

I'm not very athletic, physically or temperamentally. As a child I was occasionally urged to leave my current book and go outside, but the book was pleasant and "outside" was frequently hot and not as enticing as my make-believe world. Oh, I wasn't completely sedentary - I played "Hide and Seek" in the cool evenings and sometimes "Simon Says." I occasionally enjoyed skating until I took a tumble and scraped a knee. An occasional mile or so safari with two or three others into our as yet unsettled neighborhood for a breakfast cookout on an early Saturday morning was a treat. But mostly, my idea of an ideal occupation was to settle into the cool shade at the west side of our house and read one of my favorite Richard Halliburton travel adventures about, say, his swimming the Panama Canal, or paying his passage through the Canal based on his weight. In elementary school, recess frequently turned into a pleasant visit between Miss Audrey, our Physical Education teacher, and a small group of adoring girls, of which I was one.

Miss Audrey led a glamorous life, we thought, going to parties on weekends and happily describing the clothes the women wore and giving us details of the various intrigues among the young men and women of her acquaintance. Her stories gave us a glimpse of the kind of thrills that we thought would be a pleasant future for us. Imagine a date for a dance at the Lakewood Country Club, followed by a romantic drive around White Rock in the moonlight! She didn't shirk her athletic duties exactly, but we learned quickly how to divert her attention from her duties to her exciting private life by asking what she thought of the latest Neiman Marcus pronouncement on hem lengths or hat styles.

In high school, the biggest deterrent to my cultivating athleticism really was the required gym suit - black bloomers ending in wimpy elastic that always allowed the legs to descend uncomfortably to just below our knees. Attached to the bloomers by way of a sewed-in belt around a loose waist were the straight white blouses with our full names embroidered in bold black script across our backs. The whole contraption was closed by a heavy zipper which extended from crotch to neck. Not even the shapeliest of the adolescent girls looked glamorous in those suits. After every class, we quickly crammed the hated suits into our small lockers. We seldom took our suits home until we had to vacate our lockers at the end of the semester. How disgusting it was, then, to take the evil garment home for laundering. The resulting aroma was not one to make us look forward to exerting ourselves.

There were two gym teachers at Woodrow Wilson High School: Miss Ziphrim, who had never been young or happy, and Miss Webb, who was truly interested in us adolescent girls and our physical development. There were two large classes in the gymnasium for each hour. When Old Lady Ziphrim was in charge, she banged out a sprightly march on the piano while we marched around the perimeter of the gym by twos, threes, or fours, whichever was Miss Ziph's choice for the day. In her turn, Miss Webb taught the mandatory health classes and gave us occasional instruction on the athletic field, where we played helter-skelter soccer or a chaotic softball game. One spring day she took us on a looping hike through some lovely wild flower fields near the school. When we returned

Consequently, when I got to college, I was no shining example of grace or coordination in the various sports our Physical Education classes required. In volley ball, Miss Anderson, our P.E. instructor, discovered that I could serve as a horrible example of how not to serve the ball, which I generally delivered to the balcony behind me, or to spike the ball, which un-obligingly went into my side of the net. Unfortunately, I never developed the knack of serving the ball across the net. Then we began the dismal kind of basketball

girls were allowed to play at the time – six girls to the team, with three forwards from one team and three guards from the opposing team on each side of the center line, and no one allowed to cross the center line. During two years of directed basketball, I never played as a forward and, consequently, never once attempted to shoot a basket.

In the spring, the sororities on the campus vied at various sports such as basketball, volleyball, and softball competitions. My athletically-inclined sorority was fortunate in needing me primarily as a cheering squad for volleyball and basketball. However, softball was a different matter; fielding a team of ten frequently made my presence on the team essential until one famous game we had with the Kappas, the champions of all athletic endeavors. The captain of our team assigned me to center field where she probably thought I could do the least harm. Boy, was she misguided. The Kappas won the toss and were first at bat. Almost every hit came to far center field, where I faithfully chased it down and sent it more or less in the direction of whichever base the runner was approaching. Although the Kappas must have hit some balls elsewhere, I found myself running almost constantly after missed centerfield line drives and flies. Our team never did get to bat. The game was called because of darkness, with the score something like thirty-four to zip. The rest of my athletic career has mercifully receded into a comfortably foggy zone. I am today a really good spectator and enjoy watching baseball, football, and basketball.