It was a September to remember at US Lacrosse, highlighting the roads we embark on – as players, coaches, officials, fans, volunteers, supporters, donors and stewards of the game – were paved by those who came before us.

A sold-out crowd of 400 lacrosse faithful, including 50 National Lacrosse Hall of Fame members from the classes of 1975 - 2016, witnessed the enshrinement of nine lacrosse greats on the 60th anniversary of the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame: Douglas Knight, Leslie Blankin Lane, Jim McDonald, Laurette Payette, Casey Powell, Jill Johnson Redfern, Brooks Sweet, Robyn Nye Wood and Don Zimmerman.

The evening was spirited, heart-warming, nostalgic and fun as presenters spoke of the true nature of the inductees – on-the-field dominance and off-the-field character – that has earned them their rightful place in history.

It was not lost that lacrosse is a team sport, as each inductee gave credit to their coaches, teammates and families for providing the pathway to success, acknowledging that lacrosse changed the trajectory of their lives. (Turn the pages for their words of wisdom.)

The heroes of yesterday create the opportunities of today. These inductees maximized their opportunities afforded to them through their parents, Title IX, college, and international lacrosse to elevate the profile of lacrosse, creating unprecedented growth for lacrosse during their eras.

Just days earlier, US Lacrosse launched the Lacrosse Communities Project in the Ohio City neighborhood of Cleveland, Ohio, a new program that helps support invested local organizations to bring lacrosse – along with the promotion of lifetime heart-healthy habits - into a targeted urban population of economic, ethnic and racial diversity.

“Our primary goal is not to identify and nurture the most gifted athlete, but rather to positively impact every child exposed to the sport. A positive lacrosse experience can change the trajectory of a child’s life. And with the Lacrosse Communities Project, we are committed to doing just that,” said Steve Stenersen at the ribbon cutting for the small-sided lacrosse field at the Urban Community School.

Ohio City’s dedicated residents and stakeholders are the reason the neighborhood was chosen – a diverse mix of races, ethnicities and incomes with 1200 units of public housing and 37 percent of its residents living below the poverty line – to serve as a national pilot to:

• Model the creation of opportunities from grade school to high school
• Integrate CPR and AED training with education on heart-healthy choices
• Provide connections through the universal language of lacrosse
• Construct the first neighborhood small-sided field

Full circle. From the novice to the elite, we envision a future where everyone has a lifelong opportunity to enjoy lacrosse. We may honor nine lacrosse greats every year, but through your support, the door is opened to 9,000 or more new lacrosse whose lives are enriched through lacrosse.

Through an understanding that lacrosse creates opportunities that champion the child, we rise. Through the enshrinement of the nation’s best, we rise. Through the power of lacrosse and its ability to connect communities, generations, and the past with the future, we rise.

On your shoulders, we stand.
CHAIRMAN’S PERSPECTIVE
From Your Lead, We Follow
J. Gordon Cooney, Jr., Chair, US Lacrosse Foundation

I spent time reading the speeches of this year’s National Hall of Fame Inductees. Although this remarkable group joined the Hall through varied backstories and backgrounds, there was a strong thread running through the speeches that made me consider the refinement of US Lacrosse’s mission to six key areas of focus, and its physical evolution, from those two small rooms to the state-of-the-art headquarters and national teams training facility needed to support that mission for our expanding game.

When I considered our key areas of focus, they lined up with what the inductees emphasized. Those subjects are at the root of what US Lacrosse is all about—ensuring that more children, of all backgrounds, have the opportunity to play lacrosse, with great coaching, consistent officiating across geographies, and a philosophy of young athlete development and rules that is based on science and sound experience. And that is the sport that is approachable so that parents can support their children and enjoy the game, regardless of whether or not they have played lacrosse.

This is my last piece for Lacrosse Matters. I will be handing the keyboard to my friend Ed Nordberg, who will become Chair of the US Lacrosse Foundation Board in January. It has been my great honor to be associated with the Foundation, to work with an outstanding board, to witness first-hand the great work of the US Lacrosse staff that is fueled by donations to the Foundation, and to connect with many of you whose generous contributions make possible the important work of US Lacrosse. Thanks to all of you for continuing to support the game and USL’s crucial mission.

