

MARY CAMPBELL INTERVIEW – 05:39:18

Mary Campbell Interview Transcript

05:39:23

Bev: What inspired you to start playing basketball?

05:39:31

Mary: I suppose I was inspired to play basketball by a group of umm girls who attended church at the



St. Giles presberian Presbyterian Church up on 10th and Quebec Street, and they had a basement with pillars in it and the girls used to get down into the basement and play with the ball. Umm we found a lady and Eireen Carnival (?) who would coach and we started to play in the church team and so I think it was because of the fact that there were so many of the girls who attended this church that inspired me to become a member it was a little easier because my father's family were good Baptists and they had a church across the street but I went to the Presbyterian Church because we you could play basketball in the basement around the pillars on the wooden floor.

Bev: Can you tell me when you joined the UBC team?

05:40:54

Mary: Um after I finished my education, my public school education I went to umm King Edward High School where I played some basketball there but



umm when I was uhh when I was 15 years old I went to UBC and had to have special permission to attend UBC because I was quite 16 but I went to UBC and I started to play basketball for UBC. I played on the senior B team uh for one or two years and then I played senior A for three years and became a member of the big block club, in fact I won two sweaters, a blue sweater and a white sp sweater for playing basket basketball and winning teams for UBC. In 1930 on that same UBC team we were chosen to go to Europe.

Bev: So, can you tell me about the journey to Europe?

05:42:10

Mary: In 1930 prior to being chosen to go we played the um the Edmonton Grad team, a two game total point series in the gymnasium which is not very far from umm our new home and we lost that that two game total point series by four points. Percy Page said that their team was not able to go that year and since we were the best team that they had ever played best best girl's team he had ever played umm he thought we should we should be sent in in their place. And so on the strength of his recommendation and on the strength of uh support from UBC we worked hard all summer to to gain and to make enough money to send nine players, a coach, and a chaperone from Vancouver to Prague, Czechoslovakia to take part in the Women's International Games.

05:43:30

These games were uhh played in the two years umm the two years in between the men's Olympics, there were no Olympics for girls at that time and so the international games have been set up in they um two years between Olympics. And so that there's the the then there's all the aim and



that was umm where we eventually raised enough money, I think we um made about 98,000, 9,800 dollars not 10,000 dollars to take nine people, nine players a a coach, and chaperone from here to Prague, Czechoslovakia. Umm we were able to do this on such a small budget because one of the boys who helped raise the money uhh his father was a uh a high official in the Canadian pacific railway and we got big rates on all of our all of our train trips and they looked after us remarkably well when we were even uh in Czechoslovakia and on the way over and on the way back.

Bev: From where to where did you take the train, and for how long?

05:45:11

Mary: We left Vancouver on August 30, 15th 1930 and that train, CPR train we traveled to Montreal and boarded the SS Mont Claire and stayed on the Mont Claire before it sailed. It sailed in the morning and we crossed over the Atlantic and we landed first we landed first in Sherberg, France and then we went back to England and then we went back to Hamburg so we did a little jump there and then from there we traveled by train from Sherberg, to umm or from umm Sherberg to Berlin and then to Prague from Berlin after a night in um in um Berlin, and arrived in Czechoslovakia.

05:46:21

On the way over on the way over on the Mont Claire we were treated very well by everybody on the boat. They liked to see us in the morning doing our our umm running on the deck. The captain allowed us to rope off the promenade deck and we had that for our umm running exercising and then after that they gave us tremendously hot steam baths and um in the afternoon we afternoon we exercised up on the on the deck tennis court,



threw the ball around and one of the balls went sailing into the St. Lawrence.

Bev: Can you tell me about the competition once you got there?

05:47:15

Mary: When we got there we were astounded to find out that the we were only going to play one game. Madame Milliat, who was in charge of the Women's International Federation, seemed to think that umm she could make up her own rules in some cases and if she didn't like some of the rules she crossed them out but it was very difficult for us because we were we were going to have to play one game on the center court, outside with a ball that was smaller, a basketball that was a little higher, a referee that spoke Italian and French and no English and the cinder court did not allow us any floor play whatsoever so I always said it was a game of almost rugby football, not a game of skilled basketball that we were used to.

