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A Letter to the Student Congress from Linda Morad, Class of '76

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A LETTER TO THE STUDENT CONGRESS FROM LINDA MORAD, CLASS OF '76

By Jillian Lykins, Providence College, Class of 2025

ARCHIVAL OBJECT

A letter from a student (class of 1976) and women's ice hockey player, Linda Morad, was addressed to the Providence College Student Congress. The letter was addressed to the Student Congress due to the fact that some members were upset about her nomination and subsequent appointment to the office of the Vice President of the Athletic Board. Linda believed that the Student Congress was only upset by this due to the fact that she is a woman, and for this reason, she is unqualified for the position. Apparently, some students were trying to "convince" male members of the student body to run for the job so that she would not be in office. Morad referenced Bob Shea, who was also running for the position, and how nobody was convincing other people to run against him. While Linda acknowledged that Shea was well-qualified for the position, she also mentioned that it is unfair to consider her any less qualified than him just because of her sex. Morad wrote that women should be equally considered for administrative positions and that other women who have filled administrative positions would agree with her.



THE ATHLETIC BOARD

The athletic board at Providence College played a role in the success of athletics. It was made up of a group of elected student-athletes who were responsible for:

- Overseeing all aspects of the athletic programs
- Making scheduling decisions
- Promoting programs and events
- Budget construction
- Making recommendations on ways in which athletics can better serve the purpose and mission of the school.



HELEN BERT

During Morad's time at Providence College, Helen Bert was the first woman appointed in the history of the Providence College Athletic Department as the Women's Recreation Director, 1971-1974.

- Under Bert's tutelage, 12 Division I varsity women's sports were established
- She helped get the first female athletic scholarship at the College given to Women's Basketball players in 1975
- Her programs gained regional and national attention and produced several All-Americans

Helen Bert's success proved that women were capable of holding administrative positions, inspiring women (such as Linda Morad) to pursue similar jobs.



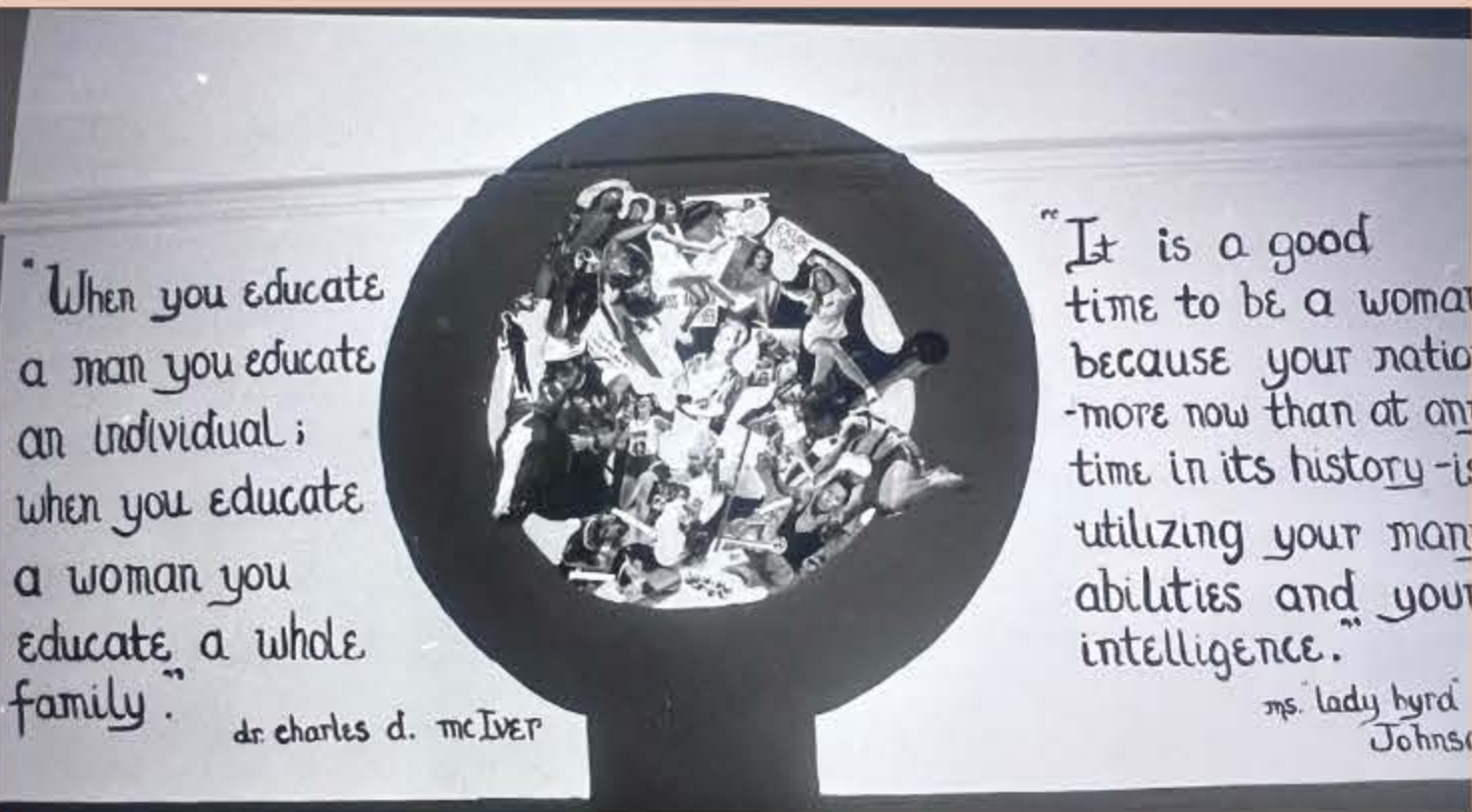
GENDER "EQUALITY" AT PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

As Title IX had recently passed, things were looking up for female athletes and administrators at Providence College. In an article for the school's newspaper, The Cowl, student Bob Murphy wrote a section on the way that the passage of Title IX and the presence of women has greatly improved the school, along with the fact that the college was making great efforts for including women and creating a more equal environment. While this was true in the broader scheme of things, many students were still displeased with the integration of women, believing them still to be inferior to men and unqualified for many positions in the administration.

WOMEN'S ATHLETICS IN THE 1970'S

The 1970s was an extremely significant period for women in sports in the United States.

- This decade saw the passage of Title IX (1972), a federal law that prohibited gender discrimination in education programs and activities, including athletics, that received federal funding.
- Despite this, the shift from male-dominated athletics toward an integrated system of both men and women was a change difficult for many. As described in "The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport", the idea of masculinity and sports seem to go hand in hand.
- Sports are deeply ingrained in the construction of masculinity in Western societies. The values and behaviors associated with sports, such as competitiveness, physical strength, and aggression, are often seen as markers of "real" manhood.
- The hypermasculine culture of sports often excludes women and reinforces gender inequality. The emphasis on physical strength and aggression in sports reinforces the notion that women are physically weaker and less capable than men, which can limit their opportunities and reinforce traditional gender roles.



MURAL IN THE
PROVIDENCE COLLEGE
WOMEN'S ATHLETIC
FACILITY, 1976