I was born in 1944, the generation before baby boomers. We are known as the silent generation although I would never describe myself that way. Like many of that generation, either our parents or grandparents came to America for a better life. Such was my case. My grandfather, Walter W. Kosek and his brother John came to America by ship to escape a life working in a Polish coal mine.

They landed in New York, and went through immigration at Ellis Island, but made their way to Chicago to set roots where there was a large Polish contingent. Grandpa became a farmer and never grasped the English language. He married a gal he met on the ship and they had one son. She died, and Grandpa married German born Louise Gluc and had my dad (also named Walter) and two more brothers.

Grandma Louise passed away when my dad was only nine years old. It had a profound effect on him as he became the mainstay of the home, cooking and cleaning for my grandfather and my uncles.

Although my dad loved the farm he was also an excellent student and was the only one in his family that went to college. In fact he earned a Masters Degree from DePaul University in Chicago.

World War II was in full swing and all of my uncles served in the armed forces. As well as being a good student my dad was a good athlete. It was a hip dislocation playing high school football that precluded him from serving in WW II. His deferment allowed him to become an elementary school principle and it’s a good thing it did because that’s where he met my mom, Dorothy Emmeline Brown.

Mom and dad met in her first year teaching kindergarten at the same school. She hailed from an aristocratic family. My grandfather, Arthur Hallock Brown was a lawyer. He met my grandmother when she arrived from England and together they had my mom and two other daughters.

Grandma Florence Maud Warren, had a most unusual life. She was actually an orphan but showed a propensity for Morris Dancing, a form of English folk dance. Because of her prominence as a young dancer she was taken under the wing of Lord and Lady Pethic Lawrence who financed her way to America. Her dance troupe was to arrive in New York and travel the East coast performing Morris dancing for two weeks. Theirs is a love story that movies are made of. During those two weeks grandpa Brown made it his business to watch her perform on at least two occasions. Smitten as he was, he asked her to marry him as she was boarding the ship to go back to England. She must have been beguiled as well because she got off of the ship and married him.

They settled in a wealthy suburb on the Northside of Chicago. Grandpa continued to practice law and grandma went on to teach ballet. In fact, under grandmas tutelage, my mothers sister, aunt Vida went on to dance for the Moulin Rouge Ballet Company in France and George Balanchine’s New York City ballet. Aunt Vida was amazing to us growing up, she recently passed away at the age of 98.

There was also aunt Cicely. She was well educated and married the doctor (Uncle Everett Joslyn) that delivered me and my brother, Gary. They lived in the wealthy city of River Forest on the Northside of Chicago. My family lived in a small suburb on the Southside of Chicago. Our suburb was called, Harvey. My father never lost his farming roots. He always seemed to have his hands in the dirt planting his gardens at home and the farm where we spent many a Saturday learning gardening and visiting with Grandpa Walter.

We had the quintessential mid-west childhood with grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles and cousins all celebrating holidays together. It was like growing up in a Norman Rockwell painting. Some of my fondest childhood memories are of my siblings and I spending time with grandpa in River Forest while the Joslyns were away on vacation one month in the summer while we kids enjoyed swimming, playing tennis and riding bikes. My dad picked up a summer job, and the only other one that was missing was grandma Florrie who we lost to breast cancer when I was only one year old, but her dance legacy and love story still lives on.

By the time I was nine years old, dads high school football hip dislocation injury became more painful than he could bear anymore. He finally agreed to surgery. The only option available at that time was a hip fusion. Uncle Everett’s best friend, Ken Hubbord, an orthopedist, performed the operation. I was only a kid but I remember my dad in a total body cast from his armpits down to his trunk and left leg to his foot. His hip was flexed at 30 degrees and he stayed like that for nine months.

After his recovery, he still played basketball with his students and hiked through the wilderness of northern Minnesota with us children, but he considered himself handicapped. When he was in the full body cast he felt too embarrassed to attend church with us. He was Catholic, but we attended an Episcopal church as a family. He was disappointed when the priest never came to visit him. He decided that the Episcopal church only wanted money much like his disappointment in the Catholic Church when the priest refused to make the bells toll when his mother died, money was the issue.

My childhood memories of dad are filled with love and respect. He was the principal of a small 4 room school house where he also taught 7th and 8th grade. He was also the custodian on some Saturdays. Principles were not paid during the summer months, so he worked other part time jobs. He worked at a publishing company for a few summers. He also picked up some milkman routes when the regular milkmen took their vacations. He was a proud man but never too proud to do an honest days work to support his family.

Mom loved teaching kindergarten but felt it was important to be home raising her children until they were in elementary school.

I was the eldest of 4 children, my sister Vicky came 20 months later. Then the sibling age gap began to widen. I was seven years old when my brother Gary was born, and 14 years old when my brother Scott was born. By the time I was beginning high school we had to move to a larger house to make room for Scott.

As the oldest I felt a responsibility to break down barriers for my brothers and sister. With the age gap I knew I needed to be a good example for them. My parents worked very hard, and I wanted to do well and make them proud of me. I was shy and did not talk much as a kid. I did get a mark down in 8th grade for chattering in the back of the class. Instead of my parents being angry, they were actually happy that I was breaking out of my shell.

My mother taught us manners, setting the table and eating properly, how to sew and knit and how to cook.  She like ice cream but she didn’t like housework much, so I made sure to pick up around the house when we were having company, especially if that company was a boy coming over to take me on a date.

Mom and dad were the epitome of parenthood. Mom was president of the Women’s Home Bureau and they both came to every swim meet, choir performance or school program in which we performed.  My mom was so proud she would cry which I’m sad to say today, embarrassed me.

They were good parents and we were good students and good swimmers.  We all got our starts at the YMCA. I began competing at age 7. My brothers were able to swim for the high school team, my sister and I continued at the “Y” through high school.

It was pre Title IX, so girls were not allowed to compete at the high school level in Illinois. My events were freestyle, freestyle relay, breast stroke, breast stroke on the medley relay, and diving.  I swam competitively through elementary school, high school and college. I was good at everything but I really wanted to be the best at something and I thought the breaststroke was it. I was almost there except for one Chicago City Y swimmer. I was good but she was one tick off the clock better in all of our meets, including one in college.

I tried very hard to be the best diver, but we really didn’t get much coaching and my swim coach thought that the team could score more points with me being on the relay teams. I poured over magazines depicting the 1960 Olympic swimmers and divers. I wanted to be like them.

I was a Brownie and Girl Scout, loving summer Girl Scout camp in Manistee, Michigan, camping in tents, hiking, swimming, and singing around the evening campfires.  In high school I chose to be a Mariner Scout which was exciting because we did some rowing in competition with other Mariner Scout troops.  Socially, it was lots of fun to cheer on the boys Sea Scout troops who were there to compete.

Along with school and sports I also took piano lessons, my sister took ballet.  She was selected by our Aunt Vida to perform as part of the children’s contribution in the New York City Ballet’s Nutcracker Suite spring performances at The Opera House in Chicago.  Thanks to aunt Vida, we were often allowed to stand in the wings (onstage behind the side curtains) to watch other ballets. I remember how exciting that was for us.

I attended church and Sunday school most weeks.  We went to the Episcopal Church which was a compromise that my parents made after they were married in the Catholic Church. Because my dad was deeply hurt by the way his father was treated by the Catholic Church, supported our family going to the Episcopal Church, but Dad didn’t go regularly. I went through confirmation when I was twelve and we had a beautiful dedication service. I believed that God loved me and that he was watching over me and was helping me. We didn’t have an Episcopalian Church in Harvey so we had to drive to the wealthy town of Flossmour.

