

VICTRESS

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Women who paved the way
in Australian Sport

CORINNE HALL
& MICHAEL RANDALL



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I come as one but stand as 10,000.

MAYA ANGELOU

For all the amazing women who have influenced, inspired
and shaped the life I am privileged to lead.

Foreword

At Cricket Australia, our aspiration is for cricket to be the number one sport for women and girls. Maintaining our current momentum into the future means it will be just as likely for a girl to pick up a cricket bat or ball as it is for a boy.

Women playing cricket is not new. The first women's match in Australia took place in Bendigo in 1874 and the first women's team represented Australia against England back in 1934/35. Acknowledging this deep history is pivotal to our future success.

Australian women's teams have demonstrated passion and leadership over many years. The inaugural women's World Cup was held in 1973, two years ahead of the first men's World Cup.

We have an honour roll of incredible athletes, record makers and breakers, who have demonstrated their skill and determination over the century, despite having to balance their training and play with the demands of work and the standard life commitments ... and once upon a time in those early pioneering years there are stories about knitting their own cricket vests!

Many of our more recent past playing stars are still involved in the game today—Belinda Clark, Mel Jones, Lisa Sthalekar, Cathryn Fitzpatrick, Shelley Nitschke, Julia Price, Joanne Broadbent, Zoe Goss, Christina Matthews and Karen Rolton, just to name a few. All committed to helping the next generation realise their dreams and crash through any remaining barriers.

It is for these reasons this book is important. It shines a well-deserved spotlight on women who have succeeded across all sporting codes and acts as a reminder of those who have paved the way, despite the odds, for girls playing sport today. I am proud that Cricket Australia has made it possible to hear these stories and celebrate these incredible women.

Congratulations to Corinne Hall for her talent and vision to celebrate the stories of 35 women who have each made history. These women deserve to be remembered and cherished as trailblazers and change makers. Their stories provide great inspiration and should be told for generations to come.

Kevin Roberts
CEO, Cricket Australia



Preface

BY LISA STHALEKAR

It will come as no surprise that the first time Corinne and I crossed paths was at cricket.

At the time, I was the high-performance manager at Cricket NSW and Corinne was a member of one of our regional junior programs, the Emerging Breakers.

What I had known about Corinne before meeting her was that she was an up-and-coming player and a determined batter who built her innings through timing and running hard between the wickets.

But her reputation as one of the best fielders within the junior programs preceded her.

I clearly remember Corinne's first training hit-out in the program. As part of our fitness component, a boxing session was organised and it was memorable for me, because the attributes Corinne showed in that session are attributes which are just as core to her as a person now as they were then.

What I observed was discipline, high work ethic, talent, kindness, respect, team-first focus, energy, passion and positivity.

Since that first meeting 17 years ago, Corinne and I have had the privilege of going on to represent New South Wales together in cricket.

More importantly, we have become the best of friends.

I have witnessed Corinne grow and develop into the most amazing human, someone people want to be around, someone you want to be friends with.

Having lived on and off with Corinne over the past decade, I can attest that she genuinely loves all sport and, even more than that, she loves supporting female athletes who are chasing their dreams, no matter the sport.

Long before the 'Barty Party', tennis starlet – and former Women's Big Bash League player – Ash Barty, became entrenched in public and media commentary with her Grand Slam victories, Corinne was down at the Australian Open in Melbourne, cheering her on.

There has been many a late night or extremely early morning cheering on athletes representing Australia, with the list including netball, hockey, football, tennis, cycling, athletics, rugby and, of course, cricket.

When it is time for a major sporting event like the Commonwealth Games, World Cups or the summer or winter Olympics, it wouldn't be unusual to catch Corinne completely immersed in an event watching an Australian team or athlete compete.

She has painted her face in Australian colours, hung the Australian flag around her shoulders, made signs to hang proudly at the events that she has attended and even made shirts for individual players, with messages of support.

She always does it with not just passion, but the biggest smile on her face. She loves nothing more than having friends close by her side.

What many people would not know before reading this book is that Corinne's artistic endeavours do not stop with painting her face or mocking up individual shirts for players.

She is a very talented artist in her own right.

Those closest to Corinne have witnessed a love of drawing evolve over many years.

We could all see her immense talent and, with some gentle encouragement, what started as a private hobby has fortunately for all of us evolved into something more public.

Friends, family and her followers online eagerly await her next piece to be shared, whether via a private message or on social media.

Drawing for Corinne has been a place where she can escape, normally picking up her chosen medium while sitting in front of the TV watching one of her favourite movies or a series.

When life has become tough, Corinne's drawing has enabled her to manage. One might say it's provided her with an escape from the reality of life.

Like many artists, Corinne is never quite happy with the finished product.

I actually have some of her artwork hanging in the house and I have noticed that she gets a little 'artist's twitch' whenever she sees it, no doubt making what she sees as necessary changes in her mind.

I have learnt from Corinne that artwork is never complete.

It is with this context that I feel incredibly proud that Corinne has found the courage to share the illustrations in this book.

I have no doubt Corinne finally relented and agreed to publish her artwork publicly for two main reasons, both, of course, unrelated to her.

Firstly, at her most fundamental level, Corinne is kind. Being able to use this book to help others through the Kindness Factory would be more important to her than anything.

