

Vicki Doty Girl's Track Coach at Ottawa-Glandorf for 40 Years – 1976/2015

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“When I first started t O-G, they also said they had an opening for a girl's track coach. And being young and enthusiastic at the time, I said sure. I kind of let my enthusiasm take me those first couple of years. I did have that background of phys-ed classes at BG and I'd run track for three years at Grove. But I got smarter as I went along. I always went to the state clinics put on by the Ohio High School Track and Cross Country Coaches every year. I learned a lot from that and I did a lot of reading.”

When it came to coaching girl's track, Doty kept saying 'sure' for the next 39 years. And while she considers herself a historian, she is also a key figure in the history of girls' sports. She is a pioneer of sorts who has seen firsthand and has been directly involved in the transition of girls' sports from the GAA days into the mainstream of OHSAA high school athletics.

“When I took over the track program, girls' sports were still under the auspices of the GAA (Girls Athletic Association),” Doty said.

“We had a very limited schedule. We did not participate at the same meets the boys did. We had separate meets. Girls' sports were just starting to take off at that point and time. It was in its infancy stages and that's just the way it was.”

When she competed in track at Columbus Grove High School, Doty said the girls still competed in events like the softball and baseball throw. When she got into teaching and coaching, there were still of number of hurdles to clear – literally.

“I coached basketball, too, and that first year the basketball and volleyball teams shared the same uniforms. We had a spaghetti dinner to raise money to be able to get different sets of uniforms for both teams,” Doty said.

“When I first started, the girls just wore cut-off jeans and t-shirts. Our first track uniforms were a pair of blue shorts and a yellow shirt with light trim on the sleeves, but they misprinted the 'O' and the 'G' on the pocket. They had like a period after the 'O' but not the

'G' when there should have been a dash. It looked kind of weird, but, hey, we had uniforms.”

Doty found herself at the forefront of a growing movement in girl's athletics. And she wasn't alone. “I've also felt there were a number of people at a number of schools in this area – Dorothy Edwards at Elida; Bernadine Reinhart at Shawnee; Gretchen Prichard at Bath; Emma Pleiman at Columbus Grove – who were the ones that really got girls' sports started around here.” Doty said.

“Emma Pleiman was my phys-ed teacher and my track coach at Columbus Grove. She did everything: she coached volleyball, basketball, track and gymnastics. Emma was very influential in getting things going, a real building block. I look at her as a role model and tried to make myself that kind of role model. I hope that I've done that.”

Someday, Doty knows that she'll hang her clipboard up for good. “When the time comes, I'll know it. And I'll step away gracefully,” Doty said. “The hardest thing about retiring from teaching five years ago was that I wasn't ready. But with our retirement system and the changes that were happening, it was what I had to do. I was known as a teacher for 35 years and when I was no longer a teacher, I no longer had that identity. That's a tough transition for anybody, but by coaching these five years I've still got my toe in the water a little bit and it's helped me make the transition. I'm not married, I don't have kids but these kids are my family and when you're around people all the time, it makes a big difference. I know it would tough to go home and just be around the dog all day. He doesn't talk back! I will say I am slowing down. I don't move as fast as I used to and my feet hurt at the end of the day. Forty years is a long time. But I still enjoy it. If I didn't, I would have been out by now. When I can't add anything to the program any more, I'll know it's time.”