

Report: Nebraskans marrying less, living longer

WOMEN STILL outlive men by several years, thanks to lower suicide and homicide rates and healthier lifestyles.

From Staff Reports

Nebraskans are marrying almost twice as much as they're getting divorced, and they're living longer to enjoy it, according to Nebraska's 1995 vital statistics report.

Last year, 12,351 marriages took place compared to 6,262 divorces. Both figures are down from the 1994 and are below the national average.

Nebraskans are living an average of 74.8 years. Men lived to an average of 71 years, six months longer than the previous year, and women lived to an average of 78.4 years, seven months longer than the previous year.

Women continue to live about eight years longer than their male counter-

parts because of their lower rates of unintentional injuries, suicide, homicide and infant deaths. Women are also less likely to smoke.

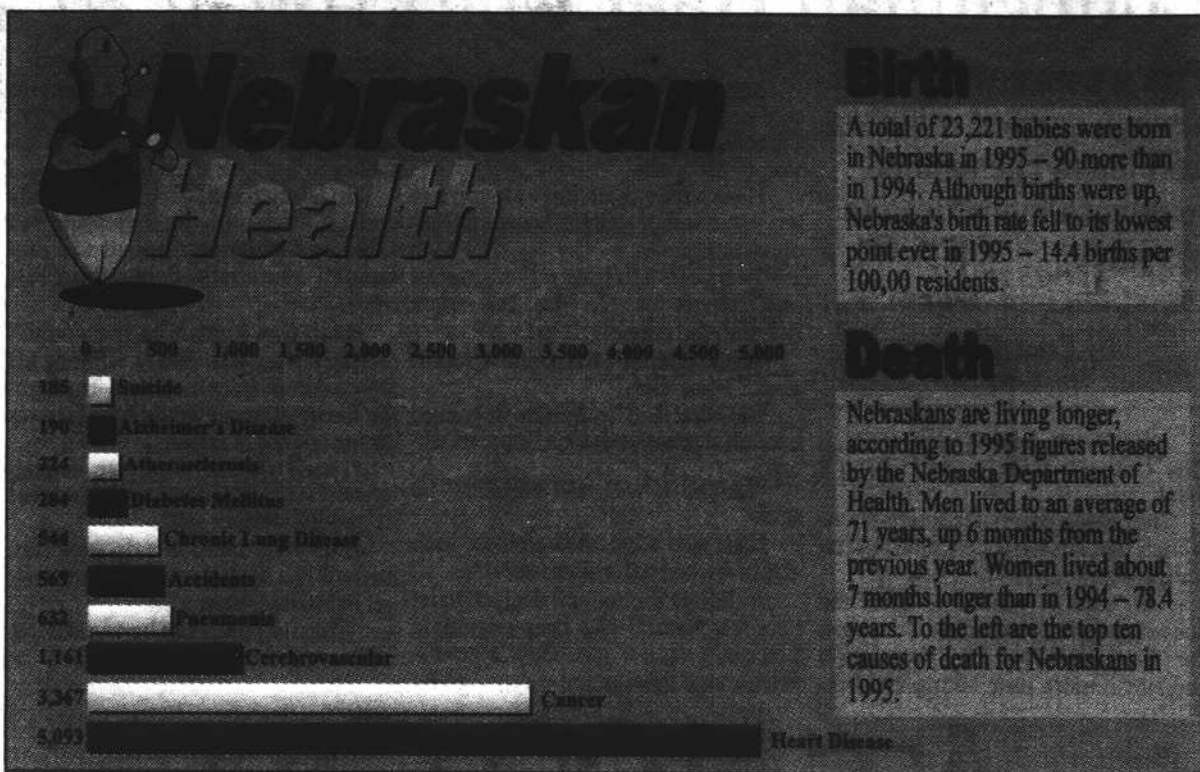
Heart disease continued to be the leading cause of death among Nebraskans and was responsible for one out of every three deaths. Lung, breast and prostate cancer were next, followed by strokes, pneumonia, accidents, chronic lung disease, diabetes Mellitus, Atherosclerosis, Alzheimer's Disease and suicide.

AIDS was the fifth leading cause of death for males ages 15-44.

Deaths totaled 15,216 against 23,221 births. The number of births increased last year for the first time since 1990.

It included an increase from 1994 in the number of multiple births. The number of sets of twins went from 274 to 366 sets of twins. The number of sets of triplets born in the state went from 13 to 20.

