

CENTER COURT

February, 2022

Newsletter of the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame

A Message from the Executive Director.....

This past year, like the one before, was filled with many uncertainties, and moments of both joy and sadness. During the summer, the CWBHOFF lost a beloved, longtime member of our executive board, Lee Franzman. Lee was always a "true gentleman", and for many years he provided excellent leadership as the chair of our nomination committee. His knowledge and input were highly valued, and Lee's attention to detail and great thoughtfulness were evident in everything he did. His dedication to the mission of our Hall of Fame will not be forgotten. We're very fortunate that Cyndie Adamski, a member of the nomination committee for many years, has assumed Lee's responsibilities.

UConn women's basketball has not escaped the highs and lows of this year either. Top basketball recruit, Azzi Fudd, joined "all everything" Paige Bueckers, along with the rest of their very talented squad, and the future looked amazingly bright! Paige had even signed a huge contract with Gatorade WOW! In an instant, the new Covid variant, Omicron entered the scene. As if the resulting schedule changes and players testing positive weren't enough, the "injury bug" struck! With more starters on the bench than on the floor, the team dropped out of the Top 10 for the first time in over 15 years, lost a conference game for the first time since 2013 and still faces many tough challenges ahead. However, not ever being one to give up, I remain optimistic Go Huskies!!!!

Speaking of not giving up – is it possible that we are soon going to be able to celebrate together? Though Covid has kept us apart since our 2019 induction ceremony, our on-again, off-again banquet is finally set to return on April 27, 2022! We can't wait to induct our 2020 class of inductees, who have waited patiently for two years!

I look forward to seeing many of you on April 27, to share experiences, get caught up and enjoy being back together. That's the joyful, positive note about the banquet; the downer my beloved prime rib will no longer be available due to price constraints. Damn!



Linda J. Wooster,
President/Executive
Director/Founder

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Brenda Reilly, PhD
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We're Back!

The CWBHOFF committee members are ready to leave their Zoom squares behind and welcome you all back (in-person) to the hall of fame banquet on April 27th to celebrate the 33rd class of inductees. But please don't worry, they have all scheduled their haircut appointments for before the big night!!

A DAY IN THE HISTORY OF GIRLS' BASKETBALL

There have been coaches who have led different teams to victory. And there have been coaches who have led different teams to defeat. But have you ever heard of a coach leading two teams to victory and defeat in the same game? No? Well, you have now! Check out this cool story.....

The year was 1964, and Ann Dougherty, of Shelton, CT, was teaching biology and physics at two different high schools; three days a week at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull and two days a week at Immaculate High School in Danbury. At each school, she started the girls' basketball program and coached both teams. There were no assistant coaches, so one of the parents, from each team, helped out. Because there was no funding available for buses to away games, the girls' parents had to drive them. Early in each team's inaugural season, the perfect storm hit, when St. Joseph was scheduled to play Immaculate in a home and home series. What was Ann to do? What would you do if you needed to be at two places at the same time....why, you would simply split your time, right?! That's fair! And this is exactly what Ann did. She sat on the St. Joseph bench coaching them for one half and then sat on the Immaculate bench coaching them for the other half, with her assistant coaches, a.k.a. parents, coaching against her. After two games, her record was 2-2, as she had won and lost each game. Honestly, this is a true story!

In 1965, Dougherty, became a one-team coach at Immaculate High School and also went on to coach at New Fairfield before retiring in 1980.



1962 Gaelettes Honored

The 1962 Shelton High School Girls' Basketball team will be honored as the Class of 2020 Shelton High School Hall of Fame Inductees at a banquet to be held on April 3, 2022. The coaches and players from the '62 Gaelettes team were the very first interscholastic girls' athletic team both in Shelton and in the greater Naugatuck Valley. And as with most newly created girls' programs at that time, they had to fight for everything they needed. Funding, uniforms, schedules, officials, practice space, and transportation were all huge obstacles this determined group of dedicated female student athletes and coaches had to overcome. All athletes and athletic programs, which followed, owe a debt of gratitude to this remarkable team.

