

H2P

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
ATHLETICS MAGAZINE
SPRING 2022

HAIL TO HER

Pitt and Title IX

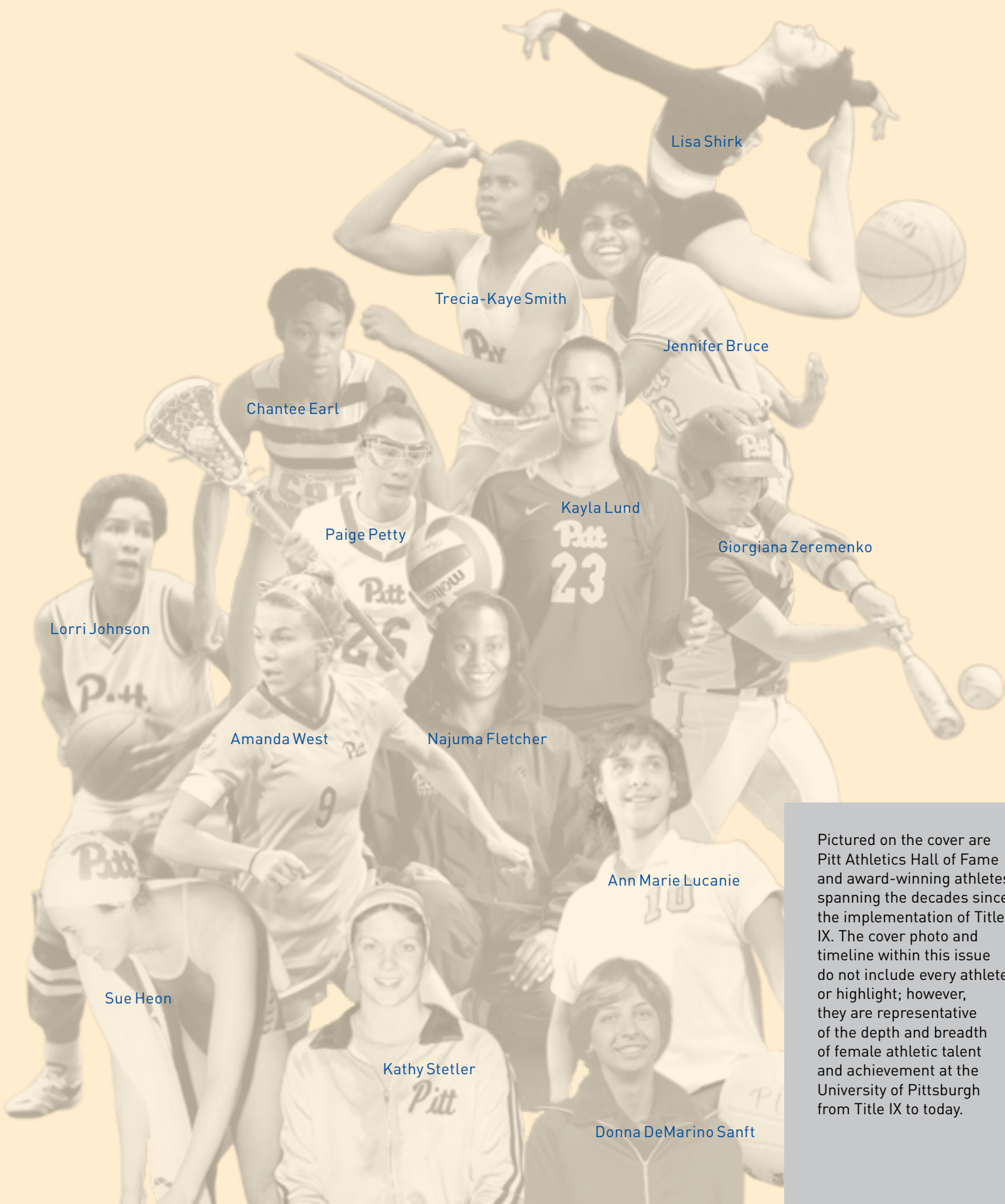


ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

PICKETT BECOMES
NEWEST STEELER

PITT LEGEND
HERB DOUGLAS

GROUNDBREAKER
MARTHA MUNSCH



Lisa Shirk

Trecia-Kaye Smith

Jennifer Bruce

Chantee Earl

Kayla Lund

Paige Petty

Giorgiana Zeremenko

Lorri Johnson

Amanda West

Najuma Fletcher

Ann Marie Lucanie

Sue Heon

Kathy Stetler

Donna DeMarino Sanft

Pictured on the cover are Pitt Athletics Hall of Fame and award-winning athletes spanning the decades since the implementation of Title IX. The cover photo and timeline within this issue do not include every athlete or highlight; however, they are representative of the depth and breadth of female athletic talent and achievement at the University of Pittsburgh from Title IX to today.

H2PTM

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SPRING 2022

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NFL DRAFT

On the Cover: HAIL TO HER

Celebrating 50 years of Title IX and our Pitt female student-athletes. See the cover story beginning on page 16.

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DONNA SANFT



Dear Pitt friends,

June 23, 2022, marked the 50th anniversary of Title IX, and I am thrilled to share that Pitt Athletics will join organizations across the country in celebrating the passage of this federal civil rights law with a yearlong celebration. As a former collegiate student-athlete and mother to two young women, including one who will be a college student-athlete this fall, I can appreciate that the opportunities available to women and girls in education and sports are directly related to the removal of barriers through the passage of Title IX.

As the first female director of athletics at Pitt, it is a point of pride to join a list of female pioneers at our university. Long before Title IX was enacted, Margaret and Stella Stein were the first full-time female students at Pitt when they enrolled in 1895 and then the first Pitt women to earn their master's degrees in 1901. Jean Hamilton Walls was the first Black woman to receive a bachelor's degree from Pitt in 1910 and a PhD in 1938. Among the notable women in Pitt Athletics was Margaret "Peg" Covert, who joined the women's athletics staff in 1946 and pushed for equal sports facilities for men and women before becoming the head of women's athletics in 1972. As early as the 1920s, Pitt women competed in basketball, hockey, volleyball, archery, swimming, baseball, golf, hiking, tennis, dancing and other social events before Title IX made it possible for women to compete for athletic scholarships. In the last 50 years, participation in college sports has blossomed, with women constituting 44% of all NCAA athletes, while the participation of girls in high school sports has exploded, rising from about 294,000 in 1971-72 to more than 3.4 million in 2018-19.

As a result, through the increased opportunities in education and sports, women and girls are benefiting from the positive impact of learning about teamwork, leadership, character

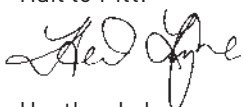
building, conflict resolution, time management, physical and mental well-being, and self-esteem. More women continue to step into leadership roles globally and in our country, shattering glass ceilings.

After five years of leading Pitt Athletics, I am inspired not only by our female student-athletes but by the number of male student-athletes who support and attend their events and by our donors, both men and women, who support their teams, too. It is a daily privilege to get to know our student-athletes, specifically the incredible women who are filled with the indomitable Pitt spirit and who radiate confidence on the field and in the classroom. As we mark the 50th anniversary of Title IX, my message to all Pitt women is inspired by Serena Williams' response following her semifinal win at Wimbledon in 2016.

Reporter: "There will be talk of you going down as one of the greatest female athletes of all time."

Serena Williams: "I prefer ... one of the greatest athletes of all time."

Hail to Pitt!



Heather Lyke
Director of Athletics



Above, Heather Lyke as a member of the University of Michigan softball team. Lyke was a four-year letter winner, two-time team captain and a Big Ten champion.

At left, Lyke with daughters Elle and Sophie



What is Title IX?

Title IX states: No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights enforces Title IX to ensure that institutions that receive federal financial assistance from the department comply with the law.





JMI Sports is proud to be the corporate sponsorship and multimedia rights partner of Pitt Athletics. Our Pitt Sports Marketing team is ready to work with you to develop mutually beneficial marketing partnerships with Pitt Athletics.

For more information, please contact:
Joshua McCorkle, Director, New Partnerships
j.mccorkle@jmisports.com



COMPLIANCE CORNER

Forged Here

Since July 1, 2021, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has allowed student-athletes to use their name, image and likeness (NIL) for commercial gain. The NCAA restricts activities that are considered “pay for play” or are a “recruiting inducement.” Pennsylvania, like many states, has a statute that governs student-athletes and their participation in NIL activities.



Pitt has put in place a robust educational program called Forged Here to provide student-athletes with the tools they need to be successful in the NIL space. Pitt continues to add additional resources to ensure that student-athletes receive a best-in-class experience.

For more information on Pitt’s Forged Here program, visit pittsburghpanthers.com/forgedhere.

Please feel free to direct questions related to NIL or any other compliance matter to the Compliance, Financial and Student Services Office at compliance@athletics.pitt.edu.

Name, Image and Likeness

Tools and Resources for Pitt Student-Athletes

External Partners

INFLCR is the leading content and compliance platform designed to assist student-athletes in building their personal brands with a goal of maximizing name, image and likeness opportunities. Pitt has regularly been ranked as high as first among INFLCR clients in uploads and second in student-athlete downloads.

THE BRANDR GROUP is a brand management, marketing and licensing agency that works with Pitt student-athletes to capitalize on opportunities such as video games, custom Pitt-branded merchandise, trading cards and nonfungible tokens (NFTs).

Pitt Programs

Pitt student-athletes benefit from key partnerships with the University of Pittsburgh **INSTITUTE FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL EXCELLENCE** and the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business **CENTER FOR BRANDING**.

The **CATHY AND JOHN PELUSI FAMILY LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM** has been preparing student-athletes for success academically, athletically and in their personal development for more than 25 years.

TM

Family Legacy

From left, Jason, Mary Beth and Lindsay Richards

Written by Chris Cappella

Thomas E. Richards—alumnus, entrepreneur, philanthropist and University of Pittsburgh Board of Trustees chair—and his wife, Mary Beth, made a \$5 million commitment to the Pitt men's basketball program, fulfilling a wish Tom made before his passing last year following a hard-fought battle with cancer.

In recognition of this gift, and of the Richards family's decades of service and devotion to Pitt, the lobby at the Petersen Events Center has been renamed the Thomas E. Richards Family Lobby. The gift to the men's basketball program—for which Tom himself was a standout player in the 1970s—will help to lead expansion and renovation efforts in the practice, training and sports performance facilities at the Petersen Events Center.

"Tom Richards' legacy shines brightly at the University of Pittsburgh and beyond," says Director of Athletics Heather Lyke. "He was a leader throughout his life—as a star point guard; an accomplished chief executive officer; and, most importantly, as a husband, father and cherished friend. Tom inspired and impacted so many people, and that was especially true

"The Richards family has been an important part of the Pitt basketball community and has made a tremendous impact on the lives of so many."

—Jeff Capel

at Pitt. This extraordinary gift is yet another example. We express our highest gratitude to the Richards family and are thankful that Mary Beth, Lindsay and Jason Richards could be with us that evening as we paid tribute to Tom."

The lobby unveiling took place on March 1, 2022, prior to the men's basketball game against Duke



University. Friends, family and supporters of the program gathered in the lobby for a ceremony that included remarks by Bill Hillgrove, the "Voice of the Panthers," who had known Tom since his high school days; Chancellor Patrick Gallagher; and Lyke.

"The Richards family has been an important part of the Pitt basketball community and has made a tremendous impact on the lives of so many," says men's basketball head coach Jeff Capel. "I am grateful for the relationship I was able to build with Tom before his passing and for the friendships that we maintain with Jason and the Richards family. Pitt basketball is extremely thankful for the generous gift to the program but even more thankful for the impact Tom and his family continue to have here at the University of Pittsburgh." 🏀

From Blue and Gold to Steeler Nation

R

ecord-setting University of Pittsburgh quarterback Kenny Pickett was selected in the first round of the 2022 National Football League Draft (20th overall) by the Pittsburgh Steelers. Pickett became the 26th Pitt player to be selected in the opening round and only the second quarterback, joining Pro Football Hall of Famer Dan Marino, who

was picked by the Miami Dolphins 27th overall in the 1983 draft.

Pickett is Pitt's first player taken in the opening round regardless of position since 2014, when defensive tackle Aaron Donald went to the Rams as the 13th overall selection. Pickett is the fourth Pitt product to be drafted by the Steelers since 1993, joining running back James Conner (2017, third round), defensive back Hank Poteat (2000, third round) and quarterback Alex Van Pelt (1993, eighth round).

Two prior Panthers have been first-round picks by the Steelers: offensive lineman Tom Ricketts (1989, 24th overall) and defensive back Paul Martha (1964, 10th overall).

"In Kenny Pickett, the Steelers are not only getting a tremendous quarterback but also one of the finest leaders and toughest competitors I've ever been around," Pitt Head Coach Pat Narduzzi said when Pickett's selection was announced. "I have no doubt he wants to leave his draft party




right now and get to work on the playbook with Coach [Mike] Tomlin and Coach [Matt] Canada. That's the type of commitment Kenny displayed at Pitt and will continue to have next door. Beyond the field, Kenny is already such a wonderful asset for the Pittsburgh community. He greatly values the importance of giving back, as he showed with his NIL (name, image and likeness) efforts. This is just a huge victory for the Steelers and Pitt."

