

Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Tucker Center News

Spring 1997

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Spring is finally here and the Tucker Center is gearing up for two exciting events.

First, the Edith Mueller Park and Recreation Memorial Award was recently established. The Award funds scholarships to undergraduate students in the Division of Recreation, Park, & Leisure Studies and also provides funding for lectures on recreation and leisure. This year the Memorial Award will help fund the Tucker Center's sixth distinguished lecturer, Dr. Donna Lopiano. Dr. Lopiano is the Executive Director of the Women's Sports Foundation. To acknowledge and celebrate the 25th anniversary of Title IX, she will be addressing the impact of Title IX and gender equity on women and girls in sport. Dr. Lopiano is a champion of equal opportunity for women and girls in sport and was cited as one of the most influential people in sport according to the *Sporting News* and *College Sports* magazine. The lecture will take place on May 28 at 7 p.m. at the Humphrey Center. For more information, please call the Tucker Center at (612) 625-7327. Details about the Memorial Award are described on page 2.

Second, we are pleased to have University of Minnesota President Nils Hasselmo and Mrs. Pat Hasselmo host a luncheon at Eastcliff to honor Dr. Dorothy Tucker's dedication to girls and women in sport and recreation. The luncheon, on May 5, will celebrate the renaming of the Center to the *Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport*. We are very thankful for the continued support of Dr. Dorothy Tucker and the University of Minnesota.

In addition to these events, we have been successful in our grant writing efforts and have been awarded three grants. Two of our successes have involved University-wide competitions.

We were awarded a grant from the Office of Student Development and Athletics in partnership with Coca-Cola. This partnership fosters community-building initiatives between the University and the broader Twin Cities community. Our proposal emphasized the importance of building mentoring relationships. In May, several students from Edison High School in Minneapolis will be coming to the University to learn more about physical fitness and how to lead a healthy life with the guidance of mentors who are Kinesiology undergraduate students. The program, "Teaming up to Promote a Healthy Lifestyle," will provide University students opportunities to increase their interaction and experiences with the broader Twin Cities community, as well as to gain valuable professional experience as mentors. Our mentorship program is co-sponsored by the Department of Recreational Sports and the Division of Kinesiology.

The Tucker Center also received a competitive grant from the Graduate School for researching intercollegiate athletes. Under the direction of affiliated scholars Drs. Diane Wiese-Bjornstal (professor of sport psychology), Elizabeth Arendt (orthopedic surgeon), and Shelly Shaffer (a research associate), data on five University men's and women's intercollegiate athletic teams is being gathered in order to examine gender differences in the impact of stress on quality of life and incidence of injuries. Researchers expect to have preliminary results by fall of 1997 and hope that this research will be a catalyst for a larger study of athletes around the country.

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The third grant that we have received is from the Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies (CTS). CTS has awarded the Tucker Center and the Human Factors Research Laboratory over \$32,000 for an interdisciplinary research project that will investigate whether gender and participation in competitive athletics are related to differences in driver accident involvement. The principle investigators, Drs. Mary Jo Kane, Shelly Shaffer, and Peter Hancock, will begin the study this summer.

In addition to these projects, we are seeking funding from outside agencies. The Center submitted grant proposals to the Minnesota Women’s Fund and the American Association of University Women (AAUW) to fund a program that would educate and empower high-school girls. More specifically, the program would involve a series of workshops that would teach girls how to create their own positive images of females in sport. These images would be disseminated throughout their high schools, and the girls would present their images and visions of females in sport to the general public.

One of the most exciting events that recently transpired was the long-awaited release of “Physical Activity & Sport in the Lives of Girls: Physical and Mental Health Dimensions from an Interdisciplinary Approach.” Donna Shalala, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, announced the release of the report at the NCAA Women’s Final Four basketball tournament in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was an exciting event that has been well received by the press and public. For more information about the report see page 4.

That concludes a summary of some of our upcoming events and recent activities. We hope all of you can join us in May to hear Donna Lopiano.

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T-SHIRT CONTEST

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- The Tucker Center is sponsoring a T-shirt design
- contest. The design should be in one color and incorporate the theme of girls and women in sport. The
- winner will receive a check for \$50 and a T-shirt with
- the winning design. The deadline for submission is
- June 1, 1997. For a submission form, please contact
- the Tucker Center at (612) 625-7327.