Members of the 1962 SHS Girls Basketball team include: Carol Petro, Sr. Linda Pepe, CSJ, Lorraine Hemenway Sedlock, Karen Kruk (Manager), Bernice Nicolari (Coach), Jerrilyn Gildea Klubek, Linda Zimmerman Bishop, Elaine Biercevicz Piazza, Linda Wight Gogan Letsch, Grace Petro DelStritto, Cheryl Ballas, Cindy Vick Iutzi, Beverly Homick O'Hara, Michelle Cayer Kawalautzki, Jozette Gralow Carlson, Christina Biercevicz Vogel DeGennaro, Cathy Carey, Barbara Churma Majeski, and Mickey Biasucci Doria.

IN MEMORY.....



The Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame created the **Brenda Reilly 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 High School Basketball Award** is awarded annually to the most outstanding high school girls' basketball team in the State of Connecticut. The award is sponsored by Central Connecticut State University Women's Basketball in honor of Brenda Reilly and is given to a team based on the criteria of character and sportsmanship, the principles on which the hall of fame was founded. The coach and a representative of the selected team are invited as honored guests to the Hall of Fame's annual banquet.

The **Norwalk High School, Norwalk, CT Girls' Basketball Team** was awarded the 2019 Brenda Reilly 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.

Kyla Griffith, Betsy Ross Arts Magnet School, New Haven, CT was the recipient of the 2019 Brenda Reilly Youth Basketball Camp Scholarship. She attended the Tricia Fabbri Girls' Basketball Camp at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT.

Odds and Ends.....

DOING THE MATH... In case you were wondering how the numbers add up, this year's inductees will be the 33rd class of the CWBHOFF but the 35th year since the hall of fame was created.

NEW FACEBOOK PAGE! Like us on Facebook! **ctwbhof** Our Facebook account has been reactivated and we would love to hear from you! Please share your promotions, job changes and milestones with us.

DON'T FORGET TO VISIT US.....
www.ctwomensbasketballhalloffame.com

READY, SET, ACTION! We would love to see all of our inductees in "action"! But at the very least, we would settle for a photo. Please send your favorite "action" photos to ljwooster@gmail.com so we can add them to our website.

IN MEMORIUM

Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail. – Muriel Stode

EULOGY for LEE FRANZMAN

By David Strong

I first met Lee in 1980 when our teams played each other in the State Tournament. He was in the process of building a great team at Milford H.S., which, 2 years later, would play in the Finals for the State Championship.

We played again the following year, and five more times, after Foran joined the league in 1995. They say things balance out. Last time we played he won by three points. Not a state championship, but I know he enjoyed it very much. I was impressed with his hard work, talent as a coach, and the fact that each girl came off the floor at the end of the game (win or lose) feeling good about herself because of his coaching and caring. (Of course, they felt better when they won.)

Lee and I saw each other many times at league and CIAC functions, and developed an excellent friendship based on common interests and mutual respect.



I also served with Lee on the CT Women's Basketball Hall of Fame Executive Board for 20 years. He was chairman of the Nominating Committee, a very important job. So many people, at all levels of society, have personal agendas when they serve on committees, but Lee's only agenda was to help recognize the most deserving candidates for the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, and he did it very well.

The CT Women's Basketball Hall of Fame has only honored individuals since its inception, but in 2023 the Hall of Fame will recognize for the first time successful teams and programs. The name of the award will be The Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame Lee Franzman Team Recognition Award, in honor of his more than 30 years of service to the organization.

When I think of Lee, I will always think of qualities that he embodied, as summarized in the word ICE: Integrity, Commitment, and Excellence.

New Award Instituted by CT Women's Basketball Hall of Fame

The Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame Lee Franzman Team Recognition Award

The Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame will institute a new team recognition award at the 2023 induction Ceremony. This award will be named in honor of Lee Franzman, chair of the CWBHOF nominating committee, who passed away last year.

