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Meeting Minutes: April 21, 2005

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Thursday, April 21, 2005
UNL East Campus Union

President Don Edwards called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He asked for self-introductions of those present, including former UNL academic unit affiliation.

Vice president and program chair Irv Omtvedt introduced the speaker, Jack Oliva, dean of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, whose topic was "*Some College Highlights and the Evolvement of American Ragtime.*"

Prior to performing several Ragtime melodies on the piano, Oliva briefly summarized the advent of Ragtime on the American scene.

The first rendition of Ragtime was in 1897 in Chicago. This unique musical form embodies a mix of American folk melodies, European composed (classical) music and African musical traditions. Ragtime was not performed in concert halls, but rather in dance halls and saloons. Centers of the development of Ragtime, with each having a unique pattern, were St. Louis, Memphis, New Orleans, Nashville and Dallas.

Composers were both amateurs and professionals. During its heyday, there were no music recording capabilities; sheet music was the norm. During the late 1800,s and early 1900's, sales of pianos in homes peaked. The popularity and use of pianos, sheet music and Ragtime were intertwined.

Memphis was noted for the Folk Rag; Oliva played a lively version of "The Monkey Rag." Some numbers were a combination of the two-step played by the left hand and the melody by the right hand.

Oliva discussed the importance of Beatrice, Nebr. native Weldon Kees in the big picture of Ragtime. Kees studied literature at UNL. An exhibition of his works is at the Sheldon Art Gallery. Kees, born in 1914, moved to New York City in 1943, to California in 1950, and died in San Francisco in 1955. He was a noted poet, painter, art critic and jazz and folk music composer.

Oliva briefly chronicled the life and contributions of Scott Joplin, credited as being a major force in development of Classic Ragtime. Joplin was born in Bowie, TX in 1868 and died in 1917. Oliva played Joplin's Pine Apple Rag and Tango Rag.

Oliva received B.A. and M.A. degrees from Mississippi State University, and and EdD from New York University. He joined the U.N. staff as Professor of Music and his current administrative post in 2001, after nine years as Director of Music at the

University of Florida, and seven years before that in a similar position at Mississippi State University. He helped set up a Ragtime collection in the *Templeton Business Music Museum and Archive* at Mississippi State

He briefly reviewed the status and reputation of the present College of Fine and Performing Arts, at one time a component of the College of Arts and Sciences at UNL. There is a high respect at UNL for the arts, he stressed. Grants of \$18 million allowed Hixson-Lied to avoid using budget funds for the benefit of students, faculty, tours and travel.

Hixson-Lied currently has 850 students enrolled, including 650-675 undergraduates; served by 72 faculty members, 12 adjunct academics and 15-20 staff. Advanced degrees are offered in art and theatre. A undergraduate program is fast-growing and arts are becoming a big presence in schools. A connection with 4-H members has been established and is thriving.

Oliva concluded noting the large financial gift by the late Johnny Carson to renovate the venerable Temple Building on the City Campus. Much needs to be done to the building with out-of-date facilities. A DVD was created, featuring “a walk down memory lane,” narrated by Terry Fairfield of the NU Foundation and given to Carson. Shortly before his death, Carson contributed \$5.3 million to UNL, with \$4.3 million earmarked for Temple Building renovation.

Business Session

Convened by President Edwards at 1:30 p.m. In memory moments, Max Schuster and Robert Stepp were noted as deceased. (Later, it was reported that Gail Wicks is deceased).

Secretary Dan Lutz reported that no minutes were taken at the March membership meeting, which was a tour of the Dental College, as no business session was held

Treasurer Walter Mientka presented a financial and membership report (Membership chair Dick Boohar was absent). Total membership: 658, including 160 life members. Current checking account balance: \$2,064.19. Maude Wisherd Fund: Book value: \$54,966.84; spendable earnings: \$31,494.78. Total expenses paid since January 1, 2005: \$850.71. A proposed budget for the Association was introduced later in the session and approved by voice vote. (Members not present wishing to obtain a copy may contact treasurer Mientka).

Old business: Edwards said the needed replacement of Jack Botts as co-secretary has been referred to the Nominating Committee, which will report its proposed slate of officers in the fall.

Three resolutions approved by the board but needing approval of members present at the meeting were introduced and discussed. The first resolution—Establishment of the

UNL Emeriti Assn. Account at the NU Foundation, was moved for approval by Duane Olsen, seconded by George Tuck, passed by voice vote. The second resolution—spelling out in detail the use of funds within the UNL Emeriti Assn. Account, was moved for approval by George Tuck, seconded by Irv Omtvedt; passed by voice vote. The third resolution—changes in Article VII, dues, in the constitution; and Article VIII, dues in the by-laws, was moved for approval by George Tuck, seconded by Duane Olsen. A unanimous vote (show of hands) was recorded; 2/3 affirmative vote was required for approval.

It was emphasized that all funds received for accounts in the NU Foundation are tax-deductible. The full text of the three resolutions is included separately as a supplement to the minutes in a mailing to all Association members, especially announcing a new amount for lifetime dues.

Committee reports: no report from Nominating and Benefits Committees. A mailing regarding applications for assistance from the Wisherd Fund will be made in June. No reports from the By-laws or Courtesy Committees..

On-Line Communications Committee Chair Jim Kendrick reported that the Emeriti Assn. web site should occur early this fall. A training meeting for Association officers and board members was scheduled after the regular meeting.

Treasurer Mientka reported that the first life membership at the new level of \$100 was purchased by Sally VanZandt.

The next Emeriti Assn. gathering will be the annual luncheon for Emeriti and retirees hosted by NU President J.B. Milliken at 11:30 a.m. on May 4 at the Cornhusker Hotel.

There being no more old, new or unfinished business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Dan B. Lutz, Secretary

Rose Leviticus and Duane Eversoll were introduced as guests.

Greg Clayton, director of benefits at UNL, and Bill Wetzal, representing Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Nebraska, were introduced to address the subject of the increasing cost of health insurance, which has become a significant concern to Emeriti members enrolled in the University health benefits plan.

Clayton said health insurance costs for a given set of benefits will continue to be a huge issue in coming years. He stressed that the University group plan is not a Medicare assistance plan. Medicare becomes the primary plan and the UNL plan supplemental. He noted that the University plan retains prescription benefits. Costs to policy holders