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CEO, US Lacrosse

DONOR PERSPECTIVE

I’m so excited that The Lacrosse Communities Project - Cleveland is giving our youth the opportunity to play lacrosse, knowing they can have the experiences that have positively impacted many of us. We are incredibly fortunate here to have a close-knit lacrosse community with passion for the sport, and with the support of Mayor Frank Jackson, area residents and stakeholders, we are now able to expand our community.

When the idea of spurring the growth of lacrosse within the City of Cleveland came up, people contacted us at the North Coast Chapter of US Lacrosse and asked “what can I do to help?” It is that spirit that galvanized our chapter around a common goal. For me, the camaraderie created by lacrosse is difficult to explain to non-lacrosse people. Friendships and experiences I’ve encountered as a player/teammate/coach have been long lasting and impactful. It’s rewarding to pay it forward for more kids to play a new sport that helps them do something divergent, create lifetime friendships, and open up doors that they might not have been able to.

We are looking forward in the next few years to seeing the first high school varsity lacrosse game within the City of Cleveland school district as a result of all these efforts.

Dave Cerny,
Past President, North Coast Chapter of US Lacrosse

HEAD COACH JOHN DANOWSKI’S PLAN TO BRING BACK THE GOLD

Sitting in the US Lacrosse offices above Tierney Field in early July, the noise was deafening. The energy of 71 of the best men’s lacrosse players in the US was off-the-charts, all vying for spots on Team USA, shouting words of encouragement, howling at impressive player moves, cheering for goals like they just won a world championship, and, of course, getting in some good-natured ribbing. Hard to believe these comrades were competing against each other for the same spots. Welcome to John Danowski’s 2018 Team USA Men.

Danowski is clear in his vision for Team USA Men. He asked US Lacrosse to trust his process. In previous years, tryouts consisted of over 100 players being observed in a series of scrimmages over a couple of tryout weekends. Danowski’s process was...more like a set of practices preparing for a game.

Players were able to interact with the coaches and get to know each other. Getting comfortable with each other is critical to Danowski’s approach to building a team. Although individuals are trying out for spots, the veteran coach and his staff are looking for people who can play together. “We’re looking for chemistry and who will take to coaching. We’re looking for guys who are interested in their own greatness, but we’re also interested in guys who have a sense of humility and want to see others be great.”

Danowski set out early to cut tensions and asked “what can I do to help?” It is that spirit that galvanized our chapter around a common goal. For me, the camaraderie created by lacrosse is difficult to explain to non-lacrosse people. Friendships and experiences I’ve encountered as a player/teammate/coach have been long lasting and impactful. It’s rewarding to pay it forward for more kids to play a new sport that helps them do something divergent, create lifetime friendships, and open up doors that they might not have been able to.

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Dave Cerny,
Past President, North Coast Chapter of US Lacrosse

Looking ahead, Danowski is clear in his vision for bringing back the gold for Team USA Men.

John Danowski is one of the most respected college coaches in the nation. In his 10 years at the helm of the Duke University Blue Devil’s lacrosse program, Danowski has led Duke to seven ACC regular season titles and four ACC tournament titles, eight straight appearances in the NCAA national semifinals from 2007-2014, four in the NCAA title match and ultimately to the 2010, 2013 and 2014 NCAA national titles.

Fundraising is underway for the named 49-man Team USA Men training roster, of which 23 will travel to the 2018 FIL World Lacrosse Championships in Netanya, Israel on July 12-21, 2018. A lead gift of $50,000 from US Lacrosse Foundation Board Member Sylvester Miniter is a great start to meeting the $200,000 goal to cover training, travel and public appearances. Team USA will play next at the IMG Academy in Bradenton, FL, on January 6, 2018. Donations can be made at www.uslacrosse.org/teamusa

