

# Interview with Lorene Ramsey

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Interviewer: Ellyn Bartges

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## **A Note to the Reader**

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This is a copy of the interview that I had with Lorene Ramsey from Illinois Central College, former basketball and head softball coach there for thirty-four years. The interview took place on October 18, 2004, and I'm transferring it over from an RCA recorder for sound quality.

Bartges: It is October eighteenth here at Illinois Central College, and I am interviewing Lorene Ramsey, former head women's basketball and softball coach at ICC [Illinois Central College], and she currently resides in Arizona.

Ramsey: (unintelligible).

Bartges: Oh, okay.

Ramsey: —once a year and I go to Arizona in the winter.

Bartges: Okay. Let's jump right in here. Where did you go to high school?

Ramsey: I went to Washington Missouri High School in Washington, Missouri.

Bartges: Did you play organized sports in high school?

Ramsey: I did. We had not an extensive program because we were a small high school. The year I was a senior, the high school was the biggest that it ever was, 201 students, so we didn't have a lot of sports. They had softball for the boys—not baseball but softball—basketball for the boys, and track and field for the boys. And for the girls they had softball and volleyball but no track and field and no basketball.

Bartges: And no basketball? I'm going to go back for a second because I didn't have the camera on. I apologize. You went to Washington Missouri High School?

Ramsey: Correct.

Bartges: Correct, okay. And you are an Illinois resident right now, and you also spend some time in Arizona. Your experience in organized sports—were those sports that you played play days or GAA [Girls Athletic Association] days, extramural, interscholastic? How would you characterize them?

Ramsey: They were definitely interscholastic competition. We had not a state tournament at that time for high school girls in any of the sports, but we did have county tournaments in both softball and volleyball and other tournaments that we played in. We had a coach. We had the same number of hours available to us to practice that the boys' teams had. And usually we played—in softball we played double headers with the boys most of the time.

Bartges: Fast pitch?

Ramsey: Fast pitch softball. And—fact, we practiced a few times on the east end diamond which had adjacent fields, and if our boys' softball pitcher was pitching the next night, I went over and pitched some batting practice for them. So it was a very good situation, I felt.

Bartges: You didn't play basketball in high school. Did other schools in your county play basketball or—

Ramsey: No—

Bartges: Where was most of your exposure to basketball?

- Ramsey: None of the schools in Franklin County and Gasconade County, which was the area that we played in, played basketball. They played volleyball and softball. All the schools had the same sports that we had.
- Bartges: When you had county tournaments, was that maybe four schools or five schools?
- Ramsey: No, that was all the schools in our conference, which was, I believe, about eight schools.
- Bartges: Okay. When did you graduate from high school?
- Ramsey: Nineteen fifty-five.
- Bartges: What level of education did you attain, achieve?
- Ramsey: Well, I had a bachelor's degree from Illinois State University, a master's degree in physical education from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, and a master's degree in guidance counseling from Bradley University.
- Bartges: And your bachelor's degree was in PE [physical education]?
- Ramsey: Right.
- Bartges: Are you familiar with the Postal Tournament?
- Ramsey: I think back in the days when I taught in high school in the sixties—and I actually worked with the high school GAA and softball and basketball in Granite City and ran the programs even though I taught at junior high—there were schools that participated with each other in archery or other sports like that and mailed their scores in either to a state office or to each other. But when I ran the GAA at Pekin Community High School, we did not participate in that, and to my knowledge we never participated in it at Granite City either.
- Bartges: Is that Granite City, Illinois?
- Ramsey: Yes, that's correct.
- Bartges: Do you have any experience with any industrial leagues?
- Ramsey: Well, I never played in an industrial league as such, but I played with the Caterpillar Dieselettes which were sponsored by an industrial organization—

Caterpillar Tractor Company. They had a very good program in basketball in the old National Industrial Basketball League<sup>1</sup>. And in softball and baseball—they had a women's softball team and a men's baseball team—and they recruited nationally for those teams. And the competition that we played was at a high level.

Bartges: And that was in softball?

Ramsey: That was in softball.

Bartges: So is that...I'm trying to equate it to something probably a generation later like what the Raybestos Brakettes<sup>2</sup> were like—AAU kind of ball league sponsored by industrial teams.

Ramsey: We were similar to what the Raybestos Brakettes setup was. We didn't recruit as nationally as they did—and they had to recruit nationally because there were not a lot of good softball players in Connecticut—but it was the same setup. The players were given jobs at Raybestos, and they were given jobs at Caterpillar. And most of the girls on the team were employees of Caterpillar Tractor Company. The exceptions—I guess I'm the exception, I went to college. (unintelligible), when she came back, would have been the exception. But by then Caterpillar had dropped sponsorship of all their programs, and we had become the Sunnyland Lettes, later to become the Pekin Lettes.

Bartges: Oh, okay. Did you serve in the military or National Guard at any time?

Ramsey: Never.

Bartges: Did you teach or coach in a secondary school system?

Ramsey: I taught for two years at Coolidge Junior High in Granite City, Illinois, for six years at Pekin Community High School in Pekin, Illinois, and then I came here to Illinois Central College and taught for—and coached for thirty-four years.

Bartges: What year did you come here to ICC [Illinois Central College]?

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<sup>1</sup> The National Industrial Basketball League was founded in 1947 as a way to enable mill workers a chance to compete in basketball. It was founded out of the teams that did not join the newly created NBA [National Basketball Association]. In 1961 they became the National AAU Basketball League.  
[http://basketball.wikia.com/wiki/National\\_Industrial\\_Basketball\\_League](http://basketball.wikia.com/wiki/National_Industrial_Basketball_League)

<sup>2</sup> The Raybestos Brakettes women's softball team was formed in 1947 by William S. Simpson. It has undergone several name changes but is still in existence today, known as the Connecticut Brakettes.

Ramsey: Nineteen sixty-eight.

Bartges: So you were at Pekin from 1966 to 1968?

Ramsey: No, 1962 to 1968, and I was at Granite City from 1959 through 1961. And then in 1961-1962 I was at the University of North Carolina as a graduate assistant, and I did some teaching there and got my degree there, my master's.

Bartges: Who was your major advisor there?

Ramsey: Gail Hennis. She was excellent.

Bartges: They have an outstanding reputation.

Ramsey: They had three just giants in the field when I was there—Gail Hennis, Dr. Gail Hennis, Dr. Rosemary McGee that wrote the text with a gentleman from Wake Forest that—his name escapes me—for a lot of the evaluations classes, and Dr. Celeste Albright who later went on to Oregon to be—or Oregon State, one of those two—to be head of their physical education department. And she did a lot with the scientific basis of physical education and mainly the philosophy of physical education, and it was a real motivating experience.

Bartges: I'm sure. I know Lynn (unintelligible).

Ramsey: Oh, I know Lynn too. She's a really good coach and a great person.

Bartges: I have a lot of friends that are UNCG grads [University of North Carolina-Greensboro graduates]. Was your principal at Pekin male or female?

Ramsey: Male.

Bartges: And his name?

Ramsey: Bob Cain.

Bartges: Cain?

Ramsey: Cain, yes. And he was followed by Mr. Holman, Bill Holman. And so I had two different principals while I were there. And believe me, they were different.

Bartges: Were they?

Ramsey: Yeah. Mr. Cain was fired up to get sports for girls into the schools. He appeared before the IHSA [Illinois High School Association] principals and gave quite a talk trying to get them. And Mr. Holman mainly wanted to get us out of the gym, I think, so the boys could practice.

Bartges: That was my next question. Were they in favor or against adding girls' basketball or sports in general?

Ramsey: Well, Mr. Cain was very strongly in favor of it. He had a daughter in the seventh grade who was a good athlete. He had seen us play softball as the Pekin Lettes in town. We had a fast pitch softball girls' league with 125 girls trying out in the summer. There was a lot of interest in Pekin. And he thought the time had come for girls to play interschool sports and was willing to put some of his own time into trying to help us get it. When Mr. Holman came in, I think that changed. And I went in and discussed with him—we had three gyms at Pekin High School: one in the west campus, small and dingy that was the girls' gym, the boys' gym at west campus, and the big gym at our junior/senior campus at that time at the east campus. And we had GAA at the west campus three nights a week: Monday, Wednesday, Friday. When I first took it over there were eight girls in GAA. When I went into him, we had three hundred.

Bartges: Oh my. What time period was that?

Ramsey: Nineteen sixty-three. 1962-1963 school year. No? Yeah, 1962-1963 was the first school year, and 1967-1968 was my last year there.

Bartges: And that's when that three hundred were there?

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: So in those six years, you'd gone from eight to three hundred?

Ramsey: Right.

Bartges: Okay.

Ramsey: We built it up in a number of ways. Barb Waddell and I worked the GAA a lot, and we both played with the Pekin Lettes. A lot of the girls watched us play. Some of them played for us in the summer in our league. We had three Pekin teams and an all-star team. And you know, there was a lot of interest. And we had good outside facilities in the way of tennis courts and things at

the east campus, but we needed the west campus gym when I went in to him. We needed it five nights a week for that many girls. And we only had it for an hour, and I asked for an hour-and-a-half. And he said he'd think about it. So about two weeks later I got a memo. And you know when you get a memo, they don't have the guts to talk to you, that's what you know. And it said he had discussed with the boys' wrestling coach giving up the gym for two nights a week and an additional half hour every night, and the boys wrestling coach felt it would ruin his program, which I disputed because I felt he could come a half hour later and maybe share with some of the other teams the other gyms. But I looked at that memo when he said that, and one of the things he said was, "The wrestling program has developed the character of boys who are marginal and has helped keep them out of trouble." And I got a red pen out of my desk and I wrote, "What about the character of the girls?" Put it in the mail back to him, was smart enough not to go down and talk to him because that wouldn't have been—that would have been a real screaming session, I'll tell you. And I picked up the phone, called Illinois State, asked them to send my credentials, applied here, and interviewed also at Illinois State. Liked what I saw here, the opportunities, and came here and loved my thirty-four years here.

Bartges: As you came into Pekin, from what you said, it didn't appear that you had any formal basketball training or experience.

Ramsey: Well, when I went to—I went to Bradley University my first year, and they didn't do anything with women's athletics at the time. And I started out in liberal arts because I couldn't decide what major I was. I liked lots of things. I was thinking journalism or chemistry or all kinds of majors. And then I just decided I wanted to do physical education. And I talked to Mildred Caldwell, who was the head of the women's PE program, and she recommended I transfer because they just had a minor. So a couple of my teammates at that time had gone to Illinois State. They thought they had the best program in the state, and I think they did. And so I transferred down there. And I played on the teams. They had what they called extramural teams. You practiced two nights a week and maybe played five or six games a year.

Bartges: What year was that? (unintelligible) starting?

Ramsey: Nineteen fifty-six was my sophomore year, which is the year that I went to Illinois State, and I graduated in nineteen fifty-nine.

Bartges: Okay, so you played extramural—

Ramsey: For three years.

Bartges: —for three years.

Ramsey: And then I played AAU basketball until I was thirty-six.

Bartges: (laughs)

Ramsey: So I played a lot of winters. We had a team called the Pekin Peoria Independents. And when I went to grad school down at the University of North Carolina, we got up a little team and played a few games just with AAU people and people at the school, anybody that would play us.

Bartges: Extramural. Briefly just kind of describe what that is.

Ramsey: Extramural is you furnish your own uniform which was a white blouse and white shorts. The school provided a red pinny with a number on it for you. If you were going to a sports day at Northern Illinois, you got up at three o'clock in the morning, and the bus left at four or five. You might be playing at nine or ten, and then you'd play a game in the afternoon and come back.

Bartges: You actually had a bus though?

Ramsey: Yes.

Bartges: Did you stay with your team? It wasn't like play days where you would mix teams?

Ramsey: Oh, no—

Bartges: You had your own team together?

Ramsey: We had our own team and we played other colleges and universities.

Bartges: In a typical or average year, how many contests might you play in all?

Ramsey: Between four and eight, that was all. We didn't play a lot and we didn't practice but two days a week. And that was probably an hour-and-a-half to two hours.

Bartges: Where did you practice in Bloomington, at Illinois State?



Ramsey: In the girls' gym. There was the big gym that they have competition in at McCormick, and then there was a side gym with—that was just about as big as the big gym, because athletics were not the big thing then.

Bartges: Okay, I'm not familiar with those buildings.

Ramsey: Yeah, we practiced in that gym.

Bartges: When you were at Pekin, did you participate in a National Sports Institute or National Leadership Conference?

Ramsey: I did not. I did go to Minneapolis for the National Physical Education Convention, and I did an hour-and-a-half program on teaching softball skills, which I also did for the Illinois Association of Physical Education.

Bartges: I'm going to jump ahead time wise here a little bit now and get more into when things started to change. There was the impetus for change here. One of the things in my reading that Marianna Trekell and Joan Hult and some other people talk about is the variance of the rules, different versions of the rules. And in Trekell's book she talks about Illinois adopting a certain set of rules. Were officials in Illinois concerned with what version of the rules were used?

Ramsey: Well, I had my National Basketball Officiating rating, and I officiated some college games, and if I remember correctly, we started out with the rovers<sup>3</sup> where you had four at one end and four at the other end. Two people roved. Two people stayed at each end, so we had six players.

Bartges: So it was six-on-six?

Ramsey: Right, we had six forwards—or two forwards, two guards. But it was always four-on-four because two of the people went both ways.

Bartges: Right, they could cross over center court and go from offense to defense.

Ramsey: Right.

Bartges: Were the officials that you were familiar with, or in your officials association, were they concerned with changing the rules in Illinois, going from six-on-six or the rover to a more traditional or standardized boys set of rules?

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<sup>3</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s women's basketball was often played with two stationary guards, two stationary forwards, and two "rovers" who were allowed to run the entire court.  
<http://www.ncweb.com/biz/sherock/history.html>

Ramsey: Well, I think there were a lot of opinions on that. It was not a unanimous outlook among women. It kind of depended on how much playing experience women had had, and there were a lot of women coaching that had not had a lot of playing experience and questioned whether it was too tough for girls. And I was on the National Basketball Rules Committee one year when we argued for a long time over it and voted as a committee, and keeping it with the rover won by like one vote. So it was—the five-on-five was coming in.

Bartges: What year would that have been, and was that for the colleges or for the high school or for both?

Ramsey: It was the colleges. It was in the sixties, but I can't put my finger on when it was.

Bartges: When the National Basketball Committee—when their Experimental Rules became official in 1971 which turned from six-player to five-on-five—

Ramsey: Correct—

Bartges: —the men's or the boys' version, how did that impact Illinois basketball for girls, if at all?

Ramsey: Well, I think it improved it because it made all the girls play both ends of the floor instead of just two of them, so that their skill was better. They were better rounded players. I think the players really wanted to play that. You didn't want to stand at one end of the floor while everybody else was down at the other end of the floor playing. And this was a battle that went on in a lot of states. I understand that Tennessee was one of the last states to give up the rover. And evidently Pat Summit told them that if they didn't vote in the five-on-five, she was going to recruit all her players from out of state because—

Bartges: And she would have meant it.

Ramsey: And she did mean it. And they didn't give it up. And so the next year she recruited four or five players and they were all from out of state, and the following year they changed the rule. But I think, you know, once we got basketball, the powers that be above us, the administrators, let us make our own decision and that decision fairly quickly moved to five-on-five.

Bartges: So the administrators, once it was a lost cause for them or we had achieved that sport, it was laissez-faire for them in terms of—

Ramsey: Right—

Bartges: —administering?

Ramsey: Right. Because at the high school level that was not something they were really concerned about. They were concerned about the budget, how are we going to support women's sports, and what am I going to do with all these teams in one gym?

Bartges: When the five-on-five rules came in in Illinois, did you notice any impact on the number of girls that played? And you may not have, I just—I'm curious if you saw that decline. That's what they predicted in Iowa, was that you would see a decline—

Ramsey: No, there was no decline in Illinois. I think interest just continued to grow every year. And I can't say that it was because they changed from the rover style to the five-on-five, it was just that it became more popular for girls to play. And then when scholarships started appearing, why it was not only the girls that became more interested but the parents of the talented girl really became interested because it was going to pay for their daughter's education for four years.

Bartges: You obviously favored the change from six-on-six or rover to five-on-five.

Ramsey: Yes, I did, as did most people that had competed quite a bit.

Bartges: Tell me about the role you had in getting interscholastic basketball added for girls in Illinois, and then I have a series of follow-up questions to this.

Ramsey: Well, when I came to teach in Illinois, I just could not believe that they didn't have sports for girls. And I could not believe that one of the reasons they didn't have sports was because they were so concerned about how they were going to put all these teams in one gym because I went to a school that had one gym and not a very big gym, and we never had a problem. I don't ever remember the volleyball coach and the boys' basketball coach arguing over the gym time. If they went late one night, we went late the next night or vice versa. It was just a given. And to come over here and have to just fight to have a sports day was an amazing thing to me. And I first got proactive not in Granite City, but up here when I began teaching at Pekin. Marian Kneer was very active at East Peoria High School in trying to rattle the cages, I guess you'd say, and get some of the women started, and she called me about the fact that there was going to be a sports day meeting and—which I attended, as did a lot of the high school physical education teachers and GAA advisors because the great majority wanted competition.

Bartges: I'm going to interrupt a second here. We need to talk about a sports day. Can you describe how that's different than a GAA day or GAA—

Ramsey: A GAA day—when I took my girls at Granite City High School to another school, there were other schools there also, same thing in Pekin. And they may have the Cougars and the Lions and the Tigers and the Apples and the Oranges and the Peaches, and they sent one girl from each school to one of these teams. So you were playing with people from all the other high schools, and you might be the only person on that team from Pekin High School.

Bartges: So nobody you've ever practiced with or played with?

Ramsey: No—

Bartges: Probably.

Ramsey: And that way there was no pressure to win and no tradition and no challenge.

Bartges: When Kneer called you about getting together, how did that evolve?

Ramsey: Well, I can remember going over to Pontiac High School for a meeting. Judy Johnson was there. She was pro sports days. And we met at several places through the two or three years, four years that we battled before they finally changed it. I guess it might have been four or five years starting in—you know, it was so long ago—the years. I can't give you a specific year. It was in the mid-1960s, maybe a little earlier than that. And maybe Gabby Kneer can give you the exact date because she was very passionate about this. And we saw kind of an increase in the people coming and a major disgust among the people and the fact that the girls never really got in the gym like they should. So in the meantime I was appointed or elected, I can't remember which, to the IHSA board. And there were five people from all over the state representing several regions. And Marge McKeon was also on the board. She was an AAU basketball player and an ISU [Illinois State University] grad, and I knew her, and she was on the Sports Day Committee. And so we started talking about bringing this up when we had our—in the fall we had a meeting of the five women that were on the GAA board. So we go up there and we're going to—we had one other woman that we knew would vote with us on the vote. And we were informed that it didn't make any difference what we thought but the principals, the seventeen principals, had to vote for this.

Bartges: And the seventeen principals would have been from those five regions?

Ramsey: Yes, from throughout the state, seventeen principals—and that if we wanted to get athletics that we needed to present this and get on the program for the seventeen principals' board meeting. So someone up north—I think Helen Heitman and her principal went first. And he was—and I can't remember his name, but he was a very well-known guy in the state.

Bartges: From Arlington Heights or—

Ramsey: No, I don't think so.

Bartges: West Lawn or something?

Ramsey: She's from the suburbs up there. So they presented it, and it was voted down fifteen to two, okay. So we were all mumbling and disgruntled. So then we were looking for another principal. And I knew Mr. Cain, when he hired me he said, "You get this GAA going, you build it. I'll help you any way I can." And he followed through on it, unlike a lot of principals that tell you that then they don't do a thing after you're there. So I went in one day and I said, "I don't know if you want to do this or not because it may not make you popular with your fellow principals." He said, "I'm not worried about that too much." And so I told him about it and he said, "When do we go?" (laughs) So we went up there. We were the second ones. And he did a magnificent job. And most of his speech was written by Marian Kneer because he said, "You ladies know this better than I do." And he said, "What am I going to do if they ask questions and I don't know the answer to a question?" And so Marge and I were there with him. And he just did a great job. And we had a brochure that we mailed to each one of these seventeen principals with a question, answer, question, answer. And it was just a little fold-open brochure because we knew they wouldn't read it if it was lengthy, okay? And he memorized it. And so he got through with his presentation and he said, "Now as most of you principals, I'm not directly involved with the program. I know what I want for a program and we don't have it, but I'm not directly involved with it. So if I—I would like to defer to Miss Ramsey and Miss McKeon if you have questions." And they had like two or three piddly little questions that were answered in this brochure. So we're walking out. We got out of the room and I said, "Mr. Cain, do you think we're going to win?" And he said, "Hell no." And he was so mad. He said, "Those guys didn't even read that brochure. Those questions they asked you were answered right in the brochure. They didn't even read it." Oh, he was furious, and—because he'd spent considerable time on this too.

Bartges: Sure.

Ramsey: Got voted down fifteen to two.

Bartges: He didn't gain any ground from the first time?

Ramsey: No. And Mr. Portis, the nonprogressive principal of Princeville High School and our own area representative, voted against it, which really infuriated me. But anyway, he said, "Don't give up. Get somebody else and go again." He was in favor of it. He said, "I'll do what I can in the background," and I think he did. So we went back the next year. Now in the meantime there were two girl swimmers in one of the suburban high schools, and I don't remember which one. But they were kids that had some thought of maybe being Olympians someday, and there was no swimming team. But there was a boys' swimming team. Well, they told them they could swim on the boys' swimming team. They didn't want to swim on the boys' swimming team. They wanted to swim on the girls' swimming team, which they didn't have. Well, then they told them, I guess you can't swim. Now their parents—their mother and father were both lawyers, and they were going to sue the IHSA out of their mind. And the next year we lost nine to eight. And as this progressed and it looked like there were going to be more lawsuits, it made it.

Bartges: A simple majority was what you needed?

Ramsey: We needed a simple majority. And anyone that thinks the IHSA did this originally because they cared about the girls, they wanted to give the girls equal rights, is living in a dreamland. It was the threat of the courts that got us in the door.

Bartges: What motivated you personally to lead or push for the changes in basketball at the high school level?

Ramsey: Well, I knew that I had enjoyed for four—I hadn't even played basketball in Missouri, but I enjoyed our volleyball program and we had a good team, we had a lot of fun. The school cared about us. And I enjoyed our softball program. And it wasn't just basketball I was pushing for. I was pushing for all sports for girls, any sport, just give them a chance to do something.

