

Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Tucker Center News

University of Minnesota

Fall 2003

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings from the Tucker Center! We move into the fall with some positive developments regarding previous efforts to scale back—some would even suggest undermine—Title IX. Recall that last year, the Department of Education created the *Commission on Opportunities in Athletics* designed to examine (in part) whether Title IX was responsible for the decline of men's sports such as wrestling. Commission members were charged with collecting information, analyzing issues, and obtaining public input to improve Federal standards for measuring equal opportunity in athletics. Many Title IX advocates were concerned that the Commission's recommendations would dismantle efforts to ensure gender equity. Thanks in large part to the efforts of the Women's Sports Foundation such fears never materialized. In fact, in a surprise announcement following the completion of the Commission's report, the Office of Civil Rights—the regulatory authority in charge of enforcing Title IX—reaffirmed its commitment to gender equity and left in place current enforcement standards.

On a second front, one of the most vocal groups opposed to Title IX—the National Wrestling Coaches Association—filed a lawsuit challenging the ways in which Title IX is enforced. In June, a federal district court concluded that Title IX is not the cause of the decline in men's teams. In addition, the court held that there is no foundation to claims that Title IX creates a quota system.

There are other positive developments as we approach the new semester. The newest member of the Tucker Center is Chris Frazier, a Ph.D. student completing her degree in Work, Community, and Family Education. She is also the former president of the University's graduate and professional student body. Her enthusiasm, experience at the U, and commitment to equity issues in higher education will be extremely valuable to our work at the Tucker Center. Another member of the "Tucker Team" is doctoral student, Anne Barry, who begins her second year in the Center. To find out more about Anne, and the important contributions she makes to girls and women in sport, see "Staff Updates" on page 5.

In mid-October, we continue our Distinguished Lecture Series. The focus of this year's lecture is one that few people have been willing to address within the sports community—Homophobia in Sports. Part of our commitment to make a difference in people's lives is to

recognize any form of discrimination that creates barriers to full participation. Research has indicated that homophobic stereotypes can cause great damage to male and female athletes. For example, gay female athletes may be kicked off their teams if their sexual orientation is discovered. Given the importance and timeliness of this topic, the Tucker Center will sponsor a panel that includes Esera Tuaolo, formerly of the Minnesota Vikings, Jenny Allard, head softball coach at Harvard University, and former student-athlete, Andrea Zimbardi, from the University of Florida. Please join us for what will be a groundbreaking discussion on the various ways in which homophobia and heterosexism impact the lives of both gay and straight athletes (See enclosed flyer for more detail about the event).

In "Learning Our Legacy," we profile women's sports pioneer and Minnesota native Peg Brenden. As you will see, Peg was the plaintiff in an historic 1970 lawsuit challenging a state high-school rule that prohibited girls from playing on boys' teams. Peg's story (not to mention her courage) brings a particularly important perspective to the history of women's sports in Minnesota and the role one person can play in creating change.

The subject of our Donor Profile column is the Women's Philanthropic Leadership Circle, a dedicated group of alumnae from the College of Education & Human Development. These women recently came together to outline their vision for—and commitment to—women's leadership and philanthropy, particularly in the areas of educational leadership. They strongly believe in what we are trying to accomplish at the Tucker Center and, needless to say, we welcome their support.

As you can see, we have had a very busy and productive summer and are looking forward to a new school year. As always, we remain committed to providing information, research, and public service to further our mission for girls and women in sport.



Mary Jo Kane

DONOR PROFILE: WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPIC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

The Tucker Center is committed to making a difference in the lives of girls and women. So too is the group we are profiling in this year's newsletter—the Women's Philanthropic Leadership Circle, a dedicated group of alumnae from the College of Education & Human Development. In 2001, these women came together to outline their vision for—and commitment to—women's leadership and philanthropy, particularly in the areas of educational leadership. One important part of the group's mission is to support and promote women in leadership roles throughout all levels of education. There is also a strong desire among group members to “give back” so that others may pursue their own passions for teaching, learning and discovery.

A recent interview with Marcia Carthaus, Circle member and a retired Director of Special Education, provided insights into the development and vision of the Women's Philanthropic Leadership Circle (WPLC). During the interview, it also became apparent that Marcia's own career of helping others served as a model for why women's leadership truly matters.

