

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The nation has recognized not only a shortage of teachers but of principals as well (Education Vital Signs, 1998, p. A13). According to educational researchers, the high school principal who once inhabited that office – white, male, Protestant, married – is no longer available due to a decline in the number of male teachers who traditionally were in the pipeline for the position of high school principal. The traditional acceptance of female principals at the elementary level needs to extend to the high school level in order to meet the demands to fill principal positions that remain empty or are handled by retired principals (Barker, 1997; Keller, 1998).

While recognizing that school personnel must be concerned with the need to fill vacant positions, school systems also need to recognize that the traditional selection of the white male for the position of high school principal is no longer the only appropriate choice in today's global, multicultural society, a society that recognizes and encourages all members to reach their potential. As women achieve leadership roles, they provide different leadership styles that may be more productive in today's educational environment, such as shared decision making, serving as a master-teacher or educational leader, paying more attention to tasks in the school and classroom, using oral communication more frequently, and building "a school community that stresses achievement within a supportive environment" (Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 200).

In order to utilize the talents and abilities of all aspiring administrators, as well as to avoid situations in which schools are in session without the leadership of a principal, the information gleaned from the strategies for career advancement of these four women high school

principals from a public school district in Virginia may provide insights that result in an increase in the number of women in leadership roles at the high school level.

Statement of Need

Data from a variety of sources suggest a disparity between the percentage of female teachers in Virginia and the percentage of female secondary administrators in Virginia. From 1988 to 1992 the percentage of female teachers in Virginia public schools increased from 67% to 78% (Southern Regional Education Board, 1994) and to 80% in 1998 (Center for Survey Research, 1998). More specifically, 66% of the high school teachers in Virginia in 1998 were women (Center for Survey Research, 1998).

From 1988 to 1992 women in secondary school administration in Virginia's public schools increased from 20% to 29% (Southern Regional Education Board, 1994). The website of Virginia's Department of Education (DOE) showed that 25% of all high school principals, including special and vocational education, were women (March 7, 2000). A few months later data analyzed from the website revealed the following: low numbers of women in school districts regardless of the area of the state or number of high schools in the school district; in the school districts with one high school, only 22% of the principalships in those districts were filled by women; and the highest percentage, 41%, of women in Virginia high school principal positions was in the most eastern and northern portions of the state (September 24, 2000; Chart 1).

A comparison of the lower percentage of women in educational administration with the higher percentages of female teachers in Virginia begins the questions and need to research the career advancement of females from the role of teacher to the role of administrator in Virginia.

Chart 1

Number of High School Principals in Virginia by Region by School Districts by Gender

	1	2 – 5	6-10	11 or more	
Region	high school	high schools	high schools	high schools	Total
I ^a					
Male	9	2	19	0	30
Female	1	1	7	0	9
II ^b					
Male	5	24	3	9	41
Female	0	5	3	2	10
III					
Male	9	5	0	0	14
Female	6	3	0	0	9
IV ^c					
Male	8	6	12	11	37
Female	4	7	2	13	26
V ^d					
Male	10	17	0	0	27
Female	3	3	0	0	6
VI					
Male	7	17	0	0	24
Female	0	5	0	0	5

Chart 1 (continued)

	1	2 – 5	6-10	11 or more	Total
<u>Region</u>	<u>high school</u>	<u>high schools</u>	<u>high schools</u>	<u>high schools</u>	
VII					
Male	6	28	6	0	40
Female	0	7	0	0	7
VIII					
Male	7	2	0	0	9
Female	3	0	0	0	3
Total					
Male	61	101	40	20	222
Female	17	31	12	15	75

Note. The number of administrators were counted from those listed in the categories of “Secondary” or “Combined” (in those cases where the grade configuration included grade 12). Not included were “Alternative,” “Special Education,” or Vocational Education.” From Virginia Department of Education, September 24, 2000.

^aVacancies listed for two schools in Region I. ^bVacancy listed for one school in Region II. ^cFairfax City is part of Fairfax County. ^dLexington City has no high schools.

With the high percentage of female teachers in Virginia, it would benefit future principal vacancies to have an increase in the number of women enrolled in principal preparation programs. Based on an informal internet survey of 14 Virginia universities and colleges with

principal preparation programs (personal communication, Fall, 2000), five universities and colleges that responded to the survey reported increasing numbers of females who graduated from their principal preparation programs. Chart 2 outlines the number of male (M) and female (F) graduates of each of the reporting universities and colleges from 1995 - 2000.

Despite the fact that the percentage remained roughly the same over time, the absolute number of female students graduating from university and college principal preparation programs was growing, which should have aided school districts in meeting any current or future principal shortages. School systems need to be proactive in increasing the number of women in the pipeline for high school principal positions in preparation for replacing administrators who will be retiring, for filling new principal positions due to construction of additional school buildings as a result of increases in student enrollment, and for counteracting the decline of males in the field of teaching. While those who hire administrators for high school positions should examine their recruitment efforts and strategies, women themselves need to possess the knowledge, confidence, and belief that they are qualified to serve as high school principals.

Chart 2

Principal Preparation Programs: Male and Female Graduates 1995-2000

University/ College:	Longwood	Old Dominion	Radford	Shenandoah	Virginia Tech	Total	% female
1995							71
Male	-	3	-	0	8	11	
Female	-	12	-	1	14	27	
1996							55
Male	-	15	-	10	2	27	
Female	-	22	-	8	3	33	

Chart 2 (continued)

University/ College:	Longwood	Old Dominion	Radford	Shenandoah	Virginia Tech	Total	% female
1997							66
Male	-	15	-	7	0	22	
Female	-	29	-	14	0	43	
1998							62.5
Male	-	15	12	16	24	67	
Female	-	37	22	23	30	112	
1999							55.5
Male	-	21	24	11	0	56	
Female	5	26	22	17	0	70	
2000							61
Male	-	7	6	19	22	54	
Female	6	27	4	23	25	85	

Note. Dashes indicate data not reported for that year.

Statement of the Problem

Predictors foresee a shortage of people to fill principalships in the future (McAdams, 1998). To combat these shortages, school systems need to have strategies and examples regarding the identification, recruitment, and hiring of women in high school principal positions.

The case studies of women who have obtained positions as high school principals during the past three decades in Union County Public Schools, a large public school system in Virginia, may provide suggestions for other school systems as well as serve as sources of information and inspiration for potential female candidates for high school principalships.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to conduct and analyze case studies of women who have obtained positions as high school principals in Union County Public Schools (UCPS). UCPS, located in the northeast section of Virginia, has steadily increased the number and percentage of women principals at the secondary level. In 1971 the first woman was hired at the high school level, at which time there were 38 middle and high schools (*Approved Boundaries, 1971-72*). Two years later this same woman was recognized as “the first woman selected to head one of the big secondary schools complexes in the County” (*Local newspaper B, May 25, 1973, p. 5*). “The big secondary school complex” is a reference to one of three schools built to house grades 7 through 12. According to School Communications C (1986-1987), seven of the 41 middle and high school principals were women. Four of those seven women were at the high school level. School Communications C (1991) listed 13 of the 43 middle and high school principals as women. For school year 2000-2001, 23 females out of 45 middle and high school principals in Union County were listed in the school system’s internal telephone directory; of those 23, 13 were at the high school level.

Each case study represented a decade between 1970 and 2000. Data were collected through interviews and documents. Each case study included a profile of the interviewee, case narrative, overview of the school system at that time, and a brief historical context of that

decade. The latter was offered in order to provide additional perspective to the culture and times in which each woman worked.

While the data reflected the history and progress of a specific school system as well as the experiences of four specific women in that school system, it is hoped that those who are responsible for hiring principals for high school principal positions will benefit from the information gathered in this study. Prospective female administrators may find support and encouragement from the voices of those interviewed for this study. Supporters, both male and female and those inside and outside of the school system, may discover ways to provide assistance to women whose career goal is high school administration. Finally, other school systems may gain knowledge from the experiences reported in this study that may aid in their own identification, training, recruitment, and hiring of women in high school administration.

Research Questions

While research questions in qualitative studies generally develop during and following the collection of data, themes or domains from a review of the literature were used to guide the initial research process and “focus data collection” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 25). The overarching foci for this study included the process that each woman used to obtain a position as high school principal and the types of strategies each woman used during the process of becoming a high school principal. Recognizing that specific questions changed as data were collected, research and related probing questions for this study began within the following domains:

1. Support system available within the school district:
 - a. Did the interviewee participate in any formal programs offered by the school system that were used to identify, prepare, recruit, and hire women for high

school administration?

- b. Did the interviewee participate in any informal strategies that existed in the school system to identify, prepare, recruit, and hire women as high school principals?
 - c. Did the interviewee participate in any formal partnerships formed between the school system and local universities?
2. Support system outside of the school district:
- a. What role(s) did resources outside of the school system play in the identification, preparation, recruitment, and hiring of the interviewee for the principalship?
 - b. Did the interviewee use such resources as mentoring and networking in preparing for the principalship?
3. Career path:
- a. What was the career path of each woman before she became a high school principal?
 - b. Did the interviewee experience any barriers as she moved along her career ladder?
 - c. Were there any influences, from the school system or outside of the school system, on the career path of each woman?

Limitations

A number of limitations were considered as interviews were conducted and data were collected. The study was dependent on the availability of archival information that was not gathered and maintained by the school system in one central location. It was a surprise to find that early school board minutes had started to be catalogued and entered into a database. In addition, the study relied on the accuracy of the memories of employees, both current and retired. One source had fortunately kept an extensive backlog of old school district telephone directories

which, coupled with her memory, provided additional information and validity of placements of people in high school principal positions.

Another limitation of the study was the decision of which high schools to include when selecting women for participation. Union County has a variety of settings for high school students that provide services beyond general education. This study did not include principals of special service centers and alternative school programs due to the differences in those types of schools, including student populations that were significantly smaller and more specific in educational needs than students in general education high schools.

A final limitation to note was that the researcher is a female principal in the school district under study, although not at the high school level. While this had its advantages, such as additional knowledge of the culture and history of the system, it also had its disadvantages, such as the possibility of bias that might have influenced data collection and analysis. Recognizing that the interviewee would assume the institutional knowledge base of the interviewer, the researcher preceded each interview with a statement of awareness to the interviewee that he/she needed to answer the questions completely even though they thought the researcher already knew the answers.

To further combat bias and prejudicial interpretations, the researcher enlisted the support of a cohort group of graduate students trained in qualitative research and coding. The graduate students, under the close supervision and guidance of a university faculty member, consisted of men and women of different races and cultures who, through their own dissertation work, had been trained in qualitative research, coding, and analysis. In support of the researcher's request for assistance in avoiding bias and prejudice, this group of professionals challenged the analysis

of data, discussed implications, and provided additional insights throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Definitions

Barriers

Blockages or limited opportunities to advancements in higher levels of leadership (Ingersoll, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1987; Weinrich, 1994).

Career path

Progress taken through a sequence of jobs within the workplace in which each successive position has additional responsibilities and power (Giugliano, 1995; McGee, 1991; Weinrich, 1994).

Glass ceiling

The under-representation of women in higher level leadership positions as a result of the presence of invisible and artificial barriers that prevent qualified women from advancing up the career ladder (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000; Giugliano, 1995; Haller, 1995; Scherr, 1995). The term was first popularized in a 1986 article in the *Wall Street Journal* (Ingersoll, 1995).

High school principal

Educational leader of a general education school in which the configuration of grades concludes with grade 12, the graduating class. In Union County Public Schools, the configuration was either grades 9 – 12 (“high school”) or grades 7 – 12 (“secondary school”).

Mentor

A person who personally oversees, directs, and guides the professional development and career of another person (Doherty, 1999; VanHuss, 1996).

Mentoring

Formal or informal process of providing support, guidance, and/or training considered essential for success as an employee progresses in positions in educational administration (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000; Giugliano, 1995).

Networking

A formal or informal process that links people to each other in order to obtain information on job openings and administrative strategies. Networking also serves as a professional support group and as an avenue for visibility. Avenues for networking include active involvement in workshops, seminars, meetings, and committees (Cooper, 1992; Giugliano, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1987; VanHuss, 1996).

Role model

Person of the same gender who demonstrates the qualities and abilities of the position desired by the aspirant, such as the teacher who wants to be a principal; considered essential for success in educational administration positions (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, p. 6).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is divided into six chapters in order to reflect the knowledge and process involved in this research project. Chapter I includes an introduction, statement of need, statement of the problem, statement of purpose, list of guiding research questions, limitations of the study, and the study's organization. Chapter II presents a review of the literature pertaining to this study. Chapter III describes the research methodology used in this qualitative study, reflecting on the different paths that the data collection and analysis took during the research process. Chapter IV provides the findings of each case study using the following outline:

historical context, overview of school system, career summary, and narrative. In addition, Chapter IV identifies the patterns suggested by the variables gleaned from data analysis. Chapter V contains a cross-case analysis of the data collected from the four case studies, an analysis that suggested three themes. Chapter VI presents a theory suggested by the three themes, advice from interviewees, relationship of the findings to the literature, and recommendations for further studies. The Appendixes include a copy of the informed consent, the interview guide, and the transcriptions of the interviews of the four women who were the subjects of the case studies. Transcriptions of additional interviews are available from the researcher by contacting her at carolc.robinson@fcps.edu.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Futurists and statisticians predict that in the new century school districts will be challenged to find the administrators needed to run the nation's public schools (Whitaker, 2001). A study by the Education Research Service (as cited in Education Vital Signs, 1998) concluded that, in general, finding good principals will become more difficult over the next few years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics was more specific in its prediction: There will be a 10-20 percent increase in the need for school administrators through the year 2005 (as cited in Education Vital Signs, 1998). In a study conducted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), half of the school districts reported a shortage of qualified candidates for the positions of principal (Keller, 1998). Recent observations and surveys of the principal market revealed that "the 'graying' of school administrators coupled with increased job complexity, rising standards, and greater demands for accountability have led to increased numbers of administrative vacancies nationwide" (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 46).

State departments of education, local districts, and association committees predict large numbers of personnel retiring from educational administration. Washington state school districts, as reported by Barker (1997), anticipated that the number of openings in principalships would largely be due to retirements. Among their secondary schools alone the number of retiring Washington principals could be as high as 178 each year. During the school year 1995-1996, approximately 30 principalships in the state of Washington had to be handled by retired principals as a result of fruitless principal searches (Barker, 1997). The Philadelphia school system anticipated replacing at least 10 percent of its 259 building-level administrators each year

due primarily to retirements. In addition, the number of candidates applying for each principalship in Philadelphia had dwindled from 40 in the 1970s to 10 in the late 1990s (Olson, 1999). The Massachusetts Association of School Committees, as well, reported a drop in candidates for vacant superintendency positions from 80 applicants in the early 1990s to an average of about 35 in the mid-1990s (Education Vital Signs, 1996). Approximately 50% of the district superintendents in Whitaker's (2001) study reported either "somewhat extreme" or "extreme" shortage of principal candidates. Some of the superintendents provided additional comments regarding the dramatically decreasing numbers of candidates, the need to hire retired principals, and the increasing difficulty of finding qualified candidates.

In addition to the rising concern of retiring administrators, school districts must also contend with increases in student populations, resulting in the need for more school buildings and more principals to lead in those buildings (Tirozzi, 2001). In Washington state, for example, a predicted 48% increase in student enrollment will result in the construction of new school buildings and the hiring of additional principals to lead those schools (Barker, 1997).

When looking for qualified candidates for principalships, school districts generally look within the ranks of their teachers, the majority of whom are women. In the early 1990s more than two-thirds of the public school teachers were women (Moran, 1992). By 1997, 73% of public school teachers were women (National Center for Education Statistics, *Mini-Digest of Education Statistics, 1997*; as cited in Education Vital Signs, 1998). While these two reports indicated an increase in the percent of female teachers, the percent of women administrators does not reflect this same pattern of increasing percentages that match the teaching population. Information obtained from three separate years of the annual survey "Educational Vital Signs" showed that in 1992 the percentage of female high school principals was 12.1%, female middle

school principals was 20.5%, and female elementary principals was 39.7% (Saks, 1992). In 1995, the percentage of female high school principals was 13.1%, female middle school principals was 30.0%, and female elementary school principals was 42.1% (Education Vital Signs, 1995). In 1996, the percentage of female high school principals declined to 9.9%, as did the percentage of female middle school principals, to 24.8%, while female elementary principals increased slightly to 43% (Education Vital Signs, 1996).

The increase in women in the teaching workforce mirrors the predictions for the general workforce. White (1992) predicted that the share of women in the workforce “will rise while the white male share of the labor force will drop to 39.4 percent by the year 2000 from 48.9 percent in 1976” (p. 24). Carr-Rufino (1993) pointed out that a shrinking labor pool meant that “business recruiters must rely increasingly on all potential sources of qualified employees” (p. 11), which includes women. The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicted in 1992 that by the year 2000 more than 68.4% of those entering the workforce between 1992 and 2000 will be women, ethnic minorities, and immigrants (National LEADership Network, 1992).

These facts – a work force that is increasingly more female, a percentage of administrators that does not reflect the current composite of public school educators, high numbers of future retirements for educational administrators, increase in the number of new school buildings – point to the need to recruit more women for public school administration positions. The question then arises as to why women are underrepresented in the field of educational administration (Banks, 1995) despite an apparent need for their leadership.

The Glass Ceiling Phenomenon

During the mid-1980s the concept of “glass ceiling” was created to describe the invisible barriers that women encounter as they climb up the corporate ladder, ones that prevent them

from entering the upper echelons of business and government, the top of the corporate hierarchy (Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Scherr, 1995). “The glass ceiling is not simply a barrier for an individual, based on the person’s inability to handle a higher-level job. Rather, the glass ceiling applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher *because they are women*” (italics in original) (Morrison, et al., 1987, p. 13). Research in the areas of government, business, and education has confirmed the existence of a glass ceiling, an invisible barrier which keeps women out of top management positions (Haller, 1995).

The positions above the glass ceiling in the corporate world include vice presidents, presidents, and chief executive officers, while in education administration the glass ceiling includes the principalship and the superintendency, “the top of the organizational ladder” (Scherr, 1995, p. 312). Just as some of the research in business examined the role that line and staff positions play in the advancement of women, so has some of the research in education. Scherr (1995) found that even though 20% of the line district office positions (assistant superintendents, directors, etc.) were filled by women, only 4% of district superintendents in 1995 were women. Women were more likely to be in staff positions, such as consultants and supervisors of instruction, than to be in assistant principal and principal positions that traditionally lead more directly to the superintendency (Marshall, 1992). While conducting research for her dissertation, Giugliano (1995) found that the national percentage of female high school principals had dropped from 5.7% in 1905 to 1.4% in 1972, while the overall national percentage of women principals dropped from 55% in 1928 to 16% in 1982.

Education researchers studied the glass ceiling phenomenon through a variety of avenues: meta-analysis of research, creation of training venues, examination of professional journals, and review of court actions. “When women began to break through the glass ceiling, it was

necessary to combat” the traditional views that a woman’s style of leadership was not valuable (Hudson, 1996, p. 12).

Shakeshaft (1987) synthesized research and divided the glass ceiling in education into two domains: internal and external barriers. Internal barriers, which can be overcome by individual change, deal with lack of confidence, low self-image, lowered aspiration, and lack of motivation. External barriers, which require social and institutional change, deal with the lack of mentors/sponsors, lack of networking, lack of outside encouragement/support/counseling, lack of appropriate and positive curricular materials in administration preparation programs, lack of finances, and family and home responsibilities. Shakeshaft’s work provided insights that included the following:

1. By 1977, it was useful for women to have been guidance counselors prior to administration.
2. Specialist positions, supervisory posts, and elementary principalships were the three most common ways for women to enter school administration.
3. The greatest number of women in administration held central office positions, which tended to be staff rather than line positions.
4. As late as 1987 female candidates for administrative jobs were still asked questions on applications and during interviews about parental status and marital status.
5. Studies of attitudes of superintendents and school board members consistently showed that these two groups held unfavorable attitudes toward women in administration.

In an effort to help women recognize and cope with obstacles to advancement, professors designed courses involving various concepts and issues related to the “glass ceiling.” At the University of Pittsburgh, Rothenberger (1997) designed and conducted an instructional

workshop for freshman and sophomore women. At the University of South Carolina at Columbia, associate professor of education leadership Tonnsen created a university course for women in school administration in which she addressed several obstacles that women have as they apply for administrative positions: the expectation for women to have their doctoral degrees, the lack of women role models in school administration, and a society that makes it difficult for women, still the primary care-givers in most families, to work in demanding careers. This occurred after Tonnsen had observed that “discrimination is subtle, but it’s out there. You see, for instance, jobs that are advertised as assistant principal/head basketball coach. There are not many women who fill the bill on both counts” (Natale, 1992, p. 18). The issue of women needing to have doctoral degrees in order to advance in their careers was also addressed by Ryder (1994).

Gosetti and Rusch (1995) analyzed articles published by major education journals between 1983 and 1992 to determine if these sources of professional research and information, which “contribute to the praxis of educational leadership” (p. 27), were reporting the various aspects and implications of the glass ceiling. An ERIC search of *The School Administrator* (American Association of Superintendents A), *Principal* (National Association of Elementary Principals), *The Bulletin* (National Association Secondary School Principals), *Educational Leadership* (Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development), *Kappan* (Phi Delta Kappan), and *The Executive Educator* (National School Board Association) revealed that feminist theoretical perspectives, multi-ethnic viewpoints, and gendered standpoints were rarely included in the journals despite the increasing number of women in administrative positions. “Those interests, despite a decade of affirmative action laws and civil rights policies, remain

predominantly focused on traditional, privileged, and predominantly male perspectives” (Gosetti & Rusch, 1995, p. 20).

Moran (1992) examined actions that school boards had taken to ensure that policies were gender neutral and concluded that policies “once blatantly discriminatory toward women - are no longer so. At least, they aren’t discriminatory on paper” (p. 38). While women who experienced discriminatory practices were reluctant to file complaints (Bechtloff Watkins, 1995), Moran (1992) compiled examples of court rulings against school boards in the areas of gender discrimination and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on account of religion, national origin, and sex, as well as race and color. The following court cases were compiled by Moran (1992, pp. 39-40) using Westlaw and LEXIS computer information systems:

1. *North Haven Board of Education v. Terrel H. Bell* was settled in 1982 following an extensive review of sex discrimination issues concerning women in school administration.
2. *Irene C. Spears v. Board of Education of Pike County, Kentucky* (1988) questioned the appropriateness of nine administrative positions that were filled only by men. During the proceedings, it was revealed that the superintendent had stated that he wanted someone who could instill “the discipline of a football coach” in one position and that he “needed a man up there” in another position. The plaintiff succeeded in establishing that she was better qualified for the positions and that she had been passed over on the basis of gender.
3. *Hidle v. Geneva County Board of Education* examined why a female teacher was not selected for the position of assistant principal for which she was qualified and the man who was selected for the position was not.

4. *Farber v. Massillon Board of Education* was continued on appeal after losing the case in district court. Farber appealed and the 6th Circuit reversed district ruling. The appeals court said both male candidates who were selected lacked minimum qualifications for the positions for which they were hired.
5. *Tye v. Houston County Board of Education* found that the Alabama school board did not promote a female teacher to an administrative position because she had an “image problem.” The court determined that this was a pretext for gender discrimination, and evidence showed other instances of discrimination against women. The court also found that the district had made it a practice for years to promote only men to positions of authority.
6. *Rita A. Melius v. Waukegan Public School District No. 60 and School Directors of District No. 60, County of Lake and State of Illinois* found that the plaintiff had established her case on both points of gender discrimination and retaliation for a previous legal action. The plaintiff had obtained an Illinois administrator’s certificate but was not considered for a position because she “had no prior administrative experience” (p. 40).

The perception of the existence of a glass ceiling in education administration needs to be eliminated and women must be acknowledged as being strong enough, knowledgeable enough, willing enough, interested enough, and tenacious enough to be in line positions that include the principalship and superintendency (Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; McGrath, 1992).

Career Paths

While the superintendency may be the supreme position, those who wish to attain that level must have had experiences at other levels of administration, particularly the level of principal. While the person who fills the position of principal comes from the ranks of teachers,

researchers have found that teachers are not going into administration as they once did in the past for several reasons. For many, the teaching profession has become more attractive as a career in itself (Anderson, 1991). For others, the increased implementation of school-based management may provide the outlet for leadership that teachers want without having to leave the classroom (Barker, 1997; Lashway, 1999; Olson, 1999). For still others, personal considerations have impacted the decision-making process as teachers consider the move to administration.

The expectations for the principal may discourage many potential candidates from pursuing the position. “The principalship has accumulated increased responsibilities without the incentives needed to attract high-quality candidates” (Tirozzi, 2001, p. 437). Superintendents identified as possible deterrents for applicants “time commitment, high-stakes testing, school report cards, increased violence, a lack of public respect for education, and overall pressures” (Whitaker, 2001, p. 88). As with the position of district superintendent, salary is also an obstacle for the applicant pool (Esparó & Rader, 2001; Whitaker, 2001)

One of those considerations when examining advancement into administration is the prevalence of two-career families (Anderson, 1991). Mobility (Anderson, 1991; Eakle, 1995; Natale, 1992; Ryder, 1994), financial barriers (Keller, 1998; Lashway, 1999; Olson, 1999), and long hours on the job (Keller, 1998; Olson, 1999; Scherr, 1995) all have impacts on the two-career family. Anticipated increases in stress (Keller, 1998; Lashway, 1999; McAdams, 1998; Olson, 1999; Scherr, 1995) and anticipated feelings of isolation are both considered by teachers who may be interested in seeking administrative positions (Cooper, 1995; Eakle, 1995).

An additional reason for why women are not entering administration is the perception of the lack of role models, mentors, sponsors, peer acceptance, networking opportunities, and

access to informational systems within the school district (Banks, 1995; Eakle, 1995; Natale, 1992; National LEADership Network, 1992; Ryder, 1994; Sherman & Repa, 1994).

Some researchers believe that there are simply too few initiatives, nationally or statewide, that challenge the profession's current gender imbalance (Hodges, 1995). On the other hand, some researchers do believe that advances have been made in breaking the glass ceiling, such as Parker (1994) who provided documentation of the increase of female administrators in public school systems in California.

In 1992, Glass published *The 1992 Study of the American School Superintendency*. This national study provided insights generally for the position of superintendent, but included many findings that specifically pertained to women and their career paths. Women in the study tended to have more academic degrees, to have spent more years as principal and teacher, to have been hired through professional search firms, to have been appointed to their first administrative position later than males, to have moved from classroom teaching into a central office position or some "non-line" position in the school, to have begun their teaching and administrative careers at the elementary school level. Shakeshaft (1987) noted that career paths for women look differently than career paths for men, that women often choose to not to take nontraditional routes through administrative positions, and that "we do not fully understand why women themselves choose these paths when given other options" (p. 74). Shea (1983) found that women have different career paths than men as well as different career aspirations.

Glass's study (1992) found that sixty-two percent of the school districts reported actively recruiting women for administrative positions. In school districts with fewer than 300 pupils, 62.4% reported that they did not actively recruit women for administrative positions. In looking at career paths of women, Glass reported that the most frequent beginning position for women to

start their careers in administration was as a coordinator or director of a special program, followed by assistant principal. Another study on career paths (Shea, 1983) found that men took a direct path to the principalship – teacher, assistant principal, principal – four times more often than women. Shea (1983) also found that the lack of experience by women in line positions appeared to be a significant barrier to career advancement.

Gupton and Slick (1996) conducted a study to examine the insights and viewpoints of women administrators regarding career achievement and leadership. The study was conducted in two parts: a written survey of 151 women administrators and personal narratives from 15 of the women in the first survey group. The analysis of the data provided information useful to women aspiring to administration: (1) be prepared with proper credentials, (2) do strategic career planning, (3) persevere despite barriers associated with gender bias, (4) be diligent and professional, (5) honor, preserve, and protect your integrity, (6) develop personal and professional support systems, (7) be a mentor, and (8) develop leadership styles and strategies.

In 1997 Gupton and Del Rosario presented a paper at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association that described some of the federally funded initiatives related to increasing gender equity, with particular attention to those aimed at improving the status of women aspiring to or currently in educational administration. They reinforced what Gupton and Slick said in 1996: women who are seeking administrative careers should remember that education in the appropriate field, meaningful experience, record of improving and updating professional qualifications, networking, and strategic and long-range planning are important for advancement. The participants in Weinrich's study (1994) suggested that women who aspire to principalship should be goal oriented, academically competent, able to work well with people, competitive, and have good contacts. One participant was direct in her advice: "Just do it.

Often women worry too much about being a woman. If you are going to be successful be as successful as you can be” (Weinrich, 1994, p. 71).

Support Systems

Mentors, role models, and networking are recurring themes in dissertations, research studies and professional literature on education administration (Davis, 1997; Grogan, 1996; Scanlon, 1997). Crow and Matthews (1998) defined mentoring as a “socialization strategy to help individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and values necessary to perform the role of school administrator” (p. 17). After synthesizing and analyzing many of the major findings from the body of literature dealing with mentoring, Scanlon (1997) found that mentoring has traditionally prepared men for leadership positions, that using this process can provide informal means of career development and/or advancement, and that mentoring can be a valuable resource for breaking through the invisible barriers preventing the advancement of women in both business and education.

Luebke and Clemens (1994) found that having a mentor does affect one’s career advancement and that teachers with mentors moved more directly into administration than teachers who did not have mentors. Shea (1983) found in her study that women reported having mentors more often than men and that their mentors were more often males than females. Scanlon (1997) was candid in her opinion of the importance of mentors and mentoring: “In sum, the relevant literature of the last two decades is rather clear that for a woman who is qualified to assume advanced leadership positions in academe, having a mentor, or several mentors at different stages in her career, can be extremely valuable for attaining her ultimate goals” (pp. 47-48).

Mentoring, though, must be supported by professional credentials in order to develop the credibility of the woman aspiring to the upper levels of administration (Grogan, 1996; Ryder, 1994; Scanlon, 1997). These credentials include postgraduate work, more time in the classroom, and demonstrated leadership abilities.

Barriers

Studies have addressed the barriers that women face as they strive to advance in educational administration as well as how and why women were successful despite the barriers (Isaacson, 1998; McLean, 1994). Robinson (1996) posited in her research that the barriers to administration were multi-faceted, including historical barriers, experiences, and knowledge of career pathing and leadership theories. Robinson (1996) also noted that “in 1995 only 22 of Iowa’s 363 high school principalships were held by females” (p. 4). The women high school principals in a study by VanHuss (1996) identified gender as the primary barrier, overcoming “the myth that ‘women can’t be high school principals’” (p. 273). “Time” was also mentioned as a barrier.

Shakeshaft (1987) identified two categories of barriers that women encounter as they move up the career ladder: internal and external. The individual can make changes to overcome internal barriers, such as lack of confidence, aspiration, motivation, and low self-image. Society and institutions need to make the changes needed in order to overcome external barriers, such as attitudes in hiring women, gender discriminatory practices, and opportunities for role models, mentors, sponsors, and networking.

A woman’s aspiration to the positions of principal, assistant superintendent, superintendent, etc., is an important aspect of her achievement to upper administrative positions (Grogan, 1996). Aspiration, though, along with confidence and motivation, may be erroneously

viewed only through the male definition (Shakeshaft, 1987). In a study of men and women in Pennsylvania who certified for administration between 1970 and 1981, Shea (1983) found that women had lower career aspirations than men for obtaining positions as high school principals.

The perception of those who are responsible for hiring women in principalships often serves as an external barrier for women's advancement in educational administration. In Shea's 1983 study of candidates for principalship, "hiring practices" was identified by over half of the women as a barrier to hiring: "Women feel that gender is a factor in the decision to hire, and believe that men dominate the ranks and therefore get the jobs" (Shea, 1983, p. 141). These women expanded the barrier to include "conservative hiring practices" and "community sentiments" (p. 141). A 1986 study conducted by Phillips and Voorhees (as cited in Banks, 1995) found that while superintendents and personnel directors in the state of Washington believed that women had the ability to advance in education administration, school board presidents believed that women could be placed in elementary administration and not in other positions, such as assistant superintendent or superintendent. Where women are placed in the pipeline to these positions is important, since the research suggests that there is a difference between advancement from a staff position or from a line position (Shakeshaft, 1987; Tarner, 1997).

In other studies, women have indicated that they have had to overcome the stereotype that the person in the principals' office had to be a man (Isaacson, 1998; Pigford and Tonnsen, 1993). Often, researchers reported that women who were in the pipeline for principalship saw what the position was like and then chose not to pursue advancement (Scherr, 1995) or believed that to change positions moved them away from more important instructional matters (McLean, 1994).

The impact of family responsibilities and associated barriers for women administrators has been the focus of several studies. In a survey of women in one California school district, Ryder (1994) found that the conflict of juggling family and career responsibilities often forced these women to postpone applying for principalships. Because “the language of educational administration rewards long hours on the job” (Grogan, 1996, p. 185), women have been questioned about how they will be able to handle that requirement as well as family responsibilities.

Other researchers discovered that women were being asked questions during their interviews about their marital status, number of children, and family responsibilities - questions that were not being asked of men and often served as a barrier to advancement (Shakeshaft, 1987; Pigford and Tonnsen, 1993). Marshall (1992) discussed how the selection process typically weeded out people who were different due to background, gender, etc.

Recruiting Women for Administration

According to DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003), “although the number of individuals holding administrative licenses or endorsements exceeds the number of positions vacancies each year, recruitment and retention of qualified and certified administrators has become one of the greatest challenges confronting school systems across the nation” (p. 47). When faced with this problem, school systems have two choices: hire uncertified individuals as principals or actively recruit women for positions as principals, including at the high school level which was once considered for men only.

When looking at recruiting and promoting women, decisions are often made within a social context that women are inferior in status, are objects of negative stereotypes, and, though a majority of the U. S. population, are considered a minority because they lack access to power

(Banks, 1995). “Scholars, practitioners, and gatekeepers (those who control entry into educational leadership) are socialized and participate in a society that makes cultural assumptions about women” (Banks, 1995, p. 67).

To avoid the appearance of patronage, favoritism, or familiarity, school districts must develop clear written policies that include specific, definable criteria about recruiting and selecting, and, when a position is advertised, identify the specific opening or vacancy requirements (Anderson, 1991; Barker, 1997; Davis, 1997; Marshall, 1992). Women need to have the same direct communication as men from their supervisors that they will be “perfect” for a position, rather than having to find their own opportunities in cautious and discreet ways (Crow & Matthews, 1998). Ensuring access to administrative positions is a matter of equity, of providing role models for students, and of maximizing the use of the entire pool of personnel (Marshall, 1992).

Past efforts in recruiting teachers for principal preparation programs have centered within the boundaries of the school district and included self-selection, chance opportunities, and random mailings (Murphy, 1992; National LEADership Network, 1992). Procedures used in the mid-1980s for recruitment and selection “were often informal, haphazard, and casual” and “standards for selecting students into preparation programs were often perfunctory” (Murphy, 2000, p. 31) Researchers also found that residency of the potential candidate played a significant role, that living within a 25-50 mile commuting radius of the sponsoring university often determined who accepted the invitation to enroll in a principal preparation program (Murphy, 1992; National LEADership Network, 1992). The Educational Research Service (1998) found that “only about a quarter of the (school) districts surveyed have programs to recruit and train teachers to become principals” (*The American School Board Journal*, p. A14). Murphy (1992)

was direct in his observation that “research on the recruitment of school administrators has been anemic” (p. 81) and that, following a critical analysis of principal preparation programs in the mid-1980s, few recruitment efforts were undertaken, selection standards were low, and program content was irrelevant and disconnected from the practice of leadership (Murphy, 1993). The National LEADership Network (1992) also found that scholars had not spent much time closely examining the issue of how people become administrators in public schools in order to apply that knowledge to identification and recruitment efforts. By the 1999, preparation programs had evolved in content and curriculum in recognition that the role of the principal had become that of instructional leader and in recognition of the need of the principal to understand school reform, educational change, and school improvement (Murphy, 2000).

Recruitment Strategies

Teachers need to be encouraged and supported as they take the risk of separating from the field of teaching and moving to the field of education administration (Marshall, 1992; Parker, 1994). Anderson (1991) believed that the recruitment of outstanding principals was too important to be left to chance. Suggestions to school districts to expand the pool of applicants included recruitment efforts outside of the district, in-district training programs, career ladders, formal internships, reimbursement for the costs of certification programs, and workshops to introduce teachers to the world of public school administration (Anderson, 1991; Conner and Sharp, 1992; McAdams, 1998; National LEADership Network, 1992). An unusual recruitment strategy by the New York City school district successfully used early retirement incentives to replace retired administrators with higher numbers of women (Olson, 1991).

By conducting recruitment strategies outside of the school district boundaries, districts will broaden the potential pool of candidates for administrative vacancies. Examples of

strategies are advertisements and connections with state administrative associations, women's educational administration associations, and institutions of higher learning (Anderson, 1991; Barker, 1997; National LEADership Network, 1992). While using strategies to recruit outside of district boundaries, it is important to provide multiple ways for potential candidates to gain access to the school district's network of information (Anderson, 1991).

District training programs have been developed around the nation by school districts and professional organizations to foster the leadership development of talented teachers (Anderson, 1991; Doud & Keller, 1998) and to recruit and prepare candidates for the principalship. In 1998, for example, the Philadelphia school system launched the "Leadership in Education Apprentice Design" (LEAD) program which included an assessment center and helped individuals pass written and oral exams (Olson, 1999). Using an intensive selection process, mentors, and internships, the Humble (Texas) Independent School District created the "Administrator Academy" to identify qualified leaders within its own ranks of teachers for inclusion in a pool of applicants for their own school district (Widmier, 1996). The School Administrators Association of New York State presented half-day "Look Before You Leap" programs for teachers whom principals had tapped as potential school leaders, while the Michigan principals association printed pocket-sized cards to remind members why they entered administration and to encourage current principals to encourage others to become principals (Olson, 1999).

Anderson (1991) found that career ladders tended to be the exception, rather than the rule, in moving women up in administrative positions. Contrary to Shakeshaft's earlier findings in 1987, the position of assistant principal appears to be a productive career stepping-stone to the principalship and beyond (Marshall, 1992). Career ladders allow school districts to identify a pool of potential leaders, provide the diverse experiences that are invaluable for successful

administrators, increase retention of potential administrators, and develop a career path, or pipeline, to the principalship and superintendency (Anderson, 1991; Barker, 1997; Hegedus & Hartman, 1992). The woman high school principal in Robinson's (1996) study reported that she benefited greatly from having a female school administrator as a role model and from the strong support of her husband as she moved along her career path from teacher to high school principal.

In order to meet the demands from rising student enrollments, new school buildings, and retiring administrators, school districts must move away from unstructured recruitment strategies and develop what Milstein et al. (1993) called "purposeful recruitment" in which school districts do more than simply post job notices. Those responsible for recruiting for school districts need to be actively involved in early identification of teachers with leadership capability and in the provision of career orientation programs and mentors (Conner & Sharp, 1992; Doud and Keller, 1998; Lashway, 1999; McAdams, 1998; National LEADership Network, 1992).