Bartges: Did Pekin have a tennis team or an archery team or a golf team at this time?

Ramsey: No.

Bartges: So there was essentially no girls' sports for Pekin girls?

Ramsey: No.

Bartges: Okay. Since those were the three that the IHSA sanctioned during this period.

Ramsey: Right. I think I was gone by the time they had sanctioned them or we would have had one.

Bartges: You sort of have answered this, but I'm going to ask this question: How was your school instrumental in getting basketball added? You talk about Mr. Cain being an advocate. Was there anyone else in your school or was it mostly you and Mr. Cain?

Ramsey: Well, Barb Waddell came to teach there and she was very active in the Sports Day Committee also.

Bartges: Was she a physical education (unintelligible)?

Ramsey: Yes, and she was—we co-ran the GAA after she came there. Our new principal was, I'm certain, not interested in getting interschool sports, but the funny thing about it was in 1976 they had their first high school girls state softball tournament, and it was in Pekin. And he must have changed in midstream because he was very—he was out at the ballpark; he was supportive. But see, there was no clash over facilities. We were using the city softball park, which happened to be connected to our school.

Bartges: You may not know the answer to this, and I'm sort of geared towards high school here: how quickly did Pekin adopt the new sport once the IHSA decided the threat of the lawsuit was real and decided to add basketball?

Ramsey: Oh, they adopted it immediately because the schools in the area did, and they were in a conference. It was over. The fight was over. Once we got in the gym, it was a period of, Well you're in the old gym, or, You're in the west campus gym. We played in Pekin at the west campus gym, and the boys' team played at the big gym, the new gym, the east campus team. And now the girls play at the east campus team. It was a matter of adjusting the level of what school support we got. But as far as trying to limit games or anything, I don't think they did that all at Pekin, and in fact, were active enough that they sponsored the Girls' State Softball Class AA tournament and A tournament for twenty-five years. So it was over once it went through in Pekin. I don't think it was over in a lot of places, but in Pekin it was.

Bartges: This is a followup to that. When the new sport was added, basketball, I have in my reading come across indications that some people felt with the adoption of the boys' rules and then the addition of the team sport of basketball, that it

was too organized, too set. Did you feel that way? And yes or no is fine because I'm going to come back to this in another question.

Ramsey: Well, I never felt it was too organized, but then you're talking to somebody that's competed a lot and wanted to compete. There were a lot of people that felt we were eliminating a lot of girls. There were no longer 300-girl GAAs because we could not have a facility for GAA and girls' sports and boys' sports because then we would have gone the other way and discriminated against the boys and then we would have had to start a BAA for those that didn't make the team, and there just weren't enough gyms anywhere for that.

Bartges: Right. And this is a rhetorical question but once the sport was sanctioned and added by the IHSA, GAA went by the wayside, it died?

Ramsey: Yes.

Bartges: Did you belong to any group or groups that were active in the civil rights movement?

Ramsey: No, I never have and for a reason. I think it's very hard to talk to an administrator without them feeling terribly threatened if you're in the women's lib [liberation] groups, things like that, and I always tried to approach them on a nonconfrontational level. And even when they turned me down for the girls' gym at Pekin, I just wasn't going to fight that anymore. I just turned in my resignation, got a different job—anything that ever happened to me. (laughs)

Bartges: It certainly gave you a different career and enabled you to touch a lot of different women over a longer period.

Ramsey: Right.

Bartges: I think sometimes that administrators say that, "If you don't like it here, go somewhere else," and sometimes that's the best choice.

Ramsey: Well, I think it is. I don't think they were eager to get rid of any of us. They liked what they had with the GAA, but it was time to do something else.

Bartges: Billie Jean King<sup>4</sup> says that she hates labels or being labeled. However, for the purpose of this interview, how did you or would you have characterized yourself during this period of your life?

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<sup>4</sup> Billie Jean King is a former American professional tennis player. Over the course of her career, she won thirty-nine Grand Slam titles and the Battle of the Sexes tennis match against Bobby Riggs in 1973.



Ramsey: A pioneer, somebody starting—asking for something that was totally foreign to the State of Illinois.

Bartges: Okay. You've addressed it a little bit in your initial statement—being from Missouri and having had competition—but I'm going to list this to lay it out. A collection of states that surround or border Illinois and the years that they implemented a state tournament for girls' basketball: Iowa first state tournament 1926, Indiana 1975, Michigan 1973, Wisconsin 1976 and they had three classes when they started, Minnesota 1974, couldn't find Ohio (unintelligible), Kentucky went from 1920 to 1932 and then reinstated it in 1975, Tennessee 1965, Missouri 1973, and then Illinois in 1977 for their state championship tournament in basketball. As an educator, as a coach and administrator, how did you feel when you saw the states surrounding you competing in competitive state tournaments and Illinois didn't have one?

Ramsey: Well, I could see it coming. And I can't say it irritated me as much as going to the principals' meeting and knowing they hadn't even read the brochure, because the overall feeling when you'd walk into a high school to recruit a player was that there was progress and it was going to continue. I certainly didn't expect Illinois to be a leader and I blame that on the people that were in the IHSA office at the time. They didn't want more stress, more work, the sometimes confrontational things that happen with athletics. That's not what they were there for. They were there for the kids. And they were limiting the girls. The other states were coming through with their tournaments as they saw fit for it to progress to that. And I know that the Missouri Athletic Association does not have the kind of money that the Illinois High School Athletic Association has because they have just an unbelievable number of small schools, and they don't have Chicago, and they don't have the population we have over here. But I think they were always, at the beginning, more true to the girls in the state. And with Illinois, I think Title IX<sup>5</sup> was an absolute must or we'd still be in the Dark Ages. Now that we have the programs, and we have a whole new breed of people in the office, and we have women in the office that embrace athletics, that has changed. I think we're very progressive compared to a lot of states, but we certainly were not a leader in the beginning.

Bartges: Can you tell me about the process of getting a state tournament added in Illinois or—you may not have been involved in that process and that's fine.

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<sup>5</sup> Title IX is a portion of the Education Amendments of 1972, and it states, in part, that "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."

Ramsey: At that time I was totally immersed in the junior college system, and I don't know what that consisted of.

Bartges: Did you attend the first state tournament at Horton Field House in Bloomington?

Ramsey: No, I didn't because we were off on a tournament. But I did get home in time—they televised it—to see the championship team on television. And I was pleased that they had televised it, but we were not ready for television yet.

Bartges: (laughs)

Ramsey: It was not a very good game, and—but they stayed with it. Once they got their foot in the water, they went into the pool. But it took a long time to get their foot in the water.

Bartges: So that was one of my other questions: what did you think about the caliber of play?

Ramsey: The caliber of play was very poor.

Bartges: That was a bad game too. That was an ugly game.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: In your opinion, given the previous data, what was the major reason that slowed basketball from being added as an interscholastic sport sanctioned by the IHSA? And you sort of touched on it.

Ramsey: I still think that the biggest problem was the gym facility. They didn't want to take the boys out of the gym. They didn't want the budgets stretched another way when they saw that they didn't have enough money for what they already had. They were afraid of injuries that occur in sports. They had no idea that girls didn't break every time they turned around. They were ignorant of what the potential was for good basketball for girls, for adding to their budget with crowds, for having girls—their girls in their school benefit by getting their education paid for, in many cases going to college when they never could have gone if they weren't an athlete.

Bartges: Did the AMA, the American Medical Association's endorsement for vigorous exercise help change public educational policy towards interscholastic sport, as far as you could tell? Did that have an impact?

Ramsey: I'm not sure, but I think it probably had—they had to read that and give that some thought, I'm sure.

Bartges: What role do you think homophobia played in the development and growth of girls' sports at the high school level, particularly team sports like basketball? Was there any one group—administrators, coaches, parents, players, more concerned or vocal about mannish behavior than another?

Ramsey: I'm not sure—I wish I could answer that—because I wasn't there in the high schools when it took place. In the colleges, I think there was some concern about that. And you know, if a boy is to be tough, impervious to pain, and very physical in order to be a good athlete, what role did they expect a girl to take? And if you said the same thing, that wasn't how they pictured a girl. They wanted her to be sugar and spice and everything nice. They didn't want her diving for the loose ball on the floor, and just a lot of things concerning basketball. And even the actions of the coaches sometimes. I had a very good male assistant coach one year, and we had a player named Mandy Bryant who was a terrific player and a very good girl. And I took her out—in fact, she started at the University of Missouri and played very well in the Big 12. Took her out at the end of one game, and as she was coming off the floor, I patted her on the back. And my assistant started to pat her on the back, and he stopped his hand in mid-air and dropped it. And I said, "Tom, go ahead. Mandy would think that was an honor to have you pat her on the back for a good game." And he said, "It's not Mandy I'm worried about. It's the people in the bleachers and what they're thinking and saying if I pat her on the back." So I think there was a good deal of thoughts concerning the role of a woman, how a woman would react, would it encourage a lot of socially unacceptable behavior, was it dangerous physically? But there were so many good things to be had from athletics, I think we as coaches kind of ignored most of that.

Bartges: What factors can you identify that influenced previous decisions against interscholastic competition in the State of Illinois for girls' basketball? And again, you have touched on some of these. You talked about gyms and budgets, those kinds of things, and if that's—

Ramsey: Well, I think controversy was another thing. The administrators did not want to—they felt they had enough controversy with boys' athletics, enough problems, and they didn't want to double their displeasure with parents calling and wanting to know why Susie wasn't playing and just the day-to-day kind of controversies. They didn't feel like they had time for all that in their life, and they didn't want to handle it. And particularly the people—there are always some administrators that would throw themselves in front of a speeding freight train rather than put themselves into a confrontational position. And

athletics were going to have some confrontational positions no matter how you looked at it. Even if you were supporting it, you knew it was going to be confrontational. And I think at the time when athletics were coming in, the song, "I Am Woman, Hear Me Roar" had not come out, and a lot of people, particularly the men, thought of, I am Woman Sugar and Spice, and I don't want our girls out there doing these things.

Bartges: You said earlier that without Title IX Illinois would not have jumped so quickly.

Ramsey: Oh, I don't think there's any—it's beyond a shadow of a doubt that that's true—just the votes that we had with the principals, and they were the ones that had power. And many of them represented areas that had told them, Don't vote for girls' athletics. We've got enough problems as it is.

Bartges: So the regions they represented, their constituencies, went to them and said, "We don't want you to vote for this?"

Ramsey: In some cases I think they did.

Bartges: How quickly did you see changes in funding, travel, schedules, publicity, uniforms, coaching, officiating, and facilities usage after basketball was added? You indicated earlier it was almost immediate.

Ramsey: I thought so. Today some places still drag their heels, but other places may have more interest in their girls' program than they have in their boys' programs in some cases. Small towns, particularly, get really behind the girls' programs or whoever's winning at the time, girls or boys. But you can't just go from never playing to everything's the same. It was the slow progression, but I think a progression that went fairly quickly. I was pleased with what I saw. The one thing I didn't like was when I'd go watch a basketball game and the girls were in small gyms. I saw a girl break both her wrists one night running into a wall because she was in the small gym instead of a big gym. And that was a very—too slow a progression for the safety of the girls. But considering what we had, it was about what I expected and maybe a little better.

Bartges: Marianna Trekell in her book, *A Century of Women's Basketball*, stated that she felt that Title IX forced the issue or role model for women's and girls' sports towards the more competitive male model sports. Do you agree or disagree and why?

