

The Dr. Donna Lopiano Leadership Fund

The goal of this fund is to ensure fair play for girls and women at all levels of sports and physical activity and to continue to use research to persuade the public and policy makers of the importance of physical activity for girls.

We invite you to be part of the Dr. Donna Lopiano Leadership Fund and to support the unique advocacy and research efforts of the Women's Sports Foundation.

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“Donna Lopiano has made a strong and lasting impression on the Women's Sports Foundation, and her never-ending commitment to advance the lives of girls and women from all walks of life will forever be part of the organization's history.”

—Ilana Kloss, Past Chair of the Women's Sports Foundation Board of Trustees



Dr. Donna Lopiano led tremendous social change in her 15 years at the Women's Sports Foundation's helm.

Program Overview

Following 15 years of unparalleled leadership in building and growing the Women's Sports Foundation, Donna A. Lopiano, Ph.D., announced her decision to leave the Foundation in August 2007. As the third leader of the organization in its 35-year history, Dr. Lopiano led tremendous social change and left behind a list of accomplishments as CEO that rivaled those of her athletic and coaching career. Among her considerable achievements on behalf of the Women's Sports Foundation, Dr. Lopiano:

- Led multiple national efforts to strengthen Title IX protections and to guarantee the legislation's enforcement;
- Provided expert testimony on gender equity issues in sport in more than 30 legal cases on issues such as coaches' compensation, athletes' rights and equitable treatment for all girls and women;
- Designed and oversaw ground-breaking research studies that definitively demonstrated the benefits of sports participation for girls and women;
- Grew the organization from \$1 million in revenue and eight paid staff to \$10 million in revenue with a staff of 65; and
- Built a network of champion athletes spanning more than 80 sports to showcase the mission and the work of the Women's Sports Foundation.

“I feel enormously fortunate to have been a part of building an organization of which all of our members, funders, program participants and trustees can be proud. I am incredibly appreciative of the opportunity I’ve had to work with such great people and help shape a movement to have our culture fully embrace an active girl as the ‘norm.’”

—Donna A. Lopiano, Ph.D.

Objectives of the Dr. Donna Lopiano Leadership Fund

Dr. Lopiano is passionate about research and a gifted leader in advocacy and public policy. Her legacy to the organization is a cornerstone of the Women’s Sports Foundation. The Board of Trustees seeks to raise \$2 million in her name toward advocacy and research; \$1 million in current dollars and \$1 million in planned gifts.

“Donna has been a driving force and a tireless supporter of gender equity issues as she led the Women’s Sports Foundation through some of its most formative years. As she moves on in her career and in her life, she has established an outstanding legacy that will pave the way for women and girls all across the country who dared to dream of a bright future in women’s sports. Donna made a difference in many people’s lives — some who she knew and countless others who only benefited from her work. Our organization has grown because of Donna’s efforts, and we wish her continued success.”

—Billie Jean King, Founder and Honorary Chair of the Women’s Sports Foundation

Connecting the Dots

The Women’s Sports Foundation’s research helps drive our public policy work, while at the same time, our public policy work helps shape the focus and direction of our research.

Examples

Women in the 2006 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games: An Analysis of Participation, Leadership and Media Coverage — This research report focused on the under-representation of women and minorities in leadership and participation in the Olympic Games. The Foundation’s advocacy team is working in tandem with the USOC to encourage internal change and reform. For example, the Foundation is compiling a list of minorities and women to recommend for national governing bodies’ boards of directors.

Who’s Playing College Sports? Trends in Participation — The Women’s Sports Foundation commissioned this study to politically educate and inform those who choose to attack Title IX under the ruse that Title IX compliance is forcing the elimination of men’s sports. The report showed men’s sports have actually increased overall since Title IX’s passage. While there have been decreases in some men’s sports, such as wrestling, gymnastics and tennis, there have been similar decreases in women’s gymnastics and tennis. This report was cited as key evidence at a governmental hearing on Title IX and was influential in shaping the outcome of a report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). John Cheslock, the researcher of the Women’s Sports Foundation’s report, was able to speak with the GAO researchers to ensure that their methodology was sound; and, ultimately, the GAO study substantiated the findings of the Foundation’s report.