

Grade school honors UNL counselor

By Margaret Behm
Staff writer

Elementary school students were entertained and enlightened Thursday by the cultural experiences and achievements of UNL counselor Marty Ramirez.

Maxey Elementary School honored Ramirez for being an important part of Nebraska's history by making him a member of its Famous Nebraskan Banner Gallery.

Ramirez said he was pleased to have been made a member of the gallery because several minorities have had their past erased by history.

"Many minorities, especially Mexicans, have been forgotten in Nebraska history," said Ramirez, a counseling psychologist. "We have contributed to this nation and this state, and now we are starting to be recognized."

Ramirez is the fifth person to be honored with a banner and a plaque. He is the first living honoree.

Students in the third and fifth grades designed and made the banner that will be permanently displayed in Maxey Elementary's gallery.

Dawn R. Connelly is the art specialist and multicultural chair at Maxey Elementary School. She spent more than a year researching facts about Ramirez.

By having the children learn about people of different cultures, they obtain a more diverse perspective, Connelly said.

"When kids are young, you can make an impression on them about other people," Connelly said. "It can be about people of color, race or of different economic status."

Connelly said she teaches students to relate to people based on what is in their hearts, not the color of their skin.

When the students listened to Ramirez, they could tell he was a good person, Connelly said.

"When they saw Marty, they saw a person with a good heart, not color," Connelly said.

Ramirez was the youngest of 11 children born to immigrants. He gives his family credit for supplying him with a Catholic upbringing, strong roots and a desire to be educated.

At a young age, he learned about hard work by being a migrant worker near Scottsbluff from ages 9 to 18.

"In this country, you're supposed to enjoy summer and go on vacation," Ramirez said. "But the first day of summer, I would be in the fields until the first day of class."

"I saw how much we were segregated and mistreated, and yet I was asked along with other minorities to fight."

Marty Ramirez
UNL counselor

He attended college on a baseball scholarship at Chadron State, where he received a bachelor's degree in sociology and Spanish in 1967.

From 1968 to 1969, he served in Vietnam, where he was awarded the Purple Heart.

When he returned, Ramirez became a part of the Chicano movement, protesting and marching in Scottsbluff and at UNL.

He said he protested because he was asked to serve the country in the war and felt he should receive better treatment in society.

"I saw how much we were segregated and mistreated, and yet I was asked along with other minorities to fight," Ramirez said.

Ramirez went on to earn a Ph.D. in counseling psychology from UNL in 1993.

Despite his accomplishments, he still has to overcome obstacles.

"The reality is that someone who doesn't know me would see my color and last name and would have the audacity to say I didn't belong here, even in the year 2000," Ramirez said.

Because of his Purple Heart and the birth of his daughter on July 4, Ramirez said he is American.

"I think I'm about as American as you can get," Ramirez said.

Chicanos sometimes struggle with identity because they have two countries influencing them, Ramirez said.

"For those of us who have been impacted by the American way, the struggle we have is 'Who are we?'" Ramirez said. "Be proud that you are Mexican. That was what the Chicano movement was about."

Ramirez said he has taken pieces from both influences when forming his identity.

"I've taken from both worlds, and I've made my own decisions as to who I am," Ramirez said.

He said he is satisfied with both of his cultural backgrounds.

"I'm very proud to be Mexican, and



Heather Glenboski/DN

MARTY RAMIREZ, counseling psychologist at the University Health Center, was inducted to Maxey Elementary School's Famous Nebraskan Banner Gallery Hall of Fame on Thursday morning. Students from third, fourth and fifth grade classes designed and painted a 30-inch by 6-foot banner in his honor.

I'm proud to be American, too. That's who I am," Ramirez said.

Connelly said Ramirez's stories affected the children.

"The kids were still talking about him in the afternoon," Connelly said. "I know he impacted their lives."

Ramirez said he was excited to be put into a category of history with Standing

Bear and Willa Cather.

His father was also honored along with Standing Bear and Willa Cather in a history book about Nebraska, Ramirez said.

