

# Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Tucker Center News

Fall 1996

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR:

As many of you know, in the Fall of 1996, we began our third year at the Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport. In the first two years of our existence, and of course this fall, we have accomplished many exciting and productive initiatives. I would like to highlight a few of them.

First, and perhaps most important, we renamed the Center to recognize the on-going support and commitment of Dr. Dorothy McNeill Tucker. Dr. Tucker graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1945, majoring in recreation leadership. She continued her education by obtaining a doctorate, and went on to become the first woman tenured at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona. As part of her commitment to girls and women in sport, Dorothy Tucker established the Dorothy McNeill and Elbridge Ashcraft Tucker Chair for Women in Exercise Science and Sport in 1993. In a recent conversation with Dr. Tucker, I asked her why she is so committed to this pioneer initiative. She indicated how much she appreciated and enjoyed what she calls "the benefits of giving." She further explained: "The joy of giving is increased tremendously when you can see how your gift is being used during your lifetime. I am sure that I have gotten more out of the gift than the University has. It has changed my life by giving me new and wonderful friends in Minnesota. In fact, Minnesota has become my second family. I guess it never hurts to think about giving when you're alive." In the Spring of 1997, there will be an official ceremony to celebrate the renaming of the Center. Details will be published in a future newsletter. In addition, our brochure has been updated to reflect the Center's new name. For a copy, please contact the Center at (612) 625-7327 or via e-mail at [crgws@tc.umn.edu](mailto:crgws@tc.umn.edu).

In terms of other exciting initiatives, the Tucker Center has been an active member in the broader Twin Cities community by being the proud sponsor of the Borghild Strand Distinguished Lecture Series. The lecture series brings nationally recognized scholars to the University to discuss issues pertaining to the impact of sport and physical activity on females. In November, the Tucker Center sponsored its fifth distinguished lecturer, Judy Mahle Lutter. Ms. Lutter is the founder of Melpomene Institute and author *Of Heroes, Hopes and Level Playing Fields* and *The Bodywise Woman*. A review of her lecture can be found on page 3 of the newsletter. If you were unable to attend the lecture and would like to view it, a videotape of the lecture is available. For more information, call the Tucker Center at (612) 625-7327.

The Tucker Center also has been actively pursuing grants to further its mission to conduct basic and applied research. Some of the grants that have been submitted include a grant to the Department of Defense to study gender differences in physical and psychosocial injuries associated with specialized military training and a grant to the University of Minnesota's Graduate School to study the relationship between psychological stress, injury and quality of life among collegiate athletes. In addition, the Tucker Center is spearheading a leadership and mentoring program to conduct interdisciplinary research, train graduate students and engage in community outreach to girls at risk in greater Minneapolis. This project will gather longitudinal data on how sport and physical activity can serve as a model for developing mentoring partnerships and leadership skills in young girls at risk for teen pregnancy, self-esteem and other social concerns. The project is part of an on-going partnership with the Mayor's Office and City Council.

As you can see, we spend a great deal of time writing and submitting grants. We have been quite successful in our efforts. For example, this fall we were awarded \$50,000 from the Graduate School, as part of their program on interdisciplinary research and postbaccalaureate education. The recipients of the award must go through a highly competitive, University-wide selection process. We were awarded the grant based on what we had achieved in our first two years; the award in a third year of operation is an unprecedented extension of prior funding.

In addition to this honor, the Tucker Center was awarded a grant from the National Center for Health and Human Services and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports to produce a groundbreaking report entitled "Physical Activity and the Adolescent Female: Physical and Mental Health Dimensions from an Interdisciplinary Approach." The report will be released nationwide in late winter or early spring. We will review the report in our next newsletter.

Most recently, the Tucker Center received a grant from the Office of Student Development and Athletics in partnership with Coca-Cola. This partnership is designed to develop community-building initiatives between the University and the broader Twin Cities community. This grant will sponsor a "learning through service" mentoring program designed to give Kinesiology students practical, career-related experiences in health and wellness education, while simultaneously providing high school students with the opportunity to learn health-related skills.

Another accomplishment has been the establishment of the Dorothy McNeill and Elbridge Ashcraft Tucker Chair for Women in Exercise Science & Sport. I am honored to report that I was chosen to be its first recipient. The Tucker Endowed Chair, the first of its kind in the country, will garner national visibility for the University and the Center, attract first-rate graduate students, and provide scientific excellence and national leadership.

Finally, the Tucker Center welcomes Karri Smith and Diane Gardetto as new staff members. They are

Ph.D. students in Recreation, Park, and Leisure Studies and the Department of Kinesiology, respectively. We are pleased to have them aboard. You can read more about them on page 3.

