LUCILLE KYVALLOS
THE LEGACY
QUEENS COLLEGE ATHLETICS
Lucille Kyvallos, one of the foremost coaches and pioneers in women’s basketball, was also a player in her own right. She began playing basketball at age 14, and by age 17 was considered one of the most outstanding basketball players developed in New York City. “Big Lulu”, as she was known, played for 114th Precinct of Astoria, the Astoria Laurels, the St. Demetrios Girls Five of Astoria, and the Rustic Queens of Astoria, among other New York teams. Her skills gained attention not only from the amateur teams in the area, but also from two professional teams: the New York Cover Girls and the Bronx Sparks. Kyvallos declined opportunities to play on both teams in order to remain an amateur.

Kyvallos began her basketball coaching career at Cathedral High School for Girls, where she finished with a record of 37-4. Her next coaching stint was at West Chester State, where she continued her winning ways, finishing 52-2. Kyvallos then served as coach at Queens College from 1968-79 and 1980-81, compiling a career record of 239-77. Her teams were consistently ranked among the nation’s best. In addition to her efforts on campus she was a leader nationally in helping the sport gain increased attention. Prior to its absorption by the NCAA, the AIAW was the governing body for women’s collegiate sports. Under Coach Kyvallos, Queens College hosted the 1973 AIAW National Championship, finishing second to defending champion, Immaculata University, in front of a standing-room-only crowd in FitzGerald Gym. The event was a breakthrough for the sport, gained national attention, and led to an invitation for Queens to be “home team” for the first women’s collegiate game in Madison Square Garden (before a crowd of more than 11,500).

A “Dean” of women’s basketball, Kyvallos served on committees for the U.S. Olympics, Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), and National Girls and Women in Sport (NGAWS) organizations. She was the Lady Champion Sportswear “Coach of the Year” in 1976. She also served as the U.S. team’s head coach at the 1977 World University Games. Her collective accomplishments earned her induction into the Queens College Athletics Hall of Fame, West Chester University Hall of Fame, and New York City Basketball Hall of Fame. The 1972-73 women’s basketball team likewise was inducted into the Queens College Athletics Hall of Fame and was the first women’s team inducted into the New York City Basketball Hall of Fame.
Lucy Kyvallos -- Basketball Star

Astoria Girls Capture Title

Bronx Angels retain ‘Y’ Hoop Title

The Rustic Queens of Astoria

Springfield College
Lucy Kyvallos, a smiling 17-year-old Astoria lass, is rated one of the outstanding female basketball players developed in New York City in over a decade. A senior at Bryant High School, which also produced Billy (No-Hit) Loes, the $22,600 Greek baseball player of the Brooklyn Dodgers, Miss Kyvallos is a fraction over six feet and weighs 128 pounds.

Lucy, also known as “Big Lulu” on the hardwood, has been playing basketball for only three years, but already she’s won a large measure of fame. She started with Bob Gance’s 114th Precinct Cages of Astoria in 1948 and was used chiefly on defense, because of her height. Near the end of the campaign, Gance switched Miss Kyvallos up front, and she promptly scored 26 points with an amazing demonstration of set shooting.

McSweeney has been paying Lucy two hours a day, and changed her from an outside shooter to a bucket performer where her height could be used to better advantage. The Bryant Senior learned fast under McSweeney’s guidance and, in her first contest this year, scored 31 points for the Laurels, a new record in the Met Girls’ loop.

With St. Demetrios, she has been averaging better than 25 points per contest. She captains the Astoria church’s undefeated female quintet. Rev. Kokkinakis of Astoria and Homer Goumenis, assistant to the Rev. Kokkinakis at the Astoria parish, both think highly of Miss Kyvallos’ cage ability.

Three weeks ago, at Volkert’s Hall, Long Island City, Lulu rang up 36 points to lead her Greek Church team to victory over the Astoria Laps. She practically stole the show from the St. Demetrios Senior male five which is led by Mike Ckezipis, former Long Island City High star and Chris Chingros of Syracuse University.

