



## A Message from our Executive Director....

It is with excitement and trepidation that I follow Dr. Ann Fariss as Executive Director of the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

Ann led our organization since its founding 25 years ago and built the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame into the role model it has become in honoring achievements in women's basketball. With Ann's continued support and the hard work and dedication of our Executive Board, I am confident we will continue to flourish.

What a year it has been! The Connecticut Women's Bas-

ketball Hall of Fame celebrated its Silver Anniversary with the induction of seven outstanding individuals. The United States Women's Basketball Team, led by UConn's Geno Auriemma and six former Connecticut players, brought home the Gold.

The nation once again watched highly competitive collegiate women's basketball and saw Brittany Grimes and her Baylor team capture the NCAA crown. Shelton High School marked 50 years of women's basketball with a spectacular celebration in October that honored its Founders, Head Coach Bernice Nicolari and Assis-

tant Coach Celeste Beattie. Past and present players, coaches, and fans gathered to hear Coach Nicolari chronicle the growth of high school women's basketball, pre and post Title IX.

Our Executive Board sees an exciting 2013 ahead. We have a new website, new faces on the Board, and an outstanding new class of inductees. We encourage you to share ideas with us as we seek new ways to promote women's basketball.

Hope to see you all at our banquet in April.

Linda J. Wooster,  
Executive Director

**Linda J. Wooster,**  
President/Executive  
Director/Founder

**Louise Albrecht,**  
Vice President/Membership  
Chair/Founder

**Ann V. Fariss, PhD**  
Banquet Coordinator/  
Founder

**Tony Candido,**  
Fundraising Chair/  
Founder

**Brenda Reilly, PhD**  
Founder (Posthumous)

**Lee Franzman,**  
Nominating Chairperson

**David Strong,**  
Historian/Archivist

**Marge Dolan,**  
Regional Project Director

**Sue Crisafi,**  
Secretary

**Tracey Finer,**  
Creative Writer/  
Newsletter Editor

**Tina Gonyea,**  
Publicity & Promotion

**Pamela Moffo,**  
Publicity & Promotion

**Elaine Piazza,**  
Publicity & Promotion

**Jeff Goddu,**  
Website Designer

## Shelton Women Celebrate 50th ANNIVERSARY

By Bernice Nicolari

October 28, 2012 saw a crowd of former and current players, coaches, and women's basketball illuminati gather at the Grassy Hill Lodge in Derby to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Shelton Gaelette Basketball.

Featured speaker at the event was five-time hall of famer and Gaelette original Head Coach and Founder Bernice Nicolari. Nicolari chronicled the team's history

and highlighted the struggles she and Assistant Coach/Co-Founder Celeste Beattie faced in establishing the first-ever women's varsity sports program at Shelton High in 1962.

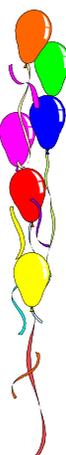
Mayor Mark Lauretti represented the city of Shelton in honoring these Founders, their pioneering 1962 women's basketball team, and all Shelton women athletes who have followed.

Commemorative plaques

were presented by the 50th Anniversary Committee to Founders Bernice Nicolari and Celeste Beattie, "For their Courage, Determination, and Success", and also to the 1962 Gaelette Pioneers since, as Nicolari said, "50 years ago, we had no money for anything, but better late than never!"

50 years later, Shelton High School boasts nine women's varsity sports teams.

[www.gaelettes.com](http://www.gaelettes.com)



## CWBHOF Inductees Honored.....

### Fairfield County Sports Hall of Fame

At the Fairfield County Sports Commission's 8th Annual Sports Night dinner held on October 15, 2012, **Dave Strong**, was awarded the J. Walter Kennedy Community Service award (one of many awards within the Fairfield County Sports Hall of Fame) which recognizes 10 or more years of outstanding achievement and service to the sports community. Strong's coaching career at Masuk High School spanned 35 years where he amassed a 704-156 overall record including 3 state titles, 19 league championships, 2 undefeated seasons and a 93 game regular season win streak.

### Northeast Hall of Fame

**Pamela Moffo and Elaine Pi-**

**azza** were inducted into the Northeast Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony was held on November 4, 2012 at the Woodland Golf Club in Newton, MA. The award honors women who have "advanced the role of girls and women in sports".

### Naugatuck Hall of Fame

**Jessica Mudry and Cynthia Adamski** were inducted into the Naugatuck Hall of Fame. The 41st annual induction ceremony was held on October 20, 2012 at the Continental Room in Naugatuck. Jennifer Rizzotti, the University of Hartford Women's Basketball Coach and a CWBHOF inductee, was the guest speaker.