Marcia grew up in the Boston area and taught elementary school in Concord, Massachusetts. She moved to Minnesota in the mid 60s and worked in the Edina Public School system as the Director of Special Education for 31 years. In 1973, she received her doctoral degree from the U of M with an emphasis in Educational Administration. These days Marcia divides her time between Minnesota and Naples, Florida, where she leads an active life as a volunteer for the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and the Minnesota Zoo. She also provides leadership for the Southwest Florida Alumni Association. Why such a continuing commitment to helping others? Because Marcia believes that almost “everyone can match their interests and passion with what is out there.”

Such enthusiasm for life-long learning and giving back is what inspired Marcia and other U of M alumnae to form the WPLC. The Circle includes nearly 35 active members who have made a three-year financial commitment. These women represent current and retired teachers, school administrators, college professors, students, and other educational leaders throughout the state of Minnesota. In their very short history they have achieved some remarkable milestones—to date, they have raised over \$80,000 and, through a competitive process, recently awarded \$20,000 to various individuals and organizations across the U of M community. These awards have one

over-riding goal: To support and promote women engaged in educational leadership. In this very important way, the WPLC uses philanthropy to support the next generation of women leaders through educational scholarships, mentoring and research, and raising the visibility of women leaders in education. As Marcia points out: “There is a passion about [our mission]. There is a commitment about it. Everybody has stood by their financial commitments ... [We are about] a combination of teaching individuals about money and trying to elevate and give back to the very profession that gave us such a positive feeling.”

It should be obvious by now that Marcia and the other members of the WPLC care deeply about the University, their profession, and philanthropy.

They are also passionate advocates for organizations that share a similar philosophy about women's leadership. This is what made the Circle take note of the Tucker Center. According to Marcia, the Tucker Center furthers the Circle's mission by connecting educational research about women's sports, health and fitness to the daily lives of girls and women: “The Tucker Center is moving life along and looking at best practices ... what they are trying to do is to determine where we have been, where we are, and where we should be going.” Last spring, the WPLC awarded one of their inaugural gifts to the Tucker Center. This award will support the Center's five-year update to the groundbreaking research document *Physical Activity & Sport in the Lives of Girls 18 and Under*. The initial report was an innovative collaboration between the Tucker Center and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Tucker Center Director, Mary Jo Kane, had this to say about the generous gift from the WPLC: “We are honored that the Women's Leadership Circle would consider the efforts of the Tucker Center worthy of their most important mission. We share a deep desire to make a difference in the lives of girls and women, their families and communities.”

If you would like to learn more about and/or join the Women's Philanthropic Leadership Circle, please contact Lynn Slifer at the College of Education and Human Development (612-625-5511).

—Chris Frazier, Ph.D. Student



Women's Philanthropic Leadership Circle †

† Organizing members of the WPLC (L to R): Melissa Krull, Andrea Hjelm, Barbara Tuckner, Susan Hagstrum, Margaret Sughrue Carlson, Marcia Carthaus and Cryss Brunner. (Missing from photo are Mona Dougherty, Mary Endorf, Barbara Gabbert and Nancy Lindahl.)

GENDER EQUITY IN WOMEN'S SPORTS: A TITLE IX UPDATE

Background: Our last newsletter provided an overview on the *Commission on Opportunities in Athletics*, a blue-ribbon federal panel charged with examining ways to strengthen Title IX enforcement and to ensure fairness for all athletes nationwide. In spite of its charge, many advocates of Title IX were concerned that the real intent of the Commission was to weaken, not strengthen, this landmark legislation. They were afraid that Title IX—versus the “arms race” in college sports—would be seen as the reason why some men’s teams had been eliminated. As we went to print last spring, the Commission had just completed its work. The full report is now available at www.ed.gov/inits/commissionsboards/athletics.

