

Eye on Sports

Takin' care of Tiz

PSU Delco A.D.: Movin' on, yes, but she's not movin' out

By JOHN HICKEY
Lion's Eye staff writer
JWH244@psu.edu

It's probably safe to say that most students at PSU Delco, athletes or not, have crossed the path of Doris "Tiz" Griffith. It's also safe to say that these students were glad they did.

A faculty member since 1981, Griffith has been a prominent figure on campus for 22 years. She began with teaching a range of health and fitness-related courses which, along with some new additions, are still offered today. What Griffith is known and admired for best, however, is something she managed to tackle while juggling a full-time job and a full-time family.

Before the paint was dry in 1988, Griffith claimed her throne as athletic director in the new sports building. If you're asking yourself how or why she snagged the job, just read about her in Temple's or Pennsylvania's hall of fame. After being named an All-American field hockey player twice, one might naturally feel a connection with college athletics.

"I just wanted to give the students the same opportunity I had," says Griffith.

It was clear where her heart was from the start. To no one's surprise, she took her goal and flourished. Over her years as A.D., Griffith expanded what was once a three-sport university to its present six offerings, all while founding and coaching a field hockey team for four years, and coaching men's & women's tennis in the 1990s (including two championship teams).

When she wasn't off revolutionizing the campus athletics, "Tiz" could be found on the sidelines of any sporting event, cheering on her "kids" as a general spectator.

Or maybe she was organizing the

team awards banquets, or making sure the snack bar was set up. Whatever she was doing, the fact that she even had the time to teach or live life is commendable. Griffith agreed that it has indeed been hard work, yet rewarding enough to keep coming back for more.

So, at the conclusion of upcoming spring semester, after 16 years and many truly impressive achievements, "Tiz" will resign as A.D. It will be an emotional change for her and everyone she knows. Looking back however, there are only smiles.

"The kids are what keep you going," she explained. Griffith refers to the kids as if they were her own, and it's evident that it is not a one-sided relationship.

At least five student-athletes stopped by during a reporter's interview, simply to say hello or to get their daily hug. Take Chrissy Kelly for example. She is the last of three Kelly children to play for Griffith at PSU Delco.

Having known Tiz longer than most students thanks to her older siblings, Kelly went on to explain how close they've become and how Tiz has gone above and beyond her call of duty.

"I've known her forever so I pretend she's my grandma," said Kelly.

"The thing that makes her so different is how she fights for the athletes, trying to give us the best experience possible."

Thanks to Griffith's hard work for eligibility extension, Kelly will be the first female to graduate with four full years of volleyball under her belt.

One of Griffith's true joys from her time spent as athletic director, was hiring her own former athletes into coaching positions. As if it weren't enough to watch her "kids" mature, graduate, and move on to success...the fact that seven have come back to her to coach