### Women's Basketball Hall of Fame

The Women's Basketball Hall of Fame's Class of 2013 will

include famed UConn standout **Jennifer Rizzotti** (Player). The 2013 induction ceremony will take place on June 8, 2013 in Knoxville, TN. The Women's Basketball Hall of Fame's mission statement is to "Honor the Past, Celebrate the Present, and Promote the Future" of women's basketball.

### CTAHPERD

**Cynthia Adamski** received the 2012 PathFinder Award given by the Connecticut Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. The Pathfinder Award was established in 1991 to recognize "women who have demonstrated continuous dedication to the advocacy, recruitment and enhancement of girls and women in sports and sports leadership in their states."



## **CT WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PIONEER AWARD**

### **"REMEMBERING THE PIONEERS OF CONNECTICUT WOMEN'S BASKETBALL"**

The CWBHOF is honored to recognize Stacia A. "Skeets" Gayeski as the 1st recipient of the CT Women's Basketball Pioneer Award. This honor is awarded to an individual who has played a role in blazing the trail for women's basketball in Connecticut, preparing the way for others to follow.

In 1933, Jack Fitzgerald, the owner of Jack's Lunch, decided to sponsor a men's basketball team called the Speedboys. In an effort to give the fans two games a night, he also pulled together a team of female basketball players to play the game before the men. This team, made up of local talent from Middletown, CT, would be known as the Speedgirls. It wasn't long before the Speedgirls were receiving top billing and selling out their games at the state armory at the south end of Main Street.

In their first season, the Speedgirls had a record of 29 wins and 1 loss against the best female squads in the country. In season two, they improved to 32 and 1. In order to get his team ready to play, their coach, Clarence McCabe, hired five guys from the Eagles, a junior team who played out of Middletown, CT, to scrimmage the Speedgirls. From the appearance of bruises and black eyes on the Eagles' players, there was little doubt the women could play.

Born in 1913, Stacia A. "Skeets" Gayeski, first started playing basketball at the age of 15. She was recognized as the "Most Athletic Girl" by the Middletown High School Senior Annual of 1931. At age 20, Skeets joined the Speedgirls during their first season. She played the left guard position and was picked by the sports writers as one of the best guards in Connecticut. She was also a defensive star during her three seasons with the Speedgirls. Well known for her leadership skills, Skeets was voted captain in her second season.

Skeets played for three seasons with the Speedgirls before leaving to marry U.S. Army Lt. John Clark Vaughan in 1936. Although the team was disbanded in 1937 after their fourth season, their brilliant play put Middletown, CT on the map.



1934-35 Team

Captain "Skeets" Gayeski is seated, third from the left (#4).

*Joe Hark... Ed Bombard... Jack Fitzgerald... Clarence McCabe... Maury Higgins... Ray Baldwin... (all Co.) N.Y. & Boston... Bob White... Emma Anderson... Skeets Gayeski... John Clark Vaughan... John Clark Vaughan... John Clark Vaughan...*

## In Memory



The Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame created the **Brenda Reilly Memorial High School Basketball Award** and the **Brenda Reilly Youth Basketball Camp Scholarship** in honor of Dr. Brenda Reilly, the Associate Athletic Director of Central Connecticut State University and one of the organization's founders.

The **Brenda Reilly Memorial High School Basketball Award** is awarded annually to the most outstanding high school girls' basketball team in the State of Connecticut. The coach and a representative of the selected team are invited as honored guests to the Hall of Fame's annual banquet.

The **Newtown High School Girls' Basketball Team** was awarded the 2012 Brenda Reilly Memorial High School Basketball Award.

The **Brenda Reilly Youth Basketball**

**Camp Scholarship** provides the opportunity for a young girl to attend a summer basketball camp in Connecticut. Each year a different Connecticut camp is selected. The recipient and her parents or guardian are invited as honored guests to the Hall of Fame's annual banquet.

## ALL AMERICAN RED HEADS

### RED HEADS ATTEND CWBHF DINNER

Although the CWBHF induction ceremony is always a special and memorable night for the recognition it provides to the inductees and their families and friends, the April 11, 2012 ceremony was special for another reason. In attendance on this night were two (of a total of five) All American Red Head players from Connecticut, Celeste Chartier and Gail Marks.

Chartier first played basketball at Stonehill College, MA before joining the Red Heads for the 1972-73 season. And she still continues to play! On the senior circuit since 2000, Chartier has played on two Silver and one Bronze National Teams.

Marks first saw the Red Heads play in Windsor Locks, CT. Believing in her talent, the owner flew her all the way to Mississippi for a tryout with the team. The year she joined the team, the 1978-79 season, the Red Heads went 127-16.

The evening's journey back through the history of women's basketball continued thanks to an exhibit created by John Molina, a CWBHF inductee. The exhibit showcased the Red Heads' basketball memorabilia.



