

# UNL Regent candidate Ferlic blows past spending limits

■ The former heart surgeon claims he had no intention of staying under the \$25,000 primary spending limit.

By Kate Grafel

Staff writer

UNL Regent candidate Randy Ferlic gave a 1992 election spending law its first test in the May 8 primary.

Ferlic, who will run against two-term incumbent Rosemary Skrupa for the Omaha's District 8 seat in November, exceeded the voluntary campaign spending limit stipulated by the Nebraska Campaign Finance Limitation act. The statute established a \$50,000 limit for the entire election, and half of that — \$25,000 — can be spent on the primary.

When Ferlic, a retired heart surgeon, filed for candidacy, he said he had no intention of staying under the \$25,000 primary limit. He reported to the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission an estimate of \$70,000. Records show Ferlic actually spent a little more than \$40,000.

"I picked a number," Ferlic said. "I never really expected to spend (\$70,000)."

According to the law, which took effect in 1996, the opposition to any regent candidate who spends over the voluntary limit is entitled to public funds, provided the opposing candidate spends a minimum of \$12,500. If \$12,500 is spent, the candidate is entitled to the difference between the established spending limit and the highest spending estimate — in this case, \$45,000.

Once Ferlic spent 40 percent of his estimate — \$28,000 — Skrupa, a consumer protection lawyer, and a third candidate, Gary Thompson, were eligible to apply for the assistance.

But neither Skrupa, who won 57 percent of the primary vote, nor Thompson, whose 20 percent fell just behind Ferlic's 23 percent, spent the minimum required.

While Skrupa said she didn't originally plan on spending \$12,500, she submitted a campaign statement to the NADC that reported expenditures over the qualifying amount.

But NADC Director Frank Daley denied Skrupa's application for public funds after determining that a \$2,000 payment for advertising on KFAB radio never

went through.

Ferlic reported his highest costs also came in advertising, but in the Omaha World-Herald. He also \$5,900 on campaign consulting and \$2,400 on radio advertising. Nearly all of Ferlic's funding came from individual contributors, many of whom reside outside District 8.

Skrupa and her husband Frank funded her entire campaign. Trucks, vans, a workshop and storage space rented for the purpose of placing signs amounted to nearly \$9,000. Skrupa is a 12-year veteran of the seat.

Skrupa said her goals as a member of the Board of Regents include better transference credits between NU campuses, an affordable, quality education and a lower dropout rate.

Ferlic said he hopes to encourage more national recognition of NU faculty and research, to develop a program in water law and to more actively recruit non-traditional students.

Both candidates must submit revised campaign statements before the Nov. 9 general election. Ferlic can modify his spending estimate, and Skrupa will have the opportunity to reapply for public funds.

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