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.
Karen Weatherington graduated from New Mexico State University in 1988 with degrees in journalism and psychology with a minor in marketing after a standout career as a volleyball student-athlete for the Aggies women’s volleyball program. Karen Cross as she was known then was a letter winner from 1984-88 highlighted by a record-setting performance during the 1987 season when she had a then program record 23 kills on 49 attempts in a three-set Aggies vs. Aggies match against Texas A&M. Prior to exhausting her eligibility at NMSU, Karen had the opportunity to compete internationally in Russia, Finland, and Sweden.

Karen would begin her volleyball coaching journey in 1994 as an assistant at her alma mater where she remained until 1997. From there she would move on to coaching stops at Duke University (1996-98), Iowa State University (1999-2000), and Clemson University (2001-02) where her responsibilities included serving as recruiting coordinator and working with middle blockers. In 2002, Weatherington landed at Butler University joining the staff of current AVCA President and Butler head coach Sharon Clark. In 2004, she would be promoted to Associate Head Coach for the Bulldogs helping lead the Butler program to an overall 90-86 record during her six total seasons in Indianapolis.

Prior to the start of the 2009 season, Karen would take on her first head coaching assignment at Kennesaw State University. In three seasons at KSU, Weatherington led the program new heights. From 2006-08, the new Owls women’s volleyball had won a total of 11 matches. In Karen’s four seasons the program had an overall record of 60-56 and an Atlantic Sun (A-SUN) Conference record of 36-25 punctuated by a 17-win 2010 season and a 9-1 conference record. She would garner A-SUN Coach of the Year honors for the team’s success.

In 2013, Weatherington would take over the head coaching responsibilities for the Hampton University Pirates women’s volleyball program. Over the course of two seasons, the Pirates would go 40-22 with a 21-3 record in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC). Hampton would make back-to-back NCAA tournament appearances in 2013 and 2014 and receive numerous awards over those two seasons including consecutive MEAC Player of the Year awards and MEAC Coach of the Year awards for Weatherington.

After successful runs at Kennesaw State and Hampton, UNC-Charlotte would be the next stop starting in 2015. Now in her sixth season as head coach of 49ers women’s volleyball, the program has achieved four consecutive winning seasons capped off by a 13-5 2020-2021 season. With a 9-3 mark in the tough Conference USA, Charlotte would finish with the second best conference record behind conference undefeated Rice University and Western Kentucky University. Karen was named the 2021 CUSA Volleyball Coach of the Year on March 31, 2021 by the league’s coaches.

Along her journey, Karen has always demonstrated her love of volleyball by serving as a clinic speaker, club coach, mentoring student-athletes academically as well as athletically, and serving the coaching profession as an AVCA Convention speaker, a member of the AVCA Minority Coaches Committee, and as the Assistant Coaches Representative on the AVCA board of directors. Just a few examples of giving back to a sport that has given her so much. A proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated Karen would receive her Masters degree in Instructional Technology from Butler University in 2006. In addition to coaching and mentoring the daughters of others, she is Mom and #1 fan of her own daughter, Zoe, who is a standout volleyball student-athlete at the University of Utah.

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