National and University Efforts

While school districts have begun to make efforts to recruit women for educational leadership positions, state organizations and universities have also increased efforts to recruit and train women for principal preparation programs and for vacancies in administrative positions. Barker (1997) reported on efforts by Washington state school districts to recruit education administrators through the "Washington Council for Educational Administration Programs," which included 300 students in 1993-1994, 240 in 1994-1995, 215 in 1995-1996, and 300 in 1996-1997. A joint meeting in 1996 of the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) and the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) included discussions on the features of the job of principals and the problems in marketing the role to teachers. Suggestions included the promotion of the concept of recruiting one's replacement as

everyone's role and the need to identify and mentor teachers in their third or fourth years who can prepare to be administrators by their seventh year instead of the more traditional tenth. This last suggestion was supported by the results of an earlier survey conducted by Hegedus and Hartman (1992) suggested that teachers who wanted to be administrators should do so early in their careers since the extra time at the level of teaching appeared to slow the rate of advancement.

To improve the marketability of education administration, the two organizations, AWSP and WASA, also suggested the need to initiate stronger lobbying for appropriate salaries for principals. Other researchers have also suggested that state legislators support efforts to encourage teachers to enter administration, such as funding recruitment for under-represented groups, improving salaries, and minimizing unnecessary stress on principals (Doud & Keller, 1998; Olson, 2000). Albric Love, Jr., director whose responsibilities include recruitment, retention, and eligibility for Baltimore public schools, suggested that superintendents and school boards need to look at the job itself and rethink the whole role of today's principal (Olson, 2000).

Universities have increased collaborative efforts with school districts, which have become more vital in the recruitment of potential administrators (Barker, 1997; Lashway, 1999; Lovely-Wright, 1993; Murphy, 1992). The University of Buffalo worked with area school districts to develop the "Leadership for Tomorrow's Schools" (LIFTS), a program that included recruitment, a mentor for each student, and a full-time paid internship (Lashway, 1999). Stanford University created a program for education administration that included such recruitment strategies as letters to principals and superintendents, individual meetings with superintendents in six school districts with large populations of students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, formation of cohort groups, scholarship programs, and

enlistment of current and former students to recruit new candidates. As a result of these outreach efforts, the university has exceeded its enrollment targets each year and anticipates that the major recruiters of future candidates will be the members of current and previous cohort groups (Bridges, 1993).

Examples of other university programs show a variety of efforts. The University of Dayton Department of Educational Administration utilized mentoring, personal and professional improvement planning, and collegiality (Drury, 1992). The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill utilized networking, cohort groups, and a commitment to gender diversity (Maniloff & Clark, 1993). The University of Washington approached recruitment through several venues: written materials and conversations with administrators, advertisement through professional organizations, annual visits to superintendent meetings, and formation of cohort groups (Sirotnik & Mueller, 1993). In addition to letters and meetings with superintendents and principals, the University of New Mexico distributed brochures to teachers, held informational sessions at local sites, and formed cohort groups comprised of approximately 75 percent women (Milstein & Krueger, 1993). It is interesting to note that, while these initiatives to promote women leaders in education are occurring at universities throughout the United States, fewer than 350 of the nation's approximately 3,000 institutions of higher learning are led by women themselves (White, 1992).

Several national initiatives have been designed to improve the identification and preparation of school leaders through such organizations as the National Policy Board on Educational Administration, the University Council for Educational Administration, and the Danforth Foundation (McCarthy, 1993). The Danforth Foundation of St. Louis, Missouri, has worked closely in the past with universities to strengthen principal preparation programs while

addressing the undersupply of ethnic minorities and female candidates for principalship. One strategy that they found to be successful in increasing these numbers of underrepresented candidates was sending program announcements and applications to all teachers in a school system, with the additional invitation to nominate other teachers in their buildings that they believed had leadership qualities (Grosso, 1993). East Tennessee State University reported that after three years of a joint program with the Danforth Foundation they had a balance of men and women and that all had been teachers. Their recruitment efforts included a brochure for teachers, visits by a university facilitator to a school board meeting at each of 17 school districts, and the formation of cohort groups (Grosso, Burkett, & Smith, 1993). The University of Alabama, also working with the Danforth Foundation, had a high average female to male ratio of 78 percent to 22 percent by using purposeful recruitment strategies such as a sponsorship system, mentors, and all-day workshops to recruit candidates (Milstein & associates, 1993).

Doctoral Dissertations and National Research

Research, studies, and dissertations on women and the high school principalship have provided information from different parts of the country and throughout the twentieth century. In the literature review of his dissertation, Etheridge (1981) included the findings of a national survey of high school principals conducted by Leonard V. Koos in 1924. Koos found that women represented less than 10 percent of the 400 principals in that survey, that these women tended to be principals of small high schools, and that their salaries were significantly less than their male counterparts (Etheridge, 1981).

The disproportionate percentage of male and female high school principals has been the focus of several studies. In Oklahoma, 89% of the high school principals in 1998 were male (Gerber, 1999), while in New Jersey, 85.6% of high school administrators were males

(Giugliano, 1995). In Ohio, twenty out of 1,015 secondary principals were females during the 1979-1980 school year. Out of those twenty, 41% served as secondary principals in seven large urban districts (with student populations exceeding 40,000), over 50% of the women were located in the more populous northeast part of Ohio, and only one female secondary principal worked in the rural southeast part of the state (Mauter, 1980). Rakovic (1998) reported that 43% of the high school principals in New York City were women, while a decade earlier the percentage of women high school principals from around the state rose from 6.4% in 1981 to 11.5% in 1986.

Career paths of high school principals were reported in several studies, confirming earlier research that women follow more indirect, circuitous routes to the position of high school principal. Giugliano (1995) conducted a quantitative survey of New Jersey secondary principals followed by a sample of male and female respondents for qualitative interviews. The results of the survey found that more female high school principals in New Jersey held staff specialist, quasi-administrative positions prior to line principalships, that fewer females were being promoted from within their school or district, and that “their movement up the administrative ladder was assisted by colleagues and mentors on the administrative levels” (p. 125). All of the interviewees revealed that none of them had planned a career pattern, that they were either “tapped” for a position or urged by a mentor to apply for a position. LaPointe (1994) found that 82.4% of the respondents in her study of secondary female principals in Michigan had not planned to become administrators before entering the field of education.

Support during a candidate’s path to a position as high school principal has been the focus of several studies. Of the secondary principals participating in LaPointe’s study (1994), 27% reported networking, mentoring, school board, and community as important factors in

attaining principalships. While 88% of the secondary principals perceived that networking was important, only 45.1% stated that “they had been assisted by other females in their position attainment” (LaPointe, 1994, p. 122). In the same study, only 26% of the Michigan secondary principals agreed that having a same-sex role model had helped in attaining a position. Females aspiring to principalship in Ohio reported that both men and women served as role models, with 29% of the respondents identifying the secondary principal as the most frequent person who served as a role model (Mauter, 1980). The female administrators in Mauter’s descriptive research study reported major concerns with the impacts of the “operation of the ‘old boy network’” (24%) and “discriminatory promotion/hiring practices” (38%) on the pursuit of career goals (1980, p. 122). Rakovic (1998) found that each of the principals in her qualitative study “had a forceful administrator or superintendent advocating on their behalf. These administrators weren’t necessarily mentors but rather superadvocates” (p. 265).

While those interested in administrative positions can take proactive measures in planning their careers, the actions and measures taken by school districts do not necessarily coordinate with those of the candidates. Studies show that recruitment and search strategies vary greatly among school districts, and use of those strategies by applicants varies as well. Gerber (1999) found that Oklahoma school districts posted vacancies in a several publications: state and local newspapers, a state administrators’ newsletter, and a national publication. One school district sent faxes to neighboring school districts. The male administrators interviewed by Giugliano (1995) said that they applied for positions from newspaper advertisements or were “tapped” from within their schools or districts. In a survey of Michigan secondary female principals, 64.7% said that they were promoted in the school in which they worked (LaPointe, 1994). The perception of luck – “being in the right place at the right time”- as the most

important factor in attaining a position was reported by 54.9% of the respondents in LaPointe's study (1994). In a 1980 study by Mauter, 28% of the female administrators in Ohio used "friends and mentors" as sources of information to find out about administrative vacancies, 23% used "incidental or word of mouth," and 20% took advantage of vacancy lists posted by the school district (p. 103).

Once candidates have been selected for consideration, the selection process can involve a committee of all stakeholders (including teachers, parents, and students), a committee of central office staff, or only a single central office staff member (such as the Director of Secondary Instruction) (Gerber, 1999). Gerber (1999) found that the superintendent had the power to exert enough influence to predetermine the outcome of principal selections from direct involvement to political maneuvering of selection committees. The superintendents of two school districts in Gerber's study, for example, invited candidates to apply for high school principal positions, both of whom got the jobs.

Following a review of dissertations completed between 1964 and 1989, Banks (1995) expressed concern that research regarding women in education administration had not focused on the variations within gender groups and had depended too much on surveys, a form of quantitative research that relies on the accuracy of self-reporting which is not always supported by the actual behavior of the respondent. Banks (1995) suggested that research was needed to explain the ways in which gender affects recruitment and selection.

Education: A View of Virginia

The above information outlined and described the phenomenon of the glass ceiling as it applied to education from a national viewpoint. Results of research and strategies piloted by universities throughout the nation have provided foundations for more successful recruitment of

women for positions in education administration. An examination of data and practices in Virginia reveals some efforts made within that state to promote the inclusion and advancement of women in public school administrative positions. It is not surprising to see that the percentages of males and females in education administrative positions in Virginia reflect the same disparities as at the national level. For the 1998-1999 school year in Virginia, for example, 78% of all district superintendents were male while 22% were female (Market Data Retrieval, 1998) while 80% of the all teachers were female (Center for Survey Research, 1998).

State and University Efforts

A number of actions and programs were developed and implemented at the state level by universities, school districts, and national outreach programs. In 1985, for example, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University began a series of actions and partnerships with school systems and organizations to assist in the screening, assessment, and training of individuals who aspired to principalship: the Southwest Virginia Regional Assessment Center (1985), the Danforth Foundation (1988), and The National Alliance (1991) (Worner, 1994). The National Alliance included a partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

An example of a national outreach program is the National LEADership Network (1992), which identified a representative and trainer in Richmond within the Virginia Department of Education. This national network of LEAD (Leadership in Educational Administration Development) organizations, with representatives and trainers throughout the United States, was co-sponsored in 1992 by the U. S. Department of Education and Kraft General Foods, Inc. with the purpose of developing the leadership needed for the 1990s and the 21st century, particularly the leadership that can be provided by women.

Virginia colleges and universities have worked diligently to create principal preparation programs to develop future school leaders. In 2003 nine colleges and universities in Virginia, out of a possible 500, received “National Recognition” from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education for outstanding educational leadership preparation programs. This followed a rigorous voluntary peer review process based on national standards developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (“University-Based Administrator Preparation Programs,” March 2003).

Doctoral Dissertations and State Research

Research findings from doctoral dissertations provided information regarding various aspects of women in education administration in Virginia. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used to provide insights regarding women at various positions along the administrative career path. Topics of research have included such areas as the superintendency, staff development, mentors, leadership styles, and networking.

Etheridge (1981) used quantitative methods in a state survey in which 263 of 358 Virginia senior high school principals participated. He found that 95.2 percent of the principals were male and 4.8 percent of the principals were female. A more recent survey of principals in Virginia reported that 71% of the responding high school principals were men and 29% were women (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003), suggesting a significant increase in the percentage of women high school principals between 1981 and 2003.

Fisher (2001) conducted a survey of Virginia superintendents to identify which of 22 administrative competencies a principal lacked would lead to his/her removal as principal and which strategies superintendents used to help struggling principals. Fisher found that the interventions most frequently used by superintendents – verbal reprimand and negative

performance evaluations – were not successful in helping principals who were at risk. Interventions such as mentoring and peer support were infrequently used, although superintendents added written comments that these would be effective strategies. Although the goal of Fisher’s study was not to find gender differences, the data showed that there were career outcome disparities between males and females. Fisher suggested that this “may be due to long held beliefs by some superintendents that females are not geared to upper-level leadership roles” (pp. 141-142). Areas of training for aspiring principals suggested by Fisher’s study included decision-making, problem-solving, delegating, monitoring, and developing and sustaining positive relationships with the school and community (2001). Fisher acknowledged that these skills tended to be more affective than cognitive, opposite of the technical knowledge and management skills provided by university principal preparation programs and school district staff development initiatives.

What is often considered the top rung of the administrative ladder is the district superintendent. Women superintendents in Virginia have been the subjects of several studies (Atwater, 1997; Davis, 1997; Isaacson, 1998). Using qualitative research, Isaacson (1998) found that while female superintendents were supported by varied job opportunities and the strong support of mentors as they rose to their positions, they also had to deal with male dominance in the position, stereotyping, and self-imposed barriers. Through surveys and interviews, Turner (1997) examined the distribution of males and females in line and staff positions in central office personnel in 56 districts in Virginia. Fifteen school districts reported no women in line positions while five other school districts reported no men in line positions. Turner found...

...that more men in line positions seem to be the standard. Even though the representation of men and women do not proportionately reflect the pool from which they

were hired, more men are being placed in line positions, particularly in the larger school districts. Women dominate the staff positions. (1997, p. 73)

Tarner also found that “the smaller rural school districts tend to have more women in line positions” (1997, p. 72).

Walker (2000) used case studies and qualitative methods to examine the leadership styles of three high school principals. She found that these principals used a variety of leadership strategies, including those that had traditionally been considered male or female. Of particular interest was the discovery that the female principals “managed school operations using *justice* to inform *care*. Care is historically and stereotypically associated with women, while *justice* is stereotypically associated with men” (p. 93).

Weaver (1986) conducted a quantitative study based on a statewide survey of 141 Virginia public school superintendents to determine if they had staff development programs for the identification, assessment, and/or training of prospective principals. Of the 112 superintendents returning the survey (76 from county school systems and 36 from city school systems), only 23 superintendents (14 county and 9 city) indicated that they had such programs in place. In the written survey, two questions related to recruitment: “How are persons identified for the training” of prospective principals? and “What is the maximum number of participants selected for the training?” Out of the 14 county superintendents who responded that they had recruitment and training programs, eight (57%) indicated that candidates were recruited by their districts through recommendations of superiors, five (36%) indicated that they employed a combination of recruitment strategies that included interviews, examinations, and other related procedures; and one of the county superintendents indicated that participation was limited to practicing assistant principals (Weaver, 1986, p. 87). Out of the nine city superintendents who

responded that they had recruitment and training programs, four (44%) reported that participation in their programs was open to anyone who expressed an interest (Weaver, 1986). Additional information collected from the respondents revealed that the majority of school districts selected participants from recommendations submitted by their superiors, followed by expression of interest, competitive interviews, and tests. The most common size of participant groups selected for training was “less than 10,” as indicated by nine (64%) of county and three (33%) of city superintendents (Weaver, 1986).

Doherty (1999) examined the role that mentors played in the development of school principals. Using qualitative research methods, Doherty found that most of the 15 retired female principals who participated in the study believed that women were more likely to advance in education administration with the support of a mentor. The retired principals reported that the mentoring occurred on an informal basis. Doherty (1999) also recorded assertions from some of the participants who believed that coaching provided an informal network as well as a quicker route to the principalship. Cooper (1992) conducted research regarding the use of networking to further the careers of 20 high-level women administrators in public schools in Virginia.

Beyond 2000

While the focus of this research spanned the years 1970 – 2000, it is important to consider what is beyond the year 2000 as we begin a new millennium in education. Quinn (2000) sounded the alarm again that “the shortage of school administrators to lead the nation’s schools is real and is reaching crisis proportion” (p. 24). Still there has been no influx of aspiring individuals who are certified and want to be principals: “Fewer teacher leaders are choosing career paths that will result in administrative positions” (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 47). Potential candidates who are certified are reluctant to consider principalships when they

witness the conditions of the principal's job: extended work weeks of over 50 hours, salary increases that do not match the increase workload of the position, and lack of support systems for new principals (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

The expectations of the principal have increased to the point that "people are reluctant to aspire to a position that sounds impossible to perform" (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 46). Whereas the principal of 1970 was expected to "manage" the building, the principal of 2000 was expected to be a building manager, student disciplinarian, instructional leader, staff developer, communication and public relations expert, program developer, grant writer, human relations handler, relationship builder, and stress manager (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Donaldson, 2001). Principals are also expected to be politically savvy, "conversant with the new lexicon of reform and the political will driving the reform" and "practiced within the context of the political climate" (Tirozzi, 2003, p. 55) as they handle Title I (enacted in 1965), Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA; enacted in 1975), Goals 2000 (initiative of late 1980s), the standards movement (late 1990s), high-stakes testing (late 1990s), No Child Left Behind (2001), and, in Virginia, the Standards of Learning (mid-1990s).

In looking ahead, the principal working in the millennium will have to serve not only in the role of instructional leader but also in the role of change agent (Peebles, 2000).

Principals as change agents and instructional leaders will have to keep the schools' focus on both ends of the educational continuum: the need to help all students meet world-class standards and the individualized learning approaches essential to help increasingly diverse learners reach them. (Owings and Kaplan, 2003, p. 261)

As change agents in the new millennium, principals will need to understand the impact of globalization as an "influence that is causing customary cultural, social and geographic orders to

disappear as we move into an age dominated by rapid, seamless information transfer” (Papalewis, 2000, p. 12). Principals will have to provide leadership in the global education arena. Papalewis (2000) pointed out that globalization does not mean the downsizing of education and getting rid of the “excesses,” as some prognosticators would indicate. Education is not like business because it cannot be driven by policies and procedures that are based on political or economic models:

Education is fundamentally a social force and has all the complications that occur in a social environment. Globalization is also a social force; it is also very complicated.... Since education is a social phenomenon, and because education is under the influence of globalizations, the broad social health of the world becomes important.... Globalization brings to education monumental challenges. (Papalewis, 2000, pp. 12-13)

School districts must be proactive in identifying principals for future vacancies. To confront the leadership shortage, schools need to develop succession plans in order to “create a cadre of management candidates with strong knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Quinn, 2002, p. 26) in order to continue the smooth operation of the school organization.

A key advantage of succession planning is the strong message it sends that school officials value the contributions of its employees and will encourage their career growth. Teachers may be more willing to take on additional responsibilities and accept challenging professional assignments if they know their efforts will result in recognition and promotion. (Quinn, 2002, p. 27)

Administration and the principalship have changed since 1970. Qualifications such as being a high school coach did not appear to be as important for advancement and promotions by 2000. In a survey of Virginia principals conducted by DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003)

only 44% of the high school principals responding indicated that they had been coaches of athletic teams. Benefits of the position have changed and, at times, come under question and challenges. On the positive side, the salary for women principals was slightly higher on the average than for men principals by 2000, as shown in an analysis of salaries between 1987-1988 and 1999-2000 by Poppink and Shen (2003). This may have occurred because (1) there was a higher percentage of women principals in urban (35.2%) and suburban (23.3%) school districts which increased the average salary for women principals, (2) women tend to teach longer than men and so enter administration at a higher salary level, and (3) “because teachers’ salaries tend to be uniform, rather than gender driven, the principals’ salaries tend to vary less by sex” (Poppink & Shen, 2003, p. 78). The changes that began in 1970 did not end in 2000, but continue as principals incorporate the millennium challenges of being a change agent, of handling globalization, and of adapting to the ever-changing institution of public education itself.

Summary

Educators predict that there will be a shortage of candidates for the position of principal, including the high school level, for a variety of reasons. Some school districts in the nation are already dealing with leaderless buildings and the necessity of temporarily placing retired principals in positions until someone can be hired. The number of principals retiring in the future is high. Increases in student enrollments are creating the need for the construction of new school buildings, resulting in the need for more principals to lead the new schools. Multicultural, global communities require different leadership skills from those used in the past, ones that are often considered “feminine.”

The teacher population consists mainly of females. The ranks of administrators are drawn from the ranks of teachers. This would suggest that there would be a pool of candidates

from which the number of female teachers who are selected for high school educational leadership positions reflect the high percentage of female teachers – but there is not. While elementary principals tend to be female, the high school principal positions continue to be filled by males. The shortage of principals will need to be filled by women – the men simply are not there in adequate numbers any more. The external barriers of family obligations, no time for additional education, no support from mentors or networking, or denial of women’s ability to lead high schools are no longer viable reasons not to hire women for high school principalships. Women are needed in order to meet the growing needs for leadership in our schools.

In Virginia in 2000, a disproportionate number of men were high school principals in comparison to the number of women who were high school principals: 222 male and 75 female high school principals (see Chart 1 on page 12). The majority of regions in the state had more male than women high school principals. With the high number and percentage of women teachers in the Commonwealth, the question is open for discussion about why there is such a discrepancy in the placements of women as principals at the high school level.

One Virginia school district that has employed a high number of female high school principals is Union County Public Schools. This did not happen overnight, but over time since the first woman was hired as the principal of Trinity High School in 1971. Gerber (1999) suggested a longitudinal study of successful female high school principals to discover how they achieved success and the obstacles they encountered along the way, thus providing “information (that) would be enlightening for women who aspire to the principalship” (p. 183). By looking at the career paths and support systems of four women in Union County Public Schools who obtained positions of high school principal from 1970 – 2000, a historical perspective may provide insights into the impact of cultural and political climate between decades as well as

changes in standards over time within the school district. Longitudinal data may also provide information to help other school systems as they search for qualified women to fill the positions of high school principalships that are currently vacant or may be vacant in the future. The stories of these female high school principals from Union County Public Schools in Virginia, as seen through their eyes, may provide that information while also providing inspiration and motivation to other women who are contemplating their own career paths to the high school principalship.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the processes used by four women as they became high school principals in a Virginia public school district from 1970 – 2000. Chapter III is divided into four sections: description of the research methodology used in this study; explanation of the sampling technique; overview of the data collection process; and description of data analysis.

Research Methodology

Researchers in the field of educational administration have used both qualitative and quantitative methods, depending on the reasons and basis for each study (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). The qualitative process, while labor intensive and challenged on the generalizability of findings, is based on a phenomenological position that supports exploration, discovery, and inductive logic; provides invaluable insights into what real life is like by collecting data that is close to a specific situation, often through observations, interviews, or documents; and involves one or a few case studies (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Qualitative research, which looks for patterns that emerge after careful analysis, asks “how?” “where?” or “why?” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The appropriate use of qualitative methods can add depth (Patton, 1990), provide richer details (Patton, 1990; Rossman & Wilson, as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), offer triangulation (Patton, 1990; Rossman & Wilson, as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), initiate fresh insights (Rossman & Wilson, as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), expand scope and sequence of a study (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, as cited in Miles & Huberman,

1994) and extend meaning to quantitative analysis, bringing the results of quantitative data to life. The review and analysis of documents in qualitative research can involve excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from publications, reports, and personal diaries, as well as responses, both multiple-choice items and open-ended essays, to such quantitative methods as questionnaires and surveys (Patton, 1990). While mail surveys have provided aggregate descriptions of the “average woman administrator,” few biographies, histories, case studies, or ethnographies have been written about women in administration, resulting in little knowledge of the individual lives and experiences of women administrators (Shakeshaft, 1987).

Recognizing the value of research that answers “why” and “how,” that examines individual women administrators, and that provides insights into real life, this research developed case studies on four women from one school district in Virginia who became high school principals between 1970 and 2000. The use of qualitative methods in this study encouraged and provided opportunities for exploration and discovery regarding the processes that these four women followed in order to obtain their positions as high school principals in Union County between 1970 and 2000.

In the past, researchers attempted to identify a specific approach under the umbrella of qualitative research to use in conducting their studies. Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed that “the paradigms for conducting social research seem to be shifting” (p. 5) and that it was possible to incorporate different research approaches in forming conclusions. Realizing that discovery and exploration are inherent in qualitative research, each case study in this research recognized the value of unstructured interviews and pursued new data obtained from each interview. These interviews offered additional people to interview as well as additional

documents to analyze. Based on the development and examination of the four case studies, this study built a theory grounded in the data collected and analyzed from the case studies.

The researcher prepared for this study in two areas: practice interviews and historical preparation. Prior to the study, the researcher conducted two pilot interviews in 2000 and 2001 to gather information about roadblocks and challenges that women faced in making the next steps in their careers to become administrators. The pilot interviews showed the challenges that the researcher would have to remain neutral during interviews while soliciting the material needed for the research topic. During the interviews for the actual study, the researcher found that she had to remind interviewees that, even though it might be true, they could not assume the researcher knew the answers to questions or understood the history or dynamics behind situations mentioned during the interviews. While the interviewees knew that the researcher had worked in the school system for over twenty years, they were to answer the questions as if the researcher were an outsider. Nevertheless, in three incidences interviewees became perturbed when the researcher attempted to further probe a topic brought up during the interview. The researcher should have known the answers!

In the second area of preparation for each case, documents were examined in order to provide the researcher with background knowledge regarding the historical context and the culture of the school system at the time. The researcher read accounts from national and local newspapers, local journals, and internet searches. The researcher located primary sources of school system information through documents housed in the system's professional library and records of school board minutes. Institutional memory of colleagues often provided valuable clues and directions. During the interviews, the snowball technique was used to identify additional people to contact and documents to read.

Because the researcher was a middle school principal in the same school district, the researcher was able to bring additional insights into the collection and interpretation of data that may not have been apparent to someone who came from “the outside.” While challenging the researcher to remain neutral during interviews, this familiarity also encouraged participants to share more information than they might have otherwise. The researcher had generally experienced and witnessed firsthand the experiences of women as they moved from the classroom to the principalship. The researcher had also heard the stories of women high school principals who served in the 1970s and 1980s and had pioneered the way for other women who wanted to make the same advancements in their careers. This study provided specific voices from an earlier world of struggle and opposition that should be understood and appreciated by current applicants for high school principalships.

For this study the researcher was not a participant observer but was immersed in the current and recent past of the school system. The researcher had an intense interest in the study and made every attempt to “hold in abeyance” any political assumptions or theoretical commitments. While the researcher’s prior knowledge and “intense interest” challenged the neutrality of the researcher, it also provided a higher level of trust with participants and access to information that an outsider may not have had access to nor knowledge of. This challenge is a risk worth taking to gain the reflections and hear the life experiences of these pioneers in educational leadership.

To help control for bias on the part of the researcher, who is an employee of the same school system and a colleague of many of those who were interviewed, a cohort group of graduate students provided assistance in discussing, analyzing, and coding data. These students were doctoral candidates who were also involved in their own qualitative research. The

members of the cohort group met regularly, often weekly, and consisted of men and women who held jobs, for the most part, outside of education. The cohort group was led under the expertise of a university professor who had extensive experience and knowledge of qualitative research and grounded theory. The combined experiences and sincere interest of all the members of this cohort group led to many intense discussions and challenges to data analysis and interpretation.

In grounded theory, the researcher begins with an area of study and what is relevant is allowed to emerge. Rather than begin with a theory and prove it, the theory is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents and involves discovery, development and verification through data collection and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Researchers working in grounded theory hope that their theories will relate to and have useful applications to others in the field. Each case study for this study included overviews of historical and school system events as well as the culture of society at large and the school system specifically. Multiple interviews and document analyses offered a great deal of data to identify and categorize. Patterns appeared from the categories, leading to overarching themes between the four case studies. Grounded in the data, a theory regarding the impact of change by society on the institution of public schools began to emerge, leading to the impact on and interaction with the processes that these four women used to advance in their careers to high school principalship.

Qualitative research can be used to build research instruments, develop policy, evaluate programs, provide information for commercial purposes, guide practitioners' practices, and serve political ends (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The results of this study of women high school principals may provide information to develop policies in other school systems that will foster the identification and training of women for upper levels of leadership within the district. Considering the concern for the predicted shortage of principals, school systems need to develop

and employ methods to identify, train, recruit and hire women as principals at the high school level. This study may also give women the confidence to recognize their own abilities to become administrators as well as to initiate their own training and strategies to be hired as high school principals.

Sampling Technique

The words that tell stories or incidents in concrete and meaningful ways are often more revealing and convincing to other researchers, practitioners, or policy makers than the statistical analysis of numbers (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The participants in this study enthusiastically shared their individual stories and perceptions pertaining to the processes that the four women in this study used to make advancements in their careers. The interviews also provided information regarding the history and culture of the school system, the historical contexts of the times, and the impact of change on employees within the school system. An unforeseen bonus was the longevity in the school system that each of the additional interviewees had. This longevity provided additional information on other women in the school system, perspective on what was happening in different areas of a geographically large school system, and interpretations of activities that occurred throughout the span of the study.

Strategies for selecting participants in qualitative studies tend to involve purposive sampling to avoid bias and to increase the likelihood that the variability commonly found in the large setting will be represented in the sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The percentage of women high school principals in Union County Public Schools in 1970 was zero; women high school principals in the same school system reached a majority of 54% for the first time in 2000 (Angles, 2003). Realizing that “the choice of cases usually is made on *conceptual* grounds, not on representative grounds” (Miles & Huberman, p. 29, 1994; italics in text), the researcher

decided to select a woman from each end of the timeline, 1970 – 2000, for two of the case studies. In order to add confidence to the findings of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994), and to best document the changes that occurred during the thirty years, two additional case studies were added between the 1971 and 2000 cases. Through these four case studies, data was collected at approximate ten-year spans – 1971, 1982, 1991, 2000 – data that better offered a longitudinal examination of the changes that occurred over time with these four women in this school system. Approaching the selection of case studies via the time span of “decades” provided a natural way to select participants as well as to include a manageable number of case studies for this beginning researcher.

A list of women who held or currently hold positions as high school principals from 1970 to 2000 were compiled from school system archives, institutional memory of members within the school system, and newspaper accounts. The women were then divided by decades – 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s – according to the first time they were hired as high school principals. For each decade, the women were placed according to seniority, based on the month and year in which each was first hired as a high school principal. As a result, the women who participated in this study were purposively selected based on seniority, availability, interest, and willingness to participate. The next step was to contact the first woman at the beginning of each decade and to ascertain her willingness to participate in this study. Every woman contacted to participate readily and without hesitation accepted. While the focus on this study was on gender, the acceptance by Georgia Xavier for the decade of the 1990s provided a glimpse into the racial challenges that she had to meet in addition to gender.

After selecting the subjects of a qualitative study, the researcher must deal with ethics -- the way he or she treats the individuals with caring, fairness, openness, and truth -- while

protecting the subjects through informed consent and assurances of anonymity (Smith, 1990).

Each participant was given a consent form to sign that outlined the research project and assurances of anonymity in the study (Appendix A). Participants were given the option to leave the study at any point. During the interviews, the researcher was sensitive to any negative reactions or reluctance on the part of the participants to answer questions or discuss topics. All tapes and notes were locked in a file cabinet in a room located in the researcher's home.

Data Collection Process

The review of literature of women administrators as well as findings from earlier dissertations provided a beginning direction for this research. Domains and themes identified by earlier research offered preliminary questions in the areas of career paths, support from within the school system, and support from outside the school system. Questions were developed to guide the interviews, but otherwise each interview was conducted in an unstructured manner. The interviewee was given opportunities to go into different topics that they deemed relevant to the basic research topic. Following each unstructured interview, the material was typed into the software package *Ethnograph* for analysis and labeling. The elements of exploration and discovery allowed for patterns and themes to emerge and crystallize from the data collected. Final analysis led to a theory grounded in the data from the case studies.

The usual methods of data collection in qualitative studies include interviews, observation, and document analysis. For this study, data collection focused on interviews and document analysis. Since one of the women was in retirement, it was not beneficial to observe the other three who are currently employed in Union County Public Schools. Other sources of data were sought and incorporated in the studies whenever possible.

Before each case study began, two areas of research were conducted in preparation for the interviews: outline of the historical context of the decade and an overview of the school district leading up to the woman's appointment to principalship. Information from these two areas – historical context and school district – provided background information for each interview. By having this knowledge, the researcher was able to determine any impact that there might have been on the woman and her career. These additional sources of information enabled the researcher to avoid miscommunications or misunderstandings during the interviews and provided a beginning vocabulary of “school talk” (such as initials, jargon, and school configurations) between interviewer and interviewee. The interviews could therefore be directed to include not only facts and figures but also to include each woman's thoughts and reactions to what was happening in history and in the school system as she made advancements in her career as an education administrator.

After preparing for the case study, the researcher developed a list of questions for each woman that initiatively centered on the research questions of career path, support within the school system, and support from outside the school system. Additional questions were asked as each interview progressed, including probing questions arising from statements volunteered by each woman during her interview. The researcher tape-recorded each interview and later transcribed the interview using *Dragon Naturally Speaking*. The software package *Ethnograph* was then used to record, analyze, and code data.

During each interview, the researcher noted references to additional sources of information. Using the snowball technique, many of the people identified by the women in these case studies were interviewed for additional information, to corroborate the women's statements, and to offer triangulation for the data. These additional participants were male and female as

well as current and past employees of the school system. These additional participants represented people at the school building, region office, and central office levels. An unexpected result of these additional interviews was that most of these people were able to extend the knowledge of school district history, to share information and insights that applied to more than one case study, and to provide additional examples of what was going on with other women, and men, during this period of change. Although there was always the chance for “one more bit of data,” the final number of interviewees was determined by the saturation and repetitiveness of information gathered by the researcher by the end of the fourth case.

Reliability, Validity, Generalizability

Scholars have debated for years the inclusion or absence of reliability, validity, and generalizability to legitimize qualitative studies. In qualitative studies, reliability depends largely on the researcher and his/her familiarity of the subject, strong conceptual interest, good investigative skills, and the use of a multidisciplinary approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher in this study was very familiar with the school system and community, having been involved in the school district since 1972 either as a student, teacher, or administrator. As an administrator, the researcher had extensive training and nine years of experience in the use and application of qualitative methods, including the collection of a variety of data sources, as applied to the teacher evaluation process. Prior extensive training and practice in interviewing strategies used in the hiring process of staff members for more than ten years created a strong foundation for the professional skills needed for the unstructured interviews in this study, particularly the ability to listen and to create a natural flow of questions and probes during interviews.

To increase the validity of a qualitative study, Wolcott (1990) offered strategies to researchers that included a procedure of more listening than talking, accurate record keeping, inclusion of primary data in final accounts, acknowledgment of subjectivity, acceptance of continual feedback and reactions, and accurate writing. To provide validity is to provide credibility and authenticity to the results (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The techniques of triangulation support validity as information is gathered through different methods, samples, perspectives, etc. (Patton, 1990). As the case studies of women high school principals were conducted, the strategies outlined above were used to provide validity to the study. The use of a graduate-level doctoral cohort group experienced with qualitative research and coding provided continual feedback and reactions to the collection and analysis of data, while offering suggestions to ensure credibility and authenticity and to avoid bias. Validity through triangulation included interviews with the primary woman in each case, follow-up interviews with colleagues from the same time period, and examinations of a variety of related documents.

Generalizability is not a useful standard or goal for qualitative research in that it does not produce universal laws in the classical sense, although studies of one situation may be used to speak to or help form a judgment about other situations (Schofield, 1990). It may best be dealt with as a concept or a sense of fittingness, in which a substantial amount of information is gathered so that similarities and differences between sites can be analyzed and reasonable judgments made. Qualitative researchers began in the 1970s to offer generalizability, which is a fundamental part of quantitative research and statistical sampling procedures, through the use of multi-site, multiple-case studies (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Schofield, 1990). Miles and Huberman (1994) pointed out that multiple-case studies offer confidence to the findings and “can strengthen the precision, the validity, and the stability of the findings” (p. 29). They added that

generalization occurs “from one case to the next on the basis of a match to the underlying theory, not to a larger universe” (p. 29). Finally, “multiple-case sampling gives us confidence that our emerging theory is generic, because we have seen it work out – and not work out – in predictable ways” (Miles & Huberman, p. 29, 1994).

In this study, four case studies were conducted based on the same format and method of research, followed by a cross-case analysis of the data. While this study focused on women high school principals in one school district, the findings may offer insights to other school districts for identification, training, and recruitment strategies as well as insights and motivation to other women who are considering or currently pursuing positions as high school principals.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research may be analyzed in various ways, but a typical sequence after transcribing raw field notes is affixing codes to the field notes; noting reflections; sorting and sifting to identify phrases and relationships between variables, patterns, and themes; isolating patterns and processes, commonalities and differences; formulating generalizations; creating constructs or theories based on those generalizations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher transcribed each interview in this study using *Dragon NaturallySpeaking* and then entered into the software package *Ethnograph* to assist in coding and analysis. A summary of each case was developed using data collected from the primary woman involved, related interviews with colleagues, and documents from the time period.

Open Coding

Open coding involves “initial thoughts and ideas without concern for what others think or whether the analysis is correct” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 223). The researcher identified and labeled the variables contained in interview, document, and observation notes and records.

Memos accompanied the variables in order to record “impressions, thoughts, and directions to oneself” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.223).

Axial Coding

Open coding leads to axial coding, particularly as the memos begin to define and suggest larger meanings. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), “the purpose of axial coding is to relate categories and to continue developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions” (p. 230). Memos written with axial codes may suggest ideas for further research, offer “different ways of thinking about the concepts that emerge from data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 233), or provide questions for follow-up interviews. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that during axial coding that “diagrams begin to take on form... (that) can be useful for sorting out the various relationships” (p.235) between and among categories and/or subcategories. The variables identified in the case studies were organized into patterns of data that supported the impact of change over time regarding the processes that the four women in this study followed in their pursuit of principalships at the high school level.

Selective Coding

The final step in coding, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998), is selective coding. There is an integration of concepts, formation of a core category, and building of a theory. Memos are written to validate and refine the theory. The diagram becomes more complex as it “synthesizes the major concepts and their connections” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 238). The patterns identified in axial coding led to themes that further explained the changes that occurred over time as the four women advanced in their careers in the field of education.

Cross-case Analysis

While the results of the individual case studies suggest a certain method to use, Miles and Huberman (1994) identified several strategies, including replication (Yin, 1984), the identification of patterns or configurations, or the use of mixed strategies, in which each case is written using the same variables but with allowances for uniquenesses within each case. Chapter IV provides an analysis of each of the four cases, identifying variables and patterns found in each case. Based on the patterns, Chapter V presents, by decade, themes common to all of the cases. Presenting the analysis by decade emphasizes the changes that occur over time in Union County Public Schools and its promotion of women to positions of high school principals.

Summary

Chapter III provided an overview of the methodology used to research the processes used by four women as they pursued positions as high school principals in Union County Public Schools between 1970 and 2000. Each case study centered on a woman who was selected based on her seniority at the beginning of each decade, her availability and willingness to participate, and her ability to contribute to the topic of the study. Prior to and in preparation for each interview, the researcher gathered information regarding school system data and historical information in order to provide a picture of the time in which each woman lived and worked. While conducting much of the interview in an unstructured manner, data collection from each woman's interview began with questions about the career path and support systems that each woman had used as she advanced to the position of high school principal. Using active listening, the researcher asked additional questions to further probe and clarify information that each woman shared during the interview. It was these additional questions that enhanced and enriched the data, allowing for the discovery of new patterns and themes. To provide triangulation, the researcher used the snowball technique during each interview to identify

additional people to interview and documents to research. The additional interviews were unstructured in their formats, loosely based on questions derived from the interviews from the women subjects in the case studies.

