

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Linda Blades Connelly

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Women's Basketball in IL Oral History project

Interview # DGB-V-D-2005-001

Linda Connelly, the first girls' basketball coach at Mattoon High School in Mattoon, Illinois, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of Ellyn Bartges' Masters Capstone project for Western Illinois University entitled *What about the character of the girls?: Girls and Women's Basketball in Illinois 1968-1977*, and donated to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

Interview dates & location:

Date: June 4, 2005

Location: Lee's Summit, MO

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Ellyn L. Bartges, Masters Capstone project at Western Illinois University

Technical Support: Ellyn L. Bartges

Transcription by: Nina Weldon, professional transcriber, Boston, Virginia

Edited by: _____

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The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Linda Connelly, *Women's Basketball in IL*, DGB-V-D-2005-001

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Linda Connelly was born in 1952, and graduated from Sterling High School in Sterling, Illinois in 1970. During high school, Connelly was active in the Girls' Athletic Association, where she participated in tennis, basketball, cycling, and softball. Her physical education teachers for these activities were Sue Strong and Sharon Douthart. She earned her bachelor's degree in physical education from Northern Illinois University in 1974.

After college, Connelly began teaching and coaching at Mattoon High School in Mattoon, Illinois in the fall of 1974. She was the girls' tennis coach and the first girls' basketball coach at Mattoon. Connelly coached both the girls' varsity and junior varsity teams without any assistance. She remembers feeling extremely young, inexperienced, and isolated during her three years at Mattoon. However, despite her inexperience, Connelly led her 1977 girls' basketball team to the first Illinois state girls' basketball tournament where her high school physical education teacher Sue Strong was one of the other seven coaches whose team qualified for the finals. Sue Strong's Sterling team would win that first championship. That was the last year Connelly coached and taught at Mattoon High School.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Girls' Athletic Association (GAA); Title IX; girls' basketball in Illinois; coaching girls' teams in Illinois; Sterling, Illinois High School; Northern Illinois University; Mattoon High School; Sue Strong.

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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