

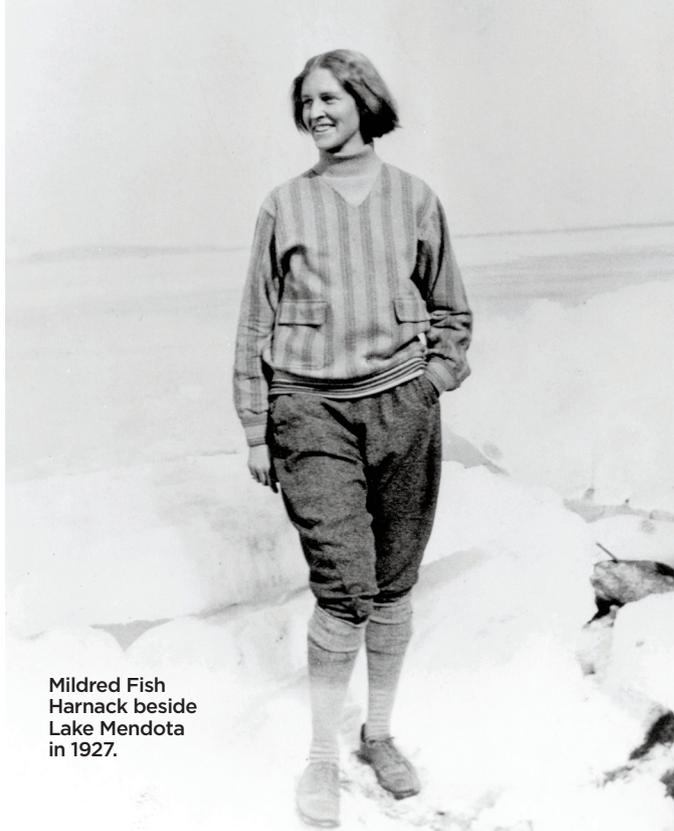
# A REBEL NAMED MILDRED

How a Milwaukee woman became one of Hitler's Most Wanted. **BY KAY NOLAN**

**T**he beheading of journalist James Foley in August hit close to home for many Milwaukeeans because the war correspondent was a graduate of Marquette University. But how many know the story of Mildred Fish Harnack. She was a native daughter and Nazi resister believed to be the only American woman ever executed on orders from Adolf Hitler. Joel Waldinger, producer of a 2011 Wisconsin Public Television documentary on Harnack, says he first learned of the professional translator's heroism in 2006 during a fellowship in Berlin. "I thought, I've lived in Wisconsin for 11 years or so," he says. "Why have I never heard of this woman?" And despite Sept. 16 being "Mildred Fish Harnack Day" in the state's public schools, his two children hadn't heard of her, either.

Mildred was born in Milwaukee on that date, in 1902, attended the Milwaukee State Normal School (now the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) and graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. There, fatefully, she met a German student named Arvid Harnack who was in the U.S. on a Rockefeller Fellowship. She followed him back to Germany, where he had obtained a job as a government economist, and Mildred worked as a translator of literature while finishing a doctorate. As the Nazi movement rose in the 1930s, the Harnacks became early critics and, later, key players in the German Resistance. Dubbed the "Red Orchestra," the Harnack-led group of intellectuals spread anti-Nazi news reports, helped Jews flee Germany and sent radio broadcasts containing military intelligence to officials in the Soviet Union and United States.

Eventually, the Harnacks fell victim to the Gestapo, which arrested about 120 resisters connected to the Red Orchestra between 1942 and 1943. The Nazis executed Arvid within months of the arrest in



Mildred Fish Harnack beside Lake Mendota in 1927.

1942, and Hitler ordered a second trial for Mildred after her first ended with a sentence of six years hard labor. The second judgment guaranteed her death, and Nazi officials executed her by guillotine on Feb. 16, 1943 – a relatively humane method for the Nazis, according to Waldinger. After the war, East Germany named streets and schools after Mildred, but the anti-Communist movement in 1950s America stalled for decades efforts to honor the Harnacks in the U.S. Milwaukee attorney Art Heitzer later took up the cause of publicizing the Harnacks' story and persuaded the state, in 1986, to honor Mildred each year on Sept. 16. He says that the Red Orchestra, once "too hot" for mainstream culture to acknowledge, "is notable for the strong role a woman played in it, compared with other resistance groups, which were mostly male. This is risky stuff." ■



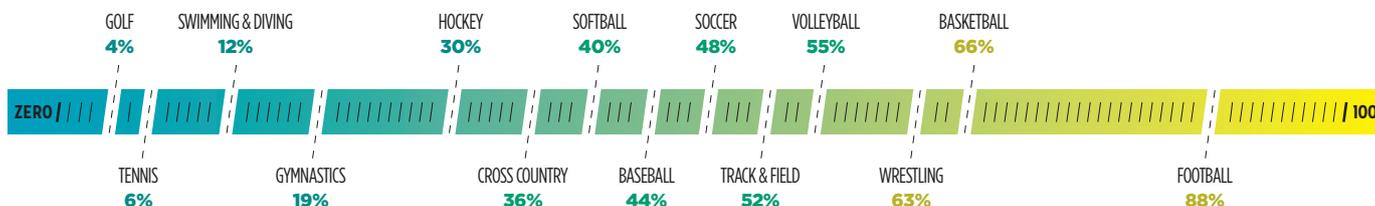
KAY NOLAN DISCUSSES HARNACK'S STORY ON WUWM'S "LAKE EFFECT" JAN. 26 AT 10 A.M.

## GAME PLANS

State officials are taking a hard look at who responds when student athletes collapse on the field of play. **BY AIMEE ROBINSON**

**A RECENT SURVEY** by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine found that only about half of the state's high school coaches have received CPR training, an important figure considering another of the survey's findings: Those very coaches serve as primary responders in about 78 percent of player "collapses." In cases of sudden cardiac arrest, each minute spent waiting for CPR reduces the likelihood of survival by about 10 percent, according to Matthew Harer, a pediatrics fellow at the University of Virginia and one of the study's authors. The survey found that in most sports, only a minority of schools staff CPR-certified athletic trainers at competitions (see below), leaving coaches as a safety net. In April, the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association will vote on a proposal mandating CPR and electronic defibrillator training for high school coaches of all ranks. ■

### WISCONSIN SCHOOLS VARY WIDELY IN THE NUMBER THAT HAVE CPR-CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS AT SPORTING EVENTS



**Mil** → **SETH MACFARLANE** sang at Lucille's Piano Bar on Nov. 1 while in town with actress and local native **JESSICA SZOHR**, whose mom was celebrating a birthday.