One controversial recommendation was that Title IX guidelines be altered to prohibit educational institutions from dropping men’s sports as part of their approach to Title IX compliance. This recommendation assumed that the reduction in athletic opportunities for male athletes was the fault of Title IX. Advocates of the law immediately protested this finding and two commission members filed a minority report. The minority report emphasized that many women’s teams had also been eliminated in the wake of Title IX, that the *overall* number of athletic opportunities for men remained about the same, and that significant inequities still existed in the number of athletic opportunities available for females. For example, collegiate sportswomen receive approximately \$133 million less in athletic scholarships than do their male counterparts.

One of the most vocal opponents of Title IX has been the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA). In 2002, they filed a lawsuit against the Department of Education over Title IX enforcement and the effects of this enforcement on men’s wrestling programs. They argued that policies and procedures related to Title IX created a “quota” system for female athletes that resulted in the elimination of men’s wrestling teams nationwide.

Recent Developments: In spite of such challenges, many positive developments in the areas of Title IX litigation and enforcement have occurred since last spring. In June, 2003, U.S. District Court Judge Emmet Sullivan dismissed the NWCA’s lawsuit and reaffirmed current Title IX policies and enforcement practices. The court’s decision—*National Wrestling Coaches v. Department of Education*—held that Title IX cannot be blamed for cuts to men’s teams because educational institutions make decisions for such cuts based upon multiple factors unrelated to Title IX. For example,

factors such as budget constraints (versus equal opportunity principles) may cause a school to eliminate a men’s team. The court also recognized Title IX as a landmark civil right’s statute with “built-in flexibility” for implementing gender equity. This latter point regarding flexibility is particularly significant because opponents of Title IX have long argued that current policies (e.g., the so-called quota system) *force* schools to drop men’s teams. But Judge Sullivan ruled that, in fact, Title IX guidelines give schools the flexibility to decide how to best structure their athletics programs. In short, the court asserted that the NWCA failed to demonstrate that Title IX was the cause of men’s teams being dropped.

Soon after the court’s decision, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR)—the federal body in charge of overseeing Title IX enforcement—issued a comprehensive statement that addressed the findings of the *Commission on Opportunities in Athletics* referred to above. Providing guidance and clarification regarding Title IX compliance, the OCR stated: “After eight months of discussion, and an extensive and inclusive fact-finding process, [the Commission] found very broad support throughout the country for the goals and spirit of Title IX.” The OCR also signaled its commitment to undertake an educational campaign to help institutions understand the flexibility of the law, and to provide technical assistance so that schools can more effectively comply with Title IX. Last, but certainly not least, the OCR made it clear that nothing about Title IX requires schools to cut or reduce men’s teams in order to comply with gender equity guidelines. The OCR further stated that the elimination of teams should be considered a disfavored practice.

Where We Go From Here? While we applaud the court’s decision in *NWCA v. Department of Education*—and the statements from OCR that reaffirm the letter and the spirit of Title IX to ensure gender equity without eliminating men’s teams—we nevertheless need to keep a steady watch on future developments. First, there is always the possibility that the NWCA may be successful on appeal, and second, it remains to be seen how vigilant the OCR will be regarding its recent clarifications about Title IX enforcement. To keep up to date on recent developments, you can check out two reliable and timely resources—the Women’s Sports Foundation and the National Women’s Law Center. See www.womenssportsfoundation.org or www.nwlc.org. —Anne Barry, J.D. and Ph.D. student

LEARNING OUR LEGACY: A PROFILE OF PEG BRENDEN

As we are keenly aware, Title IX changed the landscape of women's sports and made gender equity more than just a dream for countless girls and women. But did you know that even before this landmark legislation passed in 1972, a Minnesota native was fighting for equal opportunities in sport? Her courageous efforts in the early 1970s highlighted a growing demand for equity in sports at the national level. In this column, we are honored to feature Peg Brenden, a true pioneer for women's sports.

Growing up in St. Cloud in the 1960s, Peg learned early on that the neighborhood kids (mostly boys) would play with her, but only if she could "handle a ball—throw it, catch it, and hit it." As she recalled: "It was sort of a matter of self-defense. I found over time I had a knack for things that involved a ball." Peg had a particular knack for tennis and it was her love of this sport that began her quest for gender equity.

