

YEAR OF AWARD: 2014

Jane Miller

Senior Associate Athletic
Director for Programs

Years of service at UVA:
1983-2020



When Carla Williams became the University of Virginia's first woman athletic director in 2017, she was relieved to know that **Jane Miller** was just down the hall. "Before I even got to Virginia, I knew about Jane," Williams said. "She's one of those leaders at the NCAA level who's meant a lot to

all of college athletics."

From 2001 until her retirement at the end of the 2019 athletic season, Miller was UVA's senior associate director of athletics for programs/senior woman administrator. She supervised eight sports: men's golf, volleyball, women's soccer, field hockey, women's basketball, baseball, men's lacrosse, and women's lacrosse.

She was UVA's head field hockey coach from 1983-91. In nine seasons, her teams compiled a record of 100-65-7, making three trips to the NCAA championships and claiming two ACC regular-season titles. Her women's lacrosse teams compiled

a 12-year record of 144-44. She led UVA to six NCAA Final Four appearances and two national championships. She was named NCAA Division I National Coach of the Year in 1991.

Her tenure was marked by success (four trips with the Cavalier baseball team to the College World Series in Omaha) and heartbreak (the murder in 2010 of fourth-year student and lacrosse player Yeardeley Love, for which a member of the men's lacrosse team was convicted).

Describing Miller as "the consummate colleague," then-Dean of Students Allen Groves said upon her retirement announcement, "Her primary objective

was always how to support those student-athletes, the young women and the young men, because both teams were deeply impacted by what had happened with Yeardeley's death."

Honored by numerous athletic organizations, Miller served on the board of directors of Women Leaders in College Sports and, in 2014, became the first senior women's administrator appointed to the NCAA Division I Board of Directors. She mentors women managers in the UVA Athletics Department, and is still not far from Carla Williams' office.

WHY DID YOU COME TO UVA?

I came to the University to be the women's field hockey and lacrosse coach. Our athletes back then played both sports. As time went along, fewer and fewer student-athletes were playing both. It became imperative to split the coaching position in two, and I chose to coach lacrosse.

Before I could do just one sport, the opportunity came for me to also be the senior woman administrator. So, for three or four years, I was the head coach of lacrosse and I was also the senior woman administrator, which put a lot of responsibilities on me, not just within the department, but within the conference and nationally.

Under Athletic Director Terry Holland, I became a full-time administrator. One of my primary responsibilities was to supervise some of the sports – all of them except men's basketball and football over the years. I loved it because I got to know all of the student-athletes and not just a select group.

I was in charge of all the admissions work, which meant that I was the liaison between coaches and the Office of Admission. At the same time as the senior woman administrator, I was a representative to the conference office. And then eventually I became the first senior woman administrator to serve on the NCAA board of directors.

WHAT WAS UVA LIKE WHEN YOU ARRIVED? HOW HAS IT CHANGED AND/OR STAYED THE SAME?

I would say probably the only thing that has stayed the same about the University is its excellence. It grew in so many other ways. Within the athletics department, the facilities have grown exponentially, finances certainly have grown exponentially.

When I entered administration, I was the only visible woman in the athletics department, so I was tapped for a lot of different committees across Grounds. I came in at a time when women were so embracing of others, and they took me under their wing and really allowed me to grow. I was an extreme introvert, which is not a great thing to be when you move into a larger university.

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In Her Words | Jane Miller

we were trying to gain favor for our student-athletes. Now it's much more of a cooperative relationship between athletics and the University, where we feel like we're just such an integral part of the University.

That's really important when you go through bad times, and one bad time that we had was when Yeardley Love was murdered. Obviously, it was devastating for everybody, but it was a University event, not just an athletics event. Pat Lampkin and Dean Groves and the folks in the University administration really walked us through it. We couldn't have done it ourselves because of all the national media that was involved in it. Having built those

relationships over time, when that huge event came, we had people who we could look to and help us handle it as best we could.

It still resonates with so many of us. I supervised women's lacrosse. I had coached the sport, and the head coach, Julie Meyers, had played for me. I also supervised the men's lacrosse team, so it was gut-wrenching

We know men and women talk differently. We process things differently. When you get to the higher leadership level, there's a difference in a conversation when a woman is in the room. So, it's a matter of getting more women in the room at the same time, because we all need backup!

HOW DO YOU THINK DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF YOUR IDENTITY, INCLUDING BEING A WOMAN, IMPACTED HOW PEOPLE RESPONDED TO YOU IN YOUR POSITION?

For women's coaches and student athletes, I was a welcome addition because one of my responsibilities was to look out for the welfare of female student-athletes, coaches, and staff, and to try to make sure that we were being true to Title IX.

There were a lot of deficiencies on the women's side that needed to be corrected. We needed to add more teams. We weren't fully funded from the standpoint of scholarships. I wasn't really the only one who was

responsible for that – it really was a collective effort, and we made some really important gains.

It was very slow change. The women just wanted the same opportunity to recruit student-athletes as their peers did. So that was a huge change. And then finally all of our sports became fully funded, and that was a big thing for our coaches and our programs. We started to be more successful in a lot of our sports, as opposed to just a few of our sports.

WHAT SUPPORT(S) DID YOU HAVE?

Craig Littlepage [UVA athletic director from 2001-2017] really was my mentor. I also had mentors outside of the University, some of my peers in the ACC. I've had that all through my career, and I know how important that is. And that's why I have a mentoring group that I still do within the athletics department. I mentor middle management women, about 19 of them. It's fun – you know, once a coach always a coach.

WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP MEAN TO YOU, ESPECIALLY WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP?

We haven't used one of our greatest resources, and that's women and women in leadership. Now we're seeing women athletic directors and there are an awful lot of women commissioners, maybe not at the Power 5 level, but it's increasing.

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I can think of a number of times when I was sitting in a meeting and I had a thought and I held back just a little bit, and the next thing I knew someone was expressing the same thought. Or the times when I would express a thought and it was sort of, okay, and then five minutes later, a guy would express the same thing and it was like, oh, that's a great idea. You need more women in the room to use their voices.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A WOMAN IN A SIMILAR POSITION TODAY?

You have to be more intentional about how you build your portfolio, how you set your path, especially in athletics. You need a mentor to help guide you and an advocate who can speak on your behalf. Who you want to be is one of the most important questions you can answer. Your core values need to match who you work for and with, in order to have a successful career.

So be intentional, have a mentor and an advocate, know who you want to be – so that you'll be ready when the right job comes along.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED? WHAT LEGACY ARE YOU LEAVING THAT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF?

I would want people to remember me as a passionate person, about sport in general, student-athletes, coaches, and our department. I purely loved my job. I love being around the student-athletes. I love being around the coaches. I'm fortunate that I'm still in Charlottesville, so I can still go to games and interact with them at times and develop a relationship with Carla Williams.



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