

Humanities director will target new congressman

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

When a younger, Republican crop of senators and representatives make up the new Congress in January, a Nebraska humanities administrator will be ready to educate them.

Hood Jane Renner Hood, director of the Nebraska Humanities Council since 1987, was named

secretary of the national Federation of State Humanities Councils' board of directors.

The federation, based in Washington, is a branch of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In her new position, Hood will help the federation confront the new Congress by defining the endowment's purpose and how it can serve constituents.

Like the National Endowment for the Arts, the NEH must be reauthorized by Congressional committees every five years, Hood said. She said the federation wanted to reach the new Congress as soon as possible.

"Although sitting members of Congress are very familiar with what we do, we have an educational challenge on our hands," she said.

"I think that if people looked a little scared it was because they realized we had to reach these congressmen, and we weren't going to have much time to do it," she said.

Hood said she would start on a local level. While Nebraska Republican Reps. Bill Barrett and Doug Bereuter are familiar with the humanities programs, she said, newly elected Rep. Jon Christensen may not be.

Meeting with Christensen, she said, should be a top priority.

"The humanities are one of the best bargains the federal government has," she said.

The endowment receives \$460,000 a year from the federal government — 30 cents from every Nebraskan — and funds more than 190 programs across the state. Nebraska's Humanities Resource Center also funds more than 700 programs across the state.

But this does not tell the whole story.

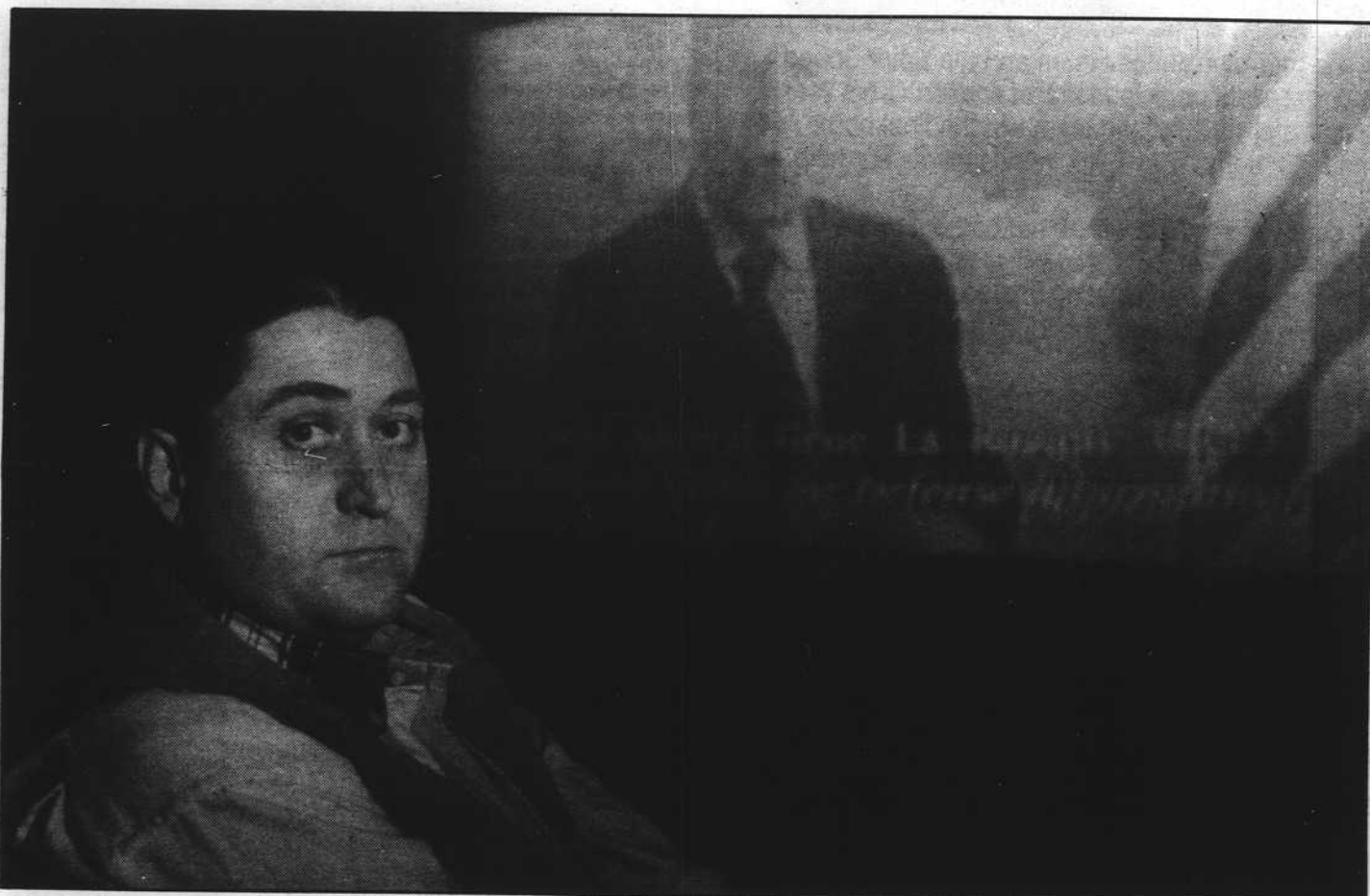
"We can give him facts and figures, but the real power of the

humanities lies in the human story," she said.

