



Smith College Basketball Team, 1896 - Shoulders Upon Which We Stand

(A Smith College basketball team in 1896. / Photo: Bettmann Archive/Getty Images)

On June 23, 1972, the United States Congress passed a bill that has simply become known to most as 'Title IX'. In thirty-seven simple, but impactful words, a cultural shift began that continues still today. Title IX was a start point for change and equity, but there is more to do before claims of full parity can be or will be made.

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

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a concise 37 words. Patterned after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it affected, among other things, girls' and women's sports, college admissions, academic majors, vocational programs, teaching and coaching positions and even the handling of sexual assaults on campus. But nothing since its passage has been simple. From the beginning, legislators, policymakers and activists clashed as some tried to extend, and others to limit, the law's reach and power (NYTimes.com April 27, 2022). Many of you reading this simple review of Title IX's 50th Anniversary are keenly aware of this ground-breaking legislation; some might have been personally impacted by the changes brought about by Title IX; others of you might be unfamiliar with what

brought about the legislation and why it was essential; and still others note that there is still a steep hill to be climbed.

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Title IX, The Academy has opted to offer a brief overview and variety of recollections and observations about the historic legislation. You will find recommendations for a number of timely articles worth reading, quotes from persons of note, and a 'walk down memory lane' or comments about what still needs to be done, from members of the National Academy of Health and Physical Literacy. We hope you will gain understanding and perspective from this brief offering.

In Their Words

Nancy Cole, a retired high school physical education teacher, recounted to Newsday (<https://www.vectorsolutions.com/resources/blogs/title-ix-positive-changes/>) what playing sports was like for her growing up before Title IX:

"It wasn't even 'playing sports.' You maybe practiced twice a week for maybe half an hour, then you played three games during the season. At the end, you went to what was called a 'play day.' There were, let's say, six softball teams there. You'd play three innings against one team, then three innings against another team. Then when it was over you'd have milk and cookies with all the other teams."

Barbara Winslow, historian and teacher at Brooklyn College, eloquently described what life was like for young women before Title IX:

"Young women were not admitted into many colleges and universities, athletic scholarships for women were rare, and math and science was a realm reserved for boys. Girls square danced instead of playing sports, studied home economics instead of training for "male-oriented" (read: higher-paying) trades. Girls could become teachers and nurses, but not doctors or principals; women rarely were awarded tenure and even more rarely appointed college presidents. There was no such thing as sexual harassment because "boys will be boys," after all, and if a student got pregnant, her formal education ended. Graduate professional schools openly discriminated against women."

With the passage of Title IX in June of 1972, everything changed.

Nancy Hogshead-Makar, Olympic Gold and Silver Medalist in Swimming (1984)

"Title IX opened doors to a scholarship – and then to three gold medals and one silver at the 1984 Olympics. It was groundbreaking. There's no way I would have gotten a college scholarship or gone to the 1984 Olympics if it hadn't been for that statute. It didn't matter what world records or championships I had, how hard I worked, or how talented I was. What mattered was they just weren't going to give any scholarship to a woman without that statute."

Victoria Jackson, a sports historian and professor at Arizona State's School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies

"It's been an unbelievably important law for young girls and women to gain confidence in their bodies. To have an equal opportunity to participate in school sports and that being defined as a fundamental civil right in this country has been hugely important in so many different ways." Jackson also stated, *"I remind my students that the reason college campuses look the way they look today is because of*

Title IX. It's the reason most campuses have majority female student bodies and have more female faculty."

Billie Jean King, Founder of Women's Sports Foundation

"Remember, you never understand inclusion until you have been excluded." (Speaking at the 2022 Springfield College Commencement)

Billie Jean King first encountered gender inequality at the age of 12, while participating in a tennis tournament at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. It was 1955, and Billie Jean was barred from a group photo of junior tennis players because she had decided to wear tennis shorts that day, rather than the tennis skirt traditionally worn by female athletes. She soon learned that the unequal treatment that female athletes experienced wasn't only relegated to dress code.

