



2005 HOF Induction Speech

Gillian D. Rattray - Inductee

Kathy, thank you so much for your kind and generous comments. Congratulations to my fellow awardees. It is indeed a privilege to be counted amongst you.

As I look around at this somewhat formidable, or should I say awesome, group, the words of the late British Statesman and great orator, Sir Winston Churchill, come to mind. When he first started speaking in public, he was somewhat intimidated by large audiences. He used the image of a field full of cabbages, but, reminded himself that each cabbage had a heart.

World War II may well have played a part in my not being introduced to the sport of lacrosse until I was 17 years old. At the start of W.W.II, I was four years old, living in London. My father went off to war, and my mother, brother and I moved to the countryside of Nottinghamshire. If I had stayed in London, I may well have played lacrosse throughout high school. On the other hand, had we stayed in London, I may not have been here at all, as our former home was bombed flat.

The first time I ever saw the word lacrosse was when I received my equipment and clothing list as an incoming first year student at the I.M. Marsh College of Physical Education, in Liverpool.

Lacrosse for beginners, was scheduled five afternoons a week from September to Easter. We had to play every position, including goalie, and in those days, the goalie did not wear a helmet!

I found lacrosse to be a fast, rhythmical and spatially free sport. Once I got the hang of it, it felt like poetry in motion.

I traveled to play high school varsity teams in Liverpool and Manchester. My lacrosse stick was put to excellent use on a train to Manchester. Our packed lunches were in one compartment, and half of the team was in another. No problem. Traveling at 50 mph, we opened the windows, and very carefully transferred seven packs of sandwiches.

My other claim to fame was when the U.S. Women's National Team came to England, in the late 60's. They came to I.M. Marsh College and practiced for several days before playing the England team. They needed opposition and I was one of the bodies put to good use. I remember the incredible speed of Tina Sloan Green as she tore down the field as an attack wing.

I came to graduate school at Penn State in 1972. In 1974, I was asked to become the head coach of field hockey. Also in 1974, I was asked to become the head lacrosse coach. Ellen Perry had been coaching both lacrosse and swimming and found that the seasons overlapped.

Coaching varsity and junior varsity teams in two sports, with no coaching assistants for several years, plus teaching 12 classes a year, was both challenging and rewarding, and, I am thankful for the opportunity to have coached so very many talented and wonderful women.