

Graduate leaves UNL \$125 million

Engineering program will benefit

BY JESSICA FARGEN
AND KIM SWEET
Staff writers

Two items on UNL's wish list could be checked off, thanks to the largest single, private charitable donation ever given to the university.

Additions to the Walter Scott Engineering Center and Love Library could likely be a reality with money from the estate of a Brooklyn, N.Y., woman who made her fortune by investing with Omaha's Warren Buffett years ago.

The NU Board of Regents approved the \$125 million donation Tuesday after an emergency telephone conference meeting was held to approve the plan to divvy out UNL's share of Mildred Topp Othmer's \$570 million estate.

The Omaha native and graduate of the University of Nebraska, in Lincoln, died at age 90 in April. Her husband, Donald, died in 1995.

Chancellor James Moeser said the money would give UNL a boost, allowing it "to rise to a whole new level of excellence, especially in the areas of research and graduate studies."

"I want to begin to design the university of the future, taking advantage of what this fund provides," Moeser said.

He called it "the single most important asset" to come to the university.

Regent John Payne of Kearney said. "This is an incredible gift, and the board of regents is greatly appreciative of a gift of this magnitude."

As the money is distributed, some of it is earmarked to provide \$2.5 million for the Donald F. and Mildred Topp Othmer Professorship. The professorship was established in the will of Donald Othmer in 1995 after he died.

The rest of the money earned from the interest of the Othmer-Topp Endowment would go to three areas, under the plan the regents approved:

- 75 percent of the income from the fund would enhance the chemical engineering program and upgrade technology for UNL libraries, said Dara Troutman, NU spokeswoman. An addition to the Walter Scott Engineering building and expansion of Love Library also would be included.

- 12.5 percent of the income would help fund functions and facilities of the regents and administration. The regents and NU president Dennis Smith have not yet determined how they will use that money, Troutman said.

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Robak's new post at NU will focus on technology

BY LINDSAY YOUNG
Senior staff writer

Lt. Gov. Kim Robak's past work with the improvement of Nebraska's technology infrastructure will help her in her new job with the NU system, university President Dennis Smith said.

Robak was appointed to the posts of University of Nebraska vice president for external affairs and corporation secretary in June. She will replace J.B. Milliken, who has accepted a position with the University of North Carolina.

Robak's appointment by Smith was approved at the June 20 NU Board of Regents meeting.

"I think she's an outstanding choice," Smith said.

Robak will do similar work to what Milliken did, but because of her background in working with the state's technology infrastructure, she will have additional duties in information systems, said Dara Troutman, NU spokes-

woman.

Robak helped create and lead the Nebraska Information Technology Commission, which became a state agency in 1998.

The NITC has been in operation since December 1997 after an executive order by Gov. Ben Nelson created the commission.

The commission will ensure the state's technology is used productively and efficiently.

Robak will help in the university's \$25 million, five-year initiative to study and improve its computing infrastructure, which calls for cooperation among the four campuses, Troutman said.

Robak said she is looking forward to continuing her work in technology.

"There's a tremendous amount of potential and opportunity," she said. Robak said the university has great potential to expand its distance learning program.

Please see ROBAK on 9

Stadium work unobtrusive



Construction won't interfere with first game

BY LINDSAY YOUNG
Senior staff writer

Although construction on Memorial Stadium will continue throughout the 1998 football season, there won't be any inconvenience to fans attending the games, a university official said.

Work that would cause an inconvenience will be finished before the first game, Aug. 29, said John Ingram, director of facilities for athletics.

"A lot of things will happen in the last week (before the first game)," he said. All entrances will be accessible.

By August 1999, work on Memorial Stadium will be finished, Ingram said. The stadium is receiving its biggest facelift ever, he said.

Groundbreaking for the project was held after the last home game in the 1997 season.

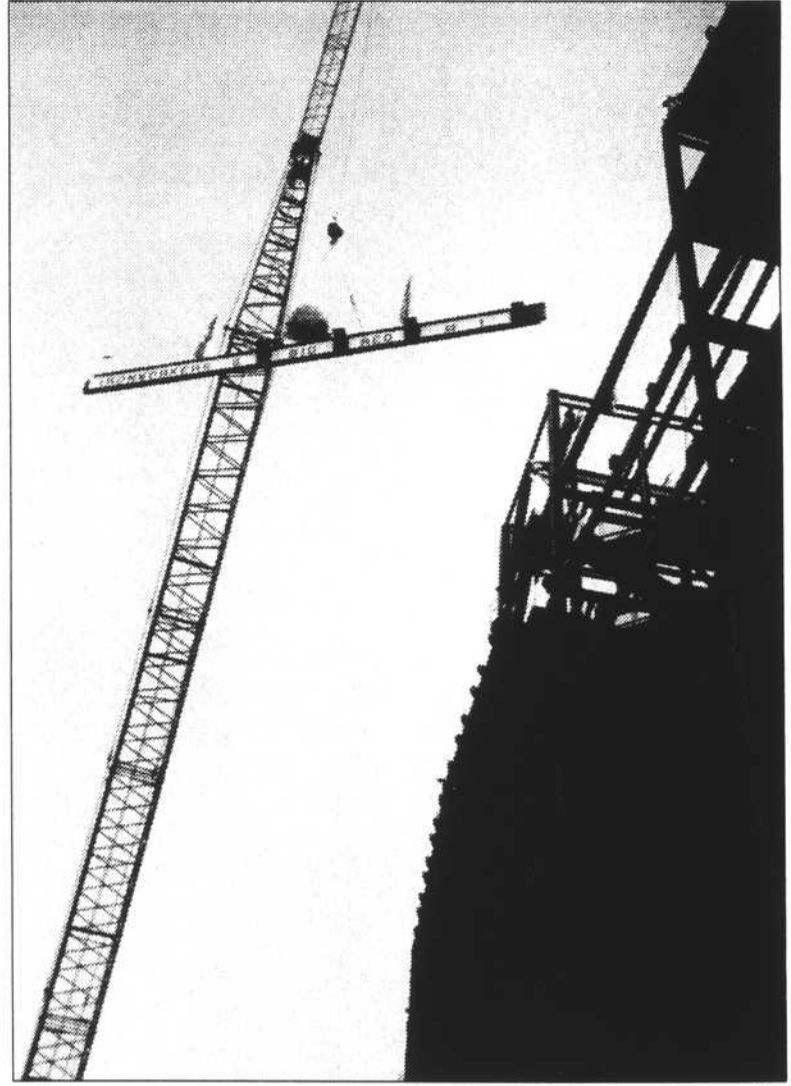
The front of the stadium is getting a new, larger look. It is now being precast and will be attached and finished before Nov. 1. Work will begin in October on the east windows covering the five levels in that part of the stadium, Ingram said. That work will continue throughout the winter.

