

Please Note

This oral history transcript has been divided into two parts. The first part documents the presidency of John G. Kemeny and is open to the public. The second part documents the presidency of David T. McLaughlin and will be open to the public in June 2012.

This is part one.

Agnes Bixler Kurtz
Former Assistant Director of Athletics

Dartmouth College

An Interview Conducted by

Jane Carroll

Hanover, New Hampshire

July 24, 1997

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Hanover, New Hampshire

INTERVIEW: Agnes Kurtz
INTERVIEWED BY: Jane Carroll
PLACE: Baker Library
Hanover, New Hampshire
DATE: July 24, 1997

CARROLL: Today is July 24, 1997, and I am here speaking to Agnes Bixler Kurtz, who had worked in the Physical Education Department at Dartmouth from 1972 to 1989. I wanted to find out, because the Physical Education Department is not very clear on the titles they ascribe people, what were your titles during that time period.

KURTZ: Well, I would have said that I worked in the Athletic Department, but the Athletic Department included Physical Education and everything else. I was hired as...my title was Associate in Physical Education, but I was hired to start women's athletics, meaning varsity teams. The fact that I was not said to be an assistant director of athletics might reflect on the feeling that they had about women, in general; that is physical education classes and intramurals were somewhat below varsity and junior varsity athletics. That might have reflected the attitude. But, after two years, I was then...my title was changed to Assistant Director of Athletics and Seaver Peters was the director. Whitey Burnham was the only other assistant director, and he was then essentially the director for men's athletics and I was assistant director for women's athletics.

CARROLL: And that title lasted until 1989?

KURTZ: Yes. No. Sorry. It did not. In 1979, I decided that I really needed to either spend more time with coaching or more time with being an administrator. I had to give up something and I decided that I would give up administration and just go

back to coaching, so I remained as a coach, varsity coach until '89.

CARROLL: And how many sports were you coaching?

KURTZ: I started out...in '72, I coached three sports...varsity coach. Three sports.

CARROLL: Which were?

KURTZ: Field hockey, squash and lacrosse. After three years, then I hired a field hockey coach. Mary Corrigan and so I was coaching varsity lacrosse and varsity squash and continuing to be an administrator. In '79, I gave up the administration and in 1981, I was...then we hired someone else, Josie Harper, to do the varsity and lacrosse and I became her assistant and I continued to coach varsity squash.

Now all this was part of the development. I mean, at first, I was the only woman and then we would hire a few more varsity coaches and then we finally got some assistant coaches. So I finally worked my way down to being a coach of one sport and an assistant in another, which was generally what most of the men coaches did anyway. But that was approximately ten years after I had gotten here that I had gotten down to the level. When I first came, I was essentially everything to do with women's athletics. I had to do all the scheduling. I had to do the hiring of other coaches. I had to coach the teams, themselves. I was also teaching in the Physical Education Department. I was also helping to get intramurals started. I soon got rid of that part of it and got Ken Jones to continue with the intramurals right away because it was just too much to do.

CARROLL: I am curious. How did you hear about the job at Dartmouth and where were you when you heard about it?

KURTZ: Very interesting. I was in Delaware teaching and we had just...I had been there for four years and we had established women's athletics down there in 1969 and I started coaching field hockey. So I was among the first women coaches at [the University of] Delaware. Now, in the whole country, things were just starting for women's sports. I mean, there had been some smattering of sports, but very few, and very

few organized sports. I was ready to leave Delaware and I was thinking about possibly going and getting a Ph.D. somewhere. I didn't really know what I wanted to do, but I was actively playing squash in tournaments in the country and I had been in a tournament in New Haven. I heard from a woman who was up here as the wife of a math teacher up here...

CARROLL: Who was that?

KURTZ: Lee Burling. I think her husband was a visiting professor a couple of times here, and she was a good athlete herself. She knew what was going on at Dartmouth and she knew that they were looking for someone to start women's athletics because they were going to start admitting women. And so, when she told me about this, I thought about it and I thought that I really didn't think that I wanted to go up to Dartmouth and start a women's athletic program because I hadn't really thought about it. But, because she told it to me in New Haven and I got in the car and drove back to Delaware, I thought about it all the way and I thought about all the possibilities and I thought starting a whole new program would be really fun. So I decided to apply and that was in February.

In May, I got the call that I was hired, which was very exciting. So I came up and spent a few days up here in May, planning a little bit; but, it was pretty hard to plan things because they really didn't know what was going on. It was really to get a feel for what was going on and to meet the people, more than I had in the interview. So that's how I got the job.

CARROLL: When you came for the interview, who did the interviewing?

KURTZ: The first interview was...I believe it could have been a day and a half or it might have been just one long, full day; but I met with two or three different groups. Seaver Peters, of course, Whitey Burnham and Will [Wilber] Votz was the head of physical education and some students. We had lunch. It probably was just one long day.

CARROLL: A very long day.

KURTZ: No. Actually...and it was very exciting. I mean, I really loved it. I met with somebody up in administration as well. Because I remember being in Parkhurst and I just don't remember who it was, but it was definitely on the administrative side of the college.

CARROLL: You had grown up in New England, right? So this was coming home.

KURTZ: Yes, as a matter of fact. I felt it very much. When I would walk down Main Street, after I got here in the fall, I thought that it was exactly that way. I felt like I was back home again. I was born in Connecticut, lived in Massachusetts for a while, lived in New York State, but only a short time, and we always spent summers in New Hampshire. So it might have been suddenly sort of the atmosphere.