Jean Lenti Ponsetto, former DePaul University athletic director

"I'm excited for the next chapter of Title IX, what's going to happen in the next 50 years. Because we've grown from infancy to our adolescent years, and now I think we're about to emerge into our adult years of Title IX and really see a lot more progress hopefully happen at a pretty rapid pace. Because I think the foundation has been laid.

It's so encouraging to me as I talk to young fathers of daughters to see the incredible amount of support and energy and enthusiasm they have for their daughters playing sports, for them to be afforded the same opportunity to grow their self-confidence and self-awareness and develop their leadership skills."

NCAA Demographics Database from 2020-21

"According to the [NCAA demographics database from 2020-21](#), women made up just 25% of head coaches at all levels, 14% of Division I athletic directors and 24% of ADs at all levels."

Research Funded by National Institute of Justice

Title IX also ensures the right to an equal education at the college level. In 2020, Senior Research Scientist Linda Williams, Ph.D., completed a report funded by the National Institute of Justice on how colleges respond to sexual assault on their campuses. Her research is critical to understanding how different rules and procedures affect college students and their ability to get an education free of sexual harassment and gender-based violence. With new guidelines for colleges on how to respond to sexual assault on campus expected from the federal government any day now, this work is more relevant than ever.

"It's a hopeful sign of progress that Title IX protections are being extended to new groups of people who had previously been left behind by it." Linda Williams, Ph.D.

A Collection of 'Good Reads' About Title IX at 50

Title IX 50th anniversary: What is Title IX, how it became law and how it changed athletics forever

<https://www.cbssports.com/general/news/title-ix-50th-anniversary-what-is-title-ix-how-it-became-law-and-how-it-changed-athletics-forever/>

Title IX timeline: 50 years of halting progress across U.S.

<https://apnews.com/article/title-ix-timeline-5fc023ca41d7d8c2489de24a23413938>

50 Years of Title IX

https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/FINAL6_WSF-Title-IX-Infographic-2022.pdf

USA TODAY answers your questions about Title IX and its role in college sports

https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2022/05/26/title-ix-college-sports-questions-answered/9837129002/?gps-source=BRNMSVCPSPXXTITLEIX&itm_source=usat&itm_medium=onsite-spike&itm_campaign=titleix-storytellingstudio-n&itm_content=static

Powerful Title IX report reveals reporting loopholes and roster manipulation in women's college sports

<https://onherturf.nbcsports.com/2022/05/27/powerful-title-ix-report-reveals-reporting-loopholes-and-roster-manipulation-in-womens-college-sports/> By Lisa Antonucci, May 27, 2022.

50 Years of Title IX: How One Law Changed Women's Sports Forever

<https://www.si.com/author/maggie-mertens>

Title IX: Falling short at 50 exposes how colleges still fail women

<https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/investigations/2022/05/26/title-ix-falling-short-50-exposes-how-colleges-still-fail-women/9722521002/>

50 Years of Title IX: We're Not Done Yet

https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/articles_and_report/50-years-of-title-ix-were-not-done-yet/#:~:text=June%2023%2C%202022%20marks%20the,discrimination%20in%20the%20nation%27s%20schools

Title IX – 37 Words That Changed Everything

<https://www.womensrunning.com/culture/what-to-read-watch-and-listen-to-about-title-ix/>

Title IX – The Nine

<https://www.aclu.org/other/title-ix-nine>

How Title IX has shaped women's athletics 50 years after its passage

<https://www.post-gazette.com/sports/NCAA/2022/06/05/title-ix-anniversary-college-sports-ncaa-women-pitt-penn-state-west-virginia/stories/202206050036>

Title IX became law 50 years ago. Here's why it still matters.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2022/06/19/title-ix-passed-50-years-ago-heres-why-it-still-matters/>

Women's History Month 2022: Celebrating 50 Years of Title IX

<https://www.insightintodiversity.com/womens-history-month-2022-celebrating-50-years-of-title-ix/>

EXPLAINER: What Is Title IX and What Impact Has It Had?

