

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I try to quote the movie *A League of Their Own* for any situation in life, and I abide by the statement “anything worth doing is worth doing right.” This includes giving credit where credit is due. I have been filled with gratitude along the way for all the help I have received, and the thanks given here are not enough, but they are a start.

Since this is an offshoot of my dissertation, I want to begin with my UMass Amherst folks. My dissertation committee — Chris Appy, Joyce Berkman, Brian Bunk, Jennifer Fronc, and Pat Griffin — were all-stars. I could not have asked for a better team, and they were critical for my getting the project off the ground in its earliest phase. My dear and brilliant friend Laura Miller was a constant support during the writing of my dissertation and has remained so throughout the process of turning it into a book. Our friendship transcends the miles that separate us.

As I state in the introduction, the project would not have been possible without my teammates at Pioneer Valley Roller Derby (PVRD). You inspired me on and off the track, and I have never known a more remarkable, athletic, fun, and dedicated group of people, and I am thankful for all the lessons you taught me about being a teammate, the DIY ethic, skating, and roller derby.

Through my relationship with the folks at PVRD, I was able to form critical roller derby networks that helped me meet the old guard of the sport as well as skaters from other parts of the country, and these contacts were invaluable for my project. Thank you to all the skaters, past and present, that took the time to talk with me in person or over the phone. You were incredibly generous with your time and memories. Talking with you was hands down my favorite part of this project. I learned so much, and was constantly inspired by your passion for the

sport. Thank you also to Gary Powers with the National Roller Derby Hall of Fame and Museum, who graciously allowed me to spend time in the Hall of Fame collection and to use some of its photographs for this book.

A highlight of my travels and meeting roller derby stars occurred in 2011 when my sister and I flew cross-country to California to interview Jerry Seltzer. He graciously opened his home to us and served as host and tour guide in Sonoma. It was a pleasure visiting with him and really piecing together the nitty-gritty history of the sport founded by his father and continued under his management. For years after the interview, Jerry continued to answer my roller derby questions as they came up. It is a great regret of mine that I was unable to finish this book before he passed, but I hope he knew how thankful I was to know the Commissioner.

Although I no longer teach at Hastings College, it will always hold a special place in my heart. My colleagues were incredibly supportive of my research and this project, especially Rob Babcock and Glenn Avent, both of whom valued sports history and always encouraged me to carve out research and writing time amid our heavy teaching loads. They kept me fed with a good supply of dangerously strong coffee and cheap Chinese food. Hastings College also provided financial support for the project and provided stipends for me to hire Grace Rempp and Joe Prickett as research assistants. Although just undergraduates, Grace and Joe functioned as graduate students and really provided the help I needed to get over a few key hurdles. Thanks, you two. My other students frequently asked about my research, and occasionally pictures of Coors Lightning would make their way into the office. You all were the best. And finally to my J-term students who took the first-ever college course on the history of roller derby—we were a part of history even as we studied it.

I also want to extend my deepest thanks to my Indiana Historical Bureau colleagues. I could not ask to work with a better group of dedicated and fun historians and have learned so much about public history from each of you. I enjoy my work at IHB exponentially more because of you all!

And now to my family. My parents, Phil and Rosemary Nigh, have always encouraged my athletic career, even when that became academic. I inherited an innate sense of competitiveness and a dry sense of humor from them, and I am always thankful for such great parents. My in-laws, Mike and Cindy Marino, are the best family I could have acquired

through marriage—fun and supportive even when I dragged their son for years at a time to the East Coast and then the Plains. My sister, Erin Flynn, served a brief stint as research assistant on our big California adventure, but more than that, she is also my best friend. Although it took Sara Crafton and I until second grade to become best friends, there is something grounding about having a friend who has been with you for every stage of your life and will, you know, be there for the rest of them as well. You provided unwavering support throughout this tedious project and encouraged me when I needed it.

Last but never ever least, I want to thank my husband, Tony, and my son, Matthan. This project pre-dates Matty, but in finishing this book, I hope to instill a valuable lesson in him: “The hard is what makes it great.” Also, you are my best boy. Tony has been through this with me every step of the way. He has contributed his time and skills by editing, transcribing, proofreading, analyzing, and serving as a constant sounding board. Ultimately, “He’s seen enough to know he’s seen too much.” But he always has my back, and I know I would not have been able to start or finish this project without his generous help and complete support. This is for you, Tony. I love you, and thank you.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ROLLER DERBY

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK