

THE NCAA LIBRARY: OUR PLACE IN THE AMATEUR SPORTS CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

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“A library offers more than information. It offers a place to think and ponder, to develop long-term goals and visions by consulting with the greatest minds of the past, to seek perspective in a setting devoted to ideas and discovery. It offers a place to meet, to share and to be alone—but not lonely.” — Virginia M. McCurdy

Regardless of size or type, libraries have always been special places for me. Growing up, going to the local public library once a week with my mother (and how long those weeks seemed then!) was a treat. The library was a magical place where new worlds were discovered each time I opened a book. That branch library and my school libraries saw me through my secondary education. Later in college, the university library became a place not only to learn and research, but a good place to meet new people and occasionally escape a hot summer day in my un-air conditioned dorm room.

Now as a librarian at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Library and Archives, I have the opportunity to reflect everyday on the place my library has, not only in our national office, but also in the community at large. Known as the amateur sports capital of the world, Indianapolis welcomed the NCAA to beautiful White River State Park in 1999 from Kansas City. The NCAA became part of a broad-based sports community that includes the Indiana Sports Corporation, National Art Museum of Sport, IU Natatorium, Indianapolis Tennis Center, USA Gymnastics, USA Track & Field and United States Diving—just to name a few.

Founded in 1906 and originally named the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States, the NCAA grew from the original 39 colleges and universities members to over 1,200 today. The national headquarters was officially formed in 1951 and a formal

library established in 1994. Despite the number of years between these corporate milestones, early records do exist and are now housed in the archives.

Historical holdings include 1906-2003 NCAA Convention Proceedings, football guidebooks from 1896, complete meeting minutes of the NCAA Executive Committee from 1939 to the present day and Championships Records from over 80 NCAA sponsored sports in Division I, II and III today. Our archives also contain the invaluable papers of our former presidents: Walter Byers, Richard Schultz and Cedric Dempsey. We are fortunate to hold copies of nearly every NCAA publication as well.

As a special library, the staff of three librarians serves 330 of our fellow NCAA colleagues, our membership, the media, students, researchers, authors and the general public. Since 1994, over 10,000 items have been cataloged and indexing of two major manuscript collections has been completed. In 2002 alone, the library added 4,000 items to the collection and online catalog. We process 400 reference requests per year as well as support numerous in-library researchers. The library was also one of the first departments to design and maintain a website on the corporate intranet, thereby establishing our place in a virtual environment and increasing materials access to staff.

With the support from our current president, Dr. Myles Brand, our mission to collect, protect and preserve intercollegiate athletics records remains constant. Our long-term goals include expanding access to library materials, creating a championships records database and writing a comprehensive document management and records retention policy for the national office. We look forward to the future and our place within the NCAA.