Mothers and children who worked with an exhibit of African-American inventors at the Children's Museum should talk to Christensen about their experience, she said.

"It's the power of telling Christensen what that very small amount of money meant for that child," she said.

Hood said humanities were important because they defined "what it means to be human." Humanities include the disciplines of history, literature, philosophy, language, ethics and anthropology.



Damon Lee/DN

Danny Ladely, director of the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater, will travel to Washington next week to serve on the Film/Video Production Panel for the National Endowment for the Arts Media Arts Program. He will help review grant applications for documentary films and videos.

Theater director to join national panel to evaluate grant requests

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

After 21 years of directing the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater, Danny Ladely will take his critic's eye to a national level.

Ladely will travel to Washington on Dec. 12 to serve on the Film/Video Production Panel for the National Endowment for the Arts Media Arts Program.

During the three-day panel, Ladely and about four other panel members will look at 245 grant applications from film and video artists requesting financial assistance for the production of documentary works.

As a teen-ager growing up in Gordon, Ladely worked for the small town's movie theater. He studied journalism and English literature at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He pioneered foreign and independent film programs for the university.

He graduated from the university in 1973 and was immediately appointed as the first director of the Mary Riepma Ross

Film Theater in the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

Ladely, who also serves on arts councils in Nebraska and South Dakota, said his work for the NEA would allow him to look at his favorite type of film — documentaries.

"People saw so many bad documentaries in grade school and high school with the voice of God telling you what to think," he said, laughing. "Good documentaries don't do that. They may be biased, but they still allow for your own intelligence and ability to make up your own mind."

Bad documentaries assume the audience is stupid, he said, by overusing narrative. Good documentaries use more visual footage and interviews that allow the audience members to form their own opinions, he said.

While reviewing grant application and samples of the artists' work, Ladely said he would look for artist capability, aesthetic quality, budget request and redeeming social value.

The artist must be able to complete the

work, he said, and should choose a narrow topic that could be fully developed in about an hour and a half.

"Coming Out Under Fire," a film shown at the Ross Theater, provided an example, he said. The film addressed treatment of homosexuals in the military in World War II.

"It didn't address treatment of homosexuals in society," he said, "because you can't cover the subject in an hour and half to give it justice."

Although he has not noticed an obvious topic trend, he said documentary films had become more political.

"In the '60s and '70s, it was very political. In the '80s, it was almost apolitical, and it was said that students were being too apathetic," he said. "Things have changed. As we proceed into the '90s, (politics) becomes more important."

Ladely said he would like to see more films by American Indian artists. Although many American Indians create documentary works, he said he would like to see these artists working on dramatic films.

Australian a cappella performs for UNL students

From Staff Reports

A singing group traveled thousands of miles just to perform Monday at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Isabella a Cappella, an eight-member group from Southern Cross University in Lismore, Australia, sang in Westbrook Music Building for UNL's University Singers and other students.

The group, which consists of two sopranos, altos, tenors and basses each, also performed Sunday at the Lutheran Student Center. Isabella a Cappella sings mostly contemporary and jazz arrangements of songs, plus Australian and aboriginal songs.

UNL wasn't the only stop on Isabella a Cappella's trip to the United States. The group already has been to Minnesota's twin cities and will spend

"It's been a wonderful experience just being here and being part of another culture."

ISABEL ATCHESON

director

more than a week in Phoenix after leaving Lincoln, according to Isabel Atcheson, the group's director.

"I was on sabbatical here and studying the difference between Australian choirs and American choirs, so I brought my choir with me," Atcheson said.

And how has the trip gone so far? "It's been a wonderful experience just being here and being part of another culture," she said.

The students, who range from 20 to 30-something years old, Atcheson said, are also enjoying the trip.

Dave Hume, a bass from Brisbane, said, "I found people to be most hospitable. They came to help us in the area of getting around and with other things."

While cold weather may be a negative about the trip, at least one thing has been very good, Hume said.

"Food. We've been constantly fed being over here," he said.

And besides just memories of the United States, the group's members will be taking back a piece of American culture.

Andrew Tarvit, a tenor, said they have picked up many American words, like "cool," "awesome" and "neat."