

Gittings' Kittens: The Development of Women's Athletics at the University of Arizona from 1930-1949

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Many changes occurred in the field of collegiate athletics for women between 1930 and 1949. The first director of physical education for women at the University of Arizona, Ina Gittings, was a pioneer in this front. Prior to her appointment, the primary policy-making organizations actively discouraged intense athletic activity for women out of fear that it might foster unfeminine values in the population. Despite this, Gittings worked from within the system to promote proper feminine values as a way to push the boundaries of what was acceptable for women athletically. In addition, she created a required social fundamentals class that taught female students about proper feminine values in order to ensure that her students were still being taught the same lessons that the Women's Division of the NAAF and other groups wanted women to learn. World War II further allowed women's athletics to flourish. The military required fit and healthy citizens, both participating in the war effort and at home. As a result, women were finally granted the opportunity to train and compete in intercollegiate athletics across the country the way that Gittings had so encouraged.

As early as the late nineteenth century, women on college campuses around the country were engaged in athletics. Schools such as Stanford University, University of California at Berkeley, Smith College, and Vassar Colleges were among those who provided opportunities for a small portion of their female population to play a sport in the 1800s, but they were in the very small minority. It was not until the 1920s that any serious discussion about women as athletes began, but even then there was very little push for girls to excel athletically. Instead, groups such as the National Amateur Athletic Foundation (NAAF) adopted the idea of "a sport

for every girl and every girl in a sport”¹ and encouraged colleges to only allow women to engage in athletics in order to create healthy bodies and teach values that would be useful to mothers.² Women did not use athletics as a way to compete for individual or team championships in the way that men’s varsity sports did. Instead of being a measurement of athletic prowess, sports for women across the country remained a vehicle for ensuring that female university students learned the skills they would need in marriage and motherhood.

However, the primary leaders of women’s athletics had their own reasons for not affording women the same athletic opportunities. One was the fear that sports for girls would employ the same corrupt practices that men’s did, such as gambling and using bribery to attract players. This issue was exacerbated by the fact that these major issues in men’s sports had recently been made public.³ Another reason was that leaders in physical education feared that varsity sports would cause women to develop “mannish characteristics”⁴ and “would not foster womanly virtues or conduct.”⁵ These issues, beyond simply discouraging the leaders of women’s physical education from following the example of men’s athletics with their female students, left them with no real role models to follow in developing a program for women. A third concern was that women were believed to be the weaker sex, and so doctors and physical educators were unsure of how the female body could withstand such physical exertion.⁶ As a result, the leaders of women’s physical education pushed for a less strenuous, but a more open manner of encouraging women to exercise. They used it as a way to foster values such as good nutrition, teamwork,

1 Nancy Theriot, “Towards a New Sporting Ideal: The Women’s Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation,” *A Journal of Women Studies* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 3.

2 Ina Gittings, *Fundamentals in Teaching Physical Education*, 1948, University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, MS 283 box 2, folder 6, page 65.

3 The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published the Carnegie Report on October 31, 1921. It was an investigation into the perceived way that colleges were abusing their men’s athletic programs, and its findings confirmed these fears. These abuses included coaches using bribery to attract players, schools allowing student athletes to pass their classes solely because of their athletic prowess, and gambling, among many others. For more information, see *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: Sixteenth Annual Report of the President and the Treasurer* (Boston: Merrymount Press, 1921), 33-39.

4 Virginia M. King, “A Problem – Softball for Women,” University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, MS 283 box 2, folder 1.

5 Gittings, *Fundamentals in Teaching Physical Education*, 60.

6 Theriot, “Towards a New Sporting Ideal,” 3.

and leadership without placing any emphasis on winning.⁷ All of these factors stood in the way of women's athletics moving forward towards varsity-level sports.

However, the University of Arizona was a pioneer on this front at the time. In 1920, the school hired Ina E. Gittings as the institution's first director of physical education for women. Gittings, unlike the vast majority of physical educators at the time, was a staunch supporter of the idea of varsity athletics for women and encouraging girls to pursue athletic endeavors of all sorts. When she arrived at the school, the only school-sponsored activity for women was dancing. Upon her retirement in 1955, the university supported thirteen major sports in which women could participate, along with various other "minor sports" like speedball and volleyball.⁸ She adopted a policy of establishing groups of the best female athletes from each sport to form honor teams, and actively encouraged the idea of varsity sports as a way to develop allegiance, loyalty, team spirit and cooperation.⁹ In order to do this, she had to work within the system by promoting proper feminine values in order to push the boundaries of what was acceptable for women athletically. In doing so, she was able to maintain her credibility and power both at the university and nationally while expanding opportunities for women.