Ramsey: I agree one hundred percent. The girls went from being apples and oranges at the GAA play day, which they thought was ridiculous, and I agree with her.

Bartges: The participants thought it was ridiculous?

Ramsey: Right. The participants did not like it. They wanted to go as Pekin High and play East Peoria High, and East Peoria felt the same way. So I think the participants liked it a lot. I didn't see any resistance to it.

Bartges: Can you recall anything else that might help me to understand the history of girls' basketball in Illinois from this period, from the mid-sixties to nineteen seventy-seven that we haven't touched on?

Ramsey: Not really. You've asked really good questions. And as Marianna Trekell said, "We wouldn't have had it without Title IX." And I think that's sad for this state. You know, Wayne Cooley, who ran the program in Iowa, was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, Tennessee. And I was there the night he gave his acceptance talk. And he said, "I don't really feel like a pioneer in girls' athletics or in women's basketball." He said, "I feel like someone who was a pioneer for equal opportunity for both boys and girls in the State of Iowa. I didn't want the girls to have more opportunity than the boys, but I didn't want the boys to have more opportunity than the girls either." And he said, "And that was then a time when that opinion was highly unpopular." (laughs) Yes, he—

Bartges: I remember going to the state tournament there in Iowa when he was still involved in it, and the difference between the Illinois State Tournament and the Iowa State Tournament, for me as a kid, was like going to the Olympics. It was such a difference.

Ramsey: Right, because he had passion. That tournament was his baby.

Bartges: Oh, it was phenomenal.

Ramsey: Yeah, and he made it that way. He was at the top. He wasn't dragging his feet. He wasn't threatened by Title IX. He felt girls should play sports. And like he said, he didn't want them to have any more opportunity than the boys, but he didn't want the boys to have any more opportunity than the girls. And I think Iowa was the best example of that in the United States.

Bartges: Some people in this state that I've come across in my reading seem to indicate there was a fear of mimicking Iowa, that basketball would be

dominant over any other sports in this state. Were you aware of any feelings or sentiments like that?

Ramsey: No, and I think if people feel that way, it's really too bad. It's like saying, "Well, we've got the 747. It's a better plane, but it's going to dominate all these other planes so let's not have a 747." I coached two sports here for many years. I coached softball and basketball. And softball didn't draw as many fans, but there were other—we had the same budget. We had a good budget. And the players played with the same passion even though it was cold a lot of times. And we placed them on scholarships just as easily as we did the basketball players. So I think if you have a program, maybe some phases of it aren't as outstanding as what the basketball program has, but softball had more girls that could play. They had nine starters at a time. Maybe basketball would be better off with nine starters. You see, you can't equalize everything.

Bartges: When did ICC add basketball as an interscholastic sport?

Ramsey: Nineteen sixty-nine. I came here in 1968, and I was hired because I had a WSI and could teach swimming and because Dr. Edwards, our president who interviewed me, wanted a good intramural program and he knew we had one at Pekin. And so I got hired on that basis. Athletics was never mentioned.

Bartges: How as coach, a college coach, did you recruit your players if basketball wasn't played in the high schools?

Ramsey: Well, the first year—this is how our team started. We put up signs on campus. Max (unintelligible) who taught with me over in the physical education department—we had a very active intramural program here. And we put it up all over campus for men's and women's basketball. We did not even have a gym. We rented the YWCA gym for four nights a week—two nights for the girls, two nights for the boys. Okay. There was a little envelope there. You wrote your team name and players. Or if you were a single person, you did not have a team, you wrote down John Smith or Mary Jones and we'd get you a team, okay? So we'd take down all the envelopes when the deadlines ended, and we'd have two-hundred-and-some men that had signed up and eight girls. And Max said, "What are we going to do with the ladies?" And progressive me said, "I don't know. There's not much you can do. I guess we won't have women's basketball." He said, "No, let's try and do something with them." He said, "You try and figure it out." He said, "What about putting one on each one of eight men's teams? I'll pick the teams. I'll pick some guy that I know will be fair to each girl, or what about the girls in the men's league?" And I said, "Oh, I think they'll get killed, but I'll talk to the girls." So Tuesday night was the girls' night. Monday night was the boys'

night—Monday, Wednesday. Tuesday, Thursday was the girls' night, okay? Here come the eight girls. And so they wanted to know what we were going to do with just eight girls. And I said, "Well, what do you think about each one of you playing on a men's team?" Oh no, they didn't want that. "What do you think about playing on a league with men?" Well, they didn't want that either. And I said, "Well, I'll think of something. You come back on Thursday."

So on Wednesday morning I went in to talk to Richard Bales, the best administrator I ever worked for other than Bob Cain. Both of them were good. And I said, "We have a problem with basketball." What is it? "Well, we have two-hundred-and-some men and eight women." And I said, "I guess we won't probably do the women's program." He said, "Oh yes, we will." He said, "We're going to give the girls the same opportunity we give the boys." And I said, "Well—" I talked to him and I told him they didn't want to play one on the men's team and they didn't want to play in the men's league. So I said, "There's only one other option." And he said, "What's that?" And I said, "Well, I guess I could schedule them against some of the colleges in the area. We'd get killed though." I said, "These kids aren't that good. I've got one true player there." And he said, "Well, we don't have it in the budget, but I'll try and get you a budget. You go and tell those girls that we're going to play some of the other schools and we'll work it out somehow." So I went back and I told the kids that we were going to play some of the other colleges, and most of them were, "Yeah", you know. And some of them were, "Oh gosh, I'm not that good." And I said, "Won't make any difference how good you are. We've got two goals: to get better every night we practice and to have fun. You don't have to win. If we win, fine, if we don't, fine, okay?" So we started out, and I called Jean Auberle over at Bradley; she had a team. And they came over and they beat us sixty-six to thirty-three, and she did everything she could to hold the score down.

Bartges: You still got thirty-three points though.

Ramsey: Yeah, and the kids enjoyed it, so this was going to work. So I called Laurie Mabry down at ISU and I said, "We're not very good, but I'd like to come—" they were having a sports day in two weeks. She said, "Okay, we'll put you on. I'll send you the schedule. I haven't made the schedules yet, you called in time." So I get the schedule and I'm standing by the mailbox reading it, and I had this funny look on my face and (unintelligible) that I taugh with said, "What's wrong, you look kind of puzzled." And I said, "Well, I got a schedule from ISU, and we're playing ISU's fifth team and they only have four teams."

Bartges: (laughs)

Ramsey: And what they did—we played Illinois' third team, and we played ISU's fifth team in the morning, and they beat us forty-four to twelve. And Laurie Mabry was coaching them, and she did what she could to hold the score down. And so I thought, Oh God, this is going to get really, really bad here today. And I had to leave the kids. I said, "Don't worry about it kids. We'll come back with a lot of energy," you know, the usual things—because I was officiating a game over in the other gym. Because if you officiated, you didn't have to pay the schools for officials, and I was trying to keep the budget down because he was trying to give me money from everywhere, and he did a good job of it. So I came back, and we were playing Illinois' third team. Well, they were bad too, and we beat them thirty-four to twenty-two. It was our first win. And it was so funny because he got us a Peoria charter coach bus for the trip. And I said, "Ah, Mr. Bales, we can get by in a van." He said, "No, those other schools are going down there in buses. We'll send our girls in a bus." So we got on the bus. Me—I had no assistant, no trainer, or nothing—and eight girls, and there's this like fifty-passenger bus (laughs). We got on it coming back, and the kids were really in a great mood. And we played—let's see, we were zero and—zero and—zero and five by Christmastime. And this kid walks into my office. And she says, "I hear you're the basketball coach." And I said, "Well, that's debatable." And she said, "Well, I'd like to try out." And she's about 5'5". And I said, "Great." And she said, "When do you practice?" And I gave her the practice times. And she said, "When will I know if I'm on the team?" I said, "You're on." She said, "You haven't seen me play." I said, "You can walk and breathe, can't you? We only got eight girls." So she comes out and she is tremendous. And we won six of our last seven games. She was our starting point guard and went to SIU [Southern Illinois University] and started down there, played for Charlotte West. And the next year we won the small college state championship, and all I did was put up sign-up notices that we'd have tryouts, and fifteen girls showed up the second year, and I kept them all.

Bartges: When did you start recruiting in the sense that we know it today?

Ramsey: Probably about 1975.

Bartges: Okay, so you had the opportunity to recruit kids that had played interscholastically here in the state at least for two years?

Ramsey: Right. We got some good players. Connie Howard came. And I did talk to her. She was at Pekin High. And she started down at Illinois State for Jill Hutchison.



Bartges: I know that.

Ramsey: Yeah, and so we had area girls that were aware we had a team, and we had a good team. And then I went out to the high schools and began sitting at games, you know, and picking people. But the first few years I took what was around here and what was—that Jan Winkler, she went to SIU. She was 5'9" and played post for us, terrific player. And Charlotte West had had some of my kids, and they'd all played well for her. And I told her about Jan. She said, "Well, she's a post player and she's not very tall, but she was strong now." And I said, "Ah, Charlotte, she'll start for you." And she said, "Oh, I've got Cathy Vandersack." And I'd seen her play. She was a 6'1", 6'2" kid, (unintelligible), not very smooth. And I said, "Cathy Vandersack's never seen a day she can play with Jan." She said, "I'll give her a scholarship on your word, but I think she'll have a lot of trouble playing with a big girl." She not only started, she led on the scoring, shooting percentage, and rebounding. And I never saw Charlotte during all—until about midway through the season. So I called her one day, and I said "Charlotte, how's Jan doing?" And she laughed and she said, "You know how she's doing." (laughs)

Bartges: There was a kid at UAV named Jackie Nero who was like that. She's 5'8", played the fourth spot. And she would just kill you.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: She had quick feet and she knew how to get position. Her timing was—

Ramsey: That was Jan.

Bartges: And she would— these big kids from Old Dominion and Miami and some of these other places, they would just get taken to the cleaner by this girl.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: Unbelievable.

Ramsey: I got to tell you one more thing about Jan. We played the Russian Olympic team with the Illinois College All-Stars, and I coached them. And we played down at Clemson College.

Bartges: When was this?

Ramsey: Nineteen seventy-six. They were on their way to the Olympics, and they were just killing everybody. And we were getting the scores and it was, you know,

one hundred and thirty to forty, and they killed us about the same score. But we started the game. And the first thing I told them was, "When you warm up, I don't want to see you looking at the Russians, because they're going to be tall. But a lot of these teams they get psyched out by just looking at people, and we're going to give them all we got, okay?" So I hadn't seen them and they walked—my kids were in getting dressed, and I was just sitting on a bench out there, and they walked in through the gym door, and this girl had to duck, this 7'2" gal they had. And then they had two six foot—like five forwards, and they had this half-court trap. And the point guard dribbled in when she should have stayed back just that (unintelligible). But anyway, the game starts, and Jan hits a basket for us. And we're down fourteen to six before they really tromped away from us. So I went to see the Olympics that year. And I went with two gals that I played AAU basketball with and one that I played against. And we're going to the game where the Russians are playing the U.S.—it's in the semifinals. And I said—Billie Moore was coaching the U.S. Team—and I said, "Well, I'm going to see what Coach Moore did that I didn't do," because I said, "They started out—we were fourteen and six, and then they just ran away from us." Well, it was seventeen to nothing before the Olympic Team scored. (laughs)

Bartges: How many timeouts did she call?