A great deal of data was collected as part of this research, particularly data from the interviews. Each interview was transcribed by the researcher using the speech-writing software *Dragon Naturally Speaking* in conjunction with the more traditional method of turning the tape recorder on and off while typing. Each transcription was then imported into the software program *Ethnograph*, which organized the interview by lines, provided a numerical order for the lines, and labeled and catalogued codes for the lines as they were compiled and analyzed by the researcher. As might be expected, the first interview with Wilma Goldman involved intense, line-by-line analysis and coding. Conversations with dissertation committee members as well as the doctoral candidates of the coding class provided additional insights and challenges to the coding, often resulting in re-coding. There were times when the coding was completed by hand and then transferred to *Ethnograph*. Hand-coding was used more as a convenience as the number of interviews increased, analysis became more apparent, and time for coding was taken advantage of whenever possible – in the car, between meetings, or at conferences. There were also times when analyzing later interviews that a question would arise to question the analysis and coding of earlier interviews, so back the researcher went to make any changes or adjustments that were necessary. *Ethnograph* made it easy to re-name and re-organize codes.

Open coding and axial coding were used to sort, label, and categorize the material into patterns; patterns led to the formulation of themes; themes led to the formulation of a theory that changes over time impacted the processes that each woman used to advance her career to the

level of high school principal. The coding process used in this research can be seen by following one thread of analysis as illustrated in the following example:

- Open coding of tapped, eligibility panel for principal, panel interview for principal, “trial balloon,” and “acting” principal led to axial coding pattern of “identification and hiring procedures.”
- Axial coding patterns of identification and hiring procedures, equity in hiring, school system initiatives, changes in philosophy, support by school system, district superintendent led to theme of “changes in school district policies.”
- Themes of changes in school district policies, school district culture, and women’s career aspirations led to a theory regarding the impact of society on change over time.

As a result of this study, it became apparent that the changes that occurred over time in the school system impacted the processes that these four women used to obtain their positions of high school principal. It also became apparent that the changes that occurred in the school system occurred over time at the urging and pushing of society. This suggests the possibility of a view on social change theory that starts with a broader scope: that change occurs as a result of the expectations of society, which then impacts the system, which then impacts the individual. While these observances apply to these four women and this school system and cannot be generalized to other women and school systems, this theory of the impact of change over time is worth examining in other school districts and with other women’s careers.

Chapter IV presents the case study for each woman in this research: Wilma Goldman, Theresa Williams, Georgia Xavier, and Olivia Yates. Each of the four cases studies is organized so as to present the historical context, overview of the school system, career summary, and

narrative relevant to each woman and her time period. Chapter IV utilizes the variables identified through open coding to suggest patterns of data suggested by axial coding.

CHAPTER IV

Research Findings

The purpose of this research was to study four women in one Virginia school system who became high school principals at the beginning of each of four decades between 1970 and 2000. This chapter includes a case study for each woman based on data gathered and analyzed from interviews of the women, interviews of contemporary colleagues, information from school system publications, and information from local media sources. Each case study includes a career summary of the principal, historical context of the time period, overview of the school system, and culminating narrative of the principal. A brief description of the school system precedes the first case study.

While research questions in qualitative studies generally develop during and following the collection of data, themes or domains from a review of literature can be used to guide the initial research process and “focus data collection” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25). The overarching foci for this study included the process that each woman used to obtain a position as high school principal and the types of support each woman had during the process of obtaining the position of high school principal. In order to be open to new insights, unstructured interviews were conducted with each woman. Each interview centered on three questions while at the same time probing additional topics mentioned by each woman.

The following research questions guided initial data collection in the study:

1. What support systems were used within the school system?
2. What support systems were used outside of the school district?
3. What was the career path for each woman?

During the interview each woman mentioned other people who were involved in her career. Using the snowball technique, additional people were interviewed in order to provide data that would enhance the four cases while serving as sources of triangulation. Participants were selected for this study based upon their availability and willingness to participate. The supporting interviews were conducted in an unstructured manner in order to freely substantiate information for the case studies as well as to gather new data. Questions contained within the support interviews revealed the participant's own knowledge of the woman's career in the school system, contemporary school system history and policies, and school system politics at the time. Unintentionally, many of the supporting interviews also provided longitudinal information about school system policies, politics, and the pain of change.

Another form of triangulation was incorporation of written information from school publications and local media. These documents supported the memories of those interviewed as well as extending the understanding of events that occurred in the school system during each of the decades. The documents also provided background information for the historical context and overview of the school system for each case study. Using data collected through the initial research questions, interviews, and triangulation, patterns were identified in the four case studies into which variables coded in the data could be categorized and further examined.

Union County Public School System

Situated in the northern part of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Union County Public Schools includes the County of Union, Union City, and the non-city sections of two adjoining school districts. Opening in 1870 with an initial enrollment of 1,034 students, Union County Public Schools grew to more than 130,000 students by the 1969-70 school year, the year of the system's 100th anniversary (*Local newspaper A*, 1970, January 2). The tenth largest school district in the nation at that time, Union consisted of 125 elementary schools, 18 intermediate schools housing grades 7 and 8, 18 high schools housing grades 9 – 12, and two secondary schools housing grades 7 – 12 (*Local newspaper B*, 1971, August 26).

According to *National newspaper* (1971, July 28), this area of Virginia had the highest per capita income in the state in 1971. Union County was second among the nation's largest counties in terms of median family income, which was \$15,707 (*National newspaper*, 1972, September 20). In 1971, the pay for beginning teachers was \$7350, with an increase to \$7500 for those with a Masters degree (*Local newspaper B*, 1971, August 26).

While the school district increased to 138,000 students and approximately 6200 teachers for the 1972-73 school year (*National newspaper*, 1972, September 1), the rest of the decade did not follow suit. Within ten years, Union saw a dramatic drop to 123,785 students for the 1981-1982 school year (*Local newspaper E*, 1981, September 22). According to minutes recorded at the 1978 June 29 School Board meeting, the superintendent reported that “the 1977-78 year was one of the heavier destaffing years” (p. 248) in the school district. Although there was a decrease in the number of students for the 1981-82 school year, there was increase of teachers to 7200 teachers. The increase of teachers may have been due to the increase in program services for special education and immigrant students.

The school system struggled with issues dealing with racial integration and relations, mainly between African American and White students and staff. The School Board included many discussions during its meetings regarding the creation and implementation of an affirmative action plan. The school system reacted to a “race riot” at one of its high schools with the requirement for personnel to take a course in human relations, effective February 2, 1976 (Olin, 2003; School Board, 1975, September 11, p. 499).

By 1982 Union County was seeing a change in the diversity of students as an influx of immigrants from Hispanic and Asian countries began. Hercules, located in Region East, was one of the first high schools to experience this increase (Williams, 2002). The school system had not prepared for this type of migration of non-English speakers into their schools.

The 1989-90 school year opened with 130,000 students (1989, Baker, Aug. 13). Although showing an increase, this number was still 8,000 students short of the enrollment in 1972. By 2000, the number of students had steadily increased to 160,000.

To facilitate administration and supervision of services, the school system was divided into four “regions” by 1968, with each of the regions led by a Region Superintendent (*School communications A*, 1968, September). Region South covered the southeastern part of the school system and included communities that were widely diverse in ethnicity, education levels, occupations, and socio-economic levels. Due to budget problems in the 1990s, the four Regions would be reduced to three by 1998.

Prior to 1995, the Board of Supervisors appointed members of the School Board. With changes in Virginia law, counties had the choice to elect school board members. Union County made the decision to have elections, and the first School Board members were elected in 1995. As a result, politics became even more of a factor for the school system as school board members

were now elected officials, vying for the same campaign financial support and constituent approval as members of the Board of Supervisors. Whereas once the two Boards worked together, there was now competition that was not particularly helpful, especially since the school system still depended upon the Board of Supervisors to support their financial needs.

Two terms relating to Virginia need to be pointed out at this time. Virginia is one of a few in the United States that is referred to as a “Commonwealth” rather than as a state. References to Virginia as a “state” will be made in this research as a general reference. In addition, the government of Virginia refers to the local educational agencies as “school divisions” rather than the more common “school districts.” The latter will be used in this dissertation to provide continuity within the broader context of national research literature.

*Wilma Goldman: Case Study for 1970s**Historical Context*

Based upon the social and political changes demonstrated in the 1960s, the following decade brought about demands for change throughout the nation. When they reached the local level, these demands impacted the philosophy and eventual direction of Union County Public Schools. The constituents of Union County sought to elicit change, specifically by recognizing and meeting each individual's unique needs. The result was pressure to hire a woman as high school principal, a position filled by Wilma Goldman in 1971.

Information from primary sources such as *National newspaper* and School Board minutes and historical analyses from authors such as Zinn (1998) and Johnson (1997) provided a picture of an era reflected in terms of "movements": Vietnam/anti-war, Civil Rights, women's rights, Native American, prison reform, and environmental. Through demonstrations, riots, revelations of political misconduct, and strong pictures drawn by various media, these reform movements brought dramatic changes to federal and local governments and impacted how agencies would operate. These movements generated societal expectations that the rights of all individuals would be upheld. The Civil Rights and women's rights movements, in particular, impacted the promotion of women to positions of higher levels of leadership in Union County Public Schools.

Civil rights movement. The Civil Rights movement challenged the status quo of minorities and sought to bring rights to all Americans outlined within the Constitution. The 1964 Civil Rights Act included Title VII, which forbade employment discrimination and created the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC). In 1965, the Voting Rights Act ensured federal protection of the right to register and vote. Also passed in 1965, the Immigration Reform Act identified a new category of disadvantaged minorities – Hispanic (Johnson, 1997).

By 1965, more than 75% of school districts in the South remained segregated despite directions from the courts following *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 (Zinn, 1998). In 1971, one school system near Union was desegregating its last two elementary schools (*Local newspaper C*, 1971, July 16) while another school system was merging its high schools. In one of the first tests of desegregation, the football coaches of the combined high schools were “confident they will prove that athletes from three long-time rival high schools of differing racial makeups can play together on a single winning football team” (*National newspaper*, 1971, August 24, p. C1). Union school district had desegregated the last of its schools in 1964-65 when it desegregated five “elementary schools that had been all black” (*National newspaper*, 1972, September 1, p. A12).

Women’s rights movement. Legislative actions resulting from the Civil Rights movement also impacted the women’s rights movement. As they heard concerns on March 8, 1971, about the hiring practices of employers, the Supreme Court included white females in the category of “protected minorities.” Under the threat of government litigation, quotas emerged throughout the business world to ensure that minorities, which included women, were hired in the workforce (Johnson, 1997). Women could use the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC), formed by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, to combat inequalities in the workplace. An executive order from President Johnson banned gender discrimination in federally connected employment (Zinn, 1998).

Women were seen and heard through many venues. Helen Gurley Brown, a role model for other female journalists, founded *Cosmopolitan* magazine in 1965. Martha Mitchell, wife of U. S. Attorney General John Mitchell during Nixon’s first administration, regularly spoke out against the war. First Lady Pat Nixon, a strong proponent of volunteerism, supported such

programs as “Right to Read” and “Parks to People” and traveled across the country in 1969 to visit other projects organized by volunteers (Thomas, 1999). In the fall of 1968, a group called “Radical Women” protested the selection of Miss America as they threw bras, girdles, curlers, wigs, and other women’s “garbage” in a “Freedom Trash Can.” The women’s rights movement began to be regarded in terms of “Women’s Liberation” (Zinn, 1998).

The Northern Virginia Chapter of National Organization of Women (NOW) was organized in May 1970 by Mrs. Flora Crater of Falls Church, the first such chapter in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A caucus was held in Richmond in the fall of 1971 to put women in political offices and make women’s issues a factor in current and future campaigns, resulting in “better conditions for and treatment of women” (*Local newspaper B*, 1971, September 9, p. A1). Earlier in 1971 twenty-four women reporters were “finally” admitted to the National Press Club (Thomas, 1999, p. 43), an organization that was previously an enclave for male reporters only.

Accomplishments. As the country was embroiled by these significant movements, there were other national and local accomplishments to note. The space program safely landed two astronauts on the moon on July 20, 1969 (Johnson, 1997) while the 1970 flight of Apollo 13 suffered a massive power failure and barely returned to Earth with all crewmembers alive (Wilford, 1970). The Filene Center at Wolftrap, the first park to be dedicated to “the preservation and pursuit of artistic achievement” (*Local newspaper A*, 1971, June 25, p. 1) and the new Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts created the hope that the area was “‘coming into its own’ as a center of culture” (*Local newspaper D*, 1971, December, p. 8). Of the most importance of sports enthusiasts, the Redskin football team moved their training facilities to Redskin Park by Dulles Airport in the fall (*Local newspaper D*, 1971, November), a move that made the team more accessible to devoted visitors and fans alike.

Overview of the School System

Union County Public Schools began the 1970s with concerns about student achievement, progress with gender and race issues, and human relations. These concerns impacted the Regions, School Board, curriculum, and sports. The community and school personnel in Region South were challenged to provide the leadership needed for progress in several of these areas. When Superintendent Washington began his second year as division superintendent in 1971 he announced that he was going to continue his theme “Commitment to Education.” Washington also reported that new curriculum guides had been created to address drug education for grades K – 12 as well as art at the secondary level (*School communications A*, 1971, September – October).

Student achievement. Results of standardized tests reported that students in the school system overall did well and were achieving academically. On September 24, 1971, *National newspaper* reported that the reading and writing test scores of Union County Public Schools were among the highest in the state and well above national averages. The article also reported that the transient areas of Region South had achieved low scores, scores that would need serious attention by the school division. The Virginia Board of Education announced in July 1971 that they would be issuing “standards of quality” as part of the national movement of “accountability.” These standards would require at least 55% of the students to pass related tests (*National newspaper*, 1971, July 28). The drive for accountability and student testing would continue to surface for the next thirty years in the form of the Virginia Literacy Passport tests in the late 1980s and the Virginia Standards of Learning tests in the mid-1990s.

Gender issues. The year 1971 included a variety of topics and concerns for the School Board and Quincy Washington, School Division Superintendent, to handle. In opposition of

1971 Virginia High School League regulations, the Union County School Board was the first in Virginia to favor the inclusion of girls in interscholastic competition, although that did “not necessarily guarantee female participation on the boys’ teams” (*Local newspaper A*, 1971, May 21, p. 2). On July 1, the School Board approved a policy on student responsibilities and rights that would go into effect in the fall of that year (*Local newspaper C*, 1971, July 2; *Local newspaper B*, 1970, August 26; Union County Public Schools, 1972).

Racial issues. Union County proceeded slowly following the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1963, School Board members “adopted several policies governing pupil placement procedures” for Negro students who applied to attend “a white or desegregated school” (School Board, 1963, March 19, pp.5 - 6). Decisions for other pupil placement requests were made at the May 20, 1963 meeting, at which time School Board members confirmed that applications involving transfer requests between Newland, Trinity, and Upton High Schools would not be approved, implying that there were a high number of requests to leave Trinity and Newland for Upton. It would take nearly a decade to correct racial tensions that had occurred during the spring of 1971 at Loring High School (*Local newspaper C*, 1971, July 16). In October, the School Board adopted a human relations policy against racism and guaranteeing equal rights for students and employees (*National newspaper*, 1971, October 15).

Human relations. In 1972, the School Board approved the position of Coordinator of Human Relations for the school system and 20 half-time positions for a human relations council (School Board, 1972, February 24). There was a great deal of discussion regarding the interview procedure that would select the Coordinator. While the School Board and citizen groups wanted to interview the top candidates, Union’s District Superintendent Quincy Washington modified the recommendation: the Superintendent or his designee would chair the interview panel,

provide a form for panel reactions to candidates, and use information gathered from the panel for the Superintendent's recommendation to the School Board. During the discussion, a representative of the Executive Committee of the County Council of PTA's stated that "this proposal is not intended to establish a precedent to be used in employing other personnel for the school system" (School Board, 1972, February 24, p. 475). One of the School Board members stated "that more and more the parents and citizens should be involved in the school organization and policy decisions...(T)he School Board was (not) so professional it could make all decisions without community assistance" (School Board, 1972, February 24, p. 476). The School Board approved the modified recommendation.

School system actions. By the end of 1971, Union County Board of Supervisors recognized the need to increase the number of School Board members from 9 to 11 in order to meet the needs of a growing school system and the needs of an expanding, and more diversified, population. Eight of the school board members would continue to represent each of the county's districts, while three of the members would be appointed as "at large" members to ensure equal representation of the county's diverse population (*Local newspaper A*, 1971, December 17). One of the at-large members was the first African-American member of the School Board. Although this at-large member lived in Region North, she was nominated by one of the supervisors from Region South (*National newspaper*, 1972, January 13). Another appointed at-large member was a senior at Sinclair High School - the first student to be appointed to the School Board (*National newspaper*, 1972, February 23).

Local newspaper A (1971, January 15) announced the administrative appointments to the new Indigo Secondary School, which would be opening in the fall of 1971 (Union County Public Schools, 1972). Mrs. Wilma Goldman was included in the list of appointees:

Mrs. Goldman taught a total of 13 years in Eastern County 1 and Eastern County 2 in Virginia before coming to Union County in 1963 as counselor at Trinity High, where she also served as guidance director and is now an assistant principal. The mother of four children, she received her BA in English from Eastern College and her masters in guidance from Ruby University. (*Local newspaper A*, 1971, January 15, p. 3)

While *Local newspaper A* included Goldman in its article on Indigo Secondary School, no such announcement could be found in that same newspaper when she was later appointed principal of Trinity in the spring of 1971.

Local newspaper A did announce the appointment of Gregory Dennison to the position of Superintendent of Region South, the first African-American to hold such a position in the school system (*Local newspaper A*, 1971, August 27; *National newspaper*, 1971, July 8). Prior to desegregation, Dennison had been the principal of the school system's all-black high school until 1965. After Union County completed integration, Dennison was appointed principal at Nelson High School before his appointment to region superintendent. As the Region South Superintendent, Dennison supervised 31,400 students in one secondary school, four high schools, four intermediate schools, and 31 elementary schools (*National newspaper*, 1971, July 8).

Summary. The school system appeared to be a microcosm of what was occurring in the Capital and around the country during 1971. Minorities and women were slowly being appointed to levels of authority and visibility. Integration continued to be implemented around the area. Students were being given rights and responsibilities, including a voice on the School Board. The public and School Board members were becoming more forthright in identifying and challenging areas in which the school system was not successful, such as student achievement.

The intense growth and expansion on the school system presented additional demands on the construction and financing of new buildings and the additional materials needed for additional students. These changes were occurring quickly, and actions to meet those changes were needed just as quickly.

Career Summary

When the 1970s began, Union County Public Schools appointed its first female high school principal. Wilma Goldman's career had begun approximately twenty years earlier upon completion of her bachelor's degree in English at a college in Eastern County 2, northeast of Richmond and approximately 80 miles southeast of Union County. Later she added certification in physical education through the same college. Ten years after beginning her teaching career, Goldman earned her master's degree in counseling at Ruby University, located approximately two hours west of where she lived. She began the masters program in counseling through extension courses located where she lived, but then "got to the point that the remainder of my work had to be done on campus. So I traveled to Ruby for a year, one night a week, and then spent two summers there" (Appendix C, lines 574-582). Goldman was an English and physical education teacher and counselor for eleven years at two school districts in the area of Eastern County 2. During those years, she also coached girls' sports: field hockey, basketball, and softball (Appendix C, lines 943-958).

Trinity High School. When Goldman arrived at Union County Public Schools in 1963 it was to serve as a counselor at Trinity High School. Trinity, comprised of grades 9 – 12, was located in the southwestern part of the school system in a section of the school district known as Region South. Goldman continued her career at Trinity as director of guidance and then assistance principal. For the first ten years that she was in Union County school system, Goldman had moved up the career ladder at Trinity, from counselor to guidance director to assistant principal (Appendix C, lines 52-60). In order to be fully endorsed for certification in administration, and thus to be considered for a principalship, Goldman had to take a course in school law (Appendix C, lines 594-601). The principal's position at Trinity became available in

1971 and Goldman was appointed to the position, the first female to be appointed to the position of high school principal in Union County Public Schools (Appendix C, lines 108-109; Baker, April 6, 1989).

Strickland High School. In 1973, after she had been at Trinity for two years, Goldman was told by the region superintendent that she was being transferred to Strickland Secondary School because the principal was retiring. The position “was not advertised... so I didn’t apply for that job, either” (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 329-331). While this school was also in the southern area of the school system, it was unique in that it contained grades 7 – 12 and had opened five years earlier as the first secondary school in the school district (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 320-323). The superintendent offering this position was not the same one who had hired her as principal at Trinity. This superintendent, Gregory Dennison, was promoted from principalship to region superintendent right after Goldman had been promoted to principalship at Trinity. In Union County, Goldman was the first woman to be promoted to high school principal and Gregory Dennison was the first African American to be promoted to region superintendent (Appendix C, line 547).

During her years of principalship at Strickland, Goldman served on the board of the Virginia High School League as a representative from the school district. It was here that Goldman encountered male prejudice that she had not experienced so blatantly in Union County. She had to develop strategies in order to survive in this all-male domain, including having male colleagues make her proposals and speaking against the same proposals. It angered her that the males in the organization did not respect her knowledge, particularly since she had been a coach for many years and knew League rules and regulations. Goldman appreciated even more being in Union County after attending these meetings.

Central Office. Goldman served as principal at Strickland until December 1980, after which time she became Director of Secondary Education. This position placed her in the Department of Instruction for seven months, where she gained central office experience before becoming the superintendent for Region South (Appendix C, lines 877-891). In the early 1970s the school district had divided into four regions – North, South, East, West - in order to better serve student and school needs. Goldman served as Region South Superintendent for four years before her next promotion to Deputy Superintendent, a position in which she served until her retirement in 1989.

A particularly sensitive facilities issue that began before she was principal at Trinity had a long-lasting impact on her advancement up the administrative career ladder. While considered modern when it opened in the 1950s, an increase in student enrollment and the lack of updated facilities were sources of concern for the stakeholders at Trinity. To address this concern, the “Charrette planning committee” was organized to study the issues at hand and to make recommendations to the School Board. In 1968 the committee recommended that a new high school be built on nearby property that would merge Trinity and Upton High Schools. They further recommended that the new building retain the name “Trinity” and that the original Trinity and the original Upton be converted to intermediate schools with grades 7 and 8 and be given the new names of “Richardson” and “Opal.” When nothing occurred after the recommendation, a member of the school’s PTA questioned the School Board in 1972 on taking action surrounding the group’s recommendations:

(The parent) reviewed recommendation made in 1968 for the Trinity-Richardson conversion, later postponed in favor of another school community in more urgent need. She also reviewed the work of the Charrette, a planning group made up of students,

parents, interested members of the community, Trinity High School staff, representatives from the Union County Schools staff, representatives from the County government and the architect. She asked that the Trinity-Richardson conversion be placed on the County bond referendum for the second time in order that this community have the long planned for new school building. (School Board, 1972, February 8, p. 451)

While Goldman had been part of this planning during her years as guidance director and assistant principal, it would not come to fruition until her term as principal of the school. A few weeks later, the School Board heard again about the need for approval for the conversion:

Assistant to the Superintendent... presented the staff recommendations that the School Board approve the preliminary architectural drawings for this project having a 2,800 pupil capacity on a campus plan not to exceed the cost of \$6,900,000... He noted that the Trinity Charrette group had worked on this project for approximately four years... On September 23, 1971, the School Board approved the preliminary drawings for the project with the understanding that it would be brought back to the Board for further review... (School Board, 1972, February 24, p. 478).

During the meeting, School Board members debated scaling the number of students back to 2,400 and eliminating one wing from the high school plant, resulting in three sub schools instead of the recommended four. The Charrette Committee had recommended the additional space for community use and “the community had decided early that the sub school organization was the desirable organization for the new Trinity School” (School Board, 1972, February 24, p. 479). This would follow the trend set by the recently opened secondary schools that were organized with sub schools. When School Board members asked for comments on committee members’ feelings on a school with a pupil capacity of 2100, 2400, or 2800 2,400, the committee

members were not concerned about the higher number of 2800 students considering projected students increases in the region. Goldman did not want to give up the increased facilities that would result from a lower student capacity:

The principal of the Trinity High School, Mrs. Wilma Goldman, stated she would rather have more pupils in this plant rather than give up some of the facilities. She expressed the desire to leave the 9th and 10th grade science program in the sub school. (School Board, 1972, February 24, p. 479)

At one point the Board suggested that “the most economical thing might be to modernize the present Trinity High School,” but it was quickly pointed out that “this approach ... would be ignoring the community involvement in this project” (School Board, February 24, 1972, p. 481). The final decision by the School Board was to “authorize the architect to draw plans to build a 2,100 student capacity for the Trinity High School conversion project” (School Board, February 24, 1972, p. 481).

Many years later the new Trinity site would be selected as the location for the merge with nearby Upton High School. Fred Olin (2003) vividly remembered the discussions and debates regarding the merger of the two schools and the impact it had on Goldman’s leadership and career:

Upton and Trinity were both getting small, and it was clear that there really wasn't any population projected any time in the future for, for both of them, so the issue was it had to be merged. There were massive politics at the time. Deep-seeded community issues. Trinity was always designed by the Charrette process, I was told, with houses and all this kind of stuff. I mean, Wilma would always talk about that. But Wilma was the Region Superintendent at the time; I was the Instructional Coordinator at the time. And, and it

was that experience, which was truly awful, and probably one of the worst public meetings that I ever remember, which happened in the now Dickinson auditorium. Ultimately, the recommendation was to close Trinity, and then there was this massive meeting, and the recommendation at the last minute was to close Upton and that was ultimately the one to close because Upton was considered the wealthier, stronger, more politically-connected community and so that was that. There were people who believed that the ultimate goal was the way it worked out but that closing Upton was, I'm sorry, closing Trinity was put up as a decoy to cause people to rise up which would then allow them to get to the preferred game plan. You know, in other words, they had to go through that process. But the other piece that specifically is related to that is that's what, that, it was that meeting, that I believe, caused Wilma to become the Deputy Superintendent. Even though her son was extremely ill, and ultimately died, it was how incredibly well she did. Because I remember Nancy Xantus, Ann Solar, and other people that were sitting in that front audience, and Wilma handled, did a marvelous job that evening with awful, awful, awful people saying awful, awful, awful things. And I remember Wilma and I talked, and I think she wouldn't disagree with that, that the way she handled that meeting allowed her then, for Mr. Yancey to come and say, "I want you to become the Deputy Superintendent." So, I think that really got, that pushed her to the fore. (lines 747 – 806)

When Isaac Henderson became Superintendent of Union County Public Schools, one of his first actions was to appoint Wilma Goldman as his new Deputy Superintendent:

As a matter of fact, I appointed her Deputy Superintendent. I remember that now. When I first came in I said, "Who's one of the best Region Superintendents?" And Daniel

Yancey, whom I still have contact with, sat down with Jack Lincoln – who's, who's gone now - they were both leaving at the same time just as I was coming in, and they gave me a list of people, but, really, told me about Wilma, and they expressed their great confidence in her, but, you know, it was my call. But I relied on their judgment a lot, too, because their judgment was very good. And, uh, and it proved true. She then became, really, the number one person in terms of managing the school system after the superintendent. And I think she, uh, just by her leadership, by her presence, inspired probably some women to come (into administration). (Henderson, 2003, lines 407-429)

It was particularly in this position as Deputy Superintendent that people in the school system saw Goldman make many contributions to the careers of various people: “And Wilma was very supportive of the women in administration and did a lot to mentor a lot of people, men and women; that was just part of her nature” (Baker, 2003, lines 222-226). For people like Oscar Young (2002) who had “the career goal of the superintendency, to get those experiences” (lines 312 – 314), Goldman made appointments to different positions within the school system that would support those goals:

So I went to Wilma, and Wilma gave me a staff development assignment as ... director of facilities services, administrative director ... and at the end of that year, my staff development assignment was up. And, uh, Wilma gave me some choices of high schools to go to, and I picked Oak Ridge.” (Young, 2002, lines 184 – 188 and 212 – 216)

Those in the school system did not see Goldman as a “woman” in a leadership role, and ceased being aware that she was a female. They viewed Goldman as someone who enthusiastically helped others achieve their leadership potential, regardless of gender.

In 1985 Goldman moved back to Eastern County 2 where she had lived before moving to Union County; she commuted north, approximately one hour each way, daily for four years. Upon retirement, Goldman had worked in education for a total of 39 years, 26 of which were served in Union County Public Schools (Appendix C, lines 901-904).

At Goldman's retirement in 1989, Baker (1989, April 6, p. Va.2) quoted observations and sentiments made by several of the school system's leaders reflecting the many contributions and attributes of Goldman:

She was what I would call a shirt-sleeve principal... These were the types of principals who were out and around and with the students. They not only attended the plays and other activities, but they were there for the blood, sweat and tears of practices as well.

Quincy Washington, District Superintendent
(hired Goldman for her first position as principal)

Wilma was a very straightforward, tell-it-like-it-is, aggressive but not abrasive type person. She was tough... but the bottom line was people knew she was an honest, caring person.

David Quintin, principal at Indigo
(worked with Goldman at Trinity)

Professionally, she was a tiger. But she always had the right motives.

Isaac Henderson, District Superintendent
(hired Goldman as his Deputy Superintendent)

Some teachers considered her a “mixed bag” and that she presided over a “good-old-boy, good-old-girl network” of principals...(H)er reputation may be harsher than reality.

Since getting to know her, “She’s kind of grown in my respect.”

President of a local teachers organization

Retirement. After giving herself about a year’s worth of rest and learning to play golf, Goldman provided additional services in Union County from 1990 – 1998 in a variety of positions, including serving as a hearing officer in the Legal and Hearings Office and as acting Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services during a transition period. To keep her brain active, she served on her local school board for 7½ years, the last board appointed before Eastern County 2 moved to elected school boards.

During her years as an administrator, Goldman was a member of such professional organizations as the National Association for Secondary School Principals (NASSP). She became a member of Phi Delta Kappa International (PDK) after they allowed women to join the organization in 1975. It was not through these groups, though, that Goldman could interact with colleagues. It was mainly through meetings for assistant principals that she could network with colleagues around the school system.

Narrative

Wilma Goldman entered Union County Public Schools in 1963 as a counselor after 13 years as a teacher, coach, and counselor in two eastern school districts in Virginia. She summarized her first ten years in Union County that lead up to her appointment as principal at Trinity High School: “I was there for ten years. I was a counselor for three years, guidance director for two, then I became an assistant principal for three years, and then was appointed principal in 1971 to ’73...at Trinity High School” (Appendix C, lines 52-60). There were no female high school principals in Union County during those ten years, nor in the years prior to her arrival.

Counselor at Oak Ridge. When Goldman was hired as a counselor for the school system in 1963, she was originally assigned to Oak Ridge High School. During the summer, though, she received a letter from Personnel informing her that they had over-hired for that school, and that she was now assigned to Trinity. Goldman worried that the Trinity principal would not be “real happy to have a counselor assigned to him, one he didn’t know and hadn’t any part in choosing” (Appendix C, lines 29 –39), so she called him and offered to come to the school so they could meet. During the telephone call, the principal, Irwin Gilmore, asked Goldman if she had any children and if she was married. Goldman replied with humor:

I had worked for a principal with a marvelous sense of humor and I just assumed everybody did. So I said, “Yes, we have four children and we’re married!” Dead silence.

Didn’t say a word. I thought, “Oops.” (laugh) But, anyway, I stayed at Trinity.

(Appendix C, lines 43-52)

Irwin Gilmore had just become principal at Trinity in the spring of 1963 after having been assistant principal at the school for two years and, before that, a counselor at the same school.

Goldman worked for Gilmore for seven years before he was transferred to another high school in 1970 by the district superintendent because he was “part of these walls” and had “been here too long” (Gilmore, 1987, lines 112 – 114). Ira Uggins was then promoted from assistant principal at North Point High School to Principal at Trinity (*School Communications A*, June 1970). Uggins was at Trinity for one year before being replaced by Wilma Goldman in 1971.

Goldman had the support of many people as she moved through the education career ladder. Gilmore was committed in his support of Goldman during her first years in Union school system: “My principal fostered me and mentored me, the one who chose me as the guidance director. Then he chose me as an assistant principal, and he helped me in a lot of ways” (Appendix C, lines 694-698). Once Goldman became assistant principal, Gilmore continued to provide opportunities for her:

He would take me to meetings with him, and so that I would, you know, knew what was going on...so that I would get a view of what was going on. Some of the things he did for me, I realized later, were helpful” (Appendix C, lines 698-708).

Because there were countywide meetings for assistant principals, Goldman got to know assistant principals who later became principals, “so when I became principal I wasn’t an unknown to a lot of the principals” (Appendix C, lines 760-762). Goldman “didn’t feel that they gave me, in any way, anything but cooperation” (Appendix C, lines 764-765). When Goldman became a principal, one of the high school principals, David Quintin, who had been principal at Trinity prior to Gilmore, said that she “thought like a man” (Appendix C, lines 766-775). Goldman took this as a left-handed compliment.

Goldman is not sure why she decided to become a principal, particularly since there were no females in administrative positions at the time. As Goldman worked as a counselor, she

“observed the principals and assistant principals, in their role in Union, and I thought, ‘I’d like to do that.’ And I didn’t see any reason why I couldn’t” (Appendix C, lines 150-155). After serving as counselor and guidance director at Trinity for five years, she applied for the position of assistant principal at Trinity when it was advertised in 1968.

Assistant principal. At that time, positions for assistant principals were advertised in the school district newsletter, and people who were interested submitted their names to Personnel. Personnel then submitted the names to the principal of the school with the vacancy. Goldman said that the requirements were not formalized: “there wasn’t the requirement to interview X number and recommend two or three” (Appendix C, lines 312-318). The principal “was able to recommend me without having gone through the other interview processes” because “he just wanted me” (Appendix C, lines 263-271). The procedure in the 1970s was the principal submitted his recommendation to the region superintendent who, in turn, approved the candidate and forwarded the name to Personnel.

For both Goldman and her principal, Gilmore, the road between recommendation and approval for the position of assistant principals was both difficult and challenging. At one point Goldman offered to withdraw her application:

But, anyway, there was a regional superintendent and he, I knew him, and he knew, you know, we’d met, but he wasn’t enthusiastic about my becoming an assistant principal. And my principal came back one day and said, “I don’t think the regional superintendent’s going to approve your appointment.” And I said, “Okay.” I said, “Why don’t we, why don’t I just withdraw it? And there’ll be another time.” And so I did. I drafted a letter, and put it in (the internal mail carrier). And my principal called Personnel and said that “it looks like the regional superintendent’s not going to approve

my recommendation for assistant principal, and, so, who else, who else is out there? I mean, who are the other candidates? And, tell me about them.” The Personnel director at the time said, “Hold off. I think he’s going, I think he’s, I think he’s weakening. He’s softening up.” Whatever. And so the principal came back and said, “Get that letter out of the (mail carrier).” And so I did. And he went ahead and approved my appointment. (Appendix C, lines 166-195)

Gilmore (1987) was not only frustrated with the hiring process, but also with the questioning of his choice of candidates:

Civil rights...like I told you I had to fight to get an assistant principal appointed, a female. And I told the Regional Superintendent, I said, “If I don’t have a choice in appointing my assistants, then you go on and appoint whoever you want.” And he took it and went ahead and appointed this person (Goldman). But he just felt that, ah, he gave some superficial reason. Later on, he apologized... So I called up Dan Yancey who was in Personnel and I said, “Since when does a person no longer have the opportunity to select(?)” (lines 963 – 989)

Gilmore later said that Goldman “was the most effective (assistant) principal I ever had and I had to fight to get her appointed. She just has a way about her” (1987, lines 1278 – 1282).

After her appointment to the assistant principalship was approved, Goldman asked her principal if she could ask the regional superintendent why he was reluctant to approve her for the position of assistant principal, thinking that “it would maybe be something that would help me in the future” (Appendix C, lines 198-200). When Gilmore said that he preferred that she not talk with the region superintendent, and she complied with his request. Goldman unexpectedly found out the reason several months later:

I was almost at the end of my first year as an assistant principal, and I was told by my principal one day to take a report in that we had, that was getting close to the deadline. I took it down, I took it to the office, to the secretary and chatted with her – I knew her because she had been at Trinity as a secretary. And the region superintendent’s office was right there, but I didn’t know if he was in his office or not. And so as I got ready to leave, he said, “Is that you out there?” I said, “Yes, sir.” He said, “Come on in. I want to talk to you.” And I went in. And he said, “I know you knew that I had reservations about your being appointed... assistant principal.” I said, “Yes.” And he said, “Well, I think I think I owe you an explanation.” And I said, “That would be great.” And he said, “Well, your principal is a very mild-mannered, you know, kind of laid-back, not aggressive, type of person. And I know that you, I knew that you were kind of strong, and I was concerned that you would usurp his, some of his authority... You haven’t done any of that. You’ve done nothing but make him look better. And you’ve done it on his behalf, and it’s been, it’s worked out nicely. (Appendix C, lines 202-238)

In addition to the support of her principal, Goldman had the support of the community. Goldman had been at the school for so many years that the community had had many opportunities to witness her actions in different situations, whether they were with students, parents, staff, or community members. It was also beneficial that the school board member for the Trinity district had a child who attended Trinity, so she knew Goldman in her various roles at the school.

At the time of Goldman’s appointment to assistant principal, there was one other woman in the school system who was an assistant principal at Victory High School:

There had been one at Vista and she died of cancer about the same time I was appointed assistant principal. So she preceded me in that role and probably, very likely, could have been the first female principal because she was very well thought of. (Appendix C, lines 298-304)

School Communications A (1970, June) reported the transfer of Miss Ursula Nelson from assistant principal at Victory to assistant principal at Dixon High School. Nelson was the woman that Goldman had described as having cancer. There were no female principals in Union school district, and Goldman remembered only one female principal in the Commonwealth at the time, in the Hampton Roads/Newport News area (Appendix C, lines 108-114).

Preliminaries to the principalship. Goldman completed her masters in counseling in 1962 prior to coming to Union school district. She took as many courses as possible through the local extension of a state university until she got to the point that she had to travel to Ruby to take the remainder of the courses for two summers and one year on the main campus. Later, when she realized that she wanted to be a principal, Goldman took an additional course in school law in order to be completely endorsed in secondary administration.

Goldman did not always see herself becoming a principal: “I didn’t think it was a realistic expectation” (Appendix C, lines 616-617). On one hand, she “came along in an era where there were no women in administration,” but, on the other hand, Union “was certainly at the forefront for the most part in terms of, for appointing women to positions” (Appendix C, lines 618-621). Activities at the local and national levels supported the appointment of women to administrative positions: “There was a lot of push in the community to appoint women to positions in, to administrative positions. The feminist movement had started, and there was a

considerable push there” (Appendix C, lines 627-632). For Goldman, she was “at the right place at the right time in my career on several occasions” (Appendix C, lines 624-627):

I was a woman in the right place at the right time. I always felt, said to myself, if I hadn’t been a woman, I would have probably been appointed earlier. I felt I had the ability to have been appointed earlier. But I wasn’t in a position to be considered earlier.

(Appendix C, lines 633-640)

In the winter of 1971, Goldman was selected to be a sub-school principal at the new Indigo Secondary School opening later, in the fall of 1971. In Union County, a sub-school principal was a step above an assistant principal because the responsibilities of a sub-school principal resembled those of a principal for a school within a school. This position was often a rung on the administrative career ladder on the way to a principalship. For several months, Goldman went to the new school after working at Trinity to plan “with the rest of the administrators who were identified to open that school... Some days (I) got away a little early, and was able to go over there to help do some of the organizational things for the opening of the school” (Appendix C, lines 86-98). Goldman never officially moved to the school because, before the school year was over, she was appointed as the principal for Trinity High School.

