



Snubbed

Nebraska senior quarterback Scott Frost was snubbed by the Big 12 Coaches, who selected him as third team all-conference. PAGE 8



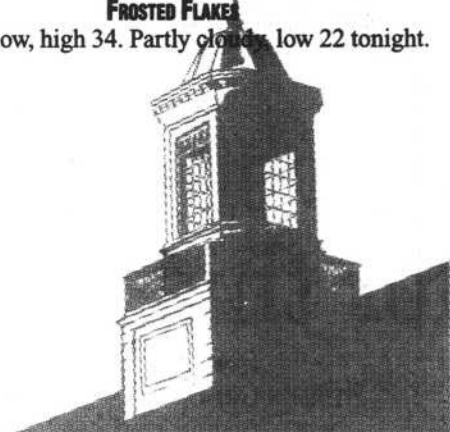
Mixed nuts

Hundreds of productions of "The Nutcracker" have been performed each year. But every company flavors its performance differently. PAGE 10

FROSTED FLAKES

Light snow, high 34. Partly cloudy, low 22 tonight.

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'The book is closed'

Williams 3rd to die in 4 years

By MATTHEW WAITE
Senior Reporter

Described by witnesses as serene, Robert E. Williams was put to death Tuesday morning, becoming the third prisoner to die in Nebraska's electric chair since 1959.

Fighting the sentence for 19 years, Williams said in his final statement he was "on my way home."

"I just appreciate living long enough to be blessed by so many people that God has led into my life, and my last statement would be that I hope that this incident will inspire other people to find another way," he said in his final statement at 8:50 a.m.

Williams was convicted in Lincoln in 1978 for the murders of Patricia McGarry and Catherine Brooks in 1977. Williams shot McGarry in the face during an argument, and then raped and murdered Brooks, who came to McGarry's aid. He was originally sentenced to death for both murders, but one death sentence was thrown out on appeal.

The double murder was the beginning of a three-state rampage that started with another rape in Lincoln the next day and the murder of Virginia Rowe in Sioux Rapids, Iowa, the day after that.

The next day, Williams kidnapped a railroad worker and kidnapped, shot twice, raped and dumped a St. Paul, Minn., woman - who survived - in a field. He was arrested in Lincoln eight days after the double homicide.

Wayne Earl Rowe, who found his wife's naked, bloody body in their bed in 1977, was allowed to witness the execution by Nebraska State Penitentiary administrators. He said seeing Williams die gave him closure to his wife's murder.

"It just didn't take long," he said. "I had to wait for 20 years for this."

"I didn't think it could be true that it was happening."

Strapped to the electric chair, moments away from his death, Williams apologized to Rowe.

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KAREN SWEATMAN OF GRAND ISLAND cries during the prayer vigil for Robert E. Williams outside the state penitentiary Tuesday morning. Sweatman said she has been against the death penalty for 20 years and that it is wrong to fight violence with violence.

RYAN SODERLIN/DN

Witnesses to execution share feelings

Friend calls inmate's faith strong, genuine

By MATTHEW WAITE
Senior Reporter

From the Bible's 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, Joy Stevens pointed out Tuesday afternoon that if one remembers God before death, God takes his soul to heaven before the body dies.

On Tuesday morning, she said, she saw it first hand as she watched her friend Robert E. Williams executed for murder.

"He was out of there before that electricity attacked his body," Stevens said from her home in Fort Calhoun.

Stevens was one of four witnesses Williams

Please see FRIEND on 6

Inside:

■ Iowa family says they can forgive Williams, but not forget his actions. Page 2

■ Protesters for and against capital punishment gathered around Lincoln Tuesday. Pages 6-7

Condemned man calm at end, witnesses say

By TED TAYLOR
Senior Reporter

A smiling Robert E. Williams was not what media witnesses expected to see Tuesday, moments before the death row inmate died in the electric chair.

But even while strapped into the chair that would soon take his life, Williams appeared happy - confident that he was going to a better place, witnesses said.

Williams' smile, along with what witnesses repeatedly described as a very "calm, composed and serene" demeanor, helped make their experience as official witnesses easier, said Brad Stephens, co-

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Academic Senate votes no classes on King day

By SARAH BAKER
Assignment Reporter

Academic Senate

After hours of debate, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Academic Senate voted 41-2 at its Tuesday meeting to observe Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday on campus by canceling classes.

The senate voted to endorse

King's birthday by instituting a set of programs, workshops and other activities to commemorate King, and to cancel classes on that day to allow students and faculty members to attend the events.

The proposal also specifies that a

day in the semester will be set aside for students to make up classes that would be missed because of the holiday. The use of the makeup class day is left to the discretion of the instructor.

The senate amended the original proposal to specify that a day will be set aside to during the semester for makeup classes rather than a Saturday.

Academic Senate President Jim Ford declared the proposal an emergency issue and said he wanted to get the sense of the body.

"I think the main issue that is dividing us is whether or not to support canceling classes," he said.

Richard Edwards, senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, urged the senate to vote for the original proposal.

"It is time for UNL to have a King holiday," Edwards said. "We should have a day to use for education concerning one of the most historical figures in our history."

Leo Sartori, physics professor and a member of the Calendar Committee, said this senate vote is used as a vote to guide the calendar

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