

Excerpt from Interview with Christine Grant

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Interviewer: Ellyn Bartges

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Grant: And sport has been an absolutely essential part of my entire life. I started competing when I was about eleven, and I can't really quite imagine my life without sport. After I'd been teaching in Scotland for four years, five years, and I decided to go to Canada, which I did. And that was 1961. I went to Vancouver. And I linked up with some friends I'd made on the Canadian field hockey team. Sport is such a wonderful experience in so many ways, but one of the best aspects of sport has to be the friends that you make. And I have now friends all over the world through field hockey. I lived in Vancouver for three years, I lived in Ottawa for one year, and then I lived in Toronto for about six years. And then I decided that I really needed to go to graduate school and came to the University of Iowa. Came down in the summer of 1968 for summer school, and then I came down as a full-time student in 1969. I had absolutely no intention of staying here. I love Canada. Canada is one of the most beautiful countries in the world, and I really intended to go back there. But what happened was I couldn't understand or fathom the discrimination against women in sport here. That was—it hit me between the eyes when I arrived.

Bartges: It wasn't that way in Scotland?

Grant: No, and it wasn't that way in Canada either. I'm not going to say there wasn't discrimination. There was in both Scotland and Canada with boys and men getting better opportunities, but nothing like here. Young girls and women were actively discouraged. I'd never seen that before. Discouraged from participating in sport, which was a sin. Anyway, that was unbelievable to me—just totally and utterly unbelievable. And that's really when I became a

feminist. And then Title IX¹ was passed in 1972. I was still a graduate student and an instructor in the department. And I just—I got caught up in the whole revolution that was about to take place. In 1973 our president, Sandy Boyd, decided that he was going to elevate twelve women's club sports right up to varsity status, and he was going to create a position of athletic director for the women's sports. And the head of our department at that time was Dr. M. Gladys Scott, and she encouraged me to apply for the position. And since I was up to my ears in debt (laughs) and feeling pretty strongly about the fact that we should stop this discrimination, I decided to apply. And I got the job. And then once I had that job, I mean—that just seems like yesterday because I was just caught up in this entire revolution. So that's it.

¹ Title IX is a portion of the Education Amendments of 1972, and it states, in part, that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."