"Who would have ever thought that a Mexican boy from the streets of Scottsbluff would be honored next to Willa Cather and Standing Bear," Ramirez said. "Only in America could this possibly happen."

County court joins transplanted offices

By Michelle Starr
Staff writer

The county court will be packing up its things and moving this weekend.

The move is part of a five-year master plan to house city and county law enforcement agencies in one central location on 575 S. 10th St. The location also includes the Justice and Law Enforcement Center at 555 S. 10th St.

"It's like a one-stop shop for criminal justice agencies," Sheriff Terry Wagner said.

The sheriff's office already moved into the building along with the city attorney, juvenile services and district court on Nov. 15.

The county court will be the second to last to move to 575 S. 10th St. Lincoln Police will move to the building Feb. 14.

"It's been an all-consuming thing for the past several years for us," Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady said. "I don't ever want to go through this again."

Judy Leech, judicial administrator of the Lancaster County Court, said the move was a complicated but positive event.

Having the agencies in one location will increase accessibility and will be more user-friendly with a larger counter for increased help, Leech said.

The building has better directional signs and acoustics in the courtrooms, she said.

Employees will also benefit from new office furniture.

Leech said because of the county court's large staff - 46 staff and six judges - the move would be an extensive endeavor.

"It requires a lot of organization," Leech said.

Leech began working on getting the correct furniture about two years ago. Three months ago, she started fine-tuning the details with supervisors.

The details included placement of phones and computers. Ensuring the proper furniture was in place and undamaged during the move was also a factor, Leech said.

In addition, ensuring the proper packing of files in order for easy unpacking was one of her concerns.

Casady said the move has been highly anticipated.

When the Lincoln police moved into the current building at 233 S. 10th St., in 1969, it was adequate for the time. But the force has outgrown the space.

"We've been planning this to be temporary as long as we've been in it," Casady said.

He said the new facility would be a great improvement.

"It's going to be a night and day experience from our facilities to our new facilities," he said.

The greatest concern for Casady was the proper moving and secure handling of the tens of thousands of pieces of evidence, he said.

The move will occur in sections because the police station needs to remain running 24 hours a day.

Casady also said the move should coincide with the opening of a Lincoln Police center team station at 27th and Holdrege streets.

The center team station, located in a neighborhood that Casady described as fragile, was a request from the community and the City's Urban Development Unit, he said.

"It's going to be a night and day experience from our facilities to our new facilities."

Tom Casady
Lincoln police chief

"Basically, this is a project that came to us," he said.

The \$29 million Law and Justice Center included: a new building in the former north parking lot, a new parking lot to the west of the building, renovations to the previous county-city building and a two-year relocation of the court system during construction, said Don Killeen, administrator of the Lincoln-Lancaster building commission.

Wagner said the move has improved the working space, increased lighting and provided furniture for officers.

Wagner said the reason why the furniture was such a highlighted part of the move was because it created a personal working area for the officers.

The private working space has increased officer efficiency, Wagner said.

The building commission, along with city and county approval and designs from Sinclair Hille and Associates, began planning about seven years ago, Killeen said.

The bonds were issued, and approval was made about five years ago.

Hopefully, the county court will be open and ready for business on Feb. 1, Leech said.

Disney site revamping its strategy

SEATTLE (AP) - After a lackluster year of operation, the Walt Disney Co.'s online subsidiary, go.com, has confirmed that it won't try to go head-to-head against America Online Inc., Yahoo! Inc., and other all-purpose "portal" sites on the World Wide Web.

Go.com President Steve Wadsworth said Thursday executives are in the midst of revamping their strategy to focus go.com on entertainment and leisure as a way to differentiate go.com from other large Internet sites.

"We certainly believe there will be room in the marketplace for a number of large portals or hubs on the Internet," Wadsworth told The Associated Press. "Some will be better than others in certain areas. Looking at our strengths, we can win in the area of recreation, leisure and entertainment, and that's what we'll focus on."

The new strategy will play down go.com's current role as a catch-all Internet portal, or site where people usually start their Internet viewing. However, Wadsworth said the go.com portal site would continue to offer all the services it currently features, such as search capabilities.