

# Pageant winner an advocate

## Graduate speaks out for disabled people

By Margaret Behm

Staff writer

Cathy Carver is using her title as the first-ever Ms. Wheelchair Nebraska to speak out on behalf of disabled people.

Carver, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln graduate, won the state contest in December, and she will compete in the national competition in August.



Carver

The Ms. Wheelchair Nebraska Pageant was based on community service, Carver said. "It has nothing to do with looks," Carver said. "It's about the things you do in the community despite your disability."

Carver didn't use a wheelchair until she became paralyzed from the waist down when a stack of plywood fell on her at the age of 10, in 1968.

Carver said the way society deals with her disability is a problem.

Even though the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed 10 years ago, many public buildings are not wheelchair-accessible, Carver said.

When Carver enrolled at UNL, she said she quickly found out she had to arrange classes around building accessibility.

"The campus was extremely inaccessible, which was frustrating. So I dropped out," Carver said.

She did secretarial work for many years before returning to college at Iowa Western Community College. She received an associate's degree in substance abuse counseling in 1991.

Carver decided to return to UNL in the fall of 1993 to get a degree in elementary education.

She thought that the campus would be more accessible, but when she returned she discovered the campus still had problems.

For example Henzlik Hall, which houses the Teachers College, had no elevators, she said.

"I still have to laugh because the campus hadn't gotten as far as I thought it would," Carver said.

Many buildings outside the university need to be more accessible as well, Carver said.

*"When I didn't have this title I felt like I was yelling in the wind. Now I have a vehicle to spread the message to design buildings for all people."*

Cathy Carver  
Ms. Wheelchair Nebraska

Because of her Ms. Wheelchair Nebraska title, Carver said she thinks more people will listen to her about making buildings accessible for everyone.

"When I didn't have this title I felt like I was yelling in the wind," Carver said. "Now I have a vehicle to spread the message to design buildings for all people."

After she became paralyzed in 1968, Carver said she wasn't treated differently after the accident until she tried to return to her school.

"I really never felt handicapped, to be honest, until I went back to school," Carver said.

Carver was told that she would have to go to a school for disabled children.

"I didn't feel like I needed to be segregated," Carver said. "At that age I didn't feel like I should have been separated from my childhood. It was yanked from me."

She was not allowed to be educated in a school not focused on just the disabled until she was in the seventh grade.

Some teachers feared she might hurt herself if she took classes like home economics, Carver said.

"It's a fear of what you don't know," Carver said. "If there's anything that's different about you, people will flip out."

Carver went on to face another challenge after she bought a motorcycle and adapted it by creating hand brakes and adding a side car for her to sit in.

The Transportation Department didn't make license plates denoting disability for motorcycles, Carver said.

"People thought that handicapped people didn't ride motorcycles," Carver said. "People assume that people in wheelchairs can't do certain things."

She contacted Sen. David Landis of Lincoln to have a bill written to produce the license plates.

Carver spoke to the Transportation

Committee about the license plates, Landis said.

"Cathy telling her story was probably the most important thing for getting the bill passed," Landis said.

Carver said she brought in pictures to prove that disabled people could ride motorcycles.

"I brought pictures in with me on a bike," Carver said. "Our state didn't think that was possible, but it is."

Carver said she has also defied expectations in her other activities. Last June, she went parasailing in the Bahamas and dancing.

"I used to be shy to be on the dance floor because of the way I look," Carver said. "But now I don't care."

Carver currently is looking for sponsors to cover the cost of traveling to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. to represent Nebraska at the Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant in August.

Carver said that she looks forward to being asked to speak for various organizations.

"Hopefully I'll get some chances to be a keynote speaker," Carver said. "That will prepare me for all the questions I'll get bombarded with at nationals."

The Nebraska program is based on the Ms. Wheelchair America Program, which was started in 1974 in Columbus, Ohio. The non-profit program is coordinated by volunteers throughout the nation.