Ramsey: I don't remember, but it wasn't too much more competitive than what we had had, you know. Our level of play in the United States at the time was just so low compared to the international. And we still got like a silver medal.

Bartges: We got the silver that year.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: I'm going to interview Charlotte Lewis (unintelligible).

Ramsey: Oh yeah. Yeah, she played on that team.

Bartges: One thing that I didn't ask you, and this has always been something I've been very interested in: when I was a player, not only the coaches were women, but almost all of the officials were (unintelligible). And then boom, when they went to two classes it seemed like the female officials disappeared. How did that happen?

Ramsey: I think a lot of things contributed to the demise of women coaches and women officials. And hopefully today's girls will come back, you know. But men weren't interested when we first started because it was not a moneymaking

proposition. They couldn't make any money off of it, and they didn't have the passion to do it for passion like women did. I mean, we were trying to help the girls.

Bartges: Right.

Ramsey: But when the money started coming in, the men started coming in, I think. I also think as far as women officials were concerned, in many cases they hadn't had the same competitive officiating opportunities before they were thrown into the state tournament. Men had to work for years before they'd get into a state tournament, and women were put in immediately. Then the news media just ripped them to shreds on how many traveling calls they made or how many three-second (unintelligible) calls they made. And I think women do not like to take all that derogatory comment and are more sensitive to it than men are. Wow. There's Harry Fitsu. He was not a big mover. I played softball with Cindy Adams, and she was very progressive. Ola, I think, was fairly progressive for the day. I don't know these people very well. And I'm sure some of these guys—this was who was Helen Heitman's principal (unintelligible).

Bartges: Oh, Niles?

Ramsey: Yeah. He really wanted girls' sports. And he was on the board of directors for a long time and he was a leader on the board, and that helped us a lot.

Bartges: Well, and they had a good team in 1976, 1977, 1978. They had a good team those first years.

Ramsey: Yeah. Jean Panconan refereed a lot of our games.

Bartges: She looks familiar to me, I don't know why.

Ramsey: Yeah, she taught at Illinois State

Bartges: But all women.

Ramsey: Uh-huh, right. Yeah, I think it's a shame. And I officiated for a while, but I couldn't—I didn't have the time because I was, you know, coaching. Washington, I think, played in the finals, didn't they?

Bartges: I think Washington played in the semis, I'm not sure. It might have been Sterling versus Washington.

Ramsey: Yes, (unintelligible) there weren't a lot of these people that coached for a great length of time. Not too many of them coached for a great length of time.

Bartges: No, she's nowhere to be found. She only coached for about four years.

Ramsey: You got any other pictures?

Bartges: There was a player, Cathy Boswell.

Ramsey: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I remember her. And Jill Strite was a good coach.

Bartges: I think she's in Arizona.

Ramsey: I think she is too, but I'm not sure where or if she's even coaching.

Bartges: Centralia upset Joliet West in a quarter final that year.

Ramsey: No, and I think here—I coached here for thirty-four years, and now Steve Garber has the team because he was my assistant the last seven years. And I did write him a recommendation because he wanted the job and he was the best prepared person. Women have to get into the trenches as assistants, and they have to want to referee, and I don't know if they're going to do that.

Bartges: I don't see very many younger women doing it.

Ramsey: It's terrific money in it now if you get up into the colleges. You make five hundred dollars a night in those big conferences.

Bartges: Yeah, and you can move up quickly.

Ramsey: Um-hm.

Bartges: It's not a twenty-year process.

Ramsey: More easily than the men can because they want women officials.

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: But I don't know what the answer is to it. If I were starting over, I would be a coach, and I would try and do some of the same things that I did. I mean, we don't have the women leaders that are wanting—maybe we have more athletes now, and when they finish they just don't do—they don't want to coach or they don't want to put the time in. Heather Cassady that went to Indiana and

played point guard for them and they won the conference that year—I don't think they've ever done it any other year, they won the tournament—and she's a real bright kid. And she told her dad she didn't think she wanted to coach and now she is, she's an assistant at Indiana State. And he said, "Why?" She said, "I don't know. There's just so much stress, and they don't seem to enjoy it, and they're always mad, and that's all they do. They don't have another life." And I thought, Well, I don't think I was always mad, but I didn't have another life.

Bartges: No.

Ramsey: When I coached here for thirty-four years at two sports, that was it.

Bartges: It's hard for me to imagine the longevity of thirty-four years. I coached Division I ball for ten years as an assistant.

Ramsey: Where at?

Bartges: I was at Penn State and at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. And I got (unintelligible) last name at Lewisburg.

Ramsey: Oh, I don't know who—what his name—the guy now.

Bartges: Soft spoken guy—

Ramsey: Yeah—

Bartges: Kind of a southern—

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: We recruited heavily out of Lewisburg.

Ramsey: Oh yeah, they had a lot of good athletes.

Bartges: We had some good athletes. But there was no—I coached two sports like you did, I coached softball and I coached basketball. The years that I was coaching both sports I was gone from May eighteenth to August sixteenth in the summer because—of course recruiting has changed. They don't let you stay out (laughs) that long anymore. You only get that thirty days in July.

Ramsey: Yeah, that is—oh, that is good though (unintelligible).

Bartges: Oh, it's great. But we didn't have that. And you just got burned out so quickly. It was almost impossible to do anything.

Ramsey: What are you going to do when you finish your master's?

Bartges: I don't know. I work in the Affirmative Action Office at Western, that's my full-time job.

Ramsey: They're pretty good about affirmative action over there aren't they?

Bartges: Yeah. There are things that frustrate me on an individual basis.

Ramsey: They hired Helen Smiley, that impressed the heck out of me, that they would give her a chance even.

Bartges: I always wondered—and this is cynical. But I came from a school that had a female athletic director. It was a nonfootball school like UNC-Charlotte—nonfootball school, Division I, pretty decent programs—but the woman was a figurehead, and there was always somebody behind her pushing the buttons, or she was so entrenched in traditional sport mentality that she couldn't think outside the box (unintelligible). Now she's lauded as some sort of a saint. But when push came to shove for girls, for women in athletics, she (unintelligible). And I don't know. I don't know how long Helen was there. I know her sister is also very powerful in women's sports. And I can't remember what her name is. And she's from (unintelligible), and—but when you look at salaries, and you look at travel, and you look at those kind of higher (unintelligible)—coaches' salaries, travel budget, media—those things are not equitable.

Ramsey: When I was full time here—in the last years I had retired from teaching and I was just on a separate contract coaching so that changed things—but when I was full time, I made the most money down there in that—of any of the PE teachers, and I made more money than their athletic director.

Bartges: But you should have. You were the most tenured member of their faculty.

Ramsey: Well no, Max and I hired in together and (unintelligible) and he ran the fitness lab. But they treated me right and I think treat well, pretty well around here.

Bartges: It seems like it. I know I just retired from high school coaching this last year. Our bus was in an accident coming home from a game two years ago and we were t-boned on the interstate.

Ramsey: Oh—

Bartges: And pushed down like into that hole there. It was a sixty foot drop. It was a miracle that nobody was killed.

Ramsey: Ah, you know it.

Bartges: But I had back injuries, and then I had surgery in the summer. I had a spinal fusion—(unintelligible) pretty good actually. I had a double spinal fusion on (unintelligible) and then I still need surgery on my back. And I coached for two years after that, but I couldn't do it anymore. It was too much for me. I would get bumped, I'd get—kid would hit me in practice or something would happen and my whole upper body would go numb. It was kind of scary.

Ramsey: Oh yeah.

Bartges: So I was way too young for that. Surgery was good but it's—I was more of a squeaky wheel (laughs) when it came to equities and had issues with gym space and things like that. We had a new superintendent, and they would—they tried to come in and change things that had been established in Macomb for a number of years, wanted to take the girls' facility and turn it into a coed facility that housed wrestling and all of the girls sports. Wrestling? Where—It wasn't a huge facility. I don't know if you've been at that gym or not. It's a beautiful basketball/volleyball facility, Field House.

Ramsey: Oh you mean the Field House there? Yeah.

Bartges: It's a great space for the girls, but if you put wrestling in there it changes everything. They were going to have to buy (unintelligible).

Ramsey: It's always wrestling, isn't it? That's what got me out of Pekin High School.

Bartges: Yeah. And I got the parents involved, and the administration was very upset with me. So even if I feel healthy enough to go back, I don't think that they would take me. The program was in bad shape. Julie Lowe was fortunate in the sense that she inherited the program right after Denise McCants retired or had a baby, and there was still buildup from those younger kids. And we had two pretty good years. I was assistant for her for two years. The first year we were, I don't know, twenty and something and then we were a little bit over five hundred the second year, I think. And then the bottom dropped out because it had (unintelligible) from the bottom up. So they've had to go back into the grade school level and build that program up (unintelligible). And as

you well know, there's a huge difference between refining talent and developing talent.

Ramsey: Oh, yeah.

Bartges: And I'm much better at (laughs) refining talent.

Ramsey: Yeah, well most coaches are.

Bartges: But they'll be pretty good now. I regret that I won't be able to see that because my goal was always to get back here as a coach.

Ramsey: In the high schools?

Bartges: Yeah. I played in the first one, I wanted to coach in one.

Ramsey: Oh, you played in the first high school tournament?

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: With Sterling?

Bartges: No. There was a girl on Sterling that looks a lot like me. She actually went to Iowa State and was a basketball player. I know her, Jolene Lessman. (laughs)

Ramsey: Jolene Lessman. I coached against her. She's up at (unintelligible) Valley.

Bartges: Yeah, yeah.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: This is me.

Ramsey: How about that. How'd you guys do?

Bartges: We were the team that lost to (unintelligible) on a controversial basket at the end. She played at Western, Debbie (unintelligible). Dawn (unintelligible) played at Illinois State. Kovachi played at Southern. (Unintelligible) played at Southern.

Ramsey: Boy, you had a good team.



Bartges: (unintelligible). Carol was a good coach. That's (unintelligible). This is our coach.

Ramsey: Oh, who was your coach? (unintelligible). Was she—

Bartges: She was a horrible coach. They actually brought the boys' coach in. When we made it to the state tournament, they brought the boys' coach in to run our practices. We didn't know him from Adam.

Ramsey: (laughs)

Bartges: It was crazy.

Ramsey: Plus, he didn't know your offense or what you were doing.

Bartges: No. No. It was—I don't know.

Ramsey: See, all of a sudden it became important to—

Bartges: Yeah, it did. And that lesson I learned at a very early age. They bought us shoes. Terrible. We had already played our (unintelligible). We played (unintelligible), beat them pretty soundly fifty-something to thirty-something. And so they bought us shoes to go to state, and then our principal insisted that we wear these shoes, brand spanking new shoes. (laughs) It was—

Ramsey: Stupid.

Bartges: Yeah, it was crazy. But all that, you know, it's a process.

Bartges: I'm not quite sure. I think sometimes I'd like to—with this, the impetus for this is to try and get some of the histories on record from people that were active in it because there's—women's history is usually unspoken history.

Ramsey: It is unspoken.

Bartges: Yeah. And I have—I don't know if you're familiar with the—Linda E. Bain?

Ramsey: Linda Bain? She was at Illinois State when I was at Illinois State. I think we played on a team or two.

Bartges: This is the only research on Illinois girls' high school basketball.

