

# EF EDUCATOR RECOGNITION AWARDEE

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## SANDRA HEARN

**Sandra Hearn** played a key role in the establishment of two girls interscholastic sports, basketball and track, in the early 1970s and was directly involved in the transformation of the high school physical education program, beginning in the late 1970s, at Elizabeth Forward High School.

Her 37-year career at EFHS began in the fall of 1968, shortly after her graduation from Slippery Rock College, now university, that spring. Her extracurricular experiences began immediately when she was assigned the duty of majorette sponsor. She also became co-sponsor of the Girls Athletic Association (GAA), which sponsored organized athletic activities one evening a week for as many as 50-60 girls. Then, sanctioned sports were only for boys.

Girl's sanctioned sports at EF began in 1972-73 with basketball, Hearn being the first head coach. Assisting her were her husband, John, and Paul "Pops" Fleishchauer. The first team posted an 8-9 record and placed second in its section. More importantly to Hearn, this initial group of girls set the standard for teams to follow. The next year, EF finished 14-5, tied for the section title and lost in the first round of the WPIAL playoffs.

In 1974-75, the Warriors had their best season under Hearn, posting a 29-2 record. They were Section, WPIAL and Western Region champions and PIAA runner-up. Their WPIAL title was significant because it was the first ever for Elizabeth Forward High school sports, girls or boys. Two years later, Warriors would finish second in both the WPIAL and PIAA championships. Her record as head coach was 93-26 when she turned over the coaching reigns to her husband, John.

Hearn started the girls track program in 1974. Under her guidance, Marie Ribik won two WPIAL titles in the high jump and still holds the school record of 5'4". There were many other WPIAL and PIAA qualifiers during her six-year stint as track head coach.

She is also proud of her involvement in the establishment of a strong physical education program for all students at EF. She began her teaching career with Helen Allen, George Hays and John Kruper. Later additions were Terry Faust, Fran Nee, Tammy Ditter Blackwood, Madonna Oliphant, Chuck Amore and Bob Yasko.

From the fall of 1968 through the late 1970s, Health and PE classes were all boys or all girls. It then became co-ed. With a high school renovation, a swimming pool, auxiliary gym and weight room were added which expanded the opportunities for the students. In her opinion, one of the best changes in the program was when Health and PE classes met daily for an entire semester.

Hearn is the oldest daughter of the late Gilbert and Hazel Jordan. She has a brother, Tom and a sister, Deb Watt. She grew up in Wilkinsburg and attended through grade five what was then a very progressive school district. The family moved to Turtle Creek where she graduated from high school in 1964.

Her major at Slippery Rock was Health and Physical Education. She played no college sports because there were no girls' sports there, only intramural basketball. During the college summers, she supervised local playgrounds, taught swim lessons and lifeguarding, and was an instructor in aquatics at a waterfront camp in Massachusetts.