Corinne has always been someone who deeply cares about her friends and family, but also someone who would take the time to stop for a stranger and ask if they are going OK and if they needed anything.

Secondly, Corinne is a huge advocate for women's sport and would love the opportunity to hero various female athletes who have brought so much joy to both her and other sports fans over the years.

The irony is that Corinne could easily have been the first illustration in this book.

She may not yet fully appreciate what a positive role model she is (and has been) in her own right, but she is someone who leaves a lasting positive impact on whoever has the good fortune of being in her company.

Within this book you will notice that Corinne has chosen not only to celebrate the stars of today but, perhaps more importantly, honoured former athletes who played a critical role in establishing their sport and helping drive women's sport onto a bigger public platform that it is now starting to enjoy.

Corinne is always someone who has seen the bigger picture and been respectful of history and pioneers who have worked hard to make life better for future generations.

I am so thrilled that, through this book, the world will have the chance to acquire an insight into the person that Corinne Hall is.

Corinne has achieved many amazing things in her life and I have no doubt that this book will be another special chapter in her story as she continues her journey of showing kindness and respect for everyone around her.

Lisa Sthalekar,
Sydney, 2020.

SWIMMING

DAWN FRASER

'dawny'

'We only have two things that we share in this life; we are born and we die. And what we do in between those times, we've got to be happy. I don't let the outside world deter me.'

DAWN FRASER
ON HER LIFE'S ETHOS

Dawn Fraser's incredible efforts in the pool made her Australia's Golden Girl.

The first woman to win gold medals in three consecutive Olympic Games, Fraser broke 41 world records throughout her career, all while managing severe asthma.

The youngest of eight children, Fraser's talent in the lanes helped her claim four golds and four silver medals at Olympiads in Melbourne (1956), Rome (1960) and Tokyo (1964) – winning the marquee 100m freestyle event at each.

She was peerless at the Commonwealth Games, earning a haul of six golds and one silver medal from her seven events at Cardiff (1958) and Perth (1962).

Accused of stealing an Olympic flag in Tokyo, Fraser's career was sadly cut short when Australian swim officials suspended her for 10 years.

Moving into politics in 1988, the Balmain-born star's ferocity in the pool was matched only by her will to stand up for what she believed in.

The first woman to be inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame, later named its Australian Female Athlete of the Century, Fraser is an Officer of the Order of Australia and was immortalised on screen in the 1979 movie *Dawn*.

The 1964 Australian of the Year remains a beacon to sportswomen all over the world.



Four-time Olympic Gold Medallist, broke and held 41 world records in the pool

what Dawn means to me

In the most respectful way possible, I see Dawn Fraser as the grandmother of female sport.

Dawn was someone who was a fierce competitor, who never backed down from something that didn't fit in with her values, even if that meant she would personally be held to the consequences of those actions.

I think that's one of the most admirable traits a person can have.

What she has done for women in sport in Australia cannot be quantified. She competed in a bygone era, when the pool and playing fields were almost exclusively the domain of men.

Despite that, her success and convictions opened doors for the female athletes who followed her.

Everything she has done in her life almost seems like there has been a higher purpose. It's like she was carrying a weight on her shoulders. Whether that's the weight of the nation, her family, or women all over the country. She almost put them before herself.

I obviously didn't get to see her compete but I know how unstoppable she was just by looking at her record



Dawn Fraser, Swimming Australia

and the way she cherished representing her country.

Dawn won all those medals and broke all those records, but she knew she still had a responsibility to stay grounded and keep fighting.

It's hard not to be inspired by her when you hear her story.

She came from a family that wasn't very well off. They couldn't afford to pay for her to access the pool to train. So, as a youngster, she would sneak into the local Balmain Sea Baths to get her training in because she had such a passion for swimming. It's no wonder that pool was later named after her.

No matter what adversity Dawn faced, she would never let anything stop her at least trying to achieve her goals and that's a trait that obviously developed in her early in life, given her ability to overcome asthma and get the best out of herself.

Dawn wasn't afraid to put herself out there for anything she perceived to be an injustice, whether that was something as simple as marching in the opening ceremony at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 against officials' orders or coming out in support of Aussie swim star, Mack Horton, when he called out Chinese

swimmer, Sun Yang, for testing positive to performance-enhancing drugs.

If she thought someone was doing something wrong, she made sure they, and just about everyone else, knew it.

Dawn has remarkable resilience. She lost her brother Donald, who was her hero, to leukaemia when she was just 13. Her father Ken died in 1960, after a long fight with cancer. She was then involved in the fatal car accident that killed her mother before the 1964 Olympics. It would have been almost impossible to cope with, but Dawn still found it in herself to compete because she knew her mum would have wanted that and she wanted to honour her.

Dawn suffered domestic violence at the hands of her ex-husband and has since become an advocate for victims.

I cannot fathom what it would be like to live in constant fear for, not just your own personal safety, but for the welfare of your daughter. It's a terrifying prop-

osition and one that no woman should ever have to go through.

