



Matthew Waite/DN

Gwendolyn Combs, director of affirmative action for Lincoln Public Schools, said her struggles as a minority in college motivated her to provide racial and ethnic diversity in Lincoln schools.

Combs

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"I would like to have in every building a good mix of staff," Combs said.

When students see teachers and administrators of the same race or ethnic origin as themselves, she said, they realize their background won't prevent them from being just as successful.

"It affirms them in terms of self-

worth," Combs said.

Combs said she felt minority students could be inhibited, as she was, being the only member of a certain race or ethnic background in a class.

Minority students would feel uncomfortable asking for help in class or networking with other students, she said.

"It's a lonely feeling," Combs said.

Combs said she defeated alienation and prejudices by being as-

sertive with people. She said she had to take the first step and reach out to others.

She said she was reminded of her loneliness in college when she first arrived in Lincoln. For three weeks, she said, she didn't see another black person outside of her family and church.

"Lincoln is just not a place overflowing with opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities to enjoy their culture," Combs said.

Three witnesses identify gunman

OMAHA (AP) — Investigators testified Wednesday that three witnesses identified the gunman in the shooting of Officer James Wilson Jr., the first Omaha policeman to die in the line of duty in 21 years.

Police investigator Michael Hoch said three eyewitnesses identified 20-year-old Quincy Hughes as the trigger man in the Aug. 20 shooting. He also said a 14-year-old charged in the case said Hughes grabbed a rifle in a van Wilson had stopped.

Hughes and Kevin Allen, 18, are charged with first-degree murder and use of a firearm to commit a felony in the death of Wilson. Five others, including the 14-year-old and a 15-year-old, are charged with being accessories to murder.

Wilson was shot in the head and died after pulling over a van to check its registration. Police said he was still wearing his seat belt when he was shot.

Charles McSpadden, 18, one of five men charged as an accessory to murder, waived his right to a preliminary hearing at the beginning of Wednesday's proceedings. No trial date was set.

Also making a court appearance Wednesday on the accessory charges

were Walter Harris, 22, and Tavares Minor, 18.

All five of the men were bound over for trial.

Ronnie D. Perry, 14, and Otis Simmons, 15, earlier waived their preliminary hearings and were ordered to stand trial as adults on charges of being accessories to murder.

All of the suspects are from Omaha. Criminal investigator Dean Thorsen testified that fingerprints of McSpadden, Harris, Allen and Perry were found in the van. Police said McSpadden owned the van.

Police investigator Bruce Ferrell said he interviewed a woman who was on a sidewalk about 10 feet from the van when it was stopped by Wilson in a residential neighborhood a few miles northwest of downtown.

She told Ferrell a man left the passenger seat of the van and soon emerged with a rifle from the side cargo door. She said the man moved to the rear of the van and fired three shots at the police car and then advanced on the police car to fire another volley of shots.

The witness told Ferrell that the man then returned the van, which sped off. Ferrell said another witness

gave police similar statements.

Thorsen said police found 11 spent cartridges of 7.62 mm ammunition. He said that particular ammunition can be fired from AK-47 rifles and possibly from other weapons.

Ferrell said the witness he interviewed believed the rifle used by the gunman was an AK-47. She told police that she had seen those rifles on television and it matched the description.

Hoch, who helped operate a police lineup for witnesses, testified that three of the four teen-agers who witnessed the shooting along 40th Street near Blondo, "positively identified Quincy Hughes" as the man who exited the van and shot at the police car.

Hoch also said he interviewed Perry, who said he was in the van at the time. Perry told police Hughes was the man who grabbed the rifle in the van.

Perry told Hoch that the men had been driving around in north Omaha after an intended robbery in south Omaha failed to develop.

When Wilson came up behind the van with his cruiser lights on, Perry told the investigator, Allen said: "I ain't going back to jail," and the shooting soon followed.

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Students must present their student photo ID to receive their check. New borrowers are reminded to bring the promissory note that was previously mailed to them. Checks not claimed by 4:00 p.m. September 15 will be cancelled.

P.O. PEARS

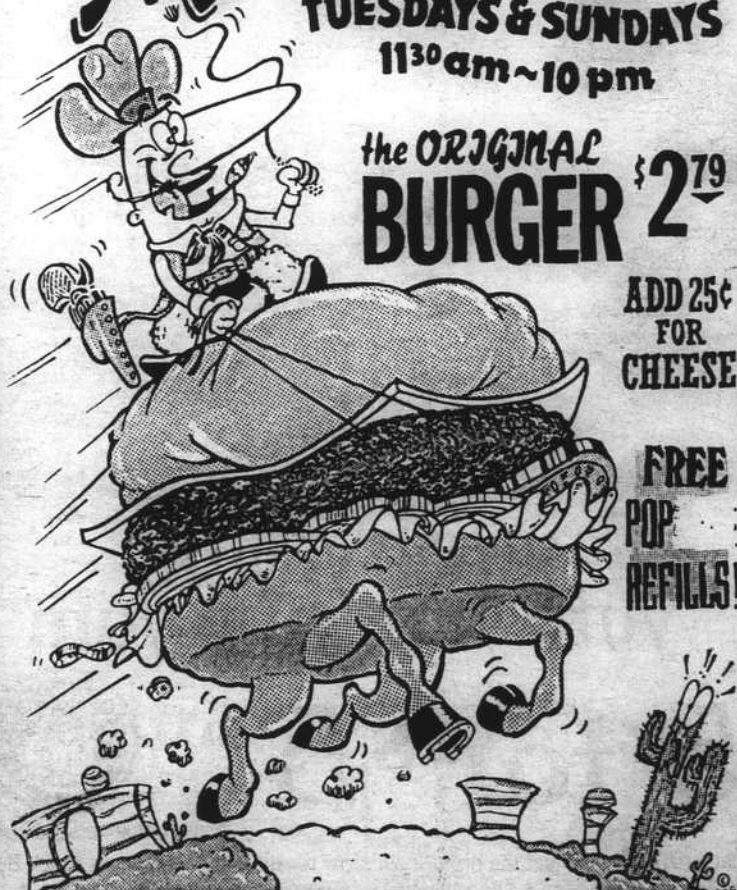
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