

Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Tucker Center News

University of Minnesota

Fall 2004

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings from the Tucker Center! As we wrap up the summer and get ready for another productive year, we're pleased to bring you up-to-date on a number of exciting developments related to our mission of research, education and outreach on behalf of girls and women in sport.

In 2001, the University of Minnesota launched the Great Conversations Series. This pioneering series pairs leading faculty members and administrators from the U of M with internationally recognized figures who are experts in their respective fields. I have been asked to kick off this year's series by exploring the unprecedented progress that has been made in women's sports in the wake of Title IX. On Monday, October 11, I'll have the honor of moderating a "great conversation" with a truly legendary sports figure—Donna Lopiano, Executive Director of the Women's Sports Foundation. Lopiano brings a long and rich history to the conversation, one that includes hall-of-fame athletic ability, coaching women's and men's sports, and administrative leadership on an international scale. No wonder the *Sporting News* has named her "One of the 100 most influential people in sports." I can assure you we'll have a lively, informative and inspiring evening! Learn more about this important event on page 3. Please note that the Great Conversations evening will replace our normally scheduled fall Distinguished Lecture.

In "Learning Our Legacy" we profile John and Sage Cowles. As long-time supporters of women's sports, especially at the U of M, the Cowles have created a legacy that is unparalleled in the state of Minnesota. As you will see, their public advocacy—not to mention their financial support—has created untold athletic opportunities for today's sportswomen, and in so doing, they have established a foundation for future generations. We learn about their story in detail on page 4.

In the "Donor Profile" column we highlight the generous support and ongoing commitment of Van and Mike Mueller. In the 1980s, the Muellers created a scholarship fund in memory of their daughter, Edith Mueller, who was a recreation major in the School of Kinesiology. When the Tucker Center was first established in the early 1990s, the Muellers wanted to dedicate part of that fund to help underwrite our Distinguished Lecture Series. Since then, the Muellers have increased their support of our mission by establishing a new graduate fellowship. This fellowship will enable the best and the brightest students from around the world to come to the

Tucker Center and do ground-breaking research related to women's involvement in sport and physical activity. We highlight their reasons for giving on page 2.

In our last newsletter, we told you about some longitudinal research we were conducting, research that allowed us to analyze intercollegiate media guides from the most prestigious athletic conferences (e.g., Big 10; SEC) in the United States. Tucker Center-affiliated scholar, Jo Ann Buysse, has been tracking these guides since the early 1990s to see if there has been a significant shift in how athletic females are portrayed, meaning is there more of an emphasis on their athletic ability and less on their femininity and physical attractiveness? She compared the same sports at the same school in the same year using the same medium (guide covers) and discovered a dramatic increase in the number of images that portray women as serious, competent athletes. We can certainly claim progress, because over the 15-year time span we examined, females were not only presented more and more as "true athletes," but in ways that were nearly identical to (dare we say, had parity with?) male athletes. Dr. Buysse and I have submitted these findings for publication so that we can share them with a broad-based and influential group of scholars, educators and students.

We are also pleased to announce another round of competition for the Eloise Jaeger Scholarship. As a pioneer, Dr. Jaeger was the first woman to serve as Director of Physical Education for a men's and women's program at an American college or university. We honor her work by awarding a scholarship to the best-qualified female and male students so that they can participate in research and education designed to improve people's lives. For more information, go to our website at www.tuckercenter.org.

As you can see, we remain involved in a number of exciting projects that further our mission for girls and women in sport. Your continuing support of the Tucker Center makes that possible. Working together, we will make a difference.



Mary Jo Kane

DONOR PROFILE: VAN AND MIKE MUELLER

From the Tucker Center's earliest beginnings, Van and Mike Mueller have been among our most generous supporters. To honor their late daughter, Edith Irene Mueller, they endowed a scholarship in the U of M's Division of Recreation & Sport Studies. And recently, they made an additional commitment by endowing the *Edie Mueller Graduate Fellowship* to be housed in the Tucker Center. Their initial gift targets undergraduates, while the fellowship will support basic and applied research related to women's involvement in sport and physical activity at the graduate level. The Mueller Fellowship has the added distinction of being the first of its kind in the nation to provide financial support so that students can come to the Tucker Center and earn an M.A. or Ph.D. while conducting research on women's sports. To show its commitment to such a worthy cause, the U of M's Graduate School provides a dollar-for-dollar match; there is additional financial support from the School of Kinesiology and the Tucker Center.

