, Alan Woods, died of cancer earlier this year, Roskens said.

Roskens served as president of the NU system from 1977 until July 31, when he was ousted by the NU Board of Regents. Roskens also served as chancellor of the University of Nebraska at Omaha from 1972 to 1977.

Before coming to the University of Nebraska, Roskens was vice president for administration at Kent State University and was serving in that capacity when National Guard troops opened fire on

a group of students protesting U.S. involvement in Vietnam on May 4, 1970. Four students were killed.

One of his duties was to report to Washington, D.C., and explain what Kent State administrators thought had happened.

Roskens said he knows both Bush and Secretary of State James Baker.

He said he first was introduced to Baker about eight or nine years ago when Baker was the chief of staff for former President Reagan. He met Bush about six months after being introduced to Baker.

Roskens said he has been contacted about other federal positions, but said he can't disclose these positions.

While working for the cable association, Roskens said, he will be a consultant and spokesperson for the industry.

Although Roskens said the details of his activities with the association have not been worked out, one of his duties will be to record public service announcements.

Roskens said the cable position will not be full-time, and he regards the job as an opportunity to raise awareness of the educational benefits of cable television throughout the state.

Roskens did not disclose the salaries of either position.