



Christine M. “Tina” Bonci was a 1972 graduate of Greenville High School at a time when Title IX was moving area schools into adopting interscholastic athletics for women. Her senior year (1971-72 season) marked the first for the Lady Trojans under Head Coach Faith Ann Miller. Although the number of games played and the rules differed in comparison to today, Tina was the leading scorer that season with 94 points.

Tina’s passion for athletics and desire to help those in need led her to pursue a career in athletic training, graduating in 1977 from Lock Haven University with a B.S. in health and physical education, followed by an M.S. in physical education from The University of Rhode Island in 1979.

In the course of her work at The University of Pennsylvania Sports Medicine Center (1979-1985), she was named U.S. women’s basketball athletic trainer for the 1980 Moscow Olympics, a career hallmark never fulfilled due to a U.S. boycott. A second opportunity came in the 1984 Los Angeles games when Tina served as athletic trainer for Hall of Fame coach Pat Summitt and the gold medalist U.S. Olympic women’s basketball team.

In 1985 Tina began a 29-year career as head women’s athletic trainer at The University of Texas. When Texas made its undefeated run to the NCAA Women’s Basketball Championship in 1986, legendary Coach Jody Conradt was quick to note that Tina’s arrival had coincided with the team’s success. She used her medical knowledge to help athletes stay on the court, just as she prepared them for a healthy life beyond the game.

Tina’s forte was developing holistic procedures and protocols for training and innovative strategies to bring student-athletes back from injury. She was a great athletic trainer whose expertise helped coaches and teams win championships. She was known as gracious, brilliant and collaborative, galvanizing UT’s athletics leaders and coaches who provided her unconditional support to develop an unparalleled athletic training program.

During her tenure at UT, Tina and her staff were instrumental in maintaining and promoting the health of female athletes, claiming 21 NCAA championship titles in seven different sports. Among her many honors, Tina was selected to the University of Texas Women’s Athletic Hall of Honor, inducted into the Southwest Athletic Trainers’ Association Hall of Fame, and received the Most Distinguished Athletic Trainer award from The National Athletic Trainers’ Association. In 2013 she was honored with the first ever Lifetime Achievement Award during the Longhorn Honors: Women’s Athletics’ Awards.

Also noted for her lectures and published works on women’s health issues, Tina passed away in 2014 at the age of 59 following a long, heroic battle against a rare form of cancer. At the time of her passing, she was co-director of athletic training and sports medicine for nearly 500 UT men and women student-athletes. Tina’s mantra was, “What you ought to be, what you can be, and what you will be is defined by the type of relationships you cultivate, how big you dream, how resilient you are, and how much you care.”

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