It also was the small town atmosphere and also the fact that, when we first came, I felt like a whole lot of people knew me. I didn't know a whole lot of people, but a whole lot of people knew me because there were about six women who came in then at different parts of the campus and we all knew each other and everybody knew of us, even if we didn't know them. So we would go down the street and everybody would say "hello" to you or would say this or that. So that's maybe part of why I felt like I was coming home because it was like just too much of a small town atmosphere.

CARROLL: Who were the other women?

KURTZ: Well, Ruth Adams, of course. Marilyn Baldwin. She had been here for a little bit. Now you are going to catch me. I can't even think of some of their names. I would have to go back and check it out. There were a couple more.

CARROLL: That's all right. I was just curious. What really attracted you to the job?

KURTZ: I got the impression that...I could tell that the people in the Athletic Department were against Dartmouth going coed. That was pretty obvious, actually, from talking with people. But I also got the feeling that, once they had lost the battle, they wanted to do it right and I always thought that was true throughout Dartmouth. They really did want to do it right,

even if they didn't all pitch in a lot. I do feel that they said, "Okay. So we lost the battle. Now let's get things going."

That and the fact that it is a challenge to start anything new and I had been in athletics all my life. I was a fairly good athlete, even though it was still frowned upon to be an athlete, so I had been kind of all the route anyway and so on. It just seemed like the thing to do.

CARROLL: Why do you think they were against the coeducation in the athletics at Dartmouth?

KURTZ: Partly that the whole College...there were a lot of people who were against it because it was a change. I think, in the Athletic Department, they were especially against it because it meant that they would have to share facilities, share the money. They already had sixteen teams. They had facilities going which they considered were completely full and they had a budget which they had to create and ask for every year, and I am sure that they didn't see that there were millions of dollars left over in their budget. So, whatever happened...I mean, even if they added a new men's sport, it would be somewhat of a pinch on the already-existing budget. So to think that they might have to add more women's sports would certainly pinch the budget. That's going to be a whole lot harder than adding two or three women to an English class.

CARROLL: Did you have to worry with details, things like locker room space?

KURTZ: Absolutely every detail, I would be [responsible for]. Everything having to do with women's athletics, I had to ask for. If I didn't ask for it, it wouldn't happen. The locker room had started, maybe during the summer before I got here; so at least they were going to make a locker room. They did specify a bathroom for the women, so it wasn't that bad.

But, in doing the locker room, we added a training room and I remember going through and consulting about the training room and things like that. So I was involved in that. As far as starting women's athletics, there were no teams here, no budgets. They gave me a general budget. This was for women's athletics. It wasn't for field hockey or for tennis or

for basketball because they didn't know. There weren't any teams for women when I came. So I had to find out what the women wanted or if, in fact, they wanted any teams. So I made contact with the women. The fact that there were only 300 made it a little bit easier and I did, in fact, go to meetings.

They had quite a few general meetings of all the women on campus because it was new. I mean, this was a campus-wide meeting where they would talk about security and they would talk about fire alarms and everything else. And so I would be involved with all of this so that I could at least talk with them and tell them what we might...what we could plan to do. I went to all of the dorms in the first month.

I went...I made a meeting, a small meeting where I could talk with just the ones in the dorm to see what they wanted as far as intramurals, as well as varsity teams. I also sent a questionnaire to all of them saying, "Please...if you are interested in a varsity sport...all sports generally, field hockey, maybe tennis, something..." just a few suggestions. Asking them what they wanted and to bring the letter back to the gym and this is where I was and please come down and bring it to me and we will see what we can do. This was the first week even because, if we were going to have field hockey, we had better get started. [Laughter]

So we did. We had twenty-one women in field hockey. We also started...we had some people in tennis. We ended up having field hockey as the fall sport. We had basketball and squash in the winter and we had tennis and lacrosse in the spring. All of these were by people coming in and saying that these were the things that we are most interested in. I coached the field hockey and the squash and the lacrosse. We hired a former male student. I think he had quit the basketball team. He was a senior. He coached the basketball team. In tennis, we hired Jan Strohbehn. That was in the spring...for tennis.

But to say, "Okay. Here's what happens when we start the program", in field hockey now I've got...I had actually twenty-one people on the team. There are eleven people on the team, so twenty-one would be just short of a varsity and the j.v. with no substitutes. So I tried to do a varsity and a j.v.

and we had one goalie who played for both teams and that was by agreement. Usually, if you play in another school, the j.v. tended to be a developmental team anyway. So, to have somebody playing...if they were playing as the goalie, it wasn't quite as demanding as say playing as a center halfback for two full games. So that was no problem for the other teams.

But I would call up schools to find out if we could get into their schedule. I think that would be a whole lot harder now because schedules are quite full and it is expected that you have it scheduled out ahead of time and everybody knows what's going on. But, as I said, the teams in the rest of the country were developing at the same time, so it wasn't as hard to add. We also had...I found that everybody wanted to come to Dartmouth because it was such a novelty to have women at Dartmouth, that is the coach's dream--to have a completely home schedule. Well, I could easily have a completely home schedule, but then I thought, well, what are we going to do next year? Well, of course, it turned out too that if we had more [games] at home, it wouldn't be so bad because next year we would be adding a few more games anyway, so we could add all those coming home and go away for the first one.

So, you call up and you get a team and then you have to call officials...get officials to officiate, you know. You also have to find uniforms of some sort. We didn't have very much money allotted to us, but we did have enough to buy some equipment for field hockey; but, for uniforms, the kids went out and bought shorts and tee shirts at Campions.

That was just the way it was. There was only so much money. That happened in all the sports as far as developing it the first year. I had to just make calls, seeing what we could get. First of all, seeing if we had a team. Then to get someone to coach the team. Then get the schedule organized. Then get officials for the home games and then, of course, arrange all the transportation and deal with the money.