05:48:16

But in any case we did not go there to come home without winning and while the score was very low, 18 to 14, I believe, umm uh we accomplished what we had gone all that distance to do, to bring back this um trophy which we brought back to UBC. It was an etched glass trophy which to had it's place in the in the um trophy case at um the gym at at UBC.

Bev: Can you tell me about the camaraderie that this team had traveling together?

05:49:00



Mary: We had a great time, of course we all got along, we got along very well, we had played basketball together for years. We had won championships in Vancouver and we were the best, the second best team and and we had almost won the BC championships, and so we knew each other very well and there was never any friction. And we got along beautifully... um and I can't remember any times were when we had any arguments and our coach and um he married Claire Menton, who was the captain on our team, years later they had 2 children, lived happily ever after ever ever after basketball. (laughing)

Bev: Can you tell me some stories about your teammates?

05:50:23

Mary: On the way over we umm had to do a little bit of our daily washing which we did in the cabin and um we strung our laundry across the across the cabin and I was umm I was umm bunking with Lois Fisher, who was one of my friends who had been my friend since church basketball, um and she hung hers out to dry and the porthole was open and the breeze came along and and um whisked the laundry out of and it went up on upper deck and some went in and one of the stewards brought it down and that was an embarrassing moment for Lois.

05:51:28

Mary: We entertained we entertained in the umm in the lounge every afternoon for what they call a tea dance and some of the officers came came to dance with us and some of them came down from first class and then they were treated by the captain about the Mont Claire were kind to us we enjoyed the Mont Claire, much more so than the bigger ship, the Duchess of Athel, which we came home on.



Bev: Had you traveled on a train or a boat prior to this?

05:52:13

Mary: I traveled a great deal in my life after going. I don't think I traveled too much before, umm we had a summer camp at crescent beach. And we used to go down on the train but that was hardly you'd call it traveling very far. Umm but after being on that trip I was um interested in going all over the world and so I think it's it inspired me to to engage in a life of travel because I wanted to see all of these things that I had um spoken about in my English classes. Umm I taught physical education and English to students and in the English classes we always spoke about all these wonderful places to see in the world and I was interested in seeing them but my traveling was after not before.

Bev: Can you tell me about what your teammates were going to school for?

05:53:44

Mary: Mostly I think they took an arts course, the same as I did and like Claire, Claire went to education, she became a teacher, she taught her um two two uh years in Penticton with me and then she got married so she she was a teacher. Umm... I don't remember quite what the others did for a living after that.

Bev: Did you ever coach?

05:54:21

Mary: I coached high school basketball. I I became a little bit of a hybrid. An



English teacher and a phys ed teacher at umm at umm Penticton I taught all the English in the high school. At umm umm... one of the other schools I taught PE for 4 years in um in junior high. That was at Tempelton. And at John Oliver I taught nothing but PE for 23 years. And umm after 23 years I went to Windermere as head of the English department so all my career was in teaching both both but at John High School which was the best high school I had ever taught in I took I coached basketball, I coached track, I coached field hockey, grass hockey, umm and every every term we played a different sport and I was the coach of them of all of all these games but I had on that staff a great many very talented people, Norma McDermott was on it and she's a member of the Hall of Fame.

05:55:53

Umm and um Sheila Marshall was on was on our staff and um he's not a member of the BC Hall of Fame but he was interested in teaching and coaching, and so um yes I did a lot of coaching and that's why I was interested in giving back something in my career to um students to learn how to play basketball so that when they got to university they're they knew a lot of the fundamentals and then Deb Hebad who was a a coach a um coach of UBC team right now and with whom I am very much associated and umm has a good many other players which we started to train come to UBC and play for her teams when they get there. So well, part of my part of my career is in giving back something which had been given to me and I'm very proud of that part of my life.

Bev: Can you tell me what you think makes a good coach?