Dawn overcame the odds every single time which is a huge inspiration not only for female athletes, but for all women.

how I drew Dawn

Dawn was the first portrait I drew and she gave me the inspiration to honour the great female athletes who I look up to. I wanted to keep her image classy and so I've done a black and white portrait. I just wanted to capture that matriarch side of her. I almost feel like she is royalty, someone who is above all of us, so I wanted to keep her portrait very simple, but very regal. She's been in the spotlight for more than 60 years, so I've drawn her as a more mature figure. She's lived an incredible life and been through a lot, but always bounced back from her battles and this is how I thought best to capture that.



kindness story



'Kindness is very important to all families. It makes us feel loved and wanted; it makes for a beautiful world that we can share with everyone.'

TRACK

CATHY FREEMAN

'our Cathy'

'I was just somebody who wanted to display a flag that everybody knew about and nobody ever saw. It's not a non-Australian flag, it's an Indigenous Australian flag.'

CATHY FREEMAN ON HER
DECISION TO CELEBRATE HER
SYDNEY 2000 400M GOLD MEDAL
WIN WITH BOTH THE AUSTRALIAN
AND ABORIGINAL FLAGS

Our Cathy ran her first competitive race aged just five and would grow into the darling of Australian sport, culminating in a momentous gold medal at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

Freeman lit the Olympic torch during a memorable opening ceremony and, with the sharp focus of the nation on her, she duly stormed home in her pet event, the 400-metre sprint, delighting the crowd of more than 100,000 at Sydney Olympic Stadium, as well as the millions watching on television.

A proud member of Australia's Indigenous community, the Mackay-born athlete courted controversy when she celebrated her win with a victory lap, draped in both the Australian and Aboriginal flags.

While she is best remembered for that stunning race in 2000, Freeman was a dominant Commonwealth Games athlete, claiming four gold and one silver medal from 1990-2002, adding a silver medal at the Atlanta Olympics and a pair of World Championships gold.

The 1998 Australian of the Year was inducted into the Australian Sports Hall of Fame in 2005 and boasts a swathe of honours, including a Medal of the Order of Australia.

Cathy established her own foundation in 2007, providing education programs for Indigenous children in four remote communities in Queensland and the Northern Territory.



First Indigenous athlete to win Commonwealth Games gold. Arguably Australia's greatest track athlete

what Cathy means to me

Cathy Freeman's 2000 Olympics performance is one of the most iconic moments in Australian sports history, period.

I remember exactly where I was when she won that race in Sydney, I remember the feelings that I had, the goosebumps that I got and, even now, I can still feel that emotion when I talk about or see footage of the race.

You just knew how much pressure she was under to perform at her home Olympics. It takes a really remarkable athlete to be able to deliver a performance like she did under that weight of expectation. Cathy is someone I've always admired for her mental ability to overcome all those pressures. You could literally feel that the whole nation was behind her.

I remember I was watching the race at home. I didn't quite grasp how big of a deal it was to have a home Olympics. It was a couple of hour's drive from where I was living in Newcastle so, in hindsight, I wished I'd gone in person.

I was at home with the family and we'd watched the whole build up to the race.



From the start she just looked so incredibly focused. It didn't seem like she was aware of any of the sounds or anything around her. She came out in that unforgettable suit – the scuba diver suit – and she looked completely in the zone, so you felt like you were about to witness something truly special.

I remember feeling like I was riding the whole thing with her when she was coming around the bend at the turn. She crossed the line first and to see the relief after she won, you could tell even though she was completely focused on what she was doing throughout the race, a huge weight had been lifted off her shoulders.

I find it incredible that she said her first feeling after the race was one of disappointment at her time. That shows what a champion she is, though. She was always pushing herself to the limits.

She strived for perfection throughout her whole career but, to the wider Australian public, her race was perfection.

Cathy did so much for her community as one of the first great Indigenous athletes.

I remember when she draped the Aboriginal flag over herself after the race, it caused a lot of controversy.

I was 13 at the time and couldn't truly understand the statement she was making in that moment. Now I have so much admiration for what she did.

I'm a big believer in being genuinely authentic and I didn't feel like she was being anything other than herself in that moment.

It seemed like a natural reaction to grab both flags; and why shouldn't it be? She is a proud Indigenous woman.

I think we have come a long way, but we can still do more to recognise and honour Indigenous culture, which is a huge part of the fabric of our nation.

The more we speak about it, the more educated we become, which should enable us all to respect and appreciate our Indigenous history. Cathy helped bring those Indigenous issues to the forefront.

She has also been a beacon for women in sport. In my opinion she was the next great Australian sports-woman on the world stage after Dawn Fraser.

The beauty of women's sport over the past few years is the fact that we're really willing to celebrate and support each other.

There are obviously rivalries between organisations for money and media attention but I think the athletes themselves like to see women do well. So I would like to think that we can equally celebrate achievements of all women in sport, and the athletes and the people that they are, without having to compare them.

how I drew Cathy

Initially when I started drawing Cathy, I knew the portrait I wanted to do. I wanted her face in the image, because she is so recognisable, but I just didn't quite know how I was going to pull it all together. It took me a while, but one day, without even thinking, I started drawing Uluru just because I knew how important that link was to her heritage. I guess I tried to incorporate some of her heritage because, even now as a retired athlete, she's still giving back to her sport and to her community. She's been a huge advocate for young Indigenous athletes and Indigenous people in general, so for me, it was really important to try to capture that.

kindness story

Through her kindness, Cathy Freeman has left a lasting mark on remote indigenous communities Galiwin'ku and Wurrumiyanga in the Northern Territory, and Palm Island and Woorabinda in Queensland. The Cathy Freeman Foundation helps provide children in these communities with an education, and works with community leaders to provide them with positive outcomes. Without Cathy, these programs would not be impacting the thousands of children the foundation reaches each year.

