

Les Robbins
16717 Elm Circle
Omaha, Nebraska 68130-2052

Hand delivered Saturday October 5, 2024

Troy Dannen, Athletic Director
University of Nebraska Lincoln
800 Stadium Drive
Lincoln, NE 68501

Dear Mr. Dannen:

I welcome you to Nebraska and appreciate what you have done so far. I'm going to get right to the point.

Perhaps you are not aware of the regrettable situation relative to the first women's volleyball team that played under the guidance of the Husker Athletics Department with scholarship players in 1974. Attached is some information which bears reading to enlighten you of this matter.

This travesty of justice first came to my attention during a recent conversation with Cheryl Henry a long-time friend of our family. The more she explained it, the more enraged I became at how unfair she and her fellow teammates have been treated.

Cheryl Nolte, Vicki Ossenkop, Denise Stange and Ann Garrett have not been given the recognition deserving of actively participating in the fall 1974 volleyball season.

Even though a so-called compromise accommodation was given to them affording them certain benefits other University of Nebraska letterwinners receive, they are still being treated as second class members with an asterisk of this prestigious group of decorated student athletes.

Title IX enacted in 1972, only two years prior to their senior season, is most commonly associated with gender discrimination in sports and is credited with advancing participation of women in athletics. Hence, this factored into Cheryl and the others receiving their first scholarships in the fall of 1974.

If the other attached evidence is not in of itself compelling, take the words of their coach Pat Sullivan who stated in her April 11, 2023 email, "I was there. The seniors on that varsity team were all integral players. Based on playing time alone, Cheryl Nolte, Vicki Ossenkop, Denise Stange and Ann Garrett were all letter winners." Need I say more?

This is unfair to these deserving women, now wives, mothers and grandmothers. They sacrificed by devoting their college years to transforming the beginnings of Husker volleyball team, practiced hard, played, earned and deserve the full recognition availed to all other Volleyball Letter winners who succeeded them.

When we attend Husker volleyball matches, we enter the Bob Devaney Sports Center thru the southwest doors close to where we park, no lines to contend with as minimal fans enter there. We walk down the west hallway by the track and swimming pool coming face to face with the volleyball letterwinners board. Last Sunday night I was especially taken back, disgusted and it burned me to see and know that this display is incomplete and void of the pioneers who were the first UNL team to receive athletic scholarships under Title IX. Can you imagine how they must feel?

Funding a replacement board is not the issue. So, ask yourself, what really is the reason?

As a Rotarian for 30 plus years, now senior active status, the treatment of these four ladies does not meet the Four-Way Test which ethically guides members in their professional, business and personal lives. Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

The 50th anniversary of this first team should be celebrated with these four ladies and their coach being held up high certainly at the Devaney Center during a volleyball game before the end of December and also perhaps during a timeout at a football game.

As a lifelong Husker fan, please honor these four deserving ladies with full recognition of all the benefits of the N Club and by putting their names on the display board at the Devaney Center and while you are at it, on the Hewitt columns in the west side of Memorial Stadium. Thank you!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Les'.

Les Robbins
402-690-6101

CC: Cheryl Henry
Denise Stange
Vicki Highstreet
Pat Sullivan
Lincoln Arneal