

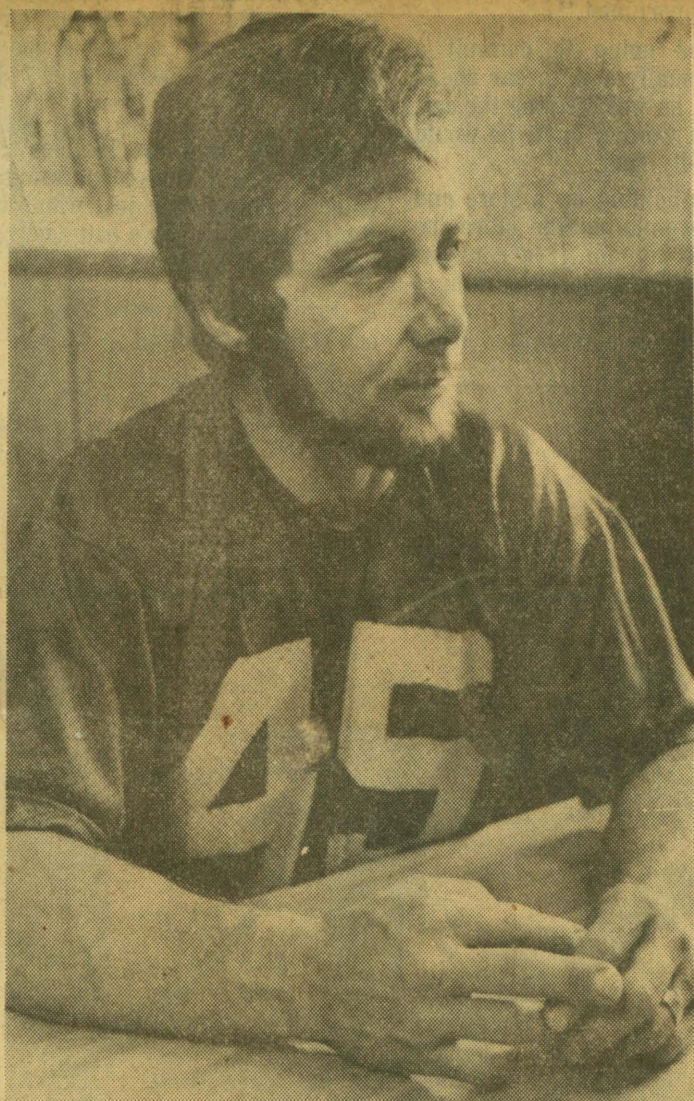
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# She Wasn't Bad Before...



Until this year, Steve Dain was pert Doris Richards, shown here as Emeryville gym teacher



## ... And Look at Him Now

By RUUD VAN DER VEER

UNION CITY—Don't worry, Emeryville: teacher Steve Dain—the guy with the deep voice, the lush beard and the slightly muscle-bound walk—does not want to get back into the girls' locker room.

But Dain, known on the Emery High School campus for the past 10 years as P.E. teacher Doris Richards, does want to get back into class, "For I believe I can learn from the students and the students can learn from me. I'm a tenured teacher and I want to teach these students, who have shown they can understand."

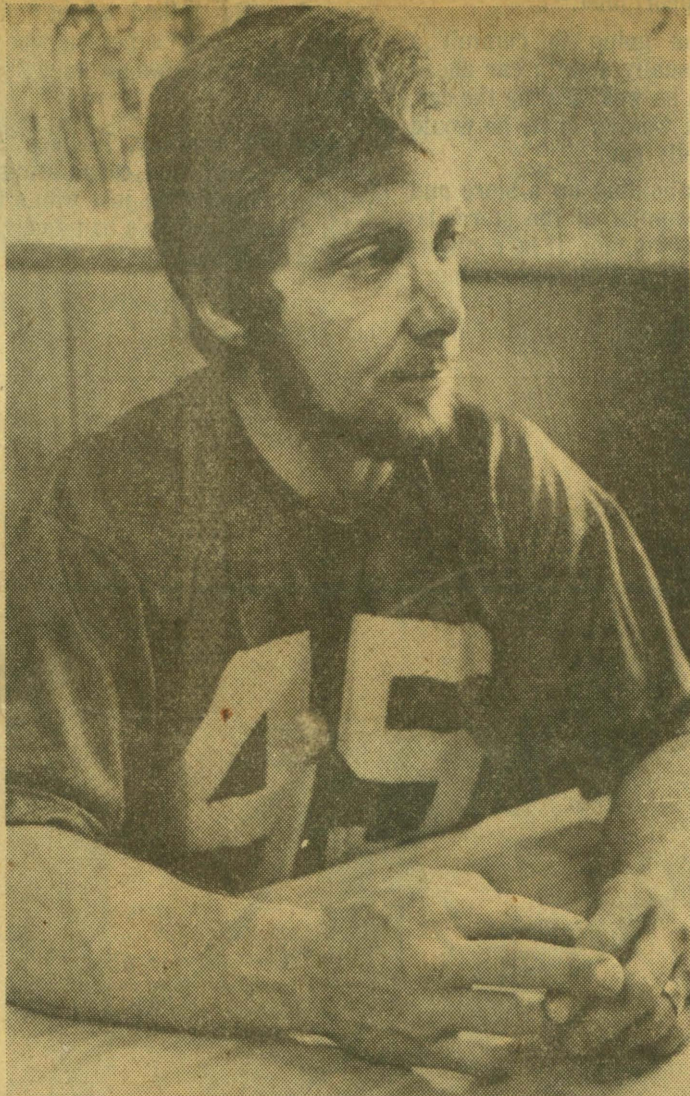
It is up to the Emery School District trustees to decide whether Dain can come back and in what capacity. Superintendent Lewis Stommel said that since the matter is considered a "personnel item" it will not be discussed publicly at tonight's school board meeting, but there is a chance it could come up at the closed, executive session which follows the open meeting.