TENNIS

SAM STOSUR

'our Sammy'

'I was still close to my absolute best against Serena. She was definitely feeling the pressure. I saw a replay a couple of days later and realised that, boy, I was really on top of her.'

SAMANTHA STOSUR AFTER
SLAYING TENNIS LEGEND
SERENA WILLIAMS TO WIN
THE 2011 US OPEN

Sam Stosur will go down in history as one of Australia's finest tennis players.

Ranked the nation's No.1 player for 452 consecutive weeks, Stosur carried women's tennis in this country.

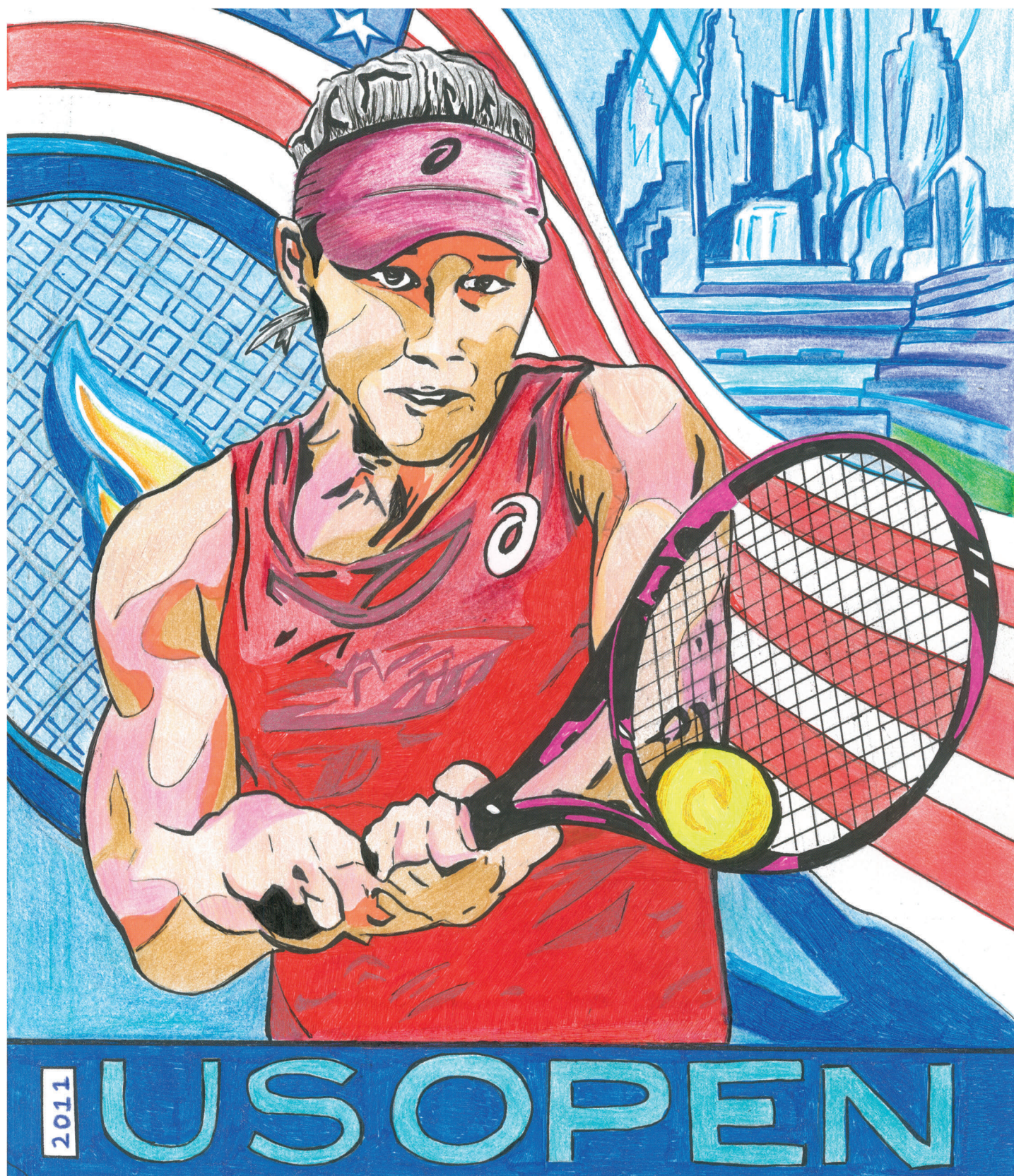
Challenges came early for Stosur. Aged just six, her home on the Gold Coast was washed away by fierce flooding, forcing her family to move to Adelaide to rebuild their lives.

Stosur would play her first professional tournament at 16 but her rise up the ranks would be halted in 2007 when she contracted Lyme disease from a tick bite while she prepared for Wimbledon. The bite caused extreme fatigue, swelling of her glands, rashes and headaches and she would later contract viral meningitis, forcing her out of the game for more than a year.

She would eventually return and, three years later, achieve her crowning glory. Her defeat of Serena Williams in the 2011 US Open final made her the first female Australian grand slam winner since Evonne Goolagong-Cawley (1980).