*Courtesy of John Molina*

### ALL AMERICAN RED HEADS MAKE HISTORY

History was made on September 8, 2012 when the All American Red Heads became the first women's team ever to be inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. This honor recognized the contributions and lasting impact the Red Heads have had on the game of women's basketball.

In 1936, Connie Mack "Ole" Olson created the All American Red Heads. From 1936 to 1986, the Red Heads toured the United States and played local men's teams using the men's basketball rules. Their season, which lasted from October till May, had them playing over 200 games and although there is no official count, it is estimated they won about 70% of their games. Olson recruited the best female players in the country who had few other opportunities to play anywhere else. In an effort to make his teams stand out, Olson dressed the players in shiny uniforms and dyed their hair red. The demand for the Red Heads was so great that there were often multiple teams touring the country at the same time.

The All American Red Heads combined serious basketball play with trick shots, fancy dribbling and amusing routines with the opposing teams and fans similar to the Harlem Globetrotters. Although the country might not have been ready to see women beat men in basketball, these games provided fun for the whole family.

In the 1950's, Orwell "Red" Moore purchased the team from Olson. Moore had been the coach of the Famous Red Heads, a farm team to the All American Red Heads, since 1948. Moore loved the Red Heads and spent the next 30 years advocating for equality in sports. The All American Red Heads made basketball among girls more popular and acceptable.

# THANK YOU!!!

To the members of the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame,

I would like to thank you for another amazing year! I had a great time at the dinner in April modeling the uniform again. I adore all of you and really enjoyed helping out more than anything. It really means the world to me that I was able to do it again. I can't thank you enough; it was really my pleasure. I would love to volunteer to help out the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame for years to come, without a doubt. I have come to love every one of you like my family.

Thank you so much for a wonderful night!

Tamra Gonyea

**Don't forget to visit us on the Web.....**

[www.ctwomensbasketballhalloffame.com](http://www.ctwomensbasketballhalloffame.com)

[www.ctwbhof.com](http://www.ctwbhof.com)

The Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame seeks to honor those who, in a superlative fashion, have contributed to the enhancement of women's basketball in Connecticut—either through participation, through service, through support, or through achievement.



**Contribution to the Cause....**The CWBHF Committee is determined to provide maximum service to/for Connecticut Women's Basketball. To give you the best we have to give and to keep pace with the increasing demands of our operating initiatives, we would welcome any financial contributions to defray our operating costs. CWBHF is a Section 501C (3) TAX ORGANIZATION FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAX PURPOSES. Certain Contributions to CWBHF MAY BE deductible to the person making the contribution. The CWBHF recommends that a person consult with his/her legal advisors as to the deductibility of the donation. If interested in donating, please contact Louise Albrecht at 203-256-0930.



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

2013 Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame Ceremony

### Inductees:

Geno Auriemma

Nicholas Chaconis

Amy Matthews McKenna

Karen 'Pie' Draughn

Chris Dailey

Patty Costa

Lisa Brummel

When: April 24, 2013

Where: CASCADE (Hamden, CT)

Reception: 6:00 p.m.

Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

**Gail Strumpf Cheney, Head Coach,  
Sacred Heart Academy**

Gail Strumpf Cheney, a 2011 CWBHF inductee, was named the head girls' basketball coach for Sacred Heart High School. Cheney steps into this new position after having been the head coach at Woodland Regional High School in Beacon Falls, CT from 2006 to 2012.

Sports do not build character.

They reveal it.

Heywood Brown



### CONGRATULATIONS!

Continuing their prominence on the world basketball stage, the U.S. Women's basketball team won its fifth

straight gold medal at the 2012 Olympic games in London, beating France by 36 points.

## We Need Your Help!

### CWBHF Website

Don't forget to check out our new website. The new site is easier to navigate and allows the visitor to email questions and suggestions directly to the Hall of Fame committee.

We have also added the ability for you to sign up for a CWBHF newsletter subscription.

Just access our website at [www.ctwbhof.com](http://www.ctwbhof.com), click on Newsletters, enter your email address in the Email Subscription box, and press Save. You will receive a confirmation email. It is that easy!!

But we also need your help with the website. The photo gallery includes photos of players that we have been unable to identify. If you know the names of the players in any of these photos, please let us know. And send us your pictures so we can add them to the photo gallery!

### EMAILS WANTED!!



In an effort to begin the move from print to digital media, we are trying to compile a list of email addresses which will allow us to provide you with information

about the CWBHF in a more timely and cost efficient manner. If you would like to send us your email address, please forward to Tina Gonyea at [tghoop@aol.com](mailto:tghoop@aol.com).

**We are especially looking for the email addresses for all inductees inducted into the CWBHF prior to 2001.**

### Updated Addresses



Please help us in our efforts to keep our list of member and inductee addresses current and up to date. If you are aware of address changes, please notify Ann Fariss at [avfariss@sbcglobal.net](mailto:avfariss@sbcglobal.net).