<https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2022-06-20/explainer-what-is-title-ix-and-what-impact-has-it-had>

Women in sports reflect on Title IX successes — and the continued challenges: 'They need to know how it was fought for'

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/ct-illinois-title-ix-changes-sports-20220620-diketpaiuvbtfbx7mkspvojkwm-story.html>

Title IX at 50: How it Changed Congress, Campuses and Sports

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/27/arts/design/new-york-historical-society-title-ix-50.html>

Title IX at 50: Star Athletes On the Law's Impact and Work Still to Be Done

<https://www.newsweek.com/title-ix-50-star-athletes-laws-impact-work-still-done-1717233>

Title IX Didn't Guarantee Black Women An Equal Playing Field

<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/title-ix-didnt-guarantee-black-women-an-equal-playing-field/>

What 50 Years Of Title IX Has — And Hasn't — Accomplished

<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/paine-title-ix/>

In Celebrating The 50th Anniversary Of Title IX, Start With The 'Mighty Macs'

Reflections, Recollections, and Recommendations from Members of The Academy

Several Members of the National Academy of Health and Physical Literacy were asked to consider the 50th Anniversary of the passage of Title IX (June 23, 2022) and respond to one of the two questions noted below. **Enjoy reading their responses!**

How did the passage of Title IX impact you personally or professionally (feel free to share recollections of life before or after Title IX)?

What changes or topics related to Title IX do you believe need to be considered moving forward in the next 5-10 years?

Charity Bryan

Founder, National Academy of Health and Physical Literacy (NAHPL)
President, NAHPL Board of Directors

In many ways, I was fortunate to benefit from Title IX as the legislation became effective the year I was born. However, inequities still existed during my time as an athlete, all the way through high school. Sadly, many inequities still exist as evidenced by the 2021 Women's NCAA Final Four basketball tournament (resulting in an apology from the NCAA). While much progress has been made in the last 50 years, moving forward, it is critical that we continue to advocate for equity as it relates to opportunity, equipment, facility access, travel, meals, and myriad other disparities. A recent USA Today article ("College Sports Perpetuate Illusion of Gender Equity") outlines the various ways in which colleges and universities "circumvent the intent" of Title IX (Jacoby, et al., 2022). Moving forward, the spirit and intent of Title IX must be honored and enforced to ensure opportunities for all

Gene White

President-Elect, National Academy for Health and Physical Literacy (NAHPL)
Member of Board of Directors

I was born in 1953. As I grew up, there was always a sport for me to play. You could play on a community team or a travel team if you were good enough. These opportunities were provided from 6 years to fifteen by the Lansdowne Boys Club. No girls club!

St. Philomena's grade school offered football, basketball, and baseball. But, only for the boys! The years for my participation were 1964-67. They also offered intramural basketball. The only sport for the girls was track. My wife's parish offered the girls cheerleading, basketball, and track.

Our high schools were not much more equitable. Both high schools were funded by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The two schools were ten feet apart, but not coed. My wife went to Archbishop Prendergast. I went to Monsignor Bonner. Bonner had football, soccer, swimming, basketball, bowling, rowing, track and field, and baseball. Each team had a freshman, junior varsity, and varsity team. There were also intramurals in soccer, basketball, and "mush ball." My wife's school offered field hockey, basketball, bowling, and softball. There were no intramurals.

The town I grew up in had a private swim club. It offered competitive swimming for members from 6 years old to 18 years old. This was a great outlet for my sister who is a year older than me. She

participated in swimming during the mid-sixties. In college, 1971-75, things were more equitable in number of teams. But the men got free cleats!

Regarding Title IX, I really was ignorant of the disparity in sports opportunities. As I listed the opportunities for the boys in the community, their parish schools, and high school, I realize how unfair things were. I am glad today for the opportunities my daughter and granddaughters have had. The communities and public schools offered equal opportunities for the boys and girls.