By 2014, though, Stosur contemplated giving up the game, a series of upset defeats and first-round exits wreaking havoc with her mental health.

But Stosur found the strength to go on and is still a tough competitor on tour, known for her fitness, defined muscles and power game.



US Open champion

what Sam means to me

I really admire Sam Stosur's longevity. She has faced numerous obstacles and has always managed to overcome them to continue playing the sport she loves.

Sam has always been very talented, driven and hard-working but, like many world-class athletes, she has had to wrestle with the high expectations she places on herself which has, at times, made it hard for her to perform at her best.

In a small way, I can relate to those mental struggles throughout my experience with cricket.

I have always had the desire to be better. What has often held me back from reaching my potential was self-doubt or lack of confidence.

I really admire Sam's persistence and resilience and the way she keeps coming back.

It's a very vulnerable thing to do, to put yourself out there the way she does, especially given the way she has been treated by the public at times.

She has been called many different names, but I like to think of her as a fighter.

Sam was recently presented with the Spirit of Tennis



award recognising an individual who has personified the essence of leadership, sportsmanship, goodwill and dedication to the sport while making a major contribution to the stature of the game.

This was 10 years after becoming the first recipient of the Newcombe Medal for Australia's best tennis player.

You only have to listen to the way younger players who view Sam as a mentor speak about her to understand the impact she has had on tennis.

Ash Barty recently credited her for the current state of success in Aussie women's tennis by saying 'Sam's paved the path for all of us. We've grown up watching her and we've had the privilege of playing with her.'

When you're winning, you face higher expectations, not just from your peers and fans, but from yourself.

It's impossible to get fulfilment out of your career if you are constantly setting standards of perfection because, unfortunately, sport is completely imperfect.

Failure isn't something the best athletes tolerate and they often explore every avenue to gain a mental advantage over a competitor.

You work on strategies and you work on different techniques to try to help you stay in the moment, but it's a tough battle to get on top of.

Sam has been open with her struggle to find that self-belief under pressure, but she has proven she can win those big moments. Sam is the only woman in a decade to beat both Justine Henin and Serena Williams – two of the best women to have played tennis – at a Grand Slam event.

Sam is widely respected for her meticulous work ethic which is probably why she has been able to consistently compete at the elite level for 20 years.

She has just completed her 16th consecutive year ranking in the top 100 players in the world. Of active players, only Serena Williams has ended more consecutive seasons inside the top 100.

Cricket is a very humbling sport. You can score 100 one day and get out first ball the next. There are times when the results are not reflective of the work you've

put in and, in those sustained periods of struggle, you question whether it's worth the investment you're making.

Sam has taught me that if your intentions with your sport are pure, you should compete as long as you can. I would love to be remembered as Sam will be remembered. Someone who played hard and fair, never gave up and left the sport in a better position than when she found it.

how I drew Sam

I've used a slightly abstract style to draw Sam. I've got her returning a ball which shows off her impressive physique. The way she trains is something I really admire and you can tell her body is a product of how hard she works. You see her on court and she barely puffs, so I wanted to capture that incredible athletic prowess. In the background I've used the cover of the US Open's annual brochure from the year she won to capture her finest achievement in the game.



kindness story



'Kindness to me is treating people how you want to be treated. Opening yourself up and giving what you can to any situation, without the want for something in return.'

BASKETBALL

MICHELE TIMMS

'the trailblazer'

**'It wasn't something
I set out to be, but
I'm very proud of the
trailblazer title.'**

MICHELE TIMMS AFTER
BEING INDUCTED INTO
THE FIBA HALL OF FAME

Single-handedly credited with making basketball an option for young girls, Michele Timms paved the way for a generation of female hoopers.

A pocket-sized dynamo, Timms represented Australia with fearless determination and unmatched skill at the point guard position.

The first woman to leave Australian shores and play professionally overseas when she signed with German club SG München in 1989, Timms would go on to win the Women's International Player of the Year Award twice (1994, '96).