As a young woman I had faith and was spiritual but didn’t realize I would be an outcast in the church youth group for not attending the wealthier Homewood/Flossmour high school. I persuaded my parents to change to the Federated Church in our hometown of Harvey. It was more diverse, a combination of Presbyterian and Congregational churches. I flourished there singing in the choir and joining their youth group. My sister had a hard time with the switch but in the long run I know I saved all of my siblings from the suffering what I went through in Flossmour.

I attended Thornton Township High School which was a very large and integrated school. A new high school was being built to split the overcrowded student population. When Thornridge High School was finished, half the students went there which made things a lot easier. We had the typical hallway and lunch room scuffles but for the most part the administrators and guards kept the peace.

My favorite subjects in school were any of the Sciences, English, Choir, and Physical Education. As kids we all played my dad’s saxophone but in high school I had to choose choir or sax in the band. I chose choir but my brother Gary continued with the sax even playing in a band for school dances.

I took swimming class for PE my junior year. As a class we had to create a routine for a 3 night swim show. Mine was selected for the juniors. We wore these cotton tank suits that were embarrassing to say the least. I sewed red sequins on my suit, and played Jezebel. The routine consisted of me diving through a ring of swimmers, all of us doing maneuvers and ending with them surrounding me and pretending to push me down while a musical tune named Jezebel played in the background. I swam solo my senior year at school and the Y. I’ve always felt comfortable in the water whether it was for competition or relaxation.

I was also infatuated with gymnastics after watching the boys gymnastic coach put on what appeared to be a circus of sorts. Girls were twirling on ropes, tumbling and vaulting. I decided I wanted to learn how to do those things so I signed up for gymnastics my senior year. The boys gymnastics coach, Mr. Feroch was kind and patient with us teaching us tumbling and trampoline. The apparatus work was taught by the girls PE teacher who used pictures from a book to which we tried to copy. In all it was a fabulous experience and helped improve my diving.

Along with stressing education our family was big on nature and the outdoors. In the early ‘30’s my Uncle Everett and his brother built a Lincoln log cabin up in northern Minnesota on Crane Lake. At the time it was in a national forest but now it’s in the Boundary Waters National Park bordering Canada. Our family was privileged to use the cabin, canoe and fishing boat for two weeks each year.

It was very primitive, kerosene lanterns for light and a kerosene stove for cooking. We used an icebox for refrigeration. The icebox used an ice block which we had to haul from the neighbors ice house. We would put the block in our boat to get to our dock so we could carry it up the steep hill to the cabin.

When nature called there was the outhouse behind the cabin quite a ways away. There were bears so we children banged pots and pans to scare them away.  We swam in the lake, bathed in the lake, pumped water from the lake manually to a barrel in the attic of the cabin for drinking and sink water.

We would also swim to the island across the lake. My sister and I watched out for our brother Gary until he was older. Vicky and I did a lot of canoeing, and for fun we would take turns standing on the gunnels of the canoe and by bouncing to propel the canoe forward.  We jumped off our neighbor’s boat house and hiked with our dad in the lead through the woods on many happy adventures. We fished for our dinner most days. The lake was full of walleyed pikes, northern pikes, croppies and perch.

It was idyllic for me, my favorite times with my family. There was no electricity or phones, just our family spending time together playing games, paint-by-number, reading, and writing postcards in the evenings after full days outdoors.  My dad also did a lot of chopping wood for the fireplace and doing some projects Uncle Everett had on his wish list.  My mom loved to swim with us and walk down to the dock to see the sunsets or Northern Lights.  We as a family traveled by boat into Canada when the fish weren’t biting on Crane Lake to try our luck there, and we picked wild blueberries everywhere we went.  I fell in love with lakes and pine trees and the beauty of the wilderness.  We called it God’s country. I lived a kids dream life: family, church, school, sports and nature.

I also had to work summer jobs in high school. During the days I volunteered for the Red Cross swimming program at our city’s outdoor unheated swimming pool for 3 years.  As a youth I earned my Lifesaving and Water Safety Instructors certificates. One day when the male lifeguards and I were playing follow the leader on the pools high slide during a break after I taught morning swim classes, I copied the guy ahead of me but did not open up and hit my head on the bottom of the pool. I cracked my head open which resulted in a patch of hair shaved off and 5 stitches.

The injury wasn’t the worst of it. I couldn’t go swimming for my birthday party at a lake with my girlfriends and I had to cover the shaved area with a little curl for my senior pictures.

My actual paying job was working at an ice cream cone shop. It was run by two of my favorite science teachers. Along with the good pay it had a fringe benefit.  I could have a free double scoop cone after my shift, so I planned all evening which flavor I would choose. Some evenings I had a half scoop of four different flavors!

My first experience with gender bias was girls not being allowed to be lifeguards until we were 18. I knew this was unfair because my younger brother Gary was able to lifeguard as a junior in high school. He earned good money lifeguarding on Lake Michigan for the City of Chicago. Eventually my sister and I were able to earn money teaching swimming and lifeguarding at different pools in Chicago, but that was after our freshmen year in college. We needed to work and this is how we earned money for college.

I graduated from high school in 1962 along with 639 of my classmates. I placed in the top 10% so my exposure to the other students was limited to those who had the same placement or those who were engaged in similar extracurricular activities. My parents taught us kids to have a good work ethic. I was always busy during the academic year. Along with going to school I was president of the Girls Athletic Club (GAC), sang in the choir, wrote for the school newspaper and worked in the cafeteria.

My plan for college was to be a physical education major. I loved sports and I found it easier to talk to people, particularly guys, if we were doing some sport. My siblings and I had a choice of any of the Illinois State colleges and universities. I chose Southern Illinois University in Carbondale because it had a men’s and women’s swim team, one of the best men’s gymnastics teams in the country and it had a lake on campus. Maybe not the best criteria, but it worked for me. With my parents approval and without a campus visit we set off for an 8 hour drive to begin my new site unseen college experience.

I was fortunate to be placed in a new dorm on Thompson Point.  The campus lake was close by and we had a large cafeteria on our complex. It was a good spot to make friends. There were socials with the men’s dorms and I also got to know everyone in the cafeteria. I was on work study my first two years chopping vegetables and fruit in the cafeteria kitchen and lifeguarding at the campus lake. The male lifeguards used to take me by boat across the lake to the Thompson Point cafeteria so I wouldn’t miss dinner.

I tried out and made the women’s swim team but the women's coach had us swimming the width of the pool instead of the length. This was my second experience with gender bias. The logic was they couldn’t push women because we were the weaker sex and this was coming from a woman. I found that mentality hard to believe but there was nothing I could do about it. We did have some meets but I realized I had peaked in high school and wasn’t being challenged in college.

I also decided to explore the men’s gym to see what I could do in gymnastics since there wasn’t a women’s gymnastics team.  The head men’s gymnastics coach agreed to let me use the trampoline and tumbling mats when the men weren’t using them. It was better than nothing and I appreciated his offer and was careful not to disturb their practices.

During my sophomore year, Herb Vogel arrived on campus with his high school aged women's gymnastics team. They were outstanding athletes training for the Olympics on our campus as the Southern Illinois Gymnastics team. When they graduated from high school, they then became the Southern Illinois University Gymnastics team.

I wasn’t allowed to use the gymnastic area. During this time the new Arena on campus opened and the gymnastics program was moved to its mezzanine level. I approached Mr. Vogel a few times about creating a gymnastics program for women like myself that wanted to teach gymnastics. He decided on a program for less skilled gymnasts that was my Godsend.

I learned that patience was a virtue and I knew if I just worked hard and kept my faith something good was going to happen at SIU. I persevered and competed at the intermediate level, but trained with the elite trampoline team.

Our intermediate team traveled to Tennessee for a meet my sophomore year and trampoline was part of the competition. I was an intermediate but I was training with the top 2 women trampoline experts in the world. We men and women trampolinists practiced together and a camaraderie was formed that went beyond gender. We were athletes striving for perfection.

