

# CENTER COURT

February, 2015

Newsletter of the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame

## A Message from the Executive Director.....

What an amazing year 2014 was for women's basketball, especially in Connecticut! Our UCONN Huskies won their 9<sup>th</sup> NCAA Division 1 Championship with the hard work, class and style that have made us so very proud! Is it any wonder that eighth grader, Mo'ne Davis, darling of the Little League Baseball World Series, and Sports Illustrated magazine's "Sports Kid of the Year", excitedly shared that she one day hopes to play her favorite sport, basketball, for UCONN?

Then, last fall, 5'6" Becky Hammon, decorated WNBA veteran point guard, began her work as the first full-time, paid, female assistant on an NBA coaching staff! She is on the staff of the defending NBA champion San Antonio Spurs.

Can you believe that it's been 20 years since UCONN met Tennessee, in that signature "big" game, on Martin Luther King Day? That game forever changed the course of our Huskies basketball program, and women's college basketball on the national stage! UCONN went on to its first undefeated season and its first national championship. The UCONN-Tennessee rivalry born that day, with incredibly talented young women and highly competitive coaches, laid the foundation for the excellent television coverage that we enjoy and appreciate today!

As we begin a new year, I have an even greater appreciation for the members of "my team", the CWBHOF Executive Board. Hardworking, conscientious and caring, they are truly dedicated to preserving and advancing Connecticut women's basketball. I'm constantly reminded of their good work and passion as I discover the many positive relationships they enjoy with former players, coaches, officials, camp directors, administrators and fans! Our CWBHOF family continues to grow and thrive!

**Linda J. Wooster,**  
President/Executive  
Director/Founder

**Louise Albrecht,**  
Vice President/Membership  
Chair/Founder

**Ann V. Fariss, PhD**  
Banquet Coordinator/  
Founder

**Tony Candido,**  
Fundraising Chair/  
Founder

**Brenda Reilly, PhD**  
Founder (Posthumous)

**Lee Franzman,**  
Nominating Chairperson

**David Strong,**  
Historian/Archivist

**Marge Dolan,**  
Regional Project Director

**Sue Crisafi,**  
Secretary/ Liaison to Web  
Master

**Tracey Finer,**  
Creative Writer/  
Newsletter Editor

**Tina Gonyea,**  
Publicity & Promotion

**Pamela Moffo,**  
Publicity & Promotion

**Elaine Piazza,**  
Events Promotion

**Jeff Goddu,**  
Website Designer

**Tracey Flynn,**  
Coordinator

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: THEN AND NOW A Panel Discussion

Written by Pamela Moffo

Beryl Piper, head women's basketball coach at Central Connecticut State University, and a member of our Hall of Fame, along with her team, hosted a special morning event on October 30, 2014... "Women's Basketball: Then and Now - A Panel Discussion". Breakfast was served while guests enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect with friends and fans of women's basketball, and meet the members of the CCSU team. Following our meal, we were treated to the personal basketball memories, experiences and present thoughts of the distinguished members of the panel. Beryl was joined by two other members of our Hall of Fame, Donna Fiedorowicz (CCSU alum and Senior VP, Tournament Activation and Outreach for the PGA Tour) and Chris Dailey (UConn Women's Basketball Associate Head Coach), along with Jaleen Thomas (CCSU '14, four year member of the women's basketball team) in a prompted question-and-answer session among the panelists. The lively conversation was both interesting and informative, as they discussed the growth, prosperity and current state of women's basketball. Our sincere thanks to all who made this event possible. Great way to kick off the 2014-2015 season!



## CT WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PIONEER AWARD

### "Remembering the Pioneers of Connecticut Women's Basketball"

The CWBHOF is honored to recognize Edith Olson Buckley as the 3<sup>rd</sup> recipient of the CT Women's Basketball Pioneer Award. This honor is awarded to an individual who has played a role in blazing the trail for women's basketball in Connecticut; preparing the way for others to follow.

Edith Olson was born on February 1, 1907 in Meriden, CT, one of 8 children born to Swedish immigrants. Upon entering Washington High School (Meriden), she immediately had an impact on the school's athletic program, excelling in diving, swimming, track and basketball. In her senior year (March 1, 1924), when women's basketball was played with 6 players to a side (each player restricted to an area on the floor), she scored 128 points in a single game against South Norwalk High School. This amazing scoring feat set a state record for individual scoring and national women's scoring record. It was even recognized by Ripley's Believe It or Not. The team also set a standing national record for the widest shutout margin, winning 148-0.

After graduating high school in 1924, Olson attended Arnold College (University of Bridgeport). She had been offered a scholarship to both Arnold College and Julliard School of Music for piano but chose to pursue her dream of coaching and teaching physical education.