Her push both for women's athletics at the university and intercollegiate competition everywhere was aided by the United States' entry into World War II. The military feared that the population was not physically fit enough to be soldiers at the time and so encouraged the growth of physical education programs across the country at both the high school and college level. Women benefitted from this as well as men because emphasis was placed creating a healthy population of both citizens and soldiers now that women had to take over the workforce. As a result, teachers who had previously bought into the idea of sports as a way to create healthy mothers now began to question that ideal. With so many men away fighting in the war, female physical educators were given the opportunity to develop army-training programs for the ROTC. Despite more rigorous exercise, no medical evidence was

7 "Women in Athletics," Compiled by the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1930), 32-36.

8 "Ina Gittings to Retire from Campus Duties," *Arizona Daily Star*, January 9, 1955.

9 Katie Manciet Frey, *From Wildkittens to Wildcats: Women's Sports at the University of Arizona* (Portland, OR: Ink Water Press, 2010), 68.

found to support the previous hypothesis that this would adversely affect a woman's menstruation and ability to become a mother.¹⁰

As a result, physical educators began focusing on encouraging physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle for both men and women, and because the focus of physical education was changing, the previously limited opportunities for women in athletics began to open up. Prospects for women in athletics exploded during the 1940s to not only allow them to compete at the collegiate level, but also professionally.¹¹ This was the case once the military opened to women as well as men, despite the still prevailing idea that women belonged in the home as mothers.¹² The need for soldiers and healthy civilians was an extremely important factor in the growth of women's athletics during the 1940s and beyond.

Although Gittings pushed against the dominant culture and expectations, she was forced at the same time to conform to them in order to push for greater opportunities for women at both the university and across the country. Consequently, pushing for change was a very slow, calculating process. Although she strongly desired to see women's athletics reach the same level as men's in terms of opportunities for students, funding, and skill levels, pushing too strongly would have resulted in her losing respect and support both in the university and from other colleges across the country. Instead, she worked slowly from within her own department in order to inspire changes in the nationwide policies, intended to teach feminine qualities more than produce athletes, that were so embraced by physical educators.

Leaders of the physical education programs at the majority of colleges did not believe in athletics for girls, particularly the idea of intercollegiate competitions or tournaments, at the start of the 1930s. The WDNAAF even went as far as to say, "the idea that winning is the principal function in our interscholastic contests is the root of all evil" as a way to encourage schools to "foster the spirit of 'playing with me' rather than 'against me.'¹³ As a result, the WDNAAF developed Play Days,

10 Susan K. Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994) 68.

11 Frey, *From Wildkittens to Wildcats*, 105.

12 Nancy B. Bouchier, "Let us Take Care of Our Field: The National Association for Physical Education of College Women and World War II," *The Journal of Sport History* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 69-70.

13 "Women in Athletics," 42.

which were then adopted at most schools around the country.¹⁴ Rather than having a series of games in which a team represented their school against others in order to determine superiority, Play Days took a much more relaxed, casual approach to sports. Utilized as a more positive alternative to intercollegiate competition, Play Days allowed one school to host the female students of another, and teams were created by mixing girls from both schools. Scores and wins were not recorded because winning was not a primary goal, as individualized success “sacrifices the individual to an unworthy and unimportant cause that promotes false values.”¹⁵ It was believed that because Play Days discouraged individual and team championships, it instead helped foster sportsmanship, teamwork, and communication skills among the competing women from both schools.¹⁶ Physical education leaders saw Play Days as a way to prevent women from taxing their bodies too significantly and prevented the female students from being exposed to the corrupt practices that men’s athletics had adopted over time.

The majority of major physical education policy-making groups around the country supported Play Days, but there was one exception. In 1923, the Amateur Athletics Association (AAU) disagreed with the WDNAAF, the CWA, the Atlantic Conference of American College Women (ACACW), and the National Section on Women’s Athletics (NSWA) and attempted to push for intercollegiate athletic competition among women.¹⁷ The AAU oversaw men’s athletics at both the intercollegiate level and beyond, as long as the athletes maintained their amateur status. They sought the opportunity to do the same for women and create a vehicle for female athletes to excel in their individual sports. However, despite students’ lobbying for increased levels of competition, the AAU was denied because women physical educators believed that the organization was attempting to take control of women’s sports, and at the time, there was an overwhelming desire for female self-determination and self-governance.¹⁸ Consequently, the CWA rejected any sort

14 King, “A Problem – Softball for Women.”

15 Rosalind Cassidy, *New Directions in Physical Education for the Adolescent Girl* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, Inc., 1938), 65.

