

Museum on Main Street, Smithsonian Institution

Batesville's First Softball Champs: A Mother & Daughter Story, Arkansas

As told by Robey Landreth and Hattie Johnson

Batesville, Arkansas

Story Narrative:



Batesville High School had never had a girls' softball team until 1997. That's when the district in northeast Arkansas asked middle school teacher, Elaine Vinson, to add Softball Coach to her job description. The BHS graduate and mother of Katie Vinson, a rising female athlete at the school, gladly accepted. Vinson spent countless hours after school coaching this team of talented young ladies. In May of 1997, the newly formed BHS Lady Pioneer softball team earned a spot at the state softball tournament in Pine Bluff, AR. Elaine and Katie discuss one of the most memorable moments of their lives--a state softball championship! They recall the moments leading up to the tournament, winning the title, and how they were welcomed home, not only as mother and daughter, but as coach and player. Filmed and created by Robey Landreth and Hattie Johnson of Sulphur Rock Elementary, EAST (Environmental and Spatial Technology, Inc.).

Katie Vinson (00:04): I play team sports because I enjoy being with my friends, the competitiveness of it all, and the challenge of every game.

Katie Vinson (00:11): It taught me hard work, responsibility, and good communication skills.

Katie Vinson (00:18): I've made some lots of time friends that I'll have always. We will go to Mazzio's and get a mini chocolate chip pizza before every home game.

Elaine Vinson (00:32): And I thought, "I've got to find something to give my girls some direction," so I told them the story of the geese, and how you've got a head goose up there. But when that goose gets tired, he can go back and someone else takes the lead and takes over. So we talked about that quite a bit, and sometimes they'd get tickled at me just talking about it. Well, we were going into the baseball field, or softball field, it was the fields at Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Our bus was turning in, and Amanda Inman screamed, "Coach, look, it's a sign. Look at all the geese." And there were some geese swimming around in a ditch. And I started laughing, everybody started laughing. We walked onto that field in a good mood. We stayed in good mood for two days and won the State Championship.

Katie Vinson (01:26): My favorite memory from sports probably would have to be winning the State Softball Championship my senior year in high school. It was on the same day that I graduated that night from high school, so it was a big day, big life event, and it's something that I'll never forget.

Elaine Vinson (01:42): We were playing Greenwood, and the coach was so nice there, and everybody talked and we decided we would play at noon because we were actually supposed to play that night. And they decided we would play at noon, where my kids could get home for graduation.

Katie Vinson (01:56): So, we got to get off the bus off all sweaty and nasty, but at least we had a State Championship and then get ready for to go graduate.

Elaine Vinson (02:04): We had a welcoming committee driving into town. People were cheering. I worked at the middle school at the time. They had already announced it over there, so it was... We were very welcomed. Like I say, I was sure wasn't expecting Channel 8 to be there, like Katie said. We all get up, even me, we were all get off the bus, hot and sweaty, and the girls are talking, they're being interviewed. It was just, it was nice.

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