TEAM USA TRAINING ROSTER

Matt Abbott
Drew Adams
Treyar Baptiste
Jake Berlindeck
Jesse Bernhardt
Ryan Brown
Connor Burke
Liam Byrnes
Mike Chenachuk
Charlie Cipiti
Ned Cottr	
Matt Danowski
Sylvester Miniter
Todd Rutt
Michael Chiurato
Michael Evans
Joe Fletcher
Brendan Fowler
Jake Falcono
John Gill
Greg Gurenlian
Kyle Hartard
Kyle Haus
Will Haus

Marcus Halain
Mykel Jones
Matt Kavanagh
Galen Kelly
Tom Kelly
Jack Kelly
Michael Hanley
Will Manney
Jake Pfronten
Dylan Pobjay
Tim Madden
Joe Marshall
Bob Pursell
Drew Rogers
Mark Roker
Kevin Unterstein
Joe Wolters
Alex White
Jordan White

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS: TIMELESS ADVICE FROM THE NATIONAL LACROSSE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2017

DOUG KNIGHT
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Knight summed up his overwhelming gratitude for being inducted with a letter to his children. “Whatever you choose to pursue, I hope that you are fortunate to cross paths with some of the following: a friend... a brotherhood... a calm and cool freshman roommate... a group of amazing teachers, coach and mentors... a couple of guys that push you and inspire you and let you be yourself... amazing teammates or co-workers... a best friend in your spouse... parents and siblings that love and support you. You must work really hard to be good, willing to be uncomfortable, willing to fail and frame it all in a positive way. Whatever you do, know there are awesome people always willing to lend a hand.”

LESLIE BLANKIN LANE
HOLLINS UNIVERSITY

“There is something magical about team sports. I consider myself a ‘we’ person. You win together and lose together. My father said ‘you might be the best player on the field, but remember, you are nothing without your teammates.’ It was those who surrounded me who made me as successful as I am. On our US tour to Australia in 1980, a coach congratulated me for scoring the final and winning tally. I would not have scored if four other teammates had not made the save, clear, run and pass to me to shoot. They scored before me, I just happened to score the last goal.”

JILL JOHNSON REDFERN
URSINUS COLLEGE

“In choosing to recognize me, you have chosen to recognize the power of teammates. Teammates taught me the game. In honoring me, US Lacrosse has also chosen to acknowledge the power of potential. I learned the game of lacrosse when I went to college. I thank my college coaches for embracing player development and teaching me what that can mean over four years.”

CASEY POWELL
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

“Growing up in the small town of Trumburg that had 1200 people and two lacrosse players - my younger brother Chris and myself - my dad taught us how to catch and throw. For four years before we moved to Ithaca we spent endless hours throwing a ball to each other and even more so against our barn wall. Without ever seeing a game we had already developed the side arm and underarm passes and shots which came in handy upon moving to Ithaca. My size was a bit of a disadvantage going against some of the bigger defenders, but my quickness was developed due to my older brothers Tim and Trip always chasing me to迫使me after I'd hit them with the ball due to their inability to catch. It paid off greatly down the road.”

JIM MCDONALD
WASHINGTON & LEE UNIVERSITY

“I have made so many friendships through lacrosse from the day when I was 12 years old and my father’s friend gave me my first stick. That’s over 75 years ago and my love is still going strong. US Lacrosse has come a long way from the two rooms it occupied behind the Hopkins gym when great friend, mentor and Hall of Famer Dinty Moore asked me to join the board. I told him I was just too busy. He replied, ‘if you need something done, find a busy man.’ I have adapted that saying to ‘if you need something done, get a midfielder.’”

LAURETTE PAYETTE
USWLA

“As I reflect on my contributions, I find that first and foremost in my mind is the people, those who make contributions possible. My family, friends, peers, mentors, role models and yes, even those with whom I may be at odds who force you to evaluate what you are doing and what is best for all. My lacrosse journey started with me looking up to so many women—strong leaders involved in women’s sports during the early years of Title IX. Now my lacrosse journey is winding down with me reflecting on that journey and trusting that I have been a strong leader, a mentor, and a role model for women and men involved in women’s sports, in women’s lacrosse.”

BROOKS SWEET
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

“You can mean over four years.”