"We circled the globe, at least the United States, the past several months, exploring and researching," Steelers Head Coach Mike Tomlin said. "It's funny—we ended up with the guy next door."

"Kenny's just a mature, even-keeled guy," Steelers General Manager Kevin Colbert said. "He obviously had a great senior year, and it just talks and preaches what you can do if you stay [in school] and develop into a first-round pick. He's special."

Pickett finished his collegiate career as Pitt's all-time leader in passing yards (12,303), pass completions (1,045), total offense (13,112), touchdown responsibility (102) and passing touchdowns (81). He had 20 career rushing touchdowns, a new standard for a Pitt quarterback. He was named a first-team All-American by both the Walter Camp Football Foundation and American Football Coaches Association, becoming the first Pitt quarterback to earn first-team status since Marino in 1981.

Pickett was selected as the winner of the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award (presented to the nation's top quarterback who best exemplifies character, scholastic and athletic achievement, and the Senior CLASS Award (presented to the most outstanding senior student-athlete in 10 NCAA Division I sports). He additionally was a Heisman Trophy finalist—Pitt's first since wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald in 2003—and finished third in the balloting. 

PITT'S NFL FIRST-ROUND DRAFT CHOICES

Year	Player	Position	Team (pick overall)
1961	Mike Ditka	TE	Chicago (5th)
1964	Paul Martha	DB	Pittsburgh (10th)
1977	Tony Dorsett	RB	Dallas (2nd)
1978	Randy Holloway	DL	Minnesota (21st)
1981	Hugh Green	LB	Tampa Bay (7th)
1981	Randy McMillan	RB	Baltimore (12th)
1981	Mark May	OL	Washington (20th)
1983	Jimbo Covert	OL	Chicago (6th)
1983	Tim Lewis	DB	Green Bay (11th)
1983	Dan Marino	QB	Miami (27th)
1984	Bill Maas	DL	Kansas City (5th)
1985	Bill Fralic	OL	Atlanta (2nd)
1985	Chris Doleman	LB	Minnesota (4th)
1986	Bob Buczkowski	DL	Los Angeles Raiders (24th)
1987	Tony Woods	LB	Seattle (18th)
1988	Craig Heyward	RB	New Orleans (24th)
1989	Burt Grossman	DL	San Diego (8th)
1989	Tom Ricketts	OL	Pittsburgh (24th)
1992	Sean Gilbert	DL	Los Angeles Rams (3rd)
1995	Ruben Brown	OL	Buffalo (14th)
2004	Larry Fitzgerald	WR	Arizona (3rd)
2007	Darrelle Revis	DB	New York Jets (14th)
2008	Jeff Otah	OL	Carolina (19th)
2011	Jon Baldwin	WR	Kansas City (26th)
2014	Aaron Donald	DL	St. Louis Rams (13th)
2022	Kenny Pickett	QB	Pittsburgh (20th)



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Honoring a Pitt Legend

A new 300-meter indoor track planned for the University of Pittsburgh's future Victory Heights facilities will be named in honor of Herbert P. Douglas Jr. (EDUC '48, '50G)—Olympic track star, Black trailblazer and one of the greatest Pitt athletes of all time.



Chancellor Patrick Gallagher announced the honor during a 100th birthday celebration for Douglas at the Senator John Heinz History Center on March 12, 2022.

"There's no better way for us to express our admiration than to emulate what you have always done, which is to hand the baton to those who follow in your footsteps, dream big and achieve great things," Gallagher said.




Douglas, who celebrated his 100th birthday on March 9, 2022, enrolled at Pitt in 1945 and marked milestones as both a track and field athlete and a football player. He won four intercollegiate championships in the long jump and one in the 100-yard dash. He additionally captured three national Amateur Athletic Union championships in the long jump.

The year he graduated, Douglas won a bronze medal at the 1948 Summer Olympics for his 24-foot, 8.75-inch long jump.

After graduating from Pitt, Douglas worked as a night manager for his father's auto business until the Pabst Brewing Company hired him in 1950. By 1968, he had worked his way through the corporate ranks to become vice president of Moët Hennessy, making him one of the first Black vice presidents in corporate America.

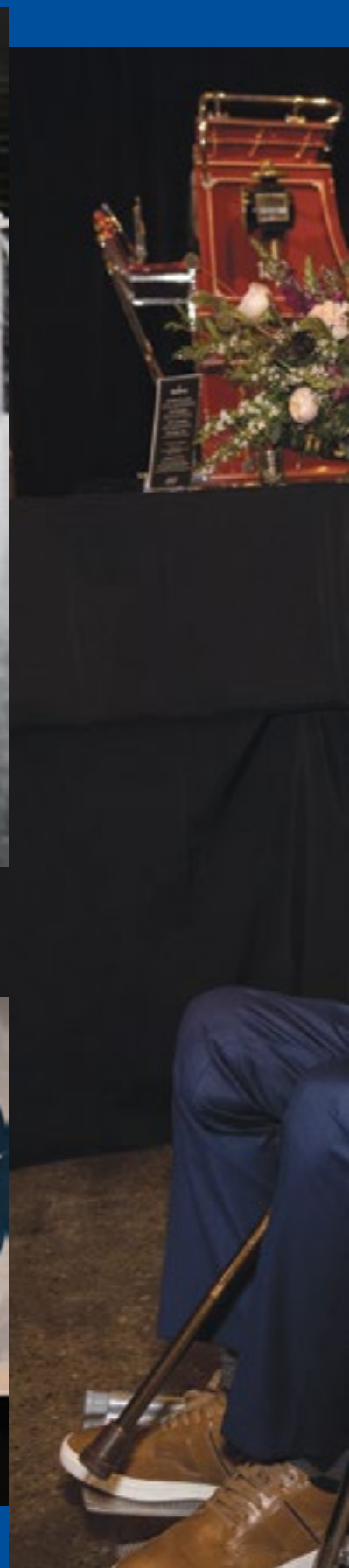
In 1980, Douglas cofounded the International Amateur Athletic Association, a nonprofit organization that promotes and encourages fairness, integrity, uncompromising sportsmanship and excellence in athletic competition.

In addition to the new track, Douglas' name adorns several notable halls of fame, including the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame, New York Athletic Club Hall of Fame and Pitt Athletics Hall of Fame.

The Victory Heights initiative is a series of state-of-the-art athletics projects that will create national-caliber competition, training, sports performance and sports medicine facilities that will impact more than 85% of Pitt student-athletes daily. 



As a student-athlete, Herb Douglas soared high.



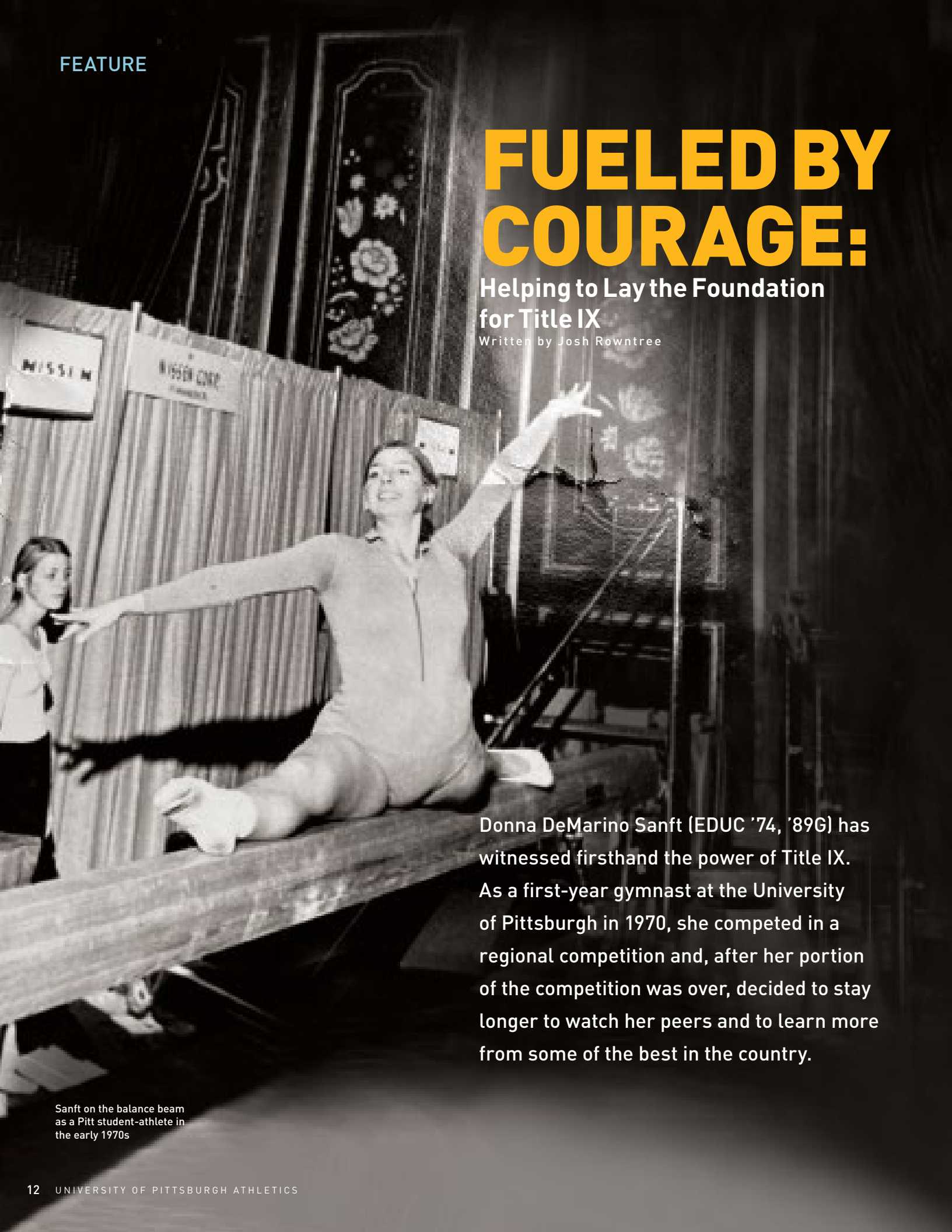


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FUELED BY COURAGE:

Helping to Lay the Foundation
for Title IX

Written by Josh Rowntree



Donna DeMarino Sanft (EDUC '74, '89G) has witnessed firsthand the power of Title IX. As a first-year gymnast at the University of Pittsburgh in 1970, she competed in a regional competition and, after her portion of the competition was over, decided to stay longer to watch her peers and to learn more from some of the best in the country.

Sanft on the balance beam
as a Pitt student-athlete in
the early 1970s



onna was by herself and didn't even have a credit card for her expenses.

"I don't know what I thought I was doing," she jokes.

Fast-forward 52 years and Sanft, a longtime coach and administrator at Pitt, attends volleyball practice before Dan Fisher's team—fresh off a trip to the national semifinals—departs for an international trip where it will compete against teams in Spain and Italy.

"How great it is that these athletes can take advantage of these opportunities to see how good they can be," Sanft says. "There's been an awful lot of progress."

Clearly there has.

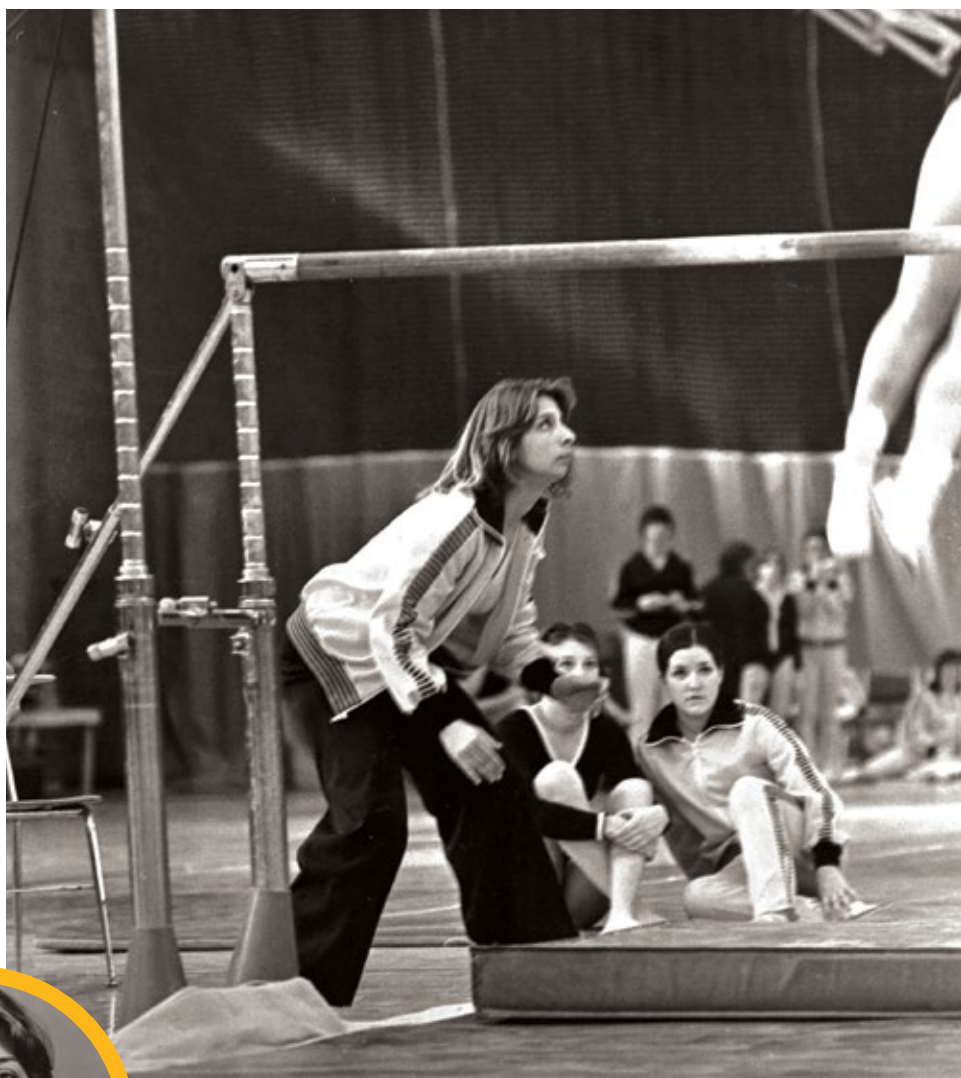
Sanft considers herself lucky. Growing up in the Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, mill town of Monessen—once known as a bustling hotbed of high school football and basketball talent—she got involved in gymnastics at a young age.

