

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Charlotte Lewis

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

Interview # DGB-V-D-2004-008

Charlotte Lewis, a professional basketball player and former Olympian and Kodak All America player at Illinois State University, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of Ellyn Bartges' Masters Capstone project for Western Illinois University, entitled *What about the character of the girls?: Girls and Women's Basketball in Illinois 1968-1977*, and donated to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Nov 6, 2004

Location: Carver Center in Peoria, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Ellyn Bartges, Masters Capstone project at Western Illinois University¹

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Ellyn Bartges

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

Edited by: Janice Culp, ALPL Volunteer

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The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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¹ 2005

Abstract

Charlotte Lewis, *Women's Basketball in IL*, DGB-V-D-2004-008

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Charlotte Lewis was born on September 10, 1955 in Chicago, Illinois. She graduated from Woodruff High School in Peoria, Illinois in 1973. During high school, she played interscholastic volleyball and softball. Basketball was not offered until her senior year, and even then the girls who wanted to play had to try out for the boys' basketball team. She made the team, but was prohibited from playing by school district officials. Despite her lack of training and practice, Lewis walked onto the Illinois State University (ISU) basketball team and played all four years. She also participated in volleyball and track during her time at ISU. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in 2001, with a double major in recreation administration and program management.

Lewis' talent made her stand out on the ISU women's basketball team, earning her an invitation to try out for the World Championship team in 1974. She did not make the team that year. However, in 1975 she made the Pan-American team, which won a gold medal. A year later, Lewis played on the 1976 Olympic women's basketball team and brought home a silver medal. In 1977, she was drafted by the Women's Basketball League. She played professional basketball for fifteen years, which included her years in the United States, Italy and Brazil. During her career, Lewis felt she had an obligation to play well and pave the way for women who came after her. She wanted to see women's sports progress. After her basketball career ended, Lewis worked with children at the Carver Center in Peoria, Illinois. In 1983, Lewis was inducted into the Illinois State Athletics Hall of Fame and her #30 jersey was retired at Illinois State University on January 12, 2002. Lewis passed away suddenly at the age of fifty-two, after suffering a heart attack on September 17th, 2007.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Title IX; American Medical Association (AMA); Billie Moore; Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW); Pan-American Games; Cathy Rush; Sue Gunter; 1976 Olympic Games; Women's Basketball League (WBL); Steve Kirk; International Basketball Federation (FIBA); Women's Basketball League (WBL); women's basketball; Illinois State University; Woodruff High School

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

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