

Powder Puff Football Is Used As Senior Specialization

by Cheryl E. Johnson

As anyone who is an alumna of Bennett can tell you — we don't have a strong athletics program primarily because we are a college for women.

And as a part of adding some variety to existing physical education courses that department has initiated a program known as "senior specialization." In this program senior majors are supposed to "display growth and development as well as impart knowledge" in a given sport according to **Bernetta "Bernie" Sisco**.

Bernie, '76 is from Philadelphia and as her senior specialization she has elected to teach powder puff football to some willing and other not so willing cohorts.

Her class in "foot ball" meets twice a week and is composed of four education majors and eight physical education majors. Class members who are phys ed majors are: **Terri Morris, Pam Jones, Frederica Spencer, Kris Dennard, Freddie Harding, Athavia Jackson, Michelle Jefferson and Yvette Smire**. The education powder puff students include **Deborah Beale, Sandra Johnson, Suzanne Owens and Pat Lloyd**.

The reason Bernie decided to organize a specialized group of powder puff players is partially because during her student teaching she became aware of "Title IX" legislation passed by the congress which makes provisions for equal facilities for both sexes as well as paving the way for co-educational physical education classes.

Bernie's objective is to teach these students to master a form of football "which is a predominately male sport" because she thinks this will be more of a challenge for herself as well as her class

than teaching a sport that women usually participate in like "field hockey" she said.

Powder puff football is the female counterpart of "touch foot ball." She hopes to teach the class "basic skills and fundamentals of the sport and also the official rules that presently exist but are not

standardized for the game."

Next time you hear soft feminine voices cracking as they raise to holler: 36—24—36 don't look around and expect to see Racquel Welch walking and bragging but rather a few Belles playing a friendly game of foot ball — powder puff that is.



Kris makes a great catch while teammates pose for the camera and look more like they are waltzing than blocking.

photo by Cheryl E. Johnson

Mrs. Matthews Loves Ole Bennett And One May Sense This

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While interviewing Mrs. Matthews, you could sense the pride and love that she continues to hold for Bennett. When asked about her personal feelings on being a "first graduate," Mrs. Matthews replied, "I always feel deeply honored and grateful that I was able to go to college at all. I enrolled in Bennett College in 1926, when the Stock Market was about to crash; but, I graduated with an A.B. degree in 1930.

Mrs. Matthews said she came from a poor family. Her father was a minister and her graduation from college was a fulfillment of a dream for her family. "One of the greatest things that happened to me while at Bennett was meeting the David D. Jones'. I grew up with them and their children. After a while, I began to feel like an older daughter. With the Jones' you always had the opportunity to develop leadership ability," said Mrs. Matthews.

Why was the class of 1930 only composed of four members? "At that time, the college was only four years old. In 1926, the institution graduated its last high school class and that fall, it became a college. The college freshmen class started with 16 members, but for various reasons, the girls began to drop out. President Jones promised that those of us who would stick it out with him, would graduate at the end of four years from an accredited college," said Mrs. Matthews.

She said that Bennett became a women's college mainly because of the women of the Methodist Church. She said, "But a lot of it was due to the Jones'. President and Mrs. Susie Jones were a team and they were genuinely interested in us."

Mrs. Matthews was the first alumna to serve on the Board of Trustees of Bennett College. "I felt very honored and proud. At that time, I felt that even though I was an alumna, I should contribute a great deal. But I had already begun our family with one child and we wanted more children, so I resigned from my position on the Board after two years," said Mrs. Matthews.

Mrs. Matthews has served in numerous capacities for several organizations, including the Board of the United Negro College Fund and the Board of Delta Home for Girls.

Mrs. Matthews was the former Dean of Women and Dean of Student Life and Development at Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama and has spent most of her life working with students and others. After receiving her Master's degree from Wayne State University, she worked as a Social Case Worker in Detroit and served as a volunteer worker in a number of organizations including the YWCA, and the Metropolitan Detroit Child and Welfare Fed-

eration. She did further graduate work at Wayne State University and Atlanta University.

Mrs. Matthews still manages to keep up with the occurrences at Bennett. "I love Bennett College. I was disappointed in the physical appearance of the campus and the conditions of the buildings, but I suppose the maintenance is doing the best that they can," said Mrs. Matthews.

Mrs. Matthews is a very vibrant and enthusiastic person. She holds life memberships in many professional and social organizations including Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, NAACP, and the American Personnel and Guidance Association. She is the mother of two sons and the grandmother of three girls.

When asked her opinion of today's Bennett woman, Mrs. Matthews said, "I picked up the fact that they are having problems, but there are problems everywhere. But Bennett girls are analyzing and facing their problems. The girls are strong and they have good minds and healthy bodies, and their problems are problems only peculiar to Bennett it seems," according to Mrs. Matthews.

She said that Bennett women will make of themselves the best, because they have vast opportunities offered to them and they can't help but succeed.

Students Not Leaving in Doves But Some Do Transfer Nonetheless

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After staying at Bennett for only seven weeks, an art major from Connecticut decided to leave because she did not like the academic program for herself. She wanted to get right into her major courses without the worry of taking English, math or social science. She plans to attend a fashion designers' school in Connecticut.

Miss Harris not only asks for the student's response concerning her withdrawal, but she also asks the parents for their opinion of child's decision.

The mother of the art major from Connecticut had strong views against her daughter's decision. She wanted her to stay here because of Bennett's reputation. "Because drug traffic is so heavy in Connecticut, I wanted her to go to a small southern city to get a good post-high school education," stated the mother. Although she was unable to persuade her daughter to stay, she was very happy to see the concern Miss Harris showed for her daughter's welfare.

While some students withdraw at the end of the fall semester, there are a few more who plan to withdraw from Bennett at the close of the school year.

Fran Franklin, a psychology major from Ocean City, Maryland, doesn't think the psychology department is competent. "For the money I am paying to go to Bennett, I think I can get a better education at another school," said Miss Franklin.

"I think Bennett is a good school but I don't think it rears you for life," claims Irene Oakley a business major from New Jersey. She doesn't think Bennett gives you the chance to really accept responsibility because there are too many restrictions placed on the students. She plans to attend a larger school but she hasn't made up her mind where she would like to go yet.

Darlene Souder, a pre-law and Spanish major from Atlanta, is also planning to transfer. "If there were more instructors like Dr. Virginia Tucker and Miss Linda Addo here I would seriously consider returning in the fall," she said. She is not satisfied socially or mentally. Bennett does not offer enough courses in her major of Spanish.

She would have to go elsewhere in the Greensboro area to take Spanish courses. This summer she plans to go to summer school in Atlanta and in the fall she hopes to go to George Washington University Law School.

Another student considering transferring is Hattie Purnell, psychology major from Ocean City, Maryland, and president of the freshman class. Her desire is to transfer only if this does not ruin her credits. She has applied to Hood College because she feels it has a better psychology department than Bennett's. Hattie is also dissatisfied with the campus atmosphere and the academic conditions such as the computers and compulsory class attendance.

Many students feel that if some of the conditions at Bennett are not changed, there will be many more students transferring or withdrawing from the college.

Alston Says Choir Sets Fine Example

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she said. "This understanding keeps them working together for a common cause. Personally, I think they set a very fine example for the college."

She is amazed at how much energy the girls have in addition to going to class. "We do a lot of public relations work but I feel confident in saying that no matter what the crisis, I trust the choir will always come through."

Dr. Alston is also a minister of music. She works in the church outside of working here so she receives spiritual satisfaction as

well. "I find my greatest happiness when I am doing meaningful and productive work," she added.

ALA President Talks

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She is a graduate of Spelman College in Atlanta and earned her library science degree at the University of Michigan.

Mrs. Jones was recently the first woman and black ever to be appointed to the Board of Directors of the Detroit City National Bank.

Danville, Virginia Poet Seeks To Preserve "Oral Tradition of Blacks" Through Poetry

Stressing the importance of preserving the "oral tradition of blacks," Lena Haden Merritt of Danville, Virginia, read to students from her own poetry in a poetry workshop sponsored by the Department of Communications and held in the Little Theatre on Tuesday, March 30.

Mrs. Merritt opened and closed her program by singing spirituals because she said they represented "poets who are a great heritage for our people in music." She noted that though they were "untrained, perhaps not technically perfect," yet their songs "contained great depth of thought."

Mrs. Merritt read a selection of her own poems in various forms on various subjects demonstrating a consistently religious approach to her subject matter. She noted that she felt that "poetry always is by divine inspiration" and that "divine guidance is necessary."

Stating that "therapeutic poetry is the most enduring," Mrs. Merritt noted that she felt she had been "chosen to cheer the hearts of people." Her poetry has been



Mrs. Merritt reads some poetry selections on the Little Theatre stage. photo by Cheryl E. Johnson

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