Monessen was a rare place, one that backed female athletes and provided a meaningful platform for competition during a time when that was not the case throughout the region and the country.

"A lot of women my age didn't have that opportunity when they were growing up," she says. "People thought it was fine for us to do it."

Sanft admits that she wasn't the best gymnast on her high school team, which won four state championships and received a police escort when returning home with a trophy one year—a sign of respect not typically given to female athletes at the time.

She was, however, good enough to attend Pitt, join the school's gymnastics team and perform under coaches Gail Santillo and Debbie Wells, who Sanft credits with working as hard as they could to provide opportunities to her and



Sanft as a student, left, and later as a coach, above



When Sanft stepped on campus, women's athletics were still two years away from the introduction of Title IX in 1972. At Pitt, they were not considered part of the athletics department, falling instead under the auspices of the School of Education's physical education department.

her teammates.

That said, when Sanft stepped on campus, women's athletics were still two years away from the introduction of Title IX in 1972. At Pitt, they were not considered part of the athletics

department, falling instead under the auspices of the School of Education's physical education department.

"We had these really wonderful women who were faculty members in the physical education department and

who were coaches of various teams,” Sanft says. “They wanted us to have the opportunities. I am guessing that they were not compensated appropriately.”

While faculty adding coaching duties to their resume was typical at colleges across the country at that time, and with only men’s sports recognized and uplifted, Sanft couldn’t help but feel the injustice.

“I had a little chip on my shoulder because I didn’t grow up in an area where women’s sports in general weren’t respected or supported,” she says. “That was a foreign concept to me. I didn’t realize that the rest of the world was different.”

So Sanft took action, writing letters to the Pitt athletics department and asking the University to invest more in women’s athletics.

She followed the example of others, like Peg Covert, who was the head of women’s sports while they were housed in the physical education department and pushed for equal sports facilities for women’s and men’s teams.

Covert led the school’s first female cheerleading squad despite plenty of resistance and notoriously upset Pitt’s administration by organizing a field hockey game on the lawn of the Cathedral of Learning.

“She was a champion for women’s rights and did everything she could to promote women’s sports prior to Title IX,” Sanft says of Covert, who passed away in 2006.

Then, in 1972, Title IX passed, prohibiting colleges from sex-based discrimination, and the path toward equality was introduced.

Two years later, Pitt brought women’s athletics into the University’s athletics department.

Even still, there were hiccups. Women’s sports across the country were naturally at a disadvantage when it came to funding and acceptance.

It was around then that Sanft finished her time as a competitor and was called in to discuss taking over as the gymnastics program’s head coach. Pitt’s athletic director at the time was Cas Myslinski, a former officer in the U.S. Air Force known for

Suddenly Sanft, like many women’s coaches during that era, had to learn on the fly how to run an athletic program, from managing a budget to recruiting and handling all the varied responsibilities that head coaches shoulder.



Sanft coached Lisa Shirk, a five-time NCAA All-American who won a national championship on the uneven bars in 1982, the first year the NCAA sponsored championships for women. Before that, women participated in the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women.

having a stern demeanor.

“I was very respectful, but I spoke up every now and then about situations,” Sanft says. “Even so, he thought I could do the job, and I give him a lot of credit for hiring me. I was 22 years old.”

Suddenly Sanft, like many women’s

coaches during that era, had to learn on the fly how to run an athletic program, from managing a budget to recruiting and handling all the varied responsibilities that head coaches shoulder.

“There were people willing to help, [to] stop for a second and give

me a hand,” says Sanft, who recalls the time she borrowed recruiting letters from men’s assistant basketball coach Tim Grgurich to use as a template for her own program. And, she notes, administrators like Carol Sprague provided tremendous support.

“I asked for help when I needed it, and there were plenty of people who were interested in being helpful,” she says. “Did I encounter some roadblocks? Yes. But instead of getting angry about it, it made me more motivated to get things done.”

Sanft ended up coaching gymnastics at Pitt for 12 years and then went on to a long, successful career as an administrator in which she held numerous roles and was able to see Title IX’s impact at Pitt and throughout the NCAA.

During her 41-year journey at Pitt, women’s athletics programs received more and more funding, better facilities and more equality in terms of scholarship allotment and overall opportunity.

Programs such as Pitt’s Cathy and John Pelusi Family Life Skills Program—which Sanft describes as a “labor of love”—began to pop up, serving as an outlet to help student-athletes

“We have to remember that all of the great things that sports can do for people are equally valuable for men and for women. Participating in sports can help all student-athletes develop skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.”

—Donna Sanft

develop outside the classroom or playing arena.

Now, 50 years after Title IX was introduced, the fight for equality is still ongoing.

Pitt, for instance, is one of only six of the 65 Power Five schools to have a woman serve as athletic director this year, and Heather Lyke is the first female to serve in the role in Pitt’s history.

But Sanft, there for the groundwork of it all, recognizes that tremendous headway has been made.

“Pitt is doing a lot of things right in terms of providing support for all teams to pursue excellence and be competitive nationally,” she says, echoing a familiar motto of Lyke’s. “It’s facilities, scholarships, coaching staffs, support services, nutrition, mental health, life skills and academic support.”

“I honestly have felt that when it came to supporting student-

athletes on a day-to-day basis, Pitt has always invested so much in the student-athlete experience.”

Ten years ago, during the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Title IX, Sanft was a speaker at the Varsity Letter Club dinner.


She posed a pointed question to those in attendance.

“I’m guessing that all of you in the audience would agree that sports provided us the opportunity to test ourselves, to be tough and resilient, to go after our goals, to learn how to deal with failures and obstacles and how to overcome them, to become mentally and physically strong, to develop teamwork and leadership,” she told the crowd.

“If those skills are so important for our sons, they have to be equally important for our daughters, don’t they?”

The crowd nodded in unison.

Fifty years earlier, that question might have been received much differently. But the work and courage of those like Sanft, Covert, Santillo, Wells and countless others paved the way for female student-athletes today to feel what Sanft felt as a young girl in Monessen: valued.


“We have to remember that all of the great things that sports can do for people are equally valuable for men and for women,” she says. “Participating in sports can help all student-athletes develop skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.” 

Sanft



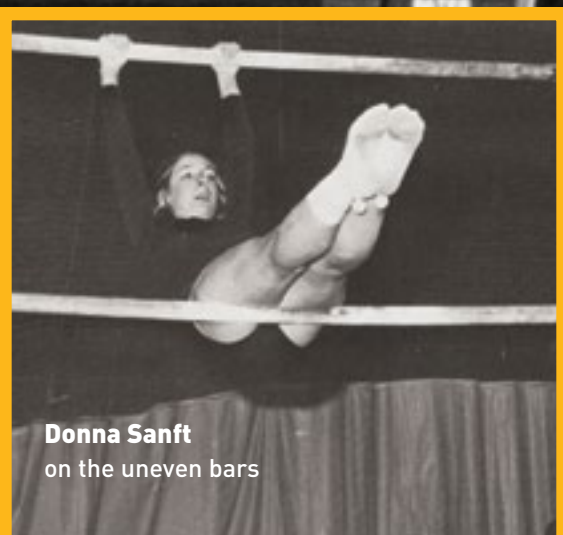


HAIL TO HER

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS 

June 23, 2022, marked the 50th anniversary of Title IX, the landmark legislation that made gender equity in sport the law of the land. On the pages that follow, Title IX's impact on Pitt athletics is chronicled in both words and images. The history reveals a triumphant yet still-unfolding journey of women's excellence in sport while wearing the Blue and Gold.

Debbie Lewis,
Pitt's first women's basketball star, holds the record for assists in a career (638) while also ranking second all-time in steals (250) and fourth in points (1,941).



Donna Sanft
on the uneven bars



1972

Title IX is passed.

The legislation protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. Women were able to join the varsity marching band.

1974

Women's varsity sports

are taken over by Pitt's athletics department. Women's track and field is introduced to Pitt Athletics and recognized as a varsity sport.

1974
Pantherette
swimming team



1976
Women's cross
country
is introduced and
recognized as a
varsity sport. Brenda
Buffington, inset,
was on the inaugural
team and served as
captain her senior
year.





1978

Kathy Stetler

(above, and at left, center) becomes the first women's national champion in Pitt history (50 Fly).

1979

Myra Bachuchin

is a two-time ('78 and '79) All-East award winner and was a member of the 1979 gymnastics team that finished ninth in the country.



1982

Volleyball

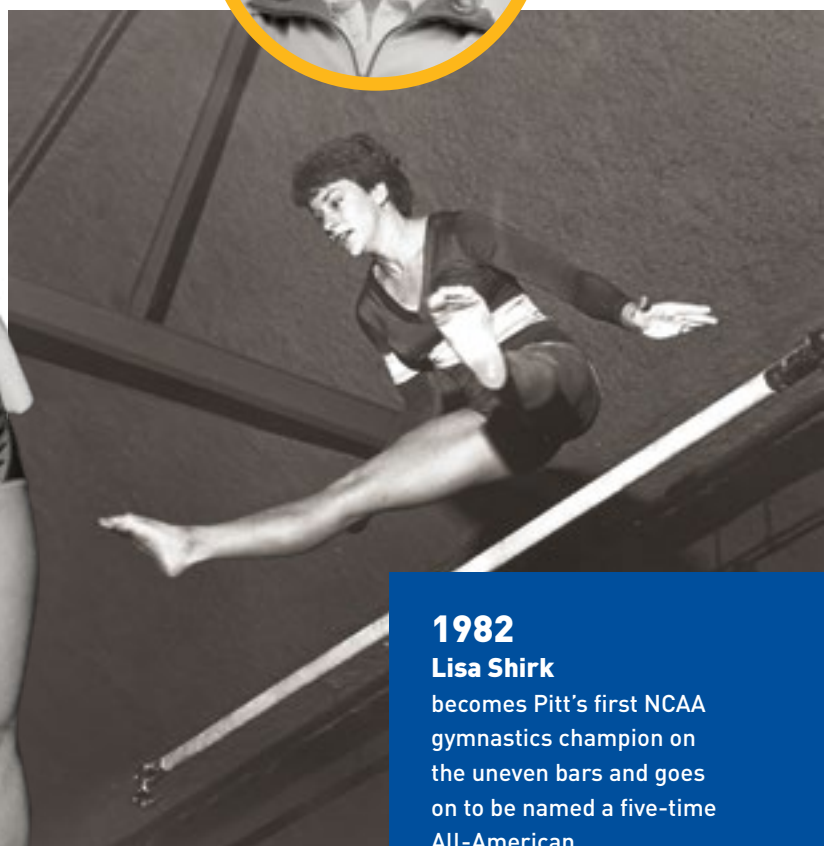
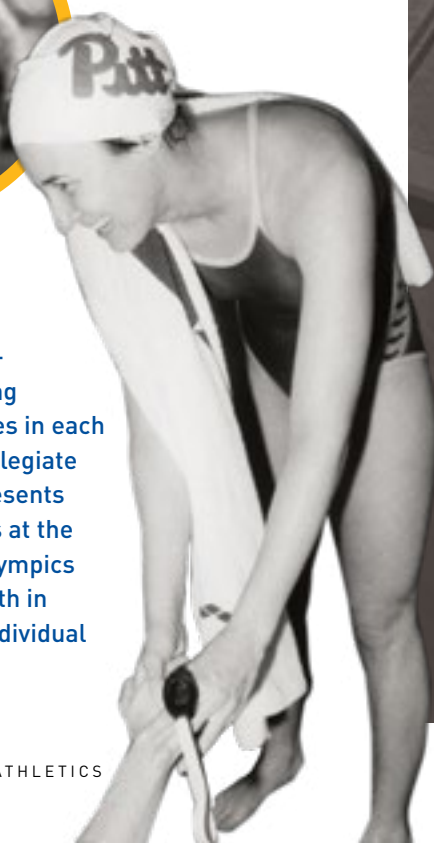
wins its first Big East Tournament Championship and advances to the NCAA Tournament. Julie Gaul (inset) earns Big East Tournament MVP honors.