Peg Brenden's legacy to women's sports began in 1971, her senior year in high school. She had been passionate about tennis since her junior high days. Not surprisingly, her high-school tennis team was limited to male athletes, and, according to Minnesota State High School League rules then in place, the team would become ineligible if Peg competed with the boys. In spite of this restriction, Peg would routinely arrive at the courts and practice with the boys' team. During her senior year, the women's movement was changing perceptions about women's roles in general and sports in particular. Aware of Peg's situation, a family member encouraged her to write a letter to the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union. Her goal wasn't to file a lawsuit. She simply wanted to be allowed to play on her high-school team. She remembers writing the letter and laying out her case. She also remembers her final plea: "P.S. Please hurry. I am a senior." How did she feel about taking such a stand? "This was a huge step outside my box. I come from a Scandinavian tradition, and we [don't like to go public with our feelings]."

In spite of her plea for a quick resolution, Peg didn't hear anything for several months. But by early spring, 1972, Peg's life was about to undergo a dramatic change. Her parents got a call from the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union saying they would take up her cause. The next thing Peg knew, she was on the front page of the St. Cloud *Daily Times* with a headline that stated: "Brenden Sues School District." She also discovered she was not alone in her efforts: A young woman from Hopkins High School, Antonette St. Pierre, also joined the lawsuit. They sought a preliminary injunction that would prohibit the State High School League from enforcing the rule that wouldn't allow girls to play on boys' teams. The judge who heard their case was none other than Miles Lord, former Minnesota Attorney General and Chief Judge of the Federal District Court. In an historic ruling, Judge Lord granted the injunction and Peg Brenden finished her senior year playing on the boys' team: "I played for three or four weeks [at the end of the season]



Peg Brenden

and was actually in five matches; I won three and lost two." Judge Lord's decision was appealed through the 8th Circuit District Court; it was affirmed after Peg's graduation. Even though the final court ruling was an "after the fact" victory, Peg left high school a winner: "I earned my high-school letter, which remains a great source of pride!"

Looking back, what does Peg think she accomplished? To begin with, she reaffirmed what scores of young female athletes, then and now, desire—an opportunity to test one's skills against individuals of a similar caliber. She also says the lawsuit was about her hope that opportunities for girls would be different in the future. And even though she was unaware of the significance of her lawsuit back then, today Peg realizes she is part of what she calls "pre-history" in women's sports: "I think we have come a long, long way ... but we also have to be vigilant about the inroads we have made so we don't backslide.

For those of us who were part of the pre-Title IX [era], it's important that we keep on track with the overall progress in promoting opportunities for girls and women."

Peg's lawsuit had a profound impact on her own professional career. "I felt like the underdog in terms of the lawsuit at that time. There was a sense that the little guy could get a fair shake!" So Peg shifted her focus from a career in accounting—her undergraduate major at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa—to the legal system. In 1979, she graduated from the U of M's law school and today serves as a worker's compensation judge for the state of Minnesota.

Peg Brenden, judge, attorney and sports pioneer, has also had quite a career as an athlete. She was inducted into both her high school's and college's Halls of Fame. In 1994, she received the Rolex Achievement Award given to former collegiate tennis players for "significant accomplishments outside the tennis world." In November, she will be inducted into the Northern Tennis Association Hall of Fame, a regional chapter of the U.S. Tennis Association.

Peg continues to pursue the sport she loves with the same passion she exhibited during her high-school days. She also continues to make a contribution for the greater good: For the past 18 years she has participated in the Pine Tree Apple Tennis Classic in White Bear, Minnesota. This annual charity tennis tournament benefits the Cancer Research Program at Children's Hospitals & Clinics.

As someone who has made countless contributions on behalf of others, Judge Brenden is uniquely qualified to understand and appreciate the role of the Tucker Center in creating positive social change: "I think the Tucker Center is instrumental in promoting awareness about the value of sports. They institutionalize the body of knowledge, the history, and the expertise for all the individuals out there who are doing their best to keep the drive alive." Carrying on the tradition established by role models like Peg Brenden, we at the Tucker Center will do our very best indeed to "keep the drive alive."

