

# Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Tucker Center News

University of Minnesota

Spring 2002

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we go to press, the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City are underway and some extraordinary female athletes are competing for medals and forging new paths for girls and women in sport. Bobsledder Vonetta Flowers became the first black competitor to win a gold medal in the history of the Winter Olympics. Brakewoman Flowers and driver Jill Bakken guided the U.S. to the first Olympic title on the bob track in 54 years. The U.S. women's ice hockey team took the silver medal in a close contest with Canada. We should be especially proud of this team because five of the players are local heroes—Natalie Darwitz, Jenny Potter, Krissy Wendell, Courtney Kennedy and Karyn Bye. And Lindsey Weier, at 17, the youngest woman ever to be named to the U.S. cross-country ski team, joins close to 20 other female Olympians with Minnesota connections.

The 2002 Paralympic Winter Games, also held in Salt Lake City, will take place March 7-16 and will be the most widely televised Paralympic Games in history. The Games will host 1,000 plus athletes representing 36 countries. Sports such as alpine and Nordic skiing, biathlon, and ice sledge hockey will be featured. The Paralympic Games provide a highly competitive and visible forum for great athletes to come together and compete at the highest levels. While doing so, they shatter definitions and stereotypes about sport and notions of what it means to be a highly skilled athlete.

How sports have been influenced by the inclusion of athletes with disabilities—especially female athletes with disabilities—is the topic of the Tucker Center's Spring Distinguished Lecture. *Emerging Faces and Visions of Sport: Female Athletes with a Disability* is the focus of a presentation by a leading expert in the field of disability studies, Professor Karen DePauw of Washington State University. Professor DePauw's lecture takes place on Tuesday, April 2, 7:00-9:00pm at the Weisman Art Museum on the East Bank Campus of the U of M. It is free and open to the public. For more information, call the Tucker Center at 612-625-7327 or visit our website at [www.tuckercenter.org](http://www.tuckercenter.org).

In the "Learning Our Legacy" column, we pay homage to Judy Mahle Lutter who recently retired as the co-founding CEO of Melpomene Institute in St. Paul. Lutter's pioneering work empowered women's and girls' participation in physical activity. And much of what we know about the relationship between running and pregnancy, as well as

exercise and menopause, is largely due to Lutter's research initiatives at Melpomene. Because of her efforts, we have greatly expanded our knowledge about the physical capabilities of girls and women. Though Lutter is no longer directing Melpomene, her accomplishments continue to impact our world.



Mary Jo Kane

Katie Lindquist is the focus of our most recent donor profile. She is a remarkable young woman who made a significant monetary contribution to the Tucker Center as a result of her fundraising campaign during her participation in the *Race Across America*, an ultra bike riding event. Katie's family and friends always encouraged her to participate in a wide variety of activities so she wanted to pass on this legacy to other girls and women. We are grateful that she chose to include the Tucker Center in such an important mission. Learn more about Katie and her commitment to making a difference in the lives of girls and women on page 2.

The Research Updates and Community Outreach section highlights many of our current projects as well as some new initiatives. An exciting new partnership with the Illusion Theater is underway and culminates on April 17 with a presentation of *Food for Thought: Raising Awareness about Young People and Eating Disorders*, a play presented by, for and about middle and high school students. This award-winning program will be followed by an all-day conference that includes teachers, parents, coaches and Tucker Center staff. For more information, turn to page 3 and also see the enclosed flyer.

Once again, thank you for your continued support of the Tucker Center as we expand the presence of female athletes and sport leaders in our communities.

## DONOR PROFILE: KATIE LINDQUIST

What do the following elements have in common? A cross country road race, a fund raising campaign, a former smoker and a self described non-athlete. The answer? Katie Lindquist, who is all of the above and then some. Katie's combination of talent and perseverance created a young woman determined to chart new trails for herself and other women. Showing great initiative, Katie decided to fund raise for the Tucker Center in conjunction with her participation in the annual Race Across America. The end result was a miraculous 10-day trip by tandem bicycle from Portland, Oregon to Gulf Breeze, Florida, and the donation of an incredible monetary gift to the Tucker Center.