Ramsey: How about that? I didn't know Linda wrote her thesis on that.

Bartges: The only research in the entire state that I could find. Phebe Scott chaired it.

Ramsey: She worked in East Peoria High School for Marian Kneer for a while before she went out to California.

Bartges: Oh, is that where she is?

Ramsey: Yes.

Bartges: I'm going to interview Kneer next weekend, this coming weekend.

Ramsey: Oh, she's a bombastic, enthusiastic person. You'll love her.

Bartges: She seemed a little tentative at first, and I would be too, you know, here's a stranger calling you out of the blue.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: But—and I understand that. I'm not quite sure what—

Ramsey: She won't be tentative in her opinions. I got a big kick out of her one year. I was at the Peoria Sports Hall of Fame Banquet and we were at the same table. And they introduced these two guys that were principals at another table. And she's sitting there and she said, "Huh, principals—all they ever did was get in the way of things I wanted to do." (laughs)

Bartges: I don't know quite what to make of Ola Bundy either.

Ramsey: I think Ola went with the flow a little bit. She was—she was not somebody that projected a real great image out of the office, but she's a nice person and I think worked hard, and I think had the kids at heart. And she did play softball, I guess, once upon a time competitively, but she wasn't a real jock if you know what I mean.

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: (laughs)

Bartges: It's a different kind of passion for something.

Ramsey: Uh-huh.

Bartges: And that's something as a coach you try to instill in your kids.

Ramsey: I bet she wrote this just because she was around Marian Kneer and really I think probably felt (unintelligible) on an issue and probably felt that it was ridiculous.

Bartges: Her questions are in the very back. And the reason I went from 1968 to 1977 was because this ends in 1968. But her questions are very—smaller in scope, different kind of focus. And things have changed a lot in the last thirty years.

Ramsey: Pretty simple questions.

Bartges: Um-hm. And I don't know if that's a function of— I'm in the history department at Western, and so my background is obviously history. I'm not into the physical education side of it, all the different organizations, the (unintelligible), and the (unintelligible). I don't have exposure to those things. I understand that they exist for a reason, they (unintelligible) function, a huge function.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: But I'm not—I don't know as much about those things as I do other.

Ramsey: Now will you continue at Western after you finish your degree?

Bartges: I couldn't. They don't offer a Ph.D. I've thought about going on. This is a twenty year cross I'm getting off my back actually. I started at Penn State and my mother got sick, and I went home to take care of her. And when she died, I didn't go back to State College and I should have. I got a job in Charlotte, a coaching job. So I went down there.

Ramsey: Was Rene there when you were there?

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: Boy, she's been at it a few years too.

Bartges: Rene is one person—she's a constant in my life. She has always supported me. She has always helped me whenever I've asked her. And I still see her and John. I can't believe how big the kids are.

Ramsey: John is her husband?

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: Is he in sports?

Bartges: He played in an industrial league out of Philadelphia, but he has a construction company, I'm pretty sure. She's very controversial, and a lot of people that I know—

Ramsey: I can't imagine that. She always looks so under control and feminine and—

Bartges: She is like flypaper.

Ramsey: (unintelligible).

Bartges: Oh, yes. She is very controversial. The years that she wins—she won two of the WBCA [Women's Basketball Coaches Association] coach of the year awards, and the WBCA didn't announce until later on because it will attract protests.

Ramsey: Why?

Bartges: She, many years ago—and I'm not even sure how many years ago—made the mistake to a reporter or somebody of saying that if she found out anybody on her team was gay, that she would kick them off and that she never recruited gay kids. A lot of people accuse her of gay bashing. (unintelligible) recruits, "Oh, you don't want to go to that school because that coach is gay," that kind of stuff. So—

Ramsey: Not what she should say. (laughs)

Bartges: I don't know. I've known Rene for twenty years, and I know that that story is true.

Ramsey: Wow.

Bartges: I know that when I would walk into a locker room—Suzie McConnell was the point guard when I was (unintelligible).

Ramsey: I know Suzie. She played on the 1983—

Bartges: No, 1985—

Ramsey: —team that we took to Canada, U.S. Select Team. I coached it with Chris Weller.

Bartges: She was in high school.

Ramsey: She was on the 1985—I think it was the 1986 USA Team.

Bartges: Could have been.

Ramsey: And they went to Canada. Well, let me tell you, she was with the first team somewhere, and they had thirteen players and they were going to have to cut one, and they cut her. We were training up at—where were we, Northern Michigan—and we were about through, and here she comes in. And I said to Chris, "What do we have to take her for?" We got all the kids, it's working well, and now this kid off the first team's coming down here—we had the second team. Well, she—they gave her most valuable player award in each game in Canada. We played in five games, and she won three of the awards. (laughs)

Bartges: Suzie was a tremendous point guard. And you know, to go to practice every day and see her work was—her work ethic was such a treat. And she didn't take this crap from her teammates. Man, if she threw you the ball, she expected you to catch it.

Ramsey: Uh-huh.

Bartges: And she would be in your face. I mean, people talk about Kamie Ethridge being that way and the other one out of Texas.

Ramsey: Oh Jamie Carey?

Bartges: No, an older player. Or no, out of LA Tech. Anyway, they talk about Kamie (unintelligible). But I saw Suzie get on some people and she's like, "If you ever want another ball in your lifetime, you're going to catch this ball when I throw it to you because otherwise—" "Who do you think Rene listens to? Do you think she listens to you or do you think she listens to me?" (laughs) But she was good. And not a prima donna about it, she really wasn't. She just was very competitive. But when you walk in the locker room, and there were a list of don'ts on there, gay was one of them, and that was—

Ramsey: She'd have that on the wall?

Bartges: Oh, yeah.

Ramsey: Oh, boy. I bet she doesn't today because you'd get into big trouble.

Bartges: She did get in big trouble. I mean, the—her first—I felt sorry. That's stupid, it's wrong, I don't condone it. But my experience with her has always been at a different level. And when she won her first coach of the year award, and they protested against her at the convention and—but then not coaches but more fan (unintelligible) because the coaches would never do that. They're—that's just—

Ramsey: (unintelligible) like her or not.

Bartges: Yeah. And that's sort of an undercurrent in the WBCA anyway. That's never out in the open.

Ramsey: Yeah, I think that's true.

Bartges: But the fans, when they got a hold of that—some media person got a hold of that and (unintelligible). Then you had this whole conglomerate of loyal gay fans that were outraged by this and really put up a big stink. So she has—I think she has changed. If nothing else, she keeps her thoughts to herself.

Ramsey: You almost have to these days because those reporters will write things up in a manner that you didn't even mean what you—that wasn't what you meant when you said it.

Bartges: Not at all, something totally foreign.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: I don't know. She's been—she's been a good friend to me, and I'm thankful for that because there were times that I needed her, especially in North Carolina. I was part of a lawsuit against the State of North Carolina for Title IX violation.

Ramsey: Oh, yeah?

Bartges: Yeah. I was the first coach in the Southeast to file a formal complaint with the OCR [Office of Civil Rights] and against a university.

Ramsey: And did it go all the way through or did they give in a little or—

Bartges: Oh, they had to give in. They were the only school ever in the country that has been found out of compliance in all three prongs of Title IX.

Ramsey: (laughs)

Bartges: I mean, it was phenomenal. I was very cautious. I knew that it would cost me my career as a college coach, but it got to the point that you either have to say you've become part of the problem or you become part of the solution. Keep quiet and you go on, or you just take a major stand. And for me at that point, that's what that was. We had eleven sports for girls, eight of them were coached by men, two of them were coached by women. All eight male head coaches of women's sports were full time and their average salary was \$42,000. And two women head coaches were both part time and their average salary was \$10,500. We had no travel budget. We had to ride in vans for thirteen to sixteen hours. This isn't—and this was in basketball too. We didn't have comparable uniforms, we didn't have comparable (unintelligible), we didn't have comparable—all thirteen—eight out of thirteen sub-areas they were out of compliance in. That (unintelligible).

Ramsey: Oh, yeah.

Bartges: When I was done doing my homework with that, I thought, I can't walk away from this. This is a fight I fought my whole life.

Ramsey: Well, I think probably they changed then.

Bartges: They had to add two sports, they had to add eight coaches, they (laughs) had to add twenty-five scholarships. The basketball team now flies to their—any team that has to travel more than three hours flies.

Ramsey: That's great.

Bartges: All accommodations have to be at a certain level. They get so much per day. Per diems are now the same. Our per diems weren't even the same for boys' basketball and girls' basketball.

Ramsey: The first year we started around here with the boys' team—who did we have in charge then? It wasn't—it was some account they put us under.

Bartges: (laughs)

Ramsey: The men's and women's team got—I forget what it was, and the cheerleaders got a dollar more apiece than the—either the men's or women's team. We got

equal, but the cheerleaders got more money than the basketball teams. You think there wasn't an instant fire over that, and that changed.

Bartges: Judy Rose was our athletic director, and I can't say enough bad things about her. I mean, that's not something I would generally do in public, but the things that went on in that school, and because I filed a formal complaint with the OCR—do you know a guy named Lamar Daniel?

Ramsey: No.

Bartges: He was with the OCR in the Atlanta office. And what they ended up doing was when the report was finally made and it came up all three prongs and in eight out of thirteen sub-areas, Lamar brought them into his office and said, "You can fix this here and now, or we can go to court," and they fixed it, but it cost me everything I had because within a year I was gone. And there was nothing I could prove. This is how they rationalized it: I was head softball coach and assistant basketball coach. Because of the OCR complaint and the changes that they had to make in adding coaches, they now added a full-time basketball coach and a full-time softball coach. So I had to apply for both of those positions because they were new. And when I applied for the basketball position, which was really my strength—when I was interviewed the first question they asked me was, "Would you rather be a basketball coach or a softball coach?" I'm screwed. I can't answer that question and survive. So what they did was I was not hired for the basketball coach position, which left me at fifty percent as a softball coach making \$10,000. I couldn't live on that.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: So they waited then they advertised for a head softball coach. I didn't get the job. Is it retaliation?

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: Couldn't prove it.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: So that was—it was good for the university, it was good for the kids, it was the right things to do, but it was expensive. So—

Ramsey: Well, see you were a pioneer too.

Bartges: (laughs)



Ramsey: I was a pioneer here and didn't have to jump over or fight all that stuff.

Bartges: I would rather not have.

Ramsey: Ned Keel from ISU called me—and that was in the seventies—and they were going to go to the legislature here at Illinois and complain about opportunities for women in different levels, and they were going to have a high school speaker, and a junior college speaker, and a four-year college speaker, okay? She asked me to represent the junior colleges. I said, "I can't do that." And she said, "Well, you've been really active in the move." I said, "I know it, but I'm at Illinois Central College and it's going to look like I'm unhappy with Illinois Central College."

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: And we had a women's basketball team five years before they had a men's team. And at that time we had a softball team and they didn't even have a baseball team. I said, "Now if you were my president and read this in the paper, how would you feel?"

Bartges: And that's a good point. If you're in a situation where the people are trying to do the right thing and are progressive and they're proactive, it's hard to complain about that. You can still be active, but I agree with you. If I was your president and I saw that you were out doing that, I'd be upset (laughs) too.

Ramsey: Yeah, I could be active about the overall picture, but I didn't want my name attached to unhappiness with equality. Even if I said it with other people, it just—I couldn't take a chance on how the media would portray that.