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# 1304 She Wasn't Bad Before...



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Tribune photo by LEO COHEN

## STEVE DAIN REFLECTS ON SEX-CHANGE OPERATION

He feels forces that condition how a man acts and feels

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"This is one of those cases which has never come up before and you can't really react to it right away," Stommel said. "The board members are sitting there with their

Continued Back Page, Col. 1

Of course, Miss Richards had breasts, and those were removed in an operation at Stanford, where her sex-change operation was performed as well. The mastectomy was so successful that Steve Dain can take off his shirt at the beach and you will not see a scar, just a broad, white band. And when he pumps a little

## A New Identity

# Former She Tells Why He Did It

Continued from Page 1

mouths wide open, to a certain extent."

Stommel said the board is checking the "legal ramifications" of Dain's request for a transfer from physical education to another subject. Before offering him a new spot the staff must see what positions are open, what seniority rules apply and then determine whether Dain is qualified to teach the subject in which there is an opening.

Dain, who lives in a four-bedroom home in the Town Estates neighborhood in Union City with a brother, a sister, a raccoon and three dogs, said he never intended to return to the Amery School District after his operation eight months ago. He even had intended to write a letter of resignation, but then the debate started and Dain said he found out that students and faculty at Emery High want him back.

"This letter says it best," Dain, 37, told The Tribune as he showed a letter from a former student, a 19-year-old girl. The girl, now living in Oakland, wrote Dain a four-page letter repeating the same theme in different words: "It is my wish, hope, prayer that somehow you may sense our need for Steven and help us give him the supportive strength he may need to return to us all."

Steve the man does not seem to need much support. If you talk with him for only a few minutes you are immediately impressed by his firm determination and conviction that "this is it, I'm accepting it and I hope everybody else will, too."

And it isn't because of that impressive beard, or the voice, or the muscle. It's because Steve Dain talks straight from the heart and after many long months of introspection, Dain is not running away from the consequences of his sex-change operation and he is not hiding, either.

"There's nothing wrong with curiosity—I've always been curious and I understand," Dain says despite the onslaught of questions from many directions. And the only reason he takes the telephone off the hook once in awhile these days is to get some rest from this barrage, not because he does not want to face these questions.

When contacted by The Tribune last Friday, Dain declined an interview at that time as his mother had a difficult time adjusting to the change. (And ironically, his mother's was virtually the only negative response he has heard so far: "She feels her daughter has died.")

Dain now readily answers specific questions about his change. And here are primary sex-change questions and answers in a nutshell:

During most of her life, Doris Richards never felt entirely comfortable with herself as a woman, what with the facial hair, the firm muscles and the masculine personality. And then there was the agony of pretending to be what she did not feel inside: the constant effort at the feminine appearance, from frilly dresses to strict dieting for that feminine 110-pound frame. (Today, Dain weighs in at 145 pounds.)

When approaching her from behind, men and women alike would sometimes mistake her for a man. And at school, students and teachers would call her "Mr. Richards," in a kind of strange admiration for her muscle and drive.

Of course, Miss Richards had breasts, and those were removed in an operation at Stanford, where her sex-change operation was performed as well. The mastectomy was so successful that Steve Dain can take off his shirt at the beach and you will not see a scar, just a broad, manly chest. And when he pumps a little fire into his eyes, you would not want to kick any sand on him, either.

This is not the end of the medical aspects: Dain will have to submit to hormone therapy for the rest of his life. There will be other, minor operations to

complete his metamorphosis, and the doctors at Stanford will keep testing him regularly to make absolutely sure that he remains in excellent physical and psychological shape.

Can Dain go all the way in this change, that is, can he marry and have children? "Everybody has to give up something in life," Dain responded. After thinking about the whole spectrum of big and little problems related to the sex-change for two months, Miss Richards once summed up her conclusions: "I decided that I'd rather be male than female." And if that meant living without a mate or children, that was one of the sacrifices she was willing to make.

Is it possible for a woman to become a 100 per cent male in less than nine months, or is there still a female living in a male body?

"I have something to compare myself with, for I was once a woman," said Dain. He feels that both men and women in our society are the products of tremendous conditioning forces, which remain at work in him even now. But Dain is beginning to recognize these forces and stimuli and is changing his female responses to male responses.

An example: "A few weeks ago, when I already was a male, I was driving along late at night when this van drove up next to me," Dain recalled. "I didn't try to look at the other driver, for as a woman I'd always avoided such encouragement to men and just looked straight ahead."

But then Steve Dain realized, "I was responding as a woman, and so I turned my head and looked at the other driver. It turned out to be a woman and I waived."

In comparing the woman's life with that of a man in America, "I discovered that the male life is rather dry and cold, emotionally. When an animal is hurt, some men seem to feel it isn't masculine to help, while a woman can." This "trip society lays on us" has nothing to do with what's inside a person. "I'm gentle and loving and I believe other men can be gentle and loving too." What is important, Dain feels, is the awareness that this complex of societal conditioning, hangups about how to express our true emotions and roles imposed on men and women exists.

"I'm more at ease than ever, my animals are more relaxed with me and I know who I am and where I am," says Steve Dain, who once was a woman teacher in Oakland, Richmond, San Lorenzo and Fremont, before going to Emeryville in 1966.

While the reaction from students, most of his family and colleagues has been "nothing but positive—people will see me and say, 'I'm with you, guy!'" What if some parents, not quite understanding what has happened to Doris Richards, should object to his return?

Dain feels there is not much he can do beyond his openness about the change. "But already a lot of people see my problem and it puts their own, little problems in perspective and they enjoy life more."