

# Hotel roof catches on fire

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struction, firefighters had to haul hoses and equipment to the top of the building using ropes thrown down from the top floor and the building's elevator.

"Anytime a fire gets above street level, it's a lot of work," Spadt said. "It's a very labor-intensive project."

Before firefighters could reach the top floor, a water nozzle mounted at the end of a 108-foot fire ladder was used to spray flames away from the building's elevator, Fire Capt. Bruce Sellon said.

"They were able to clear an area and cool it down," Sellon said. "They can pump probably about 1,000 gallons a minute through the nozzle."

Sellon said the elevator operator misunderstood firefighters' orders and brought them to the building's top floor, where the fire was burning.

"We opened up the door, and there's the fire right there," Sellon said. "That's where the tar kettle was just outside the door."

Sellon said the tar kettle was about 25 feet from the elevator and engulfed in flames.

After dropping a floor, firefighters then crawled onto scaffolding outside the building and then onto the roof, Sellon said.

Firefighters were able to use the wind by attacking upwind of the fire, out of the noxious black smoke caused by the burning tar, Sellon said.

Sellon said the roof was almost entirely covered in tar and on fire. Adding to the problem, several small propane tanks used to keep the tar from cooling as it is spread were left on the roof in the flames. Sellon said one may have exploded.

Workers evacuating the building were able to haul a 150-pound propane tank down from the roof, Sellon said, avoiding a potentially

large problem.

The fire mainly burned tar, roofing materials, plywood and Styrofoam being used to build the roof.

"All that stuff can give off some pretty nasty smoke," Sellon said.

Smoke stopped coming from the top of the building at about 11:20 a.m., although spot fires continued burning inside the building throughout the day.

"We may have crews out there all night just as a precaution," Sellon said.

Below the fire, construction workers watched much of their work burn.

Midwest Partitions employee Jeff

Badger said he and his co-workers had just finished construction around the roof last week and that the top floors were almost done.

"Man, we were so close to being completely done with it," Badger said. "This really put a big damper on everything."

Barrett said scaffolding taken down from completed sections of the building would have to be replaced to repair fire damage.

Wesely said the fire, while damaging, could have been worse.

"It's a setback, but it's not a disaster," Wesely said. "A lot of our hearts sank this morning when we saw that horrible sight of the smoke coming from that building."

## Police reroute traffic during fire efforts

■ To clear the way for emergency vehicles, access around hotel was restricted.

*From staff reports*

As the Lincoln Fire Department rushed to put out a fire at the top of the Embassy Suites Hotel, Lincoln Police hustled to limit traffic access around the fire scene to emergency vehicles.

Assistant Police Chief John Becker said emergency vehicles needed clear access to fires, creating the need to clear Lincoln streets of traffic.

The fire began at about 10:30 a.m. Firefighters and police faced the task of restricting access around the downtown hotel just before and during lunch hour.

Adding to the problem, the hotel is being built along 10th Street several blocks south of where Interstate 180 empties into Lincoln. Becker said roads were blocked as far as Sun Valley Road and Cornhusker Highway.

Becker said controlling traffic would have been slightly more difficult were P Street open to two-way traffic throughout downtown, adding that one-way streets are usually easier to control.

Police Capt. Al Soukup said no accidents were reported downtown while streets were blocked.

# Lied service offers memorial to Jones

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crowd.

"Melvin W. Jones made his work force into his family," Moeser said. "He made a unique and personal difference in the lives of the people who loved him."

Jones was involved in several groups, including the United Way, the Downtown Lincoln Association and MAD DADS.

Moeser announced that the Melvin W. Jones Need-Based Scholarship Fund and the Melvin W. Jones Memorial Scholarship Fund will be created at the University of Nebraska Foundation in Jones' honor.

Several other people who knew Jones gave remarks. Some statements elicited spurts of laughter while others drew tears.

Bruce Currin, assistant vice chancellor for human resources, read a memo to Jones that his department wrote after Jones' death.

"Thank you for enhancing our self-esteem and for caring about us," said Currin, while holding back tears.

Jones used to give awards to custodians to show his appreciation for their work, Currin said.

Leon Caldwell, assistant professor of educational psychology, drew applause from the audience as he reminisced about the lessons that he learned from Jones.

"Dr. Jones taught me that you can be on a predominantly white campus without being predominantly white," Caldwell said.

Jones was concerned about racial issues, Caldwell said.

Even though Jones was a great contract negotiator, he will be remembered for his convictions, Caldwell said.

The service concluded with the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" by the entire audience and a benediction from the Rev. Michael Combs.

Shawn Bantz, a senior management major, had a class with Jones' wife, Assistant Professor Mae Colleen Jones, and was impressed with her charisma and leadership.

"I came here to honor Mr. Jones because he must have been a big part of his wife's greatness," Bantz said.

# Remains returned to tribal members

*From staff reports*

The first of 1,700 American Indian remains housed on UNL's campus was returned to its rightful owners Thursday.

Members of the Ponca Tribe picked up remains from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Thursday, said a tribal representative.

The remains will be buried during a ceremony today near Niobrara.

The remains are the first to be returned since Sept. 1, 1998, when university leaders signed an agreement with tribal leaders to return American Indian remains found in Bessey Hall in 1997.

Under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, museums, federal agencies and institutions are required to report their inventories of native remains and funerary objects to the National Park Service.

Then, the inventories are printed in the federal register before the remains can be returned.

Since the 1998 agreement with UNL, only the Ponca and Omaha remains inventories have been published in the federal register.

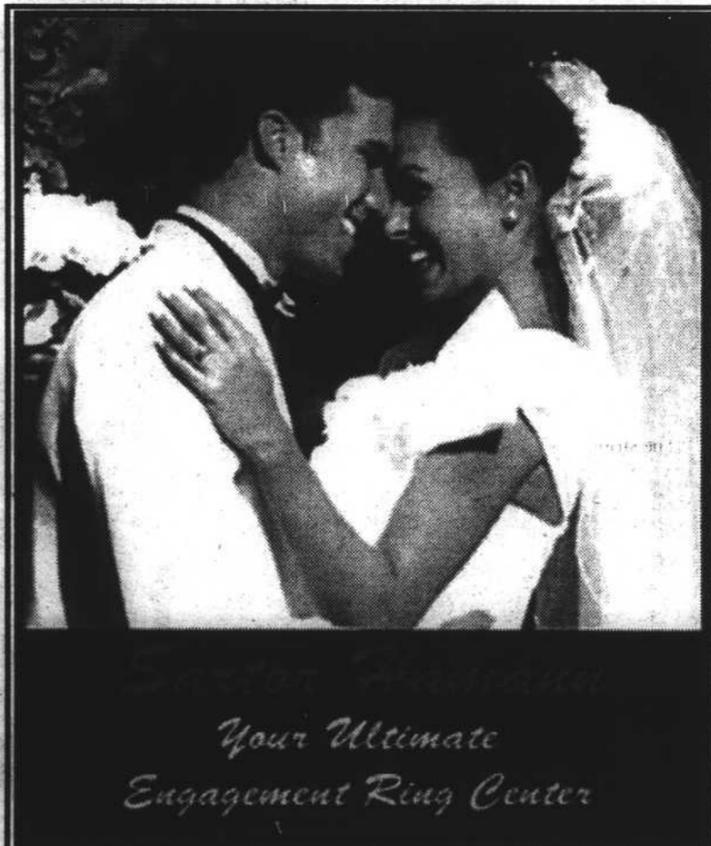
UNL officials would not comment on the transfer of remains. Tribal leaders could not be reached for comment.

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