

# Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Tucker Center News

University of Minnesota

Fall 2005

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome back to fall semester at the Tucker Center! The leaves' colors may be turning and the seasons may be changing, but the Tucker Center's commitment to making a difference in the lives of girls and women remains constant. In this issue we highlight the next topic in our Distinguished Lecture Series, profile Joe Kelly, an individual who has made an enormous contribution to connecting dads and their daughters through sports, and tell you about one of our more generous donors, Lauren Weck. Last, but certainly not least, we introduce you to the Tucker Center's new Associate Director, Dr. Nicole LaVoi.

Equality for females in all areas of sport is a vision shared by many women and men. That vision became a reality when the federal law known as Title IX was passed by Congress in 1972. Designed to ensure equal opportunities for females in educational settings, Title IX has had its greatest impact in the world of sports. As many of you know, women's participation has increased dramatically at the high-school and college levels, and for the first time in our nation's history, we have a critical mass of young girls and women participating at all levels, from recreational leagues to Olympic and professional sports. In spite of such progress, Title IX continues to be threatened, from local high schools to the courtrooms and the halls of Congress. To address these threats, the Tucker Center is sponsoring a panel presentation for our fall Distinguished Lecture entitled, "*Protecting Title IX from Emerging Threats: What's Fact vs. Fiction Got To Do With It*" The panel will feature Rayla Allison, a Title IX attorney from Minnesota State University, Mankato, and Deborah Larkin, a nationally known expert on Title IX and former Executive Director of the Women's Sports Foundation. I will round out the panel and focus on the numerous myths and stereotypes surrounding Title IX. The presentations will take place on Monday, October 24, from 7-9 pm in Coffman Memorial Union on the East Bank campus (see the enclosed flyer for more details). Please join us for this important discussion and learn about actions everyone can take to safeguard Title IX for future generations.

The "Learning Our Legacy" column features Joe Kelly, founder and director of *Dads and Daughters* (DADs), a national advocacy organization. The mission of this unique organization is to connect fathers with their daughters in ways that foster healthy, empowering relationships. Kelly has learned that a

wonderful vehicle for accomplishing this connection is through girls' involvement in sport and physical activity. We know you'll enjoy learning all about Joe Kelly and his commitment to making the world a better place through the father-daughter connection.

The "Donor Profile" column highlights a true Minnesota pioneer, Lauren Weck. She is, among many other things, a retired Executive Director of the Minneapolis-area Girl Scouts Council, a former Executive Director of the Minneapolis YWCA, and a founding mother of the Minnesota Women's Foundation. With this type of background it's easy to see why Weck supports the Tucker Center's mission to enrich the lives of girls and women through their sport experience.

In 1989, I arrived at the University of Minnesota as a young Assistant Professor. Because of the vision and generosity of our benefactor, Dr. Dorothy Tucker, I have had the honor and privilege of directing this groundbreaking interdisciplinary research center since the early 1990s. Over the course of this last year—and with the urging of many of my colleagues around the University—I made the decision to assume the position of Director of the School of Kinesiology. I will, however, continue to oversee the mission and direction of the Tucker Center. My duties as the School's Director will present me with many challenges (and possibilities!), but it is also a wonderful opportunity to bring "new blood" and energy into the Tucker Center. That is exactly what we have done by hiring two new staff members—Dr. Nicole LaVoi, a Minnesota native and U of M graduate who joins us from the University of Notre Dame, and Heather Maxwell, a Ph.D. student who will be working toward her degree in sport management. Dr. LaVoi assumes the role of Associate Director beginning this fall term. She is profiled in Staff Updates on page 5. Heather Maxwell will be featured in our spring newsletter. We not only welcome Nicole and Heather as new members of the "Tucker Team," but also know how fortunate we are to have two individuals who have devoted much of their professional careers to making an important difference in people's lives.



Mary Jo Kane

## DONOR PROFILE: LAUREN WECK

Lauren Weck has been involved with the world of philanthropy much of her adult life, but until recently, she preferred to stay “behind the scenes.” Her financial commitment to the Tucker Center, however, made her see the need to go public: “The Tucker Center is an important spokesperson for research, but this is only helpful if the outcomes [of the research] are broadly circulated. We need to get the work of the Tucker Center out to those who can use the information as a tool to translate into their specific situation. They can then leverage other activities.” Weck explains what she means by leveraging other activities: “Several mentors helped me create a more constructive, proactive strategy for my personal giving—one more aligned with my values and my interests in addressing issues affecting women and girls, using fewer but more significant gifts. A lot of women ask ‘How can my contribution make a difference?’ Well, [one individual’s giving] has greater impact because it’s joined with the gifts of so many others.”

A Minnesota native, Weck earned her bachelor’s degree at Northwestern University and a Master’s degree in special education at the National College of Education. Staying in the Chicago area, she began her professional career in special ed and following that, began to work in social services and with non-profit organizations.

A commitment to this line of work grew out of some early childhood experiences where Weck met inequality face-to-face. She remembers, for example, when her girls’ basketball team was kicked out of the gym because the boys had to practice, even though it was the girls’ gym! This would not be her last exposure to unequal treatment based on gender bias: As a 5th-grade teacher in Illinois, Weck discovered that her teacher’s union “thought it was okay for men to be paid more money than women in the same position. If you were a married man you received more money. If you were a [single] woman with children you wouldn’t.” Another hard dose of reality occurred when Weck returned to Minnesota and couldn’t get a loan to buy a house because she was an unmarried female. Thankfully, because of the efforts of countless individuals like Lauren Weck, those days have changed.

These and other inequities motivated Weck to create a world where one’s gender was not a handicap. She eventually took a job in Massachusetts as Director of Admissions in a private girls’ school and became immersed in an environment she had experienced in her younger days at summer camp, where girls were leaders and pursued whatever their interests might be regardless of gender stereotypes. From that moment on, Weck became far more vocal and persistent in her desire to remove any barriers that would thwart the advancement of girls and women.

When Public Law 94-142 was passed in 1975—the Education for All Handicapped Children Act—Weck

returned to Minnesota to go to graduate school in Special Ed Administration at the U of M. She landed a job as a Special Education director, but soon came to believe she couldn’t change the school system from within, and decided to pursue a different career path: “I knew that I wanted to be in the community relations area of corporate work, but I had a difficult time marketing myself [so] that people would see me as something other than a teacher or school administrator.” Weck was most interested in working for corporations whose headquarters were in the Twin Cities and eventually was hired into the marketing research department at General Mills. Before long, she landed the one job in the company she wanted most—with the General Mills Foundation. Weck couldn’t have been happier: “What are the odds I would come into this large company and get the one job that I really wanted? I always say ‘Shoot for the moon, you may hit a star!’ and in this case, I got the moon!”

After a successful career with General Mills, Weck jumped at the chance to face a different type of challenge and did so as the new CEO at the Minneapolis YWCA. The organization was going through difficult times and it was a make-or-break situation. But Weck was surrounded by talented people who were committed to working for the empowerment of girls and women and the elimination of racism. Weck’s job was especially rewarding because she worked with a fabulous board of directors devoted to ensuring high-quality programs and management.

After her tenure at the YW, Weck served as Director of the Minnesota Office of Volunteer Services and later became CEO of the Girl Scout Council of Greater Minneapolis. Though she enjoyed her work with the Girl Scouts, she needed to help out in family matters and decided to take an early retirement. These days, Weck takes great pleasure in caring for her grandnieces, volunteering “behind the scenes,” traveling, working on her perennial garden, biking, and cross-country skiing. As if all that weren’t enough, Weck says she’s “getting the itch again,” involving herself more publicly in endeavors she believes in, endeavors like the Tucker Center. Weck praises the Tucker Center for being committed to collaboration, and for taking a national leadership role in disseminating research findings through education and community outreach.

Weck continues her life-long commitment to making the world a place where no girl will be thrown out of the gym: “Women [now] have opportunities to participate in sports of any kind—intramural, competitive, whatever. This is absolutely, fundamentally important to girls’ and women’s mental health, their physical well-being and their long-term success in the world.” Lauren Weck’s commitment to that participation, and to the education of girls and women, is a tremendous asset to us all.

— Jonathan Sweet, Program Associate

## LEARNING OUR LEGACY: A PROFILE OF JOE KELLY, PRESIDENT OF *DADS AND DAUGHTERS*

Many organizations start with someone recognizing that a need exists. But what makes an organization great is when that same someone has the courage and fortitude to make a difference in people's lives by fulfilling that need.

In 1999, Joe Kelly discovered such a need during a phone conversation with a father from California. At the time, Kelly was the news director of Minnesota Public Radio in Duluth. The father asked Kelly if there were any organizations that promoted the relationship between fathers and their daughters. After doing some research, Kelly was stunned by what he discovered: "It was mind boggling to me that in 1999, such an organization did not exist." Not for long, we are happy to report, because Kelly conceived of and launched *Dad and Daughters* (DADs), a national (and visionary) nonprofit organization. The organization's mission is to inspire fathers to actively and deeply engage in the lives of their daughters, and to galvanize fathers to transform the pervasive cultural messages that devalue girls and women.

An avid cyclist and self-described fanatic baseball fan, Kelly has a deep love of sports. It was not always the case, however, that a father's love for sports could be shared with his daughters. But Kelly believes all that changed with the passage of Title IX: "[It] radically opened up possibilities for fathers and daughters to connect in ways that were not previously available to men. Title IX is one of the best things to happen to fathers. It provided a new arena to connect, an arena men are comfortable with. Men talk more about sports to each other than they do about parenting." Kelly is keenly aware of the intersection between parenting and sports, and sees it as a logical way to spend time with one's daughters, time that can be spent developing meaningful connections, whether it's coaching your daughter's team or attending sporting events together. Kelly stresses that fathers should utilize their passions to make relationships truly meaningful, whether through sports or some other vehicle: "Fathers gotta show up and use what they care about as a foundation to build a relationship with their daughters."

According to Kelly, we should not underestimate a father's ability to influence his daughter: "Fathers can encourage their daughters to take physical risks, to know and experience their bodies subjectively, rather than as an object. It is an incredible gift for a girl to feel powerful in her body." Kelly also believes that empowering girls through the father-daughter relationship—and inspiring men to advocate for the issues that most touch the lives of their daughters—is where DADs has had its greatest impact. Having a real impact is one of the many reasons Kelly supports the efforts of the Tucker Center: "It's

really important to have research [findings that] increase awareness that physical activity is important for girls."

Another key area where Kelly shares a mutual passion with the Tucker Center involves Title IX. Even though we are approaching the 35th anniversary of this landmark legislation, Kelly believes that Title IX continues to be undermined at every turn. But he also believes that DADs has been instrumental in protecting Title IX. Kelly points out that fathers can use their power and leverage as men to assure that Title IX will continue to provide sporting opportunities for their daughters: "Men must [strongly] advocate for Title IX." He also explains how his organization can personalize the implications of altering Title IX. For example, Kelly asks men if they would deny their daughter equal access to sports just because she's a girl. He also asks them if they want their daughters to believe their looks are more important than their athletic ability. Such questions and



advocacy can send powerful messages to our daughters because it teaches them that fathers are willing to stand up for them, that one voice *can* make a difference, and perhaps most important of all—daughters do matter!

Kelly's sports heroes are "she-roes." His mother had polio so he named Wilma Rudolph as his favorite she-roe because, like his mother, she had "an incredible spirit." Indeed, Kelly's biggest she-roes are "the three women in my family, my wife and two daughters." Kelly's wife, Nancy Gruver, also influences the lives of girls. In 1993, Kelly and Gruver founded the groundbreaking international publication, *New Moon: The Magazine for Girls and Their Dreams*. Edited by girls 8 to 14 years old, *New Moon* is the only child-edited publication to win the prestigious Parent's Choice Foundation Gold Award for best children's magazine. Kelly also owns and publishes *Daughters™: For Parents of Girls*, an international newsletter with a circulation of 35,000.

Kelly insists that the father-daughter relationship has the potential to make the world a better place, now more than ever. His parting message is very instructive and ends on a positive note: "We are acculturated to believe parenting is women's work, and of course it is, but it is also father's work. It is so important for fathers to play with daughters. Fathers should think of the time they spend with their daughters as a premium on an insurance policy. By spending time with their daughters, they are increasing the odds their daughters will be stronger, happier, and bolder...and they get to have fun [playing sports] while doing it!!"

To learn more about one great and very wise dad, go to [www.dadsanddaughters.org](http://www.dadsanddaughters.org).

— Nicole LaVoi, Associate Director, Tucker Center

**RESEARCH UPDATE**

In our last newsletter, we talked about an ongoing research study (and article) related to the various ways intercollegiate female athletes are portrayed on media guide covers. We were pleased to report that during the 2003-04 season, sportswomen were overwhelmingly represented on the court, in uniform, and in active, athletic images. In short, females were portrayed as serious, competent athletes. This type of portrayal was in sharp contrast to earlier investigations we conducted (1989-90 and 1996-97 athletic seasons) where sportswomen were routinely presented off the court, out of uniform and in passive, “sexy” poses. Building on this longitudinal research, **Jo Ann Buysse, Nicole LaVoi** and Ph.D. student, **Heather Maxwell**, will conduct a follow-up investigation to determine if there is a correlation between patterns of representation and the gender and occupational status (e.g., head coach, sports information director) of those responsible for producing the images that appeared on the covers during the 2003-04 season.

