

## **THE HISTORY OF GIRLS' TRACK & FIELD**

In 1968, girls began their participation in track and field at Ursuline. Tom Nally was the first coach. He was a volunteer coach who was assisted by Nick Heinzer. In 1970, Tony Costarella assumed the position of head coach with help from Terry Grimm and Teresa Tamburino. He guided the program through the 1976 season. Jim Boyle coached the 1977 team. In 1978, George Stroia succeeded Coach Boyle. He held the position for seven years. In 1985, when Coach Stroia became the coach of the boys' team, Patrick Hovance guided the girls' team. Karen (Lane) Pavlansky, a former assistant coach became the Head Coach in 1986. She held the position through the 1994 season. In 1995, the Track Program was officially organized into one program under Coach Stroia. It had been unofficially run as on program since 1985.

The 1975 team won the Steel Valley championship. In 1991, the Girls' Track Team earned its first District Championship. With both the Boys' and Girls' Teams winning District Championship that year, Ursuline became the first school in the area to accomplish the fete. The Girls' Team competed in the Mahoning County Track Meet for the first time in 2003. They won the Division II Championship that year.

In 1975, the year of the first State Track Meet for girls, Rhonda Howell and Monica Matasy became the first girls to place in a State Meet. Rhonda Was Sixth in the 80 Yard Low Hurdles and Monica was fourth in the Discus.

In 2007, the team finished 7<sup>th</sup> at the State Meet. This is the highest finish to date. Tim'Aira Gandy, Liz Emanuel, Michaela Write and Jasmine Brown became the first girls in school history to become State Champions as they captured the Division III 4x200 Meter Relay crown. This was also the first relay team (boy or girl) in school history to win a state championship. In addition, Jasmine Brown finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 100 Meter Dash and, and the 4x100 Meter Relay team of Nichele Scott, Tim'Aira Gandy, Lauren Ignazio and Jasmine Brown finished third.

To date, the following women track and field athletes have been inducted into the Ursuline Athletic Hall of Fame: Rhonda Howell (1976), Cathy McElroy Purfey (1970), Patty Vuksta Vrazel (1973), Marianne Kuhar LaRosa (1980), Kathleen Fechtel Pavlansky (1987) and Kisha Armour (1992).

Every year when winter is coldest, young ladies begin organizing and working to prepare themselves for a spring season. They work to become part of a team that will add to the many accomplishments of the young women who preceded them. They do so feeling the support of the many that came before them. With each new success, all who were ever part of the program continue to enjoy the enhancement of its tradition.