CARROLL: I am just wondering when you slept during this first year.

KURTZ: I was very, very busy. Actually, that was good because I was new to the area. I didn't have a whole lot of friends at first because I didn't know anybody. So this was fine. I was working. I was going out in the evenings and meeting with the students and stuff, and it was fine because things were happening. It would have been a lot more frustrating if things didn't happen. One of the things I will give Dartmouth credit for is that other schools were doing the same thing and trying to add teams, but, for example, Wellesley or Smith, who had lots and lots of women...they probably didn't have any better time getting students to participate and developing their teams. Their administration wasn't spending much money on athletics either so it wasn't easier just because there happened to be 2,000 women at those schools instead of 300. I am getting a little off the track.

CARROLL: I am curious about what the chances are of getting 300 women together and being able to field both a field hockey varsity and junior varsity team. Were the women particularly athletic who came here?

KURTZ: Well, this is interesting. There were some transfer students, of course, among the 300 and one from Wellesley said that Wellesley could not get a varsity or j.v. team and that is what I am saying of the 2,000 women. I think the 300 women who came to Dartmouth were outstanding in that they had to be fairly outgoing, fairly aggressive women, because they are going to a formerly all-male institution in the woods in northern New Hampshire. I mean, you don't just get a whole lot of people that are not interested in something outdoors or something aggressive or something athletic or...you know.

The other thing is that they were not particularly talented in a sport. Field hockey was probably the most developed team in high school, I would say. It was something that had been going on since the 1920's and, if they played anything, they probably played field hockey. It was something you would have heard about through the 40's and the 50's and '60's. So we did have people that knew a little bit about the sport. But, in the other sports, they took them up like, for example, squash. There were only two or three people who played squash before, but there were enough people who wanted to learn it that they could learn it and then get pretty good at it. In lacrosse, we had a varsity, but we only had about thirteen

or fourteen on the team and maybe five of them had played before...or maybe five hadn't played. But anyway, that was certainly a developing sport.

CARROLL: But it strikes me that today that you couldn't do that any more. People come much more professionalized.

KURTZ: Well, they come and they have definitely all played before and there are very few sports that they haven't played. That's true and that is because they are getting the chance to play much, much younger. But these are the women who would have played if they had had a chance in high school. They definitely would have played. The fact that they didn't play wasn't because they hadn't had a chance and just hadn't started. It was just because nobody told them when they were ten that they could play. They had to wait until they were eighteen before someone said they could play. This was not because of Dartmouth. It was because of what was going on in the country.

The whole country was just beginning to feel that maybe women ought to be allowed to do athletics and maybe it isn't so bad. Although the feeling was still...there were a lot of men who felt, I don't know that "threatened" is the right word, but they just didn't want to see their women running around and being so aggressive. Whereas now, I think twenty-five years later in the whole country, there is much more appreciation for a women who is athletic and can actually fend for herself and do things and, you know, still be a woman. There is no problem there.

CARROLL: I want to back up just a little bit to when you came for an interview because it fascinates me that, here are all these men who didn't want...really didn't want to open up their facilities who are forced to hire somebody. I am wondering what sorts of questions did they ask you and what were they looking for, do you think?

KURTZ: Well, that was part of what I meant when I said that now that they had lost the battle, they were going to do it right. They were very polite and I had a very good time. They were asking me questions that you would generally...they were normal questions. I mean, they wanted to find out perhaps what I thought of athletics maybe or what my background

was and how I would go about it perhaps. I don't really remember all the questions, but I do remember that it was informative and I was asking them just as many questions. You don't have the interviews on tape. But certainly they were very polite. There was no question about that.

So I didn't detect that they didn't want to have women here just from talking with them. I got it mostly from things that I had heard other people say. In fact, some of them asked me the same question the same year that I came. They said, "Boy. That must have been some interview because he is really against having women here." Well, he doesn't come out and tell me that when he is talking to me. [Laughter] So, it was just a perfectly normal interview.

CARROLL: Did you put any provisos on your acceptance? Did you ask for anything specific? I don't want to say "demands", but did you have any requests when you accepted the job?

KURTZ: I don't think so because, as I understood it, they wanted me to start women's athletics and that is what I did. But, I do remember... I started to say this earlier, but got off the track... One of the things that was good about Dartmouth that was not happening at other schools where they were just starting, is that I didn't have to report directly or ask Seaver Peters if I could do this. If I wanted to start a field hockey team, I didn't have to say "Can I call up Smith and see if they will play us?" Or "Can I do this?" or "Can I make a game?" Which was good. He just said, you know, "Start women's athletics. That's your job." So then I got a whole field hockey schedule.

He may not even have known what was going on, but people would see him on the street and say "Hey. The team is really doing well." and he would say, "Ag, you have got to come in here and tell me what is going on." I remember him saying that once, which is probably why he made me Assistant Director of Athletics, because then I would be required to go to a meeting every week and tell him exactly what was going on. [Laughter] And it was true.

The first two years, certainly I told him what was going on, but it wasn't that I had to report every week. I didn't have to get everything approved. I had a general idea of the budget

and that part of it, I thought was very good. It certainly was easier for me. And other people who had been hired by an athletic director who had tight reigns on the woman or the male who was hired, just didn't let things happen. Seaver, I think, felt that he didn't know what was happening in women's athletics in the country and I did. So it was much easier for me to start it without having to ask him because I know probably he didn't want to be bothered and it made a lot more sense if I just did it.

CARROLL: Did you have other friends doing this in other institutions? Starting women's athletics?