Van Mueller has been involved with—and dedicated to—equity issues in higher education for most of his adult life. He earned his Ed.D. from Michigan State University, and worked for the public school system and the Michigan Department of Education before transferring to the U of M in 1964. Professor Mueller's work has been primarily focused on school finance and community involvement in public school settings. As Professor Emeritus in the Department of Educational Policy and Administration, he continues to advise graduate students, co-directs the Education Policy Fellowship Program (a mid-career leadership program) and works on a host of equity issues in several states around the country.

Mike (Kerridge) Mueller earned her Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the U of M in 1973. She has worked for the Minneapolis Public Schools, served on the Minneapolis Task Force on Racism, and spent 14 years in the Minnesota Department of Education as manager of Indian Education and Director of Education Statistics. From 1989 to 1997, she taught general education classes at Augsburg College. She continues to play an active role in community and school development as part of the President's American Indian Council, though she resigned from that specific post in 2002.

When asked why they have made such an important investment in the Tucker Center, the Muellers say they did

so for a variety of reasons: "The time was right to make a larger commitment to the University so we could see the work of the Tucker Center have an even greater impact." Citing the scarcity of funds available for graduate students



to engage in research was another reason: "The [Tucker Center's] Distinguished Lecture Series, the newsletter, and the research efforts generated by this unique organization all require a long-term commitment and funding to assure there is the capacity now and well into the future." Establishing this new fellowship by making a substantial financial contribution seemed like a natural next step for the Muellers,

individuals who have a strong sense of stewardship and an even stronger belief that "giving back" will make a long-term difference for countless girls and women, not to mention boys and men: "All of our daughters and grandchildren will be the beneficiaries of research on women's sports [from exercise science to healthy psychological development]. This fellowship was the right way to honor the memory of Edie and her love of sport and physical activity."

As proof of the tangible and important benefits of the research and education we do at the Tucker Center, Van Mueller says he was intrigued by the Distinguished Lecture we sponsored last spring—a panel on ACL (knee) injuries and their disproportionate impact on female athletes. Shortly after that event, Van himself had to undergo knee replacement surgery. Because he attended our program, he was much more aware of the issues involved in recovery, and encouraged by the combination of research and practical information (e.g., post-injury conditioning techniques) he received over the course of the evening. Tucker Team members wish him well as he continues in his recovery, and are pleased (and honored) to learn that the Muellers find our work so valuable. This is especially gratifying because individuals like the Muellers are an essential part of making our work go forward. How wonderful that they themselves have benefited directly from our efforts.

If you would like to join Van and Mike Mueller in supporting our efforts, please call us at (612) 625-7327 or fill out the card on the back of this newsletter and mail it to the Tucker Center.

*Anne Barry, Ph.D. student
Jonathan Sweet, Program Assistant*

GREAT CONVERSATIONS SERIES: “A REVOLUTION IN WOMEN’S SPORTS”

This October, Tucker Center Director Mary Jo Kane will have the very special honor of having a “Great Conversation” with Donna Lopiano, Executive Director of the Women’s Sport Foundation (WSF). This conversation kicks off the third year of this innovative series. Sponsored by the College of Continuing Education under the leadership of Dean Mary Nichols, the Great Conversations Series brings together a faculty member who is an internationally recognized scholar in his or her field with an equally eminent world authority to explore topics of timeliness and interest to the general public. Over its three-year history, the series has featured such nationally prominent speakers as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Pulitzer Prize winner and Distinguished Professor of Physiology, Jared Diamond, and noted author Gail Sheehy.