05:57:16



Mary: What makes a good coach... Well, there are some coaches who (pause) become too palley with their students, I think. Uh you have to maintain the teacher/student relationship in coaching. You have to be strict with them and demand that they turn up for every practice, that uh so I think that a good many of the things you do in the classroom are done as a coach but you have to gain the respect of your students so that you have to know what you're talking about. Umm, perhaps those are some of the main things that a coach should do, but I respect for respect for the um respect of the students for the teacher, a knowledgeable teacher, um a teacher who's not afraid to experiment.

05:58:18

At John Oliver, when we were looking for people who might be runners we used to go through the whole school and run them all off and that's to see if we can find talent and then try to develop it. Basketball was the same. We would try to interest them all in basketball and umm run leagues for them, intramural leagues, and pick out the ones that showed potential so that we could get the right people in the sport.

Bev: Can you talk a little bit about your coach at UBC's coaching techniques?

05:59:11

Mary: Deb... umm, I still attend games at UBC umm and I'm very much associated with that team. I've given some money for scholarships to them. And umm so they've become part of my life. My retirement life and for that I'm very grateful. She is um a um import from the East. At one time she scored 50 points in a game all by herself. She is in the Canadian Basketball Hall of Fame. She is a wonderful coach. She knows what she is talking about. She does something that I admire very much is that she



has taught all of her players to be ambidextrous, to play with the left had as well as the right hand, and I think that that was something that I overlooked.

06:00:22

I once tried to teach a center to do that, go both ways, but um she she um they just don't. They're just as good with their left had as they are with the right and that's a very important coaching tex technique, I think. But she is very knowledgeable and um the team has umm and the team has been successful under her although Simon Fraser game them gave them good many very close games, it was at the end that they won the Canadian University um Basketball bbbaby, they call it, brown baby this year.

Bev: Can you tell me about some of your experiences in Prague?

06:01:19

Mary: We were quite interested in that because a man by the name of Mr. Harlett, who showed us around Prague, and they umm the Charles Bridge is something which is known all over the world, and um their buildings were quite modern. Umm um, what else can I tell you about them... We didn't see perhaps too much because um... we didn't um we weren't taken around too much but but what we saw we were most impressed and I was most impressed by the by the Czech people.

06:02:00

We were very popular, in fact we were the most popular people in there, in Prague, whenever there's anybody saw us on the street they recognized that we were from Canada and they would say 'Oh Canada', Canada, so they were um they um were great great umm they were interested in Canadians and Canadian life and they wanted to hear all about it.



06:02:29

And um one of the girls from UBC, Sheila Townsend, played basketball, umm professional basketball, last year in Czechoslovakia and she came to see me one day to tell me about her experience of playing professional basketball in Prague and not in Prague, it was outside Prague, she she didn't she didn't hadn't seen hadn't been in Prague very much because she played all the time, but that was a wonderful experience for her. So basketball does a great many things for a great many people.

Bev: Can you talk about the changes you've seen in basketball over the years?

06:03:26

Mary: Well, I can see so much change in basketball that I don't it it doesn't seem to be the same game. Uhh we thought we were extremely umm um extremely good at what we did, umm we'd had set plays and we would dribble and we would pass and we we we'd had no three point rule but I see so much other differences in the play though. The one thing that I was telling was saying a little while ago, they learned to use both hands, not just one hand, they learned to use two. And it's so far ahead of us that I hardly recognize it as the same game. Now I am not too fond of professional men's basketball.

06:04:21

I think it has become a game of giants. And I I um except except for people like Steve Nash, umm I'm who is not quite so tall as some of them. Umm um it just seems to me the the taller they are and the basket has not been raised to suit these giants, and and um of course it's skilled and it's professional and it is wonderful to watch but umm I prefer amateur umm basketball, I prefer watching college basketball because I think that it is a



a truer measure of what students can learn and the game has certainly changed from the time we played it although we thought we were really smart (laughing)...

Bev: What would you say to young women today about physical activity?