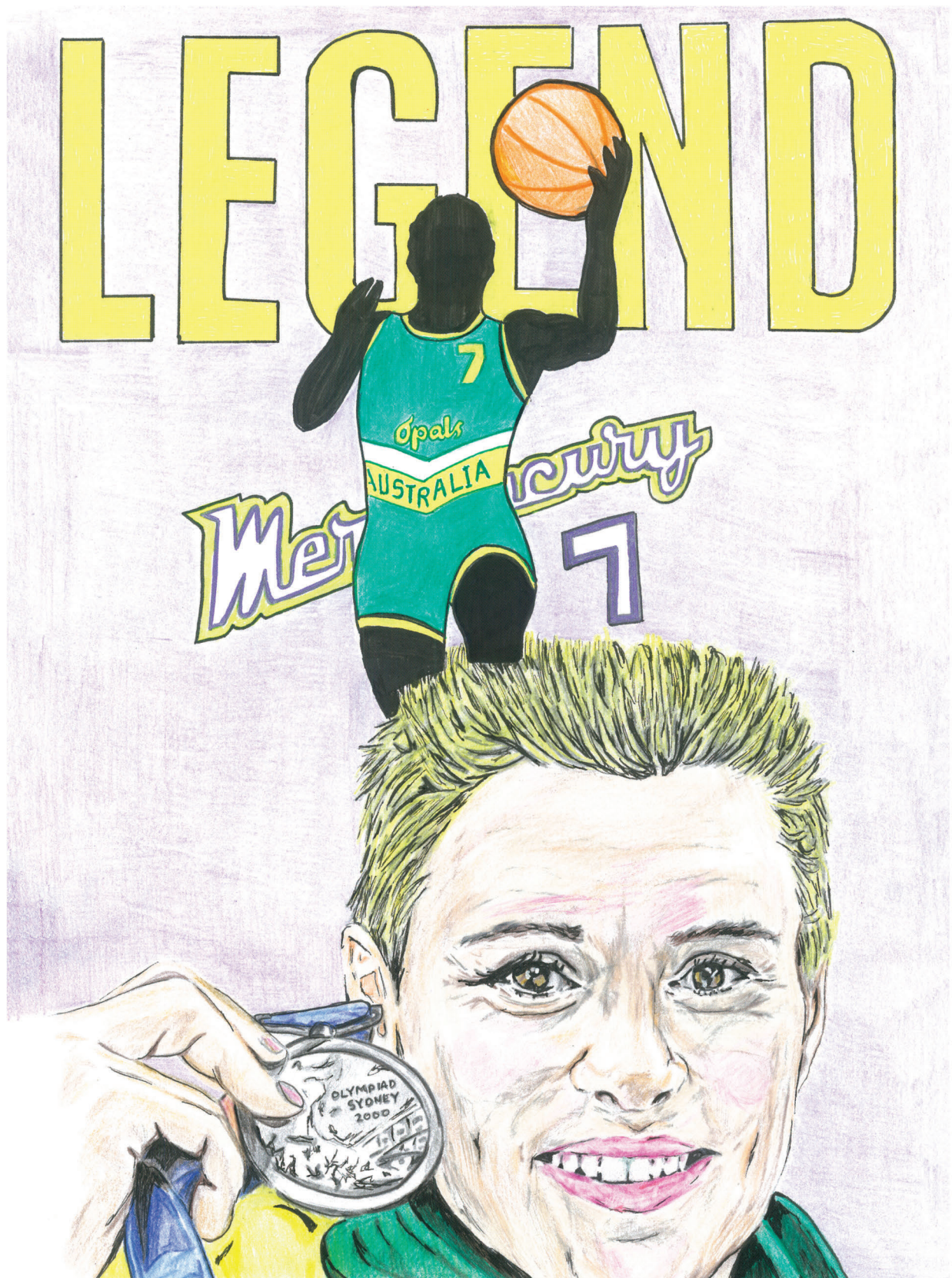
The first Australian to play in the WNBA, her career with Phoenix Mercury made her the club's all-time leader in assists. The club would later honour her contributions by retiring her jersey number 7, in 2002.

She was part of the Australian Opals side that would distinguish itself as the first Australian basketball team, male or female, to win a medal at a major tournament (1996 bronze, Atlanta Olympics).

The 1999 WNBA All Star would go on to help the Opals win silver at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, before retiring in 2001.

An Australian Sports Medal recipient, Timms has been inducted into the FIBA, Women's Basketball and Sport Australia Halls of Fame.

Timms has coached at various levels and now gives back to the sport through her junior coaching academy.



Women's International Player of the Year in 1994 and 1996

what Michele means to me

Michele Timms was one of the first female athletes who I knew existed when I was a little girl.

When I was growing up there were not many female athletes who were visible in the media. We obviously didn't have things like the internet and social media to have that direct connection to keep pace with what they were doing.

Seeing highlights of her doing these amazing things on the basketball court made me realise that yes, there was a place for females in sport.

Despite being one of the smaller players on the floor – she's actually the same height as me at 164cm – Michele was very quick, agile and athletic. She found a way to compete in a world where she was a minority. Being smaller she had to develop special skills to be able to combat that height advantage that everyone had over her.

She was very skilful and she read the game so well. It almost was like she knew where the ball was going two passes early. She was ahead of the game.

She had that short shock of blonde hair you couldn't miss her. I was a bit of a tomboy when I was younger,



Michelle Couling Photography

growing up in a street full of boys. Michele's style gave me permission to be myself because I liked to wear board shorts and skate shoes and hats, while a lot of my friends were in dresses and skirts.

By being herself, she broke down societal views of what it means to be a female.

Michele shot to fame when the Australian Opals proved they were the real deal when they did something the men's basketball team never had – winning a medal at a major tournament.

They won a bronze medal in Atlanta in 1996 and this instilled a belief that they could match it with any other nation on the court. As a result, up until Rio, the Opals had won a medal at every Olympics since 1996.

I loved Michele's competitive streak and the way she became a leader of women.

For her to take the plunge of a professional contract in Europe speaks volumes for her confidence in herself to step into the unknown.

It's just so fearless to pack your bags and head to a foreign country with very little guidance.

In 2014, I was offered an opportunity to play cricket in England for the summer and, although I wasn't in the same trailblazing position as Michele, it was a daunting step into the unknown for me.

I made the decision to go based on a single conversation I had with a friend who assured me that the Berkshire club was full of amazing people who would look after me.

My family had never travelled outside Australia before, so I guess I was taking a huge leap of faith.

On arriving at the airport I met the beautiful family I was going to live with for three months and I ran with it. It turned out to be one of the best decisions I've made.

