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100 W. Broadway, Frankfort KY

The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) educates and engages the public through Kentucky's history in order to confront the challenges of the future.

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The 'Basketball Bill' - 'The Right Thing to Do'

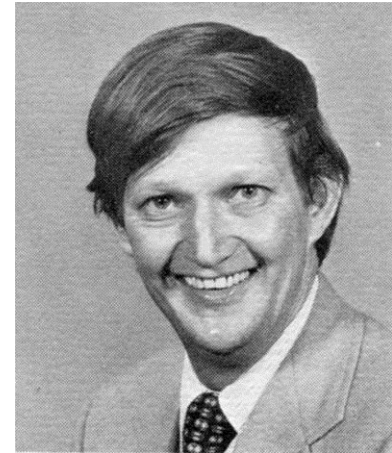


State Sen. Nick Baker, 38th District, made it possible for girls to play in the Kentucky High School Athletic Association's Sweet Sixteen® when he introduced a bill in 1974 that stipulated that any high school that had a varsity boy's basketball team had to have a varsity girls' basketball team. Schools that did not comply would lose state money. (Kentucky Senate Bill 73)

Baker knew something about girls' basketball: His mother was a member of Hazard High School's 1930 state championship team.

The Basketball Bill met opposition from schools that did not want the extra cost associated with a girls' team or the issues sharing facilities would bring. KHSAA also pushed back, saying it preferred to keep politics out of high school sports. But Baker persisted and it passed.

Even the most data-minded people would be hard pressed to quantify the trickle-down effect of Title IX and the Basketball Bill. How many Kentucky girls have had college doors opened for them because of basketball who otherwise might not have been able to afford postsecondary education? How much have they contributed to Kentucky's society and economy that they would not have been able to do without that education?



Nick Baker. (Photo courtesy of the Legislative Research Commission.)