

Trinity University Women's Intercollegiate History Project Digital Archives and Exhibit

Background

In 2015 alumni Peggy Kokernot Kaplan (class of 1975) was thinking about her time at Trinity University. Encouraged by then physical education instructor Shirley Rushing Poteet, Kokernot Kaplan had founded the first women's track team at Trinity. After viewing the Trinity athletic website, she was unable to find any references to track and field records prior to the 1990s. Email contact with Trinity's athletic department revealed the university did not have team performance records dating back to the 1970s. Determined to pursue the search, Peggy enlisted the aid of Poteet, whose service to Trinity dated back to 1960. In turn, they sought the assistance of Dr. Doug Brackenridge, professor emeritus of religion and author of *Trinity University: A Tale of Three Cities*, on where to locate information.

From this inquiry a project evolved; to trace the 150 years of Trinity women's efforts to be an equal partner in intercollegiate athletics. By doing so a chronicled history began to appear, but they realized something more was needed - the perspectives of Trinity women athletes.

The Trinity University Women's Athletics Oral History Project was developed to gain those experiences and perspectives into the defining years of women's athletics. Focusing on the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the interviews have been able to document incredible insights into the formation of the program under Title IX, the value and benefits of Division III athletics, and the lasting impact coaches and administrators have made on these athletes; none of which was evident in the historical documentation of Trinity.

From the project's work over the past four years, a manuscript is being developed to capture the 150-year story in book form. Sections will feature social and Trinity-specific historic benchmarks since 1869, personal stories derived from the oral history interviews of participants in the program, and a selection of illustrations and pictures highlighting the pivotal moments of the progress of women's intercollegiate sports. The narrative will feature profiles of the women "pioneers" for the programs, as well as the impact of the game-changing 1972 Title IX legislation and how it affected women's intercollegiate athletes at Trinity.

Mellon Initiative Summer Research Institute Proposal

In support of the history project and the forthcoming book publication, the project team is submitting a Mellon Institute proposal to design, develop, and publish a digital archive and exhibit space that will illuminate the collective history and unique experiences of Trinity women athletes. The project team would lay the groundwork for the continuation of the oral history project by researching modern challenges and progress within women's athletic programs across the country and work to identify additional Trinity women athletes to interview. There are several perspectives the oral history project has yet to explore. This includes women athletes who are BIPOC; part of the LGBTQIA community; and recent graduates (2000-2015).

The project team seeks up to four students from diverse backgrounds and areas of study, which could include but is not limited to experience in athletics, sports management, history, computer science, graphic design, new media, education, sociology, anthropology, women and gender studies, and modern languages.

To learn more about the Mellon Initiative and the requirements for proposal and application submission, visit: <https://sites.trinity.edu/melloninitiative>

Submit a statement of interest and summary of relevant experience (250 word limit) to University Archivist Abra Schnur at aschnur@trinity.edu by December 31, 2020 for consideration.