As we look to the future, we anticipate many exciting adventures. As part of our Distinguished Lecture Series, we will bring in a pioneer in women's athletics to recognize the 25th anniversary of Title IX and the push for gender equity. We hope that pioneer will be Billie Jean King. Keep your fingers crossed!

In closing, I want to personally thank all of the people who have worked so hard to make the Tucker Center a success. Without their hard work and support, we would have never accomplished our goals. Two of our strongest supporters have been Robert Bruininks, Dean of the College of Education & Human Development, and Michael Wade, Director of the School of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies. We also have received numerous offers from individuals inside and outside the university community to serve as volunteers for various functions. We are grateful to them all. -Mary Jo Kane

### **THE FIRST DOROTHY MCNEILL AND ELBRIDGE ASHCRAFT TUCKER Endowed CHAIR HAS BEEN NAMED**

On October 25, 1996, Dr. Mary Jo Kane was named the first holder of the Dorothy McNeill and Elbridge Ashcraft Tucker Chair for Women in Exercise Science & Sport. "Professor Kane's work addresses the critical connection between physical activity and the healthy development of girls and women," Dean Robert Bruininks stated. "Her research, as well as the work of her colleagues at the center, already is influencing national and international thinking on the benefits of exercise and sport." The Chair, made possible by an initial \$1 million gift from Dorothy McNeill Tucker, will foster research on women and girls in sport and create a forum for scholars and educators from around the country to share their knowledge with policymakers and the public. Dr. Kane intends to use the financial support gained from the Chair to further her research on the various ways mass media portray girls and women in sport.

## TUCKER CENTER STAFF PROFILE

**Diane Gardetto-** Education: B.A. Psychology, Ripon College.



M.A. Sport Psychology, John F. Kennedy University. Doctoral student in Kinesiology. Current Position: Graduate Research Assistant. Areas of Interest: Performance enhancement, the psychology of injury and eating disorders and their affects on girls and women.

*The topics of study at the Tucker Center parallel my research and applied experiences, which focus on the impact of injury and eating disorders in female athletes. I*

*would like to continue my research emphasis, while examining other issues that concern women's participation in physical activity and sports. As a research assistant I look forward to working with the staff at the Tucker Center on projects such as writing grant proposals, conducting research, and planning the Lecture Series.*

**Karri Smith-** Education: B.S. Recreation, University of Northern Colorado. M.S. Exercise Physiology, Colorado State University. Doctoral student in Recreation, Park, and Leisure Studies.



Current Position: Graduate Research Assistant. Areas of interest: exercise adherence and motivation, recreation administration/management, girls and women in sport/recreation.

*I turned ten when Title IX was passed and have been involved in sports and recreation*

*programs since I was two. Although I did not know what Title IX meant at the time, it allowed me the opportunity to continue participating in the activities I truly love. Being a part of the Tucker Center is a way for me to stay closely connected to sport by doing research in areas that are of great interest to me.*

**Shelly M. Shaffer** -Education: B.A. Psychology and B.S.



Sports Medicine, University of Charleston. M.S. Sport & Exercise Psychology, University of Illinois. Ph.D. Kinesiology, University of Minnesota. Current Position: Research Fellow and Affiliated Scholar. Areas of Interest: Psychology of sport injury, exercise adherence and motivation across the lifespan, enhancement of athletic performance.

*Having benefited from the determination and dedication of countless women who provided my generation the opportunity for unlimited sport participation, I feel very fortunate to "carry the torch" through my work at the Tucker Center. Grant writing, research, and presentations to local and national organizations allow myself and the Tucker Center staff to promote and enhance the physical and psychological benefits of athletic involvement for girls and women of all ages. It's quite a treat to get paid for doing something you love!*

### BORGHILD STRAND DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES:

#### JUDY MAHLE LUTTER

In the Tucker Center's fifth Distinguished Lecture on November 20, Judy Mahle Lutter, founder of Melpomene Institute in St. Paul, gave a powerful talk on "Heroes, Hopes, & Level Playing Fields" at the University of Minnesota's Coffman Union. Melpomene, founded in 1982, helps girls and women of all ages link physical activity and health through research publication and education.

Lutter spoke candidly about her experiences growing up before Title IX. This landmark federal legislation was designed to prohibit sex discrimination in educational settings; it has had its greatest impact on women's athletics. Despite the gender discrimination facing girls and women prior to the passage of Title IX, Lutter's mother encouraged her to be the best she could be—becoming an avid runner and dedicating her life's work to promoting health and wellness for girls and women of all ages and racial and ethnic backgrounds. She has passed on her mother's advice to her three daughters and has become an inspiration and hero to them and to many other girls and women in the Twin Cities and across the country.

