AVCA Launches Diversity History Commission  
First phase will explore and celebrate Black History

LEXINGTON, Ky. (December 1, 2020) - The American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) announces the formation of a History Commission. A subgroup of the AVCA Diversity Development Team (DDT), the History Commission was formed in response to the need for change and action as the country is reckoning with ongoing racial injustice and trauma.

The Commission, chaired by Deitre Collins-Parker, a 2008 AVCA Hall of Fame inductee, is made up of five members from the AVCA Diversity Development Team (DDT) and a support group of advisors. The goal 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 begin February 2021 and will explore the contributions of Black Americans to the sport of volleyball. The work is timed to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the founding of the AVCA.

“The Diversity Development Team is focused on creating opportunities and opening doors for Black and ethnic minority volleyball coaches,” says DDT chair Nickie Sanlin. “Huge thanks to Deitre, the Team, and this decorated group of advisors for advancing this groundbreaking project that will reframe the past, impact the present, and reimagine the future for our sport.”

“Having a complete view of the past helps us in the present and helps those in the future understand that they can excel in this sport,” says Deitre Collins-Parker. "It is important for young African Americans to see that they can do anything from leading on the court, in the coaching field, and in the press box. This is only the beginning of this important work to show the diversity in the history of volleyball."

Volleyball began in Holyoke, Massachusetts in 1895 when YMCA physical education director William G. Morgan created the game of “Mintonette.” With refinements and innovation, volleyball has become a dynamic, diverse, and globally popular sport, a sport that has been predominately represented as a white sport in the United States. However, at every level of the game, the contributions of Black and brown people have been and continue to be robust and impactful. This documentation, to be housed on the AVCA website, will spotlight their contributions, tell important stories, and make those stories central to the history and growth of volleyball.

**AVCA DDT – History Commission Members**
Deitre Collins-Parker, History Commission chair  
Maggie Couture, Head WVB Coach, Jacksonville University  
Ray Gooden, Head WVB Coach, Northern Illinois University  
Sarah Graves, Head WVB Coach, Macalester College  
Kennedy Wells, AVCA Director of Membership & AVCA DDT Staff Liaison  
(Nickie Sanlin, Head MVB & WVB Coach, McKendree University & AVCA Board Diversity Rep. (Ex-officio))

**History Commission Advisors**
Ruth Nelson - Bring Your Own Parent (BYOP®), GoKids Youth Sports™ & MasterCoaches  
Brian Gimmillaro – MasterCoaches & Ret. Head WVB Coach, Long Beach State  
Pat Kendrick – Head WVB Coach, Xavier University of Louisiana  
Rose Powell – Head WVB Coach, Alabama A&M University

*(History Commission member Sarah Graves contributed to the development of this press release.)*