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OCTOBER 3, 1994

Probe begins after man dies in custody

By Sean Green
Senior Editor

The Nebraska State Patrol continued Sunday to investigate the weekend death of a Lincoln man who had a seizure during a struggle with UNL and Lincoln police.

Francisco Renteria's family demanded Sunday that state patrol officers put aside any prejudice they may have against Hispanics while investigating the incident.

"This is something that should not go unnoticed," said Carlos Monzon, a lawyer representing Renteria's family.

Renteria, 30, died Saturday afternoon at

Lincoln General Hospital after a struggle with police Friday night.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Police Officer Charlotte Veskrna, a 2 1/2-year veteran of the department, was the first officer to make contact with Renteria, UNL Police Chief Ken Cauble told the Daily Nebraskan.

At least four Lincoln police officers, who were not named as of Sunday, responded to help Veskrna.

Officials with the state patrol, the independent agency investigating the incident, would not discuss the case Sunday.

Authorities gave the following account of the incident:

Renteria was walking near 24th and Holdrege streets Friday night when Veskrna mistakenly identified him as a man being sought for violating a protection order.

Veskrna approached Renteria about 10 p.m. and then called for assistance. Renteria, whom witnesses said was unable to speak English, resisted arrest initially.

At least four officers were needed to subdue Renteria and get him into a police cruiser.

Witnesses said police officers kicked Renteria in the groin and repeatedly hit him with their fists.

Once in the cruiser, Renteria had a seizure, and medical units were called. Renteria's vital

signs stopped after he was put in the ambulance.

He was taken to Lincoln General Hospital and died in a coma about 2 p.m. Saturday, said John Colborn, chief deputy attorney for Lancaster County.

Colborn said hospital tests indicated that bleeding had taken place on Renteria's brain.

An autopsy is scheduled for today. However, the lawyer for Renteria's family said Sunday he would try to have the autopsy postponed so an independent pathologist could be present.

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Stoney's performance could tighten race, UNL professor says

By Chad Lorenz
Staff Reporter

A televised debate Sunday between Sen. Bob Kerrey and Jan Stoney probably will give Stoney, the Republican challenger, a slight boost in the polls, a UNL political science professor said.

Robert Sittig said Stoney held her own during the debate, which was more than he expected. He said Stoney proved she was up to speed on the issues, despite doubts of some Nebraskans.

Sittig said that with Stoney trailing in the polls, she had more to gain and less to lose than Kerrey. She would at least gain exposure by appearing with Kerrey, he said.

The debate, which was the first between Kerrey and Stoney, was televised at 5 p.m. Sunday on KMTV. Anchorwoman Loretta Carroll and political reporter Joe Jordan, both of KMTV, served as moderators for the one-hour debate. The moderators raised questions occasionally, but the two candidates initiated most of the discussion.

Sittig said Stoney's performance helped her recover from "slips and mistakes" made early in her campaign. The debate helped the former chief operating officer of US West prove she could handle politics, he said.

But Sittig said that Kerrey didn't perform poorly either. Kerrey was aggressive in the beginning of the debate, dominating the discussion and throwing many questions at Stoney.

Stoney said that Kerrey didn't represent the values of Nebraskans.

"If you voted in Washington the way you talk in Nebraska, I wouldn't be here tonight," Stoney said.

She said Kerrey had supported Clinton's health care plan, which she said would take away Nebraska jobs. She said Kerrey didn't support spending reductions, but instead supported increased taxes, such as his proposed gas tax and a tax on small businesses.

Kerrey said that his views on health care reform had changed in the last four years and that he had supported cuts in government spending. He said the tax increases he had proposed were necessary and were put to good use.

Stoney also criticized Kerrey for "threatening senior citizens" by proposing cuts in social security.

Kerrey's plan, known as "means testing," would deny social security funds to retirees earning more than \$100,000 a year through continued investments.

The two candidates took the debate to a personal level by focusing on their records.

Stoney said Kerrey's record was one of continual support for President Clinton, despite the president's low popularity among Nebraskans.

Kerrey said that he was accountable for his record, but that Stoney passed the blame for her mistakes to others.

In closing remarks, Kerrey said he wanted to be "in striking distance" of balancing the budget during the next six years in the Senate. He promised more of the same representation for Nebraska.

Stoney said Nebraska didn't want more of the same, but did want a senator that would honestly represent Nebraska values.

Sittig said Stoney's performance might have earned her a percentage point or two of the public approval.

"It tightened the race a tiny bit," Sittig said.

