Transferring to Placer High School from Del Campo in her sophomore year came as a shock to Lorie Avis. Folks in Fair Oaks thought the kids from Auburn were hillbillies. And when she got on campus, she thought her parents were crazy making her go to a school where the football players had shaved heads.

But the sports programs at the school allowed her to find her niche, and by the time she graduated, she had come to love Auburn and admits now that Placer High School was an "amazing school."

For her exceptional performance on the softball field in high school and college, Avis will be inducted into the PHS Athletic Hall of Fame on April 25 in a ceremony at the school's iconic Earl Crabbe Gym.

After playing junior varsity basketball and softball as a sophomore, Avis competed the next two years on the varsity basketball team for Coach Peg Speck. "Basketball at Placer had always been competitive," Avis said, "And Coach Peg had a good recipe for winning." Playing in the competitive Capital Athletic League, the team made the playoffs both years.

But softball was her first love. Avis admitted to being disappointed by not getting to play varsity softball in her sophomore year. "Only juniors and seniors were allowed on the team. I had played travel ball for several years, and knew I could play at the varsity level."

Her goal was to get a college scholarship and play in college. Performing at a high level in her final two years and batting over .400 earned her a full ride scholarship to Sacramento State.

At Placer, she played a challenging third base, often playing closer to home plate than Coach Wendell Witt would have liked. "Most girls at the time bunted and slapped at the ball," she said. Playing 30 feet from home plate gave her a better chance to throw out batters at first base.

"Senior year was great," Avis said. She earned all-league honors and was named to the Optimist All Star team . Playing for the North, she had two hits in three at bat and scored the winning run.

She topped the year by receiving the Suzy Ferguson award as Placer's top female athlete.

At Sacramento State, she was a four-year starter at third base. At the same time, Irene Shea became the Hornets coach with a plan to change the softball program at the school. It paid off as the current softball field is named in her honor.

During her freshman season. Avis, batting right handed as she always had, played third base and shortstop hitting .266 in 56 games with only three strikeouts in 158 at bats.

In her sophomore year, she was fooling around after practice one day, hitting left handed. Coach Shea liked what she saw, and Avis batted left-handed for the rest of her career. Hitting from that side, she used her deceptive speed, bunting for base hits and hitting with more power.

As a junior, Avis played 74 games, excelling defensively with a .956 fielding percentage. She earned honors for the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, being named to the all-region first team. She also was named to the All American first team.

The Hornets qualified for the NCAA Division II Women's College World Series. The games were played in Sacramento at the Watt Avenue Sports Complex. Avis remembers the games drawing thousands of fans and youngsters asking for her autograph.

Even though Sacramento State finished third in the World Series, Avis received national recognition being named to the All-Tournament team.

The next year, Sacramento State went independent, moving up to Division I and playing top-ranked teams like Fresno State, UCLA, and Cal. Avis was named team captain and the squad reached a national ranking at No. 8 at one point.

Women's sports at the time were still in the early stages of Title IX equity. Scholarship athletes still had to supply their own gloves, bats, and cleats.

"Playing college softball was no easy task," Avis said. Most of the games involved doubleheaders and cross country traveling. "It put a strain on attending classes and completing homework," she admitted.

In addition, her competitiveness kept her involved despite setbacks. "I never wanted to sit out and miss a game," she said, and recalled often playing with bruises, ankle sprains, and soreness. "I played for the love of the game."

Avis finished her college career third is school history as defense assist leader and as a two-time All-American. Her portrait is prominently displayed on the school's All-American wall at the Sacramento State softball stadium entrance.

Avis graduated with a degree in Criminal Justice, but never worked in the system. She currently is district sales supervisor for the California State lottery. She lives in Roseville and is a single mother of two with two grandchildren.

The Athletic Hall of Fame ceremony will be held in the Earl Crabbe Gym on April 25. A reception will begin at 6 pm followed by the induction ceremony at 7 pm.

Tickets for the reception cost $25 until April 15, and $35 after, and are available online at placerathletichalloffame.org.

The 7 pm ceremony is free of charge to the public.