

Pageant: Orton will take a term off to do community service

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Oklahoma won.

"I could not have picked a greater or more awesome person to win," she said.

Emily Orton's mother, Liz Orton, said she was thrilled with what her daughter had accomplished.

"I've always known she was that good but I wondered if other people recognized it," she said.

Emily sang an aria, a solo song, from the opera *Carmen* at the pageant. She performed the same aria at most of the pageants she had been in for the last two years. She said that her training from Millagro Vardus, a vocal instructor at the University, had helped her improve her performance of the piece.

Liz Orton said her daughter had always displayed a strong work ethic, holding down three part-time jobs and taking 20 credit hours while at Lane Community College, before transferring to the University.

Emily Orton won Miss Lane County in 1994, but did not win the title of Miss Oregon until this year, after becoming Miss Linn-Benton County.

"She is a determined person," Liz Orton said. "She has a lot of drive and is an extremely hard worker."

Livia Evans, who has known Emily Orton for almost five

years, said, "When she decides she wants something, she goes after it. She won't give up."

She's not only a very hard worker, but a positive person as well, said Richard Clark, director of the University Singers, of which Orton is a member.

"She's a great person to work with — a generous, considerate person," Clark said.

Demonstrating that spirit, she will not be attending the University this term so she can help the group Start Making A Reader Today, or SMART. Former Oregon Gov. Neil Goldschmidt heads the group, which focuses on developing reading and literacy skills for at-risk children between kindergarten and the second grade.

Orton will tour elementary, middle and high schools along with colleges to help promote SMART.

She plans to return to the University next winter, and said she hopes to select a minor and may pursue a second major.

Orton said the University gave her more than just an academic education; it helped her to compete in the pageant. And the University's diverse student background helped her to adjust to the diversity of pageant contestants.

"We really do have a wide variety of people compared to other universities," she said.

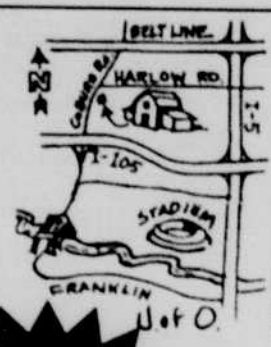


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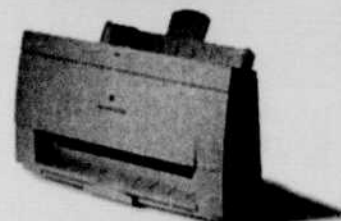
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