This fall’s conversation—“A Revolution in Women’s Sports”—will examine the explosion of interest about, and participation in, women’s sports over the last three decades, and will be framed against the backdrop of Title IX. As Kane points out:

“Because of this landmark legislation, we have fundamentally altered the public discourse surrounding women’s involvement in sport and physical activity. For the first time in our history, we have a critical mass of girls and women who play sports. This has clearly revolutionized the sports landscape for all females, not just for today, but for generations to come. And this revolution would not have happened without Title IX. Imagine this: It would never occur to young women today that if they wanted to play sports, and were willing to pay the price, an opportunity wouldn’t be available to them. Whether they know it or not, Title IX gave them that sense of entitlement. That’s what we want to explore [in our conversation]. How did we get here, what does it mean, and what will the future bring?”

Kane and Lopiano will also highlight an unfortunate and stubborn fact: Despite the progress that has occurred over the last 30-plus years, women’s athletics has not reached gender equity. In college sports, for example, females comprise over half the student body, yet still receive only 36% of operating budgets. The need for parity exists in other key areas as well—access to facilities, coaching, nutrition, weight training and conditioning. “We’re still in the embryonic stages of this revolution called women’s sports,” said Kane. “It will take some time, but we must always ‘keep up the good fight.’ I’m confident that we’ll get there because [working hard and fighting] is what sports is all about. I’m also excited about the opportunity to share this story with the public. They are in for a real treat because no one has fought harder, or established a greater legacy, than Donna Lopiano.”

Indeed she has. Lopiano received her Ph.D. from the University of Southern California in 1974. But way before that accomplishment she had a history of athletic



achievement: Participation in 26 national championships in four sports and a nine-time All-American at four different positions in softball, a sport in which she played on six national championship teams. At the intercollegiate level, she has coached men’s and women’s volleyball, as well as women’s basketball and softball. Dr. Lopiano has also excelled as an administrator: For 17 years, she was the Director of Women’s Athletics at the University of Texas. During her tenure, she served as the President of the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. Today, she is a member of the United States Olympic Executive Board. For these (and many more) achievements, she has been inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame. And as Executive Director of WSF, she leads the organization founded by Billie Jean King in 1974. This pioneering organization is dedicated to advancing the lives of girls and women through sports and physical activity.

Mary Jo Kane has a history of accomplishments as well. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois and is a prominent scholar who has published extensively on the media’s treatment of athletic females. She is also known as an expert on the passage, implementation and impact of Title IX. In 1996, Professor Kane was awarded the first Tucker Endowed Chair related to women’s sports: *The Dorothy McNeill and Elbridge Ashcraft Tucker Chair for Women in Exercise Science and Sport*. She was recently elected by her peers as a Fellow in the American Academy of Kinesiology, the highest honor in her field. Last spring, Professor Kane received the Scholar of the Year Award from the Women’s Sports Foundation. This award is given to individuals who make significant research contributions in the area of women’s sports. Come join these two heavyweights in one great conversation.

LEARNING OUR LEGACY: JOHN AND SAGE COWLES

When you think about those who have made a deep commitment to women's sports—and created a legacy of that commitment—think no further than John and Sage Cowles. It would be hard to find a couple more dedicated to one simple, yet powerful idea: When women are given opportunities that allow them to fully realize their potential, any achievement is possible. John and Sage Cowles have taken that idea and turned it into a reality for countless girls and women. Here are a few examples: They provided financial support for the U of M's softball stadium, the Ridder Hockey Arena and the Title IX weight room. And the softball stadium—Jane Sage Cowles Stadium—is one of the very few sports facilities named after a woman.



Their contributions to the U of M only partially describe their lifetime of service and advocacy on behalf of women's sports. In the mid-1990s, John Cowles created a professional opportunity for women to play fast-pitch softball. Toward that end, he helped launch the Women's Professional Fastpitch League, and currently serves as the Chairman of Pro Softball Founders. How did he and his wife, Sage, come to be such strong advocates for women's sports? One answer is their daughter, Jane. She played college softball at Utah State and was on the cusp of the revolutionary changes that came about in 1972 with the passage of Title IX. While following her career, the Cowles could see the importance of sports participation for females, and could also see their daughter's commitment to, and passion and love for, her sport, qualities that enabled her to compete in the College World Series for slow-pitch softball.

