

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

Educational and scientific advances, changes in role behavior patterns, economic independence and legislative actions have combined to effect cultural changes which have increased the mobility and broadened the living space for women of the 1970s. The public attitude toward women workers in society changed as their competence was favorably reflected as a result of wartime employment in the 1940s. This change in employment status was also reflected in a change in social status. Women assumed a dual role of homemaker and worker. Women performed jobs traditionally held by men. Society had also related male-female images to certain sport activities. However, the changing role of women at work in society brought about an accompanying change in attitude toward women's participation in sports.

This change in attitude reflected by society in general was not broadly reflected in the educational institutions of America. The policies which denied college women adequate opportunity for participating in competitive sports programs did not reflect the changing status of

women. It was evident that women athletes wanted to compete. As the trend toward increased athletic activity for women became obvious, various organizations indicated an interest in providing leadership and authority for women's programs. The realization of this phenomenon led women leaders in physical education to broaden the scope of their program in order to promote, encourage, and retain control of a "sound" program of competition for the highly-skilled female, in addition to teaching sports skills to the masses.

National, regional and local institutes, workshops, and seminars focused on developing a competitive philosophy and training competent women leaders to develop the program.

Florida State University, like most colleges, supported the operational policies on "standards" formulated by the NSWA (later known as the NSGWS and DGWS) and the NAPECW, to guide women's sports programs. Florida State University maintained its athletic program in line with these standards. Playdays, sportsdays and telegraphic meets supplemented the class games. All-star teams were selected from the class units to compete for the college letter in the Odd-Even playoffs. The Odd-Even competitive units were determined as students matriculated during odd- or even-numbered calendar years. Intramural programs evolved as the recreational aspect of sports and games were emphasized. Highly-skilled

athletes from the intramural program formed extramural teams to compete with similar groups from other schools. Gradually, invitational events gave aspiring athletes a chance to experience the elements of organized intercollegiate varsity-type competition. As opportunities for participation were offered throughout the various stages of sanctioned athletic competition for college women, Florida State University made provisions for women students to compete. This study documented that women athletes from Florida State University have, for the most part, competed successfully within the nationally-organized structure for college women's sports.

The expression by students of their needs and desires to compete in organized sports was a determining factor in initiating the present athletic program. Faculty members responded in offering guidance and creating opportunities for meeting student needs. As national governing bodies were organized and championships established, Florida State University made ready philosophically and organizationally to join the activities. However, unequal opportunity to compete with the full compliment of university support in such areas as finances, facilities, equipment and staff, has had a discriminating impact on the women's program. Perhaps the provisions of Title IX will eliminate the differential treatment of men and women in intercollegiate sports. As the men's intercollegiate athletic



program reaffirmed its place in the university community, as reflected by the 1972 self-study report, so shall the women's program be afforded a co-lateral position.

With the conclusion of the 1971-72 academic session, this account of women's participation in athletics at Florida State University comes to an end. As women athletes at Florida State University seek an equal opportunity to express their athletic abilities and to experience the discipline of training, the testing of skills, and the emotions of competition, it is hoped that the events that transpire will be noted and preserved.

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## VITA

Mildred M. (Millie) Usher, III, was born in Orleans Parish, New Orleans, Louisiana on October 25, 1940. She attended Clermont Harbor Grammar School and graduated from Bay High in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi in 1958. After attending Pearl River Junior College for one and one-half years, she was seasonally employed by the U.S. Government in electronic data processing in New Orleans. She continued her education at the University of Southern Mississippi, earning the B.S. degree in 1963. From 1963 through the 1966 academic year, she was employed by the Picayune Municipal Independent School District, teaching high school health, physical education, Mississippi history and coaching track and field and basketball. Her graduate work began by taking extension courses after which she moved nearer the University of Southern Mississippi campus and completed the master's degree in 1967 while employed as an instructor in health and physical education at William Carey College in 1966-67. In the fall of 1967, she accepted a position as assistant professor at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. In addition to teaching responsibilities, she directed the Women's Recreation Association and started the competitive women's athletic program in tennis and volleyball. After

seven years on the faculty she resigned a tenured position to begin work on the doctoral degree at Florida State University. She coached the women's basketball team at FSU for two years and also coached the softball team her first year while enrolled as a full-time student. Upon completion of her course work, she joined the faculty at Bainbridge Junior College, Bainbridge, Georgia, while completing the dissertation requirements. The doctor of philosophy degree was awarded in June 1980.