At times Coach Vogel would remind me when I was having difficulty doing a particular event that I was doing it to teach it, not to win a medal. It was humbling but it was the truth. I was having so much fun I didn’t care and I appreciated the opportunity he provided for us.

I had a routine: academic classes in the mornings, gymnastics work from 1 until 4 and swim team from 6 until 8. I ate dinner at 9 pm and then studied. With all of the physical activity I still had to make weight for Coach Vogel. Not knowing then what I know now I did the crazy things we all did back then. We put plastic bags over our leotards and sweatshirts over the bags. When we were thirsty we would sip water and spit it out rather than swallow it. I lost weight but never had the petite gymnastic body of the elites. I was large-boned with a swimmers shape. My weight didn’t match the standard weight chart but Coach Vogel looked at my gaunt face and said that’s enough.

On the evening of one of the men’s gymnastics meets, the women were asked to bring the trampoline from the mezzanine level of the Arena to the main floor. The women gymnasts were going to be score flashers at each site. It was sleeting outside which made it difficult to control the speed of the trampoline as we were slipping and sliding in our gymnastics slippers down a long sloping sidewalk. As we were heading into the arena we lost control of the trampoline which slammed into my right foot. I had immediate perfuse swelling and was brought to the door of the training room. Bob Spackman, who was the head athletic trainer, came out the door. He saw my ankle and quickly elevated my leg and applied an ice wrap as I lay on a training table in the hallway.

Mr. Spackman advised me to go to the Student Health Center for an x-ray which I did. I was told by the nurse to return on Monday for the results, so I walked back to the meet on my bum ankle to flash scores with my foot down. On Monday the doctor at the Student Health Center said my x-ray was negative and gave me a prescription for five days of whirlpool at the physical therapy clinic in town which was a long walk from campus.

By Wednesday my ankle hurt so bad that after having my leg in the whirlpool, I walked back to the Student Health Center and asked to see a doctor again. This doctor was a female with a heavy German accent.  She said that the scab on my ankle should be soft if I just had the whirlpool, so she pulled off the scab and blood clots started pouring out of the wound. The doctor squeezed the blood clots out of the hole pulling down from my knee to my ankle.  When she was finished she had me taken by ambulance to the hospital where I was put on anticoagulant medication. I stayed non-weight bearing in the hospital for 5 days.

I do remember having fun tooling around in my wheelchair though. My parents were called and shocked to hear this sad tale.  My gymnastics teammates came to see me along with my sweet women’s physical education teacher and swim coach, Miss Young. I was discharged from the hospital with a walking cast for fourteen days to prevent me from being overly aggressive. I tried to go to the Arena to work on something non-weight bearing like the uneven bars but Mr. Vogel put the cabash on that.

As you might imagine like most athletes it was difficult to do the fourteen days. To make matters worse, it was a rainy spring and getting around puddles and water holes was near impossible. By day ten I had had it with the walking cast. I walked through every puddle all the way back to the doctor’s office until the cast was soaked so he would have to take it off for good.  My ankle lost range of motion and got very stiff after only ten days in a cast. I started working on it myself but even jumping a little on the trampoline was difficult. It was even stiff in the swimming pool. My gymnastics and swimming seasons were over for my junior year.

By Spring Quarter my ankle was moving a little better as we were preparing for the swim show.  My sister was a freshman at SIU that year and we decided to swim a duet. This made sense especially with my ankle still on the mend. It was through unfortunate circumstances but it became such fun performing a duet with my sister. Our strokes were so similar after years of swimming together and we gave a great performance.

I believe my ankle injury was a puncture wound from the bolt on the trampoline. I had no rehab through the school to recover my range of motion and strength. I missed my final for my PE Major class in Folk Dance and had to make it up during the next quarter. Things got a little messy with this folk dance class. Initially I was given an incomplete until my ankle was better and I could perform. When I did perform the final dance, I received a C for it, and the teacher gave me a C for the entire quarter grade for the class in which I had strong A’s in teaching and performing going into the final. I challenged the grade and she just said she didn’t think I could do it. It didn’t compute. I worked my hardest and was an A student in all my PE Major classes:  half court women’s basketball, soccer, field hockey, golf, tennis, etc. How could this one thing bring my GPA down? I felt I nailed my folk dance final but she had a hidden agenda grading me and that was over my time spent in the men’s physical education area. Once again gender bias and from my own gender.

I learned during my junior year that men PE majors were required to take the Care and Prevention of Athletic Injuries class. To no surprise it wasn’t even on the course list for women PE majors. I thought about my ankle injury and the treatment I received from the men’s athletic trainer. It occurred to me that if I was on the other side of campus, the women’s side, who would have helped me? Did they even have ice?

I decided to go to the source, the guy who helped me, Bob Spackman. I made my argument to Mr. Spackman that I was living proof that women get injured and need care but the class that teaches Care and Prevention of Athletic Injures isn’t open to women.

Mr. Spackman listened to my request and said I was the first woman to ever ask to take the class. He said he would open the class to me and advised me that he would be altering his repertoire of jokes. I registered for the Care and Prevention of Athletic Injuries and it became my favorite class my senior year. As a student I was able to do everything in the classroom and training room during non-business hours but when the training room was operational, I was not allowed in, another gender bias. I had to do my “training room” time in the hallway outside the training room door. Bob or his assistant would come out and check my work or assessment. I aced the class and Bob told me that if I was really interested in learning more, that I should join the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA). I not only wanted to learn more I wanted to learn everything about athletic training so I followed Bob’s advice and joined the NATA in June of 1966. I later learned I was only the second female to be a member.

As a senior that year I worked as a student trainer for the women's gymnastics team. I also worked out with the team and competed on swim team. I was not on campus during the Spring Quarter for the swim show because I was student teaching in a Chicago City School and living at home back in Harvey.

The summer after graduation I worked as a gymnastics coach at a camp in Traverse City, Michigan. It was a beautiful setting with all the equipment outdoors and a back drop of the lake. The coed staff were all gymnasts from the top universities in the country and the campers were 7th through 12th graders. It was a wonderful experience for me before my Fall teaching job started at my old high school back in Harvey.

The teacher I replaced asked me to continue the gymnastics program she had started at Thornton Township High School. Her dream became a reality while I was in college. Girls gymnastics became more than imitating pictures we saw in a book. I would also be teaching swimming which allowed every student the ability to pass the basic swim safety exam.

Girls sports competition in high school had not progressed, however. It survived through the sponsorship of the girls gymnastic club. Our competition was more like play dates than meets with other high schools. The girls would perform their routines and would receive a grade but there was no team score at the end of the play date.

In keeping with my desire to learn more about athletic training, I worked with the athletic trainer for our high school football team. His name was Fred Turner who owned the Turner Physical Therapy Clinic in town. He was also a member of the NATA. Fred sent some of the boys up from the locker room to the hallway where I would tape them for games. I helped Fred on the sidelines where we talked a lot about athletic training. Gender bias struck again when the athletic director got wind that I, a woman, was working with the football players. He immediately sent out a directive that the boys could not be taped in the hallway, meaning by me.

Although that sunk any opportunity for me to help in athletic training, Fred counseled me to go to Physical Therapy school if I was really interested in being an athletic trainer. He felt if I graduated from physical therapy school as a woman, I would gain more respect working with athletes. Fred, one other athletic trainer and I went to Columbus, Ohio for my first NATA convention. He introduced me to many athletic trainers, including Pinkie Newell from Purdue University.

Teaching high school lost its luster for me during my second year on the job. I spent all my time trying to persuade the girls to get in the pool. I will say there were some very amusing “why I can’t swim today notes” though. I found myself bargaining with them. My deal was if you do half the days you got a pass. They did just enough for most of them to learn how to swim.