1982-85

Sue Heon

is an 11-time All-American, earning national accolades in each season of her collegiate career. She represents the United States at the 1984 Summer Olympics and finishes fourth in the 400-meter individual medley.



1982

Lisa Shirk

becomes Pitt's first NCAA gymnastics champion on the uneven bars and goes on to be named a five-time All-American.



1984

Women's basketball

wins its first regular-season Big East Championship, with Jennifer Bruce (wearing number 12 below) earning First Team All-Big East and Big East Player of the Year honors.



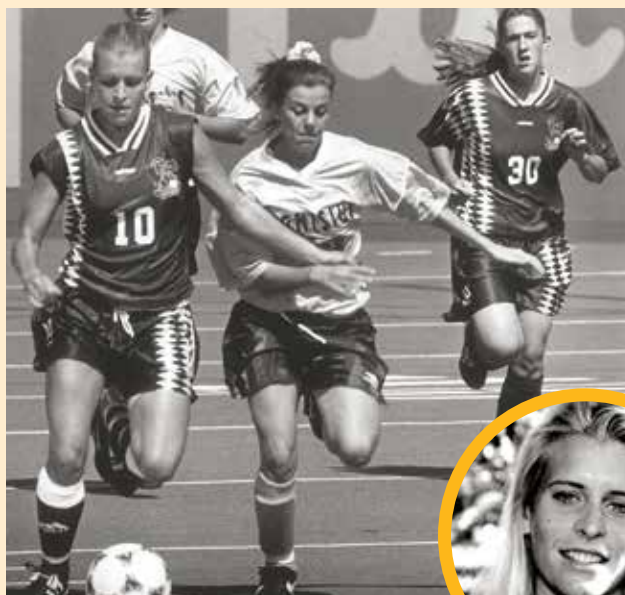
1992

Najuma Fletcher, the first women's track and field Olympian in University history, competes in the high jump and heptathlon at the Summer Olympics.



1993

Ann Marie Lucanie becomes the first American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) All-American.



1996

Women's soccer

is introduced and recognized as a varsity sport. Megan Beasley (inset) scores the program's very first goal in the season opener against Baylor.



1998

Softball

is introduced and recognized as a varsity sport.

1998

Trecia-Kaye Smith

wins two individual titles—the long jump and triple jump—at the NCAA Women's Indoor Track and Field Championships in Indianapolis, leading Pitt to a third-place national finish. Smith would finish her collegiate career as a seven-time NCAA champion.



2000

Chantee Earl

captures the 800-meter title at the 2000 NCAA Indoor Championships. Her time of 2:02.19 sets a Pitt record and is a mere 0.42 seconds from the NCAA indoor meet standard. Earl is the 800-meter national runner-up at the 2000 Outdoor Championships. She finishes her career as a six-time All-American.



2004

Maureen McCandless

wins the first NCAA Regional Championship in women's cross country program history and earns All-America honors at the NCAA Championship.



2008

Kristy Borza

becomes the fastest player in Pitt women's tennis history to reach 100 career victories, accomplishing the feat in only 137 matches. Borza finishes her career as Pitt's all-time leader in season singles wins (28), career singles wins (91), career doubles wins (85) and combined victories (176).



2008-09

Women's basketball

makes back-to-back NCAA Sweet 16 appearances. Shavonte Zellous is named an Associated Press Third Team All-American after leading the Panthers in scoring.





2014

Women's soccer

records its first ACC victory. Roosa Arvas (right) scores the lone goal in 1-0 victory over Syracuse.



2015

Softball

earns its first NCAA tournament berth and reaches the regional final.



2016

Women's gymnastics

wins the East Atlantic Gymnastics League Championship. Lindsay Offutt (left) is named Northeast Regional Gymnast of the Year and wins the NCAA Regional Championship in floor exercise.



2016

Meme Sharp

becomes Pitt's first ACC women's gold medalist in the 3-meter dive competition.



2017

Volleyball

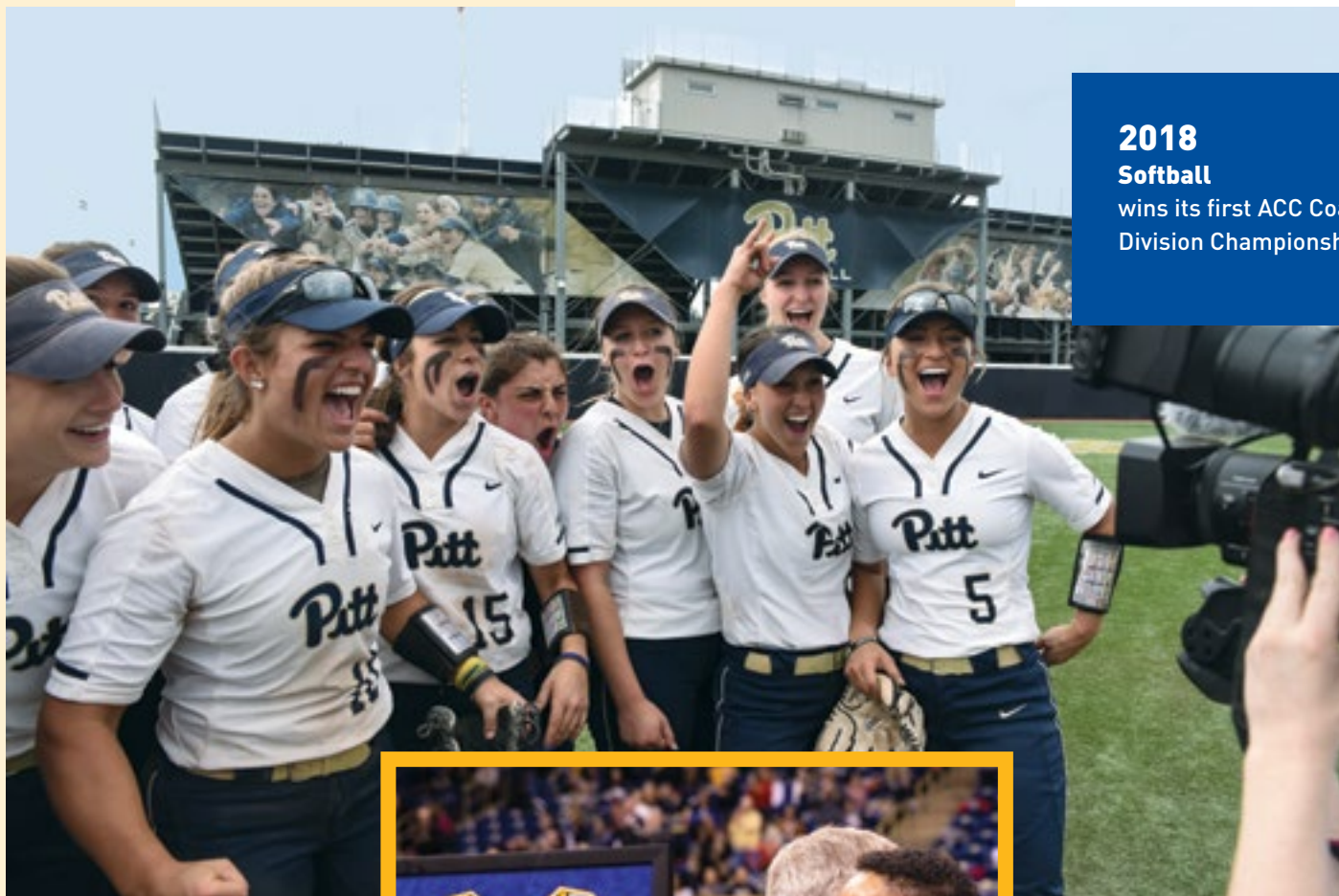
captures the first of three-straight ACC Championships.

2017

Heather Lyke is named the first female director of athletics at Pitt.



Pitt



2018

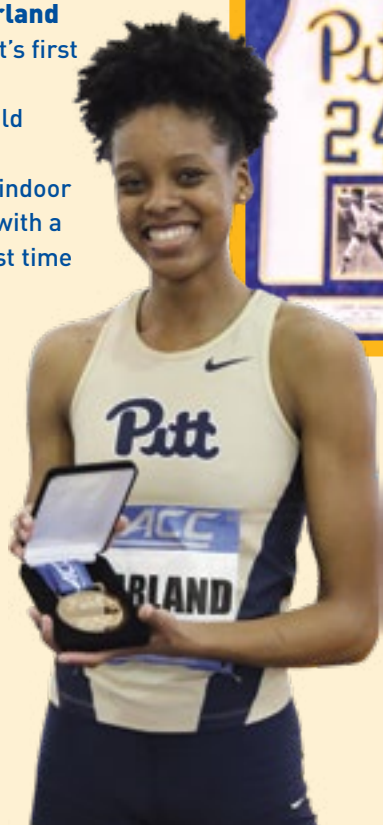
Softball

wins its first ACC Coastal Division Championship.

2018

Desiree Garland

becomes Pitt's first female ACC track and field champion, winning the indoor 400 meters with a personal best time of 53.16.



2019

Lorri Johnson

becomes the first women's basketball player to have her jersey number retired.

2020-21

Lacrosse

is introduced and recognized as a varsity sport. Emily Boissonneault is hired as the first varsity lacrosse coach.





2021 Volleyball

advances to the NCAA Final Four for the first time in school history and posts its fourth 30-win season in five years.

2021 Kayla Lund

concludes her decorated career by being named a First Team AVCA All-American, an unprecedented achievement by a Pitt student-athlete.



2022 Lacrosse

wins its inaugural game 9-8 over Duquesne. The Panthers go on to earn ACC regular-season and tournament wins over Louisville with Paige Petty and Pauline DiFatta earning Honorable Mention All-American accolades.

2022 Amy Read

becomes the first Pitt diver to qualify for four consecutive NCAA Championships.

June 23, 2022

On the 50th anniversary of Title IX, Pitt Athletics sponsors nine women's varsity programs: basketball, cross country, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, track and field, and volleyball. 🏐



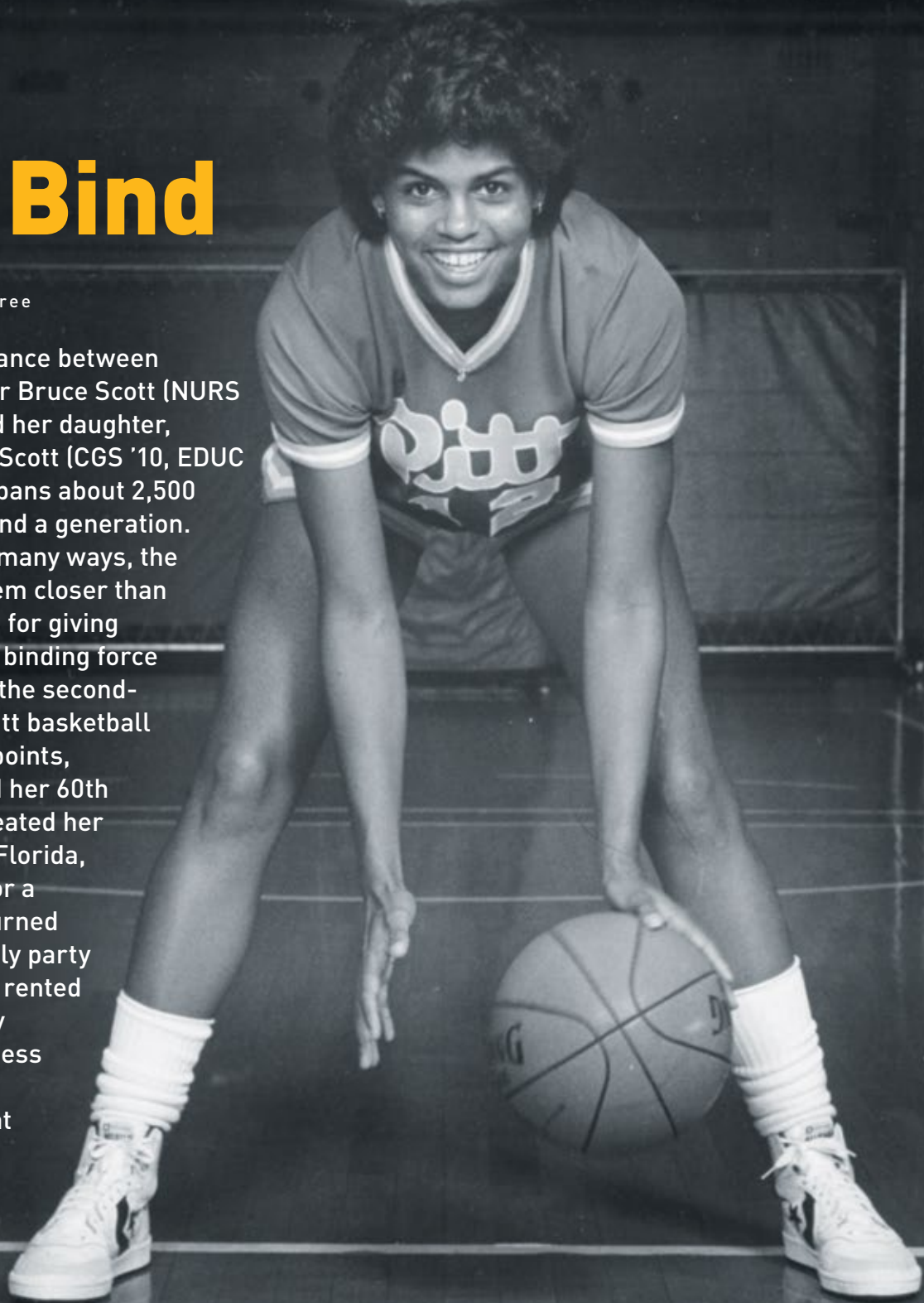
Ties That Bind

Written by Josh Rowntree

The distance between Jennifer Bruce Scott (NURS '86) and her daughter, Shayla Scott (CGS '10, EDUC '11G), spans about 2,500 miles and a generation. But, in many ways, the two seem closer than

ever. And a passion for giving back has become a binding force for them. Jennifer, the second-leading scorer in Pitt basketball history with 2,295 points, recently celebrated her 60th birthday. Shayla treated her mother to a trip to Florida, reuniting the two for a relaxing trip that turned into a massive family party on a 100-foot yacht rented out for the group by Kanye West's business partner.