I grew so much as a person and as a cricketer, learnt to depend on myself and travelled to some amazing places. Oh, and my friend was right, I met some of the most amazing people who will always be very special to me.

Like Michele, I have shifted my life a number of times for cricket opportunities, including a move from Newcastle to Sydney and most recently I have relocated to Tasmania.

I like to think Michele's leap of faith has played a role in encouraging sportswomen today to view relocation or an overseas contract as something that should be embraced, not feared.

Thank you Michele.

how I drew Michele

I had a trading card of Michele's when I was a kid and it had a picture of her doing a layup which was her signature move. Her finger roll was an iconic thing for her. The card had the word 'legend' in the background, so that has inspired my drawing. She really is a basketball legend. I have also drawn a portrait of her with her Olympic silver medal. I absolutely treasured the card because I loved Michele.

kindness story

'Kindness, to me, means doing something for someone or something without expecting anything in return. It means respecting and being inclusive of all. Kindness isn't something you should have to work at; it should come naturally. My 15-year-old daughter probably summed it up best, "Kindness means treating others how you would expect to be treated".'

NETBALL

LIZ ELLIS

'netball's diamond'

'[Netball's come] a long way. In my last year of playing, I earned \$8,000 for the year and I was the highest paid player in Australia. The first year top players turned professional was the first year I retired. The top players are full-time professional athletes and they need a living wage.'

LIZ ELLIS ON THE TOUGH
CONDITIONS SHE PLAYED UNDER
AND HER RELIEF AT SUSTAINABLE
PAY FOR PLAYERS

A towering presence, Liz Ellis' 16-year career as an Australian Diamond is matched in impact only by her work in promoting the sport as a commentator.

No one has played more Tests for Australia than her 122. Among those is a trio of World Championship gold medals (1995, '99, 2007) and a pair of Commonwealth golds (1998, 2002).

Peerless in Australia's domestic league, Ellis played for the Sydney Swifts her entire career, a record 173 games, claiming titles in 2001, '04, '06 and '07.

After injuring her knee in 2005, many thought Ellis's career had come to an end, but she made a full recovery and went out on a high in 2007, with Australia ranked No.1 in the world.

Named Australia's best player four times (1996, '98, 2002, '06) fittingly, the netballer adjudged the country's finest at the end of each season is awarded the Liz Ellis Diamond.

Made an Officer of the Order of Australia (2018), Ellis fought for the professional pay and conditions players enjoy today.

Ellis has detailed her harrowing story involving a trio of miscarriages and failed IVF attempts before she became pregnant with her second child in the book, *If At First You Don't Conceive*.



Australia's most-capped netballer (122 games)

what Liz means to me

Liz Ellis transformed the position of goal keeper in netball.

Growing up I can remember that the goal keeper bib always seemed to be left to the person who maybe wasn't as athletic as the rest of the members in the team. It's a bit sad to say, but it was a position that almost seemed like it had no purpose.

Then Liz came along and she was just electric, the way she played. She was so dynamic and had a presence on the court that perhaps no other netballer has ever commanded.

I remember her absolutely dominating shooters. It didn't matter who she was playing, she would be standing three feet away from her opponent and end up deflecting their shots without obstructing or being called for contact. Her defence was so clean.

The timing and power of her jump was like nothing we had ever seen on a netball court, and her ability to read the game helped her snap intercepts from anywhere in her third.

Liz was the type of player everyone wanted on their team.



Her impact on the game is profound. She changed it, not just on the court, but off it.

Fed up with having to pay her own way at times and watching her teammates and fellow netballers struggling to make ends meet, Liz's work for better conditions still resonates today.

She also wanted to break down the barrier between men's and women's sport. I love her quote 'It's not women's sport. It's sport.' 'Why is there a need to distinguish or compare? Sport is sport, let's appreciate it for what it is.'

Liz made the transition from playing to commentary seamlessly, and showed the way for females in other sports to make similar moves.

There were very few female commentators before Liz came along, which probably added that extra pressure for her to succeed because she was representing other women on a new frontier.

I admire how Liz came back to netball after her knee injury.

I remember how serious it was and I think more than a few people wrote her off, but she worked hard to

make it back to the court. And she didn't just make up the numbers, she was still one of the best players in the sport.

She obviously believed she still had more to give to the sport and wanted to finish on her own terms.

Whenever an athlete suffers a shock injury, especially a champion of the sport, it must make them question whether going through the extensive rehab is worth the possibility of not coming back as good as you once were.

She could easily have said, 'well that will do for me, I'll hang up the shoes and the netball dress', but there seemed to be a fierce internal drive for her to prove all the doubters wrong.

And isn't it awesome that she went out on top!

She calls it a fairytale and it was. Her last game was the 2007 World Championship gold medal match against New Zealand, which Australia won 42-38, propelling the team to World No.1.

Once retired, Liz struggled, as many women do, to conceive. She went through the heartache of multiple miscarriages and failed IVF attempts.

I can't imagine the emotional roller coaster of pain and pressure she must have experienced, but it took great courage for her to speak so openly and so publicly about such a private matter.

By sharing her story she has made many females feel less alone and more empowered.

