

Federal judge Strom to retire

OMAHA (AP) — U.S. District Judge Lyle Strom, who drew attention for criticizing federal sentencing guidelines on crack cocaine, announced Tuesday that he was retiring from regular active service on the federal bench.

In a letter to President Bill Clinton, the 70-year-old judge said he intended to work for the court as a senior judge after his retirement Nov. 2.

Lyle was out of town Tuesday and unavailable for comment, said his secretary, Jean Roeder. She said the judge was not expected back in his Omaha office until Sept. 6.

"He's not going anywhere," Roeder said. "He's just taking senior status."

Chief Judge William G. Cambridge said the move would enable Strom to

reduce his caseload if he wished. Cambridge said he did not expect Strom to do that until his successor was named.

Senior Judge Warren Urbom in Lincoln carried a full caseload for about three years until his successor was named, Cambridge said.

"Knowing Judge Strom, he'll probably do the same," Cambridge said.

Strom was appointed to the U.S. District Court in Omaha on Nov. 1, 1985.

He drew attention in 1993 when he ruled that federal sentencing guidelines for crack cocaine discriminated against blacks because the crack sentences were harsher than those for powder cocaine.

Strom said the guidelines were unfair because blacks were more likely

to be involved in crack cocaine offenses, while whites were more likely to deal in powder cocaine. He departed from the sentencing guidelines in the 1993 case that later was overturned by the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The U.S. Sentencing Commission has recommended equalizing the penalties for the two drugs.

Strom's retirement will leave Nebraska with three active judges and two senior judges. Urbom in Lincoln became a senior judge in January 1991.

Strom served as chief judge in Nebraska from November 1987 to November 1994. He was president of the Nebraska Bar Association in 1989-90.

Suicide attempt foiled by officers' midair grab

From Staff Reports

It was high drama high above the ground Tuesday night when two Lincoln police officers saved a man who jumped off the Veterans Administration Hospital.

Officers Chris Peterson and Darren Johnson were called about 7 p.m. to the roof of the hospital at 600 S. 70th St., where a 35-year-old patient was sitting on a one-foot ledge.

Lincoln Police Lt. Kent Woodhead gave the following account of the rescue:

Working about 50 feet above the ground, the officers tried for about 15 minutes to coax the man down

from the ledge.

The man then became agitated and decided to jump from the building.

While the man was in the air, Peterson grabbed the man's wrist, and Johnson grabbed his sleeve. The man began to flail in an attempt to free himself from the officers' grasp.

The man's sleeve ripped, and his wrist began to slip out of Peterson's hand. Peterson then grabbed his handcuffs, slapped one cuff around the man's wrist and the other cuff around a cable. Three other officers then assisted in pulling the man onto the roof.

"Thanks to the presence of mind of this officer, this man is alive," Woodhead said.

Judge orders voting districts redrawn

OMAHA (AP) — A federal judge ordered Tuesday that new voting districts be drawn in Thurston County because voting strength of American Indians in the area has been diluted.

But U.S. District Judge Lyle Strom denied a similar request for new Walthill village- and school board districts.

The lawsuit was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Le-

gal Aid Society of Walthill in 1993 on behalf of Indians in the county, located in northeast Nebraska.

ACLU attorneys contended that at-large elections for the Walthill school board, village board, and the county board violated the federal Voting Rights Act and the U.S. Constitution.

Strom ruled new County Board districts should be drawn, providing

for three single-member districts that include an Indian majority.

As for the school board and village board, Strom ruled there was no way to draw Indian-majority districts that were not irregular in shape. Strom also ruled there was no evidence to suggest discriminatory practices played a part in the current district configuration.

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Fan caravan sports petitions

From Staff Reports

If you see barricades put up in front of the South Stadium athletic office today, you'll know why.

The Save Herbie Foundation is bringing a caravan of fervent Herbie Husker fans from Omaha to present petitions containing more than 2,000 signatures to University of Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne. The presentation will be at 2:30 p.m.

Fans are rallying around Herbie following a decision by the University of Nebraska Athletic Department to choose a new mascot for the Cornhuskers.



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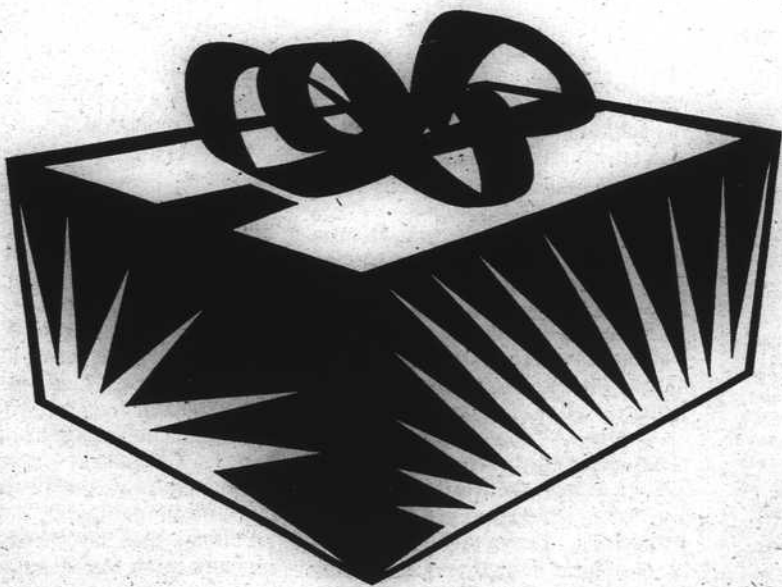
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