

## NU law students make moot points

■ A team of three scholars will argue their case at a national moot court competition in New York.

BY GABRIEL STOVALL  
Staff writer

Court will soon be in session for three University of Nebraska law students — again.

The moot court team of Wendy DeBoer, Shannon Doering and Terry Meinecke will argue a case they have argued 11 times before when the team competes for a moot court national title Jan. 25 to Jan. 28 in New York.

"The team probably won't spend as much time preparing as they have in the past," said John Lenich, associate professor in the NU College of Law. "They will face the same case in the nationals that they have in other competitions."

Moot court team members hope this repetitiveness will aid in their quest to win the national title.

NU moot court teams have advanced to the national rounds of the tournament seven of the past 10 years, but Nebraska has not won the title since 1953. But knowing this doesn't appear to taint the confidence of the team.

"There is no doubt about it that we can win the nationals," said DeBoer, who was named best oral advocate in the final round of regionals in November.

DeBoer believes the team has the talent and the chemistry to carry itself to success this year.

"Although we are different types of people, we complement each other very well as a team,"

she said. "The variety in our styles of argument help us as we face the judges."

The case, the team will argue involves a person who claims to be disabled in order to receive state benefits, while at the same time making a non-disabled claim to his or her employer in order to keep a job.

The NU team advanced to the national rounds by defeating the University of Kansas team in the final round of regional competition held Nov. 20 and Nov. 21 in Kansas City, Mo. Nebraska also received the award for best written brief in the competition.

Among the challenges Nebraska faced at regionals, the toughest one was having to beat another team made up of fellow Nebraska students, team members said.

NU's College of Law was the only school to advance both its teams to the semifinals at regionals, and the second team of Troy Meyerson, Joshua Nauman and Shayla Reed lost to the national qualifying team by less than a point.

"They were, by far, the best team we faced in the regionals," said Doering, who was on the winning team.

"Because we've practiced with them before, we knew each other so well," DeBoer said. "It was like competing against our own shadow. I think it helped prepare us for stiffer competition in the finals."

Of 208 teams from 143 law schools nationwide that enter regionals, only the top 28 teams advance to nationals where competition is stiff, Lenich said.

"It'll definitely be tougher than any other competition," he said. "But I think they're ready for it. They are just as competitive with this as athletes are in collegiate sports."

# Supreme Court agrees to postpone execution

REEVES from page 1

prove that Reeves was individually discriminated against.

The motion, which also claims that the electric chair is cruel and unusual punishment, was rejected by a Lancaster County Court judge last week.

The other motion pending in the case, filed Tuesday morning, alleges that the Pardons Board violated the rights of one of the victims' families, when the Board refused to hear them speak at Reeves' clemency hearing Monday. The Lamm motion will be heard in Lancaster County District Court at noon today.

Reeves, 42, was sentenced to death 18 years ago for the 1980 murders of Janet Mesner and Vicki Lamm.

The two women were killed in a Quaker meeting house in Lincoln, and there was evidence of sexual assault.

Since the crime, several members of the Lamm and Mesner families have been lobbying state officials to commute Reeves' death sentence to life in prison.

Vicki Lamm's daughter, Audrey, who recently came to the forefront of the efforts to save Reeves' life, said everyone within arms' reach received hugs and kisses when she heard about the stay.

Audrey Lamm said she was waiting outside the State Capitol with her father, Gus, and Hutchinson's children when Hutchinson came bounding across the street toward them.

"I knew it was good news, but I didn't know what," Lamm said. "Then she opened the door and said, 'We got a stay!'"

Gus Lamm, Vicki's widower, said the stay vindicated their efforts to save Reeves. "After being shunned and disregarded (Monday), today was round two," Gus Lamm said. "And it seems as though we scored a knockdown."

Earlier in the day, the Lamms had placed 2,000 flower stems and thousands more flower bulbs in front of the Governor's mansion to make a statement about Monday's emotional Pardons Board hearing.

At the end of the hearing in which the Pardons Board denied Reeves' appeal for clemency and refused to hear family

## Protesters vow to continue battle

REACTION from page 1

faltered in its care of Randy Reeves."

Justice said UNITE members have been making themselves visible in protest of the execution since before the winter break.

Three members attended the Pardons Board hearing Monday afternoon, and several others protested outside the Capitol before and during the break.

"We are trying to make as active a presence as possible," he said. "That way (Pardons Board members and the Nebraska Supreme Court) will know we are there."

Colette Mast, a UNITE and Northern Cheyenne tribe member, said Gov. Mike Johanns, a member of the three-person Pardons Board, should have granted Reeves clemency Monday.

"It makes me wonder what Johanns thinks when he was so adamant that justice must be served

through the execution of Reeves," she said. "I think it would have been an injustice if he had been executed."

Despite the stay of execution, Justice and Castellanos, a UNITE and Ogalalla Lakota Nation member, said the Nebraska judicial system is based on prejudiced values, citing Reeves' American Indian heritage as the cause for his scheduled execution.

Said Justice: "The reason he was given death is because he is a brown man who killed two white women. It's very obvious that (the Nebraska prison system) is a racist institution."

Justice said the system had been biased in favor of whites since its founding and said the state of Nebraska deserved just as much blame for the crime as did Reeves.

"People of color are treated with extraordinary contempt in the legal system," he said. "There's a long legacy of one law for colored people and one law for white folks, and this isn't the way to do it."

members, Audrey Lamm tried to give a pink rose to each of the Board members.

Lamm said she gave Stenberg and Secretary of State Scott Moore a flower, and told them she would pray for them, but Johanns waved her off and wouldn't accept the flower.

"Today we gave him some flowers he couldn't wave away," she said.

The three flowers she held at the hearing are a symbol of the three lives lost in this crime: Janet Mesner, Vicki Lamm and Randy Reeves.

Emotions have run the gamut for Reeves supporters this week — from despair and disappointment to happiness and relief. But even after Monday's ordeal, supporters said they held hope for Reeves' life.

"Since we heard (Monday's Pardons Board decision) it was a very down day," said Mildred Mesner, Janet's mother.

But Tuesday their spirits lifted, she said.

"We were very disappointed yester-

day at the outcome, and today, this news — this is good news," Mesner said.

Don Reeves, Randy's adoptive father, said he was pleased, but unsure what the news will mean for his son.

"I hope the court will hear the arguments we have been making for years," Don Reeves said.

After the news, Don Reeves spoke to Randy over the phone Tuesday evening. Randy Reeves had heard the news earlier in a phone call from Hutchinson.

"Numb may be the most accurate word (to describe Randy's mood)," Reeves said. "We don't know quite what to think yet."

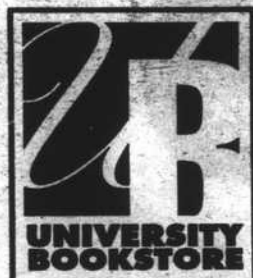
Reeves' birth mother, Grace Blackbird, said she was elated when someone called her with the news.

"This is a really big relief to me," she said, nearing tears. "That's my only child and I didn't want him to go like that."

Senior staff writer Jessica Fargen contributed to this report

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