

# Professor honored for research

By Julie Sobczyk  
Senior Reporter

A college night class in communications opened David Beukelman's eyes toward a career of helping others. "I was a sophomore in college and didn't know what I wanted to do," Beukelman said. "I was looking for some extra classes, so I took a night class in communications disorders."

That one class, along with an interest in medicine, led him to want to help people who had speech disorders, such as those caused by multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy and Lou Gehrig's disease.

Beukelman is now in his 11th year at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and he spends most of his time researching the outcomes of different techniques to help people with speech disorders.

For his research, Beukelman received the University of Nebraska Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity, one of the highest awards given to a faculty member for scholarship, research and artistic achievements.

He said he was glad he received the award, but just doing research and helping others offered enough reward.

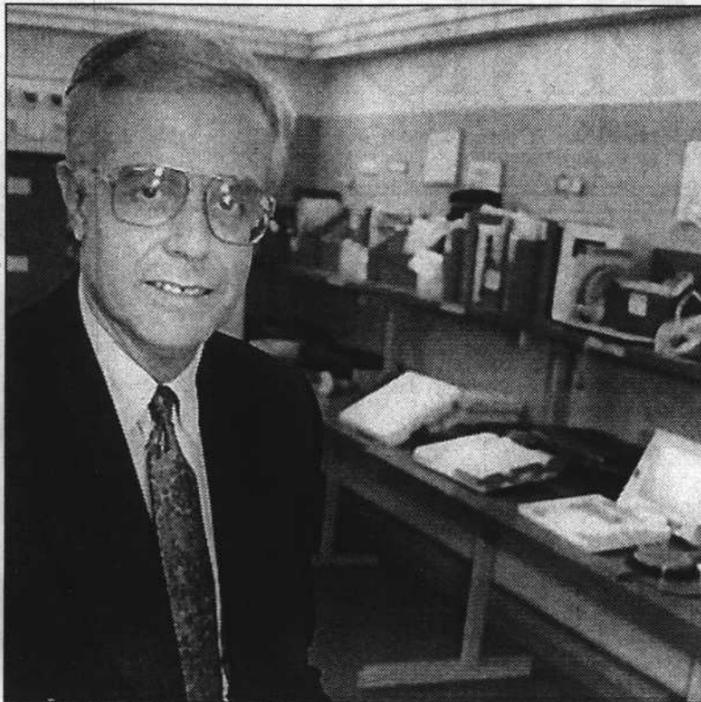
"My own personal mission has been to assist people with the most severe communication disorders," Beukelman said. "I want to help them communicate more effectively so they can live independently."

He does most of his research through the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the Madonna Rehabilitation Center in Lincoln. Much of his research has focused on how people use devices to communicate better, he said.

"I focus on what makes them successful and what could be done differently," Beukelman said.

For example, he said, at UNMC, he is making updates on 40 patients with cancer on the roofs of their mouths.

These patients had to have a special prosthesis built for their mouths, Beukelman said, and he has been following their progress for the past year.



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

**David Beukelman, professor of special education and communication disorders, won the University of Nebraska Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity for his work in researching speech disorders**

for the past year.

"Year after year, we find what is successful and what isn't," he said. "We continue to look at the people for a couple of years as their bodies get over the surgery."

Beukelman also studies how people of different ages communicate in different situations.

For example, he said, he tapes children and adults and listens to the way they talk. He then uses the information for machines to assist people who can't talk.

"We record what they say for a week so we know what type of vocabulary is used and what is talked about," Beukelman said.

When he's not conducting research at UNL or UNMC, Beukelman can be

found teaching graduate seminars and classes in augmentative communication and motor speech disorders.

He also has written or co-written more than 100 books about speech disorders, he said, most of which have been textbooks.

For the past three years, Beukelman has been the editor of the International Journal for Augmentative and Alternative Communications.

When he's away from the classroom, Beukelman said, he enjoys spending time with his family and playing tennis and basketball.

As for his award, Beukelman said, it's just part of his job.

"I came here to do research and to write," he said. "The award just happened as part of my mission to help others."

# Police errors made conviction difficult

OMAHA (AP) — Prosecutors who won a first-degree murder conviction in the case of a slain Omaha police officer said police errors in the investigation made a conviction uncertain.

The Omaha Police Department originally charged one man, Quincy Hughes, 21, with shooting Officer Jimmy Wilson Jr., on Aug. 20. Four months later, the state dropped the charges against Hughes and charged Kevin Allen, 18, with the murder. Allen was convicted Friday of first-degree murder.