16 “Women in Athletics,” 53.

17 Frey, *From Wildkittens to Wildcats*, 56-57

18 Joan S. Hult, “The Story of Women’s Athletics: Manipulating a Dream, 1890-1985,” in *Women and Sport*, ed. D. Margaret Costa and Sharon R. Guthrie (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1994), 91-92.

of affiliation with the AAU, leading to similar rebuffs from the other groups and resulting in women's athletics maintaining the status quo. Gittings, who also pushed for competitive athletic opportunities for women, had to be careful not to make a similar mistake of her own by placing more importance on the individual abilities and success of the athletes than on personal growth. However, without any major organization pushing for the development of women's athletics, and most leading physical educators following suit, there was no strong driving force for women's sports to be pushed to the next level or become a competitive outlet the way it was for men.

Groups such as the WDNAAF campaigned against women having a chance to participate even recreationally in certain sports on the basis of the fact that they were not suitable for "girls as girls." The idea was that certain sports, such as football, regulation soccer, regulation water polo, boys' basketball, and baseball with a hard ball, were too masculine and so would teach female athletes values and traits that did not fit in with the existing idea of femininity.¹⁹ Instead, many non-athletic tests were adopted, such as the "Thirty-Day Loveliness," "Health Queen," and Posture contests, because they could "really show objective accomplishments," namely how well female students had mastered the skills that society considered important for women.²⁰ The Thirty-Day Loveliness and Health Queen contests were particularly beneficial because both monitored the students' habits, such as eating and hygiene. These were made even more popular across college campuses because of the efforts being made by physical educators to prevent women's athletics from becoming commercialized. As a result of the corruption in men's sports, many physical education representatives feared hosting athletic competitions that were open for the student body to watch, particularly in events that the university attempted to charge for admission. They also felt that it would be "almost a travesty to exhibit [women] as of equal interest" because the girls were so much weaker than men.²¹ The tests, inspired by the drive to produce good mothers, only stood as a further obstacle in the growth of women's athletics because they prevented women from competing in sports that they may have excelled at.

19 "Women in Athletics," 57-58.

20 Gittings, *Fundamentals in Teaching Physical Education*, 75.

21 *Ibid.*, 74-75.

Despite the lack of support from such major groups, Gittings found compromises within the system that helped her expand the physical education department at the U of A and at other schools around the country. The democratic ideal of having a “sport for every girl and every girl in a sport” meant that girls who excelled in athletics were often discriminated against based on the idea that individual stardom inhibited the learning of feminine skills, and this in turn meant that the policy makers of physical education for women completely rejected the idea of varsity teams.²² Gittings felt differently, however, and so only abided by certain parts of the WDNAAF’s platform. While she agreed that corruption should be prevented and that men should not be the coaches of women, she did not believe that women’s teams should not travel or that women should not have varsity teams. Instead, she argued that “varsity competition for college women furnishes the real medium for maximum vigor, skill, and joy,”²³ and so she formed “honor teams,” her version of varsity teams. In addition, she believed that competitive sports were particularly beneficial for future wives because they taught women “emotional control, motor coordination... social cooperation... and health guidance.”²⁴ In this way, she was able to not only defend her school’s women’s sports teams, but she was also able to use the WDNAAF’s logic to support her own actions. Although she did not completely go against the WDNAAF platform, she molded it to fit her own desires for growth in order to grant more opportunities for her students to compete athletically.

Additionally, while Play Days continued, Gittings expanded the idea and also held Sports Days, which allowed the members of her honor teams to represent the university against girls competing from other schools. Unlike university-organized intercollegiate competitions, students organized these days. They offered a compromise between the idea of “a sport for every girl and every girl in a sport” and the students’ desires for more organized competition. By allowing this, Gittings was drastically in the minority; the school had varsity teams for women in field hockey, basketball, swimming, baseball, archery, golf and tennis in the 1930s, but by 1938 only 17% of colleges nationally held varsity competitions for their female students.

22 Hult, “The Story of Women’s Athletics,” 90.

23 Frey, *From Wildkittens to Wildcats*, 68.

24 “For Profession – For Marriage,” *The Arizona Alumnus*, 1939-1940.

Similarly, intercollegiate competition only existed in 18% of colleges in 1936, yet students at the U of A were granted that privilege.²⁵ Although she was not alone in encouraging the growth of women's athletics, but by working within the system and the cultural limitations of her time, she was able to slowly allow the physical education department to grow within her university, thereby encouraging the same elsewhere.

Gittings also encouraged intercollegiate competition among students by sending them to places such as Tempe Normal, now known as Arizona State University, and Phoenix College. This started as early as 1923, when the schools competed in basketball, swimming and archery, and continued into the 1940s.²⁶ By 1931, Gittings was insisting that the Department of Physical Education for Women was to contain "a full competitive [athletic] program with the colleges of the state."²⁷ At a time when intercollegiate competition was so rare, this was something unique to the U of A. In the 1930s, the faculty sent women to the Arizona State Tennis Tournament, where Josephine Free and Jeanette Judson were semifinalists in women's doubles and singles, and the Southwest Tennis Tournament where the duo were the women's doubles champions. The continuation of Play Week ensured that every girl could participate in any sport that they enjoyed, fitting the desired ideal of creating fit and healthy women. However, by also allowing highly advanced and proficient women to join honor teams, Gittings was able to expand the physical education program at the U of A to create an athletic program that encouraged excellence. Her clear push to afford women the very best opportunities led Rufus von Kleinsmid, University of Southern California president, to state, "girls at the University of Arizona got more for their money in splendid outdoor activity opportunities than did girls at any other university in the United States of America,"²⁸ an opinion that was prevalent throughout the U.S.²⁹ The athletics program for women at the university was one of the largest in the country, thanks primarily to Gittings' determination.

25 Frey, *From Wildkittens to Wildcats*, 82.

26 *Ibid.*, 60-68.

27 *Resume of the Activities in the Department of Physical Education for Women, 1931-1932*, University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, MS 283 box 1, folder 4.

28 *Inter-Collegiate Play Day for Girls 1930-1931*, University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, MS 283, box 1 folder 4.

29 *Resume of the Activities in the Department of Physical Education for Women*.

Even beyond her own university, Gittings was a major force in the slowly developing athletic programs at other schools at both the local and national level. Between 1932 and 1933, she was the Arizona State Chairman of such significant groups as the NAAF and the American Physical Education Association, along with being an active member of the National Women's Track Athletics Committee, the Administrative Women in Athletics Committee, and the Committee of Physical Education Directors.³⁰ As a result, she not only influenced the direction that athletics was moving in from within these groups, but also gained a vast network of valuable contacts who helped her impact the condition of women's athletics within the state. In the spring of 1931, after Gittings had already established herself as a very active member each of these groups, she invited a group of six women from various colleges throughout Arizona to the university to discuss the beginning of a state association for physical education teachers. This proved very successful, and in November of that year, she hosted the very first State Conference of Women Physical Education Directors and Instructors at the university.³¹ This time, ten women represented at least five different schools. They formed committees, such as the Committee on Intercollegiate Contests and the Committee on the Standardization of Athletic Seasons, and created a list of resolutions, which included meeting frequently for the purpose of conducting athletic competitions and pushing for better programs of physical education and athletics for women.³² With Gittings selected as chairperson, the group named itself the Association of Health and Physical Education for Women and Girls. It proved to be very successful, and in 1934 the U of A hosted a women's tennis tournament that brought in 54 players not only from Arizona, but also from Washington, D.C., New York, Washington State, California, Florida, Illinois, Missouri, Indiana and Kansas.³³ As evidence to the expansion of women's athletics at the time, not only was this tournament larger than the one Phoenix hosted in 1931, but it drew from outside the state as well. Even at a time

30 *University of Arizona Department of Physical Education for Women: Committees of which Ina E. Gittings, Director, is a Member, 1932-33*, University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, MS 283 box 1, folder 9.

31 *Report of the First State Conference of Women Physical Education Directors and Instructors in Arizona*, November 23-24, 1931, University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, MS 283 box 1, folder 4.

32 *Ibid.*

33 *Bureau of University News*, October 25, 1934, University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, MS 283 box 1, folder 4.

when so few colleges allowed a high level of competition for women, Gittings was breaking that mold and using her influence to bring together female athletes from all over the state and even the country.