06:05:37

Mary: I would say that it didn't much matter what sport you have that you had decided to go into, try them all, try everything, and find the one that you want to make you're your main sport. I used to say that when I thought that that that was very true of students in high school because they had seasons and they played every sport but there's a different one in every season which gave them an outlook which was which was umm more universal and then they could find what they really excelled and um what they liked, because you have to like it first and then you have to excel at it.

Bev: Can you comment on the treatment of female athletes in the 1930s vs. now?

06:07:17

Mary: Well, I don't know that ummmm I don't know well yes there is a lot of difference in the way that they were treated. We just played the games in 1930 because we liked to play the game and we were not aiming to reach great heights. We we played for the love of the sport. Today they are made ummm um a lot more attention is is paid to women in sport and they are becoming equal equally important as men in sport and they are treated far better.



06:08:02

They may not be treated quite as well as the men yet but they are making strides in becoming important, and umm I think that they have earned their way into um being being umm made um um of the the division between the two is is narrowing as we as they go on, as we go on. So I would say yes they're treated better but they have earned that by the hard work they have put in and before it was just a love of sport that inspired them whereas now they perhaps inspire to reach higher ground.

COMMENTS ON OTHER FEMALE ATHLETES

Bev: Marjorie Leeming

06:09:25

Mary: Marjorie was a tennis player and she was a friend of umm she she um my sister probably knew her better than I did umm who was her friend, another, can't remember. I can't remember So I actually only remember her as being a great tennis player and I probably watched her play a lot of tennis but I didn't really know her as a person, just as a umm I just had heard a lot about her more than anything else.

06:10:20

Mary: I'm sure she was a great athlete and I'm sure she was a great tennis player and now that the Wimbledon tennis is on I'm always interested in tennis because I like watching it on TV and I saw some of her games and was quite impressed by her playing by her playing but that was again many years ago. (laughing)

Bev: Ruth Wilson



06:10:48

Mary: Ya, Ruth Wilson was a personal friend of mine, umm Ruth Wilson... played basketball with my sister on the province team. She was umm my sister was six years younger than I was and Ruth was was a year younger than Isabel was I think, so that she was often at our house because my mother was a great one for entertaining the um the younger sisters basketball team so it was it was umm our own home that I first met Ruth, well then umm I probably didn't see her for I went off teaching so I was out of out of town and umm teaching and then um I met up with Ruth again when she became a teacher at umm John Oliver High School.

06:11:48

And she was actually on the PE staff at that time and umm I guess I had probably kept in touch with her but I had most of her umm most of the time that I was associated with this BC Hall of Fame Ruth was the one who dug me out to come to all of their functions. Umm umm and umm I I enjoyed them. She was a strange person, she'd never drive with anybody else, she had to drive the car herself. I always thought that was rather rather strange, but um we continued to be very friendly then we taught on the same staff.

06:12:36

She took me down to Hall of Fame and umm umm she was probably the one who who um reco she was on the on the committee who chose people who entered the Hall of Fame here and so when we were entered into the Hall of Fame it was because of Ruth, and she got people into this Hall of Fame that umm were many and that were friends of friends of Ruth, and she stuck up for them. She was a great person to umm promote women in sport, an absolute marvel of the work that she did,



nothing was too much trouble for Ruth. She had some great tragedies in her life.

06:13:32

Her brother died overseas in the in the air force I think it was, umm her fiancé died in a in an airplane accident in Canada and her um her sister died, her mother had Alzheimer's I guess, and um Ruth unfortunately umm contracted Alzheimer's. Now now Faye Burnham, who is also a member of this Hall of Fame, umm was a great friend of Ruth's. She played on many of Ruth's basketball teams and umm um she and I used to go and see Ruth about once, well I used to go about once a two weeks, even when she had Alzheimer's and right up to the very end.

06:14:29

We used to take her out for lunch but then it was impossible to take her out so we would go and visit her and it was unfortunate, the Alzheimer's was unfortunate, cause she was too great a person to have to suffer through that but she she did, but she was a personal friend and I knew a lot about her.

ROOM TONE IS HERE