—Chris Frazier, Ph.D. Student

KUDOS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Publications and Research:

Tucker Center director, Mary Jo Kane, has two recent publications:

- “Sexual Stories as Resistance Narratives in Women's Sports: Reconceptualizing Identity Performance,” *Sociology of Sport Journal*, December, 2002. This research article was co-authored with Dr. Joah Iannotta, a recent graduate of the U of M and former Ph.D. student in the Tucker Center.
- “Sociological Aspects of Sport and Physical Activity.” Chapter written in *Contemporary Sport Management (2nd edition)* by Janet Parks & Jerome Quarterman (Editors), Human Kinetics Publishers, 2003.

Tucker Center affiliate, Jo Buysse, will publish research based on her dissertation and subsequent follow-up study. The article, “Constructions of Gender in Sport: An Analysis of Intercollegiate Media Guide Cover Photographs,” will appear in the December, 2003 issue of *Gender & Society*. (Co-Author, Melissa Embser-Herbert, Hamline University).

Presentations:

Professor Kane is delivering two keynote addresses:

- “30 years After Title IX: What's Fact vs. Fiction Got to Do With It?” Annual Conference for the Western Society for Physical Education of College Women, Monterey, California, November, 2003.
- “Media Representations of Female Athletes in the 21st Century: The Good, the Bad & the Dangerous,” State-wide Annual Convention for the American Association of University Women (AAUW), Ames, Iowa, April, 2004.

Dr. Buysse will present “Title IX—What’s the Next Threat?” to the local NE Metro Branch of AAUW in White Bear Lake, February, 2004.

Professor Diane Wiese-Bjornstal, Tucker Center Affiliated Scholar, will present the Research Consortium Scholar Lecture at the annual AAHPERD Convention in New Orleans, LA, March, 2003. Her presentation examines Sport Injury Psychology and will summarize her research in this area.

Professor Wiese-Bjornstal has overseen the research of two graduate students. Their work is related to girls and women in sport:

- M.A. student in Kinesiology, Johannes Hendrik Dulfer’s, thesis is titled: “Sources and Levels of Trait Sport-Confidence among Female Collegiate Volleyball Players.”
- M.A. student in Recreation, Park, & Leisure Studies, Suzannah Mork, presents her research—“Female Participation in the American Birkebeiner Cross Country Ski Race: Motives and Barriers”—at the AAASP Annual Conference in October of 2003.

As a part of Women’s History Month, Anne Barry gave a presentation at Macalester College in April, 2003: “Title IX and the Commission on Opportunities in Athletics—What’s Next?”

In another celebration of Women’s History Month, M.A. student in Recreation, Park, & Leisure Studies, Amber Murray, presented: “A History of Women in Sports and Athletics” to a group of Maplewood Middle School students.

STAFF UPDATE

The Tucker Center welcomes Ph.D. student and Tucker Team member Anne Barry. Anne is a native of Bloomington, Minnesota, who currently lives in Minneapolis. As a graduate student with an emphasis in Sport Sociology/Sport Management, Anne comes to the Tucker Center with a most impressive professional and educational background. She earned her B.A. from the College of St. Catherine (Saint Kate’s) as an Occupational Therapist. She followed that with a Master’s degree in Public Health from the U of M. Never one to rest on her laurels, Anne then received a J.D. from the William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul.

In addition to her duties at the Tucker Center, Anne serves as the Deputy Commissioner of Finance for the State of Minnesota in Governor Tim Pawlenty’s administration; she held this same position in the Ventura Administration. No stranger to public service, Anne also served as the State Commissioner of Health for Governor Arne Carlson, a position she held for five years.

Anne first became aware of the Tucker Center through her volunteer work as the Treasurer, and then President, of U.S.A. Rugby, the national governing body for the sport. She soon became aware of the dearth of women in leadership positions in this male dominated activity. As a result, she made a commitment to find ways to get more women in sport leadership positions, and to understand the impact of sport in the professional careers of females.

With her background in the law, Anne also has a strong interest in Title IX. Court decisions and regulatory requirements are the essential backdrop to understanding important factors underlying sportswomen’s participation patterns: “At this point in my career, I am ready for a different kind of challenge. Working to understand the relationship between women, sport, and leadership is fascinating, and the Tucker Center is an ideal place for my contributions.” You can see some of that contribution in the section Anne wrote about recent Title IX developments on page 3. Welcome to the Tucker Team, Anne!



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