KURTZ: Well, I knew other people that were doing it. Certainly I had been involved pretty much down in the Delaware-Philadelphia area because I was starting that up at Delaware in '69, '70 and '71. I know that Princeton had just hired a woman and they were starting and we did play Princeton in field hockey in some tournament. I knew people at other schools, which was another thing. I knew a lot of people, a lot about people who were in athletics in the country because I was nationally involved in many sports, as well as just locally.

CARROLL: And were the problems and the challenges that everyone faced pretty much all in the same nature or did Dartmouth have anything that was specifically a Dartmouth problem or a Dartmouth challenge?

KURTZ: Well, the challenges were different in every place. For example, if you had an all-women's school starting athletics, they did not have as easy a time as at male school starting athletics because they didn't have a tradition at the school. All they were doing is taking some of their budget and allotting it to athletics and it was starting up from scratch; whereas, say, at Dartmouth, you already had a tradition of the men doing it...doing certain sports. Now we will add women. At least you had an idea of what it was like to have a varsity sport going. You also had the pressure of...if the men are doing it, then the women should be allowed to do it.

You see, if you started it up at Wellesley or Smith, you would not have that pressure. So, if the women want to play field hockey now at the varsity level, where are we going to get

the money? There is no pressure there because you are not giving it to anyone else. Whereas, if Dartmouth wants to start it, the matter of playing soccer or playing football, the women have to play field hockey or whatever it is they are doing so it was easier in some ways.

That was different from the schools that were parallel education where you already had...say at Brown, I guess...you had Brown and Pembroke. They were just taking another woman's school. Or Radcliffe and Harvard. You had a whole women's group there already...a huge number of women. So they had a whole lot more women, but not...they probably were not as homogenous a group.

I think the first women coming to Dartmouth were probably more similar than the women that you get now and it is probably good that it is much more diverse right now. But, as I said, to come to be in the first group of women coming to an all-male school in the middle of the woods, which is how people look at it in the rest of the country, that you would get fairly outstanding women. I would say that the women in that class were outstanding.

CARROLL: I have been reading The D from that period. Often times, the women seem to be almost...I don't want to say ridiculed...portrayed as jocks...who were part of that first group of women who came to Dartmouth. And it is not said in a kind way often times I get the feeling. Were you aware of that or is that a perception that I am picking up on in the wrong way from the newspaper?

KURTZ: I don't really have any idea. I mean, I can't conceive of what you mean by saying that all these women are jocks and that is sort of the term that you would think thirty years ago, it was a derogatory term, which is why women didn't go into athletics. To me, a jock is someone...they are referring to an athlete. I think they are strong and aggressive. Maybe that's what they mean. But they had to be strong and aggressive. You didn't get many wimps and, if you did get wimps, they soon transferred to somewhere else. [Laughter] I don't know how many transferred, but I do know a few who transferred out and they couldn't take it. It was pretty tough.

CARROLL: I can imagine.

KURTZ: I used to recruit. I used to help recruit women. I talked to their fathers, who were very nervous about their daughters coming to Dartmouth in the first five years. This is another aspect of what it was like to start it. I probably talked to every woman who came and interviewed at Dartmouth, if she was at all athletic, not for just my sport, but for every sport. So that was another thing that was going on at that time. I would tell the fathers "But look at it this way. If a woman can survive Dartmouth, she can survive anything." That's absolutely true. It would be a very good thing. She will probably survive Dartmouth and then she will be able to handle any situation that comes up the rest of her life. That would be one of my skills. It wasn't just a joke. I actually believe that was true.

CARROLL: Was there anything that was a major irritant in this first year as you tried to start things?

KURTZ: I think only that I had to actually ask for every single thing. Even after this first season, we had varsity athletes and so we wanted varsity letters and varsity sweaters. Varsity sweaters. There was something they had never thought of. What does a woman want a varsity sweater for? Things like that. If I hadn't brought it up, they would not have gotten them, I am sure, because they didn't volunteer to give them things at all.

CARROLL: They only had so much room in the facilities. How did you work scheduling to give yourself...allow the women time?

KURTZ: Well, it meant that we just had to expand and the fact that, at the time, people were practicing generally 3:00 to 5:00 or 4:00 to 6:00 or whatever was handy. That was the usual time for people to do sports. But, after about two years, we were going...starting at the facilities at two in the afternoon and going until ten at night for anything that was indoors so that you had lights because, if you had four teams in the facility instead of two...that is two varsities, two j.v.'s or something. Plus, every year we started expanding so...but, in something like squash where...

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KURTZ: ...the squash team practiced from 5:00 to 7:00. They [the men] were playing. They were going 3:00 to 5:00. That wasn't going to change right away. So we went 5:00 to 7:00. Then we kept having discussions...constant discussions to try to get them to be more reasonable and then we finally got it so that we would go, say, 3:00 to 5:00 on Monday, Wednesday, Friday. They would go from 3:00 to 5:00 on Tuesday, Thursday and visa versa and that's what they do now. That's what actually happened. They still do that because that's one way to do it sort of equitably.

Field hockey...we would practice in the afternoon because we had our own field. The field had been just baseball, but whereas it is just a baseball field out at Chase now in the fall, it can be used...the outfield can be used for field hockey. In the spring, it could be used for baseball. So that would be one thing where it looks like this is the schedule that is completely full. Well, it wasn't full. It was just used in the spring. Now we use it in the fall and in the spring.

And things like that happened that they just didn't conceive. They didn't conceive that they could use the basketball court from 2:00 until 10:00, either or, you know, we've got our Leverone Field House now going all afternoon and evening instead of just in the afternoon.

