

Barbara Chesler

2022 Spotlight Recipient

Barbara Chesler served as Senior Associate Athletics Director at Yale University from 1985 – 2015. She was responsible for many aspects of Yale’s thirty-five sport intercollegiate athletic program, including supervision of varsity teams, oversight of operating budgets, capital projects and facilities and alumni relations and development. Chesler firmly believes in broad based athletic programs that offer students the opportunity to compete at the highest level in a highly challenging academic environment. She often observed that the combination of teamwork, discipline, selflessness and organizational skills required of student-athletes leads them to highly successful careers.

Chesler, an avid supporter of Title IX since 1974, cultivated the first Yale endowment exclusively benefitting women’s athletics. She also served on various university, Ivy League, and NCAA committees, serving as the Chair of the first NCAA Rowing Championship Committee.

A longtime advocate of expanding Yale’s relationship with the greater New Haven community, she was the driving force in the development of Yale Athletics’ Community Rowing Program.

Following her retirement from Yale she worked on the Hillary Clinton campaign and also regularly volunteered and served on numerous committees for civic organizations including the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven Donor Advised Women and Girl’s Fund, The United Way of New Haven, and New Haven’s Clifford Beers Community Care Center. Most recently, she served for 30 months as the Interim Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of New Haven. She is recognized for her capacity to bring individuals of diverse backgrounds together for the greater good. She is passionate about education and improving the opportunities for youth and families in the greater New Haven community.

Chesler, an Indiana University graduate and varsity field hockey player, received a master’s degree in athletic administration from the University of Iowa. Before coming to Yale, the Cleveland native served as the Associate Athletics Director and Head Field Hockey Coach at Manhattanville College in New York.