In this and upcoming newsletters, we will include research updates from our network of Affiliated Scholars. These scholars come from various academic disciplines both inside and outside the U of M community, but all share a common passion—investigating how involvement in sport and physical activity impacts the lives of girls and women. One such scholar is **Lisa Kihl**, Assistant Professor in Sport Management in the School of Kinesiology. Kihl conducts research on ethics in sport and its relationship to sport policy. In a just-completed study, Kihl and her co-investigators, **Tim Richardson** and **Charles Campisi** (Kinesiology Ph.D. students), examined the fallout that occurred at the U of M in the wake of the academic scandal in the men’s basketball program in the late 1990s. More specifically, Kihl and her students interviewed men’s basketball staff, former players, staff members in the athletic department, and various university stakeholders to assess specific consequences of the scandal. Two significant consequences were NCAA and university-imposed sanctions (e.g., the loss of athletic scholarships), and the negative image of the program and the university, state and nation wide. Another set of research findings involved the numerous reform efforts that were undertaken across the University to prevent future academic scandals. For example, Kihl and her students discovered that the U of M made such sweeping and far-reaching structural changes (e.g., having the compliance officer report to the General Counsel’s office rather than to the Athletic Director) that the U has not only regained its institutional integrity, but is now recognized nationally as a model for athletic reform. One final (and major) discovery was the dramatic and immediate impact the scandal had on the remaining student-athletes who were not involved in the

scandal: Through a guilt-by-association process, they felt stigmatized by faculty and fellow students.

Professor **Moira Petit** is a new faculty member in the School of Kinesiology who came to us from the Medical School at Penn State University. Petit is launching two new studies pertaining to females involved in sport and physical activity. The first study is entitled: “Dance Revolution: A Novel Intervention for Cardiovascular and Bone Health in Children and Adolescents.” Research indicates that being physically inactive plays a significant role in the development of a host of chronic diseases including obesity, osteoporosis, and cardiovascular disease. Petit’s study examines strategies for developing innovative and effective ways to reduce physical inactivity during childhood. Girls in particular are at risk for becoming inactive during adolescence. A second study, “Determinants of Musculoskeletal Health in Youth and Collegiate Athletes: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach,” will explore the determinants of musculoskeletal health and injury in athletes, particularly in adolescents. Previous research has discovered that some injuries appear to be more common in female athletes such as ACL (knee) injuries and stress fractures thought to be associated with amenorrhea and eating disorders. However, there is a substantial lack of longitudinal studies tracking musculoskeletal health (e.g., bone, muscle, and tendon strength) and injury rates in adolescent athletes. No studies have adequately assessed both biological and psychosocial factors across adolescence in both female and male athletes. Dr. Petit will seek funding at the federal level to support her groundbreaking research efforts.

Professor **Corliss Outley** is also a faculty member in the School of Kinesiology. Outley has established a line of research that investigates factors related to youth development among urban ethnic populations. Her preliminary findings from school-wide surveys in Los Angeles County, California, suggest that many urban high-school students are not participating in vigorous physical activity; many residents do not feel safe in participating in activities outside of their homes; and very few recreation facilities and programs are available to this urban-centered population. Professor Outley is also replicating this study with adolescent males and females in various urban-centered communities throughout the Twin Cities. In addition to this line of research, Outley and her colleague **Jean Forster** (Department of Epidemiology at the U of M) are investigating the Tobacco-Free Youth Recreation (TFYR) statewide initiative sponsored by the Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota (ANSR). TFYR’s mission is to assist recreational organizations in their efforts to create a tobacco-free environment which, in turn, promotes and models tobacco-free lifestyles.



## STAFF UPDATES: NICOLE LAVOI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, TUCKER CENTER

As you read in the Director's Letter, Mary Jo Kane took on a new role as Director of the School of Kinesiology this fall. But this in no way means the mission and the work of the Tucker Center will be altered. As the new Associate Director, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to maintain existing Tucker Center projects and help launch some exciting and innovative new initiatives. The primary objective during my tenure will be to strengthen the Tucker Center as a unique global leader of research and programming which impacts the lives of female athletes, their families, and communities. I truly believe that I am in the right place at the right time.

I grew up in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Both of my parents were educators and I was a three-sport high-school athlete competing in softball, basketball, and tennis. Coming from this type of background, I clearly had two loves—sports and education. In 1991, I received my undergraduate degree from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, with a double major in Health/Fitness and Communications. Throughout my stay at GAC I was a member of the tennis team, during which we won the NCAA D-III National Championship in 1990. I was also a three-time Academic All-American and in my senior year, I received the Evelyn Young Award which is given to a four-year, letter-winning female athlete with the highest GPA.