Even with the increase in births, the birthrate fell to the lowest in Nebraska's history — 14.4 births per 100,000 residents — because of an increase in the overall population.



Source: Nebraska Department of Health

A total of 23,221 babies were born in Nebraska in 1995 — 90 more than in 1994. Although births were up, Nebraska's birth rate fell to its lowest point ever in 1995 — 14.4 births per 100,000 residents.

Nebraskans are living longer, according to 1995 figures released by the Nebraska Department of Health. Men lived to an average of 71 years, up 6 months from the previous year. Women lived about 7 months longer than in 1994 — 78.4 years. To the left are the top ten causes of death for Nebraskans in 1995.

Aaron Steckelberg/DN

Alma mater captures UNL spirit

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spirit of the University of Nebraska," Chesnutt said.

Flowing and hymn-like, the new alma mater will touch people the way other Nebraska songs can't, Chesnutt said.

"We have great pep songs and fight songs, but we haven't had anything that speaks to the soul," he said. "That's part of going to college, too."

The alma mater will represent a much different genre than the slew of fight songs usually pumped out at football games.

"It's dignified, stately, and easy to sing," Moeser said after hearing the music for the first time this week.

"It will give people goose bumps when they sing it," he said. "The song is sentimental and glorifies the university."

Davis said the song had three verses, each one representing a different facet of UNL — tradition, campus life, and the university philosophy.

"The very first thing the student body sings is 'Nebraska,'" Davis said. "That's the key hook."

Finding just the right lyrics for the three verses took some research, Davis said. He said he talked to campus historians and the chancellor, as well as people he met on campus.

The campus-life verse, he said, will reflect the romance of college, with references to kissing by the columns and Ivy Day.

"The whole notion of going back to college in the fall is very romantic," Davis said.

School colors and other well estab-

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ROD CHESNUTT
UNL marching band director

lished UNL symbols will be incorporated into the verse dealing with traditions, and the philosophy verse takes words from the university seal.

Davis said he avoided trendiness when writing the alma mater.

"It has to withstand the test of time, so I'm not going to write a pop-sounding tune that's current at the moment," Davis said. "I chose a hymn structure called 'strophic song,' or a verse-chorus format."

Alma maters, which don't quite fit into the high-energy aura of football games, do fit in during two times, Chesnutt said. They are traditionally played before or after the national anthem, to give honor to country and school, or after the game is over.

The marching band will send a recording of a practice run of the alma mater to Davis, who will then add synthesizer and four-part voice scores before the piece is rehearsed all together, Chesnutt said.

The UNL groups and Mannheim

Steamroller will have only a few chances to practice together before the song's debut. Davis will send Moeser a final copy of the lyrics to check over this week.

Moeser and Davis have navigated the same musical circles before. In the 1960s, while Davis was playing the cymbals with the University of Michigan marching band as an undergraduate, Moeser was there finishing up his doctoral degree in musical arts. The two did not know each other at the time, Moeser said.

Davis plans to release the alma mater on a compact disc single, with profits going to UNL.

But this Chip Davis song will have a longer shelf-life than a compact disc recording. Alma maters have staying power, and that's another reason Davis wanted to write it.

"It's a real honor to compose something that's going to be around for a long time," he said.

Pastor served diverse groups

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he was not the driving force behind the often controversial activities. He says he was merely acting like a Christian.

"I felt we needed to be open to the groups on the edge of things," he said. "One of the callings of the Christian community is to be open and supportive of those who have no voice."

Doerr did more than open his heart and mind to these groups, he opened the interdenominational ministry's campus headquarters, Commonplace. The ministry took in the University Child Care Project, University Gay Action Organization, the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union and the Draft Information Center when others turned their backs.

Commonplace housed these diverse groups for 14 years, until the building was sold to the Nebraska Union for development of the new UNL Culture Center. The sale, Doerr said, was one of the best actions he's been involved in at UNL.

Prior to the sale in 1985, the Culture Center, located near Nebraska Hall, was condemned. Ethnic minority groups searched for a new location to house their organizations but the searches, Doerr said, were unsuccessful and frustrating.

"The blacks and Hispanics were getting very angry and were ready to quit," he said. "But I said to them

that if they asked if our building was for sale, they might be surprised at the answer they would get."

Within 1 1/2 years, the Presbyterian-owned building became the new Culture Center and UMHE moved its organizations to Cornerstone at 640 N. 16th St.