At one point during the 1970-71 school year, Goldman heard that the district superintendent was exploring the possibility of assigning her to Trinity as principal: “There was a rumor out there that I was going to get the job. I heard it along with other people and, to this day, I think it was a trial balloon that was let go to see what kind of reaction there would be to that” (Appendix C, lines 116-122). One of the parents at Trinity was also a member of the School Board, and Goldman believed that she “was one of my strongest supporters” (Appendix C, lines 131-132) and played a role in her getting the appointment. Goldman “was not

interviewed for the job” (Appendix C, lines 115-116), but she “was called and offered the job” (Appendix C, lines 137-138). Later, she remembered the Superintendent coming to Trinity to tell her that she “was going to be appointed principal – did I accept?” (Appendix C, lines 1224 – 1225).

After verbally accepting the principalship, Goldman contacted the assistant superintendent of Personnel to check on her salary:

And I called up and said, “I forgot to ask what my salary was going to be?” And Mr. Yancey gets out his chart, and it was going to be \$11.00 more. I said, “Dan, I’m not doing this. You, you all go get somebody else. That wouldn’t buy the aspirin that it will take.” (laugh) He said, “Let me see what I can do.” So they went and made an adjustment to my salary. (Appendix C, lines 1233 – 1244)

Goldman did not offer a reason for what she considered a low salary for her position as principal. In the end it was to her benefit to stand up for herself and negotiate for a higher salary. It was also interesting to see that the school system accepted Goldman’s challenge in 1971 and followed through on their adjustment to her original salary.

Goldman took advantage of and utilized characteristics that were acceptable for her male colleagues. While still having the nurturing side of a mother of four children, she also had the competitive, direct approach often used by men. Olin (2003) remembered how women principals had to act like men during the early years of their appointments to high school principalships:

In the early days, though, it was also about personality type, because to be a Wilma Goldman or a Kim Kindle at Strickland, who were some of our early female administrators, you had to act tough, like men were supposed to act. You had to be gruff,

and people had to be scared of you, even if you had a wonderful side, as Wilma did. That was the only way to make it up (the administrative ladder)... (E)very administrator has to make tough decisions, but you don't have to have that "hard as nails," you know, "I can make grown men cry." (lines 349 – 365)

School population. The communities that comprised the boundaries of Trinity included both ends of the spectrum, from the liberal and highly educated to the blue collar, working class:

It was, there was a pocket in the community, a couple of communities, in the Trinity boundary. They were, everybody there had masters degrees and beyond. So, they, there were lots of people who were employed by the federal government in, you know, in high positions. And so there, it was a very liberal community. It was a challenge because we had a strong segment of the population that went on to Ivy League schools and some of the most prestigious colleges in the country. And then we had a large number of students who were involved in vocational courses, not bound for colleges. There were not a lot in between in terms of the student population. But it was interesting and it was challenging. (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 369-389)

Goldman remembered the students at Trinity always asking why they had to do things: "you just became accustomed – you told him to do something you gave him the rationale for it" (Appendix C, lines 396-398). Goldman did not believe that the students were being disrespectful through their questioning, but that they had just been raised that way by their parents. Gilmore confirmed that there was "a very, very political minority in this (Trinity) area" (1987, lines 1027 – 1029). Parents were encouraged to be part of the school: "We were in the era, and Trinity was the kind of school where the parents, we were encouraging them to be involved with their

students and they wanted to be involved with their students” (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 438-443).

When Goldman became principal at Trinity the school was in its fifteenth year of operation, after having opened in 1956 as the most modern high school in Union County Public Schools. Instead of the simpler use of painted cinder blocks, the school was...

...a very expensive school [with] plastered walls... That school had terrazzo tile halls.

There was a quality about it. It had birch wood on the doors, birch cabinets, birch material on the auditorium seating. It was considered a showplace in 1956... It was built for like 1100 to 1200 students to start with. (Gilmore, lines 116 – 132)

Trinity had an atmosphere of congeniality and mutual trust (Gilmore, 1987, lines 135 – 137) and “in many ways was a fairly progressive school,” particularly “in terms of its attitudes toward integration” (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 339-341). Trinity “served quite a cross section of population. There was no real majority of social class. It was just a cross section. It just had everything [which] actually was a plus for that school” (Gilmore, 1987, lines 154 – 160). Having a cross-section of students, a liberal community, and an atmosphere of trust and congeniality would serve the school well as it integrated Black students in its population in the mid-1960s.

Integration. When Goldman first went to Trinity as a counselor in 1963, “there were two or three Black students who were identified by the Black community” (Appendix C, lines 346 – 348) to be the first students to integrate Union’s high schools. One student went to Trinity and another went to Udderback High School. Goldman remembered the student who attended Trinity:

I know the young man who was identified and came by himself that first year – everybody loved him. A great person to precede that because he made that, he was such a nice kid. And actually, his senior year, I think, he was vice president of the student government, so the kids thought a lot of him, who knew him. (Appendix C, lines 357-365)

Goldman recalled that “the following year they integrated the County across the board” (Appendix C, lines 354-356). She thought that Trinity had experienced “reasonably good success” in their efforts to integrate the school (Appendix C, lines 356-357). Gilmore (1987) confirmed that Trinity “had it very smooth” in comparison to other schools in the district (lines 192 –193) and described an incident that Goldman successfully handled involving black students and the pep club:

Well, we had a pep club and the pep club had an election. What happened was the black students should have caught on to something, the idea of block voting. But they voted for the different friends they had and so none of them made it... And they had an election... And every time a black student was nominated, they would nominate another one and what happened was they dispersed their strength. The next day there was a lot of movement in the halls. It was the beginning of that kind of thing anyway. I can't even tell you what date it was. It would have been around '65, '66, maybe '67.... Mrs. Goldman was at that time a guidance counselor, and she did a fantastic job. She led the kids into a large room, which would have to be the home ec department which is right down the hall. There were only about 25 or 30 students in all. She talked to them about how you can handle something like this and how to do it and it worked very well. (lines 205 – 236)

Gilmore (1987) understood how the students felt who were newly integrated into the white schools, and shared this with both teachers and students:

Once people realized the need, that it was only fair, because these kids had these things taken away from them. Here they were (at their previous school) and had all these activities and suddenly dispersed to the white schools and no chance to participate. But I think Trinity was one school which made a great deal of progress in human relations.
(lines 258 – 268)

School board. School board members were not integral players in the schools, although one of the members, Iris Wilson, was a parent in the school. When a math teacher at Trinity told students to see him if they needed help “but don’t send your parents because I’m not teaching them” (Appendix C, lines 451-452), Wilson came to Goldman to find out what was going on:

Well, here comes Iris: “What have you done?” I said, “Iris, go home. Give him nine weeks, and if he’s not the best math teacher your kids have ever had, then we’ll talk.”

She came back not even nine weeks and said, “You were right!” (Appendix C, lines 453-460)

Wilson was frequently in the school, but Goldman saw her interest as that of a parent and not that of a school board member. Goldman believed that “we had an excellent rapport” (Appendix C, lines 472-473). There was not a lot of involvement at that time between school board members and principals: “I didn’t know all the politics that were going on. Maybe it wasn’t as much as there is now in terms of the total school board. I didn’t know most of the school board members, didn’t have any reason to be worried about them” (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 475-481).

Goldman reported few interactions with the region superintendent. She found that “you ran your own school, and as long as the (region) superintendent didn’t get too many calls you were fine” (Appendix C, lines 489-492).

Support at the state level. While Goldman felt supported by Union County Public Schools and her school’s community, she did not feel that same support at the state level. At one point she represented the school district on the executive board of the state’s athletic organization: “I was the only woman there who was a principal...And they didn’t think I belonged there. They didn’t think I knew anything about sports, and the rules, etc., which I did” (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 788-797). Goldman had coached girls sports – field hockey, basketball, and softball – at the varsity and junior varsity levels in two school systems for over ten years, including her first two years at Trinity (Appendix C, lines 941-958).

Goldman learned to maneuver within the athletic organization in order to have some success. She used close friends to make her motions, did not second those motions, and often spoke against those motions in order to have the motions pass: “So, you know, you kind of learn to exist, and to survive, in some of those environments” (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 797-808). Goldman found that she could not go to the meetings with a “strong...approach to things” (Appendix C, lines 848-850). For Goldman it was a challenge to be part of the state organization on two levels: “Because it was kind of like, just like my being a female in this group, and I had going against me the fact that I was from Union County. The worst of both worlds” (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 859-865).

Family. When Goldman decided to go into administration, she was married with four children. Her husband was supportive of her career move, and her children helped her as she carried out her responsibilities:

I'll never forget when I first became an assistant principal, I was at Trinity then. One of the responsibilities, I was Assistant Principal for Instruction. At that time the system had APIs, Assistant Principal for Instruction, and APAs, Assistant Principal for Administration, and I was the API. One of my responsibilities was to have all of the textbooks in the teachers' classrooms when they reported for duty. So it was a hot, hot August day. And I took my preteen children up and they helped me count the books out and get them taken to the rooms. And the child who was about ten years old, I guess, at the time, maybe a little older, said, "Momma, I thought you'd gotten an important job!" (Appendix C, lines 1188-1205)

Goldman laughed at this memory.

Reflection. Goldman is grateful for having the opportunities that she had at Union County Public Schools. She realized that she was given positions throughout her career that were not possible at other school systems: high school principal, curriculum director, regional superintendent, and assistant district superintendent. She expressed gratitude for the opportunities she received at Union:

I think, and I've said this – and it's not a Pollyanna kind of comment – Union County was a great place to work and to be. I was given opportunities, and granted there were probably, and I know there were pressures on them, at least when I started out in an administrator capacity, really was a good place to work. I felt like it was fair to me. It gave me lots of (opportunities) I would not have had in other places, at least in Virginia, which is what I was most interested in. I don't think, I might have passed that opportunity to be an assistant principal and a principal and not really been eligible or considered for those positions that I had later. (Appendix C, lines 1371 – 1389)

Goldman believed that she was able to be the “master of my own fate” (Appendix C, line 1416) when she was principal:

You had a job to do, and as long as you did it, well, nobody bothered you. I enjoyed that. I hope I, as an administrator, I did that with the people I worked with. I like to think I did. That was certainly the way I was allowed to flourish, and I think other people do the same. (Appendix C, lines 1419 – 1426).

Wilma Goldman overcame obstacles and hurdled roadblocks in order to obtain a position as high school principal. She tried strategies that no one had taught her, that came through intuition or luck. Her experiences benefited those who followed her – in fact, she had quite a legacy to pass on to future female high school principals.

*Theresa Williams: Case Study for 1980s**Historical Context*

When Theresa Williams received her first high school principalship in 1982, history had recorded resignations by President Richard M. Nixon in 1974 and Vice President Spiro T. Agnew in 1973. Criminal activities arising from the White House, such as Agnew's acceptance of bribes in 1973, the Watergate burglary in 1972, and the mysterious erasures in Oval Office tapings, brought shame and distrust of the leadership of the country. Upon Nixon's resignation, Gerald Ford, minority Leader in the House, became President, the first President to be in the position without benefit of national voting. One of his first acts was to pardon Nixon.

Before the Vietnam War ended, Daniel Ellsberg published in 1971 the "Pentagon Papers," which outlined America's involvement in Vietnam since the end of World War II, information that was never intended for the public's eye nor scrutiny. On April 21, 1975, the Vietnam government abdicated and the last American was airlifted from the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon (Johnson, 1997). National feelings for the war at that time were so negative that soldiers did not receive the hero's welcome that other veterans had received upon their return from previous wars.

Domestic and economic issues and policies challenged the leaders of the country during the 1970s and early 1980s. With liberal justices William Brennan and Thurgood Marshall in the lead, the Supreme Court declared death penalties as unconstitutional, supported women's right to choose abortions (*Roe v. Wade*), and supported affirmative action to help minorities and women (Zinn, 1998). The economy Wholesale prices increased in 1974 by 18% as unemployment rose as well.

When Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, the economy continued to be weak. *Local newspaper C* (1982, August 28) reported that gasoline prices in the metropolitan area had jumped 8.1 cents, ranging from \$1.13 a gallon for self-service to \$1.73 per gallon for full-service premium unleaded. People who used self-service pumps saved from two to 51 cents per gallon. One station charged an additional 26 cents per gallon for full-service because it wanted “its customers to know that if they don’t want to pump their own gas, they’re going to have to make it worth the station’s time to pump it for them” (*Local newspaper C*, 1982, August 28, p.1).

U. S. foreign affair policies had difficulties, including the 1979 takeover of the U.S. embassy in Teheran in 1979 by student militants who held 52 embassy employees as hostages for 14 months. The U.S. boycotted the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Five years after the Yom Kippur War, President Carter hosted Egyptian and Israeli officials at the Camp David Summit in 1978, which led to a formal peace treaty in March 1979. First Lady Rosalyn Carter was extremely visible and accessible as she visited “18 international and 27 American cities, held 259 private and 50 public meetings, made 15 major speeches, held 22 press conferences, [gave] 32 interviews, attended 83 official receptions, and held 25 meetings with special groups in the White House” during the first 14 months she was in the White House (Johnson, 1997, p. 913). Reagan was loudly and firmly against the Soviet Union and everything the Cold War represented. When Ronald Reagan won the 1980 elections, he made it clear that he was going to take any and all actions against anyone who was against the United States.

The negative activities of the 1970s affected all aspects of American society, including education. Leaders within Union County Public Schools faced serious issues as they encountered reductions in budgets, faced continuing human relation issues, handled increasing safety and security problems, and answered society’s expectations for women in leadership.

Overview of the School System

When Williams was appointed to the high school principalship in 1982, she was the fourth woman to be hired for that level in Union County Public Schools since the appointment of Wilma Goldman in 1971. According to school directories (Angles, 2003), the other women were as follows:

- Margaret Rolls, Principal of Sinclair High School, 1975 – 1978, Region North.
- Kim Kindle, Principal of Strickland Secondary School, 1980 – 1985, Region South, following Goldman’s promotion to central office.
- Carolyn Jefferson, Principalship of Glenfield High School, Region West, 1981 – 1983.

In between the appointments of Goldman and Williams, three additional high schools were opened by the school system (Angles, 2003), thus increasing the number of people needed to fill the positions of high school principalship.

In 1981 Orlando Ward was District Superintendent and Daniel Yancy served as Deputy Superintendent. For the 1980-1981 school year there were 20 high schools and three secondary schools (*School Attendance Areas*, 1980). A fourth secondary school, opened in 1973, continued to house grades 7-12 while a nearby middle school was being built in order to move grades 7 and 8 from the high school to the new middle school. Newland High School was put on probation by the state athletic organization for recruiting basketball players outside of the school district over a three-year period (*Local newspaper C*, 1982, June 11). The school planned to continue the appeal process in order to avoid ineligibility during the 1982-1983 basketball season.

Affirmative action. In 1972 the school system began efforts to address affirmative action and related issues. School board minutes reflected a variety of actions and programs implemented by Union County Public Schools in the areas of affirmative action, gender bias, and

human relations. In July the School Board was informed through a presentation that the County Board of Supervisors had adopted an affirmative action program on May 15, 1972, that was essentially directed toward equal employment opportunity, particularly the recruitment of “unemployed persons of minority groups” (School Board, 1972, July 17, p. 179). School Board members responded that they had a proposal in place for discussion and action, although one School Board member thought the proposed guidelines “were aimed more toward the school instructional program and that the same guidelines should apply in all areas of the school system with respect to employment” (School Board, 1972, July 17, p. 180). At a School Board meeting on September 11, 1975, school personnel reported on the status of the proposed affirmative action program, and that “this effort also included the preparation of a document that would be the school system’s first line of defense in the event of a court case” (School Board, 1975, September 11, p. 503). School personnel also “noted the School Board had been discussing an affirmative action plan for a long time and ... the school system could [not] wait much longer” (School Board, 1975, September 11, p. 503).

At the May 11, 1978, School Board meeting, members heard “testimony from the public on the proposed Affirmative Action Program” (School Board, 1978, May 11, p. 119). One citizen supported the program and “stated that women and minorities should not be the only groups primarily interested in the content and implementation of the plan” and “suggested the plan include provision for upward mobility programs” (School Board, 1978, May 11, p. 120). Another citizen, president of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, supported the recognition of the need for “visibility of women and minorities in supervisory positions at every level” and that “there must be a full commitment to training and development of female employees as needed to overcome the institutional bias that had resulted in proportionately fewer

women being promoted to supervisory levels” (School Board, 1978, May 11, p. 121). Another citizen, president of the county’s Council on Human Relations, “stated if the school system wanted to have qualified applicants from among minorities and women, they had to seek them out. Thus, new ways must be devised or more effort placed on affirmative recruiting. The speaker would find nothing unusual in seeking outside the radius of immediately contiguous states. Also, there would be nothing unusual in seeking women in graduate courses in educational administration no matter where the universities existed” (School Board, 1978, May 11, p. 122). The last speaker for the evening cited that the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the EEO Act of 1972, Public Law 92-261, already supported affirmative action plans around the country and that the School Board did not have to decide “whether affirmative action was necessary to promote social change, but rather the extent of change that would occur” (School Board, 1978, May 11, p. 123). The School Board approved the affirmative action plan for Union County Public Schools in June 1978.

The Superintendent made a recommendation to the School Board at their December 12, 1974, meeting to include someone from the office of Staff Development and Training on the Advisory Committee on Sex Bias. This addition was needed “since in-service programs were of major importance in effecting changes in sex bias attitudes” (School Board, 1974, December 12, p. 161)

At the September 11, 1975, School Board meeting, the school superintendent “recommended that a human relations advisory committee be established to advise the School Board and the Human Relations Department on ways to improve the interpersonal relationships among students, teachers, administrators, and the community with special attention to the needs of black students, ...the provision of equal opportunities for males and females...” (School

Board, 1975, September 11, p. 499). The School Board would direct the responsibilities of the committee, including “review and comment on the self-evaluation required of the school system by Title IX pertaining to sex discrimination in the treatment of students or employees” (School Board, 1975, September 11, p. 500). School Board members were concerned that human relations not be separated from the total school program and the education process. One of the members commented that “he did not want the school system to lose sight of the fact of whatever problem the Board was addressing they were working toward the improvement of the academic achievement of students” (School Board, 1975, September 11, p. 502).

At the same September meeting, the Superintendent also proposed a requirement that “all professional personnel to earn three graduate credits in Interpersonal and Group Relationships as a condition for certificate renewal,” effective February 2, 1976 (School Board, 1975, September 11, p. 499). Fred Olin (2003), who would later be assistant superintendent for the Department of Personnel, remembered that...

...the requirement to take the human relations course came out of the race, I believe, my memory is that it came out of the race riots at Sinclair High School, which occurred in the protest years of the late 60’s, early ‘70s. So I would guess that the human relations course requirement, I would guess, it was early-to-mid ‘70s is when it kicked in. (lines 300 – 309)

The School Board had approved the affirmative action plan for the school district and the superintendent had initiated actions to complement efforts for human relations training and awareness. The Department of Personnel, in conjunction with the Office of Human Relations, presented annual reports to the School Board on the progress of the affirmative action plan. On January 24, 1980, progress on the affirmative action plan showed that 45% of R-scale

(administrative) positions were women, 10% of teachers were male, and 7% of teachers were minorities. The report also included information that during the 1979-1980 school year one high school opened with no minority representation and four high schools had only one minority representative. At the high school level there were two female principals and no female directors of athletic and student activities (School Board, 1980, January 24, p. 48).

The report presented at the March 12, 1981, School Board meeting confirmed district commitments to the minimum objectives of the plan, including “women will comprise 45 percent of the employees on the R-scale with the expectation that such a percentage would be reflected as nearly as possible in all job categories” (School Board, 1981, March 12, p. 243). “In 1980-81, the 16-member leadership team included one minority male and three white females. The management team of 621 persons included 32 minority males, 218 white females, and 25 minority females” (School Board, 1981, March 12, p. 243). After the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel pointed out that the school system had lost women in administration, School Board members noted that there were “relatively few women in the Superintendent’s leadership team” and that there should be a wide advertisement for the two vacancies at that level. Another Board member asked if women served on the high school principalship selection committee, to which the answer was “yes.” The same Board member further “voiced her displeasure at the low number of high school women principals” and “is concerned that UCPS does not have more women at top management levels” (School Board, 1981, March 12, p. 244).

In addition to School Board meetings, citizens were expressing their views on the lack of women in high school principals in other arenas. Fred Olin (2003), who was a curriculum specialist at the time, vividly remembered asking a parent to become involved in a textbook adoption committee during the late 1970s or early 1980s, and her response to his invitation:

I have this distinct memory of recruiting parents to serve on a social studies textbook adoption committee... And I remember this woman had been active in AAUW and had been a gender advocate. And she said to me, “Yes, I’ll serve on the textbook adoption committee because women just aren’t, women are [in]frequently portrayed, or aren’t portrayed at all, in history and government textbooks, or aren’t portrayed enough in history and government textbooks.” And she said, “Witness the fact of the dearth of female high school principals.” And she was right. I remember thinking she was absolutely right. I think Wilma Goldman and maybe one or two others. (lines 106 – 131)

Procedures to appoint principals. According to an article on employment statistics in *School Communications A* (1973), 1,700 people applied for administrative positions for the 1972-73 school year. Forty-nine were appointed to administrative positions, giving a total of 459 total administrators in Union school district. A paragraph in *School Communications A* (1973) describing the process was also included in the article:

When it comes to selection and placement ... of administrators, the procedure is more formal. Interviewing of candidates is conducted by panels of interviewers including personnel officers, principals, instruction specialists and other administrators. Candidates from within as well as without Union are interviewed and evaluated by a panel. If the interview is satisfactory, the candidate’s name is placed on a list of eligibles from which the selection is made by the personnel officer and the program manager for ultimate approval by the Division Superintendent... (T)he selection of administrative and supervisory personnel is directed by the director of personnel-selection. (p. 5)

After an internship as an assistant principal at Sinclair High School and receiving a doctorate in education administration, Carol Baker began working in the Personnel Department

in 1980. She was disappointed to discover that the interview and hiring process that had been used by Personnel for eight years was not working to increase the number of female principals at the high school level. This was...

...an area that was significantly in need. And, although I was not directly involved in principal staffing, it became an area of slim, slim support. And there were only two high school principals I recall back then – one was Margaret Rolls, with whom I had done a short internship. Margaret was out at Sinclair and I believe Amy Foster was at Dominion. (Baker, 2003, lines 60 – 71).

Baker and other women in the school system “started chitchatting a bit about this issue” (2003, lines 84 – 84). Whatever the School Board was doing in the area of affirmative action, the women believed that the interpretations of data, and thus edicts for action, were for race only and not for gender: “Back then, affirmative action, and quite frankly Human Relations Department, didn’t talk much about women. They talked about race” and did not “perceive of themselves as being an office that was there to promote women in various classifications” (Baker, 2003, lines 946 – 949, 960 – 963). Because the School Board and central office members did not appear to be confronting the issue of gender equity, a small group of women began a series of strategies to promote women as high school principals:

They were trying to mentor some women informally and we thought, “Well, why don’t we just do something formally?” And so in 1980, ’81, somewhere around in there, we actually held a series of seminars on Saturdays because we didn’t want to get in the way with the regular work week, and we knew it wouldn’t be popular, so we decided to hold them on Saturday afternoon and we held them at Lincoln High where I believe Sara was the assistant principal back then. And we really worked with people who were not only

interested in principalships but in mentoring assistant principalships, and tried to get that population going at the secondary level.... So, a group of us met. It was very small at first, but it really did begin, begin to grow and blossom a bit. And we just, we just pulled names of high school department chairs and people in leadership roles that we knew...

(Baker, 2003, lines 89 – 119)

The Saturday meetings continued for about two years, with three voluntary meetings each year, “until we saw the fruits of our labor begin to blossom a little bit” (Baker, 2003, lines 250 – 252).

The Saturday meetings became “a women’s network that blossomed into this support system of about 30 to 40 women who met at Sara’s house every six months” (Baker, 2003, lines 281 – 285).

Baker (2003) described other times that the women met, including lunches at the Superintendent’s annual retreats: “there were a group of women together just as a group of 30 or so women, and we would just all sit together at the luncheon at the Superintendent’s retreat... just get together and talk about how to support women in administration” (lines 294 – 298, 316 – 319). According to Baker (2003), Theresa Williams “by that time was a high school principal” and “she was in the group” as well (lines 326 – 328). Breakfast meetings also offered a forum for support and networking, but Baker (2003) said that the women were very careful with their meeting times and places:

We also had some breakfast meetings together. I wouldn’t say we were scared, but we were very sensitive to the structure that was around us and we were not about to flaunt the fact that we were doing this. I mean, we did it very quietly; we did it off company time so we couldn’t be accused of using our time to – it was a very, very restrictive environment, I would say. And I think, I think the men in the system would have been

shocked to hear that we felt that way. Because I think they would have believed as if they were extremely open to it. But, in fact, they weren't. They really weren't. In fact, the numbers kept proving it over and over again. (lines 449 – 467)

When asked further about membership in the “good ol’ girls” group (“Grand Ovarian Party”), Baker replied that everyone – meaning women – was welcome to attend while at the same time describing a process in which members identified potential leaders and made direct invitations to include those women: “No, we were very inclu[sive], we loved including new people. Whenever someone would come on board, you know, if we’d get another principal in the mix, we would expand the list” (Baker, 2003, lines 479 – 483).

When Baker (2003) moved into a higher position in Personnel, secondary staffing, she believed it was easier to be “a kind of conduit” (lines 744 – 745) for women who wanted to become high school administrators. She also found that the director of staffing, a man, “was very open to it, very, very receptive to, you know, spreading the net and getting more women interested in secondary administration” (lines 180 – 187). Baker (2003) believed that the women “had constantly struggled with the way they were perceived by some of the men in the Central Office, and, specifically, I think, people that had not been used to strong powerful women who knew what they wanted” (lines 749 – 755).

In 1981 the School Board examined the school district’s procedures regarding administrative placements and the inclusion of community input. After much discussion, the Board approved revisions of personnel policies regarding “the appointment, transfer, and promotion requirements for administrative appointments”:

[A School Board member] clarified for the public that this policy was intended to permit community input into administrative selection but was not to be construed as a vehicle for

permitting community decision-making. Final decisions concerning administrative placement are the responsibility of the Superintendent and the School Board.... The revisions further permit that when administrative transfers are contemplated, the needs of the schools involved as expressed by the community will be considered. All transfers shall be made after consultation with the employee concerned. The revised policies stipulate that no principal appointment or transfer shall be announced until all members of the School Board have been notified of the Superintendent's recommendation.

Further, the School Board member(s) serving the area within which the school is located, and at-large members, shall be consulted at least one calendar week in advance of notification of a principal appointment, except in emergencies. Final selection of persons to fill other than principal and deputy, associate, assistant, and region superintendent positions shall be made by the Superintendent or his or her designee. (School Board, 1981, May 14, pp. 288-289)

School board. The Union County School Board members were appointed by Union County Board of Supervisors. High school students elected a non-voting student representative each spring to serve the following year. At the July 1, 1982, meeting, the School Board members elected the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Zena Porter, who was appointed to the board in January 1983, was voted for a third term as Chair. For the position of Vice Chair, Nancy Xantus won by a 5 to 4 vote for a second term. I. W. Usher, "at large, the Board's lone black member" (*Local newspaper C*, 1982, July 9, p. 1) was also nominated for the position. At the same meeting, the board approved salaries for their members: \$6000 for Chair Porter and \$5000 for the other board members (*Local newspaper C*, 1982, July 9, p. 2).

At an earlier meeting in 1982, the School Board decided on the 1983-84 school calendar which proposed the continuance of a pre-Labor Day opening of schools following this first year of scheduling this time period. The calendar proposal did not include the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. Whether or not to have a holiday for King was decided based on the weekday upon which the holiday fell:

...the holiday was observed this year (January, 1982) because it fell on a Friday. That decision was made two years ago. The decision last year was not to hold a holiday because King's birthday next year falls on a Saturday (January, 1983). The discussion this year, for the 1983-84 calendar, noted that January 15, 1984 falls on a Sunday, but its proponents advocated putting the holiday on the following Monday. (*Local newspaper C*, 1982, May 29, p. 4)

The School Board members discussed the deciding factors surrounding this issue, including the subjective experiences, backgrounds, and preferences held by members. In reporting the discussion on this issue, *Local newspaper C* (May 29, 1982, p. 4) included statements that suggested racial disharmony among School Board members:

- I. W. Usher, the Board's one black member, moved to have the holiday on the following Monday and commented that extended deliberation regarding this issue would enlighten other Board members.
- "No votes on this issue should be taken as a litmus test on their feelings of racial equality,' School Board Chairman Zena Porter stated. 'One is not a racist or a bigot for opposing it.'"

- “The opponents’ views were mainly summarized by Vice Chairman Nancy Xantus who said that there are many important Americans who should properly be honored and that a holiday is not necessary to pay proper tribute to them all.”

Even though the school system had completed desegregation fourteen years earlier, members of the School Board appeared to still be dealing with matters of race and equality among themselves, perhaps impacting on the progress of the school system itself.

Summary. In the period of time leading up to the 1982 appointment of Theresa Williams to the principalship of Hercules High School Union County Public Schools continued to deal with race relations and acceptance of integration. It took six years for the School Board to approve an affirmative action plan, a plan that included the promotion of women to higher levels of leadership. Women in the school system did not believe that they were part of the affirmative action plan, so they developed their own methods of identification, training, and promotion. Members of the community took advantage of every opportunity to query the leadership of the school system regarding the continued lack of women in leadership positions at upper central office levels and as high school principalships. Meanwhile, a quiet but significant increase of immigrant students – students who may not have had any formal education in their native countries and who spoke little to no English – began to increase the rolls of schools such as Hercules. Incredibly, they did not even know how to play American football! This new student population would present challenges for which the school system had not prepared and would require a different kind of leadership strategies from the high school principal.

Career Summary

Theresa Williams earned a bachelor's degree in English and Journalism in Louisiana and taught for six years in Louisiana and Texas before moving to Union County, Virginia. After moving to Virginia in 1970, Williams earned a masters degree in educational administration at Tucker University, which is located in Union County. She later began her doctoral work at Easton University, the local extension center of a state university, but to date had not completed her dissertation.

When Williams applied to Union County Public Schools, she was hired to teach English and journalism at Dominion High School. It was during this time that she decided to begin her master's degree in curriculum and instruction. Upon the advice of her university advisor and supervising assistant principal, Williams redirected her coursework in pursuit of a degree in educational administration (Appendix D, lines 131-156). Before moving into administration, Williams taught a total of twelve years, six of which were in Union County Public Schools (Appendix D, lines 100-102).

Administrative assistant. In 1976 Williams left the classroom to become an administrative aide at Trinity High School, a 9-12 high school located in Region South of the school system. She served as administrative assistant for two years. At the time, an administrative aide was an appointed position, "a kind of training ground" (Appendix D, line 241), that prepared candidates for positions of assistant principal.

Assistant principal. Williams "applied for and got the position as an assistant principal" (Appendix D, lines 247-249) in 1978 at Newland High School, also a 9-12 high school located in Region South. She was the first female administrator at Newland High School (Appendix D, lines 251-252). After approximately 2½ years at Newland, Williams moved back to Trinity to

serve as assistant principal with her former principal. During the summer of 1981, she served as the principal for the high school summer school program that serviced Region South.

Principal. In 1982, Williams began her first principalship at Hercules High School. Located in Region East, the school included grades 9 – 12, and had the highest diversity rate of 35% in the school system at the time (Appendix D, lines 445-447). As she was the first female administrator at Newland, she was also the first female principal and administrator at Hercules.

Executive assistant. After serving as principal for approximately three years, Williams was selected to serve as the first executive assistant to Isaac Henderson when he arrived to become District Superintendent of Union County Public Schools in 1985 (Henderson, 2003; Olin, 2003; Williams, 2002).

Principal. Following the experience of working at the Central Office level, Williams served as principal at Dominion High School for ten years, 1986 -1996. To her this “was sort of full cycle” (Appendix D, lines 111-112). “I sort of just did a big loop” (Appendix D, lines 117-118) coming back as principal in the school where she had taught when first arriving to Union County in 1970.

When the principalship at Strickland High School became available in 1996, Williams applied for this unique position. Strickland was organized by multiple sub-schools that created a school-within-a-school structure for grades 7 – 12. This was unique in the sense that there were only three schools in the school system that were organized in this fashion. The position itself was one step higher than a high school principal due to the extended responsibilities incumbent in the position. Williams was serving in this position at the time of this research.

Narrative

Theresa Williams began her career in education as a teacher in Louisiana and Texas, where she taught French, English, and journalism for six years. When Williams came to Union County, Virginia, she taught journalism and English at Dominion High School, where she “was very happy doing what I was doing. I loved journalism. I loved working... I loved kids. I loved the interaction” (Appendix D, lines 127 – 131).

At one point an assistant principal at Dominion, Wally Unger, told Williams that she needed to get her master’s degree: “You need to get certified to be, go in administration. You’d make a great AP” (assistant principal) (Appendix D, lines 134 – 135). Williams did begin her master’s program at local Tucker University, but in the area of curriculum and instruction. During a planning conference Williams’s university advisor challenged her choice:

“What are you going to do with this when you are done, because this isn’t going to take you anywhere? You know there aren’t a lot of jobs open around here. Do you plan to move or something?” (Appendix D, lines 149 – 154)

Following that exchange, Williams changed her master’s program to administration. She believed that going into administration would give her the control she needed to help students: “I really felt that what I really needed control of – and, see, this is really, part of this is about control – if you just had the control you could make this a lot better than where it is for kids” (Appendix D, lines 139 – 144).

Administrative assistant. When Williams completed her master’s program in 1976, the assistant principal who had helped her, Wally Unger, was appointed to his first principalship at Trinity High School in Region South. This occurred two years after Wilma Goldman had been transferred from Trinity to Strickland Secondary School. Williams remembered that she “had

just finished my master's that summer, and he hired me as, what they called, an administrative aide in administration that summer" (Appendix D, lines 159 – 163). She saw this as a challenging opportunity as she transitioned from teaching at Dominion to her first administrative assignment at Trinity:

It was a great challenge. Dominion High School was the prep school of Union County. Trinity High School was like about as far stretch away, like going across the tracks, as you could ever expect to be. It was a culture shock. (Appendix D, lines 176 – 182)

For two years Williams handled all aspects of administration except evaluation of teachers:

It was an administrative title. But you did all the work that administrators didn't want to do. You weren't allowed to evaluate teachers. You could do observations but you couldn't do the evaluations. So, that meant you did all kinds of discipline with kids, you did all the textbooks and the supplies, and all that other kind of stuff. (Appendix D, lines 211 – 220)

"Administrative aide" was the first rung, the training ground, on the administrative career ladder. After two years of experience as administrative aide, Union County allowed these individuals to apply for assistant principal positions. Williams used her two years at Trinity to gain the necessary experiences and skills that would enable her upcoming ascension assistant principal and, later, principal.

Eligibility panels. Before Williams could apply to vacant assistant principal positions, though, she first had to be found "eligible" for placement among a roster filled with qualified candidates:

Now the process is a little bit different for being eligible, being found eligible, to be put on the "eligible list." You had to go through a panel. This was a central office run panel,

where you showed up and they did questions, sort of went through the drill, to declare you eligible to apply for the positions.... So, I did my panel for AP, made it through there fine. (Appendix D, 270 – 283).

After passing the panel screening and being placed on the “eligibility list,” Williams applied in 1978 for a vacancy at Newland High School: “I interviewed for and got the position as an assistant principal – actually, it was as a sub-school principal – at Newland. I was their first female administrator” (Appendix D, lines 247 – 252).

Subschool principal. The position of sub-school principal at the larger high schools was considered a step higher than assistant principal, followed by associate principal at the grades 7 – 12 secondary schools. This position offered additional visibility and experiences for people as they climbed the administration career ladder:

And that was an interesting phenomenon in Union.... But when those large high schools were built, some of the women became subschool principals and that was another avenue because that was really like a mini-principalship.... Then they had that “associate principal” which was the next step, and I think that was another area in which women could kind of work their way up a little bit so that when they finally competed for a high school principalship they had a lot of experience under their belts. (Baker, lines 1130 – 1138).

Support. Just as she had done at Trinity, Williams continued to contact people who could help her prepare for her next career move to principalship. The principal at Newland “was a very good help in talking to me about what I needed to do to be ready for a principalship” (Appendix D, lines 315 – 318). Her first principal, Wally Unger, continued to be “very much an advocate and a supporter helping me to get ready to apply for a principalship” (Appendix D,

lines 318 – 321). These contacts, or mentors, provided informal assistance where there was no formal help from the school system. Williams remembered “there was no built-in kind of structure to really give you what you needed to move up the line in administration” (Appendix D, lines 325 – 330).

In addition to informal mentoring opportunities, there was some effort by a group of women to support women who aspired to the principalship, although Williams did perceive them to be an organized, cohesive association. Williams remembered that at one district meeting, Carol Baker, a female staff member who worked in Personnel, presented “some of the research of women in leadership, and what were the significant pieces about women in leadership” (Appendix D, lines 344 – 353). Otherwise, there was no formal training, no staff development in administrative leadership, “and certainly much more of an informal, ‘good ol’ boys’ network, for men than for women” (Appendix D, lines 363 – 366). It was up to each individual to find out “who were the power brokers, who knows who, how does that play” (Appendix D, lines 387 – 388).

Williams reflected on the principals who led the schools at the time she was assistant principal, “people that I was truly in awe of for what they did and what they knew. They seemed to have these wonderful management skills, and these wonderful perspectives of how systems operate” (Appendix D, lines 389 – 396). She wondered where men got the skills to run schools, that perhaps they got these skills as “part of growing up in settings where you get administrative positions early in life” (Appendix D, lines 398 – 401). While commenting that women appeared to enter administration later in their careers than men, Williams also thought that being coaches provided men with quasi-administrative opportunities and experiences that were not readily available to women:

If the guy was a really great coach of a major sport, then he had a really much better chance... having an opportunity to move forward. I think some of that has to do just with the management of what you have to manage if you're going to be a head football coach. You have to manage many things. I can really appreciate the skill you have to have to do the job now. In my earlier years – “What the heck did sports have to do with running a school, making an education, being an instructional leader, making the education program work?” But I can certainly see how the skills translate now. That was probably your greatest training route, if you will, for people in administration. And maybe that's why there were more men principals: lots of opportunity for people to see them in quasi-administrative, quasi-leadership roles. (Appendix D, lines 405 – 429)

Since Williams herself was not a coach during her years of teaching, it took her several years as principal to recognize the skills that coaches gained through athletics. Previously she had not seen that experience as relevant in becoming a principal.

Preparation for principalship. While Williams was assistant principal at Newland High School, she paneled to be placed on the “eligibility list” for principal. She did not pass the panel the first time:

I remember the first time I paneled, though, for principalship I didn't make the panel. They said, “Nah, haven't had enough experience. You're not ready yet.” (laugh) You know, you have to know that at the time that I was doing this, going into administration, there weren't many females... So it was still one of those, “Do we have to have one?” The kind of mentality, “Okay, I guess, I guess if we have to have one, you'll do.”

(Appendix D, lines 295 – 308)

Williams stayed at Newland for 2½ years before moving back to Trinity in 1980 to serve as assistant principal with Wally Unger. She thought that Unger was going to retire soon and that she would “have a better chance of applying for the principalship there” (Appendix D, lines 481 – 485). Eventually she did pass the panel to be placed on the “eligibility list,” but Unger was not retiring as soon as she had thought.

