

# Daily Nebraskan

COVERING THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA SINCE 1901

VOL. 94 NO. 150

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April 27, 1995

## AIDS attacks family, can't tear it apart

By Jeffrey Robb  
Senior Editor

The pictures in the Plankintons' scrapbook show the way their lives used to be. The photos portray the good days: the early stages of Rick and Laura's marriage, their basement apartment, Christmas, the yearly Easter egg hunt.

It was a good life, a happy life.

But that life stopped in the summer of 1987 when their 4-year-old daughter, Sarah, was diagnosed with AIDS.

Within eight years, Sarah and two other members of the family would be dead. A fourth is near death. All were victims of this

terrible disease.

It is a tragic story. But it's also a story about the binding together of a family; a story about love and sacrifice and great courage.

The Plankintons' plight actually started back in 1978. Rick and his younger brother, Ron, were hemophiliacs. The AIDS virus was passed on to them through a blood product used to fight their hereditary condition. Unaware that he was infected, Rick passed the virus on to his wife. Laura, through birth, transmitted the disease to Sarah.

But the problem lay undetected until 1987, when Sarah entered Norfolk Lutheran

Hospital with pneumonia. The bout with pneumonia, ear infections, a milk intolerance — all made Rick wonder about the possibility of AIDS.

"You remember that I have hemophilia, and they've been finding that virus in hemophiliacs," he told the doctor. "You don't suppose that's what's wrong with Sarah?"

"No, I don't think so," the physician responded.

But he ran some tests anyway.

The results returned two days later. The family, including Rick's parents, Ray and Betty Plankinton of Columbus, gathered

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The Plankintons in 1992

## McVeigh placed at bomb site

By Sharon Cohen  
The Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — New details of Timothy McVeigh's activities in the days before the Oklahoma bombing surfaced Wednesday, including the suspect's chilling warning to a friend that "Something big is going to happen."

Investigators also were trying to trace McVeigh's movements after the explosion that gutted the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, a source said.

One theory was that McVeigh dropped off a still-missing colleague before being arrested for traffic and weapons violations.

Three witnesses placed McVeigh in front of the federal building moments before the explosion, apparently before the truck carrying the bomb arrived, the same source said.

Revelations of McVeigh's actions in the days before the bombing came in a Wichita, Kan., courtroom as prosecutors sought to take McVeigh's friend, Terry Nichols, to Oklahoma. The judge granted their request but delayed it until May 5 so Nichols could appeal.

As the investigation advanced, the city and the nation paused to observe a moment of silence at 9:02 a.m. — the precise moment of the blast one week ago. Bells rang, tears flowed and heads bowed as searchers stood amid the ruins of the collapsed federal building. The death toll stood at 98.

See BOMBING on 7

## Cost of union renovations increasing

By Brian Sharp  
Senior Reporter

The projected cost of overhauling the Nebraska Union is on the rise.

Early estimates figured an expansion and renovation project for the union at \$11.8 million. That total is now almost \$12.7 million.

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents will be asked to approve a program statement at its Saturday meeting, including the increased estimate.

The project will add 48,000 square feet of space to the union and remodel almost 67,000 square feet. Memorial Plaza and Broyhill Fountain will be moved north to compensate for building expansion. The project is scheduled to begin in late 1996, with a completion date

See UNION on 7



Cynthia Kreps, right, and Jay Brower, left, receive help Wednesday from their instructor, Bruce Stephen, during Anatomy and Physiology class at Southeast Community College.

Jon Waller/DN

## Two-year colleges gain popularity

Editor's note: This is the fourth in a five-part series of about the rising costs of higher education.

By J. Christopher Hain  
Senior Reporter

More and more students are taking a two-year detour on the way to a four-year college degree.



Community colleges in Nebraska are no longer the sole domain of welding and machine technology. Almost every community college in the state now offers a program of academic transfer classes.

With the cost of higher education rising, many students are saving money by taking their first two years of classes at a community college.

Sue Cain, academic support counselor at Lincoln High School, said more of her students were stuck between financial reality and a job market that nearly requires a college degree.

Most of the families who have children at Lincoln High are lower-income, Cain said.

She said Lincoln High was encouraging more students to begin their post-secondary education at a community college.

"They can save a lot of money by going to Southeast Community College first," Cain said.

As the federal government cuts financial aid, Cain said, she expects more students to choose a community college as a first stop on the way to a four-year degree.

"A lot of our families are thinking, 'Maybe we should consider a community college,'" she said.

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For years, starting at a community college on the way to a four-year degree at a university has been prevalent in California, home of the nation's largest community college system.

An estimated 1,357,300 students attended California's 106 community college campuses in the fall 1994 semester.

"We are the largest higher education system in the world," said Kyle Orr, spokesman for the chancellor's office of the California Community Colleges.

In California, high school graduates in the top one-eighth of their classes qualify for the University of California system, graduates in

*"A lot of our families are thinking, 'Maybe we should consider a community college.'"*

■  
**SUE CAIN**

Lincoln High counselor

the top one-third qualify for the California State University system and everyone else is eligible to attend a community college.

Community colleges play a major role in higher education in California, Orr said.

The California State University system relies heavily on community college transfers to fill its halls.

In the 1993-94 academic year, the CSU system had 44,454 transfer students from community colleges, compared with 22,035 first-time freshmen students.

Saving money is a big reason students at

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