

# Breaking the Stereotype

**P**icture this: A cute, energetic, blond-haired girl in a short skirt, who is most likely dating the captain of the football team. Who does that describe? Most people would automatically think, "a cheerleader."

Even the cheerleaders themselves realize the typical stereotype they have been given. "What they don't realize is that we're a mix of people, and all of us are different," said junior cheerleader Stacy Walter.

Stephanie Cable, also a junior cheerleader said, "We're told to smile, and told to be happy in order to promote school spirit. Some people think it's forced, so they don't buy into it."

Becoming a cheerleader took more than just being cute and peppy; each cheerleader had to have other qualities to gain a position on the squad.

"Not only do we have to be able to perform in front of a crowd, and be able to do all the basic jumps," said Walter, "but we are tested on the rules of the sport we'll be cheering for. There's a teacher evaluation on each of us, and we have to write an essay, or go through an interview with the judges. It's not as easy as it may

seem."

Even after making the squad, a cheerleader did more than cheer at the games. "We try our hardest to increase school spirit," said Jenna Hasselo, a junior squad member. Each week, the cheerleaders made signs for the school to increase awareness about the games and to get people motivated to attend. They also made special treats for the guys on the team to show their support.

Just as any other sport, cheerleaders practiced in order to perfect their performances. In addition to making signs, the cheerleaders practiced twice a week for an hour and a half perfecting cheers or conditioning to stay in shape.

"Cheerleading is a sport," commented Cable. "We have to condition, work, and be in shape, just like any other athlete. However, like athletes, cheerleaders fight the labels placed on them."

"There are many types of cheerleaders, just as there are all types of people. Each girl has her own style," said Hasselo.

"I'm sure there are a few cheerleaders out there who are only ditzy and snobby," continued Stacy Walter, "but it's a shame that people form an opinion on all cheerleaders because of that."

by Kristie Bowman

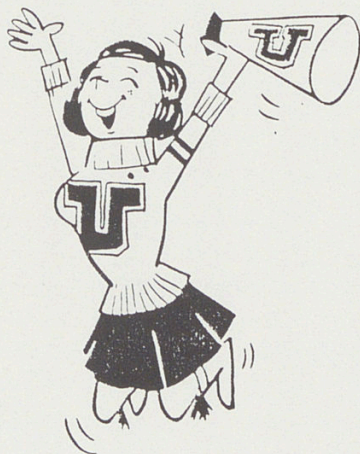
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Varsity cheerleaders take a breather from cheering at the Anderson game to show us their team spirit.

Junior varsity cheerleader Veronica "Vern" Proctor vogues as she takes a break from cheering.



S. Gallenstein, A. Lucke, M. McVey, B. Biggs, and L. Richter display perfect form as they cheer the team to victory at the Fairfield game.