Douglas County Attorney Jim Jansen said the prosecutors had a tough job of gaining a conviction.

"It became, in some respects, a defense attorney's dream," Jansen said. "We had serious concerns about whether we were able to obtain a conviction against anybody."

Jansen said he had no doubt that the right man was paying the price for Wilson's death; it just took some time to piece it all together.

Police officers and prosecutors initially put a lot of faith in what eyewitnesses thought they saw: a man who looked like Hughes pulling the trigger.

Authorities had thought two of the witnesses were 10 feet from the gunman. It took them three months to determine that all four teen-agers were at least 80 feet away. And then authorities discovered that the eyewitnesses were so nearsighted that they couldn't read the blackboard at school.

Police officials acknowledge that they made mistakes. A routine post-verdict review will explore whether changes in police tactics need to be made, said Deputy Chief Charles Circo, who oversaw much of the investigation.

Chief Jim Skinner said the review was not a fault-finding mis-

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**JIM JANSEN**

Douglas County attorney

sion. He said he believed his officers did what they could to find the person responsible for Wilson's death, and their search ended successfully with Allen's conviction.

"What we're looking for here is the truth," Skinner said. "The police department never pressured someone to identify a suspect that we knew to be innocent."

Wilson was gunned down in his police car at 40th and Blondo streets after he pulled over a brown Chevrolet van with license plates registered to a blue Mazda. A jury decided that Allen stepped out of the van with a high-powered rifle and fired 11 shots.

Jansen said that the problems started within 24 hours of the crime as police officers began to question members of the South Family Bloods gang — a group linked to South Side Terrace Homes.

Two witnesses, Otis Simmons and Ronney Perry, then 14, initially named Allen as the shooter but changed their stories after several hours of high-pressure questioning. They then named Hughes as the shooter and said Allen also stepped out of the van with a gun.

## PICTURE YOURSELF BEHIND THE WHEEL.



**YOU COULD BE THE NEXT CONTESTANT ON WHEEL OF FORTUNE.**

America's favorite game show is rolling into Omaha. We're searching for college students who love to play Wheel of Fortune. If you can distinguish between vowels and consonants, love fabulous prizes, and are easily dazzled by sequins... you may be the perfect contestant. To improve your chances, send us a postcard with your name, address, phone number, age, and school to:

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Sixty students will be selected for audition on April 11th in Omaha. Students chosen will be notified by phone or mail. So, if you're looking for something more interesting and profitable than a Summer internship, drop us a line. Who knows? You may be the next high roller on Wheel.



## Brown Bag Diversity Series

### CITY CAMPUS

Monday, April 1, 1996  
11:00 am-12:30 pm  
**"Affirmative Action: Has Its Time Run Out?"**  
Presenter: Rev. Andrew Rollins  
Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church

Tuesday, April 2, 1996  
11:30 am-1:00 pm  
**"Coalition Building and the Value of Diversity"**  
Presenter: Madeline Popa  
International Students Organization

Wednesday, April 3, 1996  
11:30-1:00 pm  
**"Multiculturalism: Fact or Fiction?"**  
Presenter: Dr. Kunle Ojikutu  
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Thursday, April 4, 1996  
11:30 am-1:00 pm  
**"Diversity: Toward a Better Understanding"**  
This session involves cultural exercises and group interaction.  
Presenter: John L. Harris  
Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Friday, April 5, 1996  
11:30 am-1:00 pm  
**"Homophobia, Heterosexism, Racism: Common Enemies?"**  
Presenter: Dr. Vern Williams  
Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual Student Services

### EAST CAMPUS

Monday, April 8, 1996  
11:30 am-1:00 pm  
**"Homophobia, Heterosexism, Racism: Common Enemies?"**  
Presenter: Dr. Vern Williams  
Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual Student Services

Tuesday, April 9, 1996  
11:30 am-1:00 pm  
**"Diversity: Toward a Better Understanding"**  
This session involves cultural exercises and group interaction.  
Presenter: John L. Harris  
Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Wednesday, April 10, 1996  
11:30 am-1:00 pm  
**"Multiculturalism: Fact or Fiction?"**  
Presenter: Dr. Kunle Ojikutu  
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

All brown bag sessions are open to everyone and will be held in the Nebraska Union. Feel free to bring your lunch, beverages will be provided.

**Any questions, call John L. Harris at 472-3755**



Sponsored by the Racial Pluralism Action Team and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs