

SPORTS

OUR MISS ALEXANDER

by Betsy Niblock

"I'm basically a very shy person," Mary Lida Alexander says as she laughs and rocks back in her chair. Knowing her as a teacher and coach, I laugh too. If she's shy, she hides it well, and she's very willing to answer questions I throw her way.

In actuality, I have stumbled across a sort of closet philosopher. Miss Alexander has a philosophy for everything. Those philosophies center around a passion for a simple and easy life. A laid-back country girl from Kannapolis, N.C. she has no mad desires to change the world or herself, but rather to just enjoy living and take whatever comes along. Though I inquired about many things, her philosophy on life becomes most evident when she spoke of her career. "You have to coach in accordance with your philosophy. Winning isn't everything to me. It's more fun to win, but the most important thing is to learn about yourself and to gain that self-discipline." She didn't stop there, "Whether teams are good or bad, good kids to work with are the key. They have to care that they play well and want to improve. I enjoy seeing kids who say "I can't" turn around and say "I can."

When asked about her life in general, she had a lot of impressive data to share that one never seems to hear about. For instance, she played women's basketball for four years at UNC-G, and while she was playing, her team was invited to the women's equivalent of the NIT, placing fourth in that event.

Then there's tennis. She didn't really start playing until her freshman year in college, yet she has managed to be ranked on several occasions including 9th in the state singles and 15th in the south. In 1974, Miss Alexander and Miss Mary Lou Jones, St. Mary's tennis coach, were ranked second in the state as a doubles team and

third in the South.

Realizing that sports is not all there is to life, I probed "Coach A's" personal life. The most common interview question of all time jumped out at me, and I couldn't resist the temptation. I asked what she thought made her "interesting and unique." As I expected, her face went blank. She pondered as she again rocked back in her chair. "I'm your average run-of-the-mill kind of person," she said. "I don't know, let's ask Mrs. Brown. Mrs. Brown! COME. HERE A MINUTE!" She paused and waited for her appearance in the doorway. "Mrs. Brown, what would you say makes me unique?"

Laughing for a minute, Mrs. Brown only managed to come up with a few weak adjectives like "friendly" and "sociable," so we gave up on getting any help from her. Finally, Miss Alexander looked up at me and smiled. "I was a CUB SCOUT!" she said. It's too bad they never had merit badges for such originality!

BOOTHS

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your exposure to them? Do threats of cancer and prematurely aged skin worry you at all?

Though you may be satisfied with the immediate results, in the long run you are really hurting your skin. The lights bombard your body with two types of ultraviolet rays: UVB and UVA. UVB increase your risk of cancer and UVA is suspected of causing skin to prematurely age. Both can cause damage to your eyes.

The earlier salons were three to four feet square booths which used eight to sixteen Westinghouse fluorescent lamps. The lamps were mounted in the corners and the walls were mirrored. The "tanee" could stay in for one to fifteen minutes. These booths used primarily UVB rays which are comparable to those of the sun.



Coach Jones and Basketball.

The new salons claim to have developed a "safer" system. Their use of UVA rays supposedly make a big difference in the amount of damage to the skin. They use sixteen to forty-eight lamps and allow fifteen to sixty minutes exposure time. The "tanee" lays on a bed of the lamps while more are suspended above.

Unquestionable proof has yet to be found showing a clear connection between tanning salons and skin cancer or skin aging, but the following facts are true and indicate distinct possibilities of damage:

1. There are 500,000 cases of skin cancer in this country per year. Most types are curable but can cleave scars and disfigurements. Malignant Melanoma, an incurable type, is increasing in incidence.

2. Aging starts in layers of the skin deeper than those where skin cancer occurs. UVA rays go deeper into the skin and attack the fibers that normally keep the skin resilient. The result is sag and wrinkling.

3. Ultraviolet rays can upset the genetic control of dormant or developing cold sores (Herpes I), thus aggravating infection.

4. The light source in the booths may provide ten times the amount of exposure received from a noon sun in the summer. This is enough to generate skin cancer in lab animals.

5. Certain drugs can increase sensitivity to ultraviolet rays found in sunlight and tanning booths. Their presence in or on the body, causes the effects of the radiation to be more severe. Examples of these include: Antibacterials such as those found in deodorant bar soaps, antiseptics and cosmetics; Antibiotics such as tetracycline and its derivatives; Antidepressants; Antihistamines; Dyes such as those found in lipsticks; Perfumes and Tranquillizers.

6. Eye protection is needed in either type of tanning salon (no matter what they say).

Miss Mary Lou Jones, St. Mary's Tennis Coach.



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