And then the money...we just added tons of money every single year. It was pretty hard, but it just was necessary because we were spending a lot of money just to buy the initial equipment. Then, of course, the next year, then we bought a lot more uniforms. We didn't want to buy uniforms before we even knew we had a team, so we shared uniforms the first few years and then we had our own uniforms for different teams, but it was a reasonable thing to do, I think, at first.

CARROLL: Some of the alumni letters that come in to the Dartmouth Alumni Magazine are complaining that women's athletics will be a drain on the Athletics Department because men's

athletics like football bring money into the Department, but women's athletics would not. Did that prove to be true?

KURTZ: Do you mean some of the first letters?

CARROLL: Yes. Yes.

KURTZ: Well, football is different from the others, I think. But, if you take...at first, they did pay for men's basketball. Let's take basketball because it is a more similar situation.

CARROLL: Okay.

KURTZ: Men's basketball and women's basketball. It is true that nobody paid to go to a women's basketball game and people did pay to go to a man's basketball game; but, as things developed, it was...We won the Ivy Championship I think from the third year that we were in existence. Women's basketball was certainly fairly popular. You would just have to look at the record to see who brings in more money, but they both bring in money.

Football definitely brings in money; but football, at the very beginning, was just kind of separate for a while. They had their budget and it wasn't affected very much by the women's. But there is also the point that some of these bring in money. It doesn't mean that they are money-making. It just means that they are revenue-producing, as you say. So I believe, when I was...in the '70s and '80s, men's basketball brought in money, but the cost of men's basketball was probably more than the money that was coming in. So, just because they bring in money, I mean...football actually may cost more than the money coming in. You would have to look at it because the football team would spend clearly \$10,000 on a weekend for expenses. So how much money did they bring in? So it is not just the fact that people spend money on tickets.

Then there are other things that go along with that as they say "Well, men will give money. The alumni will give more money if the football team wins." and all that, which I think is bogus. I think we have shown that that is not true. So it might be a drain, but there are...you look at all the other teams, I don't really believe that it is a drain on it.

There were sixteen or seventeen teams for men when I first came and three of them probably charged [for tickets]...baseball, probably. They paid to see baseball. So three of them paid. Fourteen didn't. So if they complain about women being a drain, you can complain about the other fourteen teams being a drain. I think that would be how I would argue that point. And you don't do athletics only because it is bringing you money. You do it because it is a viable thing to do. If you offer it for men, you offer it for women.

CARROLL: Now, when did you decide to use a second coach?

KURTZ: Right away. [Laughter] The first year I was here, I did get to put a budget in for the next year, which was nice, because now we had some idea. Of course, they added...in each of the years, I added a full-time person. The full-time person would do tennis and basketball because that was our immediate need, since we had five sports during the first year. I hired part-time people to do tennis and basketball and I was doing the other two. So, if I could get those two covered by a full-time person, then we could hire part-time people to do anything else that we needed in starting up which we did have things start up the next year. Then we hired another coach in the third year and so on. One coach...the full salary for one coach was quite a large chunk of the budget. I know we also hired a trainer after a couple of years.

CARROLL: Who was the first person you hired?

KURTZ: Chris Clark Kerr, who is there right now. The tennis coach. She did tennis and basketball for a few years and then did just tennis, when we brought in a basketball coach. And Chris Wielgus, I am happy to say...I hired in 1976, I believe it was, to be the full-time basketball coach. And that, of course, was a good choice. Then she left with her husband and now she is back, which is very nice. Mary Corrigan was hired the third year and she came in to do field hockey and she did gymnastics at first and also helped out as a trainer. Then we hired a full-time trainer, a female trainer.

But, getting the men to realize, to share things, in the beginning was kind of hard, too. I mean, the fact that you could share training rooms. Instead of having our training room in the women's facilities, it was a case where separate but equal did not mean equal. So, it was much better for us to be able to use the male facilities and there was no reason why we could not use the men's training room, except for the fact that, just like with the swimming pool, they didn't wear bathing suits in the swimming pool, so now they had to put on bathing suits so that the women could come in.

Well, same in the training room. They used to have the training room in their locker room area so they would go kind of back and forth and not worry about what they wore. So all they had to do is worry about what they wore and everything was fine. So, in the '70s, we were, eventually, we were sharing the training room. And then you were having people assigned, both men and women, assigned to a women's team and also to a men's team. Eventually, that sort of worked its way out.

So, all of these things that seem very natural right now seemed completely foreign. There was no way that they wanted to have women in the training room. There was no way that they could conceive of a male trainer for a women's team in the '70s. And there were many times when I thought that they wouldn't even believe this twenty years from now. They wouldn't believe what is going on. So I just had to push for this. It took many, many times.

CARROLL: I am curious. When you went out and were interviewing someone, I am trying to think...Chris Clark [Kerr], whatever, to come, did you do the interviews by yourself or did your male colleagues form part of that group?

KURTZ: They formed part of that group. We always had for everything, but I was in on every single one.

CARROLL: Were you the deciding vote?

KURTZ: Perhaps. It is hard to remember, except that I would say probably "yes". But, you know, it had to be a mutual feeling.

CARROLL: I was just wondering. I have a good friend who started a department at a university and she basically kept talking about how she would hire friends. That when she was hiring, she was looking for people who could do this job and were good at it, but what she also wanted was a cohort group around her. Did you have that sort of as an agenda as well?

KURTZ: Well, no. I wouldn't say that. Certainly, if I had friends who would come up for the interview...but I did not know Chris Clark Kerr and I didn't know Chris Wielgus, but it became clear during the interview that I wanted these people. With Mary Corrigan, I did know her and I knew that she was an international field hockey player and I had coached with her at camps.

