

Aspiring Teacher's Inspirational Comeback Nets Results

For GVSU senior Sara Hull, every step she takes toward becoming a teacher is a big one.

An accomplished athlete, Hull recently completed her final year of eligibility as a sharp-shooting guard for GVSU's women's basketball team and is eagerly anticipating the day when she walks into a classroom — or gym, as the case may be — for her first teaching assignment.

It is a blessing she doesn't take lightly.

Hull is a physical education major with a 3.7 GPA and part of GVSU's teacher education program. A car accident in 1997, however, nearly ended all her dreams.

"I feel real fortunate," Hull said. "I never thought I'd walk again — not to mention play basketball and become a physical education teacher. I have pains daily, but because of my experiences I can share with students and help motivate them. Thankfully, not many people can share experiences like that."

The accident occurred in 1997 toward the end of Hull's sophomore year at GVSU. There was one game left on the schedule when the car in which she was riding spun out of control on an icy road and collided head-on with an oncoming vehicle in the other lane.

The result was a crushed pelvis, collapsed lung, lacerated bladder and severe head injury.

The injuries prevented Hull from playing basketball for a year because of the pain in her back. But that wasn't her immediate concern.

"The doctors originally told my parents that I'd never walk again," Hull recalled. "I don't remember anything about the accident. The first thing I remember is waking up in the hospital."

"For the first few days, I couldn't move my legs and had no control over them. I was kind of depressed. But after surgery, things popped into place and I told my parents from that point on that I was going to walk away."

While recovering from her injuries, Hull continued her studies at home and made up other work during the summer.

"My goal was to walk for my 20th birthday," she said.



Sara Hull

Although unable to achieve that exact goal, she was on her feet and taking steps a couple of weeks later. It was as big as any victory Hull ever had on the basketball court. Even more amazingly, she successfully made it back to compete again at the collegiate level, and averaged scoring just over 10 points a game during her senior year.

In March, Hull was named Female College Athlete of the Year at the West Michigan Sports Awards ceremonies. University of Michigan football standout Rob Renes, a four-time Academic All-American, was named the Male College Athlete of the Year.

Hull — who is taking classes during the spring semester and plans to fulfill her student teaching requirements in the fall — completed the teacher assisting portion of the program during the fall semester of 1999 at Allendale Elementary School, where she provided game tickets for every student in the school to attend a GVSU women's basketball game and see her in action on the court.

"I think it's important to share your experiences with kids and let them know about life experiences," Hull said. "That way, they can relate to you, and that's a huge part of teaching."

"There are differences in being a role model as an athlete as opposed to a teacher, but there are similarities also. So many kids are involved in sports now, and they're all looking toward athletes as role models. Teachers are role models too, but some students may not realize it until they become older. Being an athlete AND a teacher, you're able to connect on interests right away."



Dr. James S. Leming

Character Education Issues Revisited At Lecture Series

Character Education in the Classroom proved to be a timely topic for the School of Education's Fall Lecture Series as evidenced by overflow crowds during the four-week run at the Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids.

"It was very successful," School of Education Dean Robert Hagerty said. "We averaged 300 people per session, and had overflow crowds on two of the four nights."

Closed circuit television technology was used to accommodate the overflow crowds.

Four nationally renowned speakers — Dr. David B. Brooks, Dr. Henry Huffman,

Ms. Eleanor Childs and Dr. James S. Leming — addressed issues with real-life experiences, insights and suggestions pertaining to the rising concerns about character education in the classroom. Topics such as school violence, core values and building community consensus character education programs were addressed.

Because of construction at GVSU's downtown Eberhard Center, the series was held at the Gerald R. Ford Museum.

Underwriters for the lecture series included Beta Design Group, Michigan Education Association, Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone, National Heritage Academies, Owen Ames Kimball, Pioneer Inc., Tower Pinkster Titus Associates Inc., Triangle Associates Inc. and URS Greiner.

A new series scheduled for fall is scheduled to focus on urban schools. Additional details will appear in the fall 2000 edition of *Colleagues*.



GVSU student Angie Cooper helps Freddie Martinez of North Godwin Elementary School get hooked up to the world wide web.

Students Get Online And Personal With Technology-Linked Pen Pals

Connecting with a friend on the world wide web is the next best thing to being there, and that's what teacher education candidates enrolled in GVSU professor Mark Van Gorp's required computer education course accomplished with nearly 90 third and fourth grade students from North Godwin Elementary School last fall. The program provided teacher education students with an insight into the communication skills of middle elementary students, while also providing the third- and fourth-graders access to the university via an online bulletin board.

In November, the students were able to match the web address with the face when they met their online partners in person during a visit to GVSU's main campus. The "partners," who are teacher education candidates, created online dialogue with the elementary students earlier in the semester. The experience led to the creation of a web page and increased familiarity with the world wide web for both the elementary and university students.