Kelley Thomas-O'Dowd

NAHPL Charter Member

University of Oklahoma Softball Player, 1977-81

Having been one of the first recipients of Title IX scholarship funding, I understand the blessings of a full athletic scholarship. My mother was a high school basketball star, with no opportunities for playing beyond high school. My older sister was voted 'best female basketball player' in high school and she earned the opportunity to play basketball for the University of Oklahoma (OU), but, at that time, there were no athletic scholarships available for women. Although I earned a four-year athletic scholarship, the scholarship came with duties that seem outrageous in today's athletic environment. For instance, after some concerts and athletic events held at the huge basketball arena, my teammates and I were required to clean Lloyd Noble Center to earn additional money for team expenses. Also, we traveled across the country in rickety station wagons and vans, and we played our OU home games on the city's public softball fields. I love witnessing the advancements and improvements for women athletes, including opportunities available for young girls, leagues for some professional women's sports, improvements in facilities, and corporate sponsorships. This year, Love's Travel Stops and other donors committed \$42 million to build a new softball complex for my alma mater, the University of Oklahoma. Much has been accomplished but there is still more to do, to achieve full equity.

Maria Melchionda

CEO, National Academy of Health and Physical Literacy (NAHPL)

Member of NAHPL Board of Directors

Billie Jean King...I watched her play with millions of other viewers, against Bobby Riggs in a tennis match dubbed the 'Battle of the Sexes'. Billy Jean King won, and Riggs could not believe it. At that time in 1973, this was a huge deal. After her retirement, Billy Jean King became one of the most vocal advocates for Title IX and I as a 13-year-old, I was on the equality train with her! I have read and learned that in July of 1975, many attempts were made by some Congressmen to nullify the athletics regulations in Title IX. All attempts were stopped thank goodness. However, at that point, elementary schools, high schools and universities/colleges were given exactly three years to comply with Title IX federal regulations in the area of athletics.

Honestly, while all this was going on, I was a freshman at Randolph High School, Randolph, MA and a three-sport athlete participating in basketball, softball and cross country and having a grand time playing sports. I did know that this was brewing! I paid attention, but I had no idea that at the time, I saw history in the making and that *I was part of history in the making*. Our girls' sports teams had terrible uniforms for every sport. The coaches would wash them and prepare them for the next season of athletes while the boys' teams received new uniforms each year. We watched as the boys' were driven in style with new vans and we had the old yellow school bus. The boys were even given stipends for meals. I knew that there was inequity, but my passion for the sports I played took over my whole being. It wasn't until I was out of high school that I truly saw how poorly women's sports teams were treated in our society. At that point, I was a future physical educator, and I knew that I had the responsibility of breaking down stereotypes for my future students. Comments such as "I don't want to partner with her, she's a girl" or "He throws like a girl, no way I am going to play with him", had to be dealt with in a culture at the time, which was resistant to change.

Donna J. Hester

Founder, National Academy of Health and Physical Literacy (NAHPL)

Founder's Representative to NAHPL Board of Directors

My junior high/high school years were 1965 – 1971. Our rural Ohio school offered junior high basketball and track for boys but nothing for girls. In high school opportunities were similar for girls/boys: volleyball/wrestling, basketball, softball/baseball. Were they equal opportunities? Maybe so, but we girls didn't know what we didn't know! We were happy to play ball and didn't consider the inequity of uniforms, practice spaces, coach's stipends, etc.

My mother talked about playing basketball in high school (late 1930s). The girls' and boys' teams traveled on the same bus to play on the same evening. I have always thought this was a very cool idea and how progressive things were in Ohio. Well, was I wrong! Read on...