ROBIN NYE WOOD
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

“This is truly a special honor and it doesn’t come lightly being a defensive player. Two of my most memorable moments of lacrosse came in my 4th year at UVA’s in the same weekend. At the Final Four during our practice time, coaches Jane Miller and Julie Dayton had such confidence in our team that they allowed us to play ultimate frisbee instead of lacrosse. They knew that we were as prepared as we could be and it was time to enjoy the moment. Luckily, it worked out for them and we won the NCAA title! That weekend was also graduation weekend for UVA so we missed the university’s ceremony. We ended up having our own ceremony where we got to walk down the Lawn and celebrate with our deans, teammates, and parents. That was a great weekend.”

DON ZIMMERMAN
JOHNS HOPKINS/UMBC

“It’s all about the team. Without the support of my assistant coaches I would not be standing up here tonight. There then are the players. The guys who get out there every day and work their tails off to get better – and to make the team better! The game’s focus is and should be on the players. It’s exciting to know lacrosse is the fastest growing sport in the United States. With this in mind, may we all be thankful for the opportunity to be involved with the game and find our special way of giving something back. Be stewards of the game. Always remember and celebrate its Native American roots while holding true to its spirit of fair play and mutual respect while competing in the heat of battle.”

THERE ARE AWESOME PEOPLE ALWAYS WILLING TO LEND A HAND • YOU ARE NOTHING WITHOUT YOUR TEAMMATES • IF YOU NEED SOMETHING DONE, GET A MIDFIELDER • PEOPLE MAKE THE CONTRIBUTIONS POSSIBLE • BE ALL IN. COME TO PLAY • ACKNOWLEDGE THE POWER OF POTENTIAL, EMBRACE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT • SPEND ENDLESS HOURS THROWING THE BALL TO EACH OTHER AND AGAINST A WALL • ENJOY THE MOMENT • BE THANKFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED WITH THE GAME
ENRICHING LIVES THROUGH LACROSSE

JON GORDON – FORMER CORNELL PLAYER TO PROVIDE INSIGHTS ON LEADERSHIP AT LAXCON

“Positive leadership remains critically important for adults who play important roles in the lives of young people,” said Jon Gordon, best selling author and leadership consultant. “Lacrosse had a significant impact on my life. I’m excited to give back to the sport that has given so much to me.”

Gordon, who played lacrosse at Cornell University, will address lacrosse’s largest educational event at 8 a.m. on Saturday, January 20, 2018, as the keynote speaker of the 2018 US Lacrosse Convention (LaxCon). As US Lacrosse continues its focus on championing the child through lacrosse, his insights on leadership and helping adults to develop young people is inspirational and practical.

Gordon has authored 17 books, including “The Hard Hat” — the story of former Cornell lacrosse player George Boiardi – a selfless, loyal, joyful, hardworking, competitive and compassionate leader and teammate – who passed away during a Big Red game in 2004. From the moment Gordon heard about Boiardi, he visited his coaches, attended dinners held in his honor, met his family, talked to his teammates and observed how he inspired all who knew him. While there are thousands of books with strategies to be a leader, and observed how he inspired all who knew him. While there are thousands of books with strategies to be a leader, there are few books that focus on how to be a better teammate, a better friend and a better person.

Gordon’s principles have been put to the test by numerous Fortune 500 companies, professional and college sports teams, school districts, hospitals, and non-profit organizations. We are excited to bring his message to the more than 400 coaches, officials and administrators who will be in attendance at LaxCon and are tasked with developing lacrosse athletes of character.

CHRIS SAILER TRAIL HONORS TRAILBLAZERS OF TITLE IX

National Lacrosse Hall of Fame member and Princeton University Head Coach Chris Sailer’s tremendous contributions to the sport of lacrosse were honored on October 21 at the US Lacrosse National Headquarters with the dedication of The Chris Sailer Trail, a walking path that surrounds Tierney Field.

Sailer’s honor comes in part thanks to the support of former players. In conjunction with the dedication, the Intercollegiate Women’s Lacrosse Coaches Association (IWLCA) selected 11 former collegiate coaches to celebrate as trailblazers of the game for their exceptional work in advancing women’s lacrosse and the coaching profession during the Title IX era.

