

Penelope Schneider Calf

*Language Teacher
Field Hockey Coach
Class of 1964*



Penelope Schneider Calf graduated from Needham High School in 1964. Looking back on the '60's, Penny remembers a school very different from Needham High School today. During the '60's, Needham was a three year high school with three tracks—college, business, and general. The curriculum also included Ap and accelerated courses. It was a time when a dress code was strictly enforced, especially the dress codes for girls: pants were not allowed; skirts had to reach below the knee; and legs were modestly covered by knee socks or nylon stockings. Every Friday was Dress Up Day. One day a year, shorts were allowed, at a price of 25 cents. Sororities and fraternities were in vogue, as were sock hops in the gym. The Roman Banquet with its Chariot Race was a major event. Gym suits were required; inspections were weekly; and girls had fewer opportunities to compete in sports than they do today.

Academically, Needham High School provided an excellent education, an education that Penny says insured her success at Mount Holyoke College, where she received her A.B. in 1968; at Emory University, where she received an M.A.T. in 1969; and at Boston College, where she fulfilled the requirements for Spanish certification in 1973. Penny singles out her English and Latin classes as important influences in her life. Writing term papers, spending hours completing correction sheets for compositions—correcting misspelled words (50 times for each misspelling) and writing out rules for grammar mistakes (50 times for each rule broken)—provided excellent training for college courses and for a career in teaching. Penny taught English at Walpole High School for five years. A Junior Classical Scholarship for \$100 required that she take Latin in college, a requirement that turned out to be a fortunate one. Penny loved the Latin Program at Mount Holyoke College. In fact, she has made her love of languages the basis of her academic career. Penny has taught Latin for 30 years and Spanish for 22 years at Walpole High School. Professionally, she

has strengthened her classical ties as a member of the American Classical League, the Classical Association of New England, and the Classical Association of Massachusetts. Every other summer, she brings her students to Italy.

Penny was an outstanding athlete in high school. She played field hockey, softball, and basketball and was voted a basketball all-star. Her love of sports influenced her decision to coach high school sports. At Walpole High School, Penny has coached successful teams in Field Hockey, Basketball, and Softball. Over the years, Penny has won many awards and championships, including 11 Bay State League Championships, 6 Division I State Champions, Bay State League Coach of the Year, MA South Sectional Coach of the Year, MA State Field Hockey Coaches Association Division I Coach of the Year, Boston Globe Sports Woman of the Year (1999), and 200 DITA/NFHCA South Region Coach of the Year. In 1999, The Boston Globe described Penny as the "longtime field hockey coach at Walpole High School" who "has created a dynasty at Walpole as her team—they call themselves the Porkers—won its fifth state championship in the last six years. Many of her players have gone on to collegiate careers. Many more will."

Penny's career as teacher and coach has been a distinguished one. Her remarks on being selected as a candidate for the Needham High School Distinguished Award are testament to her dedication to the teaching profession: "This honor for me would also be an honor for the entire teaching profession. It is one of the most important jobs in our society."

E.M.B.