



Celebrating 50 Years of Title IX

Guest Essay: Patty Dick



Patty Dick – Washburn Women’s Basketball (1970-71) and Coached Washburn Women’s Basketball (1977-2000) (photo courtesy Washburn Athletics)

Patty Dick was a fixture on the Washburn Lady Blues’ sideline for 23 years before retiring following the 1999-2000 season. [She was inducted into the Washburn Athletic Hall of Fame in 2001-02](#). Patty wrote about her story in athletics.....

6th grade story

My pre-Title IX story begins when I was in 6th grade at Lundgren Elementary School in Oakland (1960-61). Every lunch hour during the winter months, boys were allowed to play basketball. I thought girls should have an opportunity to play. I went to our principal, Mr. Herbert Lundgren and asked if he would allow girls to play during lunch hour a few days a week. He said yes so, I thought from then on everyone in charge would give girls the opportunity to participate in sports. Mr. Lundgren was so far ahead of his time. Nobody seemed to mind that some of our games turned out scores of 2-0 or even 0-0.

Play at age 12

The summer before my 7th grade year, I was old enough to play organized softball. I had to wait until age 12, much to my dismay. Our girls’ teams played at the Lake Shawnee girls softball diamonds. It was at this time that I had decided I wanted to be a coach when I grew up.

Mrs. Prue Hendrix was my physical education teacher at Holliday Junior High. She also coached our girls' volleyball, basketball and track teams. She and 6-8 other teachers in USD #501 met and organized competition in these sports. Other physical education teachers opted out of entering their school teams so I considered myself very lucky. We would compete in a round-robin competition for volleyball and basketball and had several track and field meets which culminated in the City Meet at Washburn University, Moore Bowl. Both boys and girls track teams participated in this city event. My junior high days of competition were the highlight of those three years and Mrs. Hendrix is still a close friend.

My High School sports

Having had so much fun participating in sports during junior high, I was really looking forward to those same opportunities in high school. However, the only competition for girls at that time (1964-1967) was gymnastics. I wondered how EDUCATORS could allow competition for tiny, pretty girls but not for the rest of us. Fortunately for me, I was able to play softball during the summer on one of the best teams in the nation; Ohse Meats. From 1966-1974, our Ohse Meats team played teams from Stratford, Connecticut; Orlando, Florida; Portland, Oregon; Nashville, Tennessee; Pekin, Illinois; Omaha, Nebraska; Kansas City, Missouri; Wichita, Kansas. My teammates turned into some of the most outstanding coaches and players in the nation. Billie Moore won two national titles in basketball at Cal-Fullerton and UCLA and coached the first Women's Basketball Olympic Team (1976 Silver Medalist) was our 3rd baseman. Judy Akers coached at Kansas State where her teams played in the AIAW National Tournament and hosted the national event in 1974, was our catcher. Several others were named to the All-Star National games. I realized at the time that these softball years would be one of the most significant times in my life. I also realized that my teammates would be my best friends forever.

My college sports: Pre-Title IX

When I started college at Washburn University (1967-1971), I learned that the only opportunities for women to participate in competitive sports were on play-days. Kansas colleges only fielded a team in field hockey in the Fall of 1967 and all of our competition between other schools in field hockey happened on one day. It was called a "play day. We would practice for several weeks and then travel to one school who would host all the colleges who had field hockey teams. Win or lose, each team played four games in one day. The team with the most wins won the play-day.

I often wondered why all of the health officials were afraid of women practicing and competing at high levels. That was always the reason given for not having competitive women's sports. Yet, having very few practices and playing four field hockey games on one day didn't seem to me to be the safest approach of the day.

My college sports: Title IX is Passed

1972 turned out to be the beginning of a breakthrough for girls' and women's competitive sports. President Richard Nixon signed into law Title IX as part of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. It stated that "no person in the United States would, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance". There was a slight problem. Title IX didn't mention athletics anywhere, only education programs. There were congressional leaders who tried to weaken Title IX by exempting girls and women's sports from the amendment. Another tried to exempt revenue sports

from compliance. No, the regulation didn't go into effect right away but in anticipation, change had already begun.