Each of the following IWLCA Trailblazers is recognized with a plaque along Chris Sailer Trail: Pat Genovesi, Tina Sloan Green, Caroline Hausserman, Kathy Heinze, Carole Kleinfielder, Gillian Rattray, Sue Stahl, Sue Tyler, Lanetta Ware, Marge Watson, and Judy Wolstenholme.

The path preserves their legacy and ensures that future generations will not forget their contributions.

Each began coaching collegiate women’s lacrosse in the 1960s or 1970s, helping to lay the foundation for the modern game. Their love for the sport, passion for teaching, and dedication to coaching were driving forces in advancing women in collegiate athletics.

“The recent gold-medal success of our U.S. Women’s National Team is rooted in the work of these trailblazers,” said Kathy Taylor, president of the IWLCA and head coach at Le Moyne College. “Every trailblazer has a unique story, but what bonds them together as a group is their shared commitment to the goal of women’s lacrosse and the progress they paved for all of us.”

NEW FIL CEO JIM SCHERR AND THE PATHWAY TO LACROSSE IN THE OLYMPICS

Jim Scherr, former CEO of the U.S. Olympic Committee, has been named as the first CEO of the Federation of International Lacrosse (FIL). Scherr, who competed for the U.S. Olympic team in wrestling in the 1988 Seoul Games, is optimistic about getting lacrosse in the Olympics. After serving 10 years as the executive director of USA Wrestling, Scherr joined the US Olympic Committee in 2000 as the chief of sports performance. He served in that role until 2003 when he was named the interim CEO for the USOC, and then served as the CEO of the USOC from 2005 to 2009.

“Fiforlacrosse to find its way back in the Olympics, it’s two parts. We have to prepare and present the sport to the IOC in the best possible way, both through the IOC and its membership and to the next two host cities for the Olympic Committee — 2024 Paris and 2028 Los Angeles. But at the same time we need to continue to build the capabilities of the sport so that the things that the IOC are looking for — a sport that attracts youth, attracts and has a digital media audience, has a robust broadcast and some sponsors, and people who want to attend the live events — are all elevating lacrosse in their eyes,” said Scherr.

There are two different paths to Olympic inclusion. The traditional way is for a sport’s international federation to petition the IOC. The alternative is for the local organizing committees to push favored sports in their country as a “new sport” included on a temporary basis. The Los Angeles 2028 Olympics is the best chance for lacrosse to get in as a “new sport.” This process typically begins seven years in advance of the Olympics.

Following the IOC petition path, a sport must be widely practiced by men in at least 75 countries and on four continents and by women in no fewer than 40 countries and on three continents. Following the local organizing committee “new sport” path, initiated with the 2020 Olympics, the Tokyo 2020 committee listed the following criteria for inclusion of new sports: added value; youth appeal; attractiveness for TV, media and the general public; gender equality; minimum impact on the number of events and/or quotas, infrastructure and operational costs; and complexity. All sports are up for review after each Olympics, including core sports.

Twelve years ago, the FIL ignited the process to take the sport to the next level. In 2007, the then-separate men’s and women’s lacrosse associations merged together to form the FIL, after musings about the Olympics surfaced in 2005. The organization has experienced rapid growth in recent years, and now boasts 58 member nations on six continents.

In 2012, the FIL was accepted into SportAccord, the umbrella organization for Olympic and non-Olympic sports. The following year, the FIL was accepted into the International World Games Association (IWGA). This summer in Poland, women’s lacrosse was one of the 31 sports included in the IWGA’s World Games schedule, marking the first time lacrosse has been included in the event. The next immediate goal is to get men’s and women’s lacrosse included in the next World Games in Birmingham, Ala., in 2021. And there is the need to get lacrosse into future multi-sport events like the Pan American Games, to broaden the sports exposure.

“Lacrosse is growing around the world, and I think it has tremendous potential to return to the Olympic program. The goal of the IOC is to modernize the Olympics and make it more relevant. Lacrosse certainly brings that. It’s an ideal Olympic sport,” said Scherr. “The values associated with the sport are tremendous.”
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