



Photos  
(clockwise from far left)

**SENIOR THEATER MAJOR BECKY KEY** is fitted for her costume for the Nebraska Repertory Theater's production of "The Princess and the Pea," which runs from July 22 - 25.

**JENNY D' AGOSTA**, a senior Theater Arts Major, trims a support for a set for the Repertory Theater's production "Division Street."

**CYNTHIA PETTJOHN**, a senior Spanish Major, works on a costume for "Division Street." The show runs from July 28th - August 7th.

## Temple is for theater, but it wasn't built that way

By Brock Wendlund  
Staff Writer

In 1904, ground was broken on the corner of 12th and R Streets, and much to the demise of many University of Nebraska-Lincoln administrators of the time, work began on a three-story brick building that would become the Temple Building.

Originally designed as a "social and religious building," the Temple housed a band room, a spa with kitchen, a banquet hall and a locker room. It was the predecessor to the modern day Student Union.

John D. Rockefeller, who had donated \$66,666.67, two-thirds of Temple's cost, insisted that one of the building's major social functions be to house a theater. This request met great opposition.

"Many people in the early 1900s looked down upon theater arts," said Pat Overton, Temple's theater manager from 1970 to 1995. "There was a two year battle before Temple could actually be built, and eventually a com-

promise was struck so that its location would be outside the UNL gates (the boundary that separated the southern edge of campus from the rest of Lincoln)."

When the curtains opened for the first production in 1908, George Bernard Shaw's "You Never Can Tell", UNL became the fourth university in the country to have a functioning theater program.

Alice Howell, the theater's first manager, was a Midwestern pioneer for theater arts and was the driving force behind the Temple Theater in its early years, Overton said.

"The theater department took shape with the go-getter attitude of Alice Howell," she said.

After the Temple Theater underwent a major renovation in 1954, the theater was rededicated in Howell's name. It became the Howell Memorial Theater as a tribute to the efforts of its first chair.

Today, the Howell Theater is a 380-seat proscenium theater located on the first floor of the Temple building.

"The thing that makes Howell a classic the-

ater is the fact that it was simply engineered to be a theater," Overton said. "In the early days, many university theater departments used forums for music for their productions instead of ones specifically for theater."

The traditional theater style of the Howell Theater creates a certain ambiance for its audiences, said Dorothy Benes, accounting clerk at Temple for 26 years.

"The patrons and actors together form a more personal relationship in the intimacy of the Howell Theater," Benes said.

Overton agreed that the Howell Theater is a place for the audience to connect with the on-stage presence before them, but she hinted at another, less apparent connection that is made at the theater.

"There are ghosts that inhabit Temple," she said. "They are the ghosts from plays that have been performed throughout the years. Nobody cared for them when their plays were through, so they've stayed at the Temple because she is the only one who cares for them."

This constant presence is what has made Temple endure through the years, Overton

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PAT OVERTON  
Temple theater manager, 1970-1995