High school, college, industrial, "barnstorming", AAU (prior to 1970) and senior teams will be eligible for recognition. Criteria for recognition are:

High school team– State Championship with special consideration for undefeated teams, the first state championship from a school with multiple state championships and teams from the early days of the tournament starting in 1974.

College team – National Championship or significant success at the national level, especially in the early days of the national tournaments.

Industrial, barnstorming, AAU (prior to 1970) and senior team – Significant success at the national level or pioneering success in the early days of women's basketball in Connecticut.

Only one team from a high school or college coached by the same person will be recognized.

The nomination form is on the website and nominations should be sent to David Strong, 15 Old Middle Road Turnpike, Woodbury, Ct, 06798.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS
2022 Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame Ceremony

Inductees:

Jaclyn Daigneault	Ron Hanson
Nadine Domond	Brian Hurlock
Queen Edwards-Smith	Margaret E. Tieman
Ellen M. Geraghty	

When: April 27, 2022
 Where: CASCADE (Hamden, CT)
 Reception: 5:45 p.m.
 Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

Contribution to the Cause.....The CWBHOFF 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. CWBHOFF is a Section 501C (3) TAX ORGANIZATION FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAX PURPOSES. Certain Contributions to CWBHOFF MAY BE deductible to the person making the contribution. The CWBHOFF 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.

CT WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PIONEER AWARD
"Remembering the Pioneers of Connecticut Women's Basketball"

The Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame honors those individuals who have played a role in blazing the trail for women's basketball in Connecticut, preparing the way for others to follow. The CWBHOFF, which first awarded this honor in 2013, has recognized three such individuals - Stacia A. "Skeets" Gayeski (2013), Helen "Jean" Cruickshank (2014), and Edith Olson Buckley (2015).

If you know of an individual who you think is deserving of this honor, we would be interested in hearing from you. Please forward all relevant information (i.e. name, contact information, history of involvement in the game, etc.) to David Strong at david.strong@snet.net.

2021 Women's Basketball Tournament Reflections and Changes
 by Linda Wooster

As the calendar moves into March and the Championship season, we may wish to reflect on the barrage of social-media posts from last season which outlined the differences between treatment of athletes at the men's and women's NCAA tournaments, with teams at the men's tournament given better food, workout areas, recreation space and gifts compared to their counterparts in the women's bracket. The outcry generated from those discrepancies, which came from the athletes themselves, has led to what is optimistically expected to result in significant changes in both the marketing and conduct of the Women's Championship.

The law firm hired by the NCAA to investigate gender disparities among the governing body's championship events found that the NCAA "prioritizes men's basketball, contributing to gender inequity," and that internal support systems and television contracts contribute to the NCAA "significantly undervaluing women's basketball as an asset." The firm suggested changes in the leadership structure around men's and women's basketball, staffing, communication between the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Committees and Basketball Oversight Committees, and "a real-time gender equity audit of the Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Championships as they are being planned and executed each year." The firm also acknowledged that many of the issues identified in their report "are not new."

While the coaches have been primarily concerned with how women's basketball is structured and marketed—complicated subjects which can be tricky to sum up in a pithy slogan or package into a viral moment – the 2021 tournament provided a glimpse into another kind of disparity: obvious, material differences in conditions that grabbed significant public attention. The coaches hope that this increased public awareness will draw interest to more of the abstract inequities.

Changes already in place for the 2022 Division I Women's Basketball Tournament: (1) The NCAA will use the "March Madness" phrasing and branding in conjunction with the women's basketball tournament; (2) A "zero-based budgeting method" for both championships will be used, a shift from the traditional approach of adjusting budgets for the championship events from the previous fiscal year; (3) The field has been expanded from 64 to 68 teams.

Since 2015, the format for the women's basketball tournament provided the top 16 overall seeded teams with the opportunity to host the first- and second-round games at their home venues. Under the 68-team format, the opening-round games of the women's tournament will take place at four of the top 16 seeds' sites.

The door for communication and meaningful discussions between the many constituencies that govern NCAA women's basketball appears to have been pried open. It will be interesting to see what happens.



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.

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