



RIETMANN-GROUT MAKES AN IMPACT THROUGH THE GAME OF SOFTBALL

by Bill Ballew

Claire Rietmann-Grout has never shied away from a challenge. Regardless of whether the test came as a player on the softball diamond or encountering new opportunities in unfamiliar territory in hopes of making those around her better, the former standout pitcher and current head coach at Mercy-Burlingame High School is constantly looking for ways to live life to the fullest for the benefit of everyone she meets. "The quote that I live by is 'Do one thing a day that scares you,'" said Rietmann-Grout. "For instance, last year was my first in a public school and it was high-risk. I didn't know what it was going to be like and we ended up going all the way. That was pretty cool. When the opportunity arose to come back to Mercy, I knew that I had to go. It was a hard decision but I knew it was another risk that I had to take because it has always been my goal to come back. I really believed in the values that our school preaches. They want to make strong, confident female leaders and that's what I want to do through softball."

Rietmann-Grout grew up playing softball in California and was part of the initial wave of young ladies who helped build a foundation for future generations in fastpitch. Always dominant in the circle, she began in the Half Moon Bay Girls Softball League prior to playing on some of the top clubs in Northern California. In high school, she was a four-year varsity starter for the Crusaders at Mercy under head coach Jim Henderson and concluded her prep career with a perfect 56-0 record, including a perfect game in the CIF playoffs. Just prior to graduation, she was named West Bay Athletic League Most Valuable Player and All-San Mateo County.

Not surprisingly, schools from throughout the nation recruited Rietmann-Grout in hopes of convincing the pitcher to bring her skills to their campus. Yet instead of taking the safe route and attending a college in California where softball is queen, Rietmann-Grout opted to travel across the country and attend Towson University in Maryland.

"When I was doing my college search, all I wanted to do was play," Rietmann-Grout said. "Any team that wanted me, I wanted them. The school that I fell in love with happened to be in Maryland. I was excited to do something new and get out of my comfort zone and live in a different part of the country. I always knew that I could come home to California after I went to school. I wanted to take a risk and do something by myself."