Bartges: Um-hm. Who'd they get in your place?

Ramsey: I think probably Connie Peterson down in Danville. I can't remember now.

Bartges: That would make sense. I think the further south you would go, the less opportunity would be.

Ramsey: Yeah. Do you know Kathy Veroni very well?

Bartges: I know K.V.

Ramsey: Why did she come back after she retired?

Bartges: I think there's a lot of different things going on there. I think once she did her farewell tour—at the end of the farewell tour last year—

Ramsey: Yeah—

Bartges: I think it was harder than she thought, and she wasn't ready. I think sometimes she thinks that the (unintelligible) wants her out.

Ramsey: Why would she think that? She's won a lot there.

Bartges: Yeah, she has. She's been very successful, but I think that—I don't know. I (unintelligible) a little bit different and quite honestly, between you and me and the fencepost, I think Katie maybe had tried to arrange a deal of some sort, and that deal didn't go through for her assistants. And when that didn't go through, she decided to stay. That would be my guess.

Ramsey: Her assistant to get the head job?

Bartges: And that wasn't going to happen. We're not doing internal searches. She's welcome to apply for it, but there wasn't going to be any kind of search waiver on that job.

Ramsey: Well, that was like when I got out of basketball. I wrote a recommendation for Steve and they (unintelligible)

Bartges: See, and I don't think she felt that that was going to be the case. And I can't even think—Kendra (unintelligible)?

Ramsey: Yeah (unintelligible).

Bartges: I think that that was what she had intended, you know, to hand that down, an inheritance, so to speak, to (unintelligible) from her program. I don't think that was going to happen, so she stayed.

Ramsey: Boy, that's tough.

Bartges: Things are different over there now. Four years ago that would happen. Three years ago—

Ramsey: With Helen Smiley? Yeah.

Bartges: And a different president.

Ramsey: Oh. Is it a change for the better or the worse?

Bartges: Oh, it's better. Al's great, he really is. We have a new provost. We have—

Ramsey: Your new president is great.

Bartges: Yes. Yeah, he is a good guy. He is sincere. He's committed to growth but not urban sprawl. I don't know how else to describe it. It's controlled growth.

Ramsey: Intelligent growth.

Bartges: Yes.

Ramsey: See, I graduated from ISU, we had 4,500. Now I go down there and it looks like they just threw these buildings every which way.

Bartges: Yeah. It's an ugly place.

Ramsey: It is.

Bartges: And that was why when—(unintelligible) wouldn't remember this, but Dawn (unintelligible) was two years behind me in school and Cathy Boswell, who was a year behind me in school. Well, she was two years behind me in school. They were very close friends. And then after the first state tournament (unintelligible) had already committed to Western Illinois. (unintelligible) saw on the wall early that she wanted Boswell. And because she knew Bos and Dawn were close, she thought, Well, I'll get my foot in the door. She called me. "Would you like to come to Illinois State?" There was no way I was going to Illinois State.

Ramsey: Right.

Bartges: It was a horrible place, as far as I could tell. I didn't look at it intelligently in terms of the education. I didn't want to study PE. I didn't want to study any of the things they had (unintelligible), so there was no point for me to go there. But Bos graduated a year early so she would come a year behind me, and then Dawn followed. So her thought was right, but she didn't have the right players.

Ramsey: What's Cathy doing, Boswell?

Bartges: She's in Chicago. I haven't seen her.

Ramsey: She's not coaching or—

Bartges: I don't think so. I don't think so.

Ramsey: See, now there's somebody that would have good influence on people probably and—

Bartges: She came from a pretty affluent family. She was an only child until she was maybe twelve, thirteen, fourteen years old. She had a little brother that they adopted. But her folks, they had money. And I'm not sure—she played in Europe for years after she got out of USA Basketball. And she came back a couple years ago to play on the ABL [American Basketball League] when they were going to have the Chicago, was is it the Condors?

Ramsey: I don't remember.

Bartges: But when the ABL was going to expand to Chicago, she had come back from Europe for that. And then the ABL went belly-up that December, and they were supposed to start that following year, and that was the last that I heard of her, so—

Ramsey: She was kind of a smiley kid from what I saw.

Bartges: She was.

Ramsey: She was happy.

Bartges: She was happy; she loved to play.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: You know, she's just one of those kids that as long as she was playing, she was happy. I always had to guard her, and she drove me nuts. (laughs) Her skills were pretty refined.

Ramsey: Oh yeah, she was very good and she had a quick first step.

Bartges: She struggled at Illinois State because of injuries, but she could play.

Ramsey: Now she played on the Olympic team didn't she?

Bartges: No. She played actually with Suzie in 1986? No.

Ramsey: Now Suzie's got all kinds of kids hasn't she?

Bartges: Yes, just a litter of them. I think there's four of them.

Ramsey: And she still ended up playing basketball in the WNBA [Women's National Basketball Association], and now is she coaching?

Bartges: She's a coach. She's the head coach of the Minnesota Lynx, and she was coach of the year this year.

Ramsey: Good.

Bartges: So, yeah. I never thought Suzie would leave Pittsburgh, but I guess that—she was coaching in Pittsburgh and then playing in Cleveland in the summer. She had a high school coaching job, won two or three state championships at a Catholic school there in Pittsburgh, and then played for the Rockers, I think, for three years. And the year before the Rockers folded, she got out of it. And when the Lynx called, it must have been (unintelligible). Of course, they have Kate Smith, so that's pretty good rock to build your foundation on.

Ramsey: Yeah, I mean (unintelligible) long time, I think.

Bartges: You know I wonder though with this injury that she had this last year if Katie will stay with it because she's in dental school and she's supposed to be (unintelligible).

Ramsey: Her dad's a dentist, I guess.

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: (unintelligible) and of course she didn't play in the Olympics very long.

Bartges: And even before she got hurt, I'm not sure how much she was playing (unintelligible).

Ramsey: Yeah. (unintelligible). I like him.

Bartges: He's a good guy.

Ramsey: Yeah. And he cares about the kids, I think. He started when there wasn't any money in the game, so—

Bartges: Not very many men either.

Ramsey: Right. He wasn't a gold digger.

Bartges: No, he's a gentleman (unintelligible). I wish I could remember Mike's last name too. I used to call him all the time (unintelligible). I worked for a fellow named Ed Baldwin.

Ramsey: He was a head coach wasn't he?

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: He called me about one of my kids, but I can't even remember who it was. They weren't interested in going to North Carolina though (unintelligible). They wanted closer to home.

Bartges: He's a snake. He really sold me out in the Title IX thing, and he got a \$25,000 raise out of it because our head coaching position wasn't comparable to what the other coaches in our conference made for women's sports.

Ramsey: Right.

Bartges: So when they upgraded everything, he would be de facto beneficiary of that.

Ramsey: And he did nothing to get it.

Bartges: Nothing. He lied. He lied, and that hurt. And I worked for him for five years. We were very successful, very successful. We got third in the NIT [National Invitational Tournament], WNIT [Women's National Invitational Tournament] one year, and we had three consecutive twenty win seasons. Nothing made me happier after that when they hired (unintelligible) in the full-time position. From a year after that, he never won ten games (unintelligible).

Ramsey: Wow.

Bartges: Not once.

Ramsey: What's he doing now?

Bartges: He was an assistant at Temple for Dawn Staley for a couple years. I knew he couldn't stay up there. He can't stand the cold weather. He is an assistant at South Carolina for Susan Walvius.

Ramsey: I think she's a good person.

Bartges: She is a good person.

Ramsey: She was here at Bradley as an assistant for a while.

Bartges: Oh, was she?

Ramsey: (unintelligible).

Bartges: Oh, okay.

Ramsey: Yeah, I liked her.

Bartges: She was a ref [referee]. She used to ump [umpire], didn't she?

Ramsey: Yeah, softball?

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: Oh, God. She really had to crouch because she—

Bartges: She really did. Ed used to make fun of her how (unintelligible) she was. She went to West Virginia and then she was somewhere before that.

Ramsey: VCU [Virginia Commonwealth University] or Richmond.

Bartges: VCU is what I'm thinking or—no VCU, as an assistant coach. But I ran into her somewhere in the summer when I was out recruiting for softball. And here she is, she had on full umpire gear and stuff. And I was like, "Susan, you don't make enough money, you have to do this now?" (laughs) She was like, "Oh, this (unintelligible)."

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: (unintelligible).

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: I've been out of it so long (unintelligible).

Ramsey: She's been pretty successful down there in Southern Carolina.

Bartges: That's a tough conference.

Ramsey: And they've got a good softball coach down there.

Bartges: Oh yeah, Joyce Thompson. Joyce is an enigma.

Ramsey: What do you mean an enigma?

Bartges: To me she was. She was sort of enigmatic, reserved. Not into much small talk, not into much of the socializing, at least not with me. And I could see where she would think that—a lot of the coaches in the softball world—JoAnne Graf was an exception to it—viewed me as a basketball coach, and they were offended that Charlotte put me in as the head softball coach because I hadn't come through the system.

Ramsey: Oh—

Bartges: And that's true. They put me there because they wanted me to stay for basketball, but they didn't want to increase the basketball thing. So they bit their nose off to spite their face, and it was wrong what they did.

Ramsey: Yeah, right.

Bartges: But it wasn't fair to the kids, it wasn't—

Ramsey: But that wasn't your fault really, and the softball coaches evidently—you played JoAnne Graf—

Bartges: I golf with JoAnne. I know JoAnne.

Ramsey: She's not going to go too much longer, I don't think. I think she's getting tired of the rat race.

Bartges: Well, you know, when I got out of it, it had started to change, and the rules had just become so burdensome—the recruiting rules. And I can't even imagine the things they put on you with the electronic things that you have now with e-mail and all that stuff. We had just started to have to take the phone logs—like every time you called somebody to write down who you called, and what time it was, and what the phone number is. It was a pain.

Ramsey: Yeah, it was a pain. And it stops you from getting your job done.



Bartges: Well, yeah, and if the phone is busy you still have to make a log of that because when they come back through or the kids—it's just—it got to be so cumbersome. You really have to love it and have great assistants to stay in it, I think, the combination of those two things. But JoAnne was one of the good guys. Joyce also—Joyce had her own problems there at South Carolina. At one point they tried to drop the program.

Ramsey: Why?

Bartges: I don't know. It was in 1990 or 1991. So it wasn't that long ago. But they came to her after she'd gone to the tournament the year before and said, we're dropping softball for compliance things. We don't want to drop a male sport so we're going to drop softball and we're going to do something else, and that's the way it's going to be. So there was a big stink.

Ramsey: Well, she wouldn't have had any trouble getting another job though.

Bartges: No. No, she's a good coach. She had some great kids, (unintelligible).

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: Oh, man. Just—(unintelligible) come up just to do whatever she wanted with the ball (unintelligible).

Ramsey: Is she from Illinois? I think she is.

Bartges: Is she? I don't remember.

Ramsey: Maybe I have her mixed up with somebody else.

Bartges: And nice facilities too, I mean, just a tremendous setup. But it's hard in Columbia. It's kind of like Iowa City in some ways. You know, the school is spread out over the town, and it's not just a college town, although Iowa City is a college town. But it's spread out. It's not walkable. It's just not what most people think of as traditional college campus.

Ramsey: Right.

Bartges: They had nice facilities. And I'm trying to think of the woman who was at Carolina. Sue—

Ramsey: Softball?