Katie wasn't always so active and goal oriented. A graduate of Minnetonka (MN) High School, Katie didn't participate in sports or aerobic exercise. "I smoked in the pit a lot" is how Katie summed up her extracurricular high-school experience. A decisive moment in her life came when she went to college in Montana and didn't own a car. "I was one of the few people in my dorm that had a bicycle. Plus it was the only one with a rack on it, so I was in charge of runs to the store for chips and beer." This was a blessing in disguise because Katie discovered that the altitude was making it difficult for her to ride so she quit smoking. "It was an incredible turning point in my life and biking took on a whole new meaning as I began to heal from smoking."

When she transferred to the University of Minnesota as an undergraduate she purchased a mountain bike and, with a friend, went to Buckhill and set out on the trail. Firmly confident in their belief that they were both physically fit, they were devastated by the physical demands of the terrain. But Katie also found rapture and was smitten with trail riding. "I was zapped for good that day. It was as close to Nordic skiing as I could get in the summer." From that moment on, Katie joined riding clubs, entered mountain biking events and trained her heart out.

After graduation from the U of M with an undergraduate degree (1989) and a Master's in animal sciences (1993), Katie relocated for a lucrative employment opportunity in the Midwest. She continued to train and compete in mountain biking simply for the joy of riding. She was often one of only five women in a field of over 500 men and eventually found it difficult to deal with such an imbalance. "I kept watching awards go to men in every variety of category you could think of. Senior, beginner, pre-beginner, they had a category for everything. When it came to the female competitors it was a blasé 'oh here, you won first.' But for me, there would be a chance for more than just one person

to be recognized and encouraged." When Katie approached an event organizer about the situation, he asked her to sign up her female friends. But her friends were already in the event and more importantly, there were hundreds of women watching men compete while hearing the loud and clear message that women weren't encouraged to compete themselves. Katie wanted to make a difference, encourage other women to get involved, and shatter barriers along the way. In the midst of these advocacy efforts, Katie had not yet discovered the Tucker Center.

While Katie was living far away from Minnesota and trying to increase the odds for other women to participate in the sport she loved, she came across a Tucker Center newsletter. The circuitous path the newsletter traveled to finally reach Katie made it seem as if the news was destined for her. From Minnesota to Massachusetts to Indiana, the Tucker Center's message finally caught up to her. When she read the newsletter Katie was thunderstruck with a common sense of purpose: "I recognized myself and my friends in the Tucker Center's work and I knew I wasn't alone any more. Subsequent newsletters hit all of the points of interest to me, and I have been a devotee of the Tucker Center ever since that time."

The Race Across America (RAAM) and fund raising for the Tucker Center became a natural pairing for Katie. When she was approached by a fellow rider to be his partner in a tandem bike ride across the U.S., Katie was intrigued by the challenge and equally interested in acting as a role model for other women. "Believe me, if I can do it, so too can other women and I wanted to reach out to them." Katie took it upon herself to call Mary Jo Kane to get permission to use the Tucker Center's name in her fund raising. Once an agreement was reached, Katie sent out letters to family and friends. "Every one responded generously and right away. People identified with the Tucker Center's mission, its research on girls and women in sport. That alone was enough to get their donation."

Big wheels keep on turning as Katie prepares for a solo tour of the RAAM. Speaking from her home in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, Katie makes clear her desires: "I want to encourage more and more women to get out there and enjoy an active lifestyle. Cycling is a lifetime sport that's non-impact and creates independence for riders." Needless to say, the Tucker Center thanks Katie Lindquist for her amazing contributions.

—Diane Scovill, Tucker Team Member

Check out Katie's website at [www.ultrakatie.com](http://www.ultrakatie.com)

## RESEARCH UPDATES & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### “Image is Everything” Educational Project

This is a year of transition for the “Image is Everything” workshop. In light of the great success we had in bringing the project to area high schools, and the repeated requests to create something for middle-school age girls, we are in the process of revising Image is Everything for a younger audience. A pilot workshop was offered at the Minneapolis YWCA Midtown location on February 9<sup>th</sup> as part of a day-long celebration of National Girls & Women in Sports Day. The workshop’s director, Tara Cassidy, partnered with Mary Beth Barry, a physical education teacher and coach at De La Salle High School in Minneapolis. Mary Beth is also well known as a Tucker Center Friend and long-time supporter. Several students from De La Salle volunteered their time as mentors and assisted the over 40 girls who participated in this innovative educational project.

