



NJSIAA TRAILBLAZER

Cheryl Reeve has come a long way from her days playing on stellar basketball teams at Washington Township, where she was a 1,000 point scorer leading into her graduation in 1984, and later a charter inductee into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame. From that local start, Reeve became a star player in college, an assistant and head coach in college, and then an assistant, head coach, and executive in the WNBA, where over the last 12 years, she's guided the Minnesota Lynx to four championships while being named league Coach of the Year three times. She was also an assistant coach for the Gold Medal winning United States teams at the 2016 and '20 Olympics and has drawn mention as a possible head coach for the team in 2024. Her path is an impressive one, and the passage of Title IX in 1972 has helped make it happen. The importance of Title IX, which helped create previously unattainable educational opportunities for women, is not lost on Reeve, who joined the Lynx in 2010 and has been the team's general manager since 2017. She's excelled in that role also, having been named WNBA Executive of the Year in 2019.

She spoke about the impact of Title IX in a piece five years ago, on the occasion of the legislation's 45th anniversary.

"I will say as a 50-year-old, what I've seen is participation by girls has gone through the roof," she told writer Nina Mandell in an article published by For The Win. "From where it started in 1972 and where it is now and it's about opportunity and participation. It was an education act so it wasn't just about athletics, it was science, it was math, all of the things they said girls couldn't do. It just blows my mind. I feel so incredibly bad for those before me who wanted to do something – they maybe had incredible talent and passion to play the sport but they were told no."

After her days at Washington Township, she didn't go far to play collegiately at LaSalle in Philadelphia. She started there as a four-year starter. She set school assists records, was an All-Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference player, and even a Rhodes Scholar Nominee before also becoming a member of that school's Athletic Hall of Fame. Her degree was in Computer Science/Management Information Systems. She was awarded a MAAC Scholar-Athlete Post-Graduate Award and an NCAA Post-Graduate Scholarship. She also earned an MBA during her two years as an assistant coach at LaSalle following her graduation.

She then assisted at George Washington from 1990 through '95, a period where she helped the program land another star player from New Jersey - Colleen McCrea from South Hunterdon, who is now Colleen Maguire, the Executive Director of the NJSIAA. Reeve then moved on to her first head coaching position at Indiana State, where she stayed for five years. She moved on from there to the WNBA, where her first job was as an assistant under head coach and New Jersey legend Anne Donovan with the Charlotte Sting. She also worked as an assistant with Cleveland and Detroit before being hired to lead the Lynx in 2010. In her time with the Lynx, she's led the team to WNBA titles in 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017. She was also named WNBA Coach of the Year in 2011, 2016, and 2020.

Her first team in 2010 went 13-21, but the following year the Lynx went 27-7 and then won the playoff championship. The team hasn't had a losing record since going 267-127 (a .678 winning percentage) She also has a 41-21 (.661) playoff record. Through it all, she's been sure to credit the impact and importance of Title IX for helping her to flourish throughout her career.

"I find it important (to talk about) and it's not just around anniversaries, it is something we talk about with our players," Reeve said in the 2017 interview. "The players that I have here – I bet if I walk up to my younger players and I say 'tell me what Title IX is', they probably don't know. They probably have heard about it. They probably have heard the phrase 'Title IX' and they probably know it's some form of legislation but they probably couldn't tell me the details – the reason for it, why it's important, the impact that it's had on their career."



Photo credits: LaSalle University



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