CARROLL: She was from Ireland. Is that right?

KURTZ: Right.

CARROLL: Why was she willing to leave?

KURTZ: She wanted to come over. She had been over in the United States several times. So she just wanted to. It was a good opportunity for her.

CARROLL: Did any of the first women athletes stand out in your mind? The first people that you coached?

KURTZ: Well, yeah. Well, Pam [Pamela] Gile ['76] is still around, you know, in field hockey. Squash had Barbara Sands ['76], who actually was...she was runner-up in the intercollegiate tournament a couple of times. She was an excellent squash player. Candy Neville played on those teams. She is in Ohio now. She is pretty active with donations to the Alumni Fund. Ann Fritz [Hackett '76], of course, came up as a Trustee. And Sandy Helve ['76]. I think she is still active. She was in that first group. It's not hard to come up with these names. [Lucinda] Cindy Fernald, who was the Class of '79. She started the soccer program.

It was always...once we got the first teams going, then it would always just be one student's idea to start a team and then I would use that student and have her be the liaison and

see what the interest was, and if there really was the interest and see what we could do. That's how things got started. But, you know, the door was always open and the kids were always coming in to talk about whatever they needed.

CARROLL: You worked with Seaver Peters for how many years then?

KURTZ: Well, I was the administrator through '79. So seven years. But then he left sometime in the '80s...I guess in the early '80s.

CARROLL: And Ted Leland.

KURTZ: Then Ted Leland was there five years. And then...he was still there in '89 or '90. So probably Seaver Peters was there until '84, I guess. But that's roughly...

CARROLL: What was the difference in style of leadership, between Seaver Peters and Ted Leland?

KURTZ: Well, let's see. I can talk more about their personalities, I suppose, than style and leadership.

CARROLL: Start there.

KURTZ: As I said earlier, the Athletic Department...the existing Athletic Department did not offer a lot of ideas. They did not say "Ag, what do you think about this?" So they didn't go out of their way to make these things happen because they didn't want it to happen all that fast. But they also didn't say "No. You can't do this" immediately. They would say "Well" and then they would have about a long six or eight months drawn out period before we ever got it. But it would be like that.

I have to give Seaver credit. I think he was an intelligent Athletic Director and he thought about things, as I said. The drawback would be that he just didn't go out of his way to help. With Ted, I did not work with him as an administrator, so the whole...it was entirely different because, by that time, we had already twelve or fifteen varsity sports. We were just maintaining and I wasn't in the seat to ask him for things because Louise O'Neal was the woman who had taken over my position as an administrator when I decided to go back to

coaching. I don't think Ted was very helpful, but then I am just talking now about what I have seen. There is just no way to compare those two because I just didn't work with them in the same way.

In the '70s, we were developing all these sports. When I left in '79, we already had twelve varsity sports for women and we had four other club teams. So, in the '80s, it was more a matter of getting all these things caught up internally. By '79, we had the same budgets for food and for travel and the same number of teams going. I think, in seven years, that's an incredible amount of stuff to happen, but we didn't have the same recruiting budgets and the same staffing. For example, we didn't have three full-time basketball coaches. We did have 2 and a half or so, and so the aim was more in getting things internally caught up and, as I said, Louise and Ted worked together rather than me working with Ted. I was only coaching squash at that time and an assistant in lacrosse.

CARROLL: What were the first teams...the women's teams...that took off comparatively, they said field hockey and I wondered what else.

KURTZ: What do you mean?

CARROLL: That may have a successful season and they made a splash on the campus.

KURTZ: Well, we had winning seasons. Basketball, I think, did not. Field hockey was like two and two, or something, and squash had a winning season. We [would] get into some tournament games where you played five matches on a weekend or something. So it was something like seven and four; but, we didn't play that many. We played five of those on one weekend. The basketball team was one and three, I believe, and tennis was undefeated the first year. Lacrosse, I believe we probably were...it was either two and two or two and three or something. It was very close.

CARROLL: So they were pretty successful from the beginning.

KURTZ: Right. They were fairly successful. The first time we had a full Ivy Championship, the Ivies...we didn't get involved with

talking about Ivy championships until about 1976. But, again, because all of the schools were developing and Dartmouth was the last to start women's athletics but the others still hadn't done very much and they hadn't even considered having Ivy championships in women's sports. This was, again, the manner of construing this. So, finally, we were allowed to go to the Ivy meetings at the end of the year and start talking about Ivy championships for women as well. But it wasn't until about '75 or '76 that we had those meetings. There could have been a meeting the year before, but somewhere in there.

CARROLL: Was it hard to coach or schedule with the D plan as opposed to a semester plan? Did that pose problems?

KURTZ: Well, basically no. Fall and spring sports still had a season. Winter sports...you had to think about it because people would be away in December and so I know, in the beginning, I scheduled all the winter sports in January/February; but then, as we expanded the season, we began to have to put something together in early December. But that didn't happen at the very beginning. Then, as far as how that affects athletics, it is the same for men and women. It wasn't a problem just because there were women just coming to Dartmouth and starting up sports. It is the same problem for all the sports and that is that, if you have a varsity athlete in a winter sport, they have pretty much got to be on fall and winter and I think the administration makes that effort.

Or the kids themselves make that effort to do that, or students who want to be on winter and spring. We did have a lot of two and three sport athletes in the first years, so they may have had slightly more problems than the men had, if the men didn't have two or three sport athletes. But, the D plan can be gotten around. It is no great hardship for women. It is just something about Dartmouth that you have to deal with.