Yes, you read that correctly.



How it began

Jennifer was a strong basketball player in the 1970s at Pittsburgh's Carrick High School. A dynamic scorer, she was recruited by Tennessee Tech University and committed to the Cookeville, Tennessee, school but never played there due to an injury. After one season, she transferred to Pitt, competing with the Panthers from 1981 to 1985.

The decision to return to her hometown proved to be a good one not only for Jennifer but for the Panthers as well. She put together a career that earned her All-American status and a spot in the Pitt Athletics Hall of Fame in 2020. Along the way, she also earned a degree in nursing.



Shayla Scott, left, with mother Jennifer Bruce Scott

During the back half of her career, Jennifer played under her brother, Kirk Bruce (EDUC '76), an assistant who had played men's basketball at Pitt.

"I loved having him on the bench for his knowledge," Jennifer says.

Kirk later became Pitt's women's basketball head coach for 13 years and then moved into the athletics department's administration.

Years later, Shayla developed into a standout basketball player at Gateway High School in Monroeville, Pennsylvania. The program's all-time leading scorer, she committed to Pitt after her junior year, following in her mother's footsteps.

"I wanted her to have her own way and not live under the legacy of her mom," Jennifer remembers. "And Shayla was like, 'Why not Pitt? This is where I want to be.'"

"She is the hall of famer," Shayla says of her mother. "That's the first thing she'll let you know, and I wouldn't want or expect anything different from her. 2,295 points. I knew before even



The decision to return to her hometown proved to be a good one not only for Jennifer but for the Panthers as well. She put together a career that earned her All-American status and a spot in the Pitt Athletics Hall of Fame in 2020.

committing to Pitt that I wouldn't really come close to that, so there was a little less pressure."

But Shayla did have a very respectable college career, finishing with 997 career points and reaching the NCAA Tournament Sweet 16 with the Panthers twice, in 2008 and 2009.

Still, she knew from a young age that her mother was something truly

special on the court.

"I was the ball girl at Pitt women's games in the Fitzgerald Field House, and I kept seeing these pictures of her," recalls Shayla. "I thought, 'Maybe she was the real deal.' Yeah, my mom was a hooper. I'm really proud of everything she did at Pitt."

“I’ve never taken for granted the opportunity, the experiences, the way we traveled and the apartments we stayed in, because I knew it was never like that for my mom,” Shayla says. “I knew they had to go through a lot more inequity, especially in the sports world.”

Different experiences

Fifty years ago, about nine years before Jennifer came to Pitt, Title IX was passed. It was a call for equality and paved the way for massive enhancements to women’s athletics. When Jennifer walked onto campus, however, there were still plenty of disparities between what men’s and women’s programs received in terms of support and funding.

“Our uniforms weren’t all that great, and we definitely didn’t travel like Shayla did,” Jennifer says. “I remember flying People Express [Airlines] way back in the day. People on the plane were mad because we had these big bags with our uniforms, which we had to pack.”

About three decades later, Shayla experienced women’s college athletics in a much different way, with full meals crafted by chefs and nutritionists, chartered flights, plenty of apparel and substantial academic and life skills support from the University.

“I’ve never taken for granted the opportunity, the experiences, the way we traveled and the apartments we stayed in, because I knew it was never like that for my mom,” Shayla says. “I knew they had to go through a lot more inequity, especially in the sports world.”

“I didn’t ever think that we were equal to what the men got when I was there,” Jennifer adds. “But now, and with Shayla’s group, they were entitled to the same thing the men got. They had a lot more resources.”



A desire to help others

Jennifer has been a nurse with Allegheny Health Network for 35 years and currently works with a gastroenterologist as an outpatient nurse.

She also spent time coaching at the high school level at several schools throughout Western Pennsylvania and currently occupies her free time as a basketball referee for high school and

small college games, something she has done for eight years and a job title she shares with her son, Tyler, now known as one of the region’s best young officials.

In March, Jennifer joined Diane Hrapla and Ellen Kline in a trio of local officials (all of whom are also grandmothers) to work a Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association high school basketball state championship game together—a milestone moment, according to Jennifer.

Shayla, meanwhile, left her

playing days behind and got into coaching, joining LaSalle University as an assistant for three years. But she had a desire to do more, to cast a larger net and give back to more athletes than just one team. So she moved back to Pittsburgh, with intentions of traveling some before diving into whatever was next for her professionally. Before she got that chance, she heard about an open athletic director position at The Ellis School, an all-girls college preparatory school located in Pittsburgh.

Shayla spent seven years at Ellis leading the athletic department. During that time, she met Justin Laboy, and they had two children together.

About Kanye

Laboy is a former basketball player and now a well-known businessperson and social media influencer with nearly 6 million Instagram followers. He works closely with West, one of the most successful musical artists of all time and the winner of 24 Grammy Awards.

West, also an entrepreneur and philanthropist, began the Los Angeles-based Donda Academy, which initially began as an elementary and middle school. When the school added a high school program, basketball went hand in hand with the online-based education that students receive. It has drawn the attention of talented high school-age basketball players from across the country, many of whom have significant Division I interest.

Laboy, in collaboration with West, determined that Shayla was the right person to run the school's athletic department. He called, and she agreed, and suddenly the girl from Monroeville was working for one of the most recognizable people in the world.

"I knew I was going to have to leave Pittsburgh, leave Ellis, and that it's going to be my full-time responsibility to make sure these 12 high school guys graduate from a school that I'm about to be running," she says. "I

"It's crazy to think that Kanye West is the one who created this," Shayla says, almost taken aback by where life has led her.

feel strongly that it's because of my education and experiences through high school and college that I'm really just set up for this. I can't imagine, being a woman, not being able to have the opportunity that I have in sports. I'm answering calls and proving a lot of haters wrong."

What's next for Shayla

In addition to serving as athletic director at Donda Academy, Shayla is now the chief operating officer of Donda Sports, a budding enterprise established by West that has recently signed star athletes Jaylen Brown of the Boston Celtics and Aaron Donald, the former Pitt football standout who has become one of the NFL's all-time great defenders with the Los Angeles Rams.

Signing Donald brought things full circle for Shayla, who grew up just minutes away from Donald's Penn Hills home.

"A Penn Hills guy and a Gateway girl, out in L.A.," jokes Shayla.

Donda Sports' objective is bigger than just sports management, though, and that has Shayla brimming with optimism over the future. Signing Brown and Donald opens doors to grow The Donda Foundation, a charitable initiative of West's that is just getting off the ground.

"It's crazy to think that Kanye West is the one who created this," Shayla says, almost taken aback by where life has led her. "For me, though, it's the combination of everything I've been doing over the last 10 years."

The Florida trip

Jennifer's ex-husband (and Shayla and Tyler's father), Rod, passed away four years ago. He did not make it to 60 years old, and Jennifer seems to have gained a sobering appreciation for life following his death. Shayla knew she needed to give her mom a fitting celebration for her 60th birthday. So they met on the beach in St. Petersburg, Florida. They kayaked, they talked about basketball, they relaxed and they enjoyed each other's company in person—a rare occurrence for the two, who are usually divided by many miles and three time zones.

A few days later, they were off to Miami and Fort Lauderdale, where Laboy arranged for the rental of a 100-foot yacht for the entire family's celebration of Jennifer.

"It was a ball; it was very fun. I'm glad I got to be around my kids," Jennifer says.

Shayla, who gained an appreciation for her mother's accomplishments as that child staring at photos in the Fitzgerald Field House and who has gained even more now that she is a mother herself, soaked up every bit of the experience with the woman who has devoted her professional life to helping others.

"To spend that time with her, my two kids and the rest of my family, it was amazing," Shayla says. "Sixty is a big deal. My mom's done it all. She did her thing at Pitt. She's been working as a nurse for over 30 years. It was nice to be able to spoil her a little bit." 📍

In her professional career, **Martha Munsch** accomplished what so many athletes and coaches value most: an undefeated record.

Groundbreaking Pioneer

Written by Chris Cappella

Munsch, a 1970 University of Pittsburgh graduate, was a legal veteran when she entered the courtroom for the final time in November 2017. Retirement was looming. Her record as a labor and employment jury trial lawyer, by that time decades old, was virtually spotless.

"My daughter kept telling me, 'You have to retire! You have to retire!'" Munsch says. "But just like sports, I kept telling myself I didn't want to lose and I didn't want to quit."

And, of course, Munsch—who graduated from Yale Law School in the same class as such political notables as Hillary Clinton, Richard Blumenthal and Robert Reich—won.

Command of a room, knowledge, charm, competitiveness—these traits shone as Munsch rose through the professional ranks, eventually becoming Reed Smith LLP's first

woman partner in its Pittsburgh branch in 1983.

But if you want to talk to Munsch about her career, good luck. It's not that she's incapable of detailing the nuances of specific trials, it's just that her passion for the University of Pittsburgh and Pitt athletics is stronger than her passion for just about anything else.

And who can blame her? A majority of Munsch's undergraduate experiences centered around watching and writing about sports.

A self-described "tomboy" from Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, Munsch spent her childhood watching and playing sports. She followed Pitt football and regularly played baseball with her cousins and friends. It's no wonder that when Munsch arrived in Oakland in 1966, her preferred career choice was journalism. She hoped to write about sports for The Pitt News.

Despite some roadblocks, there was no stopping her from accomplishing that goal and making a little history along the way.

"It was just a different time then," she says. "There are times when I wonder how things could have been different. I'm not bitter about anything; I'm amazed how things have changed."

Munsch's time at Pitt preceded the advent of Title IX. Women writing about sports was just as unheard of as their playing them. Playing softball? Forget about it. Sharing opinions about the basketball team? Not happening. Pitt had a women's club basketball team, but the mechanics of the game hardly resemble the way the game is played today.

"I liked sports a lot," Munsch says, reflecting on trying to break through as a sportswriter. "I thought being around sports and writing about them sounded like a great career choice."

Writing about sports proved to be a tough task. Editors at The Pitt News wouldn't allow her to cover sports as a first-year student. It wasn't until a journalism professor provided an opportunity in the form of a class assignment that Munsch was able to join the sports staff.

"I remember sitting in a journalism class, and the professor told us, 'OK, your assignment is to work on The Pitt News and write about whatever you want,'" she recalled. "So, when I went to the editors at The Pitt News and told them I have to write about sports for class, I was able to do so."

And from there, she was off. Munsch received smaller assignments before finally earning the editors' trust and showcasing her talents. By her senior year, she had become the first female sports editor of The Pitt News.

It wasn't uncommon for Munsch to walk into a press box and be the only female. More often than not, the majority of the people surrounding her were men who dismissed her skills and her knowledge of sports.

"It didn't bother me one bit," Munsch says. "In some ways, I was oblivious to the entire thing. I mean, you knew some people would dismiss you because you were a woman, but I was thrilled to be at sporting events, talking to coaches and players, writing my sports stories, laying out the sports section. It was all an exciting time to me."

"For as long as I have known Martha, she has loved sports and has been as knowledgeable about them as anyone," adds Richard Munsch, her husband. "It doesn't surprise me that she was able to accomplish so much."

By the time she graduated in 1970, Munsch was an accomplished writer and editor but struggled to see a future in sports journalism. This was four years before Lesley Visser became the first woman to cover professional sports for The Boston Globe and eight years prior to a landmark U.S. District Court case that granted women access to locker rooms. There was not a big market for women sports reporters.

So Munsch shifted her focus to becoming a lawyer. True to form, she set her sights on one of the country's top law schools: Yale Law School. The drastic change from sports coverage to law school might be intimidating to some, but not to Munsch, whose general knowledge, remarkable memory and strong work ethic made it a natural fit.

All the while, Munsch rooted for Pitt as much as ever.

"Even when I was in New Haven, I always kept up with Pitt," she says. "I



It wasn't uncommon for Munsch to walk into a press box and be the only female. More often than not, the majority of the people surrounding her were men who dismissed her skills and her knowledge of sports.

watched and read as much as I could. I was enamored with it all, especially when they started having a ton of success with Coach [Johnny] Majors and then of course Coach [Jackie] Sherrill."