Lucy shows such promise that Manny Strauss, New York Times sports writer, who manages the professional Cover Girls basketball team, has offered her a position with his club.

With the Cover Girls, Lucy could draw $75 a game and tour the nation’s major cities every year. The Bronx Sparks, another outstanding professional girls’ team, also would like to land the Astoria lass. However she refused all offers to remain an amateur.

In addition to her basketball talents, Miss Kyvallos also is a star softball, soccer and roller hockey player. The Roller Derby, the new sport that has taken the country by storm, is also interested in Miss Kyvallos as a skater. Despite all the publicity Lucy has been getting recently she is still unchanged, a sweet, soft-spoken girl who is very ladylike off the athletic field.

A real great player who should go places. Remember the name Lucy Kyvallos.

-- George Douvis, L.I. Star, Feb 26, 1950
Lucy Kyvallos’ set shot with 48 seconds remaining gave the Astoria Precinct girls team a thrilling 48-47 victory over the 62nd Precinct of Brooklyn last night in a playoff for the city-wide PAL Senior Division Championship at the Hegerich Center, Long Island City.

Miss Kyvallos’ two-pointer climaxed a see-saw game, which saw the lead change hands 16 times.

The Astorians forged to an 18-11 lead in the first quarter, but the Brooklyn team came back to knot the score at 23-all at the end of the half.

The invaders prevailed, 37-34, at the conclusion of the third chapter. It was nip-and-tuck all the way in the final session before Miss Kyvallos connected with the winning markers.

Miss Kyvallos and Jo Rodilloso sparked the winners with 20 tallies each while Betty Furman had 25 points for the Brooklyn aggregation.

--- Source Unknown ---

**ASTORIA GIRLS CAPTURE TITLE**

*Lucy Kyvallos’ Basket Decides PAL Game*

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--- Source Unknown ---

Astoria 114th precinct girls, who captured the PAL Senior Division basketball title of Queens this week, flash victory smiles for Star-Journal photographer. In the front row (left to right) are Janet Laviolette, Lucy Kyvallos, Margaret Bruckner and Joan Stewart. In the rear (same order) are Claire Marcovici, Patrolman John Garcia, Gilda Musto, Irene Nieder, Roberta Cermak, Joan Liebert, Thelma Magnifico, Coach Bob Gance and Marion Hernecker.
L. Lucille Kyvallos playing for St. Demetrios

**PICK TOUTED BRONX ANGELS TO RETAIN 'Y' HOOP TITLE**

The Bronx Angels, rated as one of the slickest girls’ basketball teams in the country, were expected to get off to a flying start in their opening test in the Carlton YMCA championship tournament last night at the Brooklyn “Y” gym.

The highly touted Bronx lassies, coached by Nick Lionetti, faced the Paterson Debs. Defending champions, they are favored to repeat.

Local quintets, it was reported, have shied away from the talented Angels because they feared they were not in the same class with them. As a result, Lionetti’s five has been forced to take on competition outside of New York.

The fears of metropolitan girls’ teams are not without foundation. During the past four years, the Angels, called the Pride of the Bronx, have been beaten only four times in 108 outings against first-rate foes.

At present, the adroit Angels are competing in the Solin Girls’ Basketball League, with their squad divided into two teams -- the Rusteks and the Terriers. The latter is pacing the loop.

In 1949, their first year in Class “A” competition, the Bronx Angels were a finalist in the Hudson Valley Newburgh tourney, comprised of the “name” teams from Maine to Florida.

During the same year, the local lassies won the West New York Tournament. In 1950, they copped first place in the Hudson Valley tourney and title honors in the Eastern States championship.

In 1951, the Angels captured the Carlton YMCA crown and again was runner-up in the Newburgh Loop.