### Playing (Un)fair: Media Images of Female Athletes

Last year, the Tucker Center partnered with the Media Education Foundation (MEF) at the University of Massachusetts to produce the first ever educational video that explores the various ways in which mass media portray female athletes. Based on the ground-breaking research of Tucker Center Director Mary Jo Kane, the video includes not only Kane, but also features scholar and educator Pat Griffin. The video has been recently expanded to include interviews with star athletes. *Playing (Un)fair* provides an especially thoughtful and provocative analysis of contemporary media images of female athletes. *Playing (Un)Fair* will be available for distribution this coming April. For more information and to preview a clip of the video go to <<http://www.mediaed.org/videos/MediaGenderCulture/PlayingUnfair>> or link to the site from the home page of the Tucker Center’s website.

### Research Collaboration: TAAG Teaming for Girls

The Tucker Center is teaming up with the U of M’s Department of Epidemiology in a research project entitled “Trial of Activity for Adolescent Girls” (TAAG). TAAG is a nation-wide study funded by the National Institute of Health in collaboration with Minnesota and six other universities across the country. The research highlights a community and school-based intervention program aimed at preventing the decline of, and encouraging participation in, physical activity for middle-school aged girls. As part of a pilot study, the Tucker Center is providing eight student coaches to train and mentor approximately forty 11-14 year-old girls from Skyview Middle School in Oakdale, MN. Tucker Center mentors will meet with the girls twice

a week and facilitate training and support as the young girls prepare for the annual Melpomene 5K Walk/Run. Please join us at the run/walk on May 4<sup>th</sup> as we support the girls from Skyview Middle School.

### Tucker Center & Illusion Theater: Food for Thought

The Tucker Center has formed a partnership with the Illusion Theater to present *Food for Thought: Raising Awareness about Young People and Eating Disorders*, an upcoming play and conference. The program will feature a performance of Illusion Theater’s engaging play, *NO LAUGHING MATTER*, performed by students from Highland Park High School in St. Paul. Presentations and workshop sessions by experts in the field of eating disorders awareness and prevention, adolescent nutrition and physical fitness, and related topics including an interactive session on media images of girls and women in sport by Tucker Center Director Mary Jo Kane are also planned. The program’s focus is on students grades 6-9 and their coaches, teachers, parents, and school health professionals.

The play and conference will take place on Wednesday, April 17, 2002 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. at Illusion Theater, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hennepin Center for the Arts, 525 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis. The program is free and open to the public. *Registration is required*. To register for the play and conference, please call the Illusion Theater box office at 612-339-4944 ext. 241.

*NO LAUGHING MATTER* explores some of the many pressures and tensions faced by young people as they strive to develop a positive and healthy self-image. The scenes and characters are based on research that included focus groups of young people around the state, in-depth interviews with adolescent and adult survivors of eating disorders, and consultations with education and health experts in the field. The Tucker Center is proud to be a part of this important event. For more information, please see the enclosed flyer.

Illusion Theater is a non-profit organization aimed at creating theater that illuminates the human condition by addressing the illusions, myths, and realities of our times and to use the power of theater to be a catalyst for personal and social change. They work with peer-education groups in 28 communities throughout the country.



## LEARNING OUR LEGACY: A PROFILE OF JUDY LUTTER

On February 11, Melpomene Institute celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and marked the passing of an era with Judy Mahle Lutter's retirement as its CEO. By now, the formal fanfare and celebrations (not to mention the tears of gratitude and joy for Lutter) have ceased. What will endure, however, is Lutter's mark on women's and girls' fitness, their participation in sport and physical activity, and the research and educational programs that support that participation. Lutter's legacy is far-reaching and its importance can be measured by her vision and leadership, as well as the way she set the pace for others who work to promote opportunities for girls and women.

In the 1970s, Lutter began running to give herself time to be alone. With a husband, three children and a research career at the University of Minnesota, Lutter knew she needed her own space. But little did she know that as she ran in those early years, she was running for the millions of women who were discouraged from participating in sport and physical activity. Why the restrictions? Because of age-old stereotypes that linked their participation to, among other things, damage to their reproductive organs and their abilities to be good housewives and mothers. Or so they were told.

As Lutter continued to run in neighborhoods and road races, she was often asked questions related to women's health and exercise, and specifically about the relationship between menstruation and how it changes with physical activity. Searching the latest research literature, Lutter found nothing on the subject so she decided to find out on her own. She collaborated with a friend to construct a questionnaire about the links between women's health and fitness. The response to the questionnaire was quite impressive—over 400 women provided some initial feedback. Lutter was encouraged by such enthusiasm and followed that first wave of research with another questionnaire she took to the Boston Marathon in 1978. That year, the hot topic among the 250 female runners was exercise and pregnancy. Lutter and her friends took the results of those early questionnaires and completed the research that eventually provided the foundation for Melpomene, incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1982.

