

Deborah (Pearson) Jackson 1978

Deborah (“Debbie”), along with her family moved to Yellow Springs in 1967. She always had a love for playing sports, from playing soccer, to throwing the football with her brothers, William (’79), and Stephen (’83). Deborah really didn’t take athletics seriously until high school. Lettering in 4 sports: soccer, volleyball, basketball, and track & field, her academic and athletic schedule was full all year round.

With the guidance of four great high school coaches: Sharon (“Sherry”) Johnson, Duke Conrad, Ron Underkofler, and Tim McLinden, Deborah was able to “fine tune” her athletic ability and improve her skills. During her junior year at YSHS, she sharpened her focus by narrowing her participation to 3 sports, but was still undecided on which sport to play in college. It was difficult to choose, she was dominant in 3 sports – the volleyball team went to the state championships her senior year, she led the basketball team in scoring, also was state runner-up in high jump in her junior and senior year. As of this writing, she still holds the YSHS girls’ high jump record of 5’10”, and along with Carla (Brisbane) Calhoun, holds the Dayton Relays high jump record.

Deborah had narrowed her choices to two sports: basketball or volleyball, and was fortunate to receive offers of athletic scholarships in both. She finally decided to play volleyball in college, and accepted the opportunity to play at The University of Cincinnati. Deborah and fellow freshman teammate, Andrea Jackson (no relation), were the first African American women to receive athletic scholarships in volleyball at the University of Cincinnati.

After playing 3 years at UC, Deborah transferred to The University of Houston volleyball team, to join her husband, who was a sportscaster in Houston. During her senior year at UH, she suffered a knee injury, and had to undergo surgery. Through intensive physical therapy, she was able to make a strong comeback, and had her best year ever – ranked #3 in the nation with her hitting percentage. Deborah graduated from The University of Houston with a BBA degree. She has been a business owner for more than 25 years, including owning a private school for 14 years, and is currently a private tutor. She is still living in the Houston area, and has one son, Aaron.