Women's college sports took off immediately. Women educator/coaches formed a governing body similar to the NCAA called the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. The state AIAW's were named according to the state name i.e., Kansas Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (KAIAW). Representatives from each state school who participated elected a governing body within the state to set guidelines and rules for competition. Each individual school decided which sports they would be sponsoring so rules and competition for each sport could be designed.

During my sophomore year at Washburn, we fielded a volleyball team, a gymnastics team and a field hockey team. In my junior year, basketball and softball were added. I was in heaven. My teammates and I were able to participate in four team sports each year. Even though the seasons were very short, the number of competitions were few and our coaches were not necessarily experts in these sports, we loved every single minute of it.

Our teams also tried to strengthen Title IX during those first years. We wrote our congressmen and President Nixon's Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Caspar Weinberger encouraging mandatory compliance of Title IX. During the AIAW National Basketball Tournament in 1974 hosted by Kansas State University, we attended the tournament games and marched at half-time carrying signs to make Title IX mandatory. We wanted our voices heard. It wasn't until 1978 that Title IX mandatory compliance became final.

Coaching high school sports 1972-1977

I began my teaching and coaching career at Washburn Rural High School in 1971. The main girl's sport at WRHS was gymnastics. An hour each day was built into my teaching schedule for a 6th hour gymnastics class that consisted of the girl's gymnastics team. This seemed strange to me since it took at least 10 minutes to set up the equipment and 10 minutes to take it down for the next scheduled event right after school. In most cases that left only 30 minutes of practice time. Hardly enough time to practice on four pieces of equipment (vaulting horse, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise with 12 girls).

If we were to be competitive in gymnastics, I knew we would need to schedule more practice time after school. That was not a problem for the sophomores. It did pose a problem for the juniors and seniors who were not used to any type of extra practice. They never had to do that with the previous gymnastics coach! My rule was if you didn't attend the extended practice time, you would not be a member of the competing team. Parents were not happy because their daughters were not happy. However, rules were rules so and if we ever expected to be competitive and practice better safety in a dangerous sport, we needed to be better prepared. Of course, the sophomores were extremely happy. They moved up the ladder to compete when the upperclassmen quit.

By being firm on my practice rules, it was a given when we added the competitive sports of volleyball, basketball and track that out of school practice would be required. That happened in 1972 with the passage of Title IX. High school girls were finally able to have competition with other schools in all sports. I started the first competitive teams at WRHS in volleyball, basketball and track. I continued to

be the gymnastics team coach as well. With Title IX not a popular law in these early stages of competition, there were numerous growing pains fielding teams.

Our basketball team practiced early in the morning before school or later at night for gym space. In the pecking order, our practice times ranked below the music department. As it turned out the first few years, I would start the day picking up my basketball players in a school bus and transport them to a grade school gym for practice at 6:00 am. I would drive them back to the high school and get ready for my 5 hours of physical education classes. Our gymnastics team continued to practice during 6th hour but then come back at 7:00 pm for additional practice. We had to wait for the boys' basketball practice or music/band practice or football practice on rainy days before we were scheduled.

I was finding that my days began in the dark and ended in the dark. On top of that, I was not being paid for my coaching. Things had to change. My second year I asked to be paid for coaching basketball or I would not coach the team. It was pretty disappointing to learn that they would just drop girls' basketball if I didn't coach for free. So, I quit coaching basketball. I had to take a stand. My players still wanted to play basketball and have a team so they went to their parents who went to the board and demanded that basketball be kept. With that pressure, the board decided to keep girls' basketball and hired a new coach. They hired male and he was paid.

I still was not being paid to coach volleyball or track. I decided to approach our teacher representative and ask if he would try to get me some pay for my coaching hours. He did indeed. The representatives decided to pay me with our male coaches pay raise for the next year. Yes, my first coaching pay was my male colleagues pay raise. In addition to fighting for gym time with them, I was now taking their pay raise. I was not exactly their favorite person.

