The AVCA History Commission was formed as a subgroup to the AVCA Diversity Development Team on December 1, 2020. The History Commission’s purpose is to recognize, amplify, and celebrate the rich and diverse history of the sport of volleyball. The first phase of the Commission’s work will explore the contributions of Black Americans to the sport of volleyball. Phase 1 is timed to coincide with the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the American Volleyball Coaches Association.
A native of Kansas City, Missouri, Ramona is a 1981 graduate of Oak Park High School. One of nine black students out of Oak Park’s enrollment of 2,000, Riley excelled as a student-athlete in three sports; becoming a four-year letter winner in volleyball, basketball, and track. She capped off her high school career by earning all-conference and all-county honors in volleyball and basketball, respectively, and is still arguably the greatest track athlete in Northmen athletic history.

After graduation, Ramona took her talents and academic aspirations to the University of Missouri and picked up right where she left off becoming one of the top sprinters in the Big Eight Conference as a freshmen. Transferring to Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, Bozier would become a two-sport star for the Bears’ volleyball and track programs. In 1986, Bozier and teammates Rochelle Stevens, Wendy Vereen, and Elthyn Tate would set the school record in the 4x100 meter relay that still stands today. Ramona would go on to become a three-time track All-American and one of the Mideastern Athletic Conference’s (MEAC) all-time greats. On the hardwood, Riley is one of only 10 volleyball student-athletes in program history to record 1,000 kills.

In 1988, then Morgan State Director of Athletics Leonard Braxton contacted Riley to gauge her interest in coaching the struggling volleyball team. This was a huge undertaking for the young Morgan State alum, but the program needed a captain and who better than her to take the helm. In 33 seasons, Bozier has transformed the volleyball team into consistent and competitive force in the MEAC Conference. In 2020-21, Bozier surpassed 475 wins as a head coach. MSU has won five MEAC regular season championships and made three trips to the NCAA tournament. In 1997, MSU defeated Grambling State in three sets in an NCAA play-in match that made Morgan State the first Historically Black College or University (HBCU) to play in the NCAA DI Women’s Volleyball Tournament. The program has experienced great success under the leadership of Coach Bozier. That success has not gone unrecognized, as Bozier has been named the winner of the MEAC women’s volleyball Coach of the Year Award five times and has received the MEAC Women’s Volleyball Tournament Most Outstanding Coach honor four times. On top of making the volleyball program competitive, from 1995-2003, Bozier was the head coach of the Morgan State softball program winning 161 games in her nine seasons leading that program. Coach Ramona Riley-Bozier is the winningest coach in school history for the volleyball program AND the softball program!

Ramona’s affiliation with Morgan State University and Morgan State athletics spans close to 40 years. Coach Bozier, whose favorite quote is “Just Do It,” continues to carry the same drive, passion and competitive spirit that she’s had since she came to MSU as a student-athlete in the early 80s. She is a proud alum and great representative of the Morgan State University family and the Baltimore community. In addition to her bachelor’s degree, Bozier earned her Master’s degree in sociology from MSU, is a member of the Baltimore Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, has served as a broadcast color analyst for volleyball and basketball, and has worked as an advisor for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. In 2003, Ramona was inducted into the Morgan State Hall of Fame and that was followed up by induction into the Oak Park High School Hall of Fame’s inaugural class in 2005.

Thanks to Morgan State University Athletics and the MEAC for contributing to this article.
AVCA DDT HISTORY COMMISSION

DEITRE COLLINS-PARKER, CHAIR
ASSOCIATE HEAD COACH
COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
2008 AVCA HALL OF FAMER

RAY GOODEN
HEAD WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL COACH
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

MAGGIE COUTURE
HEAD WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL COACH
JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY

SARAH GRAVES

AVCA DDT HISTORY COMMISSION ADVISORS:
BRIAN GIMMILLARO, PAT KENDRICK, ROSE MAGERS POWELL, RUTH NELSON
NICKIE SANLIN, AVCA DIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT TEAM CHAIR
KENNEDY D. WELLS, AVCA STAFF LIAISON