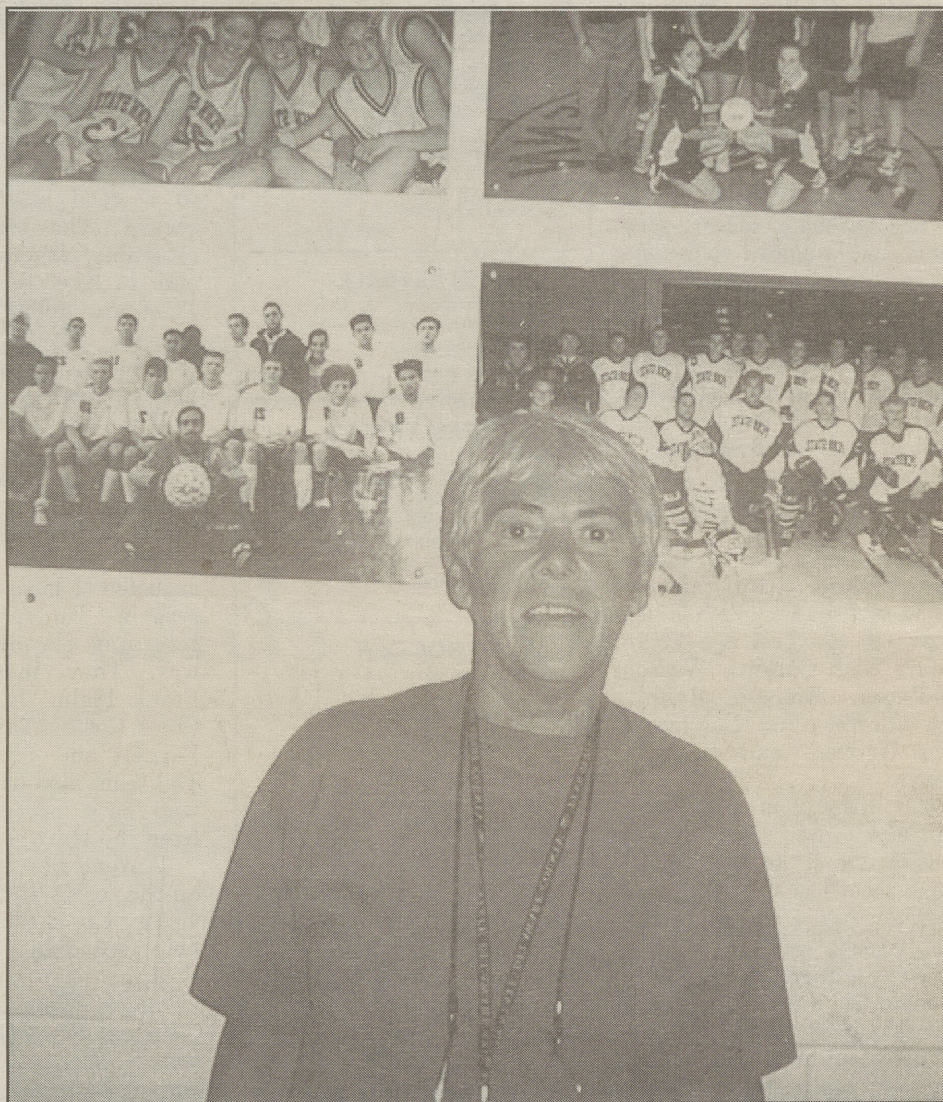


Photo by Stacie Mann

Athletic Director Tiz Griffith is proud of the teams that have represented the campus in her 15-year tenure. She is retiring at the end of the school year.

says it all. One of Griffith's former athletes in particular, Joe Giunta, has even begun to follow in her footsteps. He was named the associate athletic director at Tiz's alma mater, Temple University.

The success stories seem endless.

You could write a novel on the events and reforms Penn State Delco athletics have undergone over the years, and the plot would be smothered with Griffith's biography.

As she looks ahead to spring '04, the time has come once again for change. Only this time, Griffith will be passing on the torch to an individual that faces a tough challenge ... replacing a legend. The good news is that you'll still be able to find Tiz in the classroom. In fact, she's already planning to take her teaching to another level by introducing new courses such as ballroom dancing.

Would you expect anything less?

Men's hoops, volleyball start added eligibility

By JOHN HICKEY
Lion's Eye staff writer
JWH244@psu.edu

As of this school year, Penn State Delco, which still has only selected majors available for four years of study on campus, took the athletic leap of having two teams — men's basketball and volleyball — offering four years of eligibility.

The extra eligibility is expected to help teams

mature, but provide much more appealing environment for recruits. As an example, basketball coach Frank Farnese points to Steve Fuller, who averaged 42 points a game *against* PSU Delco last year, transferring and joining the Lions this year.

"Having this opportunity will enable us to expand our recruiting to Montgomery County, New Jersey or even farther," Farnese said. "There's definitely a lot more talent and experience to pull from."

Second-year hoops player Sesa Bowman is from

Florida.

"If you can graduate from here in four years, you should be able to play here for four years," Bowman said. "It's a smaller campus, but it's still Penn State."

The new eligibility also allows for more travel. Both volleyball and basketball are working on some expanded road trips.

"It's great for the kids who can't go to main campus," Farnese said. "It still gives them the opportunity to become well-rounded individuals."