In 1982, the principalship became vacant at Hercules High School and was advertised through the school district’s internal newsletter. With the high diversity of Hercules, Williams thought that her experiences with diversity at Trinity and Newland made her a viable candidate for Hercules. Trinity, in particular, “which was a more difficult, challenging school because of its population, the extent of its varieties, the challenge of the ranges of socio-economic and ethnic population” (Appendix D, lines 438 – 443), would provide a foundation for challenging needs of Hercules. Williams thought it was because of these extensive needs that not many people applied for the position at Hercules High School.

After she applied for the position, a panel of three central office people interviewed Williams for principalship at Hercules. Williams recalled that the interview panel acted more like a discussion group: “There was not community members. There was not student members involved” (Appendix D, lines 506 – 508). Williams remembered that the questions centered around two issues:

They needed someone who could come in and, like, clean some house... and go in and be more inclusive, meet with teachers, meet with kids, be interactive with teachers and with kids. That was one thing. And then, someone who would look at the diversity as a positive. Welcome it; try to work with it a little bit more. Those are the two things that I know were really important. (Appendix D, lines 550 – 561)

Within a few days the panel made its recommendation and Williams was hired in 1982 as principal at Hercules, as well as the first female administrator at the school. Prior to Williams, four other women had been appointed to high school principalships: Goldman, Rolls, Kindle, and Jefferson. At the time of Williams's appointment, Kindle and Jefferson were still principals, Goldman had been promoted to central office, and Rolls had retired. The high school principals meetings, therefore, consisted of three women and twenty male principals.

Family. Following in the footsteps of her mother, it was natural for Williams to become a teacher. Her family was not surprised either when Williams advanced to principal. As the oldest, her siblings had faith in her limitless potential. Williams thought that being strong-willed was an important trait that carried her through her career advancements:

I think being strong-willed is a part of our family, but I also think that I have more than my share. And maybe that's kind of the way I've gotten to where I've gotten. And maybe if I hadn't been so strong-willed, I could have been in other places. (Appendix D, lines 1170 – 1177)

Principalship. Williams began her principalship in October 1982, after the school year had begun. Although the position had been vacant for a while, everything was set up and ready for her arrival. She provided opportunities for teachers to meet and welcome her to the school. Williams was keenly aware that the faculty might have some problems with her appointment:

Now, you worry a little bit because that was, of course, the first female principal that Hercules had had. So worry a little bit about that: about who is she, what does she think she is, that kind of thing. But you know, you kind of know that kind of stuff will be there. (Appendix D, lines 610 – 617)

Even though Williams knew that these thoughts may have crossed their minds, she felt overall that the teachers extended a warm welcome upon her arrival at Hercules.

Williams believed that the first year was a learning one for her:

A learning experience as a first-year, as a principal. Regardless of what you think you know, you find out very quickly that you don't know nearly as much as you need to know. So, but, that first year was really a learning one, just trying to figure out what was going on. (Appendix D, lines 622 – 629)

Williams used that first year to “figure out what was going on... and not just turn everything upside down immediately” (Appendix D, lines 629 – 634). Her research led Williams to “three arenas” upon which to focus:

- “Instructionally, drastically, it needed some changes there to accommodate the kids who were there.”
- “In terms of student relationships, a desperate need to find a way to have kids working together and understanding each other a little bit more.”
- “And then, looking at the whole issue of program: where is Hercules going as a school?” (Appendix D, lines 639 – 648)

Students at Hercules. The student population of Hercules High School was changing, increasing in the number of students who did not speak English as their first language, and, in some cases, had not obtained literacy in their own language. Williams first noticed these immigration needs against the backdrop of the school's athletic program: “[Hercules] still had a wonderful football team that won all kinds of championships. But you see the kids were, the population was changing, and the guys coming in from Cambodia really weren't very good football players” (Appendix D, lines 650 – 656). The school demographics were changing from

homogeneous, upper class, and Caucasian, to diverse, all classes, and multicultural. Hercules “had Senators’ and Congressmen’s children and grandchildren, and then it had the immigrants and the aliens, illegal aliens” (Appendix D, lines 689 – 693).

Students new to the United States encountered difficulties in transitioning to a new country. Williams remembered the animosity that existed between the different immigrant groups:

Oh, my gosh, we had this awful thing where the new Hispanics were fighting the old Hispanics, and the Cambodians were fighting the Vietnamese, and the Afghanis were fighting anybody who showed up at their doorstep, and I’m talking kids, on the grounds coming in with all that history of where they had been. And it was very clear that we had to do something to make them a more cohesive place, and make them look at it as something they needed to work with, as opposed to against. (Appendix D, lines 940 – 952).

Hercules High School and its staff created ways to help students gain a sense of cohesion, “to make our minorities work together” (Appendix D, lines 1021 – 1022). Williams utilized the expertise of three adults – the school’s male Vietnamese assistant principal, a local Hispanic police officer, and the school’s female, Hispanic instructional assistant – to create “Students Against a Violent Environment” (S.A.V.E.). There were approximately 70 students in the group who were identified as leaders, students who “were really, I think, they were far ahead of their time at taking leadership and ownership of talking with kids” (Appendix D, lines 982 – 985).

The school had to identify and organize programs and extracurricular activities that accommodated the needs of this wide range of students. There were not many people in the school system from whom Williams could request guidance nor assistance: “I really think that in

the very early days of my principalship, discussion about instruction was really limited in terms of principals. I don't think principals talked a lot about instruction" (Appendix D, lines 903 – 908).

Parents at Hercules. While working with students was a challenge, Williams believed that parents at Hercules “as a rule... were really appreciative of someone that would try to do the collaboration and have the communication” (Appendix D, lines 673 – 676), someone who would “bring parents in, and make them feel welcome, and make them a part of decision-making, and a part of our group process” (Appendix D, lines 683 – 686). This was a challenge to do while maintaining the direction of the instructional program and handling other needs of the school.

Parents participated in school activities in different ways. The parents of the Athletic Boosters organization “were really very good. They were very supportive” (Appendix D, lines 705 – 707). The Parent Teacher Association “was not a strong one at that point, for whatever reasons; either it hadn't been encouraged or hadn't coordinated themselves to the point that they felt they were really significant in their roles” (Appendix D, lines 707 – 713). Parents attended school events, such as Back-to-School Night and student performances. At a main event during her first year as principal, Williams remembered a parent sharing her thoughts:

I can remember left-handed compliments like: I remember one lady – you know how you always remember the terrible things – this one lady walking out, and saying, “I know nobody out there likes you, but I think you're doing a wonderful job.” ... It was at one of those big group things. Yeah. And I just happened to be walking with a group, and just over her shoulder, “Oh, by the way...” (Appendix D, lines 722 – 736)

School board. While working closely with students, parents, and colleagues, Williams had little contact with School Board members: “I did not see any interactions with the School

Board much at all at the, in the Hercules job” (Appendix D, lines 1193 – 1195). She heard of other principals having contact with School Board members but this was not the case for her.

Support. When Williams was appointed principal at Hercules in Region East there were two other women in Union County who were high school principals: Kim Kindle, Region South, and Carolyn Jefferson, Region West. Geographically, though, the schools were spread widely apart within the school system, making it difficult for collaboration:

At that time, we didn’t think of, none of us thought of women as partnering or working together. We thought of ourselves as “How do we fit in the man’s world?” “How can we make this work in a man’s world?” Not “How can we make, how can we bond together as women to talk about how we support each other?” So, you know, my buddies and my support were men. (Appendix D, lines 806 - 815)

Despite the presence of women within high school principalships, Williams found support among her male colleagues. She did not think that gender was the only issue in hiring women for high school principalships:

I have to believe it is some of an issue just in terms of credibility for your ideas or thoughts... But, I think that it’s very difficult to, in a world that’s men, get the recognition, get the voice, get the platform, if you will, to be able to advance ideas.

(Appendix D, lines 1104 – 1114)

Williams remembered receiving help from one of the men at a high school principals’ meeting during which the principals were having a heated discussion:

They’re trying to figure out how to do something. So everybody had an idea about it...

And I remember [an African American high school male principal] saying, “Wait a minute. I think the little lady has an idea.” And so it was, sort of, you had to have almost

an intro to the forum to be able to get a thought on the table. (Appendix D, lines 1119 – 1127)

Reflection. Williams reflected that perhaps she had done some things that had not promoted her during her first year as principal: “I have to say that probably I did some things that wouldn’t help my cause” (Appendix D, lines 741 – 743). She focused on the issues of consistent discipline with students and appropriate instruction for students. Williams addressed teachers “who weren’t doing what they needed to do, and that always ruffles feathers” (Appendix D, lines 752 – 754). She thought she might have moved a little too fast in her changes and adjustments, “although you can’t make change if you don’t start” (Appendix D, lines 756 – 757).

Williams recognized that being “green” had a lot to do with the challenges and difficulties that she encountered during her first year as principal, as well as some “doubt if you were female on some people’s part” (Appendix D, lines 776 – 777). Williams believed that how a principal reacts to and handles such challenges and difficulties impacts that person’s reputation: “But I think, for the most part, you make your own reputation. Whether that be weak or submissive or compliant or strong-willed or hardheaded or collaborative or cooperative, or whatever it is. You make your own reputation there.” (Appendix D, lines 777 – 779).

Philosophy. Williams developed a multifaceted philosophy encircling a successful high school principal. Her way of dealing with potential obstacles was simple: “as something else you need to do to get around or get over, or ‘Oh, my, there’s an obstacle’” (Appendix D, lines 1130 – 1133). She chose the former. She talked about making a decision regarding where to put one’s energies: “I think you have so much positive energy and so much negative. And, you

know, you can spend a lot of time on negative stuff or you can decide that, where are you gonna put your energies” (Appendix D, lines 1264 – 1269).

Another part of Williams’s philosophy is to remember the positive experiences. Because Williams always found enjoyment in her career, she did not understand people who disliked their career path and complained about it all the time:

If you don’t like what you’re doing, I think you need to sort of look around and make a change. That would be, that’s kind of where I would be always, I think, philosophically in terms of what to do. (Appendix D, lines 1348 – 1354)

Williams fondly remembered her first year as principal with Hercules High School. While being a challenging school, particularly for a first-year principal, Hercules also served as a resource and guidepost for other schools and principals in the Union school district:

It was ahead of the curve in terms of all the changes that it was going through. It was sort of a precursor of things to come to the other schools... [M]any of the schools were leveling off and Hercules just continued to change. It’s just really a very unique school in terms of all that was going on there. (Appendix D, lines 920 – 929)

A unique school, in a unique time, requiring a unique principal.

*Georgia Xavier: Case Study for 1990s**Historical Context*

The history of the decade of the 1980s influenced the 1990s. Ronald Reagan served two terms as President of the United States in the 1980s, followed in the Presidency by his Vice President, George Bush. Both men were both committed to destroying revolutionary movements throughout the world that were contradictive to American ideals, particularly regarding communism. Reagan used humor and a style of light comedy, and worked through metaphor, analogy, and jokes, in communicating with the public (Johnson, 1998). It was because of his humor that the public did not know how serious the assassination attempt on his life was on March 30, 1981 (Johnson, 1998; Reeves, 2000). Labels such as “Great Communicator” and “dynamic conservatism” were attributed to Reagan in his goal to rescue the country (Reeves, 2000). He re-instituted the pomp of the Presidential Office, reinstating the playing of “Hail to the Chief” and requiring his staffers to wear suits and ties to the office (Johnson, 1998).

Economy. To improve the sagging economy, Reagan employed “Reaganomics” with the goal that “prosperity would return when federal spending and taxes were cut and government regulations slashed” (Reeves, 2000, p. 236). Congress passed the largest tax reductions in American history - The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 - in order to reduce taxes and to help the high number of people who were unemployed, which had reached 30 million by 1982 (Zinn, 1998). Reagan believed that organized labor was part of the economic problem and when the air traffic controllers union called a strike in the summer of 1981, the President fired 11,300 strikers (Reeves, 2000; Zinn, 1998). By 1983 the nation was in full recovery: annual growth in federal spending went from 17% in 1979 to 5% by 1984; tax levels dropped from 20.8% of the

gross national product to about 19%; inflation dropped from 13% in 1980 to 5% in 1982 to 4.4% in 1988; unemployment fell to 5.5% by 1988 (Reeves, 2000; Johnson, 1998).

Domestic affairs. The population of the United States grew both in numbers and in diversity (Reeves, 2000). During the 1980s, the number of people grew from 226.5 to 248.7 million people. The percentage of Whites increased by 6%, Asian by 107.8%, Hispanics by 53%, and Blacks by 13.2% (Reeves, 2000). By the end of the decade 75.2% of adults had completed high school.

Reagan appointed William Rehnquist as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, thus continuing his direction of filling the federal court system with conservative judges (Zinn, 1998). The decisions that ensued weakened *Roe v Wade*, brought back the death penalty, reduced rights of detainees against police powers, and prevented doctors in federally-supported clinics from giving information on abortions. The National Commission on Excellence in Education provided a report in 1983 entitled *A Nation at Risk*, intended to wake up the nation about the deficiencies of the public school system. After scientists recognized the spread of HIV in 1981, actor Rock Hudson acknowledged his illness from HIV in 1985 just before his death (Reeves, 2000). Also during the 1980s, states passed antismoking laws and businesses banned smoking on their premises (Reeves, 2000). Bush launched his “War on Drugs” (Reeves, 2000).

Foreign affairs. Reagan dealt with a number of terrorist activities against Americans in various areas of the world, including some that had occurred just prior to his inauguration. During Carter’s final year as President, an attempt to free American hostages held captive by Iran ended in humiliating failure in April 1980 (Johnson, 1998). Salvadoran soldiers executed four American nuns later in the fall of 1980 (Zinn, 1998). In 1983, over 200 Marines, part of a group sent by Reagan to Lebanon during that country’s civil war, were killed when terrorists

exploded a bomb in their barracks in Beirut (Reeves, 2000; Zinn, 1998). Reagan identified five nations on July 18, 1985, as terrorist states: Iran, North Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Libya (Johnson, 1998).

Reagan used his military forces in the British Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic (April 1982), Grenada (October 1983), and Tripoli, Libya (April 1986). He dealt with the “Contragate” scandal in which weapons were sold to Iran, via Israel, in order to release hostages in Lebanon, and the profits were used to help the Contras who were fighting the counter-revolution in Nicaragua (Zinn, 1998). When Reagan launched “Star Wars,” a rearmament program to intercept and destroy nuclear weapons headed for the United States, Americans protested with the largest political demonstration in American history on June 12, 1982, in Central Park, New York City (Zinn, 1998).

As the 1980s came to an end the Cold War had ended, the Soviet Union had collapsed, and the Berlin Wall had come down (Reeves, 2000). The two Germanys united in 1990 and the Communist Party had been outlawed in 1991 (Reeves, 2000). Panama President General Manuel Noriega was indicted on drug offenses in 1989 by a Florida grand jury, found guilty of drug trafficking on April 9, 1992, and sentenced to prison for forty years (Johnson, 1998; Zinn, 1998).

Media. Television played an increasingly significant role in showing the public what was occurring around the world and at home. Americans watched in horror on June 4, 1989, as 2000 student demonstrators were killed at Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China, by the Chinese army in their quest for a democratic government (Reeves, 2000; Zinn, 1998). “Operation Desert Storm,” led by General Norman K. Schwarzkopf and General Colin L. Powell in Kuwait in 1991, was watched for the first time around-the-clock through the Cable News Network (CNN) (Reeves, 2000).

Women. During the 1980s women played increasingly more visible roles in the political arena. The Democratic vice-presidential candidate in the 1984 elections was a woman, Geraldine Ferraro. Reagan appointed such women as Elizabeth Dole, Secretary of Transportation; Jeane Kirkpatrick, United Nations Ambassador; and Sandra Day O'Connor, first woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court (Reeves, 2000). Bush appointed Elizabeth Dole as Secretary of Labor and Dr. Antonia Novello as Surgeon General. When Thurgood Marshall retired from the Supreme Court in 1991, Bush recommended African American Clarence Thomas as the replacement whose position was approved only after charges on alleged sexual harassment were cleared.

Overview of the School System

When the decade of the 1990s began, Union County Public Schools had nineteen high schools with grades 9 – 12, a science magnet high school with grades 9 – 12, and three secondary schools with grades 7 – 12 (Angles, 2003; School Communications C, 1989). Two of the high schools – Hercules and Lincoln – opened with new principals for the 1989-90 school year (Baker, Aug. 31, 1989, p. Va.13). After a few months as acting principal, Michelle Duncan was appointed principal at Hercules. Other women in high school principalships for the 1989-90 school year included Otelia Garden (Maxwell Secondary School), Sara Morrow (North Point High School), Nancy Thompson (Newland High School), Amy Foster (Highland High School), and Theresa Williams (Dominion High School) (Angles, 2003).

Following a year as assistant to the district superintendent, Theresa Williams moved to the principalship at Dominion High School and accepted the position of Chairperson for the High School Principals Association. Wilma Goldman, former principal at Trinity and Strickland, and at the time Deputy Superintendent for Operations, announced her retirement from Union County effective August 1985 following almost thirty years in education (Baker, 1989, April 6). The women's networking group – also known as the “Grand Ovarian Party” or “GOP” - that had begun in the early 1980s continued to meet. Baker (2003) believed that the group was providing valuable support to women who wanted to become administrators:

And I didn't see it as a complaint session. It was really much more a networking session of how can we support people, you know, who's having trouble, you know, what are the issues that women are facing difficulties with, what can we do to mentor more women. It was always that kind of – I don't remember – and we made jokes about the men now and

then, but it wasn't really a complaint session as I recall. It was truly a networking, support group. (lines 509 – 521)

Affirmative action. School personnel reported the progress made on the school system's affirmative action goals to the School Board in year-end reports. Olin (2003) remembered that "in the original report in the '80s the gender things that came up" (lines 83 – 85) included males in various position, such as elementary teachers, secretaries, and bus drivers, "and there was always a look at the secondary, at administrators" in which there were few females (lines 88 – 90). In 1988 the Director of the Office of Human Relations said that the goals were met or exceeded in the area of educational administration (School Board minutes, 1988, January 28). One School Board member pointed out, though, that "percentage figures in the report dealing with minorities and with women might necessarily include some of the same people, with the gains in appointment of minorities and women as educational administrators, for example, including some of the same individuals in both categories" (School Board minutes, 1988, January 28, p. 238).

During Xavier's year as acting principal at Newland, Dr. Fred Olin, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services reported on the progress of the affirmative action plan to the School Board, including "the progress made since 1984 when the goals were first set" (School Board minutes, 1991, January 24, p. 152), and that twelve of the fifteen goals had been met. One School Board member did not believe that there was an objective for the Leadership Team of the school district, while another School Board member "said she was particularly glad to see that administrative goals had been met because those were important leadership and role models for the school system" (School Board minutes, 1991, January 24, p. 152).

Although School Board minutes reflect conversations by School Board and Personnel staff members about the need to increase female principals at the high school level, women in the field believed that “they interpreted the affirmative action for race only”:

I never, ever heard them talking about gender. So that they were very interested in African American and, eventually, Hispanic and Asian, but I never once heard them talk about women. It just didn't seem to be a group that they, you know, that they thought the statistics would reflect, uh, negatively. And they just, I think what happened is they lumped all the women together, so there was a lot of the elementary and the numbers that they gave to the Board were sort of K through 12 so they didn't break it down by secondary. Had they done so, they would have seen the shortage of women at the high school. (Baker, 2003, lines 904 – 922)

Personnel issues. In the late 1980s, Olin from Personnel and Keisha Little from Staff Development “created an administrative cohort to get people into, because of a short we were seeing in high school principals...there was just nobody applying for it” (Olin, 2003, lines 176 – 184). They sent out letters to minority teachers in Union County to invite them to become part of a cohort to obtain a masters degree in administration. They would also be eligible for reduced tuition.

Baker (1989, August 31) noted that “five members of the top school hierarchy will be in new positions and Superintendent Henderson will have a new executive assistant. Moreover, among those five, the key positions of Region South superintendent and assistant superintendent of instruction” would be vacant when school began the following week (p. Va. 13). When Henderson recommended an African American for the Region South superintendent position in July, one of the School Board members strongly opposed the appointment. The School Board

member, an Hispanic male, claimed that this was not an issue of race but one of promoting someone with more recent experience in schools: ““We’re a changing society, anything longer than two or three years ago is too long”” (Baker, 1989, July 20, p. Va.5). The search continued for a new Region Superintendent, resulting in the hiring of Nancy Thompson, who at the time was the principal at Newland High School. This promotion, in turn, caused a vacancy at Newland.

During the 1980s the promotion of people into principalships was the responsibility of the Region Superintendents, with input from various stakeholders:

And the authority of the region superintendent to appoint was really the predominate way you got a principalship. Certainly there would be an advertisement, and people would apply. And, but, rather than a panel, an advisory panel, the region superintendent would call in, would do a resume screen, probably with the help of his or her directors, and then call in top candidates. And, you know, I know through that period, of my involvement in the Region that, you know, we would try to be sure that among those carefully considered and screened and interviewed there would be some mix of minorities were possible, females were possible, so, I think that was just the way the Union County operated.

(Ingles, 2002, lines 273 – 292)

Because School Board members were part of the approval process, each one was contacted for approval of candidates. The experience of the strong disapproval by one of the School Board members for the earlier position of Region South Superintendent was in the forefront of the minds of those personnel selecting the new principal of Newland.

In addition to vacancies, the school system had other concerns during the mid- and late-1980s. The new Superintendent, Dr. Isaac Henderson, led the research for and implementation

of a new teacher evaluation system that included merit pay and the addition of a seventh period to the middle and high school day. School officials handled serious concerns regarding AIDS and safety and security. One request that was never approved was a pay raise for administrators.

Merit pay and evaluation process. Under the leadership of Union District Superintendent Isaac Henderson, the school system began a new system of teacher evaluation in the mid-1980s that included a bonus, “pay for performance,” merit system. In 1989, members of a local teachers organization participated in a survey:

Fifty percent of the 504 members questioned said they support some form of merit pay for teacher, but 61 percent of those who do agreed that current evaluations are a “poor and inaccurate measure of teacher performance”.... Half urged the system to eliminate merit pay but keep the tough new evaluations to assist the marginal teaches and purge the incompetent. (Baker, 1989, June 19, p. D1)

In December 1989, Henderson approached the School Board for the second time to request a pay raise for principals, assistant principals, guidance directors and activity directors. Again, the School Board rejected the proposal in a 6 – 3 vote because the members believed a raise for only school-based administrators would send a bad message to administrators in region and central office positions. Henderson believed that they deserved the raise because “principals are in the forefront of his efforts to introduce major changes in schools in recent years” (Baker, 1989, December 14, p. Va. 2).

Seven-period day reform. In February 1989, the School Board approved an extension of the school day for secondary schools in order to move from a six-period school day to a seven-period school day (Baker, 1989, February 17). The change, scheduled to begin September 1990,

was “designed to ensure that students can still take electives such as art, music and drama in the face of increasing academic graduation requirements” (Baker, 1989, February 17, p. B1).

AIDS. First in January 1988, and then in October 1989, Union School District worked with parents regarding the attendance issues of two elementary school students who had been diagnosed with the AIDS virus. The two incidents received drastically different reactions:

- In 1988 “there were angry demands, emotional outcries, and plenty of not-so-veiled threats of legal retaliation” (Baker, 1989, October 18, p. D1).
- In 1989 “there were calm, reasoned questions, shared ideas for education children and a final request from the community” of what they could do to help the situation (Baker, 1989, October 18, p. D1).

School districts at the time handled children with the AIDS virus differently, mostly on a case-by-case basis. Two nearby school systems had a few children with AIDS in their classrooms. A third nearby school district, unlike Union, did not notify the community because ““it is none of their business”” and ““we don’t hang signs on kids who are afflicted with any other fatal disease, and we are not going to do it with AIDS”” (Baker, 1989, October 18, p. D4).

Safety and security. Safety and security were top concerns as the 1989-90 school year began. There had been problems in elementary schools the previous school year as well as the creation of a “homemade cigarette-size bomb” by two students at Glenfield High School that exploded “in their teacher’s car after she called one youth’s parents about his problems at school” (Davis, 1989, June 7, p. B8). According to Baker (1989, August 31, p. Va.1), “for the first time in the history of Union school system, eight trained security officers...will roam the halls of the county’s 169 schools and 17 special education centers in daytime patrols.” In addition to the security officers, the school system also issued photo identification badges to

school personnel and required schools to continue safety measures that had begun the previous spring: “locking most doors, requiring passes for visitors, and instructing pupils to travel in pairs” (Baker, 1989, August 31, Va.1).

Dickinson High School. The 1989 graduation was the first class of seniors who had attended the newly formed Dickinson High School for all four years after the 1985 merge of Upton and Trinity High Schools. In his June 8, 1989, article, Baker reported that “four years after the caustic, divisive merger... the deep community wounds have essentially healed and, though the scar tissue is still evident in some quarters, a new combined school has emerged, with new traditions, a new principal, and new potential” (p. Va.1). In response to declining enrollments in Region South, the School Board voted 6 to 4 to close Upton in 1985 and merge it with Trinity to form a new school at the Trinity school building. At one point, District Superintendent Daniel Yancey had recommended closing Trinity, but the School Board rejected that proposal. Upton “had a reputation as the homogeneously white, academically superior, country club school” while Trinity “was thought to be more racially diverse, rowdier, drug-plagued and less academically oriented” (Baker, 1989, June 8, p. Va.3).

Career Summary

Dr. Georgia Xavier completed her bachelor's degree in health and physical education in 1968 at a state university in Tennessee. After moving to Virginia in 1978, she earned a Master's degree in education, with a minor in physical education, from the local extension center of Easton University. In 1992 Dr. Xavier earned her doctorate in educational administration from Elvington University, which was located in another state but offered local classes through an extension center: "(T)hey had courses up here in Union County, and we had to spend two summers on campus" (Appendix E, lines 283-285).

Teacher. Xavier's career began as a teacher of health and physical education at another southern state for one year before coming to Union County Public Schools in 1969. During the next 13 years she taught physical education for three years, took child care leave for four years, and returned to teach physical education, math, and science for six years. Her teaching experience included all three levels of instruction: elementary, middle, and high.

Career opportunities. Dr. Xavier accepted opportunities that led her outside of the classroom. As a member of a district audit team, Dr. Xavier visited schools throughout the system to evaluate instructional programs and school climate. "And I spent close to three years in the, at that time, the Region South Office, working actually out of two offices – HR, which was Personnel at that time, and Region South as human relations specialist" (Appendix E, lines 327-332).

While Xavier was working at the Region and Central offices, she "had opportunities before I was 'official'" (Appendix E, lines 394-395) to serve as assistant principal. When an assistant principal was temporarily on leave, or a position was temporarily vacant, Xavier was

able at several middle and high schools to fill in for the person. This gave Xavier additional experiences that would add to her resume as well as better prepare her for interviews.

Assistant principal. From 1985 – 1990, Xavier served as assistant principal at Oak Ridge High School. While at Oak Ridge, Xavier accepted temporary positions to serve as principal. During two summers she served as the summer school principal for the secondary school summer school program at Highland High School, grades 9 – 12 (Appendix E, lines 306-309), and for Strickland, “where the middle school and the high schools were combined for summer school” (Appendix E, lines 456 – 461). Xavier served as interim principal when the principal at Oak Ridge retired and until the new principal arrived at the school (Appendix E, lines 442-446).

Principal. Xavier was asked to serve as acting principal at Newland High School in 1990, receiving a formal appointment at the end of the school year. According to the school’s website, “the fall of 1991 began the tenure of only our fifth principal in over 55 years” (Curator, website, Newland High School, January 7, 2002). The website listed accomplishments that had occurred during Xavier’s time at Newland, including completion of their school renewal, implementation of block scheduling, the rise of SAT scores by more than 70 points, and her selection as Principal of the Year for Union County Public Schools for 1996-97. In recognition of this award, the Board of Supervisors declared January 6, 1997, as “Georgia Xavier Day” in Union County (Board of Supervisors, 1996, December 2).

Central Office. In December 1998, Xavier was asked to serve in Central Office as the administrative officer to the district superintendent. During the next two years, 1998-2000, the school system was reorganized from four regions to three regions in answer to budgetary restraints. When it was found that these regions were too large to meet the needs of students and

schools, the school district was reorganized into smaller regions. Xavier applied and interviewed for the position of director, for which she was selected and held at the time of this research.

Narrative

Dr. Georgia Xavier began her career in education in Union County Public Schools as a physical education teacher. Her teaching assignments gave her experiences at three levels: traveling as an itinerant physical education teacher between two elementary schools, teaching several subjects at a small middle school, and teaching high school physical education at a secondary school. In addition, she had the unique experience of being one of the first staff members when Indigo Secondary School opened in the early 1970s. After a break in service to have children, Xavier expanded her experiences as a teacher, adding math and science at Pine View Middle School. She was also assistant track coach at Norman High School, the high school that Pine View students eventually attended.

Certification advice. It was during this time that Xavier decided to get her Master's in counseling because "children and adults used to come to me all the time for advice" (Appendix E, lines 62 – 65). When her principal at Pine View found out that Xavier was considering a Master's degree in counseling, he thought she should take another career direction:

And I was told by the principal at the time that I was going back to school to get a counseling degree, and he said, "No, Georgia." He said, "I see you as a principal." And he said, "That's what you need to do." So I said, "Well, oh, OK." (Appendix E, lines 65 – 72)

Xavier found this to be "quite surprising, and was quite complimentary for him to insist that I go the administrative route" (Appendix E, lines 124 – 126) since she was just teaching and not in a formal leadership position, such as department chair.

Based on her principal's suggestion, Xavier changed her focus to administration. She followed his suggestion because "he saw things in me which he said I wasn't even aware that

were in me. He said that I just needed the confidence to do it” (Appendix E, lines 85 – 88). At this time in the school system, only a few women were high school principals, and perhaps one of those women were African American. The next principal at Pine View also expressed encouragement when he evaluated Xavier: “...on my final evaluation, he wrote that he saw me in a leadership position and that I should pursue a principalship” (Appendix E, lines 154 – 157).

For her Master’s program Xavier attended the local extension center for Easton University, a state university located in another part of Virginia. There were “very few” women in her administration classes and most of the men tended to be physical education teachers and coaches (Appendix E, lines 182 – 185). The women varied in their teaching backgrounds – “a lot of them had English and social studies backgrounds” (Appendix E, lines 237 – 239). Xavier thought that the group was a warm one, in which everyone “really assisted each other and supported each other” (Appendix E, lines 246 – 248). Upon completion of the program, though, each person went his/her separate way.

Xavier utilized experiences in the school system prior to her principalship, including in-house classes for aspiring administrators, summer school principalships, and audit teams:

Years ago we had opportunities to be in classes in which people would come to us, at our site, and at that time there were quite a few of those, those aspiring administrators... And I had a chance to, at Highland High School, one summer, to be an acting summer school principal... So there really were opportunities. And years ago, Union County used to have program audits, and I used to be on many of the audit teams, and that gave me real good insight as to the job of a good administrative, excellent experience... I would go around and audit curriculum programs, school climate, interview teachers and the

administrative staff. And sometimes students, depending on the level. (Appendix E, lines 299 – 326)

Eligibility panels. The school system had a process in which people interested in administrative positions interviewed first with a central office panel to determine eligibility for administrative positions, including assistant principal and principal. After being found eligible at each level, approved candidates were then placed on an “eligibility list,” which principals and Region offices used when positions opened. Xavier described the process:

First, to get your name on the “list of eligibles,” you first had to have the coursework to be certified. And then you had to present, or respond, to questions. And usually six to eight people, and they would rate you. And you would be on the list for three years. And if you didn’t get a job in that time, then you had to go back and re-interview with the panel. And it was for each level. And at the time API (assistant principal one) was “administrative aide.” That’s what they were called, “administrative aide”; that’s what they used to call APIs. Then you had to interview for APII (assistant principal two), and if you wanted to be an associate principal. Every level, you had to go before and get your name on the list. And that was just to get on the list. Then the principal would go and look at the list of eligibility and then make a determination as to which applicants would be interviewed. (Appendix E, lines 365 – 388)

System experiences. It was during the eligibility panel interview that the Director of Human Relations, a member of the panel, met Xavier. According to Xavier, “his coordinator called me at school and said they had an opening, would I be interested in it?” (Appendix E, lines 352 – 355). She accepted the position and worked for both Region South and Personnel as a human relations specialist. She thought that this gave her “a chance to be in and out of the

schools, and working with adults on a different level, from administrative to administrative, looking at issues” (Appendix E, lines 333 – 337).

While she was in her human relations position, Xavier had opportunities to work as a substitute assistant principal at two middle schools for short-term vacancies. She also served as assistant principal at Upton High School when it was in the process of closing, moving, and merging with Trinity to form Dickinson High School. The experiences at Upton, before and during the merge, were challenges that heavily called upon Xavier’s human relations skills:

When I think about Upton, in particular, the emotions were very high; teachers and community very upset. So, I had to deal with that as being part of that staff. And, also, as being a human relations specialist, I was dealing with some extremely difficult cases. Sometimes, staff against administration, sometimes parents against parents, and secretaries against secretaries. And I would be called to mediate, to come up with strategies so people could get along better. (Appendix E, lines 420 – 433)

Administrative aide; assistant principal. In 1985 Xavier was selected to be administrative aide, and later assistant principal, at Oak Ridge High School, where she served until 1990. Confirmation of her appointment to Oak Ridge came in the form of a telephone call to schedule her picture with the district superintendent:

...(W)hen I was appointed assistant principal at Oak Ridge, when I was API in ’85, because at that time the superintendent , anybody who got promoted you had your picture taken with the superintendent, and this is how you knew you had the job. You know, you interviewed for the position, and you anxiously wait at your job site or at home to have your picture taken with the superintendent. So if you didn’t get that call, you knew you

didn't have the job. And so, I had gotten the call that I was to have my picture taken with Dr. Henderson and so I knew I had Oak Ridge. (Appendix E, lines 1233 – 1248)

Xavier joined an administrative staff at Oak Ridge that included a male principal, two male assistant principals, a female director of guidance, and a female director of student activities and athletics (Young, 2002, lines 267 – 272). Later, between the departure of the retiring principal and the arrival of the new principal, Xavier served as the acting principal. She continued building her resume, including an appointment as summer school principal at Strickland Secondary School that required her to handle both middle and high school summer programs.

Support. While these additional experiences in administration provided further preparation for a principalship, Xavier received support from the new principal, Oscar Young, when he arrived at Oak Ridge. Young did not remember any special training provided by the school system for assistant principals who wanted to be principals. He admired Xavier's toughness and tenacity, and applauded her willingness to "fight for pretty much everything she got" (Young, 2002, lines 986 – 988). Because he knew that Xavier wanted to be a principal, Young (2002) counseled and guided her:

Well, as I said, we had some, Georgia and I, I knew she wanted to be a principal. I mean, that was clear to me that she wanted to be a principal. Uh, we, she and I had some sessions. We had some sessions on, you know, because of merit pay and all that we talked about – I did it with all of the assistant principals, you know – how was her writing; how was her write-ups; and whatever. And there were some other issues, and I would sit down and talk with each assistant principal. And I devoted a lot of time with Georgia because I knew she wanted to be a principal. And so we would have frank

discussions, and I always meant them to be constructive. And I never had any reason that she didn't accept them that way. So the lines of communication were always open. She could always come in – she always knew that I would give her an honest answer. (lines 997 – 1020)

Acting principal. Because of her experiences at the middle and high school levels, both as a teacher and as an administrator, Xavier was interested in a principalship at either level. She “was really open to both levels” and had “interviewed for a couple of middle school positions” (Appendix E, lines 475 – 479), but was not successful. Her appointment as a high school principal came in an unconventional, and surprising, manner:

This is a different story. I officially interviewed a year after I had the job. But, initially, I was, uh, during cafeteria duty at Oak Ridge High School, and a student came to get me to say that I was wanted at the main office. So when I got to the main office, the secretary said, “You need to call Dr. Howard. He’s at Central. And you need” – Dr. Howard was the Region South Superintendent – “and you need to – it’s urgent.” So I called him. “Can you be up here at Central right away?” And I asked, “Why?” And he said, “I cannot tell you, but you need to be up here.” He said, “Call the Superintendent’s secretary and tell her you are on your way.” At that time, my hands were shaking because I did not know. I thought, “This is serious stuff, being called up to the Superintendent’s office in the middle of the day.” And the secretary had to dial for me because my fingers just wouldn’t work. And his secretary said, “Be here in 20 minutes.” So when I got to Central, there were a group of personnel specialists, and my first thought was that a hearing was about to take place; I was the object of the hearing; and this was going to be big. And I was greeted by one of the HR people, and they said, “You need to

go straight upstairs.” I got up there and waited for a while. When I met with the Superintendent, it was at that time he said that the previous principal had gotten promoted, was going to be in a new position – this was on a Friday – and he said that we were thinking about who could go in and replace her, and we thought that you could do the job. And I had to decide right then and there. I could not think about it because they wanted me to start that Monday. (Appendix E, lines 485 – 532)

Prior to the telephone call requesting Xavier’s presence at Central Office, her principal Young (2002) had received his own call from Superintendent Henderson:

- Well, I remember getting a call saying, “What do you think about Georgia Xavier? Is she ready to be a principal?” And I said, “Yes, to the best of my knowledge, having worked with her for,” so it must have been a year that I worked with her. I said, “Yes, I believe she’s ready.” And that was from Henderson, I think. (lines 450 – 458)

- But I think he probably felt that he could call me and trust that I would give him the straight scoop. He said, “Do you think she’s ready?” And I said, “Yes.” (lines 476 –481)

- Well, I remember her coming into my office and saying, “Well, I’ve got to go meet with the superintendent.” ... And I know that Isaac was interested in knowing whether or not she was a disciplinarian, and whether she was tough. And I said I thought she was ‘cause, you know, high school’s high school. (lines 495 – 507)

- And the question was, “Is she ready?” And I said, “Yes.” I said, “You know it’s a tough job, and she’ll probably make some mistakes, but, yeah, she’s ready. She’s ready.” So, you know, was she a disciplinarian? They were real interested in how would she be fair. Would she be fair in terms of discipline, and that sort of thing? That was really the

only conversation I had. Then, after that, it was out of my hands, and she was gone quick. (lines 620 –632)

Young (2002) recognized Xavier as a team player, a disciplinarian, and fair: “She was tough. Again, she was tough. She was not afraid to back away” (lines 976 – 978). He believed that these strengths came from her inner city background, “where she had to fight for pretty much everything she got. And that’s what I think. And that’s a compliment to her” (lines 985 – 989). Young (2002) appreciated that Xavier “had a lot of ambition” and was “upwardly mobile” (lines 1461 – 1463). Because he believed in her ability and knew she wanted to be a principal, Young spent a great deal of time working with Xavier through conversations and discussions.

