



# Landmark Award

presented to

**Barbara Hall  
and Lea Dickson**

Written by Bernice Nicolari

Presented by Dr. Ann V. Fariss

There is the fairytale, and there is historical fact. The fairy tale regarding Title IX says that, in 1972, Congress passed a law... "and they all lived happily ever after."

Historical fact begs to disagree.

Every woman coach and athlete knows that Title IX was systematically ignored, evaded, resisted, and thwarted for years, including here in Connecticut. The long history of gender inequality would not vanish simply because Congress said it should.

Title IX was not a magic wand delivering equality of opportunity and treatment for girls and women. Lawsuits were.

Every generation of women and men since 1972 must face a harsh reality: equality of opportunity, treatment, and working conditions in athletics and every other arena had to be fought for in every town, city, and state in this country, because old habits die hard. The favored do not easily give up their favored position.

Enter two Connecticut women named Lea Dickson and Barbara Hall. Newly hired by the Stratford school system and facing the blatant discrimination women in all professions experienced at this time, Barbara Hall and Lea Dickson risked career, livelihood, professional approval, and their very futures because they believed the promise of Title IX.

In 1974, two years after the passage of Title IX, they sued their school system in order to stop the daily insult of unequal treatment and opportunities a.k.a. gender discrimination that Title IX was meant to fix. In suing their school system, Lea Dickson and Barbara Hall, two young untenured teachers, risked everything.

And they knew it.

Four years would pass before "United States District Court Civil Action B-77-41" was decided in their favor, the favor of every girl and woman in Connecticut. In 1978, six years after the passage of Title IX, U.S. District Court Civil action B-77-41 mandated, BY LAW, "equal terms and conditions of employment, regardless of the group..."

That judgment kick started the implementation of Title IX in Connecticut and in every other state in the Union where lawsuits were filed. But it began here in Connecticut.

*Thank you, Barbara Hall. Thank you, Lea Dickson.*