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.

PHASE 1 | VOL. 1.09

TONYA JOHNSON
Hailing from Zachary, Louisiana, Tonya Doral Johnson was a multi-sport student-athlete at Zachary High School in basketball and volleyball. A guard in basketball and a setter/outside hitter in volleyball, basketball was her “first love” as a youth. Ultimately, volleyball would win out and take her to Louisiana State University in 1987. Tonya would go on to be a four-year letter winner under Coach Scott Luster; and LSU women’s volleyball would win back-to-back Southeastern Conference (SEC) championships in 1989 and 1990. Johnson’s time with the Tigers would culminate with a trip to the NCAA DI women’s volleyball national semifinals in 1990. Ironically, LSU beat Texas in five sets in the South Regional finals to earn the trip to University of Maryland’s Cole Field House and the women’s volleyball final four where the Tigers lost in three sets to eventual national champion UCLA.

Tonya’s journey as a mentor, teacher, and coach started at Wellington Landings Middle School in Boca Raton, Florida. In addition to teaching, Johnson coached club at Florida Gulf Coast and served as an assistant coach at Olympic Heights High School. In 1995, Tonya would connect with Coach Fran Flory and begin her college coaching journey on the women’s volleyball coaching staff at the University of Kentucky. After three seasons at Kentucky, Flory would leave to take over at Tonya’s alma mater, LSU, and Johnson would follow her to Baton Rouge. Tonya continued her development as an outstanding evaluator of volleyball student-athletes leading the recruiting efforts for Tigers women’s volleyball as well as serving as Flory’s top assistant for six seasons.

In 2003, Johnson took her talents to Austin, Texas and University of Texas women’s volleyball joining the staff of Coach Jerritt Elliott where in six seasons, Johnson helped lead the Longhorns to an overall record of 145-39 and a conference record of 96-24. Serving as recruiting coordinator as well as working with the outside hitters, Johnson’s tenure included five trips to the NCAA tournament, one Sweet 16, two Final 8s, and one trip to the National Semifinals in 2008. In addition to team success, Tonya helped mentor top players – Mira Topic, Juliann Faucette, Ashley Engle, and Destinee Hooker.

On January 9, 2009, then-Georgia Tech athletic director Dan Radakovich announced the hiring of Tonya Johnson as the seventh head volleyball coach in program history. In five seasons leading the Yellow Jackets, she compiled an 85-72 overall record along with a 50-50 Atlantic Coast Conference record. From 2009-2014, Tonya and her staff coached 10 All-ACC selections, including four-time All-America Monique Mead. In 2012, Johnson was named co-head coach of the U.S. Volleyball National A2 team that ultimately earned the silver medal in competition.

On February 21, 2014, Johnson returned to the “Forty Acres” and Longhorn volleyball as associate head coach and recruiting coordinator. Since 2014... Overall record. 184-25. Conference record. 106-6. Finished outside the top five in the final national poll only once since 2014; #8 in 2019. AVCA First, Second, or Third Team All-Americans. 19. Four trips to the National Semifinals and three runner-up finishes. HOOK ‘EM, Coach Johnson!

Tonya is a leader in the volleyball community. Always willing to provide insight and share her love of volleyball and coaching. A quote from Tonya from an interview in 2014 sums up her coaching journey to this point:

"To be able to have an influence on young ladies and be a positive influence on their lives and help on and off the court is all I ever wanted to do. It’s a special job,"
AVCA DDT HISTORY COMMISSION

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