CARROLL: What was the press coverage like for the women athletes?

KURTZ: Almost non-existent. At first, we were written about in the beginning and we were written about as the field hockey team or the women's field hockey team. Then, in the winter and in the spring where we had a men's lacrosse team and a

women's lacrosse team or a men's tennis and a women's tennis or a men's basketball and a women's basketball, they tended to talk about varsity basketball and women's basketball, because they had only talked before about that varsity basketball. They talked about varsity football. They talked about varsity soccer. That's the only thing they knew or j.v. So then it was varsity basketball and women's basketball. And I had a lot of discussions and arguments and just demands of the sports information that they had to change from varsity basketball and women's basketball to men's varsity basketball and women's varsity basketball or men's varsity tennis and women's varsity tennis. And he and the office did not want to do that. Finally, after I think even more than a year, Seaver Peters finally got involved in this argument and told them that they had to change, but the whole first year, in my arguments with them and my discussions...and there were a lot, he just would not change.

CARROLL: Who was that?

KURTZ: Jack [John R.] De Gange [Jr.], the Director [of Sports Information]. He finally quit and I think he quit because he could not handle this. It may have been because it was a whole lot more work because he had many more teams to write about. In fact, there were only five or six new teams when he was still there and that wasn't a whole lot more. It just was very hard for him to consider giving equal coverage to the women's teams. And it didn't...it was a long pulling of teeth for that.

CARROLL: Thompson Arena was built in '76 and then the Berry Sports Center in '87. How much input were you allowed to have on the plans and to tell them what your desires would be in these?

KURTZ: Well, with Thompson, I didn't really get involved in that at all. First of all, it was being done in the first three or four years that I was here and that was one more thing and I really didn't need to get involved in that. With Berry, I was involved quite a lot. When Berry came in, of course, I was not an administrator. I was a squash coach then. But I did get on the committee and I wasn't on the committee at the beginning. I was on the committee to fill in for someone who had been on the committee and was in a car accident and

then wasn't able to continue. I am very glad that I did get on it at that point. I think it was necessary for a squash player to be in on that, not just basketball players.

CARROLL: And why was that? Why the squash...

KURTZ: Because the Berry Center houses the new squash courts and so they were doing squash and racquetball courts as well as basketball. So there was a discussion of the need for how many courts and even the type of courts and I did get it changed from five courts to seven courts in there. Now seven is valuable, very valuable for practices. Even if, during matches we might only use, five of them...we could use more than that, but they were under the impression that since only ten people play, and you play the evens first and the odds second, you only need five courts. But then, how are you going to practice?

CARROLL: How do you warm up?

KURTZ: Right. And how do you practice without going to the old facility? So we got it to seven. I also talked about the need for international courts, which was a trend in the country, but it was very young and the committee decided not to put in an international-sized court because they did not feel that it was necessary for the country. In the next ten years, everybody in the country had switched from the American game to the international game, which is a different sized court. Two years ago, we renovated the Berry squash courts to making five international-size courts and we still have two American-size courts in there.

CARROLL: What is the difference between the two?

KURTZ: About two and a half feet in width. The international are two and a half feet wider. The lines are different and the rules are different and the ball is different. The Americans had their own game of squash...American squash. Because the trend in the country now is to possibly have squash as an Olympic sport, they would have to use international-size courts. For the Americans to be competitive, they would have to start playing in the international game and so certain clubs switched over in the late '80's and early '90's and now

just everybody building new courts are building international-sized courts.

CARROLL: Does it slow the game a little bit to have them wider?

KURTZ: It is a slower ball which means that the rallies are a lot longer and it is more demanding physically because you are playing a whole lot longer point generally. That was a little aside.

CARROLL: I was curious. When they had to renovate then, did they have still enough room to have seven courts?

KURTZ: We have seven courts, but two of them are still the old size, so you can use them for warm-up, but you can't use them...You can still play squash in those courts. It is just not as much fun because you are just in a narrow spot.

CARROLL: Who made the decision to make those courts open so that people going by can watch the game?

KURTZ: Oh, that was part of the design. I mean, that is another thing that happens. Many, many squash courts in the country have glass-back walls. That was something that probably came in in the maybe late '70s, early '80s and it was just so much nicer to see because, otherwise, you would have to walk upstairs and look down from the balcony.

CARROLL: Were you ever on a search committee for a male colleague?

KURTZ: Yes. I was on many committees at the beginning. Not just those search committees, but also other committees in the College that needed a woman representative...because there were not that many women. [Laughter] There was a demand on my time.

CARROLL: That must have stretched you guys who were here quite a bit. What I am curious about then, too, is the impact of Title IX in 1972. How did that change the nature of sports at Dartmouth or in the nation, for that matter?

KURTZ: Well, it did change the nature of sports in the nation because it meant that the people who were demanding equal facilities for women had some teeth in their demand. But it came in just before or just as Dartmouth was going coed. And my

own personal feeling is that, because of the integrity of the people at Dartmouth, I don't believe that... I mean, I personally never used Title IX as a backup to what I was saying because all you had to do was point out that the women deserved to be treated equally. And Dartmouth is a fairly intelligent place and they recognized that. So we didn't have to do the lawsuit because we were just really...finally they could see the light and see that it was necessary.

CARROLL: Was there ever a sport that the women requested that could not be implemented for them for one reason or another?

KURTZ: No.

CARROLL: No? That is amazing.

