By Anne Hinchey

Elizabeth A. Nelson, a ballet dancer at Creighton's "A Company of Dancers," was selected as a semi-finalist in the Arts Recognition Talent Search, sponsored by the National Foundation of Advancement in the Arts. Nelson, a senior at Lincoln South High School, has been with the company for four years.

She traveled for three days in January to Coral Gables, Fla., to compete with 26 other finalists who were chosen from 250 applicants.

The application for the talent search included an essay on how you see yourself as a young dancer, a resume, and a video tape, Nelson said.

**Semi-Finalist**

The tape had to include three minutes of technique, composed of specific movements, and a one-and-a-half minute solo performance of the applicant's choice. Nelson performed "Snow Bird," which she was working on for Creighton's 1981 fall performance.

After a screening panel reviewed the applicant's work, dancers were chosen from the areas of ballet, modern dance, jazz, tap, Irish folk dance, and choreography, Nelson said.

When the semi-finalists arrived in Florida, girls from each dance form were assigned their own coach. A class was given in each section, Nelson said, and "the coaches watched our solos and gave us hints on how to improve our performance."

On the day of competition, judges watched each section take an hour long class and then judged each dancer's solo.

"The ballet dancers went first, so once we were done, we didn't have to worry all day, and could just sit back and watch the others," Nelson said.

**Results in February**

"We also had the opportunity to talk to May O'Donnell who was a student of (well-known choreographer) Martha Graham," she said. "It was real interesting to hear her views on subjects such as college and professional dancing."

Nelson said they went on a tour of Miami and then to Key Biscayne, where they could finally relax.

The semi-finalists did have the opportunity to meet with the judges, after they had been in consultation and had made the final decisions, Nelson said. However, the girls won't know the results until late February.

"Overall, the atmosphere was comfortable and non-competitive, because it was a reward just to be there with a group of dancers your own age," Nelson said.

"We were all in the same boat and formed a friendly comradery."

**A foot in door**

Nelson said the winners will receive "some monetary reward, but more importantly, it will provide a foot in the door for scholarship and apprenticeship possibilities."

"Anyone chosen as a finalist is recommended as a presidential finalist, which gives them the chance to perform for the Reagans in Washington," she said.

Nelson has been dancing since she began tap at the age of five and ballet in grade school. She met Valerie Roche, assistant professor of fine and performing arts dance instructor, at a Creighton dance camp when she was in the seventh grade. It was then, she said, that she decided to travel from her home in Lincoln to Creighton to take lessons through the Royal Academy.

"The company is small enough to move to the top quickly," she said.

"They have a good, strong program, and people are always impressed with my training—they open your mind to new ways of dance and techniques."

Nelson said she would like to dance professionally within the next couple years.