Ohio's high school girls have been playing organized basketball since at least the early 1920s. It was a major question of that day as to whether any kind of interscholastic athletic activity was good for our young ladies. Some saw it as simply unlady-like; others had a sincere fear for the safety of the girls. In 1937 the OHSAA sent out a questionnaire regarding interscholastic and intramural basketball for girls. 55% of schools said they did provide this activity for their girl students. However, when asked "Do you favor dropping girls' basketball as an interscholastic sport?" by a margin of 2-1, the voting schools opted to discontinue interscholastic basketball for girls as of September 1, 1940. This led to the discontinuation of all interscholastic athletics for girls in Ohio. It would be another 25 years before interscholastic athletics for girls would begin their return, and 10 years beyond that before the girls would start getting their own state tournaments.

Retrieved June 8, 2022 <https://www.ohsaa.org/sports/history/tim-hudak-features/gbk>.

Ohio was not unique during this 25-year gap! We owe a debt of gratitude to those who fought for Title IX!

Hollie Newnam

Founder of the National Academy of Health and Physical Literacy (NAHPL)

Executive Director NAHPL Southern Tier Region/NAHPL Board of Directors

Title IX passed when I started junior high school and at that time there were no organized sports for girls in my school other than cheerleading. While I enjoyed being a cheerleader, I also wanted to participate in interscholastic sports like my male counterparts, yet I was not offered that opportunity. We were taught some sport skills in physical education but the opportunities to utilize the skills in interscholastic athletics were not available. A few years after the passage of Title IX, my junior high school offered interscholastic basketball and softball for girls, and I was among the first athletes to join these teams. As I entered high school it was exciting to have equal opportunities to participate in a wide variety of sports that previously were only offered for male athletes.

Personally, the passage of Title IX enabled me to be part of athletic teams in the late 1970's, for which I am very thankful. Through my participation in athletics I gained confidence, enhanced skills, and leadership strategies which helped to mold me into the person I am today.

Donna Dunaway

Founder, National Academy of Health and Physical Literacy (NAHPL)

Treasurer/NAHPL Board of Directors

As a child growing up in rural Alabama there were NO opportunities for girls to participate in sports—not in school, not community leagues, not church leagues, and travel teams were nowhere to be

seen...Nothing. I did not understand why my brother, who had no interest in sports, had the opportunity and was expected to play Little League Baseball and nothing was available for me. Even though I had the desire, and I like to think the skills, I had no opportunity. This situation continued through most of my k-12 education. Even in high school, opportunities were non-existent. I could be a 'cheerleader' but not a 'player'. My cheerleading career was limited to elementary and middle school—the opportunity was there, but not the desire and certainly not the skill – I can't jump very high. My need to be part of a 'team' led me to join the band in high school. I thoroughly enjoyed that experience but would have much rather been participating on a volleyball or softball team. So, as opportunities began to unfold for girls to participate in sport, I was thrilled. Title IX moved girls from the shadows to the forefront of the sporting arena. Girls/women were finally provided the environment to develop qualities attributed to participation in sports: physiological, sociological, psychological. The shoulders of the Pathfinders who made Title IX possible were broad and strong. We should never forget what they did for all of us.

Linda Woods Huber

Parliamentarian, NAHPL Board of Directors

As a girl growing up in a small Pennsylvania Dutch town in Lancaster County PA, my family would attend many "little league" baseball games for my brother while I sat on the sidelines "cheering" with my family. No opportunities for young girls until the swimming pool opened in our town and girls could join the boys on the swim team. Of course I jumped at the chance to be a part of this team. All through my high school years, girls sports were limited to field hockey and tennis while the boys had opportunities in football, basketball, wrestling, track and field, baseball and tennis. Wanting to be in "everything" with my friends, I played both field hockey and tennis. Cheerleading was the only other activity for us if we wanted to "be in the sports arena" and be involved in the high school experience so I cheered too. I loved being on the teams and staying active throughout high school. I decided I wanted to be a Health and Physical Education teacher and coach so off I went to Lock Haven University in PA. It was while at LHU we started hearing rumblings of Title IX which was going to open up the doors to more opportunities for girls to participate in various sports. This was so exciting to us, but we found out as we began our first teaching positions that change does not come quickly.

