

Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Tucker Center News

University of Minnesota

Fall 1999

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

After a short summer break due to the transition from the quarter to the semester system, the Tucker Center staff has come back ready to deliver several exciting programs and events this Fall.

We are expanding a number of projects related to education and community outreach after a year of successful fundraising. Our "Image is Everything" workshop empowers adolescent females to counter stereotypes of sportswomen often found in mainstream media by creating alternative, positive images. With support from the Bremer Foundation, NIKE, and the Minnesota Women's Fund, we will deliver this highly successful workshop statewide. A second project involves the video we produced in partnership with KARE 11 TV, "Throw Like a Girl: A Revolution in Women's Sports." Over the summer, we developed a companion curriculum to the video, which we will soon test in the South St. Paul school district. The video/curriculum guide will be used to increase awareness and understanding of the past and current accomplishments of sportswomen in Minnesota. With additional fundraising, we hope to expand this project to the entire upper Midwest. Finally, the Tucker Center, in collaboration with the Boys & Girls Club of Minneapolis, is seeking funding to develop a program called Tennis Plus that encourages both lifeskills and tennis skills for local girls. For more information on these projects, see the "Community Outreach Update" section on page 3.



Mary Jo Kane



Ann Bancroft

Our first major event of the season is the Borghild Strand Distinguished Lecture. We are pleased to announce that Minnesota native and Polar Explorer, Ann Bancroft, will be the 10th lecturer in the series. Bancroft was the first woman in history to travel to the North and South Poles. In 1986, she traveled 1,000 miles from the Northwest Territories in Canada to the North Pole as the only female member of the Steger International Polar Expedition. In 1993, she led the American Women's Expedition, which she founded, to the South Pole. And in November of 2000, Bancroft will once again make history by leading the first all-women's crossing of Antarctica.

Ms. Bancroft's expeditions have enabled her to experience teamwork and leadership under extreme hardship, shatter stereotypes about females, and educate people about the importance of discovery. Bancroft will reflect on these experiences and share her insights about the emergence of female athletes as role models and pioneers. Please join us on Tuesday, October 19, at 7:00 pm in the Hubert H. Humphrey Center on the University of Minnesota campus. For more information, see the enclosed flyer or call us at 612-625-7327.

Speaking of pioneers, Minnesotans have long been known for blazing trails on many fronts, the area of women's sports being no exception. For this reason, you will find a new column inside the newsletter entitled "Learning our Legacy." The purpose of the column is to profile individuals who have made significant contributions to the development of women's sports. The subject of our first profile—Pat Lamb—has been called the "Mother of Minnesota Gymnastics." As you will see, we are all in her debt.

As always, thank you for your continued interest in and support of the Tucker Center and all that we stand for: Community outreach, graduate education, and research and scholarship aimed at creating meaningful sport opportunities for girls and women, their families, and their communities.

LEARNING OUR LEGACY: A PROFILE OF PAT LAMB

Pat Lamb has been called many things in her life: Mentor, friend, teacher, coach, and, in the state with the largest high school girls' gymnastics program, "Mother of Minnesota Gymnastics." An Emeritus Professor of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation at Carleton College, Lamb played an important role in starting the movement that increased sport opportunities for Minnesota girls and women in the 1960s. She was the perfect choice for our first installment of "Learning our Legacy" because of her early and ongoing advocacy for developmental and competitive sport opportunities for girls and women, as well as her commitment to, in her words, "preserve and further enhance the work we've done in the past."



A brief history lesson is needed to illustrate how important Pat Lamb has been to girls' and women's sport at both the state and national levels. As recently as the 1920s, some sporting activities were widely encouraged and available for girls and women. The reasons for this typically centered around the physical, social, and aesthetic benefits of sport and physical activity. "Acceptable" sports included golf, tennis, basketball, swimming, cycling and certain track and field events, as well as many outdoor recreation activities. Unfortunately, this early progress was followed by a backlash against women's participation, and, by the end of the 1920s, women's involvement was seen as a threat to traditional gender roles. Sporting ability was hardly consistent with the myth of female frailty. And there was the persistent belief that competitive sports would make women too "manly." Female PE teachers tried to counter such stereotypes by downplaying highly competitive athletics. They thus embraced a "girl for every sport and a sport for every girl" philosophy. Though not intended to hold women back, this approach was nevertheless limited because it lacked such elements as mastery of skill, strength, and assertiveness.