Henderson was seen as a superintendent who “had a lot of faith in people” and “would not manage the internal workings of things” (Baker, 2003, lines 1374 – 1377). He entrusted the Deputies and Region Superintendents to make personnel selections. Olin coordinated with Bob Jackson, the Region Superintendent who was moving to Central Office, and with Nancy Thompson, the current principal at Newland who was being promoted to the Region Superintendent position, to recommend Xavier for the position. Knowing that there were problems with the original recommendation for the Region Superintendent, and to avoid a potentially long vacancy period at the school, the three recommended to Henderson that Xavier start immediately as “acting principal,” with the formal interview process to take place the following spring. This was an “attempt to set Georgia up and to give her a time to get her ‘sea legs’ to prove how good she was before we did a frontal assault on the community” (Olin, 2003, lines 644 – 649).

When she was the human relations specialist in Region South, Xavier had worked for Olin. From there, Olin (2003) had followed her career and knew that she was the “perfect person” for the principalship at Newland:

Georgia had worked for me. She was a human relations specialist in the Region North office. She had wanted to be an administrator. She was made an assistant principal at Oak Ridge High School. She was doing good, well with that, when the white male principal was always gone, always occupied, not, I mean Georgia was doing really, really well with that. And when Nancy left Newland, she and Bob and I talked about we needed to move Georgia to, Georgia would do great at Newland. It was important too, that as a female and as a person of color, that would be very positive to do that. And that, but that the community might not rise up for her, so we needed to do something that got her there for a while before that happened. And there was, and there was more to it than that, too, because the other part of the issue was there was a problem. There was an attempt to put an African American administrator, not female, at Newland and somehow that blew up. So it was, it was very astute to put another, to promote another African American into that position because I can't remember now – I remember who, but I can't remember why it blew up. But, so there were other dynamics that were going on that Georgia was just the perfect person. And she had done a great job at Oak Ridge and was extremely talented. (lines 971 – 1007)

The recommendation was made to Henderson by Olin and others to place Xavier at Newland: “But her name came through the Region office, through other nominations, and so on, so there was a larger, there was a larger group that came up to me” (Henderson, 2003, lines 471 – 475). After interviewing Xavier and obtaining her acceptance for the position, Henderson

stipulated that he had to obtain approval for her appointment from members of the School Board. As Olin stated above, there was concern regarding one School Board member, who had not approved another appointment. Surprisingly, the School Board member that others were worried about approved Xavier's appointment without hesitation when contacted by the superintendent. So, with telephone approval by members of the School Board, Xavier was approved and appointed to Newland High School to begin the following Monday. Young (2002) agreed that the appointment "happened real quick, happened real quick" (line 575-576).

Young (2002) thought that a promotion happened because "it's the right place at the right time and the right superintendent and the right set of circumstances" (lines 1608 – 1611). Although it was not stated, he believed there was a movement by Union County to promote women to principalships at the middle and high school levels. Young (2002) remembered that there was "the feeling among some white males that they were being slighted, overlooked, not given a fair shot, affirmative action, ethnic, the ethnic issue, all that affirmative action with race and gender, was impacting on white males at that point" (lines 1553 – 1559).

When Xavier accepted the position of "acting principal" at Newland, she knew that the position would be advertised the following spring and she would have to interview for the position at that time with other candidates. She believed she had strong support from Bob Jackson, the Deputy Superintendent, because he had consistently approved the advancements in her career:

...I felt that he was behind me... At the time, he was the one who had hired me as API, or administrative aide, down, when I was down at Oak Ridge. He was the one who had approved that, approved when I moved up within the school as APII, and appointed me

the summer school principal. And I think he had a lot to do when they were looking for someone to go to the school. I think he had a lot to say, you know, about me going in.

(Appendix E, lines 875 – 888)

Family. Xavier’s family was proud of her achievement. Xavier’s mother was not surprised that her oldest of six children had been promoted to the principalship: “...she said, ‘Of all our kids, you were always the strongest.’ And, so she was proud, but was not surprised one bit, you know, that I was able to do the job” (Appendix E, lines 971 – 975). Xavier’s husband was equally proud, and confirmed that “if anybody wanted to know how tough she is...all they have to do is ask me. She sure knows how to push me around” (Appendix E, lines 975 – 980).

Principalship. At the time Xavier was appointed to Newland, there had been much growth in the school system during the previous five years. As a result of many appointments and changes, Xavier was not summoned to Central Office for a picture with the district superintendent as she was when appointed administrative assistant: “Now, by the time I became a principal, I think there were so many people moving into positions that it was difficult for him to schedule” individual photo sessions (Appendix E, lines 1273 – 1276).

Newland in transition. When it first opened, Newland High School served an upper middle class community. During the late 1980s, Newland “was changing” and had “some really tough areas” (Young, 2002, lines 643 – 650). When Xavier arrived, the school was in the midst of transition; change was evident among student demographics, leadership, and human relations. Xavier described the struggles that ensued at Newland:

The school was in transition. For many, many years it had been an upper middle class community. We were cognizant of our struggling families, had very few minorities, students. When I got there, although the white students were in the majority, it was over

the last couple of years it was changing. There were a lot of internal/external fighting. Externally, parents were fighting for leadership of the school and leadership among the parent groups. To give you an example, the president of the Athletic Director's Booster organization and the president of the PTA were at odds with each other. And, when I was assigned there, the Athletic Booster president would not speak to the PTA president, and it was my job to try to bring them together and, that was one of my projects. Internally, there was discord among the administrative staff. And, a lot of this I had gotten from a couple of APs, assistant principals. When I had got there, you know, they were telling me some of the issues I was going to have to deal with. They said the men, male administrators, depending on the issues, the men administrators would be opposite the female administrators. And then it was a different issue if it was a racial issue – then it became black against white. And the teachers, there were a lot of turmoil among the teachers. One of the assistant principals, while we were touring around the building on my third day on the job, which was a Wednesday, she said, “We need to go to the lecture hall to the sensitivity meeting that we have every Wednesday.” And I said, “What are you talking about?” And she said, “Because the teachers are fighting among themselves.” So when I got there, teachers were in tears, they were accusing each other, showing favoritism either toward the minority kids or not doing their jobs. Fortunately, the students, they were fine! (Appendix E, lines 702 – 753)

Xavier was impressed with the students at Newland. She saw diverse groups join activities together and interact with minimal regard for differences in race and socio-economic levels:

...(G)oing in the cafeteria and in the halls, I saw a good mixture of children, you know, associating with each other. And when there were fights that took place, it tended to be within their race. And it tended to be over, it was boys over girls, not, very rarely, a racial issue had come into play. And another thing that I found that I was very impressed with the students: at that time Newland, as I said, was going through a transition period, and we had a very, very wealthy families that lived in million dollar homes. And then we had a lot of kids, black and white, that lived in apartments, low-income apartments, and trailers, because there were trailer camps. And I didn't see polarization among the socio-economic levels. I saw kids mainly with each other, and that was quite surprising that the have-nots and the haves – you would see them get into cars together. It was just – I was impressed with that. (Appendix E, lines 757 – 765)

The teachers were very positive about Xavier's appointment, particularly after "they had called around" and "got good reports" about her (Appendix E, lines 795 – 796). The administrative team included four assistant principals, two male and two females. Because one of the assistant principals believed that he was going to be the acting principal, he had moved into the Principal's Office and sent memos to the faculty with his name and title "acting principal." He did not realize the new appointment until Xavier arrived on Monday morning. Contrary to what Xavier had been told, there were no internal fights between administrators and everyone worked together. Xavier was relieved not to have had to deal with problems on the administrative team.

The community was the biggest obstacle for Xavier – they were not happy to see her in the position. Xavier's words best describe the situation:

But the community was very, very angry. The black community was upset because they had, I had found out, they had requested that they wanted a minority principal because of the changes. However, they wanted a male minority. They did not want a black female principal because they didn't think females could do the job. And, the white community made it clear, the number one choice was a white male, the number two choice was a black male, the number three choice was a white female, and there was no place for a black female. And I got threatening, anonymous threatening calls that "we'll never accept you, black so-and-so, as principal of this school." I got hate letters. And the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, came down and he said, "Are you OK?" I said, "Well, as long as they're not shooting at me." I said, "I'm sorry. I'm going to stay here as long as I, you know, intend to stay here." I said, "They don't shoot at me, I'm OK. They can say whatever they want to say, but I'm not leaving." (Appendix E, lines 796 – 825)

Xavier remembered the assistant superintendent's words of encouragement during this time:

"Remember, Georgia," he said, "You are a former athlete. You ran track." And he said, "You don't finish until you cross that line. And he said, "You are just starting. I'm behind you. I know you can do the job." And as long as I knew that he felt I could do the job I wasn't going to disappoint him, I was going to hang in there. (Appendix E, lines 892 – 902)

Xavier identified several areas on which to focus her energies during her first year at Newland. "One of my things was to get, calm things down, to get the adults working together because I figured that we couldn't move forward as a school if we had all that external and internal fighting" (Appendix E, lines 1408 – 1413). Once staff members were working together,

the next focus was on instruction, “because with the change in the demographics, we were getting more and more students that came to school with needs” (Appendix E, lines 1417 – 1420). These students included second language learners and students coming from disadvantaged homes. Everyone was concerned about the reputation of the school: “And so the academic level was dropping, and that was a major concern to the upper middle class parents, black and white and Hispanic, all concerned about the reputation of the school” (Appendix E, lines 1423 – 1428). Several programs were implemented at the school, “programs that in terms of discipline, leadership, academic, that we were trying to give the school a good name and provide opportunities for the kids to excel in a lot of different ways” (Appendix E, lines 1482 – 1488). These programs included a mentoring program called “Future,” classes taught through videos, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program, International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, and ROTC Marine program.

Culture shift. In the three or four years prior to her appointment at Newland, Xavier saw the number of high school female principals increase from one to six. When Xavier was appointed principal of Newland, she noted that she was only the second female principal at the school and “when I was principal in the county there were only six females, high school principals, that sat around the table of 23 principals” (Appendix E, lines 561 – 565). This was causing a change in the culture of the principalship:

At that time some of the men were feeling uncomfortable having the females around; they couldn’t talk their usual talk. And most of the females, well, I would say all of the female principals, were really about instruction. I’m not saying the men weren’t, but the emphasis was really placed highly on instruction in how the meetings were being run, committees to get on, our goals as an organization. (Appendix E, lines 598 – 610)

Once the community saw one or two females be successful as high school principals, they were more willing to accept females in that position. Xavier had come through a period of time when the community was apprehensive toward female principals, at both the high school and middle school levels:

In the beginning, you would hear people say, “Only a man can run a high school.” And, I think that there was this perception out there that – well, for a long time, people didn’t feel that a female could even run a middle school... So once they saw one or two females actually venture into the high school level, and surviving, then more took the chance. And, back at that time, most of the females, and many of the men, not all, but many of the men, even before they took on the high school, went to middle school, or intermediate school, first. (Appendix E, lines 1302 – 1319)

Being a principal at the middle school level was recognized by many as a stepping-stone in the career path to high school principalship.

Overcoming resistance. Gradually, over the first few years of her principalship, the community slowly changed its resistance to having a female African American principal. They saw her having fun while supporting the school: playing Gladys Knight in the PTA’s annual talent show one year; being a cheerleader at a pep rally; and dressing in costume along with other staff members during special events, including Mrs. Santa Claus, a flower baby, and doctor. Xavier saw this as a way to balance the ability to effectively communicate with students while maintaining discipline within the school. She did not want students “to see me as somebody to fear” (Appendix E, lines 1196 – 1197).

Xavier confronted parent leaders when it became apparent that they were challenging her authority and undermining her ability to be successful:

...And, so the first several years were tough, but the good thing about it – some of those people who opposed me came out, ended up being some of my biggest supporters. After three or four years, I can remember one leader of the community came in and said, he said, “I apologize.” He said, “Because I didn’t give you an opportunity to demonstrate what you could do.” He said, “I just made some assumptions.” He said, “I can see you are here for the kids and for the school. Anything you want me to do, I can do.” And the black men leaders in the community, after the first year, became supportive, and it was years later when they told me why they made a change. One of [them], who was the president of the Minority Student Achievement parent group, said that (sigh) he and the PTA president tried to bully me. And he said when I called them at their offices and said I want you in my office immediately. And they both came in to the Principal’s Office, and I told them, I said, “I’m going to run this school the best way that I think it should be run. You’re either with me, or you’re not with me. But I am not going to be intimidated. I am not going to, you know, be pushed around. I’m going to do what’s right.” When I told them that, and they said they considered themselves bullies, they said this lady is not going to take any stuff. And they became, they really became, really very supportive.

(Appendix E, lines 825 – 863)

Xavier found that “once the first PTA president got over the fact that I was a black female,” he “became supportive” as well (Appendix E, lines 1498 – 1501).

“Not going to take any stuff” is a characteristic of Xavier that served her well those first years. Xavier described her demeanor as “deceiving,” because “on the surface I come across sweet... I am not a yeller... I’m not one who has a big stick... I’ve not really had difficulty dealing with people, or people trying to push me around because they know that they can only go

so far and I will put a stop to it” (Appendix E, lines 984 – 994). Xavier was a risk-taker as she looked for ways to include parents and the community in the school, such as including the presidents of 56 community organizations at annual Back-to-School Night meetings (Appendix E, lines 1632 – 1639), assigning parent liaisons to attend department meetings (Appendix E, lines 1536 – 1540), and selecting parents who were known to be negative on the Parent Advisory Committee (Appendix E, lines 1572 – 1575). Xavier found great success with this last strategy:

And that whole year, they felt so good, you know, being called in as leaders and being on the inside. So they became advocates for the school and supportive of me... But that was a chance, because they could have cut me and sabotaged me. That was a real risk.

(Appendix E, lines 1587 – 1603)

In the spring of Xavier’s first year, the position of principal was formally advertised in *School Communications B*. Of the approximately 35 candidates, most worked in the school system with a few applying from outside of the school district (Appendix E, lines 551 – 555). Xavier found that “when they had official interviews...the Region Superintendent met with the PTA and they all voted for me to remain” (Appendix E, lines 1502 – 1505).

School board. Two male School Board members represented Newland High School, both of them supportive in their own ways. If a parent contacted them, they would call Xavier to let her know what was being said and to hear her side of the situation. One of the two school board members “was extremely supportive, to the point that I had heard from several people that he stood up for me on many occasions” (Appendix E, lines 1356 – 1359). When Xavier thanked him for this support, “he said, ‘You’re doing a great job.’ So that meant a lot to me” (Appendix E, lines 1362 – 1364).

Support. Xavier found support from other administrators during her first year. The principal at Oak Ridge during her last two years there, Oscar Young, “was real pleased that, you know, I got the position” and he and two other male high school principals “kind of took me under their wing... I felt that those gentlemen, you know, treated me, you know, like I was one of them” (Appendix E, lines 1010 – 1018). Two of the other female high school principals provided support as well. Otelia Garden had a “calm way of about, you know, dealing with issues, and I was able to sometimes run things by her” (Appendix E, lines 1030 – 1033). Michelle Duncan “had such a great sense of humor. It was just sometimes just to say things to her just to get a reaction out of her, and just put everything in perspective” (Appendix E, lines 1039 – 1043). Oscar Young (2002) agreed that there was a supportive group of high school principals from that area of the school system:

Yea, we did have a real supportive group. We did; we definitely did. We would meet at, then we would go from there. We also did lunch when we would have District meetings. We would meet at Vista... And, again, that was sharing kind of a time. So, yea, we had a pretty tight group. It was a good group. There was no sense of competition. (lines 1129 – 1143).

During her 8½ years as principal at Newland High School, Xavier, saw real changes regarding male high school principals:

In the beginning they were taking leadership roles, some were kind of beginning to withdraw. By the time I left the principal position, the women, first of all the number of women had increased significantly, and the men were really taking a back step, and saying, “You do what you want to do.” Very few of them actually participated verbally,

or action-wise, into what we were doing, as if “You women have come in and taken over our organization.” (Appendix E, lines 629 – 641)

Xavier did not think the men were angry, but “it was almost as if we were invading secret types of things” (Appendix E, lines 655 – 656). When the high school principals signed up for committees, fewer men participated on committees dealing with instruction, gravitating toward those involving facilities and general services. The women principals tended to be on the instructional and special education committees. The human resources committee had good representation by both genders. Xavier recognized that the committees were voluntary, and that everyone could choose whichever committee he/she wanted. For her part, Xavier volunteered to be “on two committees: the instructional committee and the budget committee” (Appendix E, lines 673 – 675).

Reflection. Xavier encouraged female administrators to apply for high school principalships “because, in spite of some of the past experiences I had, it’s a fun exciting place” and “the communities are now beginning to see that females are capable of being high school principals. So that perception is changing” (Appendix E, lines 1721 – 1728). The story of Dr. Georgia Xavier illustrates how one can overcome many obstacles in pursuit of a successful career in education administration.

*Olivia Yates: Case Study for 2000s**Historical Context*

Despite the fears of Y2K and predictions of technological catastrophes, the new millennium and decade began with few problems. William Jefferson Clinton served two terms as President of the United States during the 1990s, sandwiched between the two Bushes: George Senior, President 1988-1992, and son George W., who won the elections in 2000.

Challenges for the decade leading up to the new millennium occurred in the nation's economy, foreign policies, and domestic issues.

The decade of the 1990s began with a sagging economy that became a recession. Bush reluctantly agreed in spring 1991 to raise taxes and make cutbacks in military and aerospace spending. With businesses replacing workers with technology and shifting manufacturing to low-wage developing countries, the unemployment rate in 1992 reached a high of 7.8%. The national debt grew from \$2.8 trillion in 1989 to \$4 trillion in 1992. Whether for economic necessity or for materialistic desires, the percentage of two-income families grew from 33% in 1967 to 66% in 1998. During the mid-1990s the economy began to bounce back, as the unemployment rate went down to 5.6 % and people living below the poverty line reduced from 15.1% in 1993 to 13.8% in 1995 (Reeves, 2000). By 1999 the unemployment rate was 4.3% and inflation was 1.7%.

Throughout the 1990s, Americans witnessed events that impacted people around the world. The decade began with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the demolition of the Berlin Wall, and reunification of the two Germanys. In 1991, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia declared their independence and the Commonwealth of Independent States was created in place of the USSR. The United States became involved in the Persian Gulf War and "Desert Storm" after

Iraq invaded Kuwait. Clinton sent troops to Haiti in 1994 to restore democracy, bombed Afghanistan and Sudan in August 1998 to punish terrorist Osama bin Laden, and bombed Iraq in December 1998 to punish Saddam Hussein (Reeves, 2000).

During the 1990s, several significant acts were signed and implemented: the Clean Air Act of 1990, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, the American with Disabilities Act, renewal of the Voting Rights Act, and the Welfare Reform Act in 1996 (Reeves, 2000). By signing the Civil Rights Act, Bush enabled employees to more easily sue for employment discrimination. As a result, lawsuits for job discrimination rose from 12,962 in 1993 to 23,796 in 1997. In 1998, Viagra became the best-selling drug in history. The National Center for Health Statistics listed the top five causes of death in the 1990s as heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lung disease, and accidents.

Acts of terrorism occurred on American soil during the 1990s, conducted by both foreigners and by Americans. Muslim terrorists exploded a car bomb in February 1993 at the 110-story World Trade Center in New York City, killing six people and injuring over 1000. Timothy McVeigh, military veteran, bombed the Federal Office Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in April 1995. The Pentagon launched in 1998 a new agency to deal with threats of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, biological, and chemical (Reeves, 2000).

Women continued to rise to higher levels of leadership and self-promotion in federal government positions throughout the 1990s. Many of these women were “firsts” in their positions: Janet Reno, Attorney General; Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Resources; Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Supreme Court Judge; Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State; Carol Moseley Braun, Illinois, first African-American woman Senator. In 1998, Arizona became the first state to have an all-female elected line of succession: governor, secretary of state,

attorney general, treasurer, and superintendent of public instruction. By 1996, American women owned 7.7 million businesses, of which 3.5 million were based in the home. Also in 1996, an estimated 16 million students enrolled in college, of which 52% were women of all races. By 1998 one-third of women aged 25-29 had never married, and women ages 25 – 54 working outside the home had increased from 50% in 1970 to 76% in 1995.

The media played a pivotal role in covering all the news. Videotapes showed the March 3, 1992, kicking and beating of Rodney King by police when they caught him after a high speed, 8-mile chase. The media covered the three-day race riot that began on April 19 after an all-white jury in suburban Los Angeles, California, acquitted the police officers in the King incident. The media was also there for the trial of black football player and actor O. J. Simpson who was accused of killing his ex-wife and her male friend, both white, in 1994. In 1998 the media recorded all aspects of Clinton's impeachment and covered two highlights in sports: Mark McGwire, St. Louis Cardinals, breaking the homerun record with his 70th hit and "Ironman" Cal Ripken, Jr., Baltimore Orioles, ending his record-setting pace of playing 2,632 consecutive baseball games.

The "need to know, now" expectation by Americans heavily influenced the creation of different forms of communication. In American homes by 1998, 98% had television sets and two out of three had cable television services. Computers were found in 45% of American homes. The market for computer products and services increased from \$85 billion in 1992 to \$240 billion in 1998. By mid-1998 Yahoo, an internet search engine company, was worth more than the New York Times Company; America On-line, an on-line service provider, was worth more than ABC, CBS, and NBC combined (Reeves, 2000).

The decade leading up to year 2000 encouraged changes for women as they became visible and high-ranking leaders in the federal government, worked more outside of the home, took advantage of legislation against job discrimination, and saw the integrity of women as major issues in the sexual harassment case by Anita Hill with Clarence Thomas and in the affair between Monica Lewinsky and President William Clinton (Reeves, 2000). While Simpson was not found guilty for killing his former wife, many found satisfaction in the fact that he lost the civil suit, a message that domestic violence was not acceptable. Women were being recognized for their abilities beyond sports and entertainment. Communication became increasingly important as the decade progressed, a sign that the media and Internet were primary sources of information regardless of accuracy and importance of the information.

Overview of the School System

Through most of the 1990s the superintendent for the Union School District was Dr. Isaac Henderson. He made many efforts to provide opportunities for personnel to become involved with division-wide changes and innovations: meetings, study groups, Blue Ribbon Commission of business people from the community. Henderson (2003) appointed a female teacher from Orange High School to be on the Commission because “she ran a very good-sized business on her own besides being a teacher” (lines 295 – 297). Henderson made a point of being visible and noticing those who displayed leadership in those meetings.

In 1995 the School Board in Union County, along with many other school boards throughout the Commonwealth, were voted into their positions rather than appointed as had been done throughout the history of the district. Henderson (2003) noted that this change from appointed to elected School Board members brought unsettling results:

It had changed from an appointed school board, where the superintendent had pretty much say so, with great support from the Board. “Say so” in the sense that administration was his job – let him do it. To a point, to an elected Board. And that was a disaster. We...increased. Then we had four at-large, or something like that, or three at-large, and then eight, nine districts. And there was always that tension between the at-large versus the district. There used to be just the districts appointed. And then there was another tension, that if I was appointed by a Board of Supervisor then we were a team and we worked together. And I found it easy to get money during appointed board than an elected board. Because if I’m elected, and you’re an elected supervisor – if I got more votes than you, you’re going to be afraid of me because I may want our job. And so, you’re not in a position to make me look good. I’m on my own. You didn’t appoint me.

I, I got elected by myself. And so, therefore, why, what's in it for you to make me look good? And that's the way politicians think. And so I think there, that created a breach. In that sense ... the appointed board was, there was a team effort between (Board of Supervisor who appointed the School Board member).... So that changed; the politics changed. (lines 744 – 784)

Budget problems in the 1990s impacted several programs within the school system, including the merit pay teacher evaluation system that had been created at the beginning of Henderson's term. It was dropped after eight years because, according to Henderson (2003), "the union didn't like it because 100 teachers were getting dismissed for incompetence as opposed to one or two" and "then the Board got cheap" and stopped the funding (lines 313 – 325).

During the 1990s William Ingles (2002) worked in the Region North office, where he often gave advice and support to aspiring principals, who were more and more becoming female candidates:

At times, certainly, I had ongoing, sometimes, conversations with people, encouraged people to apply. And they were often females because, frankly, females were, were becoming a predominate group within the APs [assistant principals], and within those applying. And, so, I mean, it was like the flood gates had opened as far as women coming into administration. (lines 877 – 888)

The continual growth of the school system, with the resulting impact on delivery of services, encouraged discussions of reducing the size of the regions within the school system. These discussions coincided with the appointment of Dr. Warren Wilson in January 1998 as the new superintendent of Union Public School System. As a result, the school system was re-

organized from three to eight Regions (*Local newspaper E*, 2000, June 13) beginning summer 2000. Dr. Georgia Xavier was promoted to Director of Region D. The Region North Superintendent, as one of her last actions before a change in position, appointed Olivia Yates as the new principal of Norman High School.

There was increased concern about safety in the schools. A \$1.75 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services in School Program enabled many high and middle schools in Union School System to have full-time school resource officers (*Local newspaper E*, June 13, 2000).

Eligibility and interview panels. Budget problems eliminated the "eligibility panels" that had been conducted by Personnel for each level of building administrator. Fred Olin (2003), assistant superintendent for Personnel, saw the necessity of eliminating the eligibility panels because they had created a counter-productive "funneling" of candidates:

I mean, the panel was ultimately eliminated because of budget cuts, but it was also eliminated because it seemed like a funnel. And some little group was blessing and not blessing people as principals, and the reality is that some of the people there are great principals for certain schools. That whole model was created on that there was a threshold that you had to cross. If your competency was above this, you could be a principal. Well, there were different threshold levels, and different competencies required in different schools. And so it made one bar that everyone had to jump over sort of counter-intuitive, and counter to what seemed good leadership. (lines 253 – 271)

Ingles (2002), who worked in the Region North office, believed that the eligibility panels were helping to promote women to administrative positions:

From an HR (Human Resources) perspective, they were using those panels to help diversify the administration in general.... The process of using panels in the interview process by the mid-1990s was transferred to the Regions, including the review of candidates and resume screening (lines 233 – 236, 361 – 364).

Ingles (2002) “was involved in setting up the first model for a panel interview involving parents and staff” (lines 398 – 401) at the Region level. A parent had asked District Superintendent Henderson if parents could be involved in the interview process for the new principal of Orange High School. From that, and using the previous eligibility panels as a basis, Ingles designed a panel consisting of three parents and three staff members. Ingles (2002) “had a strong feeling that if we involved parents we better involve staff” (lines 423 – 425). Several years later students from Student Government were included as participants as well.

Visibility. Baker, who worked in Personnel, noted that there were several ways for women to be visible in such a large school district. Being a department chair of a high school “was one way of gaining visibility” (Baker, 2003, lines 1065 –1066). Being a department chair was of particular value when the school system went from a six-period to a seven-period day:

I remember some of them emerging, believe it or not, during the seven-period day reform. That, the men kept worrying – they didn’t know how to do the seven-period day thing. And all these high school department chairs came forward and said, “we can help teachers make that transition. We can do that.” Some of them got their first assistant principalships out of that effort, which I thought was really an interesting development... So I think a lot of women kind of made their name during that period of time. (Baker, 2003, lines 1076 – 1095)

In addition to the switch to a seven-period day, Baker (2003) believed that the new evaluation system and volunteerism provided two more ways for women to be visible:

The new evaluation system provided an avenue for colleague evaluators and colleague trainers to emerge throughout the school system. Women volunteered for internships and for county-wide instructional committee meetings. (lines 1067 – 1076)

Baker (2003) also noted that with the middle school reorganization in the early 1990s more women were becoming principals at the middle school level, thus providing a new stepping-stone and source of visibility for future positions at the high school level:

Then, as I said before, I think the middle school is what really did it. Once you put that middle school structure in place, with teams and nurturing and the whole child, and your elementary principals began to filter up and the principals, the assistant principals, with that philosophy began to infiltrate at the middle school, then they became visible enough to go to the high school from there. Once you've been a middle school principal, then you're visible. (lines 1095 – 1107)

Olin (2003) noticed that the number of women in the principal positions at the middle school level had dramatically increased during the 1990s:

And I remember thinking about five years ago [1998], when the School Board met with the middle school principals, "My God, there's only two white males in this group." Now, that, there are more white males today than there were a couple of years ago, but I remember thinking, in my career in Union County, look how far we came, because middle school principals also were white, and they were male, and the most always had been high school assistant principals and that is not what you see now. (lines 145 – 158)

Diversity management. In the early 1990s, the school system stopped implementing its affirmative action plan. Olin (2003) remembered that there was a change in focus from...

...“affirmative action” to “diversity management” [because the former] implied that some minorities were less to and were being promoted. It had this thing that you had to do something special for minorities because they weren’t really qualified to do it. And that did apply to women. (lines 72 – 83)

When Olin was in Personnel in the early 1990s, he “abolished” the requirement for school personnel to take a human relations course.

State issues. Union County was very different from the rest of Virginia. Around the mid-1980s, William Ingles, then a principal of a middle school and serving as a representative from Union County at state meetings, noticed that “around the state it was extremely unusual that we had so many high school female principals. It was like, you know, people around the state didn’t even know there was such a thing until they came up here” (Ingles, 2002, lines 118 – 123).

The 1990s showed increased involvement by the state in local education. The Standards of Learning tests began to be administered for grades 3, 5, and 8, and as end-of-course tests for several high school courses. Schools were required to recite the pledge and to have a moment of silence at the beginning of each school day (*Local school newspaper E*, 2000, July 5).

A Maryland Task Force reported that “principals need higher salaries, better training, and more time to focus on classroom instruction” and that “nearly two-thirds of the state’s middle and high school principals will be eligible to retire within five years” (*Local newspaper E*, 2000, July 5, p. A7). These two findings raised a concern in Maryland there would be a critical shortage of school administrators if possible candidates saw that salaries did not meet the responsibilities and expectations of the position. Union County School System, often in close

competition with some of the Maryland school systems for employees, expressed this same concern for a future shortage of building administrators as well.

Networking. Although the Saturday sessions and informational/motivational meetings were not being held as frequently, women who had been involved in the “Grand Ovarian Party” networking group in the early 1980s continued to get together at different homes. Baker (2003) remembered the group getting together through 1997, around the time that she was leaving for a position in another school district: “Now, after I left, it fell apart a little bit. So, up until about seven years ago we included every secondary principal who was a female” (lines 496 – 499). By this time men in the school system knew about the meetings and joked about coming, to which Baker (2003) remembered telling Superintendent Henderson, “You can come, but you won’t be let into the front door...It’s not a party to which you are invited...We’re working” (lines 503 – 507).

Career Summary

Olivia Yates began her education career in 1979 as a teacher at Trinity High School in Region South of Union County Public Schools. During her first three years of teaching, she taught earth science and served as chair for the science department during her second and third years.

Yates successfully applied for a Fulbright exchange in 1982, which enabled her to teach physical geography in England for a year. Because of the nature of the exchange program, Yates was still considered a Union County teacher.

When Yates returned to Union County, her position at Trinity was no longer available. She was then assigned to Sinclair High School in Region North, where she taught earth science and math (Algebra I). When the planetarium director left mid-year, she took that position at Sinclair because it was “an opportunity that presented itself that I couldn’t turn down” (Appendix F, lines 27-29).

Yates was fascinated by the position of assistant principal that her father held in Union County, as well as other administrators with whom she had contact through her various school assignments. When she realized that she wanted to advance her career in education as an administrator, Yates began her Master’s program in education administration in 1984 at the local extension center of Easton University, the same university from which Xavier had earned her Master’s in administration.

Special projects teacher. In 1985 the principal at Ivy Middle School in Region West asked Yates to be a special projects teacher at that school. Recognizing the precarious position of planetarium director – a position always on the list of programs to eliminate during difficult budget times – and knowing her goal to become an administrator, Yates accepted this position

and served for two years as a special projects teacher, a position that was used more as a third assistant principal.

Curriculum specialist. The position of science curriculum specialist opened in Region North in 1987. “Timing being everything” (Appendix F, line 554), Yates successfully applied for the position. She believed that this position “would be a way to enter administration – that was my first administrative position - but also enter it from my angle, which was the instructional angle” (Appendix F, lines 564 – 569). This position involved working with all levels of the science curriculum, both at the region and district levels.

Assistant principal. After a year as the science curriculum specialist, Yates was appointed assistant principal at Orange High School in Region North in 1988. Because of her experiences at the 12-month science curriculum specialist level, Yates did not have to begin her assistant principalship at an entry level, but rather at the higher, 12-month position of assistant principal II (Appendix F, lines 662 – 681). For the next seven years, Yates worked with three major core departments, evaluated teachers, and developed a new approach to the GT Humanities program. During those years, Yates worked with several principals and gained additional experience one summer as principal for the high school summer school program.

When a new principal was appointed to Orange in 1995, the director of Region North offered Yates the opportunity to go to another school in order to have new experiences and challenges. For those reasons, she accepted a position as assistant principal at Norman High School, also in Region North. Yates worked at this school for almost two years.

Central Office. In 1997, the principal who had earlier appointed Yates for the special projects position at Ivy Middle School became director for high school curriculum and instruction at the central office level. When the position for specialist in that department became

vacant, she asked Yates to apply. Yates did so, completed the interview process, and accepted the position in 1997. The following year, Yates moved into a new position in the same department as the high school coordinator to implement Virginia's new Standards of Learning staff development requirements. Her years at central office provided a variety of experiences and projects, including programs for beginning teachers and staff development for standards-based education.

In 2000 the principal at Norman High School, where Yates had earlier been an assistant principal, was promoted to a central office position. Following difficulties in procedures, the principal's position was advertised in the school system's internal newsletter and Yates applied. In June 2000, Yates was promoted to the position of principal at Norman High School after 21 years in the field of education.

At the time of Yates's appointment to Norman, there were 20 high schools with grades 9 – 12, one science magnet high school with grades 9 – 12, and three secondary schools with grades 7 – 12. Women principals led the three secondary high schools, the magnet science high school, and 9 of the other 20 high schools (Angles, 2003). For school year 2000-2001 54% of the high school principals were women. School directories from two previous years (Angles, 2003) also showed high percentages of women serving as high school principals: 54% in school year 1999 – 2000 and 50% in school year 1998- 1999. It would appear that by 2000 the public and the school system had come to recognize and accept women as viable leaders for their high schools.

Narrative

Olivia Yates is a product of Union County Public Schools. She graduated from Glenfield High School and earned her Master's in administration from the local extension of Easton University. Both of her parents were educators in Union County, which further supported Yates's self-description of being "home-grown" (Appendix F, lines 605 and 635). A year of teaching in England through an exchange program early in her career expanded her scope of knowledge and skills in teaching and in education:

And, in addition, I taught in England, North Kings School on a Fulbright exchange. And, when I went there, I taught physical geography of England... I've had 23 years in education, all of that, it's been in Union County Public Schools, with the exception of the one year I taught in England. And I was still employed by the school system; it was an exchange program... I did it after my third year of teaching. (Appendix F, lines 38-77)

Although she taught geography in England, Yates mainly taught within the sciences while she was in Union County. At times she also taught a few classes in math in order to complete her schedule of classes for the year. Because of her willingness to be flexible in order to meet the needs of her schools, Yates was able to teach a variety of courses in different schools: earth science for three years at Trinity High School, earth science and Algebra I at Sinclair High School, and planetarium director at Sinclair. The position of planetarium director gave Yates opportunities to reach beyond the classroom and school building and into Region North schools and communities:

And that was the Region North planetarium, so I had students form all of the Region North schools, primarily elementary students who came. Occasionally I would have community groups – Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, pre-school, some of the private schools in

the area – but then I would see middle school students occasionally, but high school classes also – science as well as Latin, physics. (Appendix F, lines 137 – 148)

Masters in administration. While Yates enjoyed teaching, she began her masters in administration a year after returning from England. Two things prompted this move to administration:

- her father: “And, you know, what prompted me to do that , I just had, I had role models in my own family. My father was an assistant principal” (Appendix F, lines 858-361).
- her readiness to move on in her career: “So I had a wealth of experiences at that point and the majority were very successful experiences, and I was at that point that I was ready to make a bigger commitment to education” (Appendix F, lines 400-405).

Yates believed that she understood the demands of being a principal since she had lived it in her childhood: “And, having had my father as a role model – he was an assistant principal – I felt like, you know, I understood the life style, having lived with one. You know, you’re out every night and that kind of thing” (Appendix F, lines 405 – 411). While having knowledge of the position of principals, and having gained confidence in her teaching abilities and skills, Yates “also, though, ...had...the interest and desire to learn more about my profession” (Appendix F, lines 411 – 414).

Stepping-stones. Just as a scientist, and a science teacher, would carefully plan the steps to implement an experiment or project, Yates followed a variety of steps – “stepping-stones,” as she called them – in moving her career from teacher to administrator. At times, these stepping-stones were self-initiated; at other times, they were accepted at the encouragement of others. The “others” involved in her career included a wide range of acquaintances from her early schooling in Union County as well as friends of the family.

The first stepping-stone was the appointment of Yates to Science Department Chair at Trinity during her second year of teaching (Appendix F, lines 121-123). After her third year of teaching at Trinity, and after her second year at department chair, Yates obtained a Fulbright Scholarship to teach at England, something that she had planned and which would serve as the second stepping stone in her career:

I did it after my third year of teaching. I knew I would do it the moment after I entered education because you had to wait three years. You had to have three years before you could even apply for a Fulbright Exchange. I knew I was going to do this my fourth year of teaching because I grew up in a family that ran exchange programs all the time with English schools. And, so, I had that background. And wanted to do it before I got into a lot of coursework and family and all those other commitments that keep you from doing, uprooting, and moving to a different country. (Appendix F, lines 76-92)

The third stepping-stone was the position of “special projects teacher” at Ivy Middle School. Yates described responsibilities that were more along the lines of being an assistant principal than of being an assisting teacher:

Now, there, I wasn’t in charge of classes of students. I was the Jack-of-all-trades, as the position often is. I functioned as a third assistant principal... So: I met with students; I met with parents. You know, I did discipline, and supervised teachers, did teacher evaluations... did all the things that, that officially I couldn’t do, but... But the principal said, “Do it,” and I did it. (Appendix F, lines 164-182)

Yates had not sought the position of special projects teacher, but “it was something that someone asked me to apply for” (Appendix F, lines 190 – 191). The position of planetarium director was not a stable one and was “always the thing thrown up on the cut list” (Appendix F,

lines 196-197) during difficult budget times. Yates began to see the position “as sort of a dead-end job” (Appendix F, lines 214 – 216), one for which “much of my time was spent in maintaining the equipment as opposed to actually teaching and preparing” (Appendix F, lines 226 – 229).

The principal of Ivy had contacted Yates to ask her to apply for the position of special projects teacher:

A principal knew that I had just entered a program to get my Master’s degree in secondary school administration. The principal knew of, I guess, the work that I had done in the classroom, and that sort of thing, and said, “I have this position opening up,” and it was a position where she had tapped people all along to fill the position because she knew that they would be good at doing staff development, working with student groups, working with parents groups, guiding an instructional program for a certain department, that sort of thing. So, she had this opening, and, in fact, tapped me and said, “Would you come?” I applied for the position and, ultimately, got that position.

(Appendix F, lines 240-258)

The position of “special projects teacher” was not one that was advertised through the school system’s normal channels of notification (Appendix F, lines 261-263).

