

HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND SPORT

Following the Female Athlete Conference at Simon Fraser University in 1980, an ad hoc committee met to provide guidance and direction to Fitness and Amateur Sport's Women's Program. During the meetings the issue of the need for a national organization dedicated to the promotion of women and sport was raised on several occasions.

No existing organization was dedicated work on behalf of women and sport, and while there were several groups with a local interest, there was no national focus for action, no lobby effort directed toward government, national sport organizations or the general public.

With the assistance of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Women's Program, funds were provided for a meeting in March 1981, to discuss the possibility of forming a national organization dedicated to the interests of women and sport. If a national organization for women and sport was to be formed, it would have to tap into the experiences and knowledge of existing women's organizations (National Action Committee, Canadian Research Institute for Women, etc.), and reach out to establish sport as an area of concern for the women's movement and bring women interested in sport into the mainstream of the women's movement.

The three-day workshop was held at McMaster University under the organizational stewardship of Dr. Mary Keyes, suitably enough the first women director of a School of Physical Education and Athletics in Canada.

The workshop discussions were directed toward: the question of whether women and sport issues could or should be dealt with within a feminist framework (and what it would mean to adopt a feminist position), the feasibility of forming a national organization (including a discussion of the nature of the formative stages), and the delineation of specific areas of activity that such an organization might take (ultimately leadership, advocacy, research and communication were identified).

The McMaster participants named the new organization CAAW+S - the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport with a mandate to promote, develop and advocate a "feminist perspective on women and sport". A meeting that had been called to discuss the feasibility of forming a national organization, in fact, became the founding meeting.

In the year following the founding of CAAW+S, an interim planning committee met to:

- write the organization philosophy paper
- prepare a structural proposal
- develop plans for activity
- investigate funding sources

Thus, early in its development CAAW+S established a mission statement, goal statements, areas of emphasis and long and short -range plans within each area of emphasis.

At the first Annual Meeting of CAAW+S in Hamilton, February, 1982, this work was adopted and CAAW+S elected its first national executive.