



2004 HOF Speech

Jane Barbieri - Inductee

Thank you Judy for the wonderful introduction! Judy Wolstenholme, a highly respected official, and Hall of Fame member herself, was my college coach and has been a constant source of inspiration and support. To paraphrase Henry Adams, "Teachers effect eternity, they can never tell where their influence stops". How very true! Thanks again Judy for your generous comments. And thank you to US Lacrosse - Joe Gold, Josh Christian, Mollie Richardson, the Hall of Fame Committee and the many others who've taken great care to make this evening so very special.

And to my fellow honorees-don't you feel so incredibly proud? How lucky we are to be honored for something that has been a lifelong source of joy and fulfillment.

This is, without a doubt, the pinnacle in my sports career. Who would've guessed that when I entered in to a sport that I pronounced "la-crus-see" at age 10, that I would be standing here tonight.

La-crus-see is a sport like no other. It has always filled me with a sense of awe and humbled me with its demand for grace, skill and speed. From the time I was that skinny, shy, 10-year-old girl, lacrosse, whether playing or coaching, has been in my life. For the time that I've put in to the sport, it's given me so much in return. It's allowed me to play alongside some of the most incredible athletes ever...and to be coached by women who've made a difference in my life, and in the game. It has also given me the opportunity to play a key role in introducing girl's lacrosse at the William Penn Charter School in Philadelphia, one of the oldest all boys' schools in the nation. I may be the one up here at the podium, but behind me are all my coaches and teammates.

We've been through a lot together, haven't we? From Springfield High School in Delaware County, to West Chester University, where one of the prerequisites to play on that team was having a great sense of humor...and that included coach Wolstenholme. We loved to laugh (or cackle as some referred to it) but come game time, we were serious enough to get the job done. After graduation, I continued playing with many of the same players for the Philadelphia lacrosse association. The cackling got louder and the caliber of lacrosse rose.

I remember the 1975 tour to Great Britain. Our coach, the amazing Kathy Heinze, raised our game to a whole new level. No longer could we get by with being good, we had to strive for perfection. Under her guidance our true colors showed through. The press described us as "the beautiful invincibles". And invincible we were. We did everything Kathy asked of us, winning all 13 matches. In the end, the British, and I quote, "were dazed by the speed and the dexterity of the visitors, but most of all they were destroyed by determination". How true. We upset the British who had dominated the sport, causing them to report that "these Americans have caught us napping". I received a beautiful letter when I returned home from Jackie Pitts, the president of the United States Women's Lacrosse Association. She congratulated us for closing one chapter in the world of Women's International lacrosse, and opening the next. Ironically, it was Jackie who went on to write the next chapter, as she coached me in the 1st World Cup Championship in 1982, where she set the standard even higher. Not only did she hone our technique; she honed our spirit, always saying the right thing at the right time to pull us through. She helped us connect our minds to our bodies, building our self-confidence and our ability. Jackie Pitts was the backbone of The United States Women's Lacrosse Association and has done so much for the game throughout the years. Thank you Jackie!

For us lacrosse meant training hard, playing well, and staying close long after the tour ended. My teammates, outstanding athletes all, became my friends, and for that I am eternally grateful.

We thought we were working hard in those days, well today, teams work even harder! The competitiveness continues to mount and players continue to thrive. I coach my daughter's youth team and watch her succeed while she's having fun, remembering when I did too, cheered on by my mom, who still cheers for me today-thanks Mom! And thank you to everyone who has joined me here this evening-coaches, teammates, my brothers and their families, my husband and children.

As you can see, team sports, athletics and lacrosse are woven in to the fabric of my life. And I wear that mantle proudly. Thank you!