First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Floris Jessica Kelshall

H.B.M.

Administrator

Inducted in 1985

With the verve that was the signature of her life, Floris 'Florrie' Kelshall swooped into local hockey and helped to progress the sport throughout the 1950s and 1960s in its development from a small number of women's teams to the expansion enjoyed in the present day.

Kelshall was born in Barbados but came to Trinidad with her sporting family after she had attended Manchester University, England, which is where she played hockey, in addition to throwing the javelin and discus. While her brother played Inter-Colonial cricket for Trinidad in the early 1940s, Florrie joined the Venture Ladies Hockey Club, becoming part of the keen rivalry that existed with the Wanderers Club.

The two teams would share the spoils season after season, carving up the league and knockout competition trophies between each other.

Kelshall immediately became involved with the administrative side of the sport as Secretary for the Northern Ladies Hockey League which governed the sport at the time.

When World War II ended, Keshall was a central figure in the resumption of Inter-Colonial hockey as Trinidad and Tobago hosted British Guiana, with Kelshall reprising her club role as a speedy centre-forward on the national team. The following year she toured Guiana with the Trinidad and Tobago team, which opened her mind to the possibility of expanding the tournament and the Trinidad and Tobago team travelling further for a wider array of competition.

By the 1950s Kelshall was slowing down on the field and moved to the position of goalkeeper, but kept up the pace in administration. In 1955 she became the first female President of the Trinidad & Tobago Women's Hockey Association which had taken over the running of the female side of the sport. Under her tenure, she pressed for Jamaica to be included in the Inter-Colonial tournament, which eventually came to fruition. Barbados soon followed, then Bermuda and Bahamas joined, to make the competition a true Caribbean affair.

With sound administration and with Kelshall at the forefront of the many fundraising activities to enable the national ladies' team to travel, the number of teams expanded. It was no longer the Ventures- Wanderers show, with teams like Rockets, Malvern, Notre Dame, Checkers, Paragon and Magnolias coming to join the battle for titles. It led to a raising of the standard of play, and in Kelshall's final year as President Trinidad and Tobago attended the 1963 International Federation of Women's Hockey Associations Tournament, the forerunner to the World Cup and the

premier competition for the global game. Held in Baltimore, Kelshall was also the manager of a team of limited financial resources that beat France and Switzerland, drew with Argentina, and suffered three defeats to finish 10th in the final rankings.

Upon her retirement from the Presidency, Kelshall was made an Honorary Life Member of the Association. During her time as President she also served in the additional role of Treasurer for the Trinidad and Tobago Hockey Board of Control which looked after the men's side of the sport. Kelshall's sterling work there earned her the unique distinction of being the first female to be made an Honorary Member of the Trinidad and Tobago Hockey Board. Further accolades would follow: Honorary Life Member of Ventures and, in recognition of her contribution to hockey, she was awarded the Hummingbird Medal Silver in 1983.

An optician by profession, Kelshall still found the time to play tennis and badminton throughout her hockey career before taking up swimming and running in her 60s. A keen bridge player and horticulturist, a fan who always remained close to sport, she remained a livewire for her entire 104 years. In 1985, Floris Kelshall was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame