

# CAMPAIGN '94

## Spence spirits high after expected defeat

By Matthew Woody  
Senior Editor

OMAHA — Republican candidate Gene Spence was in good spirits on Tuesday night despite a landslide defeat in Nebraska's governor race.

"I can't say I enjoy losing, because I don't," Spence said in his concession speech. "But the Republican Party is still alive, and it will be back in four years, and it will win."

With 97 percent of the precincts counted, Gov. Ben Nelson won 74 percent to Spence's 26 percent, making the Democrat the first re-elected governor in 20 years.

The victory was no surprise to Spence. He had all but conceded the election to Nelson more than a week earlier.

"We've known for a long time that I was a long shot," Spence said Tuesday night. "We were prepared for a trouncing, and we were trounced."

Spence stayed upbeat during an election night party at the Omaha Club, although he conceded less than 30 minutes after polls closed at 8 p.m.

Fund-raising difficulties prevented him from running on an even keel with incumbent Nelson, Spence said.

But he will finish the campaign in the black, said Matt Butler, Spence's campaign financial chairman.

"I don't anticipate any debt for the campaign," Butler said. "Gene is a fiscal conservative, and debt is very much alien to that way of thinking."

Besides funds, other factors hurt the Republican challenger, campaign aide Cara Catlett said.

Nelson did not have a large record of his positions on issues, said Catlett, a 3rd Congressional District field representative for Spence's campaign. Therefore, the Spence campaign had difficulty pinning the governor down on issues to stress the candidates' differences.

Nelson agreed with Spence on some key issues, like abortion and the death penalty, on which Spence had planned to campaign, Catlett said.

David Spence, the candidate's son, emphasized that his father had nothing to hang his head about.

"I know our campaign worked all the way through," the younger Spence said.



Gene Spence, left, thanks supporters in Omaha early Tuesday night after conceding the gubernatorial race to Gov. Ben Nelson. Spence conceded after receiving only 26 percent of the vote.

Shaun Sartin/DN

## Races end with two new faces on board

### Skrupa



By Nick Wiltgen  
Staff Reporter

Rosemary Skrupa retained her 8th District regent post on Tuesday in a narrow win over challenger Richard Berkshire.

With 80 percent of the precincts reporting, two-term incumbent Skrupa of Omaha took 53 percent of the vote.

Skrupa said she was positive about the future but disappointed with what she called "negative campaigning."

Because of negative tactics, Skrupa said she didn't have time to delve into issues during the campaign.

"I felt it was a sad race because the issues weren't addressed," she said. "When your opponent's campaign runs a totally negative campaign... as the incumbent I have to spend time defending my record."

"You don't have time to discuss the issues."

Skrupa said she planned to continue her past agenda.

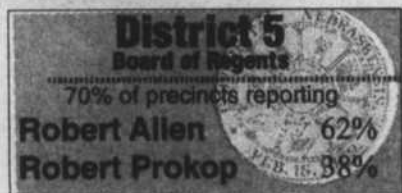
"We need to make the campus more comfortable for learning," she said. "We can't have so many dropouts."

Skrupa proposed streamlining the University of Nebraska's budget to fund this goal.

Berkshire said he was pleased with his campaign and hoped the NU Board of Regents would keep the needs of all Nebraskans in mind.

"I hope the regents put aside parochial territorial bickering, which is really damaging the university system to the detriment of the students," he said.

### Allen



By Sean McCarthy  
Staff Reporter

With his victory in the race for the 5th District seat on the NU Board of Regents, Robert Allen said he planned to keep working for the students' interests.

Incumbent Allen defeated former regent Robert Prokop 62 percent to 38 percent with 70 percent of precincts reporting.

Besides thanking his supporters,

Allen would only comment on his plans.

Improving undergraduate education was a key issue, Allen said, and renovating some of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's oldest buildings would accomplish that.

"When buildings such as Richards Hall begin to deteriorate, then something needs to be done," Allen said. "When they let the Arts and Sciences buildings go, that's just wrong."

Preparing students for their careers is another of his goals, Allen said.