For John Cowles, there is another answer for why he is so committed to seeing women reach their potential through sports. That answer would be his mother, Elizabeth Bates Cowles. With great pride, he fondly describes her as a strong, capable and forceful woman, someone who could be a loving mother, homemaker and churchwomen, and also be a strong and committed advocate. She taught him one essential lesson—that any woman could achieve if allowed to participate to the fullest extent: “I saw my mother as a fiercely determined woman who advocated for equal rights and opportunities for every member of society.” Elizabeth Cowles left an important legacy as the founder of the Iowa Maternal Health League in the 1930s. But it was an experience related to sports that perhaps made the biggest impact on John's sense of fairness. He saw his mother give up the game of golf because she was better than most of the men she competed against. Due to the social mores (and pressures) of the time, she felt it was her best course of action: “My mother was a very athletic woman, but she gave up something she loved because she was so much better than the men. She shouldn't have had to make that choice.”

Sage Cowles remembers the pure enjoyment and fun of sport in her early years, and believes that that experience led

to her commitment to women's sports: “The first gift I recall receiving [as a little girl] was a baseball bat. We played sports together as young boys and girls. We never thought for it to be otherwise.” Such a positive experience may have led to another great passion in her life—dance. For Sage, it was dance that instilled an understanding of what women can achieve through physicality and movement in space. Born in Paris, France, she studied at the New York City School of American Ballet, and continued her formal instruction while studying for her B.A. in Art History at the University of Wisconsin. Currently, she serves as the co-chair of the Cunningham Dance Foundation in New York

City, and is also involved with a variety of local and national art boards dedicated to philanthropic and community service.

Over the years, John and Sage have witnessed the impact of Title IX. They have seen girls develop skills at an earlier age and receive the benefits of coaching at all levels. They have also noticed a departure from focusing on what women can't do as well as men, to those things they do as well or even better. And both agree we have yet to see the full impact of Title IX. Indeed, they consider this landmark legislation just as significant as the Civil Rights Voting Act of 1964. The Cowles remain hopeful because society is waking up to the reality of women as full participants in every aspect of life: “If we demonstrate to boys and men what women are capable of achieving in sport, we may finally see them respect women not just as athletes, but as fully contributing leaders and partners in our society.”

In the future, the Cowles hope to see even more progress for women, even as they know that change is slow and often resisted. What are signs of “more progress” for women's sports? The Cowles say one breakthrough would be a women's sports magazine, one that provides real coverage about females as competent and dedicated athletes. One setback would be that the trend toward female coaches being displaced by male coaches would become even greater. To counteract such a trend, they hope that women coaching men's teams will no longer be a rare occurrence. Finally, they hope that women's sports will not succumb to the pressures of winning and the influence of commercialism that permeate men's sports.

John and Sage Cowles recognize the essential role played by research and educational organizations dedicated to women's sports, including Melpomene, the Women's Sports Foundation and the Tucker Center: “Through organizations such as the Tucker Center, we can foster a deeper understanding of girls and women in sport, dispel myths, and get high quality, accurate research about the physical and sociological aspects of women's involvement in sport.” Thanks to the efforts of John and Sage Cowles, organizations like the Tucker Center will continue to do just that.

Anne Barry, Ph.D. student

KUDOS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Keynote Addresses & Presentations

Tucker Center Affiliate, **Diane Wiese-Bjornstal**, gave a lecture at the Action on Obesity Summit held at Mayo Clinic in May 2004, entitled: "Increasing Activity Levels in Youth Sports and Games."

Mary Jo Kane will give a paper, "Title IX: 30 Years and Counting," at a symposium designed to honor pre-Title IX athletes, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH, February 2005.

The following three presentations will be delivered at the upcoming Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP) Conference held in Minneapolis at the Marriott City Center, Sept. 29-Oct. 2.