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EDITH MUELLER PARK AND RECREATION MEMORIAL AWARD

The Edith Mueller Park and Recreation Memorial Award was established by Dr. Van Mueller and Dr. Mildred (Mike) Mueller in memory of their daughter, Edith. Ms. Mueller was a senior in the Division of Recreation, Park, & Leisure Studies at the University of Minnesota when she died from a sudden case of severe pneumonia in 1982.

Edith with her neice, 1980

Edith was a tough, yet compassionate woman who loved sports, the outdoors, photography, and children. In eighth grade, she swam on the boys’ swim team because the school district did not have a girls’ team. According to her parents, the boys on her team were supportive, but she often was harassed by boys on other teams. Despite all the harassment, she continued to swim unabated on the boys’ team until a year later when a girls’ swim team was established. She swam competitively until she started college.

Ms. Mueller pursued her love of activity and the outdoors by majoring in recreation, park and leisure studies and by interning both in corporate recreational facilities and in municipal park and recreation departments. Had Edith lived, her father believes she would have embarked on a career in municipal parks and recreation. Right after her death, her parents decided to establish the memorial to honor Edith’s commitment to her studies at the University and to recreation.

Dr. Van Mueller is a professor of Educational Policy and Administration and has been teaching at the University of Minnesota in the College of Education & Human Development for 33 years. Dr. Mike Mueller has an Ed.D. in educational administration, is a lecturer at the University of Minnesota, and recently retired from the faculty at Augsburg College. The Muellers said that the University has been very good to them and that they are glad to be helping young women and men pursue their dreams with the memorial award.

For more information on how to apply for the Edith Mueller Park and Recreation Memorial Award, please contact the Tucker Center at (612) 625-7327. The first person awarded the Edith Mueller Park and Recreation Memorial Award will be announced at the Distinguished Lecture Series on May 28.

AFFILIATED SCHOLAR PROFILE: DR. PETER HANCOCK

Dr. Peter Hancock, director of the Human Factors Research Laboratory at the University of Minnesota, has teamed up with the Tucker Center to explore whether gender and participation in competitive athletics are related to differences in driver accident involvement. The study of gender differences is not a new topic of inquiry for Dr. Hancock. He has been systematically studying gender differences for over a decade.

His interest in gender differences was sparked by two separate observations. First, women are largely underrepresented in research in general. Women comprise



half the population, but until quite recently, they rarely have been used as subjects in research investigations, and there is a paucity of research on gender differences, especially in the domain of sensory and cognitive abilities. Second, and on a more personal note, he has observed differences between himself and his wife. His natural curiosity

and a chance to further the scope of scientific understanding of gender differences launched him into his academic career.

Dr. Hancock has written numerous articles and directed several studies on gender differences including the following: the effect of gender and time of day upon the subjective estimate of mental workload during the performance of a simple task and of a constant task; effects of age, gender, activation, stimulus degradation and practice on attention and visual choice reaction time; gender differences in posture effects on cognition; gender and task loading effects on cognition; sex differences in sustained attention; and the effects of age, sex, and handedness on the perception of time.

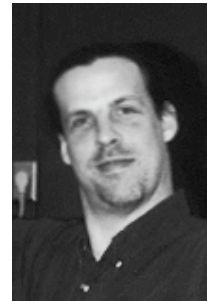
Collaborating with Drs. Kane and Shaffer, Professor Hancock will be expanding his domain of research to include driver-related skill (i.e., perceptual motor competence) differences between female and male competitive athletes and nonathletes. The study, funded by the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS), will attempt to answer two questions. First, does competence in perceptual-motor skills developed through sport participation transfer to driving ability? If findings indicate that athletic experience positively impacts driving ability, such findings would encourage girls' and boys' early involvement and continuation in competitive sports so that skills gained from athletics can transfer to an important lifelong activity, driving.

Second, Dr. Hancock and his colleagues are interested in finding out if such transfer is mediated by gender. Hancock admits that "men and women are more alike than different," but sex-related research has the potential of improving the capabilities of both females and males, by identifying strengths of the different sexes. If the research, through the examination of gender differences, identifies particular characteristics that improve driver competence, there is a possibility of improving everyone's driving capabilities through training.

The CTS research is particularly relevant to our society since, as Dr. Hancock concluded, "sports are an important part of society and failing with driving can get you killed."