Allen said Nebraskans wanted higher educational standards. However, classroom education is not getting better, he said. Allen plans to improve education through better organization.

"If we focus our resources, we can make our strong resources go even further," he said.

To build name recognition throughout the campaign, Allen said, he used many traditional media sources. But he said he also campaigned door-to-door.

## 3 Lincoln senators re-elected

By John Fulwider  
Staff Reporter

Three incumbents in Lincoln's four legislative districts won re-election in Tuesday's election.

Incumbent Don Wesely won 69 percent of the vote in District 26, while challenger Robert Van Valkenburg claimed 30 percent.

"It's great to have a chance to serve my district again," Wesely said. "It's back to work, and I'm excited to go back for four years."

Wesely said he ran no negative ads during the campaign and his victory was proof that positive campaigning could win.

Incumbent David Landis defeated challenger Charles Reinsch 77 percent to 22 percent in the District 46 race. Landis said before his victory that he would be "honored to have a chance to represent north Lincoln again in the Legislature."

Landis told the Daily Nebraskan during the campaign that Nebraska faced a \$15 million budget shortfall, but he didn't want to raise taxes. Budget cuts for the University of Nebraska are possible, he said, but he supports higher pay for university professors.

In the District 28 race, incumbent Chris Beutler defeated challenger Carol McShane 58 percent to 41 percent. Beutler said the race was tough.

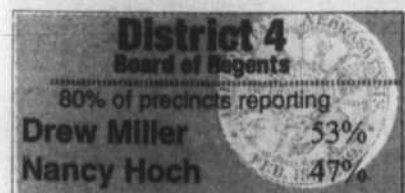
"I think it's the most difficult campaign I've been in because of the energy that Carol put into it," he said, "and because dealing with negative campaigning was new for me."

In District 30, where incumbent Dennis Byars did not run, David Maurstad won with 53 percent of the vote compared to Bev Bennett's 47 percent.

Maurstad said he was excited to get to work.

"I'm ready to work and be a strong voice for southeast Nebraska in the Legislature."

### Miller



By Chad Lorenz  
Staff Reporter

In the race for the 4th District seat on the NU Board of Regents, challenger Drew Miller defeated two-term incumbent Nancy Hoch.

Miller said he had expected to win about 60 percent of the votes. Miller, who said Gov. Ben Nelson's endorsement of Hoch hurt his campaign, received 53 percent of the vote. Hoch won 47 percent with 80 percent of precincts reporting.

"We didn't just have to run against Hoch; we also had to run against Gov. Nelson," Miller said.

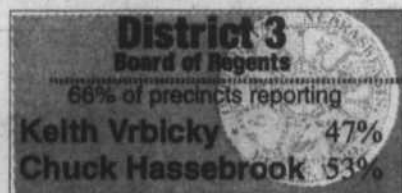
Lack of name recognition was a major obstacle in the campaign, Miller said. As chairman of the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners,

"People don't like their representing officials not telling them things about what they're doing."

DREW MILLER

4th District regent-elect

### Hassebrook



By Jeff Randall  
Staff Reporter



HASSEBROOK

Hassebrook had 53 percent of the vote compared to Vrbicky's 47 percent. Hassebrook took the seat vacated by Margaret Robinson of Norfolk, who did not run.

Hassebrook said he looked forward to putting his ideas to work.

"I see myself as a representative of the average struggling family in this state," Hassebrook said. "I provide a voice that needs to be heard."

"I see myself as a representative of the average struggling family in this state. I provide a voice that needs to be heard."

CHUCK HASSEBROOK

3rd District regent-elect

Hassebrook focused his campaign on keeping down tuition costs, improving the agriculture programs and enforcing equity programs.

Vrbicky expressed no regrets about the race.

"We ran a positive campaign with integrity," he said. "We stayed away from the traditional negative aspects, and I wouldn't change a thing if I could go back."

During the campaign, Vrbicky focused on improving the quality of higher education, putting more faculty in classrooms and increasing recruitment of top Nebraska students.