Liz is a champion who champions other females. What an amazing woman.

how I drew Liz

When I drew Liz, I tried to capture all of the elements I admire about her. I wanted her portrait to stand out as she has been a trailblazer in everything she has done, so I left it in pencil as a contrast to the busy background. The abstract background is a signifier of her commentary work, her netball career and her endeavour to become a mother. Her bright, humorous personality is reflected in the colour choices. I also wanted her to have a powerful presence, so I placed her portrait in the foreground, because we all knew she was in control and running the show.

kindness story

'To me kindness means focusing on others to make the world a gentler place to be in.

More often than not, kindness happens in small ways rather than big gestures.

I try to incorporate this into my life and demonstrate to my children - by being polite and respectful to the people around me, starting with my family, and trying to take the time to do something unexpected that shows them that I care. It can range from a note in my child's lunchbox telling them that I love them, to helping someone out in the supermarket. Small, selfless actions magnify to make someone feel better or to make their day easier.'

AFLW & BOXING

TAYLA HARRIS

'the kick'

**'It's more than me
just kicking football,
it's a message,
it's a turning point
in Australian society,
so it's something I can
be personally proud of.'**

TAYLA HARRIS ON HER ICONIC
'THE KICK' PHOTOGRAPH
IMMORTALISED IN A STATUE

The carrier of the flag for women's Australian rules football, Tayla Harris is a dual-sport female warrior at the peak of her chosen crafts.

The Brisbane-born power forward was plucked by the Lions in 2017 as one of the club's inaugural marquee players and made the All-Australia team. Traded to Carlton, she made the AA team again and has twice been the club's leading goalkicker (2018, '19).

Harris is perhaps best known for the stunning photograph of her in full flight kicking a ball, that became the target of online trolls' sexual harassment.

Harris never backs down from anything in her sports or off the field, sharing the photograph with a message to those who harassed her: 'Here's a pic of me at work... think about this before your derogatory comments, animals.'

Widespread support came from all over the country for Harris and, dubbed simply 'The Kick', a bronze statue of the transformative image was erected in Federation Square in Melbourne in mid-2019.

Not content with being a star footballer, Harris has made the boxing ring her own, enjoying an undefeated run in seven fights dating back to June 2017. She is the current Australian female middleweight titleholder.



Trailblazing women's football star (dual All Australian) and undefeated pro boxer

what Tayla means to me

Growing up in the rugby league city of Newcastle, I discovered AFL in my early 20's.

When the women's competition came about I began to take an interest in it as a sport, especially as one of my teammates, Courtney Webb, played in the AFLW.

'The Kick' image of Tayla is so iconic to me. When I saw it, it didn't even enter my mind that something so pure and so normal could be construed as a negative in any way.

We have seen that sort of kick every weekend for as long as the AFL's existed. It's something we shouldn't even think twice about.

I found it quite heartbreaking reading some of those cruel, hurtful comments.

The internet has become a real haven where people can say anything without accountability or consequence. What Tayla was subjected to was inappropriate.

As Tayla said, she was at work, there was nothing untoward, there was nothing wrong with the image. It's upsetting to think something so innocent brought out the worst in so many people.



Michael Wilson

The way she handled it spoke volumes for who she is as a person and made her an inspiration to women all over the world.

A lot of people would have been very apprehensive to be involved in such a public discussion, but she was brave to take on these online trolls as fiercely as she did.

So many female athletes before her have had to put up with bullying and sexism, but I think Tayla has really drawn a line in the sand. It has planted a seed in people's minds so they might think twice before polluting social media with their judgemental assumptions, and she has emboldened others to call out online trolls when they are subjected to this sort of harassment.

It's almost expected that women won't stand up, mostly because our sports are still developing as a profession and we're fearful a negative issue could stunt that growth.

We have been told it would be easier if we just let it go, that the person didn't mean anything by it or that it was intended to be a joke.

But I think in the last couple of years and particularly that moment, there's been a shift. It was like 'that's enough', something needs to change and it's not just in sport, it's on a societal level.

I don't know if I could have done what Tayla did. I don't know if I could trust myself to have those big conversations so publicly, because she's not just speaking for herself, she's speaking for half of the population. Not just female athletes, but females who are discriminated against in their workplace and in daily life.

The key message in all of this is if you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't type it, don't put it out there on social media.

I love the fact that they made a statue out of 'The Kick' photo. It's the full stop on her entire argument. She's come out against people who have judged her on her looks and what she was wearing and what she was doing in her workplace and that statue is an amazing celebration of a female athlete – and all women trying to make it in sport.

How good was it when Tayla beat most of the boys in the Fox Footy Longest Kick contest. There were twelve players in the contest and she kicked a 61.5-metre torpedo which was only beaten by kicks less than 5 metres longer, by Melbourne's Clayton Oliver and Adelaide's Brodie Smith. Tayla has proved she can match it with the boys and speak up for all women. She is an incredible role model.

how I drew Tayla

I found it difficult to figure out how best to draw Tayla because her statement was so strong and I didn't want to take anything away from it. 'The Kick' was such a monumental moment in female sport in shifting the whole conversation. I felt the most powerful way to capture it was in black and white. I decided that I would draw the picture in a slightly abstract way that I believe is still graceful, powerful and bold. I wanted the viewer to see the image in a different way and make up their own mind.



kindness story



'Kindness is a non-negotiable for me. I feel it's my responsibility to show kindness to others, and that it is an easy way to help others and to enjoy life a little more.'