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Hill going for a male-dominated job

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Female athletic directors scarce

The number of female athletic directors in the United States is not exactly overwhelming. To be specific, there are none at Division I universities with a major football program.

Mary Alice Hill, associate director of athletics at SDSU, may very well be one of the first to achieve this distinction. Hill is definitely interested in becoming an athletic director.

"Since I was very young, I've been very interested in sports," Hill said. "My ultimate goal is to be an athletic director at a major Division I school."

Hill nearly became the athletic director at SDSU last spring when Cedric Dempsey resigned after two months on the job.

"I was almost prepared to appoint Hill after Dempsey resigned," SDSU President Day said.

"When I looked for a new athletic director, I wanted someone who would work well with the community and stimulate monetary and attendance support. I looked for a person who would run a clean program under the rules of the university and conference.

"I also wanted someone with experience and good taste. Hill measured up well in all of these categories, but Gene Bourdet had

more experience.

"Hill is still young. You don't go from coach to athletic director overnight. She will make an excellent athletic director some day, but we hope we manage to keep her here."

Despite being one of the finalists for the job, Hill never actually applied for the position.

"I never applied because I thought the college and community weren't ready for a woman A.D.," Hill said. "If I applied and didn't get the job, it would have hurt my ability to stay in a support role. I felt I could be more effective by not seeking the job."

Dempsey informally asked Hill to join him when he left for the A.D. job at Houston. But Hill is happy with the way things have turned out at SDSU.

"It's worked out good for me because Gene (Bourdet) has given me more responsibility and the chance to work in all areas of the athletic program," Hill said. "Gene has really taught me a lot. Taking the full step to athletic director would have been a bit scary even though I have confidence that I could do it.

"I have a great deal of loyalty to SDSU because they hired me when no one else would. I was fired unjustly by Colorado State

because I was trying to improve the proportion of scholarships given to female athletes."

Hill has filed suit against the university and her case is currently on appeal at the Colorado State 10th circuit court of appeals.

Athletic Director Gene Bourdet credits Hill for much of SDSU's success with the sex-independent program.

"SDSU has played a leadership role in establishing a sex-independent program," Bourdet said. "She has been sought out both regionally and nationally to help get women's programs in the right direction."

Hill feels the whole athletic department is responsible for the success of the pilot program.

"Dr. Ken Karr began the program, and Day has really encouraged the continuance of the sex-independent program since coming to SDSU in 1978.

"We are changing traditional ideas of athletics and we need everyone's help. The administration and coaching staff have been

very flexible and willing to cooperate. We work jointly in scheduling and setting practice times for the men's and women's programs," Hill said.

The immediate goal of the athletic department, according to Hill, is to bring the women's program into compliance with Title IX, and to upgrade existing facilities for athletic teams at SDSU.

"SDSU has made significant progress towards improving the amount of money given to the women's programs," Hill said. "In 1976 a total of about \$50,000 was distributed to 11 women's teams. This year's teams received close to \$200,000.

"We are also looking at improving the football practice field and the tennis facilities.

"The softball field is totally inadequate because it slopes downhill. Every time it rains a ditch develops through the center of the infield. Facilities for the swimming pool and track also need upgrading.



Mary Alice Hill

"Probably our biggest project is increasing office space for the entire staff.

"SDSU has an outstanding coaching staff, a beautiful area to recruit to, and weather permitting year-round training.

"If we could provide more scholarships and adequate facilities, SDSU could be one of the most dynamic athletic powers in the nation."