Meriden High School

Olson married Ralph Buckley, a CT State Trooper, who had been a classmate in her 1924 graduating class from Washington High School (Meriden). In 1938 they settled down in Portland, CT to raise their four children, Patricia, Susan, Michael and Thomas. Olson Buckley taught Physical Education at Lincoln Junior High School (Meriden) and Middletown High School. From 1945 to 1952, she coached women's basketball at Morse Business College (University of Hartford). She also refereed women's college basketball games across the state and even found time to attend the Women's Coaches Sports Clinic held annually at Smith College.

In 2007, Olson Buckley was inducted into the Portland Sports Hall of Fame.

When her daughter, Sue, was not allowed to play in the all-male Little League, she started a girls' softball league in Portland, CT. Years later, Sue's daughter would follow in her grandmother's trailblazing footsteps and be one of the first girls to play in the Little League in MA.

Even in her 80's, Olson Buckley continued to teach. She started a daily exercise program in her retirement home to keep all the residents active.

Her children describe her as having a quiet strength, great sense of humor and a talent for making and keeping friends. In a high school essay, her granddaughter writes, "I have learned from her that the really important values that you learn from sports last your whole life and apply to everything you do."

## IN MEMORY.....



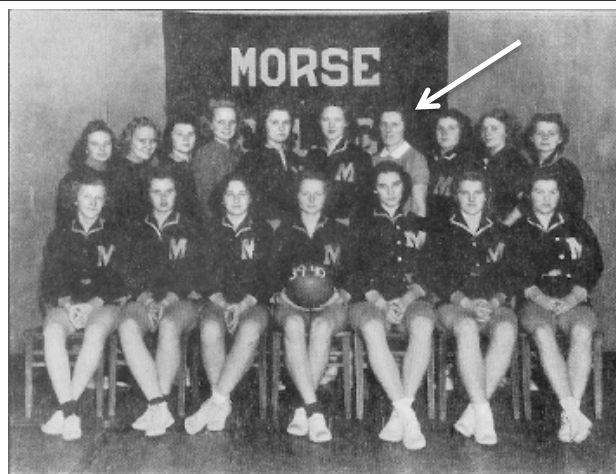
The Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame created the **Brenda Reilly Memorial High School Basketball Award** and the **Brenda Reilly Youth Basketball Camp Scholarship** in honor of Dr. Brenda Reilly, the Associate Athletic Director of Central Connecticut State University and one of the organization's founders.

The **Brenda Reilly Memorial High School Basketball Award** is awarded annually to the most outstanding high school girls' basketball team in the State of Connecticut. The coach and a representative of the selected team are invited as honored guests to the Hall of Fame's annual banquet.

The **Capital Preparatory Magnet School (Hartford, CT)** Girls' Basketball Team was awarded the 2014 Brenda Reilly Memorial High School Basketball Award.

The **Brenda Reilly Youth Basketball Camp Scholarship** provides the opportunity for a young girl to attend a summer basketball camp in Connecticut. The recipient and her parents or guardian are invited as honored guests to the Hall of Fame's annual banquet.

**Rae Ada George** was the recipient of the 2014 Brenda Reilly Youth Basketball Camp Scholarship. She attended Tricia Fabbri's Girls' Basketball Camp at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT.



GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM, MORSE COLLEGE

Bottom row, left to right: Ellen Peterson, Dorothy Slater, Joanna Quinn, Frances Krawiec, Evelyn Fitzsimmons, Dolores Paulson, Marian Seifert.  
Top row, left to right: Rita Beloin, Toini Harju, Dorothy Dal, Barbara Uskla, Betty Welton, Thomazine Connolly, Mrs. Buckley, Gertrude Barber, Eldi Gurske, Minnie Hulpine.

## CIAC Merit Award



Paulla Kolnaski Solar, (High School Coach, 2006) received the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference 2014 Merit Award. This honor is given to individuals who have made significant contributions to high school basketball in Connecticut. The awards ceremony was held on March 22, 2014 at

Mohegan Sun. Solar, coach of Stonington High School girls' basketball, has amassed over 325 wins including 2 CIAC titles in 1980 (23-0 season) and 2006. Her teams reached the CIAC tournament 21 out of 22 seasons and she has earned area coach of the year recognition numerous times.

## NEW PLAYERS, SAME RIVALRY

On October 30, 2014, Aetna traveled back in time to the 1920's and 1930's when the Aetna women's basketball team (the "Crimson Tide") drew crowds over a thousand strong and beat just about every team they faced. In a span of 10 years (1924-1934), the Crimson Tide won 111 of 133 games and even got the chance to play at Madison Square Garden in 1928, reported to be the first women's game played there.

Travel forward eighty years and the scene is the same. Aetna, inspired by a story about the Crimson Tide in The Courant, pulled the red carpet off their home basketball court (currently used as a meeting room) and challenged their long time rival, Travelers, to a game. The players, all company employees, were thrilled to be a part of reliving history. Aetna beat Travelers 43 to 38. New tradition? We'll see!

## Special Recognition.....

Ann V. Fariss, (Founder of the CWBHOF and Board Member) was inducted into the Connecticut Field Hockey Hall of Fame in 2014. The induction ceremony was held at the Aquaturf Club in Plantsville, CT.



The Southern Connecticut State University Field Hockey team's 2014 fall field hockey tournament was named the Dora Metrelis Fall Field Hockey Classic in honor of Dr. Dora Metrelis (Honorary, 1991). Dr. Metrelis was the SCSU head field hockey coach from 1961 to 1976, compiling an 81-31-30 record.



## CWBHOF SHOWS THEIR PRIDE

The Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame could not have been prouder of the UConn Men's and Women's Basketball teams for their amazing 2013-2014 seasons and for winning the Women and Men's NCAA National Championships. To congratulate each team and show their appreciation for the pride these young men and women have brought to our state, the CWBHOF placed an ad in the Hearst Connecticut Media 2014 Commemorative Special Section that was included as an insert in the Connecticut Post.

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
AND **THANK YOU**  
to the **student-athletes** and **coaches**  
**OF OUR MEN'S AND WOMEN'S**  
**UCONN HUSKY**  
**BASKETBALL TEAMS!**  
you have **made us all** so very

**PROUD!**



This commemorative section was seen by over 125,000 households.

## THE COACHES ENJOY CAMP TOO!

Written by Tina Gonyea

I had the pleasure and privilege to work with and for Coach Tricia Fabbri at her basketball camp at Quinnipiac University this past summer. What a terrific experience it was! Coach Fabbri has a wonderful staff with some of the most talented coaches and players (including and especially her own) from all around Connecticut. It was not only a lot of fun for myself and the campers

but it was well organized with a lot of basketball 101 material! I would definitely do it again. I will also be encouraging anyone in and around our town looking for a good camp... to go to this camp. They will not be disappointed.



Rae Ada George, recipient of the 2014 Brenda Reilly Youth Basketball Scholarship, and Ryleigh Shortell-Gonyea at Tricia Fabbri Girls' Basketball Camp at Quinnipiac University.





### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

## 2015 Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame Ceremony

### Inductees:

Lisa DeGennaro Bailey  
James Vincent Bombaci  
David A. Grossman  
Hannah Stubbs Picariello

Jennifer O'Brien  
Ellen Tomasiewicz  
Linda A. Hamm

When: April 22, 2015

Where: CASCADE (Hamden, CT)

Reception: 6:00 p.m.

Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

**Don't forget to visit us on the Web.....**

[www.ctwomensbasketballhalloffame.com](http://www.ctwomensbasketballhalloffame.com)

[www.ctwbhbf.com](http://www.ctwbhbf.com)

The Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame seeks to honor those who, in a superlative fashion, have contributed to the enhancement of women's basketball in Connecticut—either through participation, through service, through support or through achievement.

**Contribution to the Cause.....**The CWBHOF Committee is determined to provide maximum service to/for Connecticut Women's Basketball. To give you the best we have to give and to keep pace with the increasing demands of our operating initiatives, we would welcome any financial contributions to defray our operating costs. CWBHOF is a Section 501C (3) TAX ORGANIZATION FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAX PURPOSES. Certain Contributions to CWBHOF MAY BE deductible to the person making the contribution. The CWBHOF recommends that a person consult with his/her legal advisors as to the deductibility of the donation. If interested in donating, please contact Louise Albrecht at 203-256-0930.

## EMAILS WANTED!!

In an effort to begin the move from print to digital media, we are trying to compile a list of email addresses, which will allow us to provide you with information about the CWBHOF in a more timely and cost efficient manner. If you would like to send us your email address, please forward it to Tina Gonyea at [tlghoop@aol.com](mailto:tlghoop@aol.com). We are especially looking for email addresses for all inductees inducted into the CWBHOF prior to 2001.



### Updated Addresses



Please help us in our efforts to keep our list of members and inductee addresses current and up to date. If you are aware of address changes, please notify Lou Albrecht at [labbz323@yahoo.com](mailto:labbz323@yahoo.com) or Tracey Finer at [george.finer@snet.net](mailto:george.finer@snet.net).

***Most of the things worth doing in the world had been declared impossible before they were done.***

**Louis D. Brandeis**

## THE BEAUTY OF A CHARITABLE BEQUEST

Charitable bequests to the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame help to ensure that we may continue our goal of honoring individuals who have contributed to the enhancement of Connecticut women's basketball through their participation, service, support, or achievement.

CWBHOF recently received a generous gift from the estate of Dr. Helen Spencer, a member of the first induction class in the 1988 Honorary category. Helen always encouraged others to support the CWBHOF and her gift will allow us to broaden our horizons. We gratefully acknowledge Helen's gift.

Please consider the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame when making future plans.