In the 1951-52 campaign, Ellie Mullin, ambidextrous pivot ace, was picked as the Most Valuable Player of the Newburgh tourney. Sadie Jones won the same award in the Carlton YMCA games. Ditto for Lou Kyvallos in the Eastern States invitation play. Aggie Fortune rounded out the award winners by making the all-star team in the Hudson Valley tourney.

Lionetti also has a good word for Margie Winters, who he says is his club’s top ball handler and playmaker and one of the finest players.

The Bronx Angels are not competing in the Eastern States championships this year. However, they will face the winners of the competition on Feb 22.

--- New York Post, Sunday, Feb 8, 1953
THE RUSTIC QUEENS OF ASTORIA

Eastern States Women’s Tourney 1950-51

T Our Lady of Angels of the Bronx, NY, winner of 39 consecutive games during the season, was crowned kingpin of the Eastern States Women’s Invitation Basketball tournament Saturday night. The champs, front row, l to r, are Sadie Jones, Marjorie Winters, Dottie Williams, Nina Gugliotta. Rear: Coach Nicholas Lionetti, Joan Teehan, Ellie Mullin, Lucille Kyvallos and Bobby Franks.

C General view at Madison Square Garden, showing players and fans, was taken at the start of the game between the Richmond Crescents and the Rustic Queens of Astoria, in the finals of the Mirror-Parks dept. basketball tournament. (photo credit: Arthur Aidala)

B EXCITED? AND HOW! Members of the victorious Queen Rustics squad go into a victory huddle after defeating the Richmond Crescents, 38-26, at Garden. By winning title, the girls also won themselves 17-jewel Benrus wrist watches. (photo credit: Dennis Burke)

SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

Alumna Kyvallos ’55, is given props in Triangle Magazine

“...the best basketball player, male or female, who ever came to Springfield. She would have to have someone go with her (to the Industrial League games downtown) and stand at the door of the gym. If somebody from the College came, they would tell her, and she would leave the floor.”

-- Diane Potter, Springfield Alumna

“...She could have played on the men’s team. She could’ve. She was outstanding.”

-- Ed Steitz, Former AD and Basketball Coach, Springfield College

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-- Ed Steitz, Former AD and Basketball Coach, Springfield College
I loved playing basketball in high school and then in college. I believe there were two eras of coaching that made women’s basketball so strong at West Chester. Phase one was in my sophomore year when coach Lucille Kyvallos took over the program and changed the whole landscape of the sport.


It was Lucille Kyvallos who had a profound effect on Carole [Kleinfelder]. Carole says she is probably the single most influential person in her development, both as a teacher and a coach...She [Kyvallos] was ahead of her time as a basketball coach. She had been a great player and loved the game enough to want to expose athletes to higher levels of the game...[She] taught Carole that basketball was more than a physical game. She challenged Carole and the team intellectually about the theoretical part of the game.

“Celebrating Women Coaches: A biographical dictionary, 2000
Once Beaten Queens College Co-Eds Happy Over Change to 5-Player Rule

Dr. Lou Lean Moyer of Northern Illinois University, chairman of the DGWS-AAU Committee, revealed that the 12-member committee in Chicago had approved the transition to five-player teams.

The games the college women are playing this year are called experimental because the AAU decided to try a two-year experiment using five-player guidelines.

Although many independent teams have always played with five-players, the most recent development, till this year, was among schools as the six-player "rover games," explained Miss Kyvallos.

The AAU has been thinking about setting up a joint, standard set of rules for all women's competition in the country early in the 1960's, said Miss Kyvallos. "However, which ever way the committee votes this week, there still will probably be a number of teams which will not go along with the decision and will continue to play their own way. In some instances this flexible process hurts but in others it helps."

...Miss Kyvallos, to the chagrin of her opponents, takes every opportunity at developing confidence in all her players in all phases of the game. Connected with basketball for some 20 years and nationally known as a player, coach and clinic lecturer, she explained her coaching method.

"I try to develop every girl on the team into a solid unit with enough skill that the unit functions well no matter who is substituted. It's essentially taking advantage of opponents' fatigue, especially in five-player games, to have a strong bench."

"As far as stressing defense goes, I've always expected my girls to fulfill their defensive responsibilities first and be scorers second. Right now we are overcoming the opposition by a margin of almost two-to-one, and that's because our defense gets the ball back often enough for us to have more scoring opportunities than the other team," continued Miss Kyvallos.

...Miss Kudla added, "I think Miss Kyvallos is a great coach. But, I don't think anyone could inspire me to going back to playing six-player rules..."

Long Island Press, Sunday, Feb 14, 1971
Indeed, the Queens College women’s basketball team during this period was one of New York’s finest, becoming the first ever to compete in a national tournament. The team ranked among the top 10 nationwide from 1972-1978, and finished second in the country in 1973. The following season, it went on to beat Immaculata College, the number one team, and in 1975, the QC team became the first women’s basketball team ever to play in the famed Madison Square Garden.
AIAW NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP 1973

ASSOCIATION FOR INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS FOR WOMEN

1973 AIAW National Championship Tournament program
C Opening ceremony for AIAW National Championship
R AIAW National Championship Game - Immaculata vs Queens College
Queens College played in the first women’s collegiate game at Madison Square Garden in 1975. They also played at The Garden in 76-77, 77-78, and 79-80.

**TL** Queens player going up to block rival’s shot  
**TR** Kyvalios coaching from the sidelines  
**BL** Delta State vs. Queens College. All-American Althea Gwynn shooting a free throw  
**BR** The bench at MSG during Immaculata vs. Queens College game
Playing in its second World University Games, the USA, under the direction of Lucille Kyvallos of Queens College (N.Y.), traveled to Sofia, Bulgaria with the hopes of dethroning the Soviet Union and capturing the USA women’s first World University Games gold medal.

The Americans did not win the gold, however, they did continue to improve and in the process finished 6-2 and in possession of the silver medal.

The Americans won their first four games rather easily. Opening the preliminary round against the Federal Republic of Germany, the USA women handed West Germany a 96-60 defeat as 5’10” Carol Blazejowski led the way with 23 points and Ann Meyers tossed in 12. The following day Gail Marquis scored 17 points and added 11 rebounds to lead the Americans to a 103-51 pounding of Mexico, as five U.S. players scored in double digits and all 12 players scored.

The U.S. sprinted over China, 89-55 as Blazejowski made 12 of 20 field goals and finished with a game best 29 points and Charlotte Lewis added 13 points and a team best nine rebounds. The U.S. closed out its pool play undefeated, recording a 76-66 victory over Hungary. Blazejowski spirited the U.S. offensive attack with 31 points (11-22 FGs, 9-13 FTs) and 15 rebounds, while Marquis added 16 points.

Opening the medal qualification round with a 76-73 win over Romania, the U.S. squared off against the Soviet Union next and, despite 25 points from Ann Meyers and 15 from Blazejowski, fell 104-78. The U.S. trailed 41-34 at halftime, but was outscored 63-44 in the second stanza. The U.S. shot just 37.3 percent (28-75) from the floor and was out rebounded 60-35 by the Soviets.

Regrouping to defeat host Bulgaria in a closely contested affair, 87-84, the U.S. again challenged the Soviet Union, but this time the gold medal was on the line. Once again, the Soviet Union women were too strong for the Americans. Taking control early and leading comfortably 66-42 at half, the Soviets went on to record a 107-90 win. Blazejowski paced the U.S. with 28 points.

Blazejowski finished the competition as the overall leading scorer with 164 points and a 20.5 ppg average. Host Bulgaria finished the tournament on a high note by defeating Cuba 60-49 to capture the bronze medal.
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HALL OF FAME

31  West Chester Hall of Fame
32  NYC Basketball Hall of Fame - Kyvallos
33  NYC Basketball Hall of Fame - Queens College Team
Kyvallos was inducted into West Chester University’s 2nd Annual Hall of Fame the fifth day of May, 1989.
...six-person rules, this was entirely new.

“It was the style of basketball that teams aspire to play today,” said Cathy Andruzzi, who since has coached at several Division I colleges, including East Carolina and Rutgers. “And we were just excited that someone actually cared so much about us being good.”

Kyvallos wanted women who were willing to follow her rules, to practice for three hours (sometimes against men on the faculty) and then do sit-ups and modified push-ups. She demanded they run the fast break in less than four seconds. She ordered them to the gym during their free periods to shoot free throws.

There are no dorms at Queens College, so every woman on the team was a commuter. Andruzzi took the Belt Parkway an hour-and-half from Staten Island every morning, and Hilgenberg came from the Bronx, and they all went home late in the evening and ate whatever they could scrounge up in their parents’ refrigerators. Their uniforms were taxicab yellow and royal blue, and their warm-ups were bright orange with white stripes.

“A fruit salad,” Marquis said.

Mason Points Way to Tourney

They were 22-4 that season heading into the final game of the 16-team AIAW Tournament. Kyvallos had lobbied hard for it be held in New York, in the 3,000-seat Fitzgerald Gym on the Queens campus, and she’d succeeded. Now she had a team with nobody taller than 5-11, a team whose average margin of victory was 19 points.

She had a point guard in Mason who had become something of a local legend, whose nickname was “The Pearl,” because her playing style resembled Earl Monroe. Behind the back, through the legs, flash and dash; It began with Mason, who’d also learned the game on the city playgrounds.

“She was the only one in the country who could handle the ball that way,” Kyvallos said. “She was magical.”

Mason drew attention, and lured the New York media. Broadcaster Dick Schaap showed up at the tournament, and so did a reporter from Sports Illustrated, and they had to turn people away from the gym before the final game so as not to violate the city fire code.

Immaculata won by seven points, 59-52, but this is a footnote now, because what will be remembered is that in the midst of a campus still roiling from the 1960’s and deeply involved in the women’s rights movement, they did their part to change history.

“I think we were symbols for women who wanted to see progress,” Marquis said. “But back then, we were the golden ladies of Queens. And we were really happy just to have those warm-ups.”

NYC Hoops Hall

Queens women inducted into NYC hoops hall

The 1972-73 Queens College Women’s Basketball Coach [Kyvallos] and players celebrate after their induction into the NYCBHOF

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-- Newsday, Wednesday, Sept 22, 2004

The 1972-73 Queens College women’s basketball team, from left, Gail Marquis, Maureen Steuerer, Maryann Jecewiz, Nancy Rullos, coach Lucille Kyvallos, Debbie Mason, Judy Spina, Maggie Hilgenberg, Yvette Pierre, Barbara Riccardi, Judy Milewski, Cathy Andruzzi, and Connie VanHousen at the New York Athletic Club.

(photo credit: Daniel Avila)
ENDORSEMENTS

37  Donna Orender
39  Donna Lopiano
41  Mel Greenberg
We all stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. It is indeed ironic that the great women who are coaching and playing the game of basketball today are still called pioneers. And yet, all of us who love the game, and benefit from its opportunities and joys would not be where we are today without the true pioneers of the game and foremost amongst them is Lucille Kyvallos.

Coach Lucille Kyvallos had remarkable vision, gumption, the spirit to defy the odds and was a true trailblazer of paths that inspire achievement and excellence. Her work and impact continue to inspire, through the many athletes who came through her program and, because of her training, have gone on to be successful in life. She is a woman of deep convictions, with a legendary work ethic and the vision to take women’s basketball to its rightful and respected place in the world of sports. She was among the leaders in the new cutting edge coaching techniques for women, teaching skills, and elevating the expectations of what an elite athlete was and what was expected to achieve that expectation.

She built a dynasty of excellence at Queens College, a program, pre-NCAA and scholarships, which was a beacon of excellence for players all around the country. Her 1973 team was a runner-up to Immaculata in the AIAW National Championship and began a string of top 10 rated teams from the public City University. Forever pushing the envelope, she organized a historic event for the first ever women’s basketball game to be played at the world wide recognized mecca of basketball, Madison Square Garden. The significance of this event, based on the time and expectations of the time, should not be underestimated. It was a Herculean task, against all odds, but that was the odds that Coach Kyvallos enjoyed. She put the game front and center and made it a regular part of the sports page in the city that loved the game most of all - New York.

She represented our country as a coach at the World University Games and brought a team from China to play here, another first. She is a national treasure, the kind of person who at an unheralded time, accomplished so much, against all odds. We truly owe it to our collective history in the game of women’s basketball to recognize her for what she has done for hundreds of women athletes, for future coaches, for the elevation of the game and for paving the path that allows us to celebrate the successes of our current day. There is no one more worthy of a place in the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame than Coach Lucille Kyvallos.

I strongly recommend that Coach Kyvallos be seriously considered to take a place, a rightful place, among the greats of the game, as she has without a doubt, done as much if not more than most in establishing the women’s game, its standards, its opportunities and its brilliance.

With the deepest of respect,

Donna Orender
CEO of Orender Unlimited
Former WNBA President
Former Sr VP/Office of the Commissioner at PGA TOUR
I am honored to write in support of Lucille Kyvallos, a candidate for selection into the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame. Ms. Kyvallos was among the most highly respected coaches in the nation during her 1968-81 career. I had the privilege of playing with and against her as an athlete and observed her multiple decades coaching career during my tenure as a collegiate athletics administrator.

She introduced women’s basketball to a New York City style of play—tenacious defense and a fast break offense played by tough city kids that always left everything they had on the court—a style of play that was simply non-existent in the conservative women’s game. During a period in which few if any women’s teams participated in weight-training and conditioning, her team trained year round using a program designed by nationally recognized exercise physiologists and regularly practiced and scrimmaged against men’s and open amateur AAU women’s teams. With a career record of 239-77, her teams won 20 or more games seven times and held a winning streak against other New York teams that stood for a decade. She took her Queens College team to the national championship finals only to fall to Immaculata College during its legendary reign as Queens of the Court. Coaching the first women’s team to play at Madison Square Garden, the Lady Knights drew over 11,500 fans to their inaugural appearance. She took a silver medal winning U.S. team to the World University Games and served on numerous Olympic, AIAW and NGAWS Committees.

She did all this in an era where Queens College awarded no scholarships, funded women’s basketball on less than a $5,000 budget and never paid Kyvallos more than that amount for her coaching services. She simply loved to play and coach the game. As a player, she was the first woman I ever saw palm a basketball, and her ball handling and dribbling skills were legendary. Kyvallos, Kathy Rush, Pat Head and Mary Ann Crawford–Stanley represented the “next generation” of former players who became head coaches and brought an energy, passion, and intensity to the game, the likes of which had never existed before.

Kyvallos expected her players to be great basketball players, not female basketball players. Every year, every player had to try-out for the team. No one had a free ride onto that ball club. They played against male players in practice because they wanted to be tested by players who were bigger and stronger and quicker. Queens College basketball players became local icons, the first female athlete role models for a generation of NYC girls, during a period when women’s sports were non-existent to the media. They earned the respect of the media, the men who watched them play, and the men they played against. They inspired a generation of girls and women, creating aspirations for our daughters to become athletes. Kyvallos developed players who were fundamentally sound and pushed their opponents to match their desire and conditioning. There is no doubt in my mind that Kyvallos took women’s basketball to a higher level.

I feel privileged to speak of the impact she made on the game of basketball and on my generation. I, along with many other women, aspired to play the game like a Kyvallos player.

Sincerely,

Donna A. Lopiano, Ph.D.
President, Sports Management Resources
Former President, AIAW
Former Chief Executive Officer, Women’s Sports Foundation
Former Director of Women’s Athletics, University of Texas at Austin
This note is to add my support for the candidacy of former Queens College coaching great, Lucille Kyvallos, for induction into the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame. I believe others are telling you about her worth as a star player and coach. I am here to add to that in Lucille’s role involving behind-the-scenes acts that also make her a contributor, which places her in a third category.

I don’t believe there have been many people that have been able to fill all three categories at the same time in being brought before the board for consideration. I got to know Lucille quickly when I became involved with my activities and the sport in the mid-1970’s. Much as she had made her coaching mark in New York in turning the [Queens] Knights into a national power of the time, she also had been a teacher at West Chester in the Philadelphia suburbs. One of her students was Cathy Rush, who was later to go on to a Hall of Fame coaching career at Immaculata, which was a rival of West Chester back in the day. When people ask, “Who was your role model?” when I began the early phases of trying to launch a weekly top 20 poll, I always quickly pointed to Lucille and her front office staff at Queens.

The second AIAW tournament was held at Queens, and being in the nation’s top media market, they did not shy away from getting the major networks to come across the East River from Manhattan and do features on the tournament, of which Queens was a prime contender. Later on trying to launch the poll, Lucille was eager to add their support and provided me with a ton of contacts and places to connect, which saved much time considering we’re talking about a pre-technology era, as we later began to embrace in the early 1980’s moving forward. She [Kyvallos] was also a prominent force on the AIAW tournament committee, the equivalent of today’s NCAA group.

As much as there was plenty of charm to the original 16-teams at one site format, Lucille was a progressive who understood it really put the female player at a disadvantage in having to play a game at 9am and then come back and play a game again the same day as early as in the afternoon. There was also the problem of qualifying, in which what happened more in the past was involved in filling the field, especially the at-large slots. And furthermore, the rapid effect of Title IX was causing talented programs to spring up overnight and be capable of overtaking the past powers, who, themselves, were still worthy.

So perhaps something was needed to help move the sport into the future and even make the terminology more understandable to the person-in-the-street, whose basic familiarity was the NCAA structure at a time that March Madness had not even become part of the competitive vocabulary. I can say Lucille was a major force in grabbing evolution in the AIAW world and turning it into revolution.

With Lucille as a prime moving force on the committee — she may have even been in the chair, which, obviously, was helpful — several things happened to revamp the tournament following the national confab in March, 1977, at the University of Minnesota. In 1978, the national tournament was, in style, similar to the NCAA men’s event, broken into four regionals and then culminated in the first women’s stand-alone Final Four, which was held at UCLA. So while the general public still didn’t know from Region 1A, 1B, etc. — as compared to the similar Atlantic Coast, Southeastern, Big Ten, etc. in the men’s world — they did understand the levels of advancement, which was a key factor in gaining more media coverage nationally as the competition progressed. TV was also involved in Los Angeles. It was helpful that the talent of the time was able explain how the teams progressed to the four survivors. Either that year or soon thereafter, the field also expanded because it was obvious that the schools that had embraced athletic scholarships in the wake of the Title IX were proliferating and so they at least gave more opportunity to the entire membership.

Under Kyvallos’ guidance, the selection process was re-vamped to enable schools to qualify because of what they did in the current season, not ride the strength of what others in their regions had done in the past. These changes that don’t come up a lot in discussions these days were quite important to the overall growth process — even to the point that as programs at schools began getting their own individual sports information directors, the new format enabled them to sell their own programs easier to their local media markets.

So in this role and what we have today, Lucille is no different than Edison inventing the light bulb and everything else he holds credit for creating, or Franklin harnessing electricity.

I just thought I would make this information available to you to highlight Lucille’s other areas of excellence. I believe she may be the one person from that early 70’s era that has yet to join we previous inductees; but I believe her moment should arrive.

Thank you for your time and if not earlier, see you next June in Knoxville.

Mel Greenberg
Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame Inductee ’07