

Clara Swan

Title: Contributor to Women's athletics & Student-Athlete

Year: 1930



Clara Swan epitomized the image of a scholar athlete, long before the phrase was coined. As a result of her father's work-related transfer from Princeton, Maine, Clara Swan entered Brewer High School during her sophomore year. She played basketball and participated as a cheerleader for three years and was active in several academic organizations such as the National Honor Society. As reported in the Trident, "Whether it's sports or studies, Clara's right in the race..." This description of Clara was prophetic as she graduated the class valedictorian, pursued a career in education, and became a legend in women's athletics.

Throughout Clara Swan's career, beginning as a student athlete at Brewer High School, she has been a pioneer for girls'/women's sports. At Brewer High, Clara was introduced to three court basketball which was the only interscholastic team sport available to girls at that time. An outstanding guard, she not only received her "B" letter all three years she played basketball, she was a significant factor in leading the Brewer girls' team to their first winning season in school history her senior year.

After high school graduation, Clara entered the Maine School of Commerce, known as Husson University today, and was recruited to play basketball under coach and school namesake Chesley Husson. Demonstrating her strong leadership early on, she captained the basketball team for three years. Upon completion of her studies, she taught for five years in Mexico, Maine and Dover Foxcroft. She earned her bachelor's degree from American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts and her Masters in Education from the University of Maine. After earning her degree, Mr. Husson, again wanting her to be part of the Husson College family, offered her a position teaching business and coaching women's basketball. While at Husson, she spent 19 years coaching, compiling a record of 241 wins, 34 losses and 7 ties. For all the years she coached at Husson, she never got paid...as she stated, "it was part of my teaching

duties”. On the days her team didn’t have games, she refereed girls’ basketball games at the high school and college level from Houlton to Camden. Those early refereeing jobs paid \$5 plus traveling expenses, which she once described as an enormous amount! At Husson, Clara Swan was not only a coach and teacher, she became a department head, a dean and the University’s Vice President. Her academic career culminated as President of Casco Bay College of Portland.

Clara Swan’s accolades are numerous. In August of 2014, the Maine Basketball Hall of Fame inducted her in the category “Legends of the Game” which recognizes those who helped the early development of basketball in Maine. Other honors have included induction in the Bangor Daily News Sports Hall of Fame, Husson College Sports Hall of Fame and the Maine Sports Legends Hall of Honors. In 1992 she received the Maine High School Coaching Association Award. As a longtime, extraordinary community volunteer, she was one of the first recipients of the WLBZ Channel 2 *Those Who Care* awards.

At the age of 102, Clara has described her debut in this world as an infant weighing a pound and a half who was placed in a shoebox in the oven to keep warm and was not expected to live a day. Live she has, and Brewer High School is honored to be part of the formative years of this remarkable woman.

WATCH CLARA SWAN'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH (*coming soon- technical difficulties-*
we apologize for the delay)



Clara Swan's head shot above is courtest of Husson University.