When asked how this principal, Rhonda Hill, could be so aware of her abilities and skills, Yates relayed additional information that provided a link to this occurrence. When Hill first came to Union County and was not able to get a teaching position immediately, she worked as a secretary for Yates’s father. Hill “ultimately did get an English teaching position, and she was my English teacher, at Glenfield High School” (Appendix F, lines 287-290). Yates believed that “this is someone who early in my career, very early in my career, recognized talent and then

fostered it, you know, by providing opportunities” (Appendix F, lines 315 – 319). These “opportunities” provided experiences that would help Yates in her future as an administrator:

(Hill) would say, “I want you, I want you to run a counseling group for gifted and talented students.” And I’d be, “Okay.” And then I’d go out and figure out how to do, and do it. Having no background in gifted and talented education, other than I taught it, you know. No formal background, no certification, that kind of thing. Having no background in running a counselor group. But she, that’s how she manages. She would just say, “Do it,” and you’d do it. And it was amazing because you learned a great deal in the process. (Appendix F, lines 492 – 506)

During her time as a special projects teacher, Yates completed her Master’s in administration. She was still interested in science, though, and took advantage of an opening in Region North as a science curriculum specialist for that region. This next stepping-stone in her career provided a full-time, 12-month administrative experience that met her continued interest in curriculum:

Actually what I did at that point was, timing being everything, I still had my interest in the area of science, and the Region North science curriculum specialist opened, and, remember back to the old Region arrangement, that those positions were really key in terms of helping teachers implement the new science curriculum... and felt like that would be a way to enter administration – that was my first administrative position – but also enter it from my angle, which was the instructional angle. (Appendix F, lines 553 – 569)

Yates believed at this point in her career she needed the experience as a regional curriculum specialist in order to get a position as assistant principal. She planned to stay in the position, this stepping-stone, for a year before going back to a school:

So that was my first position, and I did that for a year, knowing ultimately I wanted to be in a school. Back then it was almost like you had to do those stepping-stones or at least that's what I felt... I felt like before I could get a full-blown assistant principalship, I had to get out to the Region. (Appendix F, lines 571 – 577)

She thought that the position of curriculum specialist provided her “first look at how the system runs from the central perspective” which would give her the knowledge, skills, and “understanding of how to manipulate... how to navigate the system as you're trying to get things done” (Appendix F, lines 582 – 588).

Assistant principal at Orange. Just as Rhonda Hill had reached out to Olivia Yates for the position of special projects teacher, another principal also reached out with an offer for the next stepping-stone for Yates. When the position of assistant principal opened at Orange High School, “the principal called me and asked me if I would apply” (Appendix F, lines 589 – 593) before it was advertised. The principal, Alan Andrews, had been an assistant principal at Glenfield when Yates was there, knew Yates “was in the system, and he knew that my father was in the system” (Appendix F, lines 602 – 604). Yates thought that it was a mixture of things that worked together that enabled her to be seriously considered for the Orange position:

I think, just, Alan was the type of person who always worked with his connections. You know, he valued his connections. And, I think he felt that being a person who had been home-grown, you know, gone through the system, had parents in the school system, that I would be a good team player to work with him... That I was a good match, given the

type of principal that he was. And that I was there to support what had to be done at, at Orange. And I wasn't going to make waves for him. He had some political problems, you know, and, but those weren't going to come from me. So I think he felt like I could be loyal to him as a staff member. (Appendix F, lines 630 – 652)

In 1988 Yates obtained the next step in her career plan – a position as assistant principal at Orange High School. Because she had been at a 12-month level as a curriculum specialist, Yates was able to enter the position at the second level of assistant principal – APII (Appendix F, lines 665 – 681). The first level of assistant principal, API, was a shorter, 10½-month contract. The administrative staff included Andrews, “two males (assistant principals), and then myself, and the guidance director was female, the activities director, male” (Appendix F, lines 687 – 689).

During her eight years as assistant principal at Orange, Yates supervised the departments of science, history, and social studies, which included evaluation of the teachers. One of her most vivid memories was tackling a curriculum and instruction problem with the identification of students as either gifted or not, and the course offerings for both that supported a “have and have-not situation”:

At the onset, ninth graders would come to Orange and they would either be in the GT Humanities program or they weren't, and there was such a disparity between the, what the offering, the education offering in the two programs that we decided to take the GT curriculum and give it to every student. Absolutely every student did that curriculum. The only difference was, there was some outside reading that we didn't require the general ed. students to do. When we decided to do that, there was quite a culture change, because all of a sudden you came to Orange and you had the very strong four year – and

we, we made the Humanities program a four-year, teamed, interdisciplinary program, for every student... Team teaching, the integration, the interdisciplinary nature of it was provided for all students, we raised the quality of the curriculum and lowered the D/F rate at the same time. Basically, what we did is we, you know, raised the expectations for all of the students. (Appendix F, lines 731 – 762)

Yates found that this project gave her “the confidence to tackle a huge project, and to see it through fruition, and deal with the controversy it causes” (Appendix F, lines 769 – 771), which she thought “was real helpful in terms of being principal” (Appendix F, line 767 – 768).

Yates had an opportunity to work with the guidance director at one point in building the master schedule during a five-month period between principals. She believed that she “really got the opportunity to do absolutely everything at Orange High School required for a high school principalship except for one thing: “The experience I did not get was student activities and athletics” (Appendix F, lines 831 – 833). Because Yates had not been a director of student activities nor an athlete herself, she thought this to be a lack of knowledge and experience that she would need as a high school principal.

An experience that Yates did get was handling “the finances at Orange” (Appendix F, lines 1943 – 1944). She believed that she needed to have that experience before becoming a principal:

I did finance when I was an assistant principal. Very few principals turn that over to an assistant principal. But that was important to me to understand the finances before I took this job. Had I not, I would have been overwhelmed, I think, with that piece of it.

(Appendix F, lines 1866 – 1873)

After serving as assistant principal at Orange for approximately six years, Yates began to apply for the positions of high school principal that were opening. Her principal at the time encouraged her to apply for positions, to practice interviewing with a panel:

And it was probably in 1994, when I was having a lot of successes as an assistant principal, and I had a principal who was extremely supportive, you know, who for the most part let me run with any project I wanted to do, and was there saying, “Go out and apply for that job.” You know, I wasn’t really ready, but he’d say, “Go try it. Go try the panel interview process. See what it feels like. See if you’re comfortable, you know, doing that kind of thing.” So it was someone there saying, “Try this out. I’m going to support you. I’ll give you feedback.” (Appendix F, lines 849-863)

During her years at Orange, Yates gained additional experiences as principal for the high school summer school program at Nelson High School (Appendix F, lines 1788 – 1789).

First applications for principalships. The first time that Yates interviewed for a principal position, in 1994, she mainly did so for the experience: “It was rare that a high school principalship opened... so when the first one opened up, I interviewed to get the practice, interviewing in front of the panel” (Appendix F, lines 943 – 951). In her words “it was disastrous” (Appendix F, line 951), but she used it as “an instructive process... ‘this is what I have learned. Here is what I need to work on’” (Appendix F, lines 967 – 968).

At one point, Yates unsuccessfully applied for the principalship at Orange High School as well as two other positions:

So I was sort of crushed about Orange, then I probably applied for two more positions at that point – so four altogether. One of which I didn’t even get an interview for, which, of

course, I was devastated: “My God,” you know, “what do you have to do?” (Appendix F, lines 1010 – 1017).

Not getting the position at Orange was particularly a blow, since Yates had “worked there for eight years... worked there with a principal who had been fired, essentially... worked there with a principal who had commuted from Boston” and people “had a sense that my level of responsibility was pretty high in that situation” (Appendix F, lines 1037 – 1044). Carol Baker remembered that Yates...

...had a darn hard time getting a principalship, and she was terrific. Again, it’s that instructional leadership that, you know, these women had years and years of their experience as strong leaders of instruction, and I think that is a little frightening to people. And it often would put them off, I think. (Baker, 2003, lines 1618 – 1626)

After receiving a letter in the mail informing her that she had not been appointed to a principalship, Yates contacted a member of the Region North staff, William Ingles, for feedback:

I needed, you know, at that point, for someone to pick up the phone and say, “Hey, Olivia, come in; let’s talk.” So I sort of stewed with that for a while, and then I thought, “You know, I gotta have feedback because if I don’t I won’t have learned from this process. It would have been for naught,” you know. And at that point I said, “William, I’d like some feedback. I’d like to hear what the panel had to say.” That feedback session did more for me than many things in my career. And I wrote William a note later on saying, you know, “That was not easy to hear, but it was important.” And it’s what I needed to hear in terms what my strengths were, what my areas of growth needed to be, and how people perceived me in that, you know, in that setting, in that interview setting. (Appendix F, lines 1048 – 1069)

Assistant principal at Norman. Following that feedback session, Ingles asked Yates if she wanted to remain at Orange with the new principal or go to another school. Yates knew that a position was open at Norman High School, and she knew the principal there, Roberta Jewell. She also knew that she “needed a change, personally and professionally” (Appendix F, lines 1081 – 1083), and that she “needed to move because I was too invested there, and I needed different experiences” (Appendix F, lines 784 – 786). Yates moved to Norman High School as assistant principal, and enjoyed a school where “we were somewhat autonomous, because, you knows (Roberta) was very knowledgeable and skilled principal, and, yet, she’d leave me alone to do my own thing” (Appendix F, lines 1115 – 1119).

The change from Orange to Norman was quite dramatic. Although in the same school district and the same Region, the two schools were practically polar opposites. Yates was indeed going to have different experiences:

Orange is not a typical high school in the nature of its population; it’s not like the rest of Union County. So I needed to see something different. But when I came to Norman, I was just struck by the difference in how parents reacted when I called them as the assistant principal. You know, it was like “I’ll be right there.” “What can I do to help?” “You mean my son didn’t follow his teacher’s directions?” It was all focused on “how do I help the schools,” “help my child with what he needs to learn..” At Orange, it was a very different situation. The parents were very demanding; their over-all focus... was keeping their kid’s record clean so that they would have a stellar record to apply to the best colleges in the country. (Appendix F, lines 786 – 808)

Ingles (2002) believed that the move to Norman “was a great move for her. It showed her (in a) whole different” light (lines 470 – 471). The two schools were at the extremes in terms

of Orange with its little diversity and high socio-economic level and of Norman with its multi-cultural and lower socio-economic levels. This move provided Yates with “a nice career move to get such great experience to prepare” her to become a principal wherever she went, “to get such different experiences” (Ingles, 2002, lines 477 – 480).

“Certain conversations”. Yates appreciated the feedback from Ingles, information that helped her grow and prepare for future interviews. Ingles did not see himself as a mentor, but described his role in Yates’s career as one of “certain conversations”: “I wouldn’t describe myself as a mentor unless I was so intensely involved with someone throughout their career. And yet, sometimes, at certain times of, certain conversations can change your career, your focus, or tell you some things you need to know” (Ingles, 2002, lines 507 –514).

SOL Coordinator, Department of Instruction. Yates was assistant principal at Norman “only for a year and a half” (Appendix F, lines 1774 – 1775) before going to the department of curriculum and instruction and working in the office for high school instruction. By this time Rhonda Hill, Yates’s earlier supporter, had become Director of High School Instruction and was in a position to offer Yates a staff development position (Appendix F, lines 1211 – 1213) in the department: “...our paths kept crossing. And crossed again when I went to become the SOL coordinator... (Hill) hired me to be the SOL coordinator” (Appendix F, lines 297 – 302). Hill again gave Yates new projects and opportunities, although the challenges may not have been as eagerly accepted as before. One example that Yates gave centered on reading a book and deciding how to introduce it to the school system:

Hill was getting into (a new book) and she’d say, “Here, Olivia, read this and present how we’re going to implement this in Union County.” She’d say it to me on a Wednesday afternoon – I had to present it Thursday afternoon. (laugh) And, and, you

know, at times you'd, I'd sit there and say, "God damn it." (laugh) "Who do you think I am? You know – Superman?" (Appendix F, lines 511 – 522)

But Yates continued to see the positive side of these activities:

But, the amazing thing about it was, you know, she set the challenge there because she knew I could rise to the occasion, and would learn through the process. You know, that's sort of a forceful way of mentoring, if you will, but it worked... It was very motivational. It helped me understand what my skills are, what I can do under pressure, and that kind of thing. So – it was good training. (Appendix F, lines 526 – 540)

This new step in her career strengthened Yates's background in instruction, particularly in dealing with Virginia's new Standards of Learning tests. She was able to know information first-hand coming from Richmond as well as the many ways that high schools were dealing with the testing and the results. Yates was in the position for two years, working on "in-the-moment type projects" (Appendix F, line 980), such as programs for beginning teachers and the standards-based classroom. It was clear to Yates early in the two years, though, that she wanted to be back at a school:

Then, what I was thinking later, when I was at Instruction, I knew at that point I wanted to get back to a school. After I was at Instruction six months central office isn't for me. I mean, I liked it. I did it for two years... But I am so a school person... I want to be around teachers, I want to be around administrators and students... (Appendix F, lines 970 – 975, 981 – 982, 987 – 989)

The time spent at Instruction provided Yates with time to think, to plan her next steps, and to become "more deliberate about what I would be interested in" (Appendix F, lines 1000 – 1001). It was at her desk at Instruction in spring 2000 that Yates first read in the school district's

weekly *School Communications B* that the principal's position at Norman was open. Since she had been an assistant principal at Norman, and had a comparison with five other high schools, she "knew that (she'd) like to be back at that school as principal" (Appendix F, lines 1254 – 1256). At the same time, the principal of the new soon-to-be-opened Richmond High School stopped by to invite Yates to be one of his assistant principals:

Victor Ericson walked in and said, you know, "I'd like to hire you as assistant principal at Richmond." I told Victor, "No. I've done that job for ten years, uh, I really want to look at something else." And I said, I think that was really the first time that I admitted to, you know, a colleague there, or another principal, that I was interested in the principalship. And he said, "Oh, you'd be excellent." I mean, so that, you know, it was immediate positive feedback. And that's Victor. But after that, he said, "What do you have in mind?" And I said, "Well, Norman." And then he told me that this other person had been placed in the position and I was just crushed. (Appendix F, lines 1256 – 1275)

Conflict at Norman. Yates later learned that "the PTA, and the parent community, had really, was in an uproar because they really hadn't had the opportunity to select their principal, to participate in the process" (Appendix F, lines 1276 – 1280). This did not sit well with either the staff or parents as they compared their situation with the process being followed for another high school in the school district:

There was a comparison to Columbia, where they had done a national search for a principal and, ultimately, had some candidates, interviewed them, and didn't go with anybody. It was a second time around that they had this national search. And, ultimately, of course, they hired someone who was a retired principal from Union, a female. Well, at the same time as this national search, Norman had a vacancy and rather

than give the parent community, the teachers, any input, any say, any involvement in selecting their candidate, they went out – or, sorry, the Region North superintendent selected someone to be placed here. That didn't work out though. The community went in an uproar. That person was removed and, in the meantime, someone from Norman called me and said, "I think this is what's going on," you know, "that we're not going to have this person coming." And so I sort of just waited to see what was going on.

(Appendix F, lines 1286 – 1312)

Ingles (2002) remembered that the Region Superintendent had wanted to make an appointment for the opening at Norman:

When she met with the faculty, there was an uproar as to "how can Columbia advertise nationally, go through a process involving everybody, and yet at Norman you just want to make an appointment? What are you saying to us – we don't rate?"... And it came out so strong and so loud that she realized right away: no appointment; we've got to involve everybody. Norman wants to be involved. (lines 712 – 733)

Yates's patience paid off as the position was re-advertised in *School Communications B*, the internal school system newsletter, and the selection process began. Yates believed that that "this time I was ready" (Appendix F, lines 1317 – 1318): "I was confident. The questions I was prepared to answer. None of the questions stumped me, or took me off-guard, or were unanticipated. The responses that I had were based on the experiences I had." (Appendix F, lines 1322 – 1327).

Interview process for Norman. Yates was involved in an eligibility panel process through Human Resources when she applied for the position of science curriculum specialist

early in her career. After some probing, Yates remembered the process, but it was not something that she had to complete as she advanced through the next levels of administration:

The eligibility panel was just to go from the teacher to administrative level in my situation. I didn't have to go through that. There was probably a paper screening in terms of eligibility when I started applying for the principalship, but not, there was not another panel conducted by Personnel. (Appendix F, lines 914 – 923)

Upon reading the advertisement in the school system's newsletter, Yates submitted her name and resume to Personnel. After staff members at Personnel checked her credentials, her name, along with the other candidates, were forwarded to the Region Superintendent's office. At that level, candidates were selected to appear for an interview with a panel of representatives from the school. The panel, chaired by Ingles, included teachers, parents, and students.

Yates appraised the panel members when she entered the room for the interview, seeing a group of people who were dedicated in selecting the best person for the position for their school. She quickly adjusted her strategy for the interview so that the panel members knew that she was as equally dedicated to having the right person in the principal's position. Following the panel interview, Yates requested feedback from Ingles regarding her interview:

William Ingles gave me some very important feedback again... But one of the things he said is, "I thought you were doomed from the minute you started your interview." And I said, "Why, William?" He said, "Because when we asked you if you had an opening statement, you said, 'No.' But you said something important afterwards: 'I want to spend the half hour together answering your questions, and then I have some things to summarize in the end to make sure you know everything it is that I want you to know about why I want this position.'" So he said that sort of won the group over. It wasn't

anything I had planned to do, you know. I just walked in and thought, “These people look” – you could just look in their eyes; they were so committed to selecting the right person, and I think it’s because of what had happened before, and they weren’t going to get to participate, so now it was really important to them. So I wanted to be sure to answer their questions, and then come back and tell them why I think I’m the right fit here, at this school, at this time, at this place. (Appendix F, lines 1327 – 1358)

Principal at Norman. Yates was selected for the position of principal at Norman High School, beginning June 1, 2000 (Appendix F, lines 1362 – 1366). She “felt prepared for the job, with the exception of athletics” (Appendix F, lines 1375 – 1377). When asked of the possibility that being “home-grown” played a role in her appointment, Yates thought it might be a possibility, as well as being “the right person at the right time for this school and what the needs were. You know, so much of it is timing” (Appendix F, lines 1990 – 1993).

Ingles (2002) believed that Yates had “set herself up through her career choices, to be, to come in as the best match” for the position at Norman because “now she brought an instructional piece..., she brought a knowledge of the school and community, and, obviously, respect already from colleagues and leaders in the school” (lines 588 – 590, 582 – 587). Ingles (2002) explained that at that time in Union County it was important to find the person who best matched the position at the individual school:

I think “match” is everything, the right match. And, in Union County, we really have made that a recognized goal and focus of principal selection – is the “best match.” Not necessarily the “best prepared” for a principalship somewhere, or the “best experience,” or the “best skills,” to be a principal somewhere... So, “best match,” in my mind, is critically important. (lines 558 – 573)

To help with the “matching” between candidate and school, Ingles (2002) said members of the Region met with staff members after school and with parents in the evening: “We send a letter to every single parent and staff member, and on the back of it inviting them to the meetings, and also asking them for their input” (lines 665 – 669). Input could be shared at the meetings, in writing, or through emails. All of the information was gathered and used to compile questions in the interview process and to provide a profile of the principal needed at the individual school.

When Yates was appointed, Norman was the smallest high school in Union County (Ingles, 2002, line 766 – 767). Ingles (2002) believed that Norman, “throughout their history, they’ve been slighted” (lines 750 –751). The school had tremendous diversity within its student population, but instead of “getting rave reviews in the press” the school was constantly scrutinized because “they’ve got to work on their test scores,” scores that were some of the lowest in the school system on the Standards of Learning end-of-course tests (Ingles, 2002, lines 742 – 745). Ingles (2002) noted that “every now and then, some politician, you know, talks about ‘if we sold that property we’d get millions and millions’” (lines 746 – 749). Norman did not appear to have the same respect as a Columbia High School, thus the “uproar” when the vacancy appeared to be filled without community input and involvement.

Support from parents and School Board. Yates felt supported by parents and the School Board. The president of the PTA was a strong source of support, someone who was also cognizant of doing what was best for the school:

I had a PTA president who, I tell you, you know, she is, she’s just incredible. She’s an incredible human being. She was on the principal’s selection panel, so she had, you know, I used to tease her, because, I said, “You know, Helen, you selected me,” (laugh)

“so you know I gotta be good.” You know. She’s an interesting woman because she graduated from Norman High School along with 39 relatives. So I’m not going to mess up this school for her. (laugh) She is so invested in this place. And when I needed help I could go to Helen, and even when, for the most part we’ve agreed, or at least that’s the appearances. I mean, even if she didn’t agree with me, she was supportive. (Appendix F, lines 1430 – 1449)

In one conflict, Helen “was able to rise above that and say, ‘This isn’t in the best interest of Norman High School’” (Appendix F, lines 1495 – 1498) and accepted Yates’s decision.

Yates said that she based her decisions on what was best for the school:

And I always tell the students, and the teachers, and the parents, that that’s how I make my decisions, in terms of what’s in the best interests of Norman High School. I have to do that from where I sit. And sometimes that may not play out well for an individual kid. I mean, we try to be very student-centered, client-centered, too, but there are times I have to make decisions that are for the school. (Appendix F, lines 1498 – 1500)

Yates also had a supportive School Board member for her first year, although they “didn’t interact much because there really wasn’t a need to... We’ve built that relationship over the past two years we’ve worked together” (Appendix F, lines 1397 – 1399, 1403 – 1405).

Students. Yates worked diligently to meet the needs of her students. In her first year as principal the school had 1100 students, the make-up of which was “20% Asian, 18% Hispanic, 14% Black” and the rest white (Appendix F, lines 1530, 1523 – 1525). The school had a vocational academy, the International Baccalaureate Program, and “an MR [mentally retarded] program that we started the first year (Yates) was here” (Appendix F, lines 1548 – 1550) as part

of the school system's inclusion target to return students with special needs to their base schools.

The SOL scores were below the passing rates established by the Commonwealth:

When I came on board, the SOL scores for Norman High School were all below the division average. At the end of the first year, they were all above. And some of them – Algebra I for example – they were second highest in the county. (Appendix F, lines 1568 – 1574)

Yates had opportunities to have fun experiences during her first year as principal at Norman. One of her fondest memories of that first year was being asked by two senior boys who were competing in the “Mr. Norman” contest to be part of their act:

Basically what they wanted to do was, they were singing that...song “You Lost that Loving Feeling”... and at one point... we had to get up and do the wave together. You know, do a silly dance together... So I kind of think I had arrived there, you know. (Appendix F, lines 1747 – 1755, 1763 – 1765)

Challenges. During her first year as principal, Yates faced three major challenges: academics, teacher leadership, and facilities. In terms of academics, Yates thought that the biggest challenge when she came to Norman was the SOL scores:

That was huge, because I did not want to be part of a school that was below the average. That's not, you know, this school is so much better than that. The teachers are so much better; the kids are so much better. And we just need to focus on “that's the work we have on hand.” (Appendix F, lines 1589 – 1596)

Yates also worked hard her first year to develop teacher leadership and shared decision-making:

In terms of leadership development, I worked real hard on that the first year. Having the Leadership Council, which is our department chair group, understand that I wasn't going to tell them what to do. We were gonna decide together. And ultimately, I have to make the decision, but we were, but I was very much into participatory management. Some people struggle with that, with having those extra responsibilities. You know, the chair just wants to count books, doesn't really want to be in charge of making decision.

(Appendix F, lines 1599 – 1613)

The third challenge during her first year was the facilities – how to organize the instructional space of the building to meet the demands of a rapidly growing student population:

Believe it or not, Norman used to be under 1000 in enrollment. And during that time Roberta brought in Transportation Training Center, all sorts of programs to be sure this building was totally utilized. It's what she had to do at the time. What I'm having to do now is pry these people out of here. (laugh) And what I mean by that is – we're running out of space for our building. So I spent a great deal of time working with transportation, working with facilities, working with special education, with all of the – at one point I had a meeting in here and there were four assistant superintendents...And the Region Director, my school board member, to try and look out how, how do we work with the fact that our enrollment is going up? It has 250 in just the two years I have been here.

That doesn't even address the Academy enrollment that's going up by 200 kids a year, and how do I address that along with all the other programs in the building? (Appendix F, lines 1615 – 1645)

A fourth, unplanned, challenge came from the athletic program. Yates had to grapple with two situations for which she felt unprepared and, later, thought she should have received more support in resolving:

...I had, in my first year, two pretty high-profile problems in athletics. Had I had different staff working on it, had I had more experience - you know how you do this, hindsight that's 20/20 - uhm, had I had more support from Personnel with regard to one issue I was dealing with - uhm, it would have made the year a breeze, a breeze. Because, you know, it's a difficult job, but I felt prepared to do everything but that area.

(Appendix F, lines 1377 - 1388)

Yates pointed out that "safety and security is paramount at this building" (Appendix F, lines 1648 - 1649) and described her security staff as excellent. Yates expected them to be consistently and constantly out in the building and grounds so that students could know them:

Those are the people that I want the kids to think of if they are in trouble, or if they know of trouble. I want them to be the confidante, you know, the one who sits down at the lunch table with them and says, "how're you doing?" so that we know what's going on all the time. That's something we work on constantly. (Appendix F, lines 1709 - 1717)

In 1996, two weeks after she had left Norman as assistant principal to go to the staff development position at Instruction, a car chased another car onto the campus and a male was shot on school property, most likely the result of gang actions. This incident was on her mind when she applied for the principalship. After she began her principalship, the aftermath of the situation required her guidance and support in order to provide closure for students:

Well, it had to be [on my mind when I returned to Norman], because it, you know, it's something that's always in our mind. It's part of Norman now, which is too bad. But

what, what I try to do is, is, “Yeah, we gotta put that aside.” One of the things I had to deal with was the sister of the boy who was killed – came to me, and the family had such hostile, hostile feelings about the administration because you got to have hostile feelings when your child dies. And that’s where they were placed. There wasn’t any other reason for that. But being that it was a new administration, a new face, she could come to me and say, “I’d like to do a memorial.” So I had to work with her. (Appendix F, lines 1684 – 1701)

Beyond the principalship. Yates is currently focusing her energies on her family: “I have to really, really pick and choose what I do over and above the job and raising my children... an 11- and 12-year old” (Appendix F, lines 1811 – 1815). She is currently chairing the Leadership Review Board, which supports the career ladder process for assistant principals who want to become principals (Appendix F, lines 1827 – 1834). Yates had not “spent a lot of time doing professional organizations” early in her career, perhaps doing that “down the road” (Appendix F, lines 1176 – 1178). While she has started “branching out more, doing stuff with ASCD and that kind of thing” (Appendix F, lines 1180 – 1182) as a principal, she is more involved with school system activities, such as the Leadership Review Board. Due to the demands and expectations of being a principal and raising a family, Yates is not sure if starting a doctoral program is in her future (Appendix F, lines 1803 – 1810).

Reflection. Yates repeatedly said that she was fortunate to have the opportunities that she had in Union County Public Schools. She had experiences that helped her grow, with many role models and much support as she moved up the administrative career ladder. Having the ability to mentor future principals through the Leadership Review Board is currently an exciting

way for Yates to continue the same mentoring process and support systems that helped her as she transgressed through the stepping-stones of her career path.

Chapter Summary

Chapter IV described the findings of the data collected for four case studies investigating the processes through which four women progressed as they sought positions as high school principals in one public school district in Virginia between 1970 and 2000. Each case study centered on a decade; a woman high school principal from each decade was selected based on her availability and willingness to participate in the study. Each case study provided a historical context leading up to the decade, an overview of the status of the school system for that decade, summary of the woman's career, and a narrative that included data collected for that case. The data for the case studies were based on interviews with the women, interviews with colleagues mentioned by the women, school system documents, and information from national and local news media. From these many sources of data, variables were coded and categorized into patterns for each woman regarding incidences, activities, and actions that impacted her career advancement to the high school principalship. Chapter V provides an analysis and comparison of the four cases and themes that occur between the four cases. Because of the strength of the additional interviews, these themes will further explore how change occurred over time for not only these four women but for other women, and men, as well.

CHAPTER V

Analysis and Comparison of the Four Case Studies

For women to obtain the position of high school principal is not common and parallels the concept of the “glass ceiling” that has been described and analyzed by researchers in the worlds of business, corporations, and politics. As suggested by education researchers (Shakeshaft, 1987), the under-representation of women in the position of high school principals parallels the under-representation of women in high-level leadership positions outside of the field of education. While the Commonwealth of Virginia followed this trend of under-representation of women in the high school principalship, one school system in Virginia, Union County Public Schools, did not. Between 1970 and 2000, the percentage and number of women high school principals in Union County increased from 0% and 0 for school year 1970-71 to 54% and 13 for school year 2000-2001.

The focus of this study was to discover the processes involved in the acquisition of high school principalships of four women educators in Union County Public Schools in different years. Each woman is the subject of a case study of her progress of receiving her appointment to principalship in the same school district but in a different decade. The woman selected for each case study depended upon her availability and willingness to participate and the date of the woman’s promotion to the high school principalship. A search was conducted for women who were hired as high school principals in Union County Public Schools for the first time and as close to the beginning of each decade as possible. Each woman was then given a pseudonym to provide anonymity. The result was the following women and their dates of appointment to their first high school principalship: Wilma Goldman (1971), Theresa Williams (1982), Georgia Xavier (1991), and Olivia Yates (2000).

Data for each case study were obtained from a variety of sources: the historical context of the decade, historical overview of the school system, interviews with the women themselves, and additional interviews with colleagues referenced by the women. Triangulation was provided for each case study through reviews of written and technological documents and interviews of other people mentioned by the women during their interviews. Written documents included school district newsletters and reports, minutes from school board meetings, and local newspaper articles. Technological documentation included school web sites and on-line research. Using the snowball technique, additional interviews of professional colleagues mentioned by the women during their interviews were conducted. These additional interviews not only supported what the women were reporting, but also provided an enriching overview of the culture and history of the school district during the time of the case studies, 1970 – 2000.

Chapter V identifies three themes suggested by the analysis of the four cases: changes in school district policies, changes in the culture of the school district, and changes of women's career aspirations. While one might suppose that the increase of women in the positions of high school principalship in Union County was a deliberate, logical, and linear process, that supposition was dispelled during analysis of these four case studies. It more accurately appears that the increase in the number and percentage of women in high school principalships occurred as a convergence of separately-occurring actions resulting from changes in school district policies, school district culture, and women's aspirations beyond the level of classroom teacher. These actions included pressures from outside influences, political expectations, actions by different women in different parts of the school system, chance occurrences through school board and system actions, and changes in student population. These factors appeared to come together in year 2000 as the majority of the high school principals, 54%, were women.

Further, Chapter V is organized decade by decade in order to include additional information provided by the research and to offer a longitudinal look at the changes that occurred over time in school district policies, school district culture, and women's career aspirations. The information obtained from the interviews of additional people also suggests how changes occurred over time not only for these four women but for other women, and men, as well.

Decade of the 1970s

Changes in School District Policies

Identification and hiring procedures. Prior to the 1970s, principals were selected and hired by the district superintendent. At one point the district superintendent obtained information and suggestions from the community, but the district superintendent made the final decision. During the 1960s, Union County was increasing so much in student population that it was becoming difficult to handle the entire school district through a central office. To facilitate governance and communication, the school district was divided into four regions by 1968, with each region having its own regional superintendent. At first, the district superintendent used the regional superintendent for additional identification and input when making decisions regarding promotions to principalships. Later, the decision for promoting principals became the responsibility of the region superintendent.

In the case of Wilma Goldman, the district superintendent sent out a “trial balloon” in 1971 to get reactions from the school district and the community regarding their acceptance of a woman in the position of high school principal. There were no other women in administration in the school system at that time, and Goldman remembered only one other woman high school principal in another system in the state. Goldman believed that it may have helped that the school board member who represented her area of the school district was a parent at her school, Trinity, and knew Goldman very well. The reactions to the “trial balloon” must have been favorable, for in 1971 Wilma Goldman was promoted by the district superintendent as the first woman high school principal in Union County.

Equity in hiring. The school system, under the supervision of the School Board, took six years to create and implement a plan for equity in hiring, known as their “affirmative action

plan.” At a School Board meeting in 1972, the County of Union presented the affirmative action plan that the Board of Supervisors had developed for the county. Although offered the plan to incorporate or duplicate for the school system, the School Board decided to develop its own plan. The plan for the school system was approved and implemented in 1978.

The plan directed the school system to hire women in supervisory positions in what were, at the time, non-traditional levels of leadership. This included principalship at the high school level and on the district superintendent’s leadership team of assistant superintendents and region superintendents (Olin, 2003; School Board minutes, 1981, March 12). Annual reports to the School Board by school employees showed that there had been improvements in the first years of implementation of the affirmative action programs. Not all School Board members were pleased with the progress, and specific comments targeted the continued lack of women promoted to high school principalships and the district superintendent’s leadership team.

School system initiatives. By 1968 Union County Public Schools had re-organized from a large single district to smaller sub-divisions of “regions.” This not only fostered better deliverance of services to a growing school system of over 100,000 students, it also created a new layer of leadership in the form of “region superintendents.” By having these smaller grouping of schools, women were able to have more opportunities for being known and recognized for their leadership abilities by the region superintendents.

The region superintendents played significant roles in Goldman’s career, as one Region South Superintendent hesitated in promoting her to the position of assistant principal and another Region South Superintendent transferred her to a larger high school a few years later. This second region superintendent, while still male, was the first African American region

superintendent. This appointment supports Goldman's observation that the Region South community was liberal in its politics and accepting of new changes and values in society.

At the other end of the school system, in Region North, Liz Sharp was promoted from elementary principal to Region Superintendent during the late 1970s (Olin, 2003). This coincided with the expectation that more women would be added to the district superintendent's leadership team as required by the School Board's affirmative action plan. Employees in the school system saw Sharp, as a female region superintendent, actively seeking ways to promote women into positions of leadership within her region: "And, and so there were women in high positions in the school system that were making sure that that old style – male, jock mentality – wasn't being perpetuated by males in power" (Olin, 2003, lines 392 - 397). As a woman in her position, she had a direct impact on the people who were promoted to leadership positions and appeared to take advantage of opportunities to challenge the "good ol' boys."

Changes in philosophy. Regarding leadership in the schools, women were accepted as elementary principals prior to the 1970s, but not seen as capable of heading middle or high schools. Secondary school principals were seen as managers of schools that were more like a "prison system": "(P)eople looked at high schools, instead of being instructional innovators, we looked at it as, you know, disciplinary, kind of a prison system. And men were, appeared to be much more successful" (Baker, 2003, lines 662 - 667).

The district superintendent was the person who decided who would be placed in principalships, accepting advice from the community if he so desired. To be considered for principalship, the traditional routes were those men who were successful athletic coaches and those men who were in the "good ol' boys" network. Neither of these positions was open or

available for women, which had more impact for positions at the secondary level than at the elementary level.

For the district superintendent to go against the prevailing philosophy in the early 1970s that only men could be high school principals must have been a daring gamble on his part. It may have also been a calculated and political move on his part as members of the community and the School Board, who hired him, were vocally expecting women to be in more visible leadership positions in the school system. Goldman was the answer to that expectation, particularly since she was already known by male principals in the system, was supported by her School Board member, had been an athletic coach and knew that side of high school operations, had been in several positions in the same high school as the pending promotion, and had successfully navigated through the issue of integration. It did not hurt that her male colleagues believed she “thought like a man,” which is something they could handle with this change in philosophy.

Support. In 1971, Goldman had support for her move into administration from different arenas. First, she had the support of her husband and family, and often brought her children to school to help her with different projects. Second, Goldman had the support of her male principal who helped her integrate into the all-male meetings. The fact that Goldman followed the same career path as her principal – teacher, counselor, assistant principal, high school principal – may have made it easier for him to support her advancements in administration.

Because Goldman had moved up the administrative career ladder within the same school, all stakeholders – students, parents, community, district leaders – were able to know her as a professional, as a leader, and as a person of integrity, and to support her as the leader of their

school. It was beneficial to have had the School Board member for her district, Iris Wilson, in her school, which gave Wilson first-hand knowledge of Goldman's leadership abilities.

Networking was not a tool that Goldman reported using as a strategy as she prepared for the principalship. She knew the existence of the "good 'ol boys club" and the blockage that presented to women at that time. Men held the political power within the principal groups, and Goldman knew that she had to develop strategies to work with that or around that in order to be successful. Goldman came to realize that she had to deal with the perception of the "pushy woman" when the region superintendent explained to her one day his initial reluctance to promoting her to the position of assistant principal:

"I knew you were kind of strong, and I was concerned that you would usurp his [the principal's], some of his authority." In other words, the "pushy woman syndrome." And he didn't use those terms. But he said, "You haven't done any of that. You've done nothing but make him look better. And you've done it on his behalf, and it's been, it's worked out nicely." And I thanked him, and I always appreciated the fact that he told me. It reaffirmed the "pushy woman concept" was alive and well, or had been. And it made me more aware of perhaps how I had to function in administration in those days. (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 228 – 244)

The district superintendent. When Quincy Washington, District Superintendent, moved Gilmore from Trinity to another school in 1970, he promoted Ira Uggins, another male, from assistant principalship at Orange High School to principal at Trinity. According to school records provided by Angles (2003), Uggins was at Trinity for only a year. When Uggins left, Goldman heard rumors that she was being considered for promotion to principal at Trinity. After

floating a “trial balloon,” the district superintendent promoted Goldman to the position without a formal interview process.

Changes in School Culture

Prior to the 1960s Union County Public Schools was considered a school district that followed Southern traditions and practices. Although desegregation was federally mandated in 1954, Union County did not finish integrating all of its schools until 1968. While the county government had completed an affirmative action plan for recruiting and hiring women and minorities in 1972, it would take Union County Public Schools six more years to complete their plan for the school system. Making significant changes seemed to take a long time for this school system.

Accepting women as secondary administrators. Although the affirmative action plan developed by the School Board was inclusive of both race and gender, women employees perceived the plan as only considering racial needs (Baker, 2003, lines 901 – 907). For that reason, women who aspired for administrative positions decided that they needed to be more proactive in their own professional development and training and in their vocalization of wanting positions as high school principals. The resulting actions were quite interesting: by the end of the 1970s, women in the school system had planted the seeds for their own networking system, developed support systems within central office, and begun to actively promote women to leadership positions with higher visibility. Aspiring women leaders were not willing to wait any longer for changes to take place.

Legal mandates and society expectations in the 1970s brought changes in the type of leader needed at the high school level. No longer was it a natural progression from athletic

coach to principal. No longer could the principal be just a manager – he, or she, had to be an instructional leader as well:

To coach a team where everyone thinks he's a star, and every parent thinks his kid's a star, is something that a superintendent deals with everyday. Everyone's right; no one's wrong. And so they do have that – they have a leg up in terms of that kind of broad experience. Plus, in most cases, they're very popular, you know, fair people, and so on. Many of them just didn't have a strong academic background. And when I first started in the superintendency in the 60s, uhm, we were managers. As principals we used to be managers. And it didn't take me very long to figure out that we needed to be instructional leaders. (Henderson, 2003, lines 239 – 256)

As the decade of the 1970s progressed, the school system promoted two other women as high school principals. Goldman's success with integration at Trinity may have encouraged the superintendent to promote Margaret Rolls in 1975 to the principalship of Sinclair High School following race riots at that school. When Goldman left Strickland Secondary School in 1980 for a central office promotion, another woman, Kim Kindle, replaced her as principal. Only one other woman, Carolyn Jefferson (1981), would be hired before the promotion of Theresa Williams, the subject of the 1980s case study. Despite demonstrative expectations from society through the Civil Rights and women's rights movements for changes, there appeared to be no rush by Union County to promote women to high school principalships after the successful placement of Goldman in 1971.