Following law school, Munsch worked for Reed Smith until 1975, when she received a call asking her to teach at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. At the time, she was the first—and only—woman on the full-time faculty.

"There were very few people Martha could model her career after," Richard Munsch says. "She was always going to work hard and make her own path."

Munsch's career path turned out to be law. She returned to Reed Smith in 1978 and remained with the law firm until her retirement at the end of 2017.

Successful careers for the Munsch family provided the opportunity to give back to Pitt. They are longtime season ticket holders for football and men's

and women's basketball. They have endowed athletic scholarships and provided support for enhanced Pitt athletics facilities and programs for more than five decades.

If you ask Munsch to single out her favorite Pitt moments, chances are she won't be able to narrow it down to just one. Her impeccable memory can recall moments spanning six decades. She even collects football cards of former Pitt players in the NFL. One favorite moment? One favorite player? There are too many stories to tell.

This is, after all, the woman who convinced her husband to name their first son Danny, after Hall of Fame quarterback and Pitt legend Dan Marino.

"Pitt athletics is very important to me," she says. "My passion has always been there. I think it provides so much opportunity for the young kids playing sports and is a way we go out, have fun, catch up with friends and enjoy ourselves." 

SPOTLIGHT: SWIMMING

Kreitler On Deck

Written by Allison Koerbel





Chase Kreitler, who earned a reputation as one of college swimming's top assistants while working at perennial NCAA powerhouse University of California, Berkeley, was named the new University of Pittsburgh head swimming and diving coach on April 26, 2022. Kreitler brings to Pitt a sparkling championship resume featuring a highly accomplished four-year tenure as a men's assistant at Cal under five-time NCAA Coach of the Year David Durden.

"I am humbled and honored to accept the head coaching position at the University of Pittsburgh," Kreitler says. "This is an incredible opportunity to build a really special program that will be very competitive within the ACC and NCAA."

During Kreitler's time at Cal, the Golden Bears won two NCAA championships (2019 and 2022) and consistently dominated the ultra-competitive Pac-12 Conference.

"Having worked for some of the most accomplished head coaches in the sport, Chase has an exceptional understanding of how to build a strong team culture that is both competitive and unifying," says Heather Lyke, Pitt director of athletics. "His knowledge of our program, the University and Pittsburgh's high standards as the 'City of Champions' made a great impression."

Kreitler has served as a U.S. national team coach since 2018, assisting a lengthy list of pupils who are accomplished at the international level. He worked with seven 2020 Olympians, including Ryan Murphy, who won gold (4 x 100 m medley relay), silver (200m backstroke) and bronze (100 m backstroke) in Tokyo, and Tom Shields, who also won gold as part of the 4 x 100 m medley relay.

Before coaching at Cal, Kreitler served as a volunteer assistant coach for the women's swimming and diving team at Stanford University (2018)—coaching Olympic gold medalists Katie Ledecky, Simone Manuel and Lia Neal—and as an assistant coach at Louisiana State University (2013-16) and Eastern Michigan University (2011-13), where he helped the men's team to win consecutive Mid-American Conference titles.

"[Chase's] dedication to his athletes and the sport are evident in the things he does," two-time Olympic medalist and nine-time NCAA national champion Neal says. "He brings his energy, spirit and joy to the pool deck every day. Pitt is so lucky to have Chase lead its program and is bound to have a bright future ahead."

"I have been very fortunate throughout my career to work with some great coaches, teams and student-athletes, and I know what it takes to build a championship culture and help student-athletes reach their academic and athletic potential," Kreitler says.

"I can't wait to get started at Pitt! H2P!" 📍



Kreitler with his wife, Liz

Panther Pride

The 2022 Panthers' Choice Awards



From left: Leketor Member-Meneh, Cal Adomitis, Amy Read, Director of Athletics Heather Lyke, Olivia Miller and Felix Wolter

The University of Pittsburgh Department of Athletics hosted its fifth annual **Panthers' Choice Awards** on April 10, 2022, with a celebration of student-athlete achievements in academics, athletics and citizenship made during the 2021-22 academic year.

For the first time since 2019, the program was celebrated in person at the Petersen Events Center. In 2020 and 2021, the event was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

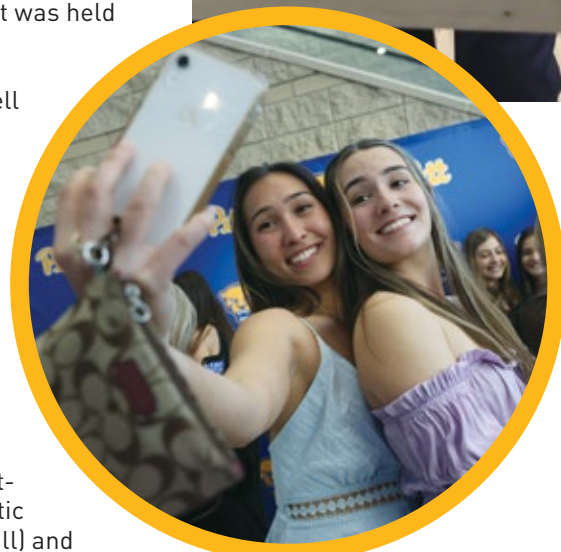
The Panthers' Choice Awards honor top athletic performances and community service participation as well as the top teams in terms of both athletic and academic accomplishment.

The prestigious Panther Awards and Blue-Gold Awards were among those presented at the event. The names of the recipients of these awards are engraved on the pavers on Pitt's Varsity Walk between the Cathedral of Learning and Heinz Memorial Chapel, a tradition that dates to 1950.

For best representing the student-athlete "ideal" based on academic scholarship, athletic achievement, leadership qualities and citizenship, this year's **Blue-Gold Award** recipients are **Cal Adomitis** (football), **Olivia Miller** (gymnastics), **Amy Read** (women's swimming and diving) and **Felix Wolter** (men's track and field).

The **Panther Award** is presented to the male and female senior student-athletes who have promoted Pitt Athletics through their outstanding athletic achievement. This year's recipients are **Leketor Member-Meneh** (volleyball) and **Kenny Pickett** (football).

A celebration for these award recipients was held on Varsity Walk on May 2, 2022. See pages 38-41 to read the remarks made by the student-athletes at the event.



Danielle Yakubisin and Courtney Wells of the Pitt dance team capture the moment with a selfie.

Additional Awards

Top Overall Academic Teams of the Year awards are reserved for the male and female teams with the highest cumulative GPA in consecutive spring and fall terms. The 2022 recipients are the **men's cross country** and **women's soccer** teams.

The **Bridge Builder Award** is presented to the team whose student-athletes demonstrate the strongest commitment to making an impact in the community. The 2022 recipient is the **lacrosse team**.

The **Heart of a Panther Award** is presented to the student-athlete who best embodies the spirit of service through the Pitt Promise and is involved in the community above and beyond what is required. This year's recipient is **Jenna Baltes** (women's cross country and track and field).

Gold Standard Teammates of the Year awards are presented to the student-athletes from each team who most effectively inspire their teammates through exemplary commitment, composure and integrity. The 2022 recipients are as follows:

Baseball: **Jack Anderson**

Cheer: **Katy Burke** and **Allison Curtis**

Dance: **Arlin Vieira**

Football: **Gavin Bartholomew**

Gymnastics: **Olivia Miller**

Lacrosse: **Karina Latsko**

Men's Basketball: **Aidan Fisch**

Men's Cross Country: **Tyler Rollins**

Men's Soccer: **Jackson Walti**

Men's Swimming and Diving:

Stephen Hopta

Men's Track and Field: **Felix Wolter**

Softball: **Sarah Seamans**

Volleyball: **Kayla Lund**

Women's Basketball:

Amber Brown and **Liatu King**

Women's Cross Country:

Mary Borkoski

Women's Soccer: **Chloe Minas**

Women's Swimming and Diving:

Janelle Schulz

Women's Track and Field:

Breanna Phillips

Wrestling: **Cole Matthews**

Gold Standard Administrators of the Year

awards are presented to noncoaching staff members in the athletics department who have gone



Lacrosse team members (left to right) Payton Reed, Caroline Lederman, Kierin Ratliff-Kailbourne and Brittney Villhauer

above and beyond to ensure the success and development of student-athletes. The 2022 recipients are as follows:

Baseball: **Austin Thompson**, director of operations

Cheer/Dance: **Jordan Kissner**, athletic trainer

Football: **Chris LaSala**, associate athletic director, football administration

Gymnastics: **Shawn Mueller**, athletic trainer

Lacrosse: **Joe Lassi**, director of social media

Men's Basketball: **Garry Christopher**, head strength and conditioning coach

Men's Cross Country: **Darryl Weston**, director of operations

Men's Soccer: **Christina "Tilly" Sheets**, associate director of academic support services

Men's Swimming and Diving:

Dylan Baxendell, athletic trainer

Men's Track and Field: **Molly Trott**, athletic trainer

Softball: **Danny Bonaventura**,

director of mentorship, and **Brian Williams**, academic counselor

Volleyball: **Kate McCartney**, athletic trainer

Women's Basketball: **Ali Hoesly**, director of basketball operations

Women's Cross Country: **Indira Bricker**, athletic trainer

Women's Soccer: **Ann Marie Porada**, athletic trainer

Women's Swimming and Diving: **Wendy Meyers**, executive associate athletic director for business administration and human resources

Women's Track and Field: **Mike Brubaker**, senior academic counselor/director of tutorial services

Wrestling: **Brian Bonnar**, athletic trainer

The **James Conner Comeback of the Year** award is presented to a student-athlete who, having recovered from an injury, illness or hardship, returns to make a noteworthy contribution to their team's athletic success. The 2022 recipient is **Cole Matthews** (wrestling).

The **David Sandberg Champion Award** is presented in memory of the former Pitt wrestler and assistant coach to the senior who best exemplifies the qualities that Sandberg embraced: dedication to academic and athletic excellence with an unyielding spirit and passionate commitment to the improvement of the University of Pittsburgh and its surrounding communities. The 2022 recipient is **Katherine Robinson** (women's soccer).

Male and Female Performance of the Year awards are presented to a male and female student-athlete for the most remarkable or significant performance achieved in an academic year. This year's recipients are **Jordan Addison** (football) and **Leketor Member-Meneh** (volleyball).

Newcomer of the Year awards are presented to the student-athletes who have made an immediate impact at Pitt in their first year of intercollegiate competition. Nominees can include first-year students and redshirts. This year's recipients are **Gavin Bartholomew** (football) and **Hallie Copperwheat** (gymnastics).

Team Moment of the Year awards are presented in recognition of a striking performance by an individual or group in a specific competition that led to a shift in momentum. The 2022 recipients are **football**, for winning the program's first ACC championship, and **volleyball**, for advancing to the program's first NCAA Final Four.

Female and Male Athlete of the Year awards are presented to standout student-athletes who have demonstrated outstanding athletic performance during competition and have been instrumental to their team's success. The 2022 recipients are **Kayla Lund** (volleyball) and **Kenny Pickett** (football).

The **Script Writer Award** recognizes a student-athlete who best embraces Pitt Athletics' seven bridges, achieving comprehensive excellence in the classroom, on the field/court of play, within the University community and within the city of Pittsburgh. The 2022 award recipient is **Therese Pitman** (lacrosse).

The **Carson Graduate Fellowship Full Award** is stewarded to the best candidate who is of high moral character, has shown outstanding undergraduate academic achievement and demonstrates the potential for outstanding graduate study in continuing their graduate or professional education at the University of Pittsburgh. The 2022 recipient is **Olivia Miller** (gymnastics).

Congratulations to this year's Panther's Choice Award recipients.

Etched in Stone

A Place of Honor

At a ceremony held on Varsity Walk on May 2, 2022, Panther Award and Blue-Gold Award recipients from 2020 to 2022 who were in attendance shared their thoughts on being honored with this lasting recognition.

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Demetrius Thomas

Panther Award Recipients

Leketor Member-Meneh Volleyball, 2022

"I just want to say that I feel so unbelievably honored to be standing next to all of you guys here today."

If you guys would have known where I was a year ago, I was not an athlete. I had no intentions of playing a fifth year, but Fish [Coach Dan Fisher] took a chance on a 5'8" outside [hitter] from across the country and brought me here. And I'm so unbelievably grateful for all that you've done for me and for this program. And also it's just a testament to the things that God can do. I prayed for this, not necessarily this, but to be at a university where I'm cared for, where I'm loved, where I'm pushed beyond measure, and to shape me into the woman I want to be. And so to think of where I was last year, to be standing here in front of all of you guys today, I just can't thank God enough for hearing me, loving me, answering my prayers. And lastly,





I want to thank my family. Hey, we did it. We're here. From coming across the country as well as supporting me in this moment, pushing me to be the best woman I can be and having me put God first in everything that I say and do, and hopefully I can represent this university proud as I move forward in my life. So thank you all, and hail to Pitt."

Kayla Lund Volleyball, 2021

"When I was just a 15- or 16-year-old girl from California, I barely even knew where Pittsburgh was, what Pittsburgh was about, all of that. I never thought that, from that little girl, that I would be standing up here in front of all of you today and understand what all of this means.

