

# ***U of A is target of Justice Department action on sex discrimination***

The Department of Justice has sought to join in a private suit charging the University of Alaska with discriminating against women student athletes by giving less assistance to its women's basketball team than it does to the men's team.

Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti said a motion to intervene as plaintiff in 'Pavey v. University of Alaska' and a proposed complaint in intervention were filed in U.S. District Court in Anchorage, Alaska.

The suit, filed by three member of the 1978-79 women's team on January 18, 1979, accused the university of denying female athletes equal opportunity to compete in intercollegiate sports.

The Justice Department's proposed suit said the university is violating the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendments of 1972, which forbids sexual discrimination in federally funded educational programs.

The proposed suit asked the court to find the university in violation of the law and Constitution, to enjoin it from continuing its alleged discriminatory practices against female athletes, and to require it to end the alleged discrimination against women's intercollegiate athletics.

Assistant Attorney General Drew S. Days, III, head of the Civil Rights Division, said the Justice Department is committed to eliminating sex discrimination in intercollegiate athletics. The action is the second taken by the Department this week to enforce Title IX.

Because there has been relatively little litigation on these issues, Mr. Days said it is hoped that the Department's action will help establish much-needed judicial interpretations of the nature and scope of Title IX as it applies to intercollegiate sports, and should help obtain voluntary compliance.

Mr. Days noted that Title IX provides, "No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."