It never bothered me to take swimming for the whole year when I was in high school. I practically lived in the water and I loved it. Nonetheless, I did, as an adult, empathize with the girls. I’m sure it was tough on a young girl to be in high school with wet hair every day, but there was nothing I could do about it. It was PE department policy. It just wasn’t my call. It was the same thing with gymnastics. I slowly came to realize that I would end up hating my two favorite sports if I stayed in teaching beyond my second year.

I applied to the physical therapy schools in places where there were mountains and ski resorts. I had fallen in love with skiing as a novice when I joined the Chicago Ski Club. For two winters I would travel one weekend a year to a ski area in Michigan. The trip was a 9-12 hour bus ride away. It was a great a bonding experience with the other skiers. One application was to the Mayo Clinic School of Physical Therapy in Rochester, Minnesota. Fred was a PT alum from Mayo and was my reference. I received an early acceptance letter and didn’t hesitate, it was a great program and there was skiing nearby.

The Mayo Clinic School of Physical Therapy program was extremely intense. There were 40 students at the start but we lost 5 along the way. There was a kinship amongst us classmates and we helped each other study and have fun together. Nine of the 24 months of the program were spent in class and lab and the other 15 months we were in clinical rotations.

Our clinical experiences were varied and interesting. I worked at two hospitals in town, an outpatient clinic, a mental hospital, and an elementary school where I worked with disabled children. I approached everything with the idea of how I would apply it to athletic training. Although I was shy as a kid I was not afraid to ask questions of the doctors when I needed clarification. I remember them to be more than willing to discuss things with me. They were dedicated to our learning. I had a run in with the female director of the outpatient office for daring to ask the doctors questions. I couldn’t quite get my head wrapped around an attitude like that. I was taught that you learn by asking questions.

Two of the guys in my class were able to help out with high school football, but when I asked, it was a definite no. No surprise there!

The female physical therapy students had to wear white nurses dresses and nylon stockings in clinic. It was 30 degrees below zero for five days during our first winter in Rochester and we’re running around wearing white uniforms and nylons. Us gals decided to go in sweats and boots which we removed outside the door of the hospital before we hurried in. My car battery died on the 5th day. Today they have plug in heaters for car batteries that didn’t exist back then. Fortunately, two of the second year male PT students were neighbors and gave us a ride. I was afraid to smile because the skin on my face felt like it would crack like glass it was so cold and dry.

My thesis of sorts and presentation to my class was done near the end of our program. We had to choose a topic that was not covered in class that would benefit all of our learning. I chose the care and prevention of knee injuries. A doctor had to be our advisor but mine wasn’t that familiar with sports medicine. In fact the term sports medicine didn’t exist yet. My speech was well received, especially by the guys in my class but my instructors tried to discourage me from seeking a job in athletic training.

During my first few weeks at the Mayo Clinic we learned that one of our instructors would not be teaching that term because she was serving on the medical staff for the 1968 Olympics. I couldn’t wait to meet and talk to her about her Olympic experience. To my dismay, she told me it wasn’t worth talking about. As a woman with a passion for helping women athletes, my heart burned for the day that I could work as an athletic trainer for the Olympics. You can imagine my disappointment!

I began applying for an athletic training job halfway through physical therapy school. I contacted six athletic trainers from around the country whom I had met at successive NATA national conventions. Their responses were much the same. “We could not have a female athletic trainer in our training room because it is in the locker room, or there is not outside access other than going through the locker room.” Some just said it would not work in their facility. But, each athletic trainer to whom I wrote gave me the names of 5 other athletic trainers to approach for a job. I was hearing the same narrative over and over again. Down but not out I decided to attend the NATA National Convention in Denver in June of 1970 a few months before graduation.

I was sitting in a large convention hall when I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was James G. Garrick, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon, Team Physician and Director of Sports Medicine for the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington. He said to me, “I know that you are an athlete and that you are a teacher. I know you are about to graduate from Mayo Clinic as a physical therapist and I know you are looking for a job as an athletic trainer. We would like to have you consider working for the University of Washington. I was surprised and thrilled at the same time. He would not disclose who gave him my name and till this day I still do not know.

We made arrangements for me to fly to Seattle to see the campus and meet the staff of several departments. I fell in love with Seattle from the time the plane touched down. It was everything in nature that I loved, evergreen trees, lakes, mountain peaks in every direction and the fireboats shooting water in all directions on Elliot Bay for Seafair Week was an added treat. I could not wait to return and start my professional life over again.

I drove across the country from my home in Illinois with a stop in Oaks, North Dakota to be a bridesmaid for my roommate in PT school. After the wedding I was back on the road through the plains and mountain ranges all the way to Seattle.

I learned many things along my journey. Some things are hard to put in words but if I could pass on some words of wisdom which guided me throughout life, these would be the words:

If you cannot say something nice, do not say anything at all.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

If something is worth doing, it is worth doing well.

If at first you do not succeed, try, try again.

My dad always told us children that education was important and when I told my parents that I was leaving a good teaching job to attend physical therapy school, my dad was all in favor of my pursuit of more education. He felt that way then and I do too, today.

By the time I arrived in Seattle, the University of Washington football team and their training staff were in full swing. Sayers Bud Miller was the head athletic trainer and he had two full time assistants that I met but rarely saw. No surprise at the time I was not allowed in their training room during operational hours. Bud did tell me to let him know my needs and they would make sure I received it.

I was given a tiny room on the mezzanine level of Edmonds Pavilion as a training room. It was formerly used as the basketball officials locker room. The mezzanine level also housed the athletic department offices. In the level below us there was the main basketball gymnasium and the mens training room. There was an outside entrance to the training room and a door that led to the tunnel that went to the football stadium.

During my campus visit I was shown my future training room with the lockers still in place. When I arrived in September, the lockers had been removed, but that was all. There was a shower room with tiny windows for ventilation and a small window in the bathroom. The door was mostly closed making for a very dark room. It needed a paint job so selected canary yellow to brighten the place up. Unfortunately, it turned out to be a frightening hue that required me having posters on as much of the wall space as possible.

I began building my training room with a whirlpool in the shower area and two treatment tables in the main space. I also requested a hydrocollator unit, an ultrasound machine and an ice maker. I supplied my training room and field kit straight out the Klafs and Arnheim textbook. Little by little it started to look like a real training room.

I was hired to be the physical therapist for the University of Washington and the athletic trainer for women's sports. For the first year I was paid jointly by the Athletic Department and the Student Health Center. It was a budget thing but subsequently, I was paid exclusively by the Athletic Department. Once my training room was operational, my mornings were dedicate to treating student patients referred by the doctors at the Student Health Center. The afternoon hours of the training room were devoted to preparing the women athletes for their practices.

When pre-practice preparation was complete I would have to drive to the women’s athletic fields or the women’s PE building to cover women’s field hockey and volleyball in the fall, basketball in the winter and track and field in spring. I also covered home and away games for all but volleyball, which I only covered home games.

I was required to take the American Physical Therapy national licensure exam again because I was only licensed to practice in Minnesota. Later in my career when I moved to California my license was recognized and I didn’t have to retest again, thank goodness.

The women coaches had never worked with a certified athletic trainer and as a result they became very suspicious of my intentions. They assumed I would be keeping their athletes out of competition, so they did not encourage them to come to me. Prior to my arrival the women practiced and competed with untreated injuries. They would go as long as they could until they couldn’t and then they would quit. It took time and patience for me to gain the respect, confidence and trust of the coaches and athlets. Eventually they realized I was their to help and we were all on the same side.

