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Williams pleads no contest to charges

By CHAD LORENZ
Senior Reporter

A 2 1/2 year legal battle came to an end Monday when former Nebraska football player Tyrone Williams pleaded no contest in District Court to reduced charges for a 1994 shooting.

One of two felony weapon charges was lowered Monday to third-degree assault — a misdemeanor.

Williams was originally charged with violating the state's drive-by shooting law and use of a weapon to commit a felony for a January 1994 incident.

The plea bargain led to Williams' conviction on the day his long-awaited trial was scheduled to begin.

Williams was accused of firing a .22-caliber handgun at a car occupied by then-New York Jets player Kevin Porter and a UNL student near 17th and L streets.

Joe Kelly, Deputy Lancaster County Attorney, said after the hearing that he lowered the charges in order to "save everybody the time and expense of a trial."

Williams made no statements during the hearing.

Sean Brennan, Williams' attorney, later said Williams was grateful to the county attorney's office for reducing the charges.

The incident was Williams' only run-in with the law, Brennan said. He added that people shouldn't judge the former Nebraska cornerback based on the shooting.

During Williams' career at UNL, he proved he was a hard-working student and athlete, Brennan said.

"He developed into someone who is a first-class person," he said.

The third-degree assault conviction didn't mean that Williams intended to hurt anyone, Brennan said, only that he threatened the victim.

The county attorney's office couldn't have convicted Williams on the original felony charge without showing intent, he said.

"They didn't have evidence that Tyrone meant to hit people in that car," Brennan said.

The case swayed in and out of Williams' favor during its 31-month history.

At Williams' first arraignment, he argued that charging him with both felonies was double jeopardy — trying him twice for the same act — and violated his constitutional rights.

He appealed the charges to the Nebraska Supreme Court, which refused to review the case in March. Before that, the next lowest court, the state Court of Appeals, ruled Williams could not appeal until he was convicted.

Brennan said Williams will focus on his career with the Green Bay Packers now that the case is behind him. He said Williams probably would not be suspended from playing for the Packers.

"I don't think they're worried about him getting into any more trouble," Brennan said.

NU Football Coach Tom Osborne released a statement saying he was "glad to see there has finally been some closure" in Williams' case.

"Tyrone has not been in trouble before or since this incident and we hope he is able to move on with his life and continue to be successful," Osborne said.

Green Bay Packers representatives had not prepared a statement by Monday evening.

Williams will be sentenced on Nov. 19. He faces a maximum penalty of six years in jail and an \$11,000 fine.

Guide to help communities prevent juvenile delinquency

By TODD ANDERSON
Staff Reporter

In an effort to direct community support and keep juveniles out of trouble, Gov. Ben Nelson announced a planning guide for communities across Nebraska.

During a conference call Monday from North Platte, Nelson voiced his support for the "Partners in Planning" Community Planning Guide for 1996 to 1998. The guide is intended to promote and preserve families and to prevent juvenile delinquency.

The guide is provided by the Nebraska Crime Commission to assist communities in developing a comprehensive and specific plan to address juvenile justice and other community issues.

The guide is part of the "Partners in Planning" process.

"This comprehensive planning approach brings community leaders together with statewide assistance teams to identify local problems and implement solutions that are tailored to the needs of that particular community," Nelson said.

Through the program, a coordinator, a statewide assistance team and a network of people will help the communities.

These "Partners in Planning" team members are trained to introduce community leaders to the plan, identify and mobilize a local planning council, develop and carry out a plan and find funding, said Jeff Hart, the Crime Commission's Juvenile Justice Planning Specialist.

The original planning guide was released in 1993 and is used by more than 50 communities, Hart said. It was revised using input from 45 Nebraska communities.

Five hundred planning guides will be distributed this month, Hart said.

Hagel, Nelson downplay contributions from tobacco PACs

By MATTHEW WAITE
Senior Reporter

In a campaign climate stacked against both tobacco and special-interest money, Nebraska's Senate candidates are not worried about the appearance of campaign donations from cigarette companies.

According to information released by the Federal Election Commission, Democratic Gov. Ben Nelson has taken \$3,000 in tobacco political action committee money during the 1996 election season. His opponent, Republican businessman Chuck Hagel has

reported taking \$1,000 from tobacco PACs.

But Hagel campaign staffers are quick to point out that Nelson has taken in more than \$15,000 in tobacco PAC money since 1990, when he first ran for governor.

Hagel said he was against smoking and that he tells everyone he knows who smokes to stop. But he also said government should be careful when getting involved in tobacco issues.

"This is not a risk-free society," Hagel said. "We need to go back to exercising some personal responsibility and discipline."

Hagel said he was not worried about public criticism for taking \$1,000 from tobacco PACs.

"I don't think it's going to buy much influence with me to start standing up for the tobacco industry," Hagel said. "I've said it before, it's a disgusting habit."

Nelson also said he wasn't worried about the appearance of tobacco PAC money donations in his campaign funds.

Tobacco companies are not asking for favors or expecting anything in return, the governor said.

Nelson also said many tobacco companies are diversified and have

"This is not a risk-free society."

CHUCK HAGEL
Nebraska Senate candidate

interests in Nebraska away from tobacco. He used RJR Nabisco as an example. The tobacco giant also makes food products.

During his time as governor, Nelson said, he has tried to get tobacco companies to voluntarily move cigarettes behind counters and move vending machines to places where minors

can not get access. The governor also echoed Hagel, by saying government's role in regulating tobacco should be limited. Personal responsibility, Nelson said, should be stressed.

"It's a very delicate balance to make sure government isn't overreaching," he said.



SCOTT BRUHN/DN

RICHARD DURST, new dean of UNL's College of Fine and Performing Arts, held the same position at the University of Minnesota-Duluth for seven years before coming to Lincoln.

New arts dean: Students shouldn't be so modest

By ERIN SCHULTE
Senior Reporter

Students from Nebraska are just too modest.

That's what the new dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts thinks. And if he has his way, that's something that is going to change.

Richard Durst started as the college's new dean on Aug. 1, after spending seven years at the University of Minnesota in Duluth (UMD) as dean of the School of Fine and Performing Arts.

"In Minnesota, we called it 'Minnesota nice,' Durst said. "Everyone was so modest."

But convincing arts students to come to UNL and getting donors to help fund the

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