

# Loyalty draws new alumni director to UNL

By John Fulwider  
Staff Reporter

Whether they're her colleagues at the Wick Alumni Center or alumni hundreds of miles away, people are the most important thing to Jeanne Salerno.

"Working with people energizes me," said the new chairwoman of the board of directors of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Alumni Association.

Salerno, a 1962 graduate of UNL, said her ability to strike a balance between leadership and management traits would help her in her duties at the Wick Center.

"I am a leader who tries to motivate and inspire other people and a manager who can get things done efficiently," she said. She is also the director of professional development for Kutak Rock, an Omaha law firm.

She has taken on the difficult task of managing an organization that provides a wide range of services to both the university and its alumni.

The alumni association's mission, she said, is to generate support for the university by building and maintaining a strong membership base. It can also provide services and activities that benefit both alumni association members and the university.

The association's many duties include providing information to alumni, maintaining membership records, reaching out to alumni, helping alumni clubs stay active and providing career service networking to help alumni find jobs, she said.

Salerno, who was elected July 1, succeeds Gates Minnick of Lincoln. She said she would focus on improving the alumni association for its members.

"(I want) to schedule interesting and enlightening board meetings so that members not only have the opportunity to contribute their ideas and expertise to activities that support the university and its alumni, but also to gain personally from the time they spend at the Wick Alumni Center," Salerno said.

Salerno said she had always been active in community affairs, and her nomination to the board was partially a result of her leadership experience on other national boards.

She chose to serve on the board both to help the university and for personal reasons.

She said she was "a loyal supporter of the university."

"I felt that serving on the board would allow me to support the university, and I would enjoy serving with other alumni from all over the country."

"I felt that I would benefit from keeping up with what's going on at the university."

She said the board of directors did not participate in management of the alumni association, but the board was kept informed of all activities and contributed ideas to the association.

Salerno has always been involved in service to other people. In her university days, she was president of the Association of Women Students, the



Jay Calderon/DN

Jeanne Salerno is the new chairwoman of the board of directors for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Alumni Association.

former governing body of women students at the University of Nebraska. She also was first vice president of Delta Gamma Sorority.

More recently, she has been nominating director of the International

Association of Junior Leagues, a women's volunteer group, and a board member of the National Association for Law Placement.

Salerno said her loyalty to the university motivated her to accept the

volunteer job, which has no pay or benefits, except maybe a Christmas card at the end of the year.

Prior to her nomination as chairwoman, she served as first and second vice chairwoman of the board.

## Bats

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said, "but because of the whole Dracula thing, people have given bats a bad rap."

Kirshenbaum said bats were the most misunderstood animals in the world.

"When you go up to someone and say 'bats,' they get the shivers," he said.

Lincoln has a large bat population, Kirshenbaum said. The most popular bat in the Midwest, the little brown bat, formed large colonies in the Capitol, the First Plymouth Church in Lincoln and wooded areas outside Lincoln, he said.

The largest bat colony, 20 million Mexican free-tails, lives in Bracken Cave, Texas, near the Austin-based Bat Conservation International.

The organization served as scientific consultant for "Masters of the Night."

Robert Benson, BCI public information officer, said the exhibit's purpose was to "reach kids at a young age and bump bat stereotypes."

Benson said stereotypes came from movies, bad media coverage and "old wives tales."

He said many people had bad experiences with bats because natural bat habitats were being destroyed and the animals were forced to dwell in man-made structures.

But Benson gave advice for anyone who runs into a bat.

"The important thing to remember is don't panic," he said. "Bats are more afraid of you than you are of them."

Bats are wild animals, he said, and people should never try to handle them. Bats can contract rabies, but are no more likely to do so than any other animal.

Actually, Benson said, bats are very beneficial.

"We need them to balance nature's delicate ecosystem."

Important bat facts from BCI:  
● Almost 1,000 kinds of bats account for almost a quarter of all mammal species.

● Vampire bats are the only bats that drink blood. They live in Latin America and compose only 1 percent of the entire bat population.

● A single little brown bat can eat 600 mosquitos in one hour.

● A colony of 150 big brown bats can protect local farmers from up to 18 million or more root worms each summer.

● Tropical bats are key elements in rain forests, which rely on them to pollinate flowers and disperse seeds.

● An anticoagulant from vampire bat saliva may soon be used to treat heart patients.

● Bats are not blind.

● Bats use sonar, an echo-feed-back device, to navigate at night and catch their prey.

● Almost 40 percent of American bat species are threatened or endangered.

● Bats are vulnerable to extinction. They are the slowest-producing mammal, producing only one pup each year.

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