Dr. Garrick held regular injury clinics in both the mens and women's training rooms. Having Dr. Garrick see the women athletes in the training room was a new privilege for me. My experience was sending them to the Student Health Center or make an appointment at the University Hospital or clinic. I was ecstatic to see my women getting the same treatment as the men.

Dr. Garrick would ask my thoughts about a particular injury and we would exchange ideas. Most times we were on the same page which strengthened my confidence as an athletic trainer. He allowed me to scrub-in for surgeries and I learned a great deal as he became a mentor during my tenure there.

One of my field hockey players was having pain on the lateral side of her ankle with the tendon slipping over the lateral malleolus causing pain and dysfunction. During the surgery, Dr. Garrick discovered that the athlete had an accessory peroneus brevis muscle which he dissected away. He was almost giddy at this discovery, and I could see that he loved teaching those around him in the OR about this anomaly he discovered.

Early on it was a very lonely existence for me. As with many athletic trainers, the job is so demanding there is no time for socialization outside of work. I had no one other than my patients and athletes to talk to most days. It was also lonely on the sidelines. There was no other athletic trainer to talk to during home or away games. We often had impromptu sideline injury clinics during half time of our games. Athletes from opposing teams would ask me what they should do about their injuries.  I considered it a neutral zone, because we were not competitors when it came to discussing injuries. During my third year at UW, circa 1973, I learned that some schools had female graduate assistants working toward becoming certified athletic trainers.

Around the same time, Dr Garrick received a grant to hire four of what I called, research athletic trainers. They researched the need for certified athletic trainers at the high school level. After a year of working on their proposals, they presented them to various high schools in the Seattle area. The idea was to work as athletic trainers and record longitudinal data on injuries at the high school level. Unfortunately, although the study showed the need for full time athletic trainers in high schools the budget was just not there and a full time athletic trainer was looked at as more of a luxury than a need. Once they left for their respective high schools, I rarely saw them again. After the study was completed, they went on to other parts of the country to work as certified athletic trainers.

During the time they did spend in Edmonds Pavilion they provided comic relief. They shared the funniest stories about what they were doing in their world. They were truly a blessing that helped me keep my sanity in the insane world of collegiate athletics. Till this day, we remain friends and even had a reunion of sorts at the 2019 NATA National Convention in Las Vegas. After 45 years, they’ve retained their senses of humor and I would be remiss if I didn’t mention their names:  Rich Carey, John Schrader, Gary Reinholtz and Mark Smaha, all of whom have served in offices for the NATA including President of the NATA.

Dr. Garrick had the foresight to hire a woman to care for the women's athletes at UW. Prior to my hire he saw the injured women in his clinic along with professional ballet dancers. This forward thinking came before the NATA even had a certification process which began in 1972, which is also the same year Title IX became law.  Because I was hired in 1970 by Dr. Garrick to work at the UW, I had my physical therapy credential which qualified me to work as an athletic trainer.

When I arrived at the UW, the head athletic trainer, Bud Miller and all of his assistant athletic trainers were registered physical therapists. It was the same when I arrived at Stanford University in 1975. By that time I had become the first woman to sit for the NATA certification exam which I did in 1972 at the NATA National Convention in St. Louis. This was an important step for the NATA because the certification process gave credibility to the profession of athletic training.

 The NATA certification exam included a written part and an oral practical demonstration.  I was scheduled to take the written part in the morning and the practical part at 4:00 pm. I was the very last person to take the practical exam that day. As a result all that was left for supplies were just the ends of tape rolls. There wasn’t enough tape on any roll to compete a strapping so my taping skills were constantly interrupted to find more tape. I still remember Lindsey McLean (former San Francisco 49er head athletic trainer) and two other seasoned athletic trainers in the back of the room whispering and quietly laughing at the sight of me taking the exam.

The taping snafu was not an issue but I did make another mistake. I removed a football helmet from the mannequin that was posing as an unconscious athlete which is a no no. The examiners realized I had never been able to work football before so they spoke to me about it and passed me. I used that mistake as a great learning experience.

Like any move, it takes time to settle in and meet new people. I gradually made friends with some of the women coaches and by my second winter I was skiing with the field hockey coach and her friends. We made a habit of Thursday night skiing but it was short lived for me because of scheduling demands. My days became filled from morning till night with athletic training responsibilities. The summers were short but packed with outdoor activities like biking, sailing, water skiing and mountaineering.

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Dr. Garrick was more than just a team physician. He and his associate, a statistician by the name of Ralph Requa worked on many research projects. Ralph also took publicity pictures of me for the Seattle Times and the student newspaper when I first arrived.

Together, they published many ground breaking studies. These early studies documented what athletic trainers knew in theory but had no data to be called evidence based. Dr. Garrick planned for me to do a research project on the women athletes but I really had my hands full. I did find time to write up the five most common sports injuries that women sustained. I also included the care and treatment for each injury. It was this topic I tweaked for the future speeches I gave, just as Dr. Garrick had taught me.

My two most memorable presentations were for the

American Physical and Health Education and Recreation (APHER) National Convention in Detroit and my first spring talk at the UW. My speeches included new information for men and women PE teachers and coaches. No one was talking about women athletes and their injuries yet. I came full circle from my teaching days. Now, I was helping the women PE teachers nationwide to prevent girls from getting injured and to know the steps of acute care for those injuries. In retrospect. I realized I could not have impacted as many women had I stayed at the high school.

I was excited to stay with my favorite Uncle Leo and his wife. The night I arrived we bbq’d a fresh salmon that a brought from Seattle. I was thrilled when my uncle surprised me by taking time off of work as a parole officer to attend my speech.

I had an offer from the assistant athletic trainer from Montana State University to speak at a conference in the middle of the summer for men and women PE teachers and coaches.

My summers were precious to me after the many hours spent working and traveling with the women athletes. I needed that time to reboot. I had a penchant to share my knowledge but truth be told the real lure was the call of nature. He offered a day in a kayak fly fishing for trout on a river. That dear athletic trainer spent the day with me pointing out good quiet pools to cast as we floated down the river, together catching 10 trout each, the limit. He gave me his 10 and iced all 20 down so they were ready to take on my flight back to Seattle. Along with a good day of fishing, my speech was well received.

Some time later, I was invited to be an instructor at a Cramers camp. It was around the summer of 1974 and somewhere in the Midwest. Other staff included Pinkie Newell, Marge Albohm and another male athletic trainer whose name I am unable to recall. I was pleased to help the young people learn the basics of athletic training. We all did a super job and had fun along the way. The life of the party was always Pinkie. He kept us laughing in the evenings after dinner with his stories. His drawl and his ability to cuss without being offensive was an art form. His swear words came off his tongue like honey. There was only one Pinkie, may he rest in peace.

During my 4th year at the UW I began to question my life. Had I truly found myself or was there more? I had accomplished my dream of helping women athletes as an athletic trainer but was there more? What more did God want me to do? Yes, I was beginning to see more women at the NATA National conventions. Yes, more women athletes were receiving care as far as I could see. What more could I do or was more needed to be done to help women athletes? Who should I ask? People were coming to me for answers but where could I go with questions?

There was also another question in the back of my mind and heart.

I attended the Mercer Island Covenant Church on Mercer Island. In addition to regular religious services I was part of an adult Sunday class. We studied the book of Revelations, the last book in the New Testament. It is an apocalyptic prophecy about the End Times. On this particular week we discussed the Rapture of the believers. This posed an uncomfortable question for me. I had always had faith in God and believed God was by my side throughout life. After all, doors always opened for me, God must be on my side.

I did not push my way into the mens world of athletic training. I did not kick, scream, plot or scheme. I had a passion for helping women athletes. I felt God had placed that on me and I followed my heart and spirit. But, the question was, would I be raptured during the End Times or would I be left behind? How would I know for sure?

These two questions followed me into the summer of 1974. My boyfriend at the time invited me to this church. He was not the model of a good Christian which made for a rocky relationship. It was an evening in July that I was sitting on the dock of my apartment on Lake Washington that I asked I asked Jesus to be my Lord and Savior. I was doing good work career wise but for some reason I felt like I was losing my way.

That next evening I was eager to hear Hal Lindsay speak on his book, “There is a New World Coming”. We used this book along with the Bible to study of the Book of Revelations. At the end of his lecture he asked if there was anyone present who had asked Jesus into their heart but had not told anyone. I just knew he was talking to me but I was afraid to come forward. He repeated the call to come forward and I just sat there. Suddenly I felt an upward tug on my collar and was halfway standing. I looked behind me but did not see anyone. I continued to stand and walked forward where I was greeted by a host woman who asked me some questions.

I confessed that I had asked Jesus to be my Lord and Savior the night before but had told no one. She said that she would send a card to my pastor and she encouraged me to discuss my new decision with him. It is written in the Bible “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved: for it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”(Romans 10:9-10)

My question about the Rapture was settled, I knew that when Jesus returns to rapture or take up the Christians with him to Heaven, I will be with them and not left behind. My faith was strengthened and I was not alone in my future decisions. I continue to pray to know the will of God in my life.

Great changes occurred during my 5th year, 1974-1975 at the University of Washington. Bud Miller resigned as head athletic trainer to work on his doctoral degree at Penn State University. Dr. Garrick did not replace him. Instead, he closed my training room and moved me downstairs to the mens training room essentially making it coed. I brought all my equipment with me, including the one and only Cybex machine which we all shared.

Title IX required the athletic department to duplicate all equipment for the women's training room. It made financial sense to have one training room and one Cybex for both the men and women. We three divided up the responsibilities. Gary Derschied became head athletic trainer for football, John Anderson, head athletic trainer for mens basketball, and I became head athletic trainer for all women's sports and the coordinator of the student trainer program for which we all shared teaching responsibilities. We also treated students referred from the Student Health Center in the mornings along with the athletes, at least for that year.

My new colleagues were not that happy about the change, but admitted that by having me as part of their training room staff, the training room had a much more professional atmosphere. The male athletes had to wear more than a towel into the training room and my new colleagues felt that they were treated with more respect by the athletes as well. After awhile they wondered why we had not combined training rooms sooner.

Being short staffed we worked harder than ever. The wonderful exchange of ideas between the three of us was music to my ears.

The male athletes, including the football players, were very respectful of me, and I treated them all with respect as well. Football season was very busy as always and I was there taping along with the others. The first home football game of the season was in early September before the womens field hockey team began its competitive season. I could assist on the field for football games when it did not conflict with my coverage of womens field hockey. Gary Derscheid asked me to stand on the visitors side of the field during football games because he thought that it would be better for me. It actually was just the opposite because the visiting team did not know me and they were crude and disrespectful. I asked Gary after the football season was over for the reason behind his decision, and he said that the head football coach told him that if our football team lost he would be blamed for having a female athletic trainer on our sidelines. My opinion was that Gary wanted to keep his job as head trainer of football. I was not afraid to bring this matter up to the head football coach, because we had mutual respect for each other. He said that in his opinion I should have been on the UW side of the field.

In the spring of 1975, I approached Dr. Garrick about hiring a female athletic trainer to assist me with the women athletes, we were certainly understaffed in the training room, and the men asked Dr. Garrick about hiring another male athletic trainer to help with the male athletes. Dr. Garrick told us that we were all doing an excellent job, so therefore he did not see a reason to make any changes. In the end, both John Anderson and I left after the NATA national convention that June, and we were later replaced by two female athletic trainers and 2 male athletic trainers. We had to resign our positions in order to improve the staffing at the UW athletic training room.

It was the perfect storm. My personal life was in turmoil, and now after we had worked so hard all year, we were denied at least a replacement for Bud Miller and also another to help me. I discussed with John Anderson that I had explored the employment opportunities for a female athletic trainer, and it looked bleak. John called Dave Blanchard, head athletic trainer at Stanford University from where John had graduated from the physical therapy program. Dave Blanchard called back asking John if there was a good student trainer who would work out at Stanford and that he wanted to bring a woman trainer in to begin working with the women athletes. John said there were no student trainers that he would recommend, only his colleague, Sherry Kosek. I had been praying that God would find me a place that was as beautiful as Seattle. Could there be another place as beautiful as Seattle?

I met Dave Blanchard at the NATA National Convention in Anaheim in 1975 where he interviewed me. He wanted me to come and see the campus, so I flew from Seattle to the San Francisco Airport a week after the convention. It was dark outside as the plane began its descent for landing, there was a bright moon and I saw tiny white lights all over the mountains surrounding the airport and San Francisco Bay. It was beautiful, and I began to think that God was answering my prayer. Dave Blanchard picked me up the next morning and took me to the Stanford campus, pointing out landmarks along the way. We discussed the plan of making the training room coed when I arrived, and I noticed immediately that as we entered the training room, that it did have an outside entrance. I met Stan Scott, the assistant athletic trainer. After questions were asked on both sides, Dave offered me the job with a salary just a little less than what I was making at the UW. Dave and Scotty later told that it was a boon for them because they each were able to receive pay increases because I bumped them up on the scale.

After I returned to Seattle I gave notice and left to join my family on vacation, in shock that I would be leaving Seattle. Because I left the UW during the short summer break, I was unable to say goodbye in person to my friends and coworkers. I knew God was directing me to leave Seattle, but it was very difficult emotionally for me.

 In contrast to when the UW training room became coed where it was not really desired by the male athletic trainers, but because financially they had to do it, that transition was tense at first. The transition at Stanford to a coed training room was much smoother and pleasant because it was the choice of the head athletic trainer, Dave Blanchard, and his assistant Scotty, as well as the athletic director, Joe Ruitz. In fact, Joe Ruitz created a family atmosphere throughout the athletic department and we all felt like valued employees. Dave and Scotty were very positive and welcoming of me and the changes that were sure to happen. They voiced their approval and support of me from the very beginning, and the football players sensed that my presence was a good thing. For example, one football player named Ray often sang My Cheri Amour as I taped his ankles.

A woman from the WHO, Womens Health Organization contacted me after I had been working at Stanford for a few months and asked if I would do a phone interview. The questions she asked me were unbelievable. What did it feel like to tape your first football player’s ankle? Ugh. She was also pressing me to say something that would indicate that I was being discriminated against at Stanford, and asking questions to make it sound as if the male athletic trainers at Stanford were treating me unfairly. I did not give her any ammunition for her gossip column, and she never contacted me again. I had not been discriminated against at Stanford.

The Stanford training room was located in the mens athletics area. I would have to drive across campus to the womens PE fields and buildings for womens field hockey. Some things do not change. And again, I had to start all over again convincing the women athletes and coaches that I was there to help keep the women in competition, not prevent them from playing. Gradually the women coaches and athletes began to trust me and before long we had more than enough women seeking access to the training room. I loved the athletes, male and female, at Stanford as I did at the UW. Working with athletes was my passion.

At Stanford, the men and women shared Maples Pavilion for basketball practices and games. The women practiced after the men, from 7-9 pm making for very long days for me. If the women did not have a good game, the coach would call a Sunday morning practice which I had to cover. The womens head basketball coach refused to let me sit on the main floor during practices, so I could either wait in the basketball locker room or sit in the balcony during practice and wait for an athlete to run up the stairs to me in case they needed something, or I would run down to the main floor if there was an injury. Maples Pavilion was a good distance from the training room, so we needed be at the practices in case an athlete became injured.

When I arrived at Stanford I jumped right in soon after finding an apartment to begin double day and triple day football practices.

Once the field hockey team arrived on campus in the fall, I hurried off after the busy taping time for all the men and womens sports to drive over to cover field hockey practices across campus carrying a huge water jug, ice packs in an Igloo, my training kit, my small kit, my purse and sunglasses. What I did not have in my training kit I had in my purse! At the UW I learned as I went along what else I needed to include in my training kit specific to womens needs, so now at Stanford I knew what to pack. My training kit in keeping with the times was larger than the one I had at the UW, plus Dave, Scotty and I wore camera cases on a shoulder strap to have tape and other small incidentals at the ready so we would not have to run back to our training kits for everything.

I covered Stanford home football games along with Dave and Scotty on our team sidelines, respected as athletic trainer. My first priority was to cover the womens field hockey games and travel with that team, so I was not always able to serve on the sidelines for football. When Stanford went to Penn State one year, I was able to go because there was no conflict with the field hockey team. I also accompanied the team with the athletic trainers to two Bowl Games during the days when Bill Walsh was head football coach. These were the Sun Bowl in San Antonio, Texas, and the Blue Bonnet Bowl in Houston, Texas. I participated in evaluating an injured Stanford player and rode in the cart with that injured player to the training room.

The Stanford field hockey team went to nationals one year and I traveled to West Chester, Pennsylvania with them over Thanksgiving. Nancy White was one of our best field hockey players, and her father and mother, Supreme Court Justice Byron White and his wife, treated the team and staff to a Thanksgiving Dinner at a restaurant after the tournament.

One year a very promising freshman arrived at Stanford and I sensed a lot of tension among the trainers and coaching staff. That quarterback really put a lot of speed and power on the ball and the receivers were not used to handling it. During one practice that first week, one of the receivers sustained a compound dislocation of the MP joint of the fifth finger, and everyone, including the players were stunned. That quarterback was John Elway and he played for Stanford all four years and graduated even though he had offers to turn pro during his junior year. He had the choice of playing pro baseball or pro football upon graduating, but he chose football. His dad was head football coach at San Jose State University which was just down the road.

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Our head athletic trainer, Dave Blanchard, had been on the medical staff for two different Olympic Games, Munich, Germany and Quebec, Canada. He was tapped by Bob Beeten, director of the newly instituted Olympic Training Center at the Squaw Valley Ski Area near Lake Tahoe in California to be a volunteer athletic trainer the summer of 1976. Bob recruited me after Dave gave his recommendation. We three worked with Olympic athletes from many of the sports, we were duly certified as physical therapists and athletic trainers, and worked well with the orthopedist who was on call from State Line, CA in South Lake Tahoe. That first summer the US Olympic Committee hosted an international womens basketball tournament there at Squaw Valley where the Olympic Training Center was located, and for this we had more athletic trainers to help with coverage.

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At the end of the summer I was asked to accompany the Mens USA Volleyball Team to Hawaii for the Pac Rim tournament, but it would be during the first week of Stanford football practice. Dave graciously allowed me to take this opportunity to have Olympic athletic training experience. The tournament was held at the University of Hawaii, Hilo campus on the Big Island. Personally many of the men on the team were very crude on purpose to fluster me, but I did not buy it. Years later I met up with one of the men from that same Mens USA Volleyball team who had not been disrespectful to me and his name was Greg. He was now the coach for the current Mens USA Volleyball team. The US Olympic Committee contacted me to cover this volleyball event that was being held at a local high school in my new home town of Visalia, CA. Greg remembered me and in speaking with me after the match he apologized for the poor behavior of his teammates when I had worked with them in Hawaii many years ago.

During the second summer of the US Olympic Training Center in 1977, I spent most of the summer volunteering with Olympic athletes from even more sports including some winter sports. The area became known as Olympic Valley, CA.

I was recommended by the Womens American Basketball Association and then selected by the US Olympic Committee in 1978 to serve as the athletic trainer to accompany the womens pre-Olympic basketball team on tour of the Pac Rim countries to play basketball games that summer to gain international experience prior to the 1980 Olympic Games. We met at the Olympic Training Center in Olympic Valley, CA in June for the women to train together. It was around then that I was asked if I would consider accepting the job as head athletic trainer at the Olympic Training Center. I turned it down after much consideration, but 6 months later the Olympic Training Center was moved to Colorado Springs, CO. Shortly after that the Womens Basketball Team, coaches and I flew to Hong Kong; Peking and Canton, in China; Seoul, Korea, and Nagoya, Japan before arriving in Tokyo for a tournament with all the countries we had just played. The USSR sent their womens national basketball team to compete at this tournament as well. The head coach for the tour was Pat Head, from the University of Tennesee, who became Pat Head Summit a few years later. As an athletic trainer in a foreign country, this tour was instructive for me as well. We were the first US team or group to enter China in 30 years. I never knew what first aide supplies were available to us, such as ice, or medical doctors in case of serious injury. When I asked these questions through an interpreter to the medical representative from China, he just shrugged his shoulders. He did show me his acupuncture needles, however.

The Pan American Games were in the summer of 1979. I was asked to come to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs in April for the Womens Olympic Basketball team tryouts. In June I married Tom Babagian, and two weeks later I left to join the USA Womens Basketball Team in Colorado Springs at the Olympic Training Center prior to flying to San Juan, Puerto Rico for the Pan American Games. We athletic trainers on the medical staff served from early morning when the training room opened till 9 or so at night each day. We took turns covering the training room, providing on site coverage of other sports as well as the team we were designated to cover and take turns on emergency coverage at night. I was designated to cover the Womens USA Basketball Team practices and games. We had the full Olympic experience including Opening Ceremony, medal ceremony, Closing Ceremony. The only difference was that the countries participating in the Pan American Games were from the Western Hemisphere. When I returned to the USA we were welcomed at the airport as heros. Soon it was time leave Michigan to return to work at Stanford to cover double and triple day football practices.

In April of 1980, the US Olympic Committee flew me to Colorado Springs, CO where the Olympic Training Center had been moved to serve as athletic trainer for the womens basketball tryouts for the selection of the women who would be competing on the USA Womens Basketball Team for the 1980 Olympics. Most of the women who were selected had been on the Pan American Team. In May of 1980, the President of the United States Jimmy Carter announced that he was boycotting the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, USSR which we knew was for political reasons. This was devastating to all the athletes who had trained for four year for this Olympics. Most athletes had to get on with their lives and this was their only chance to compete in the Olympic Games.

For me, it was my only chance as well. In honor of the 1980 Olympic Athletes, coaches and medical staff, the Olympic Committee hosted us in Washington, DC at the end of July 1980 to take part in some festivities, and to some of the sting out of the boycott of the Moscow Olympics. We were all given parade uniforms and a medal among other gifts. On the first evening there was an reception with appetizers and soft drinks on the White House lawn. The next day we marched in a parade down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol Building in our new Olympic parade uniforms. The temperature was 101 degrees and very humid as we stood in our cowboy hats and boots, long sleeved shirts and long skirts for the women, long pants for the men in front of the Capitol listening to Tip ONeal speaking on the steps of the Capitol. Athletes began passing out from the heat and we athletic trainers spent our time along the building wall behind the bushes giving the dehydrated athletes water to drink and cooling them down with wet towels. Typical for athletic trainers, we served behind the scenes. That evening there was a barbeque with music and fireworks in a park and a closing speech. The whole experience was very nice, but it was very sad when we said our goodbyes that evening knowing we may never see one another again, and that this had been our Olympics, never to be repeated again.

When I returned to Stanford I received the news that I was expecting our first child. Though thrilled at the news, my husband and I agreed to only give the news to our families. I did not want to cause my fellow athletic trainers to worry about how our football season would go, or think I would be a liability to our staff. I continued to work in the training room without problems and cover my field hockey team as always with carrying my heavy loads to the field and back to my car. At the end of the football season Dave took our athletic training staff out for pizza, and that is when I announced that I was five months pregnant. They were all so surprised and happy for me, but Dave and Scotty were dismayed that I did not trust them enough to tell me earlier, and I was greatly humbled.

Our first child, a daughter was born in March, 1981, and I left Stanford at the end of February on maternity leave. The last event I covered was a tennis match on the floor of Maples Pavilion which had a green covering over the floor. John McEnroe was a freshman tennis player his one and only year at Stanford before he went pro, and I had worked with him regularly in the training room. It was wonderful to have my last responsibility at Stanford be a good one.

 I was 8+ months pregnant with our second child in April 1984 when I was asked to come to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs for the USA Womens Basketball Teams tryouts. I made the decision not to participate because I knew I would not be able to work two practices per day with the womens basketball team so close to giving birth. Due to this I was unable to serve in the 1984 Olympic Games which were held in Los Angeles and our baby boy had just been born. I did not realize that I had not mourned my loss of being a part of the 1980 Olympics until the Opening Ceremonies of the 1984 Olympics began, and while watching the athletes enter the stadium on TV, I began to sob uncontrollably.

 The winter of 1979, the Stanford womens basketball team, coach Dottie McCrea and her assistant coach, Sue and I traveled to two tournaments on the East Coast, one before Christmas at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill which ended on December 23rd and the second tournament in Brooklyn, NY beginning on December 26th. It was a great learning experience for the women basketball players, but difficult on the team to be traveling over Christmas. The coaches decided never to do that again. It was my first Christmas as a married woman, and the coaches gave me permission to leave the team for two days, and instead of driving with the team to Brooklyn, I flew to Washington, DC and met my husband Tom where we went to the home of my Aunt Vida and Uncle Stan. We had a very lovely and relaxing Christmas and then flew to JFK International Airport on the evening of the 25th to rejoin the team. I taped the womens basketball players in my room with the gals sitting on the bed, pretty standard for my whole career on road trips, but this time Tom was quizzing the gals on topics in history which was one of the subjects he taught at Milpitas High School in Milpitas, CA where he taught and we lived after we were married. This entertainment was a great diversion while I was taping.

Though the Stanford Athletic Department in my first few years at Stanford was like a family under Athletic Director Joe Ruitz, things changed drastically when Mr. Ruitz retired. The new AD, Andy Geiger, totally changed that atmosphere. We athletic trainers had no voice in how our training coverage was to be. Mr. Geiger felt we should be at each practice and game of all sports, intercollegiate sports and club sports. We did not have the staff to meet all his demands. To tell you the truth, I felt like a slave while working in his regime.

When I approached Mr. Geiger who was considered our department chairman according to university policy to ask about taking a years leave of absence for maternity, Mr. Geiger granted my request. When my last day on the job at Stanford arrived, the Athletic Department threw me a coed baby shower at a luncheon. Following my baby shower, I went to the office of Mr. Geiger to complete the paperwork for my leave, and Mr. Geiger said that he had never said that I had been granted a years leave of absence. Well, this was shocking. I told him he had, and he said he had not, and then he finally admitted that I could not take a years leave of absence because it would be difficult for him to fill my position for only one year after doing a nationwide search. I was very upset about this, but I had enough comp time to allow me to take 4 months of leave with pay. I chose not to return to Stanford after my leave was over.

I did not have a model for how to be and athletic trainer and mother, and I did not see how this would be possible with my hours at work and travel schedule. There were no other women for which to guide me. One gal I spoke to from Ohio State University said that her husband was the home dad as she worked and traveled. I wanted to be a mom and did not see how I could do both.

I was so frustrated with Mr. Geiger and Stanford because of the way I was treated after all the sacrifice I had made all of my professional career, that I turned my face away from all healthcare, particularly athletic training for a couple of years. If it had not been for Jim Welsh, former head athletic trainer at San Jose State University who asked me to work one day a week at the sports medicine clinic which he owned and directed, PAR Clinic, I would have remained bitter.

Working with Jim helped me to regain my love for helping athletes, no matter what age. There was great opportunity in the Bay Area to work in sports medicine, however, when my husband and I made the decision to move to Visalia, California in the Central Valley of California, there were no sports medicine clinics, so I began working in the hospital for acute care, rehab, outpatient and finally Home Health where I had more control over my schedule and could work with the patient as a whole, and help them learn to handle obstacles in their home.

As a certified athletic trainer and registered physical therapist, I worked hard to maintain my dual certifications. When I worked at the University of Washington and was the 11th member of District 10, and we all went to the district meetings and the NATA National Conventions. At Stanford I continued to attend the NATA National Conventions by myself, but our staff was active at the state and district levels. I also attended seminars and workshops with hands on training for CEUs that I could use for both certifications. After I left athletic training I continued to maintain my certifications for both until I retired.

I was on the USOC list for covering US Olympic teams whenever the various teams came to California for competition. I covered the Womens Olympic Volleyball team at the University of San Francisco during a competition and assisted some of the athletes with finding medical help while they were in town.

When a reporter for the NATA came to interview me about being the first certified athletic trainer and currently a certified athletic trainer but working in a different area other than colleges and universities, she took a picture of me working with one of my elderly patients. I had my hospital ID badge on which clearly stated Home Health. When her interview was published in a magazine, I received quite a few hateful messages from other athletic trainers. I was not purporting to be anything that I was not, but clearly these athletic trainers thought I was. Jack Rockwell, a member of the original athletic trainers who met at the first NATA meeting in Kansas City, MO in 1955 came to my rescue, writing the kindest letter to me in my support. He had always been a good friend of mine.

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I have been married for 31 years as of June 3, 2020. My husband Tom and I have two married children, Rebecca and Paul, and 4 grandchildren who bring us great joy. Tom and I are busy with Christian mission work. We are both retired but have served together with Students International bringing students to work in short-term missions to serve with full-time North American and national staff in Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Nicaragua in occupational ministries. I worked in the Sports site one time and several times in the physical therapy area some of those countries. We serve at our local church and are part of a Bible Study. I still snow ski and we spend time swimming in our pool, walking and bicycling. We are members of a wine club. We enjoy time at the Central Coast where we enjoy splashing in the Pacific Ocean and walking along the beach, having our grandchildren come for sleepovers or just to swim in our pool, and be loved by us.

I believe I reached my early goals of helping women receive care for athletic injuries when there was no care for women when I first began. Now there are more women than men members in the NATA. I also achieved my goal of working with Olympic athletes, and although the USA did not attend the Moscow Olympics in 1980 due to the boycott, we had the Olympic experience during the Pan American Games in 1979. I am very thankful for the struggles and the successes I have had in forging a path that had not been trod which helped to form who I am. As a role model particularly in athletic training where there had been none, I always tried to represent myself well. I have not lost my passion for helping athletes and patients, caring equally for the stars and the least among us. I have tried to speak with kindness and stand up for what I believed, becoming more assertive through my life. And, after serving with the Olympics I am even more patriotic than ever.

I mentioned some very important athletic trainers and doctors who helped me along the way, including Bob Spackman, Bud Miller, Dr. James Garrick, Dave Blanchard, Stan Scott, Pinkie Newell, Jack Rockwell, Jim Welch, Rich Carey, John Schrader, Gary Reinholtz, Mark Smaha and John Anderson. I am proud of the women who came after me and served so well in the NATA, including Marge Albohm, Janice Daniels and Julie Max.

I had some wonderful women working with me at Stanford including Patti Millson, Emily McCall and Billie Hendrix. I am privileged to have had the support of my husband throughout our marriage. He was never intimidated by my taping of football players ankles, for he was a football player himself. And I am thankful for my children who have always been there for me as I have been for them. My grandchildren are the best life can offer.