- **Suzannah Mork** (Ph.D. student) and **Diane Wiese-Bjornstal** organized and will be speaking as part of the panel: "Applying to Sport Psychology Graduate Programs: A Faculty Panel Discussion of Admission Criteria and Responses to Common Prospective Student Questions."
- **Diane Wiese-Bjornstal**, **Nancy Cullen** (sport psychology coordinator, U of M athletics department), and **Moirra Doyle** (Director of Athletic Medicine at U of M), will present a symposium entitled: "The University of Minnesota Department of Intercollegiate Athletics Mental Health Triage and Sport Psychology Program."
- **Diane Wiese-Bjornstal** will be part of a symposium organized by U of M alumnus **Dr. Aynsley Smith** of the

Mayo Clinic. The lecture is entitled: "Action on Obesity Among Children and Youth: What Can Sport, Exercise, and Health Psychology Experts Do?"

Publications and Research

Phil Esten, recent Ph.D. graduate and Tucker Center affiliate, is currently working on a manuscript that addresses resource alignment in intercollegiate athletics and how fiscal allocation can lead to athletic success.

Mary Jo Kane and **Jo Ann Buysse** have submitted their manuscript "Intercollegiate Media Guides as Contested Terrain: A Longitudinal Analysis" to the *Sociology of Sport Journal* for publication.

Honors & Awards

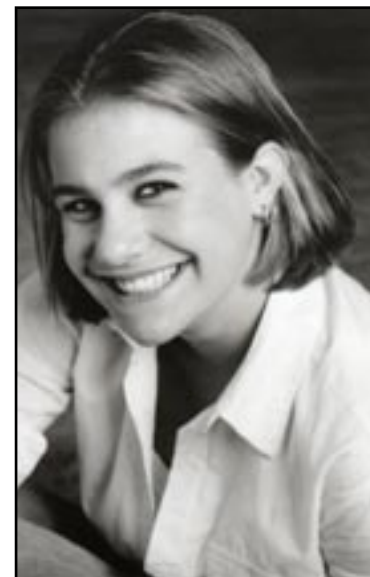
Former Tucker Team member, **Missy Lott**, an M.A. graduate from the School of Kinesiology, has another accomplishment to be proud of: Her work as a strength and conditioning coach with U.S. Olympic athletes, some of whom competed in the Summer Olympic Games in Greece. Last year, Lott won a prestigious internship at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO. As part of her work there, she collaborated with head coaches to design and implement strength training programs for several world-class athletes. Lott is currently the interim strength and conditioning coach with the Minnesota Lynx of the WNBA. You can read more about Missy Lott at www.umn.edu/umnnews.

STAFF UPDATES

One of the hallmarks of the Tucker Center is that we have attracted many talented individuals from around the globe who have come to work with us in a variety of capacities. They have ranged from faculty members on sabbatical, to graduate students doing post-doctoral research, to undergraduates who want some first-hand experience as part of their internship requirements.

This year is no exception, as we welcome **Maggie O'Brien**, who will be completing her senior practicum/internship with the Tucker Center this fall semester. O'Brien is a senior in the Kinesiology Department with a minor in Women's Studies at Penn State University. O'Brien was a member of the swim team at Penn State—she was a varsity diver there for the past four years. O'Brien says her internship goal is to learn more about the research being done in women's sports: "I hope to gain insight into how research [actually] functions by being a part of the Tucker Center and achieve even greater knowledge about the world of women's athletics." A Minnesota native from Minnetonka, O'Brien graduated from Hopkins High School in 2000 and was a two-time

NCAA qualifier and two-time Academic All-American at Penn State. She became aware of—and excited about—the Tucker Center because her mother sent her newspaper clippings about Professor Kane's work: "I chose the Tucker Center because its dedication to furthering the progress of women and girls in sport is unique and perfectly aligned with what I hope to become professionally." O'Brien says she's really looking forward to being part of the "Tucker Team." And we're looking forward to that as well!





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