Lutter believes that heroes are important because they make us strive to be our very best. She defined heroes as those who "encourage us to be more of our better self." She emphasized that "a hero dares to be herself, is strong enough to take pride in who she is, and stands up for her beliefs even if she must stand alone."

Four women that have inspired Lutter are Billie Jean King, Willye White, Donna Devarona, and Mariah Burton Nelson (the Center's fourth speaker in the Distinguished Lecture Series). Lutter affirmed that our heroes can be found everywhere: some are well-known celebrities, others are less famous and are found closer to home. Lutter emphasized that we need to recognize our heroes, no matter where they are found.

Lutter asked the audience to identify their female heroes. The audience named 20 different women heroes, but Lutter noted that it is more difficult for young people today to name female versus male heroes. She questioned why it is that female heroes are not always recognized, offering the possible explanation that the media continues to neglect a large percentage of women who deserve attention and recognition for their achievements in sport and physical activity.

Lutter concluded by saying, "I believe we're all heroes or looking for a chance to be one. We need to stand out and speak out, support what we believe in, acknowledge the positive work and effort put forth by the media, and encourage girls and women of all ages." She challenged the audience to become actively involved—to cheer at a girls' event, volunteer in activities that support and promote girls and women in sport and exercise, and to make a commitment to improve the future for all women. The challenge is one she has tirelessly promoted across the span of her life and career.

-Diane Gardetto

## PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL'S REPORT UPDATE

In partnership with the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, the Tucker Center will release a groundbreaking research report entitled "Physical Activity and Sport in the Lives of Girls: Physical and Mental Health Dimensions from an Interdisciplinary Approach." The interdisciplinary report examines the physiological, psychological, sociological, and mental health impact of sport and physical activity in the lives of girls, ages 18 and under. The report highlights current research findings, identifies gaps in the knowledge base with suggestions for future research directions, and offers recommendations for targeted constituencies such as parents, coaches, educators, and policymakers. Dr. Mary Jo Kane is the project director and Dr. Diane Wiese-Bjornstal, an affiliated scholar of the Tucker Center, is the author of the chapter on the psychological impact of sports on girls. The report will be released toward the end of winter or the beginning of spring with a press conference at the White House. The press conference will be hosted by Donna Shalala, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Tucker Center Internships:** Here is your chance to become actively involved with the Tucker Center. We are looking for individuals who would like to educate our community, enhance our visibility, and promote girls and women in sport. Volunteers will research topics related to girls and women in sport and will help with the daily workings of the Tucker Center. Internship opportunities are available for academic credit or on a volunteer basis starting winter quarter 1997. Appointments are flexible, depending on your time and interests. Please call the Center at (612) 625-7327 for more information.

- **Mark Your Calendars:** *National Girls and Women in Sports Day* is February 6, 1997. Contact the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport at (800) 321-0789 for a community action kit.

- **New Publication:** *Grace and Glory*, a recently released book about women in the Olympics, is available for \$19.95. The Women's Sports Founda-

tion receives a donation from each book sold using the following number (800) 335-5323.

- **National Internships:** The Women's Sports Foundation's Internship Program is now accepting applications. Positions are available for three to eight months. Contact the Foundation's Information Referral Line, (800) 227-3988, to receive an application. Positions are available in the Communications, Advocacy, Sponsor Relations, Information Services (Internet), Special Events, Community Relations, Education, and Awards & Grants Departments. Full-time, paid internships and non-paid, part-time positions are available.

- Stop by the Tucker Center to view a guide on colleges and universities that offer athletic scholarships. Reprints are available from the Women's Sports Foundation, Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, NY 11554. There is a three dollar charge for postage and handling.

- **New Publication:** *In the Company of Women* documents an oral history of the women's movement. It is available at local bookstores or through the Minnesota Historical Society Press (800) 647-7827.

## CENTER STAFF

Mary Jo Kane, *Director*. (612) 625-7327.

Diane Gardetto, *Graduate Research Assistant*. (612) 624-2531. gard0068@tc.umn.edu

Kristin Raab, *Editor*. (612) 625-7327.  
raab0002@tc.umn.edu

Shelly Shaffer, *Research Fellow*. (612) 624-4505.  
shaff003@tc.umn.edu

Karri Smith, *Graduate Research Assistant*. (612) 624-2531. smit0806@tc.umn.edu

Jonathan Sweet, *Executive Assistant*. (612) 625-0139.  
sweet006@tc.umn.edu

1900 University Avenue SE  
203 Cooke Hall  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
(612) 625-7327; fax (612) 626-7700  
crgws@tc.umn.edu

The Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport is dedicated to exploring how sport, recreation, and physical activity affect the lives of girls and women. The first of its kind in the country, it is an interdisciplinary center leading a pioneering effort on significant research, education, community outreach, and public service.