With the support of friends and a national advisory board, and listening to what people were eager to learn about, Lutter directed Melpomene researchers to widen their scope to include young girls. Re-visioning Melpomene's mission to include a focus on girls produced important research on adolescent girls' beliefs about, and experiences with, menstruation and physical exercise, and

how physical activity relates to girls' self-esteem and body image.

What began as a collection of women working in the attic of Lutter's home, Melpomene is now known nationwide as a prolific producer of original research on topics such as osteoporosis and aging, menopause, motivation and competition. Melpomene's findings have been distributed in research articles and books authored and co-authored by Lutter, including the *Bodywise Woman* and *Of Heroes, Hopes & Level Playing Fields*. Lutter has also been a regular contributor to the *Minnesota Women's Press* and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*.



One of the most important ways Lutter's legacy will continue is reflected in her commitment to mentor young people. Over 200 women (and a handful of men) have had the opportunity to complete an internship at Melpomene where they learned about office teamwork, conference planning, interviewing, research, writing and editing. Perhaps most importantly, they have followed Lutter's lead and gotten a taste of what it means to honor their passions and balance commitments to their work, families and friends, as well as their very own selves.

We should not forget the first event held in Melpomene's name: the Melpomene 5K Walk/Run. Spring in St. Paul wouldn't be the same without this unique event and how it brings together competitive runners, walkers, and wheelers, recreational athletes, women and men, great-grandparents and toddlers, and entire families that cheer each other on in the journey. At this amazing event, Lutter's commitment to physical activity, fun and relationships are evidenced in all participants. This year's race celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> running and will be held on May 4.

Even with Lutter stepping down as CEO of Melpomene her presence remains. Her exuberant passion to deliver research that counts—and to encourage girls and women to reach their potential through sport and physical activity—has taken hold among the 1,400 Melpomene members around the globe. In Lutter's wake come girls and women who live longer, healthier and happier lives, and who will continue to pass on to their daughters, friends and colleagues the power they experience in exercise and sport.

—Kim Pearce, Ph.D. Candidate, Tucker Center

## Honoring Dorothy McNeill Tucker

This past August 16<sup>th</sup> the University of Minnesota Foundation, under the direction of CEO and President Jerry Fischer, hosted a dinner to honor Dorothy Tucker who recently donated a second gift of \$1 million to the Tucker Center. Approximately 50 of Dr. Tucker's closest friends, and her many admirers at the U, came together to acknowledge her generous contributions, while enjoying an evening of great food, captivating conversation, and a brief trip down memory lane. For more photos of the evening's festivities, go to our website at [www.tuckercenter.org/dinner/](http://www.tuckercenter.org/dinner/). You won't be disappointed!



*A Perfect Partnership: President Mark Yudof, Mary Jo Kane, Dorothy Tucker, Provost Robert Bruininks*

## KUDOS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Nicole Black presented "Using relationships as a teaching tool" in January, 2002 at the New England Winter United States Professional Tennis Association Conference at Wheaton College, Norton, MA.
- Nicole Black presented "A relational model of coaching and leadership" in October, 2001 at the Women in Sports Leadership Conference, Minnetonka, MN.
- Mary Jo Kane presented a paper co-authored with Kim Pearce—"Media representations, by, for and about athletes with disabilities: What's race and gender got to do with it?"—at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Annual Conference, San Antonio, TX, November, 2001.

## STAFF UPDATE

**Jonathan Sweet**, Executive Assistant, has been with the Tucker Center since 1995. He provides secretarial support on projects, technical support for the computer network, and manuscript and report preparation assistance. Our Jack-of-All-Trades, Sweet says, "As a small Center with a broad mandate, I often find myself juggling a lot of things simultaneously. I look forward to this style of work as each new task allows me to test new skills against new challenges." When he's not working tirelessly for the

Tucker Center, Sweet can be found bicycling or taking in a movie. He adds, "The Tucker Center is a place where meaningful efforts are made to benefit real people in an arena that still needs a great deal of attention. I help my colleagues to spread awareness about girls and women in sport and support our projects that let girls in their communities speak out for themselves. I can't think of a better way to get good work done."

Please cut out this card and return with your donation to:

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1900 University Avenue Southeast  
Minneapolis, MN 55455



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