"In that way, we've had an impact on ethnic and minority organizations on campus," Doerr said.

Doerr said the main lesson he hoped he had given the students was an understanding of religion.

"Following Jesus does not mean being deeply religious," the pastor said. "The center of religion is caring for the earth and the people on it."

He said that was how he wanted to be remembered.

"I would like to be remembered as someone who cared about the university and the lives of those at the university who want a good education and justice on campus," he said.

Doerr's last official act on campus will be Sunday's sermon at the September Service of Celebration and Dedication for the New Academic Year. The service is 7 p.m. at Cornerstone and open to the university community.

There will be a reception at 3:30 p.m. today honoring Doerr at the UNL Culture Center and a banquet at 6:30 p.m. Saturday in the Nebraska East Union.

Some UNL fraternities, sororities face fire-code violations

CODE from page 1

no house has ever lost its occupancy permit.

Anderson said she usually received copies of violations but was not directly involved. The greek house corporations are responsible for repairs.

"The fire-safety people deal with the unit, but if I can be helpful, I do it," she said. "We do not want any unsafe places for students to live."

Neither do house corporations.

Jon Snare, who is on the board of trustees for the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, said the bulk of the problems at Fiji centered on the building's age. Most of the repairs have been to update an old structure, he said.

Phi Gamma Delta is concerned with fraternity house safety, because the fire in North Carolina involved one of their chapters. Snare said alumni planned to upgrade safety.

"If our house is full ... we budget for things like (safety upgrades)," he said. "There are things that come along that need to be fixed."

But Anderson said the structures are not solely to blame. Students'

hands are not clean when it comes to fire codes, she said, because students are responsible for the immediate care of their houses.

When fraternity or sorority members prop open a fire door with a brick, it's a fire code violation. When too many plugs end up in a socket, it's a fire code violation.

Such actions might seem insignificant, but Schoen said it doesn't take much for a fire to take a house.

A fire started by a cigarette dumped in a trash basket can destroy most of a house in as little as 15 minutes, he said. In six minutes, people in the house could die from heat and smoke.

"You could be down the hall and never know there's a fire raging down the hall until it's too late," Schoen said.

If a house is up to code, with closed, self-latching solid-core — not hollow or panel — doors and working fire doors, most of the fraternity or sorority could be spared, Schoen said.

"What we can't get through to these people is that's why those solid-core doors are there," he said. "It's to keep that fire contained."

With no sprinkler systems in the houses, Schoen said, greek houses have to rely on doors and building construction to contain a fire long enough for fire fighters to respond.

"We've got some fraternities and sororities that are just fabulous," he said. "And we've got some people that don't have the money and are really difficult to deal with."

But Snare said alumni are kicking money back to the house for repairs but they're not in the black yet.

"We're trying to comply, and we'll be in compliance when they next inspect," he said.

Some fraternity members say problems in their houses are not house problems, but rather individual problems in personal rooms.

Greg Hand, president of Phi Delta Theta, said the list of violations for their house was long, but it was a list of things that could easily be fixed.

Problems in Phi Delta Theta mostly include too many extension cords and blocked doors, Hand said. Other violations, on the last inspection, included bikes in a hallway and a lawnmower

stored inside, he said.

"These are things that I didn't think about until I moved into a fraternity," Hand said. "It was like this in my parents' house."

Phi Delta underwent renovations six years ago, Hand said, and the construction was shoddy. He said the house has had to fit the house with more outlets and install new lighted exit signs.

Hand said it was the poor construction that may have driven Phi Delta's violation numbers up. He said he wasn't surprised to be on a list of houses with a history of violations, but that it didn't bother him.

"I feel safe living here. I don't have any problems living here."

Schoen offered to sit down with house corporations and members to tell them about violations and what needs to be done. But he offered little hope, saying it was hard to get the right information to the right people.

The increased awareness of fire-code violations at fraternity houses across the country has not spurred any new inquiry at UNL, Anderson said. "It has been an issue at Nebraska

"I don't have any problems living here."

GREG HAND
Phi Delta Theta president

ever since there has been a code here," Anderson said. "It's not something new to this campus and to this state. We've always been conscious of safety and security."

What much of the problem boils down to, officials said, is money. Fire doors cost money, solid-core doors cost money, and in some houses, money is tight.

"I can understand if they are hard-up for money," Schoen said. "But if you just consider the value of the house itself."

"Ask the people in North Carolina. You can't rebuild that house."