The failure to develop a generation of highly skilled female athletes eventually took its toll. By the 1960s, the U.S. Olympic Committee was well aware that our female athletes would not be able to compete at the international level without a grassroots movement. According to Lamb, such a movement would "increase the depth of experiences and expand opportunities for girls and women in sports." In 1963, the Olympic Development Committee and the Division for Girls' and Women's Sports invited two representatives from every state to a National Institute to learn teaching strategies and techniques in gymnastics and track and field. Lamb was Minnesota's gymnastics representative and she was charged with the responsibility of holding similar sports institutes and clinics once she got back home.

Not every state sent representatives to the Institute, which makes Lamb's participation even more significant since there remained strong opposition to increasing women's involvement. Dorothy McIntyre, Associate Executive Director of the Minnesota High School Athletic League, and one of Lamb's disciples, explained: "At every crossroads of opportunity, there has to be that person to take the first step; that person was Pat Lamb."

Spending a week with national leaders in the girls' and women's sports movement lit a fire in Pat: "I was born to be the messenger ... I had a mission!" Shortly after returning from this first National Institute, Lamb was planning and running committee meetings and training sessions for volunteers who would then put on clinics of their own. While quick to point out she was not alone in designing those first workshops, Lamb clearly provided the inspiration, exuberance and willingness to gather others equally committed to implementing a grassroots gymnastics program. Prior to Title IX, when there were virtually no financial or physical resources, the group of women Lamb assembled used their own time and money to travel throughout the state to conduct the clinics. Their compensation for tirelessly working toward their dreams? The pure joy and satisfaction in their cooperative efforts to give girls the opportunity to become strong, confident, and accomplished.

All of this hard work paid off. In 1965, the first gymnastics competition for girls in Minnesota was held. And in tracing the development of other sports throughout the state, it is clear that the efforts of Lamb and her cohorts became the basis for the eventual development of competitive sports for girls under the auspices of the Minnesota State High School League. While reflecting on that not so long ago history, Lamb couldn't contain her enthusiasm, "Didn't I live in an exciting time?"

A Minneapolis native, Lamb graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1956 with a degree in physical education. She also received a master's degree in education before she was hired by Carleton College as a physical education instructor in 1962. In 1970, Lamb became Director of Women's Athletics at Carleton and held that position for 15 years. During that time, she supervised the development of 12 varsity athletic programs for women. While coaching gymnastics, diving, and tennis, Lamb also held numerous leadership positions with the U.S. Tennis Association, the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport, and the NCAA.

In 1987 Lamb was honored by her tennis colleagues as the NCAA Division III Coach of the Year. In the early 1990s, she was inducted into the Carleton College Hall of Fame, and the Pat Lamb Award was created to honor Carleton's outstanding senior female athlete. In 1995, she

was the recipient of the University of Minnesota's Eloise M. Jaeger Physical Education Honorary Award for being a pioneer in girls' and women's sports throughout the state, region and nation.



Today, Lamb is interested in seeing that the legacy behind the contemporary sports landscape is not forgotten. Dorothy McIntyre explains why Lamb remains committed to girls' and women's sports: "The person that creates change can never walk away from it. It's in Pat's blood, it's integral to her life." Lamb is clearly proud of her accomplishments and the ways in which her fellow pioneers changed the course of sports history for girls and women.

A belief in the Tucker Center and its mission to advocate for meaningful sport opportunities for girls and women recently led Lamb to become a Friend of the Center. Her endorsement and financial support will enable us to fulfill our mission of research, education, and outreach to make a difference in the lives of girls and women.

We can all learn from Lamb's ability to enlist individuals to work for a cause and to set a course with remarkable vision. As women's sports continue to break new ground, we would do well to honor Pat Lamb's legacy.

— Author Kim Pearce is a PhD student in Recreation, Park & Leisure Studies and a member of the Tucker Team.

"It can't just be pink. It has to work!"

— Innovative Designer Pam Ryan, Women's Sports Advocate

Ever gone to a sporting goods store hoping to find equipment made specifically for your needs as a female athlete only to discover that what constituted "women's sporting apparel" was the color pink? Women's sports advocate and Friend of the Tucker Center Pam Ryan had just that experience, but she discovered it on the softball field while coaching one of her three daughters. In this particular case, the trouble with the equipment was more serious than color preference. The equipment, designed for baseball and boys' bodies, did not fit: The gloves were too big, the leg guards hung loose, and the uniforms bunched. Worst of all, when the girls were at bat, their helmets slipped down over their eyes making it virtually impossible for them to do anything but strike out.

Besides the obvious handicap posed by batting with a helmet over one's eyes, Ryan was concerned that the equipment might also be bad for girls' confidence. Adolescents are self-conscious by nature, and it's hard to feel like you have that fly ball taken care of when you have a hard time keeping the glove on your hand.

