More Tallahassee Superwomen

We continue our series on local superwomen with someone familiar to Tallahassee sports fans. Richard RuBino interviews Coach Sue Semrau.

Florida State Women’s Basketball head coach Sue Semrau enters her 24th season with the Seminoles. She has guided FSU to three NCAA Elite Eights, five NCAA Sweet 16s and two ACC co-regular season titles. Known as “Coach Sue,” she was named the 2015 National Coach of the Year by the Associated Press, the Women’s Basketball Coaches Association and ESPNW, and is a four-time ACC Coach of the Year.

Your program has shown sustainable success for quite a while now. When you were asked about this one time, you mentioned that one of the keys is to “develop the personality of the team.” What do you mean by this?

I believe that in order to have success in your program, it doesn’t just begin and end on the basketball court. We have to be one unit on and off the court. I recruit people whose values are in line with mine. I believe that our team needs to be filled with compassion for each other and for the community at large. I want us to work hard together every day on the court, AND work hard to build relationships with each other off the court. What makes coaching a basketball team so fun is the opportunity to take players from different backgrounds and blend them together creating one unit that works in synergy. That’s the beauty of sports.

Speaking of being there for your players, Florida State Women’s Basketball has been outspoken this year on racial injustice and systemic racism. What are some of things you have done as a program?

The incident with George Floyd really lit a fire across this nation, and it deeply disturbed our players and staff. Shortly after that incident, we saw tensions rise. Our staff organized Zoom meetings with the team to have very raw and cathartic conversations with our players. I wanted to be the listener. I wanted them to do a lot of the talking. As a white woman, I needed to be quiet and let them tell me how they felt and what we could do to help. Not too long after, we went on a March to the Florida Capitol, and I did several interviews talking about how our players feel and how we need to fight to rectify all this. We’ve tried to use our voice on social media as well to fight for the right kind of change. I believe this needs to be a world where everyone has an equal opportunity. And I’m proud to have joined an organization called Coaches4Change that advocates for equality in our diverse society and is taking action.

What civic responsibilities do you preach to your players?

Voting. We have been preaching and educating the importance of voting to our players, especially with all that has transpired this summer. We are working with a wonderful organization called the SAVE Alliance (Student-Athletes Voter Engagement) which discusses all the different educational aspects of voting that not just our athletes should know, but every American. Change comes at the ballot box. In late August we did a Zoom...
call with the SAVE Alliance and our entire team, as well as other athletic support staff. It was very enlightening. We all get caught up in our day-to-day lives, but we need to always remember that we live in a democracy where you can be the change.

Do you see yourself as having a role in developing your players as strong women as well?
Absolutely. Over my years of coaching I’ve preached that these are strong, powerful, beautiful women of character who can positively affect lives. I have wonderful female role models on my coaching staff in Brooke Wyckoff, Joy McCorvey and Morgan Toles, among others, who give their all day in and day out to challenge our players to not just be great athletes, but great people. I want them to leave Florida State University with a vision of what they will pursue. And I believe it is here in Tallahassee where many of them truly learn how they can influence not just other little girls, but all children. They become heroes to these kids, and it really makes me smile to see that.

[Photo courtesy of Jeff Romance.]

Upcoming Candidate Forums
Join American Experience for a discussion with internationally acclaimed historian and author Martha Jones on her new book, *Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All*, on September 8th from 2:00--3:00 pm ET.

Sign up for this free event on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).

The event is produced in conjunction with the encore broadcast of *American Experience's The Vote* on PBS. The event will include an excerpt from the film and a
discussion between Martha Jones and fellow historian Marcia Chatelain around the savvy political maneuvering of Black women from the fight for women's suffrage to the present.

The event will be streamed live on American Experience’s YouTube page [here](#) and American Experience’s Facebook page [here](#).

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**Vote T-Shirts**

We still have T-shirts! Let people know where you stand both in public and at the polls! Let people know that they need to vote!

The League of Women Voters of Tallahassee has created t-shirts to underscore the power of the vote in this time of struggle. These shirts, pictured below, can be purchased on the League’s website at: lwvtallahassee.org. Price, size and delivery information is posted on the website. Tell the world the power of your vote!
Sandra Kendall has her T-shirt and her Vote411.org sign! Do you have your T-shirt and your sign?
To get your sign email margaretallen97@gmail.com.

New Members

Mary Lee Kiracofe
Susan Strauss
Toni Walmsley

What's Happening This Week

N.B.: Even if not so noted, many of these may be virtual meetings. Always check.

Tuesday, September 8.

11:30 a.m. Utility Citizens Advisory Committee. Virtual Meeting.

2:00 p.m. Vanguard on American Experience. See above. Sign up for this free event on Eventbrite.

5:00 p.m. Environmental Board Meeting. Renaissance Center, 1st Floor Conference Room.

6:00 p.m. School Board Business Meeting. Howell Building, 3955 W. Pensacola Street/Live Broadcast Cable Channel 23.

Wednesday, September 9.

9:00 a.m. Tallahassee/Leon County Planning Committee. Virtual Meeting OR Renaissance Center, 2nd floor Conference Room.
3:00 p.m. City Commission Meeting. Virtual Meeting.

Or contact us at lwvtallahassee@gmail.com
850-309-3005