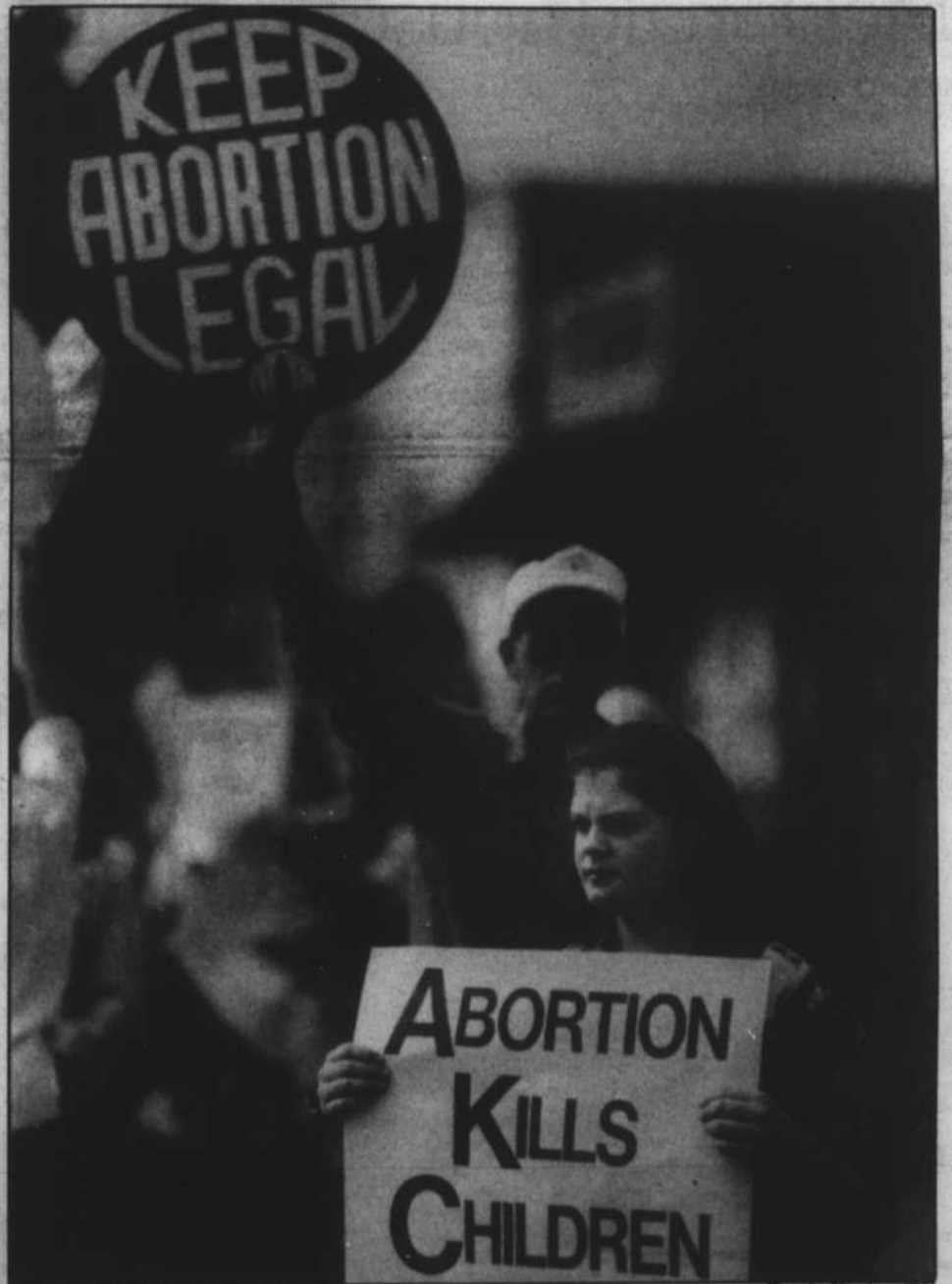


Stoney



Kerrey

OPPOSING VIEWS



Travis Hoving/DN

Cherub Schmidt and Robert J. High, both of Lincoln, show their opposing views in front of Planned Parenthood, 2246 O St. Hundreds of anti-abortion protesters lined O Street from 9th Street to 70th Street on Sunday afternoon as part of "The Chain of Life."

Regents discuss enrollment drop, engineering college

Smith to review task force plan, report to board

By Brian Sharp
Senior Reporter

The NU Board of Regents will decide — possibly by the year's end — whether a separate college of engineering should be established at UNO.

Regent Chairman Charles Wilson of Lincoln said Friday that the board, not the University of Nebraska president or the engineering task force, would

decide whether a separate engineering college should be established at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

NU President Dennis Smith said he expected to present a recommendation to the board by December.

Smith, in clarifying the role of the engineering task force, told the regents on Friday that he expected the members to submit their report to him by mid-November. The group is developing a strategic plan for implementing the separate college, if the board decides one is needed.

The task force report will be used

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Regents Meeting

■ NU President Dennis Smith clarified the steps left in resolving the engineering debate. The task force should return its report by mid-November, Smith said. Smith would make recommendations to the board about creating a separate engineering college at UNO by December. But the Board of Regents would make the final decision on a new college.

Chancellor says better recruiting would help UNL

By Brian Sharp
Senior Reporter

UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier blames a downturn in enrollment on one thing — money.

The number of students attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has declined 2.5 percent, or 606 students, since the fall 1993 semester. Last fall, UNL had 24,695 students; this fall,

UNL has 24,089 students.

"We don't have the resource to do a full-court press (in recruiting)," Spanier said at the University of Nebraska Board of Regents meeting on Friday. "We are clearly behind. Compared to the top institutions that are increasingly picking our pocket — our (recruiting) budget is at less than half."

Spanier said that in the past, UNL had had to rely heavily on reputation and visibility to recruit top students. UNL went after top students only after the students contacted the university, he said.

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