To Ryan, this scenario felt like a recipe meant to turn girls off sports. She was keenly aware of the positive benefits girls derive from playing sports—increased self-esteem, lower incidents of teen pregnancy, and decreased risk factors for cancer and heart disease, to name a few—and she wanted to make sure that girls had the kind of athletic experience that encourages them to stay with it.

Ryan's solution was to begin designing sports equipment for girls and women. "It can't just be pink. It has to work!" became her motto. Early on in this pioneering venture, Ryan relied on Tucker Center resources. For example, she made

continued on next page

COMMUNITY OUTREACH UPDATE

Tennis Plus • This summer, we teamed up with the Boys & Girls Club of Minneapolis and the Joy of Sports Foundation (Washington, DC) to apply for funding to bring an exciting tennis/life skills program to adolescent females. The program, "Tennis Plus," was developed by the Joy of Sports Foundation to help children develop important life skills such as cooperation and imagination, while learning basic tennis strokes. Our goal is to provide girls with an enjoyable sport experience that will help them gain basic skills and enable them to see sports as a fun and valuable part of life.

Image Is Everything: Equitable Treatment for Females • This fall, we begin expanding the "Image Is Everything" project to schools in out-state Minnesota. Thanks to the generous support of the Otto Bremer Foundation, the Minnesota Women's Foundation, and the Nike Corporation, we will be able to reach girls in 12 additional high schools during the next two years. Ultimately, we hope to make the program available nationwide by developing a video and curriculum package.

"Throw Like a Girl" Video • Thanks to generous funding from the South St. Paul School District and the Medtronic Foundation, we are moving ahead with our plans to develop a companion curriculum to the video "Throw Like a Girl: A Revolution in Women's Sports" for statewide distribution in early 2000. We will pilot test the curriculum in the South St. Paul School District this fall, and will use the feedback we receive to refine the curriculum. Our goal is to distribute the video/curriculum package to every middle school and high school in Minnesota, as well as to such organizations as the Girl Scouts, the Boys & Girls Club, the YWCA, and the Minneapolis and St. Paul Park and Recreation Boards. More information on how to order the video and curriculum will be posted on our web site soon.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Women's Sports Foundation is looking for "old-timers," women involved in the intercollegiate sports and gender equity movements. WSF is trying to reach those individuals who determined the values, philosophy, and direction of women's sport governance associations such as the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, the Division for Girls and Women in Sports, the United States Field Hockey Association. The WSF hopes to: Document and distribute the history of female leadership in sport; create a network that can continue gender equity progress; raise funds to create leadership opportunities and better professional preparation programs; and renew old friendships through web-based bulletin boards and chat rooms. For more information, or to join this project, contact Donna Lopiano, Executive Director, by email at wosportvag@aol.com and include "AIAW project" in the subject line. You can also visit the WSF website at Womensportsfoundation.org or call 516-542-4700.

KUDOS

Tucker Center Students and Staff

- **Nicole Black** participated in the International Association for Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women conference held this summer at Smith College in Northampton, MA.
- **Joah Iannotta** will present a paper entitled "Taking Women at their Word: Interviews, Theory and Interpretation" at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS) conference in Cleveland.
- **Maura Rosenthal** will also present a paper at NASSS: "Bodies, Blood, and Bonding in Women's Recreational Ice Hockey."

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"It can't just be pink" continued

ample use of our ground-breaking report *Physical Activity and Sports in the Lives of Girls*.

After meeting with coaches and athletic directors, she began work on a gender-specific helmet for softball. Her innovative product—a helmet that has a channel in the back for a ponytail and a design that allows for a tighter fit—is patented and manufactured by Schutt Sports. Ryan has also designed a lacrosse and hockey goalie mask for athletic females.

Ryan knew of several sporting good manufacturers that produced high-quality products specially designed for female athletes. She also knew there was a need to make connections between the products these companies offered and the organizations buying sports gear. To meet this need, Ryan founded Designer Sports whose purpose is to act as a distributor for the best product lines designed to meet the needs of athletic females.

Designer Sports offers products ranging from helmets to uniforms, and represents 21 companies including Ballgirl, Schutt Sports, and Spalding. What makes Designer Sports so effective is that Ryan has compiled a list of the best products made for female athletes, and works with schools and teams to get the very best equipment to sportswomen. Designer Sports has already served a number of school districts and has recently worked with Minnesota's first female pro-football team, the Vixens, in searching for gender specific football equipment. For more information on Designer Sports call 651-450-7375 or email at desport@earthlink.net.

— Author Joah Iannotta is a PhD student in Kinesiology and a member of the Tucker Team.