I first arrived at the U of M in the early 1990s eager to pursue a Master's degree in sport psychology with the goal of coaching at the intercollegiate level. From my perspective, coaching was the best avenue to make a real difference in the lives of young women. With my M.A. degree in hand, I took a job as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Education and Recreation—and also served as the Head Tennis Coach—at Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts. As a teacher-coach at an all-women's college, I became even more interested in exploring ways that involvement in sports, and more specifically the coach-athlete relationship, can empower females. This interest led me back to the U of M where I entered the doctoral program in sport psychology/sociology. As a Ph.D. student, I was able to examine how the coach-athlete relationship facilitates the growth and development of young girls and women. I was convinced (and still am!) that coaching females requires gender-specific coaching strategies and processes, but little empirical evidence exists to support this belief.

Due to my interest in gender differences in sport—as well as a strong commitment to interdisciplinary research—I became quite involved with various Tucker Center projects during my doctoral training. One such

project was *Image is Everything*, a unique advocacy and media literacy initiative that engages adolescent girls to recognize and counteract the harmful effects of stereotypic images often associated with women's sports. One of my proudest accomplishments at the Tucker Center was that I developed and directed *Tennis Plus!*, a life-skills program for urban girls that utilizes tennis as a vehicle for growth, empowerment and connection. In 2001, I received the Tucker Center's Eloise M. Jaeger scholarship awarded to students who pursue educational and research initiatives designed to make a difference in the lives of girls and women.

After completing my Ph.D., I wanted to continue my passion for interdisciplinary work. This led me to the University of Notre Dame's Mendelson Center for Sports & Character. After one year, I transitioned into a new position as the Sports Director in Notre Dame's Center for Ethical Education (CEE) and taught sport psychology in the Psychology Department. With support from my CEE colleagues, I developed the Play Like a Champion™ (PLC) Educational Series, a research-based curriculum that uses the latest research findings in the social sciences related to character education, moral development, and developmental, educational, and sports psychology. The objective of the series is to provide those adults committed to youth sports with the expertise they need to simultaneously promote healthy development and athletic achievement.

Though I loved my work at Notre Dame, the opportunity to return to the Tucker Center was one of my long-term goals and dreams. I knew I could combine the work I was doing at ND with the ongoing efforts of the faculty and staff at the U of M. For example, one of my first objectives is to secure external funding to develop a research-based curriculum similar to the Play Like a Champion™ Educational Series. This series will then be delivered to high schools and youth sport organizations throughout the state of Minnesota.

This will no doubt be a unique and exciting time for me and the Tucker Center. I will be guided by Professor Kane's leadership and expertise, and supported by veteran Program Associate Jonathan Sweet's stability and insight. But I also look forward to using my own background and professional experience to launch exciting new initiatives, ones that will carry on the best of the Tucker Center's traditions. I also look forward to hearing from and meeting you as the opportunity arises. In the meantime, stay tuned via our website, [www.tuckercenter.org](http://www.tuckercenter.org).



**KUDOS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Mary Jo Kane** will deliver the Ethel Martus Lawther Distinguished Lecture in the School of Health and Human Performance at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, October, 2005. Professor Kane's lecture is entitled: "Media Representations of the Post-Title IX Female Athlete: The Good, the Bad & the Ugly."
- Kane also wrote a chapter entitled: "Sociological Aspects of Sport and Physical Activity." In J. Parks & J. Quarterman (Eds.), *Contemporary sport management*, 3rd ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics (in press).
- **Diane Wise-Bornstal** will speak at the Twin Cities Marathon Sports Medicine Conference on "Psychology of the Injured Athlete," Minneapolis, October, 2005.
- **Jo Ann Buysse** taught a graduate course in Sweden entitled: "Global Sport Issues." Twelve UMN undergrad

- and graduate students accompanied Dr. Buysse in May-June, 2005.
- Buysse also presented "Framing the Female Athlete: What's Sex Got to do with It?" at the Saturday Scholars Program, U of M, Minneapolis, September, 2005.
- **Nicole LaVoi** is working with the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association on implementing Parents and Coaches Together (PACT), a program she developed with colleagues at Notre Dame. PACT is a research-based curriculum designed to help change the climate of Minnesota youth soccer.
- **Heather Maxwell** will present her research on a fan motivation case study for NCAA Division I women's college basketball at the Sport Marketing Association's Annual Conference, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, November, 2005.

**Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport**

University of Minnesota  
 203 Cooke Hall, 1900 University Ave. SE  
 Minneapolis, MN 55455  
 (612) 625-7327 voice, (612) 626-7700 fax

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 www.tuckercenter.org

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