

LINDA KAY MORGAN BET absence hurts Lincoln

Before coming to Lincoln, I remember turning the station to channel 39 late at night and listening to the soft sounds of Luther Vandross, Anita Baker and others. During those moments, I could leave my worries behind and listen to a world of "my own" through Black Entertainment Television.

I had the opportunity to watch programs that were not only beneficial to me and my culture but to everyone who tuned in the station.

It wasn't long after that several stereotypes centering on blacks were broken down. The reality is that blacks can be more than athletes and good dancers; they have the intelligence and power to succeed at other things as well.

BET provides a means to self-confidence in my culture. It educates, entertains and opens the eyes of an audience that are closed to the African-American true identity. This station instills in African-Americans a sense of pride.

BET was started in January 1980. It was developed to let Americans view quality black entertainment primarily produced by African-Americans and provides a national platform that showcases the creativity and diversity of the black entertainment industry.

Although its primary audience is African-American, BET is neither restricted nor limited to those persons.

Often, people pay so much attention to the first word — Black — that they disregard the entertaining part.

After I came to Lincoln, I thought I could wind down the day in my dorm room by listening to softnotes or midnight love, the mellow tunes played late nights on BET.

To my dismay, there were no softnotes or midnight love to wind down to, no talk shows to listen to.



Although its primary audience is African-Americans, BET is neither restricted nor limited to those persons who wish to be educated from a cultural perspective. Often, people pay so much attention to the first word — black — that they disregard the entertaining part.

There was no BET. The only thing I found on channel 39 was static.

From that moment on, I knew I had a rough road ahead. I found myself far behind on all the latest tunes and doing old dances. I was missing the intellectual conversations of my brothers and sisters and the inspirations of the minds of my role models.

I was deprived of Donnie Simpson, the gorgeous, hazel-eyed, caramel-coated host.

I was a woman in dire straits. I realized Lincoln probably wasn't ready for diversity back in 1980 when

BET first was launched onto the airwaves, but to remain unprepared after an entire decade shows how unlikely it is that Lincoln is willing to diversify itself.

Why doesn't Cablevision air BET? Are its viewers scared to open up to a totally different culture other than the stereotyped one portrayed by society?

Cablevision's Jeff Jarecke says the company can't afford to air the program.

At an open forum Wednesday at the Lincoln Public Schools Administration Building, Jarecke, sales and marketing manager of Cablevision, tried to answer the question of why Cablevision doesn't have BET.

When asked to answer the complaints of paying customers, Jarecke, who was selected to represent Cablevision because the station manager had prior engagements, told the audience that Cablevision probably wouldn't get BET, at least for a while.

A very long while. Like, several years from now.

In fact, BET probably will never be here. Cablevision will just continue to listen to the complaints and give any excuse to get the customers off the phone line.

After leaving the meeting, I realized the only way I would enjoy BET was in another city. I will be long gone before BET makes its appearance on Cablevision.

But if Cablevision executives think African-Americans will give up requesting BET, they're wrong. In giving up BET, we give up a culture.

If not for my VCR, I would be lost to the BET world forever. Life without MTV for many is just like life without BET for me — a restriction from a vital culture.

Morgan is a sophomore broadcasting and advertising major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

CHRIS POTTER

Raise shows academia-athletics rift

Nebraskans were surely satisfied with the 38-13 trouncing the Cornhuskers inflicted on the Iowa State Cyclones last Saturday. But were students and faculty of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln satisfied?

Nebraska football has become a semi-professional organization only weakly attached to the university. As the Huskers rise in the national polls, the response they elicit from students is the same response, say, the Minnesota Vikings elicit from Minnesotans.

Massive wins are satisfying, and the Huskers deliver. But students feel no sense of collegiality. Only a few of the players out on the field can be identified as classmates.

But to students and faculty members alike, the most blatant expression of the split between the university and the football program lies in the contrast between their fiscal status.

Last week, the football program announced that Coach Tom Osborne will receive a 21 percent salary increase. His total salary will now be \$143,560, but that is just a fraction of the estimated total \$230,000 Osborne will earn annually from a combination of foundation, commercial sponsors and media programs.

The increase comes from a private gift from Gail and Dan W. Cook III. The university had little to do with it, except for the perfunctory approval of the NU Board of Regents. One can hardly criticize private individuals for doing with their money what they please.

But one can criticize Osborne for accepting the massive gift when the academic programs of the university he is supposed to be affiliated with are threatened with extinction.

Has Osborne been reading the Daily Nebraskan? If he has been, he could hardly have failed to note two of the recent headlines: "Official makes plea for sparing classics program" and "Targeted programs open final ap-



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Osborne anticipated criticism when he accepted the gift.

"There'll be people madder than heck about it," he predicted in the Nov. 13 Daily Nebraskan.

Well put, Tom. Well put.

The Nebraska Legislature ordered the university to reduce its budget by 3 percent over the next two years. Charged with recommending plans to carry out that mandate, the Budget Reduction Review Committee considered a plan to eliminate the classics and speech departments.

Five professors within the classics

department alone were threatened with being fired. Their average salary is about \$31,000 apiece, a paltry sum when compared to Osborne's \$230,000. Osborne's raise alone would be nearly enough to spare one of the classics professors.

Far less dramatic cuts already have been decided. In the math department, for example, professors will relinquish their personal telephone lines and photocopy privileges. Can a professor be reasonably expected to fulfill her or his obligations under these conditions?

The head coach admits there is something wrong with his annual income.

"I'm overpaid," he admitted. A characteristically humble admission, but admission is one thing. Acting on the admission is another.

Osborne thought that to turn down the hefty raise would have been "ungracious." But just how gracious is accepting money for football coaching when vital academic programs are being phased out and the quality of those that remain is diluted?

Osborne could have chosen either of two noble decisions: He could have refused the raise or he could have accepted it to donate the money to academic programs. He chose neither.

After all, will an extra \$25,000 each year make Osborne's life any better, considering that he already receives about \$200,000? To the impartial observer it all seems inordinately gratuitous.

On the other hand, if Osborne considers his football program separate from the university, the point is irrelevant. If he feels no sense of community with the academic sphere of UNL, then he surely cannot be blamed for enriching himself while the academic community withers.

Potter is a senior physics, philosophy, history and math major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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