The five levels include two levels of skyboxes, a level for the media, a club lounge and a photo deck.

The last of the steel frame was put in place Tuesday morning at 11 at a traditional ceremony. A crane lifted the final steel beam into place along with an evergreen tree, American flag and red Nebraska flag, which were placed on the beam.

The tree symbolized that the structure went up with no loss of life.

The stairs on the north and south side of the stadium are finished as well, Ingram said.



DAWN DIETRICH/DN

THE LAST STEEL beam of the new Memorial Stadium front was placed Tuesday morning. Atop the beam were an evergreen tree and Nebraska and United States flags for good luck. Above left: Athletic Director Bill Byrne and Chancellor James Moeser wait for the last piece of steel to be placed on the new front of Memorial Stadium. Byrne and Moeser thanked the steel workers for all of their hard work on the stadium this summer.

The number of restrooms has tripled, and the number of concession stands doubled on the east side. The same will be done to the west side by next August.

Also, the east concourse has doubled in size. Again, the same will be done on the west side, Ingram said.

Sinclair Hille & Associates Inc. in Lincoln have been co-contracted with a Tampa, Fla., company to do the architectural work for the project, and Sampson Construction, a Lincoln company, and J.E. Dunn Construction, a Kansas City, Mo., company, have been contracted to do the construction.

Richard Toren, project architect for Sinclair Hille & Associates Inc., said the university and his firm wanted to make sure that the changes

made to the stadium didn't affect its character.

"A lot of people like Memorial Stadium, and it's a real identifiable building," Toren said.

The \$36.3 million renovation and addition project is being paid for through the sale of 40 of the 42 skyboxes, all of which have been sold, Ingram said. In fact, he said, there is a waiting list for the skyboxes despite the high cost.

Thirty of the skyboxes sold for \$75,000 a year for 10 years. The other 10 sold for \$2 million total for 25 years. Two skyboxes will be used by the university.

The skyboxes were sold to both companies and individuals.

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Regents OK tuition increase

BY JESSICA FARGEN
Staff Writer

The cost of higher education got higher this summer as the NU Board of Regents approved a 5.5 percent tuition increase.

The extra amount students pay, now \$82.75 per credit hour, will help cover inflation, fund building renovations and compensate for lower enrollment.

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen said 1.5 percent of the total increase was expected.

This is the second year of a four-year plan that earmarks 1.5 percent of tuition to pay off bonds taken out for building repair, he said.

Most of the renovation projects are in the planning stages, Griesen said.

"Nothing physically will happen during this fiscal year, except for planning, architectural drawings and bidding-type things," Griesen said. "All the construction will continue next year or thereafter."

The 1.5 percent increase for build-

ings will be spent on the following:

- Partial funding for the total renovation of Richards Hall.

- Renovations at Love Library south, Hamilton Hall, Avery Hall and the West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte.

- Construction of one building to replace Lyman and Bancroft halls.

- Construction of a natural resources complex replacing the former biochemistry building on East Campus.

Upperclassmen will pay for these renovations even though many will graduate before they can take an art class in a sturdier Richards Hall or study in a freshened-up Love Library.

NU Regent Nancy O'Brien of Waterloo justified such expenses saying that current students are reaping the benefits of past tuition increases.

"There have been juniors and seniors two years ago who paid tuition increases to support benefits that this group of juniors and seniors had that (earlier students) did not," she said. "It is a continual cycle."

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's tuition increased 4.67 percent last year and 3.1 percent in 1996-

97. In the last five years, tuition has increased a total of 27.64 percent.

Griesen said most students realize tuition increases are necessary to maintain a quality education.

"There's been understanding ... that we need to provide students with the kind of classrooms and labs and excellence of faculty that they expect," Griesen said.

O'Brien said the regents also know the size of most college students' pocketbooks.

"We understand that dollars are tight. Our responsibility is to balance what the state pays with what students pay," she said. "As budgets get cut, tuition is one of our only places to go."

"We are trying to provide the best quality of education for the lowest dollar, and that is important."

Why tuition increased 5.5 percent:
3 percent - Inflation (salary increases and increased operating expenses)

1.5 percent - Pay back of bonds for building renovations

1 percent - \$500,000 added to the need-based scholarship fund and compensation for decreased enrollment.

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