

# Funds create professorship

■ An English department search committee seeks a professor of national stature.

By **KIMBERLY SWEET**  
Senior staff writer

Nebraska native Cliff Hillegass created Cliffs Notes to help students understand literary masterpieces.

Members of the University of Nebraska Lincoln's English department hope a recent donation to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln by the Cliffs Notes creator will do the same in a different way.

Thanks to a \$250,000 donation from the Hillegass foundation, the English department will be home to a distinguished professor next fall.

The professorship, called the Cliff Hillegass Chair in English, will be filled by someone with expertise in 19th century American literature, said Linda Pratt, chairwoman of the English department.

"It will benefit us in many ways," Pratt said. "It will allow a distinguished scholar to join our faculty, and it will also give us teaching and research help in the American literature program."

The expertise will extend into other areas as well, Pratt said.

The Center for Great Plains Studies and 19th century studies — both

“It will allow a distinguished scholar to join our faculty, and it will also give us teaching and research help.”

**LINDA PRATT**  
chairwoman of the English department

American and British — will benefit, she said.

The \$250,000 gift from the Cliffs Charitable Foundation will be matched with funds from the Donald and Mildred Othmer estate.

A portion of the funds from the Othmer estate had been set aside for such matching funds. The funds aim to bring professors with national and international stature to the university.

Pratt said the search committee would be looking for someone who can fill the bill.

"We're looking for (someone with national stature)," Pratt said. "We think we can recruit that."

The Cliff Hillegass chairmanship in English will be the first distinguished chairmanship to be filled by someone outside the department at the time of the appointment, Pratt said.

Other distinguished chairmanships have been appointed internally, she said.

Along with giving money to estab-

lish a professorship, the Cliffs Charitable Foundation gave another \$250,000 to help the Literary Research Program and Nebraska Writing Project at UNL.

Terry Fairfield, president and CEO of the NU Foundation, said the donation was one of many Hillegass and his wife, Mary, have given to NU over the years.

"The Hillegasses have displayed their generosity through time and skill as well as through their monetary gifts to the University of Nebraska," Fairfield said in a statement. "We greatly appreciate their dedication and support."

Hillegass founded Cliffs Notes in 1948. Starting in the basement of his Lincoln home, Hillegass' company had expanded to a warehouse and brought in an annual revenue of \$12 million until it was sold in 1998 to a publishing company.

Hillegass and his wife both attended the University of Nebraska.

## Walk this way



LIZ MEACHAM/DN

**RODNEY PHELPS** walks Sunday in the parking garage at the corner of 9th and O streets. He was replacing old license plates on his classic Chevy truck, which he stores there.

# Cells of aborted fetuses used at NU

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sent," Audi said.

Robert R. Blank, chairman of Metro Right to Life, an anti-abortion group, said it was "abhorrent and repulsive" that the Medical Center would use tax dollars for experiments using aborted babies.

Blank said his organization is concerned any time public money and officials become involved with abortion.

Audi said he didn't have a position on the current Medical Center fetus research.

"I am inclined to say that with the right safeguards, some procedures of this sort may be warranted," Audi said.

Safeguards include the conditions of consent, scientific quality and ethical conduct of the experimentation, Audi said.

Medical Center Vice Chancellor Dr. William O. Berndt told the World-Herald the research has been under way for several years.

He knows fetal-tissue research is controversial, Berndt said, but it could improve the lives of many people. History has shown important scientific work has always been controversial, Berndt said.

"We are trying to understand the fundamental biology of human brain cells," Berndt said in the World-

“I am inclined to say that with the right safeguards, some procedures of this sort may be warranted.”

**ROBERT AUDI**  
UNL professor of philosophy

Herald story.

The research could help determine what goes wrong in the brain in patients with disorders such as Alzheimer's disease. It may lead to new treatments.

Berndt declined to reveal the identity of the researchers at the Medical Center because of concerns about adverse public reaction.

Dr. LeRoy Carhart, who runs an abortion clinic in Bellevue, provided the tissue for the research. Carhart was appointed as an unpaid faculty volunteer in October 1997.

Before the fetuses are used for research, women must agree to participate and sign a release form.

The Medical Center's research raises ethical questions, Audi said, including whether people can give consent for experimental use of any human body that is not their own.

That reasoning depends on whether a fetus is considered a human

body, Audi said. He also questioned the father's consent rights.

"I would say that it is reasonable to think that a woman may give appropriate consent if the body is that of a fetus she has carried and is genetically hers."

The Medical Center does not perform elective abortions, Berndt said. An elective abortion is an abortion that is used as a form of birth control.

Carhart does not perform abortions at the Medical Center, Berndt said, and Carhart does not teach there.

The Medical Center is also involved in controversial research using embryonic stem cells, Berndt told the World-Herald.

Researchers hope to use the stem cells for treatment of a number of disorders.

Senior editor **Jessica Fargen** and staff writer **Jill Zeman** contributed to this report.

# New ways sought to lure researchers

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Torr said.

A Research I Institution title is a good tool to gauge the amount and quality of research at UNL, and it brings researchers to the university, Torr said.

The foundation's interim classification system, last revised and computed in 1994, eliminates two research categories and a \$40 million federal funding minimum requirement.

The 1994 calculation that placed UNL as a Research I Institution was an average of 1989, 1990 and 1991 figures of funding, said Norm Braaten, assistant director of the Research Grants and Contracts office.

The concern for prestige was one of the reasons for the foundation's change.

The foundation's goal for classification was to note the amount of research done at institutions, not to provide a ranking system or recruiting tool, said Alex McCormick, senior scholar of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

"For better or worse, the Carnegie classification has become a status and quality order. That's not what we're about," McCormick said.

He said he did not know how the changes would affect schools and their abilities to display their research programs.

Currently, the Carnegie Foundation says a Research I Institution is one that awards at least 50 doctoral degrees per year and receives and spends at least \$40 million in federal funding for research; the funding requirement being the most difficult to obtain.

The changes, which will take place about mid-summer 2000, eliminate the funding requirement.

But the changes extend the number of doctoral certificates

granted annually to require the certificates be earned among at least 15 different educational areas.

It also changes UNL's title from Research I Institution title to Doctoral/Research Universities I.

The technical reason for dropping the funding requirement is because the National Science Foundation, the organization that compiles the funding statistics from 15 different federal agencies, has decreased the number of agencies that it gathers data from, making the information inaccurate, McCormick said.

Torr disagreed that the National Science Foundation's calculations were inaccurate.

Though the NSF has dropped some data from agencies, Torr said, when the foundation started taking numbers from the NSF, the agencies that were dropped from calculations were not included and therefore wouldn't affect the numbers now.

The 2000 interim revisions for the Carnegie classification should be a more accurate, fair and adequate gauge of research, McCormick said.

The title Research I Institution might attract researchers to UNL, but the foundation's classification is for educational information, not for competition between schools, said Gay Klebold, communications director of the Carnegie Foundation.

The figures were supposed to be an indication of the amount of research done at an institution, Klebold said.

"The classifications aren't supposed to be a ranking," she said. "When you're talking about status, that's not what they're used for."

The long-term plan proposed for 2005 will include a series of classifications to compare and group institutions in a variety of ways because one classification for each institution is inadequate for comparison, McCormick said.

*"All I want for Christmas is dailyneb.com!"*

**Daily Nebraskan**

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