Bartges: Yeah. Sue. She was a character. She's been there a long time. And Melody Cope at Greensboro.

Ramsey: You know Lynn (unintelligible). And she's got a lot of class.

Bartges: Very much. Cheryl Pesshal, the assistant coach.

Ramsey: (unintelligible). Lynn had one of my kids, and I just talked to her. Carol or somebody had seen the kid play (unintelligible) junior college (unintelligible) and she called me about it. That girl made five visits and UNC [University of North Carolina] was the fifth one. And she said to me, I don't think I want to go. I'm tired of going. I said, "Coach (unintelligible) has been talking to you, and you told her you were coming, just go." And I said, "I went to this school. I liked the school. You may like it and you may not like it." She came back and she said, "I'm sure glad I made that last visit (unintelligible)."

Bartges: (laughs) So you were at UNCG in 1971, did you say?

Ramsey: No, sixty—let's see, I was at Granite City 1959-1960. 1960, 1961. 1961-1962 I was—the fall of 1961, spring of 1962.

Bartges: Because Graf is a UNCG grad.

Ramsey: (unintelligible) everybody?

Bartges: Just about. (laughs)

Ramsey: Just about. And most of them have pretty much the same philosophy too.

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: And it's a disappearing philosophy. Well, it's more academic and more treat-all-the-kids-well-not-just-the-superstar and I just—a lot of people driven to win, and they forget about other things sometimes.

Bartges: The new interim chair of kinesiology at Western is a UNCG grad. She did her master's there.

Ramsey: Oh—

Bartges: Marianne (unintelligible) is her name. It's through a convoluted set of contacts, you know, the six degrees of separation. She did her undergraduate at Iowa State, which is where I went, and then her master's at Greensboro, and

I know a whole bunch of people from Greensboro that she knows also, so we have these common sides. But she worked in my basketball program. She coached basketball, high school basketball, in Texas for about six years when she worked at Texas (unintelligible). She was coaching high school basketball. I'm not sure why. And so I would have her coach my summer teams at Macomb, the younger kids, to teach fundamentals because she's a physical educator, she understands movement—all those things that you need to build the blocks on. And it's just amazing what a difference that makes in your kids. But she never emphasized, like you're saying, Win at all cost. It was, Are we executing properly? Are we doing these things correct? Is there things we worked on in practice (unintelligible) significant change. But a more (unintelligible) approach to things.

Ramsey: That's the John Wooden approach.

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: His players have said he never said anything about winning as long as—how you performed, how you worked on what you were doing, and how you executed the fundamentals.

Bartges: Winning takes care of itself, if you can get them to do it. (laughs)

Ramsey: Well, I think you've got a long trip ahead of you.

Bartges: I really appreciate your time and working me in.

Ramsey: Oh that's—I'm retired.(laughs)

Bartges: You're busier than I am so—

Ramsey: I am very busy. I couldn't believe that retirement was like this. And I love it. I thought, Oh boy, I'm going to be miserable for a couple of years because I really enjoyed coaching. But it's time. I'm sixty-eight years old, and it's time to do some of these other things or I'm not going to be able to do them, and it's worked out really well.

Bartges: That's good, I'm glad. It's so refreshing. And actually, it's encouraging to see people who are in so much better shape now when they retire, particularly women, and they have—they live longer, they're able to do more, and I think, Gosh someday I'm going to be there.

Ramsey: Yeah—

Bartges: So it is encouraging for me to see people who are retired, and everybody says, "Hey it's great, I love it, life is so much better."

Ramsey: It is great. (laughs) You don't have the stress you used to have. And we won a lot here, and people think, Well, that's easy. But it comes to the point where they think, Well, if you don't win the national this year, you've had a bad year. So it's not as easy as it looks.

Bartges: Well, and pressure isn't always external. Pressure is more usually internal—

Ramsey: Right—

Bartges: —what you yourself are driven to do.

Ramsey: Right.

Bartges: Now nobody expected more of me than what I expected of myself in terms of performance, and that's what makes competitive people. The people that aren't competitive, they don't have that thought. They're happy with whatever.

Ramsey: Whatever happens.

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: And you get a few players like that too, and you've got to try and change that outlook a little bit. That's an interesting struggle.

Bartges: I never had much success with that.

Ramsey: Some you can light their fire. Some are just lost in the woods.

Bartges: Yeah, well, I'm glad that retirement's good. You know Bea Yeager?

Ramsey: Yeah. What's she doing?

Bartges: Bea's having a grand time in retirement. (laughs)

Ramsey: Where is she?

Bartges: She splits her time half in Avon, which is a wee bit north of Macomb, and in Arizona.

Ramsey: Yeah, see, I live here half time and I'm—November 1st I'm out of here.

Bartges: Trying to think when she goes to Arizona and where she goes. Can't remember where she goes. She takes her horses down. She takes two or three horses down, and she pretty much rides all winter long.

Ramsey: Good for her. See, I play golf, she rides horses.

Bartges: I think she golfs some too. She had a knee replacement a few years back, a total knee. And at first I think she struggled with it a little bit and I'm not sure if she had some infection problems or if it was just getting used to it, but now she seems pretty good with it. She's had some heart things, so she had a pacemaker put in.

Ramsey: She should be about my age, I would think, or maybe a little older.

Bartges: I'm not—I don't think so.

Ramsey: No?

Bartges: I think she (unintelligible). Yeah, she must be because—she must be a little older than you. She must be seventy-one.

Ramsey: And she's still riding those horses?

Bartges: Yeah. Yeah. She said, "I keep having to find bigger horses." (laughs) She's good though, I—

Ramsey: Tell her I said hi.

Bartges: I will. I enjoy talking with her because we talk Iowa basketball. I mean, she went to Iowa Wesleyan.

Ramsey: Yeah. Did she play there? That's a good program.

Bartges: Yeah, one of the first ones.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: And so we'll get to talking about basketball and everything else so—

Ramsey: I remember when I used to go to those AAU tournaments. It was Iowa Wesleyan, Ouachita College from Arkansas, Texas, or Whalen—

Bartges: (unintelligible).

Ramsey: And they called it National Business College, but that was just the sponsor. I don't think all those people were going to National Business College.

Bartges: Was that out of Des Moines?

Ramsey: No, that was out of Nashville.

Bartges: Nashville, okay. There was more than one of those teams I think, Nashville. National. Yeah, it's— I don't think Bea is playing basketball anymore, but she can still ride.

Ramsey: We played AAU ball one year, and we went up to Iowa and played this team that Rita (unintelligible) was playing on.

Bartges: Really?

Ramsey: Do you know who—

Bartges: I know that name.

Ramsey: And she was a very good player, but she was the dirtiest player I ever played against. We were losing by about fifteen points at halftime, and we were going to the locker room—and we played a double post—and I said to the other girl that played the other post, I said, "Man, that (unintelligible) is elbowing me and doing this and doing that." And she said, "Yeah, she's doing the same thing to me." I said, "You know, let's just get her when we go out there." I said, "We're not going to win this game anyway." So we went out there, and we sandwiched her the first time she came on the floor and knocked her flat. And you know she stopped that stuff. (laughs)

Bartges: Why do I know that name?

Ramsey: She coached at Northern for a while.

Bartges: That must be it.

Ramsey: Yeah. I took my team up there when she was there and played. And later on she passed away. I think she had cancer. But she was a very good player.

Bartges: I think she was inducted into the Iowa Girls Hall of Fame.

Ramsey: Oh, I can believe that.

Bartges: We used to go down to the state tournament in Des Moines when I was in school (unintelligible). And my favorite part—now this is what a history geek I am—my favorite part was I couldn't leave at halftime because I had to see the induction into the Hall of Fame. I wanted to see all the older people that got inducted.

Ramsey: All the past players, yeah.

Bartges: It was fascinating to me. You know, here you had Jim Enright and of course E. Wayne Cooley (unintelligible). Who was it who was the announcer? In 1928 (laughs) the (unintelligible) town of (unintelligible) Iowa (unintelligible). It was these great stories that just brought that individual to life. And here you see this woman who was in high school in 1928, so however old she was then, I thought, Wow, how great is that?

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: It was just tremendous.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: So, I always enjoyed it. (laughs)

Ramsey: Yeah. Well, you'll always be in with sports because you're like me. And I'm going to go watch the Cardinals play.

Bartges: Oh yeah, are they on tonight?

Ramsey: What time is it? Yeah, they should be just starting now. I hope they do a little better than they have the last two nights. I don't think they're going to win.

Bartges: I don't know if you ever saw this one. That's from the first NCAA championship.

Ramsey: Wow.

Bartges: I have a bunch of junk, just stuff I've collected over the years.

Ramsey: (unintelligible) won it, huh?

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: I thought in 1988 they would win it again. Nora Lewis was playing.

Bartges: Oh, yeah.

Ramsey: Pam McGee. She was a twin wasn't she?

Bartges: She was a twin, yeah.

Ramsey: Cheryl Miller, Paula McGee.

Bartges: Look at Linda Sharp. (laughs)

Ramsey: Where is she now?

Bartges: She's—I think she's still in California.

Ramsey: Janet Harris.

Bartges: She could play.

Ramsey: Georgia. There—Teresa Edwards, 1983. Boy, she lasted—Susie Gardner. She's coaching at Arkansas now.

Bartges: Yeah, Teresa is like the energizer bunny.

Ramsey: Susie was on that team that Suzie McConnell was on, and look at Andy Landers.

Bartges: Oh, I know. (laughs)

Ramsey: He was a kid.

Bartges: He was a puppy, wasn't he?

Ramsey: Uh-huh.

Bartges: He's one of those guys, though, when you're recruiting against him it's—you just (unintelligible). You want to come play for your daddy, don't you? Your daddy will take care of you, and all this southern stuff. It's just like, Oh God.

Ramsey: (laughs)



Bartges: He's a funny guy. And he has some beautiful—he raises purebred angus.

Ramsey: Oh, does he?

Bartges: He has some beautiful cows on his ranch.

Ramsey: He's an old farm boy.

Bartges: Yeah, he is. (laughs) I never liked Georgia's small "g" though, their logo, that bothers me.

Ramsey: Susie played with—she was slow, but boy could she shoot. She played on that team that went to Canada. Oh, there's—

Bartges: Look at Pat.

Ramsey: Yeah.

Bartges: I worked her camps for six years.

Ramsey: She's a good person.

Bartges: Yeah.

Ramsey: She's done a lot for women's sports.

Bartges: And mostly she's honest.

Ramsey: Yeah, I think she is.

Bartges: (unintelligible).

Ramsey: And cares about a lot of people, I think.

Bartges: Janice Lawrence. Look at that jump shot.

Ramsey: Uh-huh.

Bartges: Yep. Pat has also been good to me. Anne Donovan. I remember seeing Wanda Ford spike a ball off her face at (unintelligible).

Ramsey: (laughs)

Bartges: Now you don't have any trouble imagining that.

Ramsey: Anne was not a very combative type person, but she could play.

Bartges: She's gotten a lot better as she's gotten older.

Ramsey: She was on our (unintelligible) World University Games Team when I coached that (unintelligible), and really a nice person. And I watch the WNBA, I was rooting for her there, first because she (unintelligible) because I like Anne. You know how to get out of this building?

Bartges: Yes. Yes, I do. I'll be all right.

Ramsey: Well, I've enjoyed it Ellyn.

Bartges: Thank you very much.

**(End of Interview)**