TUCKER CENTER STAFF PROFILE

JONATHAN SWEET-Education: B.A. English,



Creative Writing, University of Minnesota. Current Position: Executive Assistant. Areas of Interest: hang gliding, swimming, classical physics, and horticulture.

Working for the Tucker Center is one of the most rewarding experiences in which I have been involved. The high level of scholarship and activity at the Center are stimulating and I know that my professional skills contribute to the well-being of the Center and its efforts to improve the lives of women and girls.

KRISTIN RAAB-Education: B.A. Political Science, University of Minnesota. Masters student in Public Health. Current Position: Editor. Areas of



Interest: the impact of physical activity, nutrition, environment, and public policy on women's health.

The Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport has afforded me a rich environment of intellectual activity. Not only have I been able to explore the associations between women's health and women's participation in physical activity, I also have been surrounded by very knowledgeable people who have made my work challenging and a lot of fun.

PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL REPORT UPDATE

The report "Physical Activity & Sport in the Lives of Girls: Physical and Mental Health Dimensions from an Interdisciplinary Approach" was released on March 28, 1997 at the NCAA Women's Final Four basketball tournament. As previously mentioned, Secretary Shalala announced the release of the report at a national press conference. Dr. Shalala said that the report, the first of its kind in U.S. history, is an impressive scholarly report that documents the benefits of girls' participation in sport and physical activity.

The report compiled research information from three different disciplines (i.e., psychology, sociology, and physiology). Emphasizing the importance of sport for growing girls, the report cited several studies demonstrating that girls' participation in sport enhances body image and self-esteem, increases confidence and scholastic performance, decreases school drop-out rates, and reduces the risk of many physiological and psychological conditions, such as obesity, osteoporosis, and depression. The report also identifies barriers to girls' successful sport involvement including gender stereotyping and institutional barriers (e.g., lack of funding), as well as provides recommendations on how to improve girls' participation rates in athletics. To request one paper copy of the report, call the Tucker Center at (612) 625-7327. The report and executive summary also are available on the world wide web at http://www.coled.umn.edu/KLS/crgws/pcpfs_es.html.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

• **Mark Your Calendars:** The Minnesota Department of Health, in conjunction with Boynton Health Service and other Twin Cities organizations, is sponsoring the Women's Health Festival on Wednesday, May 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The festival, entitled *Celebrate Women*, will take place in Minneapolis at the University of Minnesota in front of Coffman Memorial Union and will involve music, food, and interactive activities focused on promoting healthy lifestyles.

• Learn more about women's sport and fitness issues as well as career opportunities at the Women's Sports Foundation Summit 1997, May 15-18 in Bloomingdale, Illinois. For more information, call (800) 227-3988.

• On May 28, the Borghild Strand Distinguished Lectures Series and the Edith Mueller Park and Recreation Memorial Award are sponsoring Dr. Donna Lopiano's presentation addressing the impact of Title IX and gender equity on women and girls in sport. The lecture will take place at 7 p.m. at the Humphrey

Institute in Minneapolis. Please call the Tucker Center at (612) 625-7327 for more information.

• **Tucker Center Internships:** Promote girls and women in sport! Join the Tucker Center as an intern. Volunteers will research topics related to girls and women in sport and will help with the daily workings of the Center. Appointments are flexible and are available for academic credit or on a volunteer basis. Please call the Tucker Center at (612) 625-7327 for more information.

• **Internship:** The Minnesota Women's Consortium is offering a paid internship for the summer of 1997 for ten weeks to study its connection to and increase its interaction with organizations of women of color. For more information, contact Heidi Vardeman (612) 228-0338.

• **Scholarship:** Mervyn's Scholarship Program, in partnership with the Women's Sports Foundation, is offering scholarships to deserving athletes. Applicants must be seniors in high school who have participated in interscholastic sports and will attend college in the fall of 1997. Due date for applications is May 30. Call (800) 227-3988 for more information.

• **New Publication:** *A Guide to Women's Studies in the Outdoors: Review of Literature and Research with Annotated Bibliography*, edited by Nina S. Roberts, is available for \$15.00. Send check or money order to Nina S. Roberts, 9703 47th Place, College Park, MD 20740-1470.

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The Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport is dedicated to exploring how sport, recreation, and physical activity affect the lives of girls and women. The first of its kind in the country, it is an interdisciplinary center leading a pioneering effort on research, education, community outreach, and public service.

Questions or comments about this newsletter? Call Kristin Raab at (612) 625-7327.