

Lisa Gehret:

Helped blaze trail for future Lady Lions

By Jim Lane
Altoona Mirror

Altoona Area High School has had one of the strongest girls' basketball programs in the state for almost two decades, and most people point to the 1981 team as the group that started it all.

The 1980-81 Lady Lions won 34 straight games before losing to Allentown Allen in the PIAA, Class AAA state championship game.

Since then, the AAHS girls have made seven more trips to Hershey. The scorecard reads four championships and four runners-up. Only Downingtown, with five, has more Class AAAA state titles than Altoona.

The '80-81 Altoona team had its share of standouts — Miriam Heidler, Tracy Kimmen, Judy McNellis, and Paula Wood, to mention a few.

And Lisa Fubio.

"Lisa was the catalyst," Art Taneyhill said. "She was the catalyst that started everything (for girls' basketball) in central Pennsylvania.

"She has to be the No. 1 basketball player I've ever coached," noted Taneyhill, who sent more than 20 girls to Division I college basketball programs.

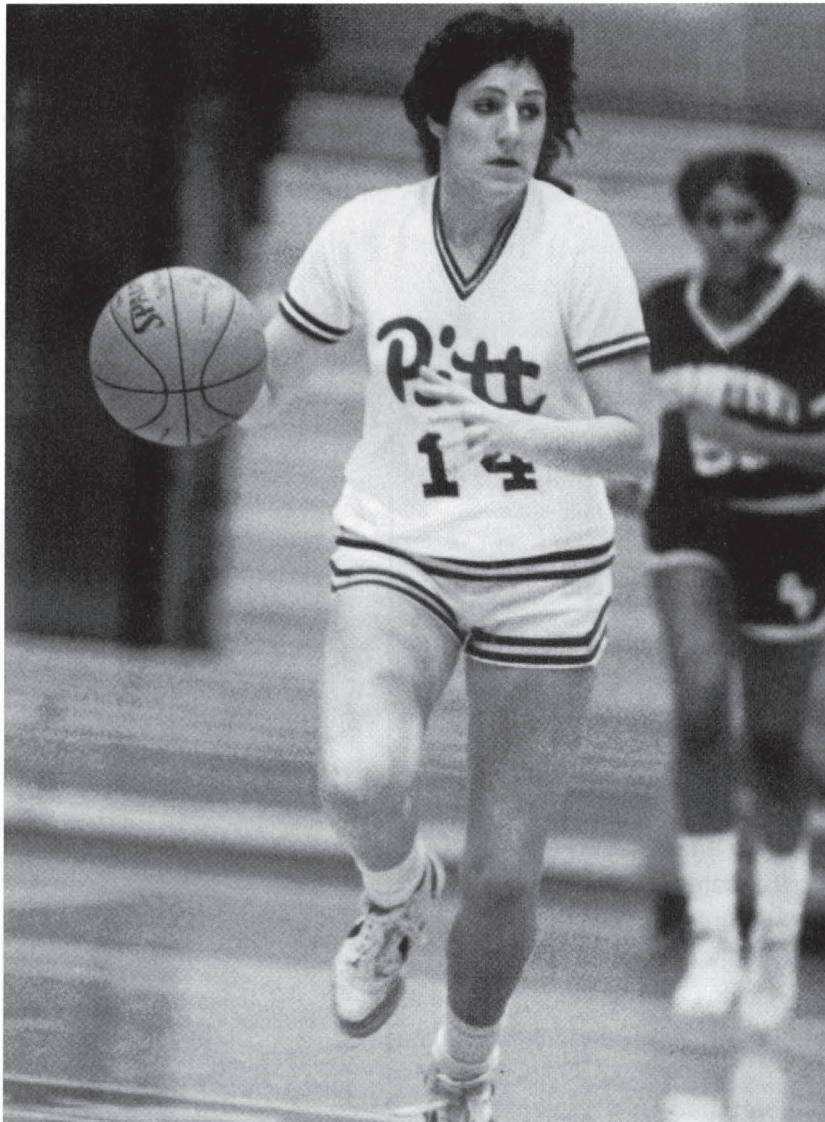
Now married to Cory Gehret and the mother of four children, Lisa (Fubio) Gehret will become the second woman inducted into the Blair County Sports Hall of Fame.

"I'm extremely honored," Gehret said of her selection. "Knowing that this area is so rich in girls' basketball history and to know I'm the first is amazing. I'm flattered and humbled."

Gehret got her basketball start in Lewistown.

"The Park and Rec program was popular there," she recalled. "My brother, Tony, was my idol. We had a hoop on the garage, but I didn't play anything competitive until we moved here.

"I played in 7th and 8th grade at Roosevelt," she



Gehret captained Pitt and had an Olympic tryout.

said, "but it was only four games — two against Keith and two against Logan."

She decided to try cheerleading in 9th grade, but Taneyhill, who will present Gehret for induction into the Hall of Fame, got a tip from former Roosevelt boys' coach Jim Rice.

"Jim said 'you don't want to lose her,'" Taneyhill noted. "I made contact with her and the rest is history."

Under Taneyhill's guidance, Gehret grew attached to the game.

"I believed everything he said. I soaked up everything

Blair County Sports Hall of Fame '98



Lisa (21) led the 1980-81 Altoona girls' team to its first PIAA title game.

like a sponge," she said.

The numbers Gehret put up at Altoona (1979-81) still rank among the Lady Lions' best. She's the all-time leading scorer (1159 points), has the second-best career average (14.0 ppg), is seventh in rebounds (470), and seventh in assists (261). She earned all-state and high school All-America honors.

After an outstanding high school career, Gehret signed a letter of intent to play at the University of Connecticut.

"I didn't even visit there," said Gehret, who declined offers from Maryland and Pitt. "Cory (Gehret) had received a football scholarship at UConn and that's where I was going."

Even though she was selected as the defensive player of the year for Division I schools in Connecticut, Gehret was unhappy in the UConn program and left after one year. Before transferring to Pitt, she played for the East in the National Sports Festival.

"Winning the bronze (medal) was a great experience," she said. After an outstanding performance in the Sports Festival,

Lisa Gehret



Sport: Basketball.

High school: Altoona Area, 1981.

College: University of Pittsburgh.

Hall of Fame achievement: Captained Pitt basketball team and had Olympic try-out. Leading scorer in Lady Lion history.

Current occupation: Secretary.

Current residence: Altoona.

Gehret was one of 300 players invited to the Olympic Trials the following summer, after she sat out a year at Pitt because of the transfer.

"I got down to the last 50, which was OK," she said, "but I had my heart set on making it. Ever since I was little I wanted to go to the Olympics, and that was my biggest disappointment. That and seeing how things worked at that level. They brought the top 10 or 12 kids to the tryouts in limos, so I got my eyes opened."

Gehret had three productive seasons at Pitt and played for the Lady Panthers when the Big East Conference was formed.

"We were the first regular-season champions (of the Big East)," she said, "but we lost in the conference tourney so we didn't get invited to the NCAA tourney."

After graduation from Pitt, Lisa married Cory Gehret, her high school sweetheart.

"From the time I met Cory, my only aspiration was to get married and have a family," she said. "Now I'm living happily ever after."

The Gehrets have four children – Lauren, 11; Rachel, 9; Mathew, 8; and Brady, 5.