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## Interview with Thomas Hickman

Thomas Hickman

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**LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Interview #171  
HICKMAN, Thomas**

**HICKMAN, Thomas**

Director of Athletics

*Interviewed:* February 27, 2015

*Interviewer:* Jenna Kasmarik

*Index by:* Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

*Length:* 00:44:19

Abstract: In his February 27, 2015 interview with Jenna Kasmarik, Thomas Hickman shares his experiences complying with Title IX in the athletic department. Hickman lends his perspective on the pros and cons of Title IX and how the athletic department has changed since Title IX became law. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Title IX, Athletics, soccer, golf, lacrosse, track, tennis, volleyball, basketball, coaches, finances, facilities

**Interview Session (February 27, 2015): Digital File**

**Time      Keywords**

00:00:00    *Start of Interview*/Interviewer's Introduction

00:00:09    *Question:* Opinion of Title IX and has your opinion changed? *Answer:* Heard about it when it passed in 1983 (not at Winthrop at the time). TH didn't think a lot about it at the time. Obviously a good law. TH would like to see more flexibility in the courts when dealing with Title IX issues.

00:01:30    *Question:* Examples of flexibility? *Answer:* Should be able to take into consideration that Winthrop spends more on female, athletic scholarships. Winthrop has support for both male and female athletes. TH talks about the unbalanced student body population. Winthrop has more female than male sports. TH discusses the intent of Title IX.

00:03:30    *Question:* How do you perceive Title IX? *Answer:* Not a negative towards male athletics. TH read recently that the percentage of female coaches has declined, because female sports are becoming more popular – male coaches are interested in coaching these. TH speculates that not a lot of women want to coach on that level.

- 00:05:16 *Question:* What kind of changes would you like to see? *Answer:* More flexibility – put less emphasis on matching up percentages. Winthrop shows regular progress in adding female opportunities. TH athletic director for 19 years. TH says Winthrop has added four female sports in that period of time. TH says no court has never upheld conducting surveys to show progress.
- 00:07:25 *Question:* How has Title IX affected Winthrop’s athletic department? *Answer:* Caused Winthrop to add female sports. Winthrop had female sports – most not intercollegiate – when it was an all-female school. Coeducation hurt female sports – put them in the backseat – not Title IX. Financially hard to fund all the sports, because of Title IX. TH knows that his athletes do well academically. TH talks about male vs female athletes GPAs.
- 00:10:00 *Question:* Have you seen other positive or negative influences? *Answer:* Has affected men’s wrestling negatively. Gymnastics has taken a hit. Overall, it has been a positive influence. Forced schools to afford more opportunities to women. TH talks about some coaches comparing women and men in match-up sports.
- 00:12:16 *Question:* Who is responsible for making sure Winthrop complies with Title IX? *Answer:* TH is athletically. Winthrop has a Title IX compliance officer – Kimberly Faust.
- 00:14:25 *Question:* What sports have been added and why? *Answer:* Women’s indoor/outdoor track, women’s soccer, and women’s lacrosse. Added women’s track, because there are a lot of track athletes in South Carolina. It was a natural progression. At the time women’s track was added, Winthrop did not have a track. Winthrop would compete at middle schools down the street, never at home. Added both men’s and women’s track at the time. Women’s soccer was added because of Title IX. TH’s philosophy is to add a female sport every six years. When you add a female sport, it adds more females to the student body and athletics. The percentage of increase is much greater. Winthrop already had men’s soccer. Women’s lacrosse was a Title IX and financial decision. TH says it gave Winthrop opportunity to recruit from the Northeast. Recruits from the Northeast generated revenue even after the expense of the program. Next task is to decide what the next female sport will be.
- 00:18:55 *Question:* What will be the next female sport? *Answer:* Winthrop once thought about women’s swimming. Winthrop will look at women’s swimming again. Rock Hill has a competition facility. A challenge is getting more males in the student body. TH talks about football – would need non-scholarship football. There aren’t enough male teams around here. TH talks about challenges of athletics.
- 00:22:05 *Question:* Athletic activities complying with Title IX? *Answer:* Winthrop falls short

- on participation. Winthrop spends more on women's scholarships than men. Winthrop tries to hire the best coaches – TH says some people may fault Winthrop on not hiring more female coaches. Winthrop has made strides in that direction. First soccer coach was female. Unfortunately, not a lot of female basketball coaches lasted long. Winthrop had one person teaching both male and female sports – talks about tennis. Had both male and female coaches in volleyball. Mark Cook has been the only softball coach. Winthrop tries to make games and practice time equitable. Two weaknesses: participation and number of female head coaches.
- 00:27:05 *Question:* Any sport excluded from Title IX? *Answer:* Depends on what you consider a sport. Cheer and dance squads are excluded as collegiate sports – have not been recognized by the courts or NCAA. Any sport that the NCAA sponsors a championship in is considered a sport. TH talks about competitive cycling teams across the country. TH says courts would be more likely to recognize cycling because there are structured organizations.
- 00:29:35 *Question:* Is Title IX equal? *Answer:* There isn't any advantage one way or another. The opportunities are equal. Winthrop has ten women sports and eight men sports. When you have a sport that has large numbers, then there will be a disparity (football). TH talks about some schools solutions to this problem: rowing. TH talks about the rigidity of the law.
- 00:32:20 *Question:* What lead to coach selection? *Answer:* Coach Carvalho was here when TH got here. Years ago men and women teams traveled together. As tennis grew as a sport, Winthrop decided to split the position. Carvalho chose to coach women. There was a male coach teaching softball and soccer once. Winthrop had to get a men's soccer coach and a women's softball coach. TH talks about the hiring of Mark Cook, because he was the most qualified. TH talks about splitting women's and men's golf teams. Had female basketball coaches until the hiring of Bud Childers. TH talks about the progression of hiring basketball coaches.
- 00:38:45 *Question:* What about the decision to hire a male coach for the women's lacrosse team? *Answer:* Interesting. Winthrop tried to start women's lacrosse a year before they did. Had female applicants, but Winthrop didn't feel they were qualified. Had two males and one female in the final pool. Winthrop then delayed everything and did a search a year later. TH cancelled female applicant's interview. TH says it comes down to hiring the best applicant. Women's lacrosse is division III – TH explains why he cancelled the third interview.
- 00:52:50 *Question:* Final thoughts? *Answer:* TH talks about equal pay. Have to pay what the market is and the person's experience. TH provides an example.
- 00:44:19 *End of interview*