The Ms. Wheelchair America Board and Elysse Power, state coordinator, chose Carver to be this year's Nebraska representative.

About 20 to 25 states participate in the program, said Power, who started the Ms. Wheelchair competitions for Nebraska and New York.

In September, a new Ms. Wheelchair Nebraska will be chosen.

"It's a great way to meet other women in wheelchairs," Power said. "Then you will start to see the abilities of people with disabilities, not just the negative aspects."

Carver said that she is happy with her accomplishments because despite some obstacles, she has achieved a lot.

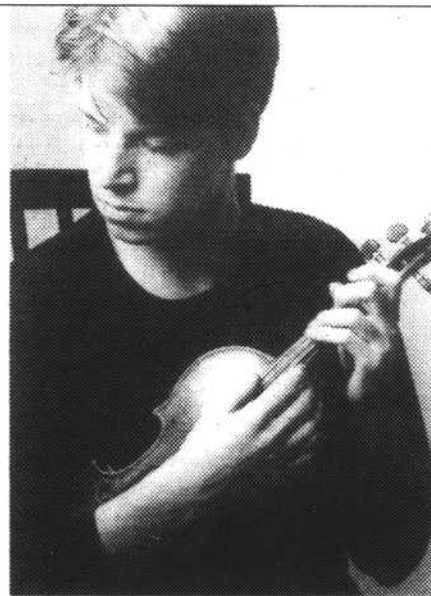
"When I look back on my life I am proud of myself," Carver said. "Not just because I'm disabled and overcame obstacles, but even as a human being I can be a good role model."



This is my last try, Roxanne...  
either be my Valentine or kick out the chair!

# Joshua Bell, Violin

The next generation of violin virtuosos. Joshua Bell is a critical and audience favorite. (He was recently associated with the films *The Red Violin* and *Music of the Heart*.)



Sunday,  
February 13,  
7PM

Celebrate Valentine's Day with enchanting music and a chance to win some romantic prizes! Concert-goers may register to win dinner at Misty's; flowers from Danielson Floral Co.; a heart-shaped box of candy from Sugar Plum Candies; a body massage from Suzanne Border, LMT; a European Spa Facial from Skin Care Etc.; a gift certificate to Gateway Mall; tickets to see Harry Belafonte in concert and more!

Many thanks to these donating businesses:

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# Area employers on campus for fair

UNL's career fair a place to look at jobs, meet prospective employers.

From staff reports

More than 100 businesses and organizations will be at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln today to help with Career Services' spring career fair.

The fair, part of a day called Career Kaleidoscope, will be in the Nebraska Union Centennial Room from 1 to 6 p.m.

Christina Fielder, a career fair coordinator, said the annual career fair is open to all students and alum-

ni. Employers from non-profit organizations, the government and private businesses will be at the fair.

Students wishing to interview with employers at the fair should bring a resume and research the organizations they are interested in.

Students should keep in contact with the employers they speak with at the career fair by sending thank-you notes.

After the career fair, students seeking more information should contact Career Services at 230 Nebraska Union and attend any future events where the employer will be.

Two other career-related events will take place today as well.

There will be a discussion from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union about careers in criminal justice. The brown bag discussion is sponsored by the Criminal Justice Students Association.

After the career fair, there will be a Students of Color Recruiter Reception in the Nebraska Union Regency Room from 6 to 8 p.m.

Jake Kirkland, of Career Services, and the Students of Color Career Advisory Committee organized the opportunity for minorities and recruiters to get acquainted in a more relaxed atmosphere.

More than 60 representatives from businesses and non-profit organizations will be at the reception.

News rules at the Daily Nebraskan  
where it goes from god to jerry to kent to the cleaners to the us



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Lied Center programming is supported by the Friends of Lied and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Mid-America Arts Alliance and the Nebraska Arts Council. All events are made possible by the Lied Performance Fund which has been established in memory of Ernst F. Lied and his parents, Ernst M. and Ida K. Lied.

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