After stirring up enough good trouble in my six years, I left Washburn Rural in 1977 and was hired to teach physical education and coach softball and basketball at Washburn University.

Coaching college sports 1977-2000

I was thrilled to reach my dream job. Returning to my Alma Mater to teach and coach. I wanted my teams to have opportunities girls and young women didn't have pre-Title IX. But I didn't know that my journey would be long and hard.

At that time, being a female teacher and coach at the college level didn't mean that men and women were treated equally. My male colleagues had a lighter teaching load and none of them were the head coach of two major sports. Once again, my days were early and my nights were long. At the same time, it was a thrilling time to be in women's athletics. Everything was moving rapidly. Women's collegiate sports were at an all time high for participation. My students loved playing even though they didn't have athletic scholarships like the men did. Even though their practice times and locations were not exactly desirable, they did what they had to do to play. For a whole group of women coaches, we were determined to make changes and fight for equal rights under the law for our players.

It was the little things that were irritating. When our basketball practice time was at 5:30 pm, we were never able to begin until the men's practice was over. If the men's team was having a bad day, their coach would make them practice until 5:45 or even after 6:00 pm. Even though our team was waiting to get on the court at 5:30, it didn't matter. The men ruled the court.



Washburn's 1987-88 Team coached by Patty Dick, second from the left. (Courtesy Washburn Athletics)

When a new facility was built, we finally got an afternoon practice time on the old court, but never got to practice or play games on the new court in the new facility. My players were paying tuition just like the male players. The Athletic Department funding came from tuition paid by all students. It just wasn't fair.

During our games in the old gym, our half-time meeting room was the women's swimming locker room. It was very interesting trying to plan during half-time when the swimming class ended and wet swimmers were walking around the room soaking the floors. Of course, the men had a new, larger locker room with their own individual dressing stations. No wet floors to worry about for them.

When our women's team finally received some scholarship money in 1983, our individual players received around \$300-\$500 each. My star player received a tuition and books scholarship with one free meal per day during the season. She was our first All-America player in women's basketball. Unfortunately for her, our practice times were so late, the cafeteria was closed when she finished practice. I called that to the attention of our Athletic Director. To remedy this, the A.D. arranged to have her free meal placed in the cafeteria refrigerator for her to pick up after practice. Her dinner was a cold sandwich - ready for pick-up. A real healthy training table for our All-America player.

The equal pay issue came much later during my tenure. In the 1990's, our Title IX compliance officer went to work to increase my salary so it would be equal to the men's coach. She was successful. However, my salary was so far from his salary, it took an increase over a three-year period to make it equal. After fifteen plus years, we were equal.

It was during the 1990's that women's scholarships became equal as well. The men and the women both had 12 full rides. This was quite an accomplishment yet there was more work to do.

In 1993-95, I was a member of the NCAA Division II Women's Basketball Committee. Each region had a representative that met with the NCAA Director for Women's DII Basketball. We conducted the national rankings during the season and then met at the DII Championship games at the end of the season to discuss rules and regulations. During our meetings, we found that the NCAA per diem for female athletes was not equal to the men. We found that the traveling party for championships were not equal. Women's teams had a limit of 19 for their traveling party, the men had twenty-two. We were able to remedy this the next year.

Another item I was able to bring forth simply because both the Washburn men's and women's basketball teams won the regional championship that year was the fact that our men received a giant regional championship trophy. Our women received zero. That too was remedied the next year. If not for champions from the same school, I'm not sure when the women would have received a regional championship trophy from the NCAA.

I retired from coaching at Washburn in 2000. I was so fortunate that my coaches and physical education teachers were such progressive people. They worked hard to give girls like me so many opportunities to compete in sports. I am so grateful to these men and women. I hope I carried on their legacy and helped my students and players to even more opportunities so they could thrive and prosper because of their participation in sports.

Even though President Richard Nixon didn't realize that the bill he signed in 1972 would result in an explosion in girl's and women's sports, I am very grateful that he signed that amendment. Happy Anniversary Title IX.

-Patty