

Single parent professor adjusts to 'near-impossible task'

By Jeff Singer
Editor

Being a single parent is never easy. But being a single parent while teaching and advising is a near-impossible task, said John Gruhl, a political science professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Gruhl, who has been teaching at UNL since 1976, has had the job of raising his 10-year-old son, Joshua, for the majority of his tenure at UNL.

And after he and his former wife divorced eight years ago, Gruhl has done the parenting solo.

"It's almost overwhelming for one parent — having a full-time job, having a child, taking care of the house . . .," Gruhl said. "I've felt overwhelmed, but I've never regretted it for a second."

Gruhl said while his schedule can be hectic, as he is also a pre-law advisor, it could be worse.

"I consider myself lucky, because my job time is so flexible," he said. "I just shake my head in amazement at those single parents who have rigid schedules."

While UNL likes its professors to focus some of their time on research, Gruhl said his time with Joshua has prevented him from doing a lot of research work.

And, he said, while some of his research time has been lost, it gives him more opportunities to spend his time on more valuable things — mainly being with his son.

"The university wants us to do research, but (spending time with Joshua) is certainly a plus for my son and it's a plus for me, because I think I'm doing the most important thing that I think I should be doing," Gruhl said. "I think being a father is the most important thing I do."

In recent years, the ability of fathers as single parents has been questioned, as highlighted by a recent cover story in Time Magazine.

But, Gruhl said, fathers can do just as adequate a job raising children on their own as mothers can.

"I just can't see what mothers can do that fathers can't do," he said. "There's almost nothing mothers can do that fathers can't do — with the exception being breast-feeding."

"It's beneficial to have two parents around because of the two personalities; (being a single parent) is not ideal, but in the modern world, it's hard to talk about an 'ideal' family situation."

As an undergraduate at DePauw University majoring in political science, Gruhl had a type of 'ideal' classmate he attended college with.

While at the small liberal arts college in Greencastle, Ind., he came across and eventually graduated with DePauw's most famous alumnus, former vice president Dan Quayle.

Gruhl said he would have never expected Quayle to excel as far as he has in politics.

"He didn't stand out too much; I was with him in student senate — you'd never had guessed he was destined to become vice president," he said.

After the pair took a political science class together, Gruhl's image of



UNL political science professor John Gruhl at his home in east Lincoln. Damon Lee/DN

Quayle did not improve.

"My overwhelming impression of him was that he didn't pay attention much," Gruhl said. "He was just always leaning over cracking jokes with his buddies."

Gruhl said the one way Quayle did gain notoriety on campus was in what became known as the "Quayle Run."

"He was quite a golfer, but he had trouble getting out of bed in the morning," he said. "So the person on the

team who had the worst score in the last week's match had to go get Quayle out of bed at his frat house in time for that week's match."

After DePauw, Gruhl went on to earn his master's degree in political science from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

He said although he was a pre-law advisor, he really never considered becoming a lawyer.

"I was an undergrad in the '60s

during all the turmoil, and at the time, it seemed like what lawyers did was really boring — and I still think that," Gruhl said.

Gruhl said from bypassing law school and becoming a political science professor to ending up as a single parent, he is happy with what has transpired in his life so far.

"Life is a series of choices; you just have to play the hand you're dealt with in life," he said.

Psych

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specifically at a few journals, so the study really underrepresented what we've done," Conoley said.

Among the top contributors considered in the current study, only two, Terry Gutkin and Wayne Piersal, were also part of the department in the 1984 study.

Although concerned about the limits of the study in comparing institutions, Piersal said he was pleased with the university's ranking.

"The correct way to interpret the

data is journals publishing in the field of school psychology, but clearly we're a very strong program," Piersal said.

Piersal specializes in mental retardation and behavioral modification, an area which clearly affects education but wouldn't be published in most major school psychology journals.

Among the Big Eight Conference, only UNL was in the top 10. Other Big Eight schools in the top 50 were the University of Kansas, University of Missouri at Columbia and Iowa State University.

August graduates must meet requirements

Students who are to receive degrees from UNL in August, who have Federal student loans, must fulfill exit requirements with the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.

If a student fails to attend, a hold

will be placed on their academic transcripts, diplomas and any future registration at UNL.

Any student who has received any of the following assistance must attend: Federal Stafford Loan, unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan,

Federal Perkins Loan or Federal Supplemental Loan for Students.

Sessions will be held at the City Campus Union today and Friday at 12:30 and 4 p.m. Room locations will be posted.

McElroy stands mute

By Jeff Zeleny
Senior Editor

Arthur McElroy stood mute in Lancaster County District court Wednesday on four charges stemming from an incident last October on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus.

A charge of not guilty was entered by Judge Earl Witthoff. McElroy, 44, is charged with attempted second-degree murder, making terroristic threats and two counts of using a weapon to commit a felony.

McElroy, a UNL graduate student, was arrested last Oct. 12 for allegedly holding a semiautomatic weapon on about 20 students. He reportedly attempted to fire the gun, but the gun jammed.

McElroy has been confined to the Lincoln Regional Center since December, and was diagnosed with suffering from a paranoid delusional disorder.

In April, McElroy was declared competent to stand trial by Judge Donald Endacott.

Witthoff set a Nov. 29 jury trial date.

Deputy Lancaster County Attorney Richard Rothrock said he was not surprised by McElroy's plea.

The Lancaster County Public Defender's office, who represents McElroy, earlier challenged the constitutionality of the terroristic threat charges filed. The court later found the charges to be constitutional and to stand as filed.

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