I'm really grateful that Fish [Coach Dan Fisher] gave me this opportunity when maybe not a lot of other coaches or programs did. He believed in me and all of us from day one, and you know the reason our program has the success that it has is because of him right there and all the coaches



behind him. And then for me, it's amazing being on the walk next to so many amazing athletes and people that have come before me, but it's most special to me that I'm right next to Chi [Chinaza Ndee]. I'm right next to Lek [Leketor Member-Meneh]. I'm right next to my former teammates. I'm right across the way from my fiancé that Pitt gave to me. So this has been a really special time of my life. I'm really grateful that this is how we get to close it, and special shout out to my parents who came to almost every match from California. They made a lot of trips and earned a lot of flying points."

Blue-Gold Award Recipients

Felix Wolter Track and Field, 2022

"It's a great honor being able to be here, and I want to start by thanking Pitt Athletics for making this possible.

I think three years ago I had no clue I would get here.

Big thanks to the coaches, too, that recruited me and made all of this possible. Kevin Mayer, the current world record holder in the decathlon, said that his biggest strength was to find the right people to surround him and that was what made him so strong. And that's what I've been trying to do the past two years. Thanks to my friends that came today as well. I think honestly that I don't deserve yet to be out here, but I will do my best from now on and continue my journey, yeah, to deserve to get on the walk."





Cal Adomitis and Olivia Miller

Cal Adomitis Football, 2022

“First and foremost, just obviously thanking everyone here. You know, I feel like every time someone walks down the walk and reads our names, you know, and from my perspective I hope you all come to mind, because I think that the only thing I’ve done to earn this is just be smart enough to listen to you all and take the advice that you all have kindly given us and the love that you’ve shown us all. I just hope that I can show my gratitude for this, this great honor, by just trying to represent the University the absolute best I can through the rest of my life. I’ll never forget my time at Pitt, and I certainly won’t be a stranger. I’m so thankful and grateful to be here with you all and just to call this university home, so thank you.”



Olivia Miller Gymnastics, 2022

“Well, obviously, I wanted to thank my entire support system for allowing me to be here today and whether it’s from Life Skills, sports med, all of my awesome teammates and family. It’s been a huge honor, I think, coming to Pitt and really being able to blossom into the person I am today. I wouldn’t have been able to do it without every single one of you standing here—all of the awesome people that are on the Varsity Walk with me. I mean that’s incredible. Congratulations to you all as well. You guys really—you guys are really my mentors. I know, even watching Kayla Lund play volleyball, like, as a freshman, whoa, she’s pretty cool. I want to be like her. So just everybody being able to help guide me to where I am today, and to be the future health professional that I will be, has honestly been some of the best mentorship, and everybody here has really been somewhere special in my heart. I’m honored, blessed and excited to be here for PA [physician assistant] school next year as well, so I will be staying here around the area. I’m really excited to give back to Pitt in any way that I can because they’ve given me every opportunity since I’ve arrived here as a little freshman in Sutherland [Hall]. From now on, my name will be on





From left, Amy Read, Felix Wolter and Olivia Miller

Varsity Walk among some of the awesome Pitt greets that we have here. So thank you all, and I appreciate every one of you.”

Chinaza Ndee Volleyball, 2021

“I’m so grateful that this is happening. I don’t think things like this are normal, and I think we just all need to acknowledge that for a second. Families like this aren’t normal. Programs like this aren’t normal. This is special. This place has been special to me since 2016, when I called Coach [Dan] Fisher and told him I wanted to be here. I’m just really grateful for everything this place has done for me. I think a lot of places like to throw around the word ‘family,’ and I don’t think everyone shows up. And the thing I appreciate about Pitt is that people show up for each other and people actually embody the word family. And so even today, my family isn’t here with me, but I don’t feel that loss because I have family here with me. I’m just so grateful for that. Pitt has really made me the woman I am today. Fish [Coach Dan Fisher] will tell you, 16-year-old Chi could not do this, okay. Talking in front of all these people? Absolutely not. And so being a place that you feel safe, comfortable, loved and challenged but cared for at the same time—that has really meant the world to me. It will make me a better person in the future, it will make me a better mother, a better sister, a better doctor, and I’m so grateful for this place. I hope everyone here knows how much this place can mean to people and how much it can truly change lives in a way that’s not cliché, that’s not overdone, that’s real, tangible and concrete. I’m just so grateful. And I’m grateful to be here with teammates, and I’m grateful to be here with Fish. This journey has been amazing, so thank you all so much.”



Jake Wentzel Wrestling, 2021

“I want to start by thanking my coaches, family, friends, teammates and also [the] administration for the opportunities, guidance and continued support throughout the years. I believe that I can speak for everybody on this walk when I say that no one man or woman gets their name engraved here on their own. This is truly a group effort, and I’m more than grateful for everyone that was a part of my journey. Being up here with all these Pitt legends is truly an honor, and this will forever be one of my greatest accomplishments as a Panther. I know how much this means to everyone up here, so congratulations to all the other athletes and, as always, Hail to Pitt.”



Demetrius Thomas Wrestling, 2020

“[I am] very grateful and honored just to be here amongst the names that are on the Varsity Walk. First, I just want to start by thanking my lord and savior Jesus for just allowing me to be here. You know, anything I do is possible through him. I’m just grateful for that. Next would be thanking my parents for shaping me to being the man that I am today, and then next would just be my coaches, who helped open doors and just molded me into the athlete that I was. And just allowing me to be here today. Just honored to be alongside my coach, Keith [Gavin], on the walk as well, so that’s cool. And then also just thankful for the staff and everybody at Pitt that, you know, helped me on the way, helped me to where I am today, and that’s it. Just grateful and honored to just be on the Varsity Walk.”





Bettina Love's life has turned into a mission of giving back. And her impact, fueled by her time at the University of Pittsburgh, is now spreading across the country. But her path to becoming a leader in American education has humble roots.

Written by Josh Rowntree

Love (CGS '01, EDUC '02G) grew up in Rochester, New York, with working-class parents. Her mother managed a convenience store, and her father was a cab driver and worked at the airport. At the time, Rochester was an important port city on Lake Ontario and was home to several thriving companies. Because of that and her parents' connections to her community, Love learned an appreciation for the diversity of the region.

"It was just a wonderful time," she says. "I really loved growing up in Upstate New York. Black families

had middle-class jobs. It was just a beautiful time. I grew up in a loving and thriving community of Black folks."

Love spent her childhood years drawing and dancing. At the age of 10, she picked up a basketball, and that was that.

"Once I found basketball, I did absolutely nothing other than play basketball," she says. "It was my love. I was a gym rat."

At age 12, Love began working at her gym, cleaning the toilets and floors and being paid under the table. Four years later, on her 16th birthday, she was officially hired by the gym.

When she entered Edison Career and Technology High School, Love's

basketball skills and 6-foot-2 frame were noticed by the school's athletic director, Judi Knight, who helped to guide Love through the recruiting process when colleges came calling.

"She was everything to me. She really became like a second mom to me," Love says of Knight, who was known as an advocate for girls' sports in Upstate New York and who passed away in March of 2020 at the age of 79. "I don't think I would've gone to college or left Rochester without her. She was the one who really pushed me, got me SAT training and took me to college. She was my rock."

Knight helped Love to connect with Old Dominion University, which, at the time, was a powerhouse

in women's college basketball, finishing second in the 1997 NCAA tournament.

"I was a kid from Upstate New York [who] had never been to the South before, but here we go: I'm in Virginia," she says. "It was beautiful, but I was having a culture shock being in a new place."

It didn't take Love long to realize that there were some inequities being practiced at Old Dominion and she was caught in the middle of them.

"By the end of my freshman year, I realized I was in classes with all of the male basketball players, and I was the only female basketball player," she says. "I didn't understand why."

She approached her teammates and asked them what classes they were taking.

Their responses? Premed, calculus, biology.

"I wondered why I wasn't taking any of those classes," she says, so she went to the school's administration and asked.

"They said, 'Well, you're an inner-city kid, went to an inner-city school and got terrible SAT scores, so this is your major: recreation and leisure.'

"I'm not saying that's a terrible major or putting a value statement on that, but that's not what I wanted to do. And they said, 'Well, that's it for you.'"

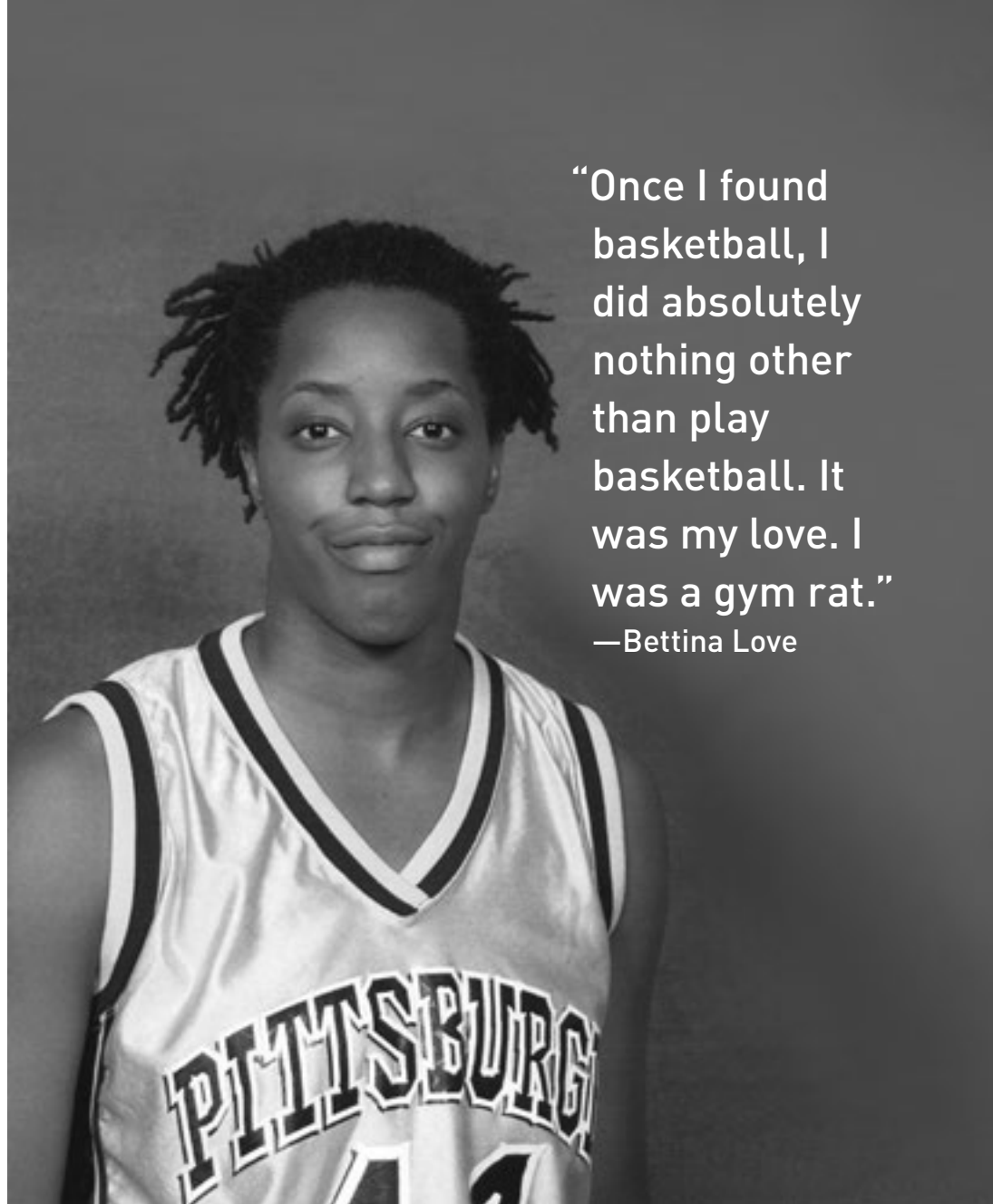
Love immediately got on the phone with Knight, who flew from New York to Virginia to speak with academic advisors and coaches.

"After that, she comes to me and says, 'Bettina, you can't stay here,'" Love explains. "I said, 'Where am I going to go?' And she said, 'Don't worry, I'll make some calls.'"

That's exactly what Knight did. She connected Love with Pitt coach Traci Waites, and in 1999, Love transferred to Pitt.

"[Waites] said, 'Here, you're going to be a student-athlete, and I truly mean that,'" Love says. "And I didn't know what that meant, but I knew that I wanted to go to college; I wasn't just there to be an athlete."

Her new coach had strict academic standards, with eight



Love during her time as a Pitt basketball player

"Once I found basketball, I did absolutely nothing other than play basketball. It was my love. I was a gym rat."
—Bettina Love

hours of mandatory study hall per week. If one player missed a minute, the team had to run a mile. Players learned quickly that tardiness would cost them.

"We all did like nine hours of study hall, because we didn't want any problems," Love jokes. "But I just started studying nonstop. And it became a beautiful experience. I just started reading a ton of books. I took my first [Africana] studies class at Pitt. I was a student for the very first time in my life. The institution just took care of me."

Love played in 53 games with the Panthers, scoring an average of seven points per game. She

graduated in four years with a Bachelor of Arts degree in liberal studies and had an extra season of eligibility left. She elected to stay at Pitt to get a master's degree from the School of Education, with the University providing an academic scholarship to attend the graduate program during her final year of eligibility.

It was then that Love was first presented with the idea of one day becoming a full-time college professor. First, though, she became a teacher in Pittsburgh, then Miami. But she always felt that a path back to college was in the cards.

So, in 2004, Love applied to the PhD program in educational policy studies at Georgia State University.

"The rest is history," she says. "But it doesn't happen without Pitt."

Since then, Love has been an associate professor at Northern Kentucky University as well as an assistant professor and, most recently, Georgia Athletic Association Professor in Education at the University of Georgia.

Along the way, she found a new passion that didn't involve a basketball.

"I realized that something that brought me as much joy as basketball was writing," she says.

"I see writing as a big puzzle. It just became another challenge."

Getting to take those Africana studies classes at Pitt greatly inspired her writing.

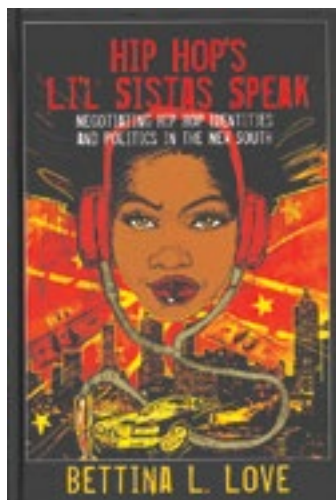
"The richness of Black people, the richness of our culture—it can be studied," Love says. "Something that was so near and dear to my heart was Black art, Black creativity and hip-hop."

Love took that passion and turned it into her first book, "Hip Hop's Li'l Sistaz Speak: Negotiating Hip Hop Identities and Politics in the New South," which analyzes the relationship between Black girls and hip-hop culture in the South.

Her second book, "We Want to Do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom," turned her focus to the experience of Black people throughout the United States.

"The richness of Black people, the richness of our culture—it can be studied. Something that was so near and dear to my heart was Black art, Black creativity and hip-hop."

—Bettina Love



"Being Black in this country is to live in a perpetual-state survival mode, and that's no way to live," Love says of the book's theme.

She has another book set to be published next spring, titled "Punished for Dreaming," that details the last 40 years of educational reform in the United States.

"I never thought, in a million years, that I would be writing about education, Black people, Black culture and education policy and politics," she says. "I never thought that would come from the kid from Rochester, New York, who just wanted to play basketball."

Love's next journey will bring her back to her home state. She has accepted a position as the William F. Russell Endowed Chair at Columbia University's Teachers College and will begin

her work there this fall.

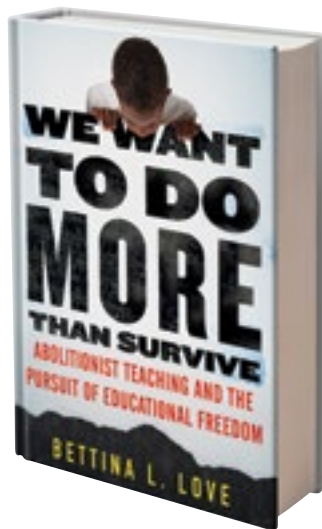
It's quite an accomplishment for the young woman once pigeonholed into a major simply because of her background.

"Oftentimes, when you're labeled an inner-city kid, people don't see how amazing you are, how strong you are, how smart you are or how intelligent you are," Love says. "They take those labels and they run with it. And that's not it at all. Like any kid, we need guidance, love and support. We have gifts, and we need those gifts to be nurtured. My work has really tried to show people how brilliant Black folks are and how amazing Black communities are. What we need is support and for folks to see our humanity."

Love continues to give back to Pitt. She has formed a strong relationship with Michael Haas, director of development and alumni affairs in Pitt's School of Education and has served as a motivational speaker for Pitt's women's basketball team as well.

She has immense gratitude to Pitt, and to those like Knight, for viewing her in a light in which she didn't even see herself and for bringing out the best in her.

"It goes back to all the amazing people who saw something in me, who listened to me," she says. "That's why I'll always be indebted to the University of Pittsburgh. They were the first place that saw me as an athlete and a student—and more of a student." 📖





Become a member of the **I.C. Light Baseline Club**, a new exclusive pub-style area at the Petersen Events Center for Pitt Men's Basketball games. With access to bar seating, select happy hour specials, and a mobile registration system, the I.C. Light Baseline Club membership is a flexible, affordable way to see the Panthers play!

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interest
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W

What degrees did you earn at Pitt?

I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry in 2009 and an MBA in 2012.

What is your current profession?

I'm a global product manager for a chemical business, but I'm transitioning to full-time mentoring and coaching of athletes on how to succeed beyond game day and become champions in all aspects of their lives.

What's it like working in a male-dominated environment?

The chemical industry has always been extremely male dominated, although over the last few years, it has been refreshing to see more women in leadership roles in the industry. I have never seen this as an obstacle but rather as an opportunity to increase perspective and diversity of thought. I am a big believer in letting my results drive the conversation and control the "controllables." I have never been afraid to hit things head on and demand the respect I deserve. I lead with integrity and being firm but fair.

Why did you choose the University of Pittsburgh?

Pitt is a leader in science, research and innovation. I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do with science at the time, but I knew that Pitt would uniquely position me if I wanted to go to medical school or into business. From an athletics point of view, I was able to become part of the foundation of a program. If I recall correctly, the softball program was about nine or 10 years old when I was at Pitt. Being part of the beginning of Pitt softball shows how building brick by brick is what it takes to drive programs to greatness. I am honored to be a Forever Panther!

How did your experience at Pitt inspire you to write your book, "The Athlete Advantage: Success Beyond Game Day"?

The University of Pittsburgh, along with Pitt Athletics, helped to mold me into a powerhouse woman with a strong winner mentality who can use my athletic building blocks while also leveraging my curiosity, analytical skill set and quest for innovation. More specifically, the [Cathy and John Pelusi Family] Life Skills Program opened my first major door after my college athletics career. That program provided mentoring and gave me a chance to grow while being a grad assistant. I was shown what true leadership looks like on and off the field. I was afforded the chance to get the interview that turned into getting my MBA and ultimately getting hired by a Fortune 100 company, Honeywell, by 2012. While working on high-impact projects, I also was mentoring athletes

“The University of Pittsburgh, along with Pitt Athletics, helped to mold me into a powerhouse woman with a strong winner mentality who can use my athletic building blocks while also leveraging my curiosity, analytical skill set and quest for innovation.”
—Samantha Card

to help them succeed after college sports. In November 2021, I decided to pay it forward full time and help NCAA and pro athletes across the country to become champions on and off the field by gaining more business and financial literacy to solidify their post-sports legacy.

How are you using your experience and knowledge to help current student-athletes?

Softball was my life growing up. I played year-round, like many NCAA athletes, and didn't have the privilege to participate in internships or acquire work experience. I graduated in 2009 with zero years of traditional work experience but found a way to reframe my athletics experience and apply it to business. Once I did that, I got into grad school, lived abroad in France while getting my MBA and then ultimately was hired quickly. Furthermore, I not only got the job, I also was finding ways to get into the big rooms in corporate America while traveling the globe. I have never been in a role that existed before and was also afforded stellar mentorship and coaching. I use my experiences to show how there is no one size that fits all and that student-athletes are more than equipped and prepared not only to land the job but also to excel at the highest levels. My goal is to make all NCAA athletes

better than I ever was by showing them how to prepare, arm, improvise and navigate their post-sports afterglow.

What career accomplishment are you most proud of so far?

In 2015, when I was in my mid- to late 20s, I was chosen to work on a \$10 billion merger and acquisition project at Honeywell that challenged me not only as a person but also as a future executive leader. I learned how to help others, how to hone in on my emotional and situational leadership and how champions on your behalf are paramount to success.

Do you stay connected with Pitt Athletics and your former teammates?

All the time—I probably should have a desk at the Petersen Events Center at this point! I recently attended our 25th softball alumni weekend and spoke during the Pitt Life Skills etiquette series about executive presence. It is important to stay connected and always be there when your teammates need you. It is a forever thing! We Not Me!



What would you say was your best athletic moment at Pitt?

My junior year, 2008, when I received Big East first-team honors. What a year! Everything felt like it clicked. I received a Senior of Distinction Award in 2009 that I cherish to this day, and the award sits on my desk.

What advice do you give the current student-athletes you mentor?

Start before you are ready and grow through what you go through. Fail often, just like you do in the weight room or game, and fail fast. Take the learning and use the momentum.

In one word, how would you describe your experience as a Pitt student-athlete?

Transformative

Are there any special people from your time at Pitt that you would like to thank?

Oh, yes! There are people I can't thank enough. I am not only honored to know them, they are the reason I am the way I am today! Thank you from the bottom of my heart, Penny Semaia, Sam Clancy, Amy Niceswanger-Anderson, Charles Small, Gina Hafley, Megan Wilson-Smulski, Holly Aprile and Gina Bianchini-Fuchs. I am the culmination of your coaching and mentorship! 🙏

Pitt SEASON TICKETS ON SALE NOW



2022 HOME SCHEDULE

 SEPT. 9	 SEPT. 9	 SEPT. 10
 SEPT. 16	 SEPT. 18	 SEPT. 23
 SEPT. 25	 OCT. 14	 OCT. 16
 OCT. 21	 OCT. 23	 NOV. 11
 NOV. 23	 NOV. 26	

SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

VISIT [PITTSBURGHPANTHERS.COM/VBTICKETS](https://pittsburghpanthers.com/vbtickets)

VARSITY LETTER CLUB: AWARDS



After a year's postponement due to COVID-19 concerns, the 60th anniversary Pitt Varsity Letter Club Awards Dinner was held on February 18, 2022. Honored at the dinner were the 2021 Awardees of Distinction:



Buffington



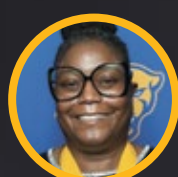
Dahar



Englert



Gibbs



Hockaday



Silvestri



Terzich



Utter



Brenda Buffington,
Women's Track and Field, 1976-80

Phil Dahar,
Football, 1964-65

Bill Englert,
Football, 1971-73

Rhonda Gibbs,
Women's Basketball, 1981-83, and
Women's Tennis, 1983-85

Monica Hockaday,
Women's Track and Field, 1989-93

Don Silvestri,
Football, 1990-91

Denny Terzich,
Baseball, 1989-92

Alan Utter,
Wrestling, 1986-90

Varsity Letter Club Director
Sam Clancy (left) and
Phil Dahar



Since 1961, the Pitt Varsity Letter Club has honored letter winners who have distinguished themselves in their profession or community and who, through their accomplishments, have enhanced the value of the intercollegiate athletics programs at the University of Pittsburgh.

SETTING RECORDS

Noah Walker

After claiming a fourth-place finish at the NCAA Mid-Atlantic regional meet with a school record throw, senior Noah Walker earned his first career bid to the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in the hammer throw. Walker's career-best throw at regionals traveled 224 feet, 11 inches (66.46 m) which gave him the 32nd-best throw in the NCAA. The Wayne, Pennsylvania, native then competed in Eugene, Oregon, and became the first male athlete in Pitt program history to earn All-America honors in the hammer throw, earning Honorable Mention All-America recognition for his outstanding performance.

Felix Wolter

Graduate student Felix Wolter became the first Panther in program history to earn an ACC title in the decathlon on May 13 as he set a Duke facility record with a score of 7,880 in the 10-event gauntlet. Wolter earned First Team All-ACC honors for his epic performance at the conference meet while also earning a bid to the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Eugene, Oregon. Wolter was unable to participate in the outdoor championships due to injury, but his score was the 13th best in the country this season.





SALUTE TO GRADUATES

Chayce Smith and Onyebuchi Ezeakudo

Hail to the more than 100 student-athletes and cheer and spirit squad members who earned a degree from the University of Pittsburgh during the 2021-22 academic year!



PRO BIKE + RUN



On June 3, 2022, Pitt Athletics celebrated World Bicycle Day by working on a staff community service project thanks to the help of our partners at Pro Bike + Run. More than 70 staff members worked to build 47 bicycles for fifth-grade students at Weil and Miller elementary schools in Pittsburgh's Hill District neighborhood.

PITT MEMORIES

It has been 25 years since **Trecia-Kaye Smith** earned her first indoor NCAA Championship in the long jump as she cleared a distance of 21'10.25" (6.66 m). She closed out her impressive Pitt career with a program record seven NCAA titles and being named an All-American 15 times. Smith represented her native Jamaica at the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics and was inducted into the inaugural Pitt Athletics Hall of Fame class in 2018.





Pitt 2022 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE



WEST VIRGINIA

SEP 1



TENNESSEE

SEP 10



@ WESTERN MICHIGAN

SEP 17



RHODE ISLAND

SEP 24



GEORGIA TECH

OCT 1



VIRGINIA TECH

OCT 8



@ LOUISVILLE

OCT 22



@ NORTH CAROLINA

OCT 29



SYRACUSE

NOV 5



@ VIRGINIA

NOV 12



DUKE

NOV 19



@ MIAMI

NOV 26

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