

Olympics Legend Jackie Joyner-Kersey Joins Discussion of Women in Sports

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SPRINGFIELD – The federal law “Title IX” revolutionized women’s sports in America, allowing millions of female athletes to get off the sidelines. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum will examine the law’s impact March 25 with a panel of experts, including Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey.

The online panel also includes a participant in Illinois’s very first girls state basketball tournament, who has since collected oral histories from Title IX pioneers. She will be joined by the authors of the definitive book on Title IX and an Emmy-winning sports reporter as moderator.

“Title IX - The Landmark Legislation That Transformed American Sports” takes place 7 p.m. Central time on Thursday, March 25. To register for the free event, please visit bit.ly/ALPLMtix.

“It’s hard to imagine now, but opportunities for women and girls to play organized sports were incredibly limited until Title IX passed,” said Melissa Coultas, the ALPLM’

s acting executive director. “Our Oral History Program has collected fascinating stories from dozens of women about the impact it had, and we are excited to discuss it further with this distinguished panel, particularly the great Jackie Joyner-Kersey.”

Passed in 1972, Title IX prohibits sex-based discrimination in any education program that receives federal money. This meant, among other things, that most high schools and colleges had to offer women’s sports programs comparable to those for men. In Illinois, for instance, more high schools began offering girls basketball, and in 1977 the first statewide girls basketball tournament took place.

Some believe it made the most important change in the lives of American women since 1920, when women were guaranteed the right to vote. Title IX allowed millions of young girls the chance to participate in all manner of sports, enriching their lives in the process.

One such girl was Jackie Joyner-Kersey of East St. Louis, Ill. Going to high school in the 1970s, she was able to participate in track and field, basketball and volleyball. That allowed her to attend college on a track scholarship and to qualify for the Olympics. She earned three gold, one silver and two bronze medals over four Olympic games and has been voted the greatest female athlete of all time.

She will be joined on the panel by:

- Ellyn Bartges, a player in Illinois’s first girls state basketball tournament. She later conducted scores of oral history interviews about Title IX as part of her master’s and Ph.D. programs.
- Linda Jean Carpenter and R. Vivian Acosta, emeritus professors at Brooklyn College and co-authors of the book “Title IX.”
- Moderator Peggy Kusinski, a sports reporter at Chicago’s NBC5 and recipient of two national Emmy Awards for her work as a producer at ESPN.

Educators who attend this virtual program and complete the mandatory program evaluation will receive 1.5 CPDU credits.

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum uses a combination of rigorous scholarship and high-tech showmanship to immerse visitors in Lincoln’s life and times. The library holds an unparalleled collection of Lincoln books, documents, photographs, artifacts and art, as well as some 12 million items pertaining to all aspects of Illinois history.

For more information, visit www.PresidentLincoln.Illinois.gov or follow the ALPLM on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