She was further aided by her insistence that her students, including members of the honor teams, were taught the qualities that the WDNAAF and the rest of society valued at the time, which allowed her to take extra liberties in promoting athletics. In 1931, the same year that she established Sports Days and declared that her department was to contain an athletically competitive intercollegiate program, she established an orientation course at the U of A that was required for all freshman women called Social Fundamentals. It instructed them about social etiquette and the conventions of being a proper lady by emphasizing the importance of reputation, health, and manners. Instructors drilled students on the fact that “reputation is better known than our real character”³⁴ and that women are judged primarily on their appearances.³⁵ Besides the general lectures on etiquette, there were lectures each semester on the proper way to host a party and the correct way to choose a suitable mate.³⁶ This section was prominent enough to encourage Dr. Boris Zemsky, a leading psychologist at the time, to suggest that the course change its name to “Introduction to Marriage and Homemaking.”³⁷ The WDNAAF, in its promotion of values useful to mothers, could not deny that Gittings was teaching her students just that. The class even went as far as to coach students on their personalities: each girl had to fill out a Personal Characteristics Rating Scale and determine what aspects of themselves they needed to improve on.³⁸

They were also taught the values that the WDNAAF intended women to learn from sports, like cooperation, through projects like throwing a dinner party for the class. In this way, she almost prepared students more for becoming wives and mothers than she would have if she simply followed the WDNAAF’s platform because even beyond simply teaching her students things like teamwork and leadership,

34 *Conventions*, University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, AZ 519, folder 1.

35 *Appearances – What We Are Judged By*, University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, AZ 519, folder 1.

36 *Preparation for Home and Marriage*, 1945-1946, University of Arizona Special Collections, AZ 519, folder 6.

37 Dr. Boris Zemsky to Hazel Maccready, September 3, 1946, University of Arizona Special Collections, AZ 519, folder 6.

38 *Material to be Covered*, University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, AZ 519, folder 7: Miscellaneous.

each student was also instructed in other life skills, such as the importance of good conversation – “it is important to know facts but also be able to think,”³⁹ and the proper way to use silverware – “when meat is being cut, the end of the handle of the fork should press into the hand.”⁴⁰ On the final exam used from 1939-1941, students were tested on things that apparently made for a proper lady at the time, such as when it is acceptable to ask for help eating an artichoke, who should be the first person to say goodbye on a phone call and what plate was most appropriate for eating lettuce.⁴¹

However, even within this class, physical education was emphasized. Gittings allowed herself three days in the 1941-1942 school year to talk about health and physical education, more than those who talked about table etiquette, budgeting, or nutrition.⁴² Although lessons in etiquette were more along the lines of what the WDNAAF wanted young girls to learn, Gittings was able to also use this class to further expand her students’ opportunities for sports. She ensured that even with the development of her athletics program through the implementation of honor teams and intercollegiate competition, no one could say that she did not promote feminine virtues in her students. Through this class, she was able to work from within the system to change it slowly in order to open up more doors for women to participate athletically.

With the U.S. entering World War II in December of 1941, there was suddenly a greater need for fit citizens to partake in the war effort both at home and abroad. As a result, physical education for women finally expanded across the country the way Gittings had been pushing for so long. In March of 1942, a major policy change when Ruth Atwell, the Chair of the NWSA, declared:

39 *Appearances – What We Are Judged By*.

40 *Final Examination for Social Fundamentals, 1939-1940/1940-1941*, University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, AZ 519, folder 3.

41 *Ibid*.

42 *Class Syllabus, 1941-1944* University of Arizona Library of Special Collections, AZ 519, folder 4.

...Our work is an essential phase of the country's defense program... we who are trained leaders should make work on expanded and better programs our 'defense job.' Let others take care of other phases but let us take care of our field even though our first impulse might be that we should roll bandages.⁴³

Atwell wanted female physical educators to take part in the war effort, but she believed that this could be done just as well from their positions at colleges as it could be by becoming nurses. The military also encouraged this; fear existed that the American population was not fit enough for the war, so physical education programs were expanded throughout the country and the “Hale America” National Fitness Campaign was created to focus attention on the need for fit men, women and children in the U.S.⁴⁴ As a result, female physical educators were given the opportunity to assist in creating training programs for female enlistees in the Air Force, although these programs were still supposed to satisfy the NSWA’s “Desirable Practices in Athletics for Girls and Women.” Women physical educators believed that their jobs were crucial to the war effort.⁴⁵ Combined with the National Fitness Campaign, the focus for women’s athletics shifted from teaching values and creating healthy mothers to creating strong, fit citizens able to participate in the war, both on the home front and in the military.

The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League was created during this time in order to give people a diversion from the war. Because men’s sports were disbanded to fill military ranks, women had the opportunity to pursue professional athletic careers. This allowed intercollegiate athletics to expand as it dissolved one of the primary reasons that had been used to prevent women from competing with an emphasis on winning – that these women were not being prepared for professional sports.⁴⁶ WWII opened doors for women athletically that otherwise would have remained closed long into the future.

43 “Women’s Athletic Section News,” *Journal of Health and Physical Education* 13 (March 1942): 197-198.

44 Bouchier, “Let us Take Care of Our Field,” 65-66.

45 *Ibid.*, 77.

46 Gittings, *Fundamentals in Teaching Physical Education*, 71.

As a result of the military's attitude, female physical educators were not the only ones to push for the expansion of physical education programs at the university level. In June of 1943, the National Association for the Physical Education of College Women (NAPECW) and the U.S. Office of Education sponsored a seven-day workshop called "Victory Through Fitness." Afterwards the NAPECW urged the latter to permanently establish a division in Health and Physical Education and peacetime health and to develop physical education programs for colleges and universities. NAPECW did not want women's physical education programs to grow during the war in order to aid the effort overseas only to shrink again once it ended.⁴⁷ As a result, once the war was over, physical education and athletic programs for women continued to remain in the forefront for the association.

In November 1945, the NAPECW established a Placement Bureau in order to help female Air Force veterans, who had formerly been physical educators, find jobs in the same field after returning from the war.⁴⁸ This was especially significant because at the time, many returning service women, and even civilian women who had worked jobs during the war, struggled to find employment due to the return of male workers. Ultimately, the Bureau was able to fill all of the physical education job vacancies it worked for, a total of 226.⁴⁹ In addition, it ensured that women would continue to govern physical education for girls and that its growth, pushed for by the NWAPECW and aided by the Office of Education's newly developed programs, would not be abandoned now that the war was over.

The U of A concurrently expanded its own physical education program during this time as well. Enrollment grew from 150 to 1193 between 1920 and 1945, despite overall enrollment numbers decreasing during the war.⁵⁰ However, it is the growth from 1945-1947 that is truly astounding. In just two years, the program nearly doubled in size to 1,934 girls.⁵¹ It would appear from these figures that a large boom occurred right around the end of World War II, and even continuing

47 Bouchier, "Let us Take Care of Our Field," 72.

48 Ibid., 73.

49 Ibid., 73.

50 "Girls Sports Have Gained," *Arizona Daily Star*, November 18, 1945.

51 Peggy Land, "Coeds Won Victory Over Onions in 1925: Women's Physical Education Department Plagued by Constant Struggle for Recognition," *Daily Wildcat*, 1948.

into its aftermath. Gittings' employee Marguerite Chesney, Associate Professor of Physical Education for women, helped this growth. Chesney was famous for her tennis prowess both prior to and during her appointment at the University in 1929. She was the Southwestern Tennis Association (SWTA) Singles Champion six times between 1916 and 1927 and the Arizona Open Singles Champion eight times between 1916 and 1931, more SWTA Singles and Arizona Open titles than any other competitor. By 1939 she was the first female president of the SWTA.⁵² As a result, her reputation caused young women to come the school with the desire to compete as athletes. She brought in many tennis national junior champions, including Jean Doyle Garrett and Mary Cunningham, and nationally ranked juniors, including 5th-ranked Marie Jacks, into the program as freshmen, and it showed in the University's success.⁵³ Chesney's student Mari Bailey Bell was the SWTA singles and doubles champion from 1942-1946. Mary Cunningham was a national junior and SWTA doubles champion from 1945-1947, Marie Jacks was an SWTA doubles champion from 1945-1948, and Jeanne Doyle Garrett was the singles and doubles champion at the California and Ojai Invitational Intercollegiate Tournaments from 1948-1950.⁵⁴ In addition, in 1947 Chesney established the University of Arizona Intercollegiate Invitational Tournament, the first intercollegiate tennis tournament for women in the U.S., and remained the tournament's director for the next ten years.⁵⁵

Gittings was at the forefront of the national movement supporting the growth of women's athletic opportunities. Rather than just competing in regional tournaments against opponents who could be in high school, college, or older, now tennis students at the U of A had the opportunity to compete at intercollegiate tournaments, started by Chesney. In addition, Sports Days continued to grow – ten teams participated in the 1949 New Mexico Sports Day that Gittings and her honor teams attended. While Gittings was gaining ground for women's athletics all on her own, WWII allowed it to reach a different level altogether.