Schools were navigating their way through the changes that desperately were needed to open these doors fairly for girls. My first teaching position was in northern New Jersey and the list of boys sports far outnumbered the list for girls. We had field hockey and basketball. The boys had football, basketball, baseball, track and field and wrestling. I heard disgruntled parents saying this Title IX is going to take away some of our son's opportunities. All discussions at our meetings were about, "what are they going to eliminate from the boys sports to make room and have finances for more girls sports." Changes began to occur, but it was a slow go. I volunteered to run girls gymnastics workouts on Saturdays hoping to bring this sport to that high school. I was only there for 2 years when I got married and moved to State College, PA. It was at my interview for an HPE position in Bellefonte, PA that I mentioned wanting to start a girls gymnastics competitive team. At that point the school only offered basketball for girls and so this was viewed as a welcomed addition. I also tried to start field hockey which was a popular sport for girls in the area but could not convince others we needed more.

As I said – Title IX was passed but I did not see major changes for quite a few years. My first gymnastics team had uniforms, not of the highest quality to say the least. We did get leotards and I sewed a small flower on the front for some attention to the plain red uniform. I also drove the girls in my car along with a few parents to all our competitive events. No money for travel for the girls. We willingly did what we had to do to provide the opportunities for our young athletes. We did quite well our first few years as we even had a few of our gymnasts make it to States. Yes - we paid our own way for travel, lodging and meals to the State event as well.

Year by year more sports were added to the school's list of sports for girls and, surprise for those naysayers, boys did not lose any sports. The opportunities existing today for girls to participate in a variety of sports is fantastic. It really was worth those lean painful years of working it all out to see how far we have come. I am dating myself I know, but these many hard-fought changes were during my first few years of teaching. It makes me smile and gives me much enjoyment to see all ages of boys and girls playing a variety of activities/sports – loving that joy of movement and being part of a team.

Sandra Sims

Southern Tier Representative to NAHPL Board of Directors

In 1972, I was eleven years old. I had no idea that the passage of Title IX would impact my life in such a powerful way. I was provided opportunities that opened so many doors for my future. In 1974, I entered 7th grade. I was amazed at the opportunities to play sports in school. My school offered competition in volleyball, basketball, tennis, gymnastics, badminton and bowling. I remember seeing a sign on the gym door about tryouts for volleyball. I vividly remember walking into the gym to try to play a sport I had never heard of before. In the blink of an eye, my life was changed.

The opportunity to compete in high school sports opened my eyes to what I wanted to do the rest of my life. I found joy in movement that I had never felt before. By my freshman year, I knew I wanted to be a high school physical education teacher and coach. I wanted others to experience this joy too. I played volleyball, basketball and tennis in school and softball in the summers. I was blessed to be recruited to play volleyball in college. Playing sports provided me with everything-fun, friends and a future. After college, I found my dream job-a high school physical education teacher and coach. Today, I am blessed to train future educators to teach physical education and help others find this joy in movement. What a great life!

As I look back, my journey would not have been possible without Title IX. I owe so much to all of the women and men who fought for the passage of Title IX.

Ginger Aaron-Brush

Social Media Manager, NAHPL Board of Directors

As a high school athlete in the early to mid 90's I witnessed the struggles in the implementation of Title IX. For example, at my small, rural school the boys' basketball team practiced daily in the competition gym while the girls' team practiced in the basement gym. Our uniforms were handed down for many, many years while the boys' team got new uniforms regularly. It wasn't uncommon for me to meet with our school Principal to voice my displeasure in these situations, however at that time, I wasn't fully versed in the rights and protections that Title IX provided.

As a mother to a young athlete, I am a witness to the increased opportunities for girls and women to participate in sports. When I mention my own athletic involvement, my daughter doesn't fully comprehend the inequality that I experienced or the extreme discrimination that girls and women faced prior to the passage of Title IX. It's hard for her to imagine this discrimination when she is living in an era when these challenges are not as common.

To me Title IX means opportunity. Without Title IX, opportunities for women and girls, in all educational sectors, would be limited. I am thankful for the pioneers that made the passage of Title IX possible.