KURTZ: Even women's gymnastics required all new equipment. It was one where they had to buy a lot of different things. Not just additional equipment, but different equipment like balance beams. Parallel bars are uneven bars that men don't use. In fact, Ken Jones bought equipment for gymnastics before I got here because he was the gymnastics coach. So his whole bent was toward gymnastics and he thought "Well, I guess we are going to need gymnastic equipment for women." So he went out and bought it without really any plan for having women gymnasts. That was probably one of the things that helped to get women gymnasts...the whole team. We had them for a few years and then dropped both men's and women's gymnastics because it just wasn't a very popular sport and we had to start dropping some things because we were just getting...it was requiring too much money.

CARROLL: I am wondering what kind of role the NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association] played in making varsity sports legitimate for women.

KURTZ: Not at the beginning. They were very much against it and so the women formed an association called the AIAW [Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women] in 1969 and, as I said, that just gives you some idea as to how young varsity sports for women was. So 1969, it was just beginning and we were 1972. So there wasn't a whole lot of

impact at Dartmouth. The NCAA was very much against women's athletics for the same reason the Dartmouth Athletic Department was, and that was because it was going to take too much money. Too much money. Too much facilities. Too much time and we can't be bothered.

So that was their attitude and then, once we got here and got successful, then they took over women's athletics and they just did that by demanding it. They said to all their schools that, if you don't comply and have your women join NCAA, then we will not allow you to join the men and, if you don't join the NCAA for men, you don't go to your national championships and you don't do those things. So they took it over and then they started running all the national championships and, much to the chagrin of the AIAW...

CARROLL: Which just then collapsed, I would imagine.

KURTZ: Essentially, they did. I mean, there wasn't any point really in having two national bodies and two national championships. But they didn't have a whole lot of say as to how it was run, except to infiltrate the NCAA. We did get a few women in there. But still, it was just a few women.

CARROLL: Is it still that way?

KURTZ: It is pretty much a boys' school. I guess there are more women in there now. It is actually getting a whole lot better. I guess probably even in the last five years, it's much better. Just the whole attitude toward...the country and the media toward women's sports. Having women's basketball pro teams on television is very new.

CARROLL: And have them get ratings, which I think is pretty exciting.

KURTZ: In all of this stuff, it's not just that Dartmouth is doing it now. It is all over the country, so Dartmouth's athletic growth has been more or less paralleling the country, except, you know, it has been its own little...what am I trying to say? Well, just the same parallel.

CARROLL: Sort of a microcosm.

KURTZ: Yeah. That's what I am trying to say. [Laughter]

[End of Tape 1, Side B -- Beginning of Tape 2, Side A]

CARROLL: ...the different presidents, if any, played in the athletics of the College.

KURTZ: Well, certainly [President John] Kemeny played the most important role by making the decision to admit women. As far as the Athletic Department, I don't think that he...he had more of a hands-off administrative style. He did not tell the Athletic Department how they should do it. I believe that [President David] McLaughlin was somewhat the same way. Now, they both were supportive. In fact, I have communications from both of them supporting the idea of women's athletics. So, from that point, they were certainly supportive; but they didn't actually take an active role when we started it up because they were not qualified to do that.

CARROLL: McLaughlin had been such an outstanding athlete as an undergraduate here and I wondered if he had...I don't want to say meddled...but had been part of or more involved.

KURTZ: Well, no...you know, the Athletic Director has meetings with the President regularly and my feeling in remembering and thinking of things that they had said, both of them, would be that they both were supportive and both urged Seaver Peters to make things happen.

I know that Kemeny came out to a field hockey game in 1973...the second year that we had the team...and we were playing [the University of] Vermont and he was there for ten minutes. We scored five goals in ten minutes while he was there. Then he went back to his office and then he saw the score in the paper the next day that we had beaten Vermont 5-1. He wrote a note and said that he thought...it occurred to him that, since he was there for ten minutes and we scored five goals, perhaps that he ought to put it into his schedule to appear at every game for exactly ten minutes and that might help us more than anything else could. [Laughter] Although

he didn't do that, he at least took the time to write a note and make the comment, which was very nice.

CARROLL: You were involved in the administration of the Athletic Department when Joe Yukica was fired and that was a big controversy around campus. Could you comment on that or the story behind that at all?

KURTZ: Well, I would have to think about it for a little while. Boy. It's so far. It is just so far. It has been so long since I have thought about it. I know I discussed it with a lot of people about the things that had gone on. Well, the story was, of course, that he had a contract and they wanted to end the contract before it was up and he didn't want to. So he was fighting it. I don't know. I can't tell you any juicy stories and I can't tell you any facts, so I don't see much point...
[Laughter]

CARROLL: Well, it was worth a try. The reasons I was curious about it is that, in reading and doing research about the Athletic Department here, it has been a remarkably harmonious exterior that it has presented to the world. Whatever in-fighting there had been does not break the surface very often. And that is the one time when it really seemed to and people took sides and were vocal about it in the Department.

KURTZ: Actually, I think that the Athletics Department is harmonious and I felt, in the '70s when I was here, for all of the pressure and stress, maybe, of setting up the women's...the athletic program for women...it still...It was a challenge and I loved it. It is hard for me to listen to all of this and all the complaining and everything and all the problems, but it was a challenge and it was something...Things were happening. So it was not an unreasonable situation or anything and the people down there are very close. We had, I felt, a great group of people. The women who came in, they all stayed. They stayed for years and years before a single woman coach ever left. So, when you think about how hard it was to start it and how hard it is to keep on...every year, you have to keep on trying to get more things. It still was exciting.

The support is there. The support is there from a lot of people saying, "Come on. We are behind this. Go ahead. Let's see if we can get this." I mean, you know that there are

people out there. It's not like you are fighting the whole world at all.

End of Part One