52 "E. Marguerite Chesney," Intercollegiate Tennis Association Women's Collegiate Tennis Hall of Fame, accessed October 26, 2014, <http://itahalloffame.org/inductees/e-marguerite-chesney/>.

53 Frey, *From Wildkittens to Wildcats*, 111.

54 "E. Marguerite Chesney"

55 Frey, *From Wildkittens to Wildcats*, 111.

In the 1920s, when Gittings first took the position of the director of physical education for women, there were large obstacles standing in the way of her desire to grant female students the same athletic opportunities as men that continued into the 1940s. One reason for this was the prevalent belief that women belonged in the home sphere as wives and mothers. Female physical educators, along with such prominent groups as the WDNAAF, the CWA, and the NSWA, believed that allowing women to compete in varsity athletics would prove detrimental to this because they feared contending for either individual or team victories would teach the young women poor values. This was exacerbated by the discovery of corrupt practices throughout men's varsity athletics, such as bribery and gambling, and physical educators believed that women had no place in such an environment. As a result, women were prevented from participating in "highly intense specialized competition," a policy that was advocated for from the top, particularly by the WDNAAF, down to the individual educators at the vast majority of schools around the country.⁵⁶

However, Gittings disagreed with this overall sentiment, and made changes slowly from within the system. As the state chairperson for Arizona of the NAAF and a member of the National Committee of the American Physical Education Association, Gittings was able to develop a network of both local and national contacts that she then used to both compete in and form tournaments and intercollegiate competitions at the local, regional, and national levels. It was because of this that she was able to form the Association of Health and Physical Education for Women and Girls, of which she was the chairperson, made up of physical educators from colleges across southern Arizona. The group's goals included pushing for better opportunities for female student athletes, leading them to hold a tennis tournament that brought competitors from across the U.S.⁵⁷ The U of A fell into a category of schools that allowed intercollegiate competition and varsity teams for their female students, a group that comprised not even 20 percent of all schools across the country.⁵⁸ State champions in multiple sports were coming from the university by the early 1940s, and throughout the 1940s the school's tennis players found a great

56 "Women in Athletics," 39.

57 *Report of the First State Conference of Women Physical Education Directors and Instructors in Arizona.*

58 Frey, *From Wildkittens to Wildcats*, 82.

deal of success in the state and even across the country. However, even with all of this competition, Gittings managed to ensure that her students did not miss out on the crucial values that the WDNAAF and others insisted so strongly that female students learn. Her Social Fundamentals class ensured that her students not only were taught teamwork and leadership, but also other vitally important skills from the time, such as the proper way to host a party, budgeting, reading, nutrition, and how to conduct oneself properly in social situations.⁵⁹ As a result, no one could fault her for teaching her students poor values through intercollegiate competition at all, and instead she became a leader in the front to promote athletics for women.

Her mission was furthered by the necessity of the military to have citizens, both soldiers and civilians, who were more physically fit, and as a result physical education programs were ramped up across the country. With so many men away participating in the war effort overseas, female physical educators were left to develop ROTC programs for both men and women, which shifted the focus away from turning college girls into mothers to creating a physically fit population, capable of either fighting in the war or holding a job. As a result physical education around the country began to grow rapidly, particularly at the U of A. The number of students enrolled in physical education at the school grew, nearly doubling in the years immediately following the war, and with the increased opportunities for competition for female athletes everywhere, the university's different sports began to flourish. Chesney's tennis program is one example: she recruited nationally-ranked high school students and even national champions, to the school and allowed them to compete at the country's first intercollegiate tennis tournament in 1947. Even outside of college the attitude towards women's sports was changing: the first professional baseball league for women was born during the war, giving female student athletes and physical educators a concrete reason that they did not have before to pursue intense athletic competitions. Gittings was a major driving force behind the expansion of women's athletics working both from within the system, before competitive sports for girls was considered appropriate or acceptable, and alongside it, once the war called for fit citizens of both sexes.

⁵⁹ *Final Examination for Social Fundamentals.*