Finding new ways of identification. Prior to 1970 Union County school district was small enough that the district superintendent was aware of who the potential candidates were for the positions of high school principalships. The district superintendent knew of candidates since

he saw them in action as coaches of successful athletic teams, assistant principals of high schools, principals of middle school, and members of the “good ol’ boy” network. Until the hiring of two females as high school assistant principals in the mid-1960s, potential candidates for leadership positions within the school system were only males since there were no females in the career pool for administration.

With the push of affirmative action and the women’s movement, as well as expectations from women members of the School Board, Union County leaders felt the pressure of appointing women to higher levels of leadership within the school system. Since the traditional ways of identifying male candidates was not applicable, school district leaders had to find other ways to determine female leaders, such as the “trial balloon.” The woman selected for this first high school principal’s position needed to be the right person who would have a high level of respect and experience, which would therefore lead to a high level of acceptance and success. Wilma Goldman was respected by her administrative peers, viewed as a team player, had proven herself during the integration of her school, was successful in the early stages of her career as teacher and coach, and had demonstrated that she was a stable employee who could successfully handle both family and school. Her sense of fairness and dedication to Trinity High School and to Union County was unquestionable. Goldman, who was the appropriate woman for that first appointment, saw herself as being the right person in the right place at right time.

Handling diversity. The success of Goldman in handling difficult human relations situations related to integration may have provided the opening for other women to be promoted to the position of high school principal in other challenging situations. Margaret Rolls, the second woman to be promoted to high school principalship in Union County, served at Sinclair High School in Region North from 1975 until 1978. According to Olin (2003), this occurred the

year after race riots had taken place at the school. Carol Baker (2003), on sabbatical to complete her doctoral program, was an intern at the school under Margaret Rolls during 1975 –1976 and observed this woman leader successfully handle a school that was undergoing difficult and challenging times.

Impacting male candidates. Goldman and Rolls were the only two women hired as high school principals in the 1970s. The School Board did not approve the school system's affirmative action plan until 1978. Kindle and Jefferson were hired in the first two years of the 1980s. It would appear that there was no sense of urgency on the part of school system leaders to increase the number of women promoted to higher levels of leadership within the school system. As a result, there did not appear to be an impact on male candidates during the 1970s for positions as high school principals.

Perhaps to appease community clamor, the School Board promoted one woman to the District Superintendent's leadership team. By the end of the 1970s, Liz Sharp had been promoted from the position of elementary principal to superintendent of Region North. Using her position just as men had previously done with their male colleagues, Sharp encouraged other women in the school system to become administrators and found opportunities for them to move up the administrative career ladder. Olin shared an experience that had happened to him, one that supported the thinking that males were purposively not being promoted to administrative positions as well as the theory that women were going to use tactics previously used by men to promote their own gender:

I distinctly remember Liz Sharp was one of the first females really rising to the Region Superintendent. And my personal story is that I was selected in the late '70s to be an assistant principal at a Region North Elementary. And I know that because the principal,

good ol' male, jockey, C. S., called my principal, good ol' male, racially biased, P. D., and told him that he wanted me to be his assistant principal. And when he called Liz Sharp, Liz Sharp, knowing what kind of approach C. would take to this whole thing, said, "I want to interview the most female, the most qualified female applicant in the pool before I will sign off on your choice as assistant principal." And, I never got the job. I never got a call – it went to a female. (Olin, 2003, lines 368 – 389)

Like Olin, men must have been shocked when women such as Sharp were using "male" strategies to promote their gender to leadership positions. Regardless of what the men thought, Sharp's sphere of influence was limited to her region, and women were not being promoted to principals at high schools throughout the school system during the 1970s.

Changes in Women's Aspirations

Beyond the classroom teacher. With the start of the women's movement in the 1960s, women in Union County started to question the concept that women could only be teachers and only men could be administrators. The leadership abilities of women were capable of going beyond the principalship at the elementary level and beyond the classroom at the secondary level. Society, and the school system, had to make a transition from seeing teaching as a job of convenience for women, who could come and go as maternity and family called, to seeing teaching as part of a career path in education that led to administration.

Goldman left the classroom in another school district to become a guidance counselor in Union County. As she observed administrators, Goldman believed that she could handle the same administrative responsibilities as the men. She also realized that had she been a man there would have been no hesitation in promoting her to positions of leadership within any school system.

Goldman recognized that Union County was more progressive than the first school district in which she started her career in education. Because one woman had already been promoted to the position of high school assistant principal, Goldman thought Union County was more open to the idea that women could go beyond the classroom and, as a large system, was able to offer leadership opportunities for women. Her strategic move proved to be a successful one for her career in education and in administration.

Traits of the women. For Wilma Goldman, coaching girls' sports, holding positions of guidance director and assistant principal, and attending county-level meetings with her principal provided opportunities for male colleagues to get to know her and consider her a leader and candidate for high school principalship. In addition to holding the positions, Goldman "had to act tough, like men were suppose to act... and people had to be scared of you, even if you had a wonderful side, as Wilma did. That was the only way to make it up..." the administrative ladder, according to Olin (2003, lines 354 – 359).

When Goldman was considered for the position of high school principalship, this was after several demonstrations of her ability to effectively handle difficult and challenging situations, to successfully work with all stakeholders involved with the high school, to willingly work for the school system team, and to be verbally grateful for her opportunities. She demonstrated characteristics valued by a male system, including confidence, humor, and compatibility. When she offered to concede her application for assistant principal, this was a sign that she was a team player, willing to do what was needed for the good of the team, the school system.

To further support the trait of "team player," it was beneficial that Goldman had been a coach for twelve years and knew the linguistics of that male arena. The fact that she

accompanied her principal to countywide meetings further enabled others to get to know her as an individual, and to, perhaps, acknowledge her abilities beyond the scope of gender.

Goldman represented stability to the stakeholders of Trinity. The man appointed principal at Trinity after Gilmore only lasted a year, a fact never mentioned by Goldman. Goldman herself acknowledged that “it was definitely unusual for a person to remain in the same building for eight years. And then, and to go through that succession – teacher, I mean, counselor, guidance director, assistant principal – I think that was probably a little unusual” (Appendix C, lines 73 – 80). People saw Goldman as being “around forever” (Ingles, 2002, line 95 – 96), a compliment to the stability and trust that she had developed during her years of service.

Perhaps her appointment to a subschool principal position at another school prompted neighborhood school and community leaders to seriously consider Goldman for the principalship at Trinity in order to maintain stability for the good of the school. When one of her male colleagues said at the time of Goldman’s promotion that she “thought like a man,” Goldman took it as a compliment. It may also have been an indication to her that she had successfully crossed the gender line, that she was “one of the boys.” All this, and raising a family at the same time!

Also during the 1970s, another woman wanted to become a high school principal - Carol Baker. After teaching for a few years, she entered a doctoral program and served internships as a high school assistant principal under high school Principal Margaret Rolls and as a certification specialist in Personnel. Although she wanted to become a principal, chance comments during her internship at the high school in the mid-1970s foiled her vision:

I remember when I worked with Margaret as an AP for 8 months. I came in behind P. S. who had gone on, kind of a mini-vacation. He had just literally gone on a sabbatical or

something. And I came in behind him, and everybody kept saying to me not only, you know, was it really hard to be a principal, but also I was too short, which I thought was another interesting. And back then we said, “Oh, okay.” You know, I mean, you didn’t seem to get angry back then because we really just were new into the women’s movement. We really hadn’t thought a lot about it. So, I think, I remember thinking, “Well, I’ll just have to find some other career,” even though I loved being an assistant principal, and I thought it was really fun, and I wanted to be a principal, but I literally started looking for something in the central office... But my original goal was to be a high school principal. (Baker, 2003, lines 667 – 695)

It would appear from these comments that women had to have characteristics that in the 1960s and 1970s would be classified as masculine attributes, such as being tall, acting tough, coaching, and thinking logically rather than emotionally. Because Goldman possessed these traits, the men in upper leadership positions accepted her as a high school principal. Because Baker did not have these traits, she was not accepted in the male arena of high school principals.

Career paths. The opportunities for women to be considered as candidates for high school principal positions were nearly nonexistent prior to the 1970s. After teaching and coaching several years in high schools in other school systems, Goldman accepted a position as a counselor, and later as a coach, in Union County Public Schools. With the support of her principal, and his recognition of her leadership skills, Goldman became an assistant principal and guidance director under his administration. Even though a precedent had been set with a prior appointment of another woman in the position of assistant high school principal, Goldman’s principal still had to fight with the leaders in the school system for her to be promoted to

assistant principal. It appeared to be beneficial for Goldman to have stayed at the same school as she moved up the administrative career ladder to principalship.

Visibility. Goldman appreciated the times that her principal at Trinity, Irwin Gilmore, took her to countywide administrative meetings. Through these principal meetings, as well as countywide meetings for assistant principals, Goldman met the men who would later become her promoters and principal colleagues. Goldman was not active in any support or networking groups; in fact, none existed for women. She was not a member of professional organizations; organizations such as Phi Delta Kappa did not accept women in its ranks until later. As a result, Goldman proved her abilities as a leader through her actions in her school, her coaching experiences, and attendance at county-level meetings.

One of Goldman's strongest supporters was a parent in her school who was also a member of the School Board, an active female member of the School Board who would know directly the leadership that Goldman had already provided for the school. Other women on the School Board continued to support Goldman, and perhaps other women, as she rose up the administrative ranks to assistant district superintendent:

...(R)ight there was Ann Solar and Nancy Xantus who were two females who were really leading the Board..., as women, they were minorities on the board. So here were two very strong, connected, capable, able women who were pushing forward, and they were right there. They were right there pushing Wilma, you know, and, I'm sure whispering in [District Superintendent] Daniel Yancy's ear about Wilma. And then along came Jean Kirby. So, I mean, there were very strong women on the School Board, too, who were looking out for women. (Olin, 2003, lines 807 – 823)

While the opportunities for visibility were limited, Goldman made the best out of what was available. Society had begun to change in its value regarding women in leadership, including women as high school principals. Women on the School Board were pushing the school system to make changes, to accept women as education leaders. Although possessing the characteristics of a leader, and having demonstrated those leadership capabilities in her school, Goldman contended that in her case she was the right woman at the right place at the right time.

Approaches to obtaining positions. During the 1970s, Goldman understood the difficulty that change brought to the system as school leaders considered a woman for the position of high school principal. Men saw her abilities according to their terms: team player, not pushy, appreciative, and “thinking like a man.” Goldman was willing to wait for a position that she really did not believe would ever come during her career in education.

While Goldman patiently waited for her appointment, other women accepted the roadblocks put in front of them and moved on to other positions. Baker, for example, reluctantly accepted the comment that she was too short to be a high school principal and found a job at Personnel. Luckily, Baker used her position in Personnel to work behind the scenes to help other women obtain their goals as high school administrators.

By the late 1970s, Baker was one of a group of women who were not willing to wait any longer for the school system to react to the changes called for by the women’s movement of the 1960s. They did not want to work with a system that was slow to make changes in appointing women for high school administrative positions. They did not think that the school system’s affirmative action plan included gender nor had made any impact on the number of women promoted to administrative positions at the high school level.

This group of women created their own networking group known as the “Grand Ovarian Party.” The group of women supplied their own staff development activities and identified potential candidates for leadership. Members of the group included women who were in Central Office like Carol Baker, were in Region Offices like Liz Sharp, and were school-based assistant principals and lead teachers. They were a group of strong women who were pushing their way into administration, which some interpreted as a radical attempt to shock the rest of the school system into making changes.

The women in this group used their power in various ways to ensure that other women were not left out of considerations for promotions. Baker found opportunities to remind members of the District Superintendent’s leadership team of certain women and their readiness for leadership. Sharp interviewed and placed women in administrative positions that would have gone to men in the past. Members of the Grand Ovarian Party used some of the same strategies that the “good ol’ boys” had used for years, including networking, mentoring, and sponsoring, to help colleagues climb the rungs of the career ladder in education.

Support through role models and mentors. While Goldman remembered only one other female assistant principal in the late 1960s, there were no women in Union County when she was appointed principal in 1971. Her principal at the time, Irwin Gilmore, was the closest she had as a role model and mentor, taking her to county meetings and allowing her to attend separate meetings with other assistant principals.

Gilmore championed the way for Goldman to start her administrative career and the region superintendent later recognized her willingness to work as a team player. Goldman appreciated that Gilmore “fostered me and mentored me... He was very good at taking me to meetings with him so that I would get a view of what was going on. Some of the things he did

for me, I realized later, were helpful” (Appendix C, lines 694 – 695, 703 – 708). Gilmore reported that Goldman had something special about her and that he was willing to provide the mentorship and assistance that she needed in order to obtain positions as high school administrator.

Of interest was the acknowledgement during the interviews of William Ingles and Carol Baker that they had had mentors in their careers. When he was promoted to principal at Norman High School, Lars Gunston, the principal who earlier hired Ingles as a counselor at his middle school, called Ingles and hired him as assistant principal: “So, in that sense, he was a mentor in encouraging me from the beginning and also helping my career by giving me an opportunity – which I was glad I took” (Ingles, 2002, lines 863 – 867). Baker (2003) credited her mentor with explaining to her the culture of Union County in the late 1970s:

Dolita Parra was one of those Southern women who you would never believe could be as strong as she was from the way she spoke, but she was one tough cookie. And she really helped me out a lot in terms of, you know, “you have to understand you’re in Virginia,” “you have to realize what this environment is like,” “you have to understand the ‘old boy network,’” “you can’t get angry at it,” “you can’t, you have to work through it, as opposed to around it,” and “you have to really hang in there with your buddies and find women in the system who can be supportive and whom you can support because, because it’s a very powerful entity, and if you get angry, they’re just going to say, ‘You’re just an angry broad,’ and you’re not going to get anywhere.” So, I think, you know, the women had to play it very close to the line in terms of their assertiveness.... And she (Dolita) would just talk Southern to the old boys and they just wouldn’t know what hit them because she’d get her way but in a very genteel Southern lady, kind of white glove, sort

of way. And I was – Southside Chicago is where I grew up – so I was like, you know, “What do you mean I have to talk Southern? What does that mean? I don’t know how to do that.” You know, I, I just was an inner city kid and I just, it was very hard for me to learn that culture, and to learn to slow down, and to learn not to get, you know, outraged by the lack of sensitivity. I mean you really had to hang in there until you got what you wanted. And you couldn’t do it by just, you know, stomping your feet. (lines 1555 – 1578, 1584 - 1602)

Mentors provided individual support and guidance for those seeking promotions.

Mentors had the ability to help aspiring administrators know colleagues within a complex school system and culture. By having a mentor, those aspiring to administration were able to have a way to make a large school system such as Union County smaller and more manageable in terms of communication and getting known by those in positions to promote.

Support through networking. There were limited opportunities for networking in the 1960s and early 1970s. Women were not allowed in local chapters of professional organizations, including Phi Delta Kappa. Because Goldman was a coach, she did have a limited avenue through which she could interact with male coaches as well as a common ground from which to speak. Because she accompanied her principal to meetings with other principals and other central level personnel, Goldman had some opportunities to interact with future colleagues. These meetings and coaching provided limited networking sources, sources that may have helped Goldman’s promotion to high school principal.

Women helping women. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the women’s movement demanded that women be promoted to upper levels of leadership, including those within school districts. The female members of Union County School Board echoed these demands by society

in promoting women to higher positions of leadership, including high school principal. Goldman believed that the school board member for Trinity, Iris Wilson, was supportive and instrumental in her promotion.

While women may have been supportive of her appointment to administration and principalship, Goldman still had to use strategies to integrate within the men's system. Her background in coaching provided connections with other principals who had been coaches. Her experiences with desegregation enabled her to serve as a resource for other principals during the changes from a segregated to an integrated school system. She did not assert herself as a "pushy broad" in order to get her position at Trinity. As a result, Goldman could be viewed, and accepted, as a non-threatening entity in the all-male world of high school administration.

Decade of the 1980s

Changes in School District Policies

Identification and hiring procedures. When Theresa Williams was promoted to the position of high school principal in 1982, Union County had created a system of “eligibility panels” for each rung of the administrative career ladder. Williams had to be approved by the eligibility panel before she could apply for the position of assistant principal and had to be approved again by a different eligibility panel before she could interview for principal positions. She could panel as many times as she needed in order to be found eligible for interviewing. Once approved by the eligibility panel for any level, the candidate had three years to obtain a position. If he/she had not obtained a position during those three years, then the candidate had to go through the eligibility panel process again.

Each year the Department of Personnel organized panels for each level of administration, including assistant principal and principal. Each panel consisted of colleagues who at that time were in that administrative position. The panel members to interview people for the position of assistant principal, for example, consisted of people who were assistant principals at that time. Following the interviews, members of the panel determined if the candidate was qualified to be placed on the list of people eligible to interview for future administrative vacancies. When a position was advertised, candidates sent their resumes and request for interviews to Personnel. A certain number was selected to continue in the interview process for the advertised position.

The school system was growing so much that people did not know each other. By having a list of approved candidates, principals and superintendents knew who was qualified regardless of their locations in the school system. Baker (2003) pointed out that candidates often had to

wait for the annual panels to occur if they moved into the school district at some other time of the year or if they happened to complete their degree program at another time of the year.

Williams remembered the challenges of being accepted for each level of the eligibility panels. When she applied for the principalship at Hercules, she submitted her name to Personnel. After checking to see that her name was on the eligibility list for principals, an interview panel of three people interviewed her for the Hercules position: “I think there were only about three people... It was more a region office decision... there was not community members... There was not student members involved” (Williams, Appendix D, lines 502 – 508). The region superintendent approved the recommendation from the interview panel, and Williams began her position as principal. By this time, the district superintendent left the hiring and promotion process to the region superintendent, giving his stamp of approval as needed.

Equity in hiring. The School Board had approved an affirmative action program in 1978. According to School Board meeting minutes (January, 1980), school personnel reported that “there were only two female principals and no athletic directors [or] student activity directors. Although several were qualified, they were not selected” (p. 48). School personnel pledged to advertise administrative openings to a larger community.

Minutes from the March 1981 School Board meeting showed concern from one school board member that the school system had lost women in administration and displeasure from another member “at the low number of high school women principals” (p. 243). While answering questions from School Board members at the same meeting, the district superintendent noted that there were women on the high school principalship selection committee and that the staff was developing new procedures “which would involve more people in the decision-making process of recruitment and selection for jobs. Employees in this process

would represent males, females, blacks, whites, and other appropriate categories” (p. 9).

Williams did not report any of these changes in procedures when she interviewed for her position as principal almost 18 months later.

School system initiatives. After Isaac Henderson became district superintendent in 1985, several initiatives were enacted in the school system that played to the strength of women as instructional leaders, particularly the 7-period day reform and a new teacher evaluation system that occurred soon after his arrival. These initiatives provided opportunities for women to demonstrate their abilities to be leaders. As the women were successful in the implementation of these two initiatives, school leaders, community leaders, staff, and students were able to witness the drive and commitment that women had in order to promote the best for students in the school system.

In the first initiative, the school district determined that students needed a seventh period in their school day in order to meet state and local graduation requirements while not losing the ability to have elective courses in their schedules. According to Baker (2003, lines 1076 – 1088), the department chairs - most of whom were female - quickly accepted the challenge of what to do with teachers for this extra period of the day. Having positions as high school department chairs put women in the pipeline for leadership, and Baker saw many of these women promoted to positions as assistant principals as a result of their leadership in this initiative.

The second initiative provided leadership and visibility for women as they were actively involved in a new evaluation system for teachers. The entire school system was mobilized to train administrators and colleague observers in a qualitative method of data collection and reporting in the new teacher evaluation process. In addition, extensive training was offered to all teachers

who were being evaluated to support them as they encountered this new initiative. Teacher leaders rose to the challenge of observing colleagues and teaching the training classes. The new evaluation system provided visibility and leadership opportunities for aspiring administrators in the teaching ranks.

In addition to the two initiatives outlined above, the Department of Personnel initiated programs of its own to support aspiring administrators. In collaboration with the Office of Staff Development, the two departments formed partnerships with local universities in the late 1980s in order to arrange cohort groups for masters programs in educational leadership and administration (Olin, 2003). Members of the cohort group took classes together and formed a support group during the length of the masters program. None of the women in this study reported being part of a cohort group such as this during their principal preparation programs.

Changes in philosophy. During the 1980s, the student population changed, becoming more diversified and multicultural. The change in student population required a new philosophy in the way to handle the new students did not speak English and were coming from countries that were in political conflicts and war-torn. For many students and their families – if their families were even able to come to America – this new home and new school asked them to give up their hatred of their enemies and to work in a new system of cooperation. The American school expected students to understand a new way of behavior and consequences, even though they may never have attended school in their countries of origin. A new type of leader was needed for this change in philosophy in student management, one who not only could manage a building but could also provide the human relations and counseling skills needed to meet the needs of legal and illegal immigrants and to manage a different type of student.

Support. Support for Williams came primarily through family and male colleagues, although there was the possibility of support from women colleagues. Williams reported that her family was supportive of her desire to become principal of a high school. Her siblings – Williams being the oldest – believed that if she wanted to be a high school principal there was no doubt that she could do the job.

When Williams became principal in 1982, men still held the political power within the principal groups. While Williams recognized the existence of the “good ‘ol boys club” and the blockage that presented to women, she also recognized that “it’s always the people who have really supported me and worked with me were men in the system” (Appendix D, lines 821 - 823). Like Goldman, Williams had to develop strategies in order to become successful in situations where she was one of few, if not the only, female in the meeting room. Williams found that she had to develop ways to “get around” obstacles she encountered and to successfully manipulate her contributions to the group. At one point during a heated discussion at a principals meeting, she welcomed the assistance of a male, African American colleague to point out to the others in the meeting that the “little lady” had something to say.

When she was appointed in 1982, Williams did not see women working together to overcome obstacles and meet the challenges of being high school principals. While she remembered hearing Carol Baker speak at county-level meetings about women’s leadership abilities, Williams did not report being part of the “Grand Ovarian Party” (GOP) nor of receiving support from them during her pursuit of principalship. Baker (2003) remembered, though, that Williams “was a high school principal” and “was in the group” (lines 326 – 328).

The “GOP” was careful to keep a low profile in order not to jeopardize the progress they were making in a man’s system. Their meetings were on Saturdays so as not to interfere with the

workweek, which they thought would be a source of scorn and anger from male colleagues. Men did know about the meetings, though, as revealed in interviews with Olin and Ingles:

Baker was an impetus, but the person that did actually form a women's group was Sara Morrow. Sara Morrow has a pool party, or used to have a pool party, every year. And it was only women invited.... (It was the women's network, no men allowed; it was the women's support system. (Olin, 2003, lines 583 – 596)

And there was, I think, a strong move to get females in positions, administrative positions... Because all females, I think, were being encouraged, mentored, supported, and I think, some of the female principals had their women network, you know, where the women principals would get together regularly, support each other. (Ingles, 2002, lines 172 – 185)

The group seemed to subside in 1995 when Baker left for a position in another school district and other members started to retire. The original members still gather when those who have moved come back to visit.

The women who were foci of these case studies did not reveal information about the "GOP" group. Since the leaders of the GOP group appeared to work mainly in Region North, and Goldman and Williams were based in Region South, the distance of approximately 30 miles may have provided enough separation that the two groups worked independently and through different strategies to obtain the same goal of promoting women to high school principalships. Williams specifically mentioned that when she became principal for the first time, the other women principals were too far away for easy networking and assistance. This distance may have also contributed to the fact that the women relied more on their male colleagues within their region than their female colleagues within the school system. Williams believed that she as an

individual, not as part of a group, had to figure out how to maneuver within a man's world to overcome any obstacles and challenges.

Region superintendents and other high level leaders served as promoters and supported women's promotions to positions of high school principalships. Olin remembered a situation in which Wilma Goldman, after reaching the position of assistant district superintendent, identified and helped teacher Nancy Thompson move into administration:

Nancy Thompson, certainly. Wilma saw Nancy's talent. I remember Nancy was an AP [Advance Placement] social studies teacher at Vista High School when I first went to Region South, because we had to create the high school gifted program and Nancy was a talented teacher, got her administrative credentials, and I remember Wilma pulling her in the office and saying, "I'm sending you to be an assistant principal at Trinity, or administrative assistant." I mean, Wilma saw talent in Nancy and pushed her, and pushed her right up there on her own – you know what I mean. I remember Wilma took a special interest, and was very pleased with herself for getting Nancy started. (Olin, 2003, lines 929 – 949)

Other women provided support through "behind the scenes" efforts. Because she worked in the Personnel Department, which was located at central office with the district superintendent, Baker took advantage of having opportunities to promote women who were either ready to move into administration or on to the principalship:

Well, I think I had a little bit more of a role because I had a kind of foot in the door at Personnel. It was easy for me to go down the hall and say to Scott Jones, or say to John Pope, "Gee, you know, I interviewed this incredible woman named Otelia Garden. She's a high school department chair." You know, I could kind of keep an eye on people a

little bit more, and I think that helped. I don't think, I was certainly not instrumental, but I could really make sure that certain women at least had their names in front of people who were making those decisions. And I think the fact that Personnel back then was in the Superintendent's building [until 1986 or 1987]... We'd have lunch with the Superintendent. We'd, you know, run into him in the hallway... And that was very, very beneficial, I think, for me to be able to just sort of drop a name here or there. Or, you know, say to Bob in the hallway, "Hey," you know, "have you thought about so-and-so? She's an AP over at," you know, "Emerald." And it really allowed me to put my toe in the water now and then. (Baker, 2003, lines 1290 – 1308, 1321 – 1337)

While Williams did not report a great deal of support during her advancement to principalship, other colleagues recalled the creation of a women's networking group and the tapping by upper leadership for women throughout the school system. With her promotion in 1982, Williams did not appear to directly benefit from these endeavors and support activities.

The district superintendent. From 1971 – 1985 seven women had served as principals at the high school level: Wilma Goldman (1971 – 1980), Margaret Rolls (1975 – 1978), Kim Kindle (1980 – 1985), Carolyn Jefferson (1981 – 1983), Theresa Williams (1982 – 1985, 1987 – present), Sara Morrow (1984 – 1996, 2000 – present), and Amy Foster (1984 – 1994). When Isaac Henderson became district superintendent in 1985, three of the women were still in their positions of high school principals, and the average length of service for women high school principals was approximately 3½ years.

Beginning in 1985, the number of women in high school principal positions began to increase, with the women staying in their positions as high school principals longer than 3½ years. Oscar Young thought that the acceptance and increase of women in the high school

principalships occurred because “a lot of times, you know, it’s the right place at the right time and the right superintendent and the right set of circumstances” (Young, 2002, lines 1607 – 1611).

Isaac Henderson, Superintendent of Union County from 1985 – 1997, believed in hiring the right people for the job regardless of gender or race. He himself modeled the acceptance of women in leadership through his own appointments of women to his Leadership Team, to central office and regional superintendent positions, and to principalships. He felt it was important that whoever was selected, she needed to be of the highest quality and integrity. In other words, a lousy pick could jeopardize the public’s perception of how women could lead a high school:

The worst problem with anything would be with, whether it be female or male or affirmative action, was that if you put someone in who really does not belong in that job it kills it for the rest of them, whether it be Hispanic, or whether it be an African American, or whether it be a female... You’ve got to get the best person, because to put a female in, or any other – a minority – into a job that you don’t think can handle it, or is less than, is a clear signal. (Henderson, 2003, lines 176 – 184, 200 – 204)

Baker believed that Henderson was a pivotal part in promoting women to high school principalships. She credited much of this acceptance of women to Henderson’s own demeanor, that he was open, accepting, and trusting, and that he appeared comfortable and confident in his own skin:

Well, I think Isaac was truly one of the most secure men I ever knew, and that’s what it takes. It takes somebody who’s very secure in their own leadership to broaden the base. And you can see in Isaac’s appointments that he had assistant superintendents who were female.... And then gradually, under Isaac’s tutelage, I think that really began to change.

Partly because he put the right region superintendents in and then when Wilma became an assistant (district superintendent), she just expanded that even further. (Baker, 2003, lines 844 – 850, 880 - 886)

In addition to the appointment of Goldman as assistant district superintendent, he also appointed Theresa Williams as his administrative assistant when he began in the school system.

Henderson thought that the number of women in high school principal positions grew during his tenure at Union County as they became more confident in getting positions:

But I don't think a lot of women in the early 80s were applying as much as they are now for the positions because they probably felt that they didn't have a good shot at it... But I, we never, to my knowledge, we never hired a female principal because we needed a female. You could always get a great female principal for a school. You just didn't have to put them in.... There are enough qualifying, there are enough ready. If you look hard enough, or train hard enough, you'll get the right people. But in the case of women, I think it was just a natural. They were there, and I think they saw, "Well, hey, I can become a principal. It doesn't have to be all men. I can be one of the guys, too!"

(Henderson, 2003, lines 218 – 222, 429 – 449)

Henderson thought that because he was open to appointments of women as high school principals women believed that there was fairness in his philosophy and approach. Henderson insisted on hiring the best person and not someone with political ties. Since there were "no secret deals," women "felt, 'I have a shot at this. I'm not going to be hurt because I'm a female'" (Henderson, 2003, lines 738, 724 – 726).

Perhaps it was a coincidence that Henderson became superintendent in a school system that was already on the brink of making breakthroughs in hiring women as high school

principals. Perhaps it was the School Board's quest to hire someone at that time who "was brash and had a national reputation" and who would "help them get that national reputation" for Union County (Henderson, 2003, lines 73 – 79). In either case, the stage was set for Henderson to recognize and promote women to positions of high school principal with the support and backing of the School Board and the community.

Changes in School Culture

Accepting women as secondary administrators. From the viewpoint of nearby school districts, both in and out of state, Union County was considered even as late as the 1980s to be "the red-necks, in Virginia. You know, we hadn't made it" (Henderson, 2003, lines 838 - 839). The school system was conservative in its approach to changes, particularly in appointing women to positions of high school principalships. The School Board, through its affirmative action program, expected the school system to promote women to upper levels of leadership. Society also expected the school system to change, to be a leader among other school districts in promoting women to high school principalships. Male leaders in the school system received pressure to accept women as high school administrators from female colleagues, community presentations at School Board meetings, and comments from community members in school system committees. It would take a new superintendent such as Henderson to push the system into action.

Finding new ways of identification. Although the "good ol' boy" network was still in existence, by the 1980s the school system had established a method of identifying candidates for principalships through eligibility panel interviews. After obtaining masters degrees in administration, individuals could determine whether or not to participate in the eligibility panels that would enable them to interview for positions in the school system. There continued to be

pressure from the School Board, community, and women employees to promote women to positions as high school principals.

Handling diversity. When Theresa Williams was promoted to principal at Hercules High School in 1982, she was the fifth woman to be promoted to a high school principal position in Union County. Williams believed that not many people applied for the position at Hercules because of the intense challenges of the new student diversity and sudden increase in multiculturalism at the school. This position called for a leader who had human relations skills and experiences with diversity, both of which Williams possessed. At the time, though, Williams believed that there was still the belief in the school system that women were not the best choice for the positions of high school principals and that she was selected because “if we have to have one [a woman], you’ll do” (Appendix D, lines 307 - 308). She was the first female high school principal in Region East.

Impacting male candidates. The number of women at the principal’s level was not increasing at a significant pace during the first part of the 1980s. On the other hand, the eligibility panels were approving more women who could then interview for assistant principal positions, the pipeline to principalship. With the number of women in high school assistant principal positions, more women could be considered for principalship. This increased the competition between male and female candidates, particularly as school administrative staffs attempted to appoint a woman to provide diversity to the administrative team (Ingles, 2002).

Changes in Women’s Aspirations

Beyond the classroom teacher. Williams taught English, French, and journalism in both another school system and in Union County. Her years of teaching in Union County were in one

high school. With the exception of sponsoring the school's newspaper, Williams did not report participating in any other leadership activities.

Williams at first wanted to get her masters in curriculum and instruction, but was advised to change to administration. In the early 1980s it was still relatively new to have women leave the classroom for administration, as shown by the small number of women in high school principal positions and the re-direction of Carol Baker from her goal of high school principal to working in Personnel.

Traits of the women. Prior to principalship, Williams's teaching and administrative experiences strengthened and highlighted the leadership traits that would later support her as a principal. She possessed the leadership traits needed to continue the successes at Trinity with integration and diversity, further enhanced by her humanistic point of view as a teacher of English and journalism and her teaching experiences in another southern state. As an administrator for Trinity and Newland, Williams demonstrated the ability to meet the instructional and disciplinary needs of a very diverse and potentially volatile school. She also had the ability to "clean house" of teachers who were not doing what was needed for the students and the school.

Prior to her appointment to high school principalship in 1982, Williams was not an athletic coach. It would appear that her cerebral and humanistic skills were more appropriate for Hercules than the more competitive, combative skills of the athlete. In 1982 Williams was not afraid to take a risk to become principal of a highly diverse high school, and she was not afraid to use other strategies to "fit in a man's world."

Career paths. Like Goldman, Williams taught for a few years in another school system before teaching in Union County. All of her teaching was at the high school level, with

additional responsibility for the school newspaper whenever she taught journalism. After she decided to obtain her master's degree, her assistant principal at the time and her university advisor urged her to go into administration. When that assistant principal became principal at another school, he hired her to be his administrative aide, the first rung on the administrative ladder.

Williams was the first subject in this study to report having to pass eligibility panels in order to advance in her career as an administrator. After acceptance by the career advancement panels and found eligible by her peers for positions, Williams was promoted to assistant principal, sub-school principal, and later to high school principal. Unlike Goldman, Williams did not go through the route of counseling on her way to administration. While Goldman stayed at one school, Williams changed schools several times during her climb to principalship.

Visibility. Visibility for Williams occurred through her work with the journalism classes and the school's newspapers. She was fortunate to be a teacher under the supervision of an observant assistant principal who later hired her as an administrative assistant when he became principal at Trinity. Williams credited her rise through the administrative ranks as "magic timing":

I really had sort of this, like, really magic kind of timing, because I had, somebody dragged me into the administrative aide. I applied for AP – I got that job. I applied for principalship at Hercules – and I got that job. Those were like, just kind of, just the timing, I think, as much as anything. (Appendix D, lines 286 – 294)

During the time that Williams was progressing through the administrative ranks there was no organized support system or training to promote women in administration. Williams laughingly reflected that perhaps she was selected for her first position because the school

system was being pushed to have women in high school principal positions and “if we have to have one, you’ll do.” On the other hand, perhaps Williams was selected because she took a risk to be an administrative leader at the high school level and she had successfully deciphered “who were the power brokers, who knows who, how does that play?” (Appendix D, lines 387- 388).

The way things were done in Union County changed with the hiring of Isaac Henderson as district superintendent in 1985. The changes that he implemented provided a visibility for leaders in the school system, leaders who could be targeted for administrative training and positions. Because Henderson made it a point to “try to be pretty visible. We used to have lots of meetings” (Henderson, 2003, lines 274 – 277), he knew who the teacher leaders and potential candidates were in the school system. He attended principal meetings at each level – elementary, middle, and high schools – which enabled him and others to “see, you know, the ones who developed leadership” (Henderson, 2003, lines 352 – 354). He began other initiatives that offered visibility to potential leaders, including a study group on teacher professionalism, a Blue Ribbon Commission, and a Superintendent’s Advisory Committee (Henderson, 2003, lines 278 – 284).

During the mid-1980s, Union County implemented several changes. One change lengthened the secondary school day to seven periods. When the male principals indicated difficulty in the transition, women in department chair positions voluntarily took over the transition to a 7-period day. County-level committees provided leadership exposure for women as they handled the transitional needs of this new initiative. A second change was a new evaluation system for teachers. It was a radical change from the traditional system, and required training of curriculum and peer observers and provided common courses for both observers and observees. Henderson saw that the new system gave “people exposure, in meetings and so on”

(Henderson, 2003, lines 346 – 347), thus giving visibility to potential administrators. Again, women throughout the school system stepped up and enthusiastically accepted opportunities within this change to train others, to serve as observers, and to serve on challenge committees organized to provide due process to teacher complaints of evaluation results.

Approaches to obtaining positions. Williams benefited from the support of her assistant principal at Dominion as she moved from teaching to administration, both under his purview. She was successfully promoted to a position as sub-school principal at another school, but returned to Trinity as part of her strategy to replace the principal when he retired. The position at Hercules came first, though, and Williams was promoted to principal of a school that was challenged with immigrants and multiculturalism. Williams did not believe there were many applicants for the position at Hercules and that by her appointment the school system may have been fulfilling an expectation of society to promote more women to positions of high school principal.

Support through role models and mentors. Williams identified men who served as role models and sources of information for her when she was appointed to her position in 1982. She did not consider the other women who were principals at the time as role models or mentors because they were few in number, the distance between schools was great, and they just did not get together for that purpose.

Support through networking. Williams did not report using networking strategies prior to her appointment to principalship. She acknowledged that there “were a couple of efforts being made at that time” to establish a networking group to support women, “but it was not terribly cohesive” (Appendix D, lines 328 – 332). Baker reported that a group was created in the early

1980s, the GOP (Grand Ovarian Party), but that the group would not have been helpful for Williams.

Henderson, appointed district superintendent in 1985, recognized the existence of “good ol’ boy” and “good ol’ girl” systems nationally and in Union County. He defined networking as “what it is, it’s connecting with people” (Henderson, 2003, lines 580 – 581). He suggested that the “good ol’” system might be disappearing as people are being appraised for their individual abilities:

The goal in life is that some day you won’t have to have a good ol’ girls network system. But, you know, networking is important, you know, sexual drop to the side, male or female, but who’s the better person to lead and who’s the better leader? But I don’t think, I don’t think we’re there yet; I’m not naïve enough to think that we’re there yet. (Henderson, 2003, lines 585 – 595)

Women helping women. Even though two other women were principals at the time of her appointment, Williams believed that she had to continue pushing her way through male bureaucracy in order to be successful. She did not interact with the other women principals due to the distance between their schools. There was also not the thought of collaboration and working together during the early 1980s – Williams believed that they just wanted to survive and be successful in a man’s world.

While Williams did not report support from other women in her pursuit of principalship, Baker and Olin reported women who were working throughout the school system to promote women to high school principalships. These women were employed throughout the school system, including Personnel and Region offices, and were members of a networking group called

the “Grand Ovarian Party.” While not of benefit to Williams, this group provided identification, training, guidance, and support to aspiring women administrators.

Decade of the 1990s

Changes in School District Policies

Identification and hiring procedures. By the 1990s, the community expressed an intense interest in being involved in the selection of their principals. As with other positions at that time, the region office obtained input from the community regarding the type of principal that they wanted at Newland High School. While “black female” was the fourth recommendation of the community, members of Region South and Central Office staff believed that Xavier was the best person for that position. In order to give the community time to come to the same conclusion, the Region Superintendent, with the approval of the district superintendent, appointed Xavier in the position as “acting principal.” Xavier had already gone through the eligibility panel and had her name accepted to the list. This appointment was slightly awkward for Xavier because one of the assistant principals had assumed, and publicly informed the staff, that he was the acting principal in the interim period between the departing and the future new principal. His self-imposed promotion lasted one weekend. Even though the position was a temporary placement, the district superintendent still had to get approval from School Board members before Xavier could start.

In the spring of Xavier’s first year, the principal position at Newland was advertised through the school district’s internal newsletter. Xavier submitted her name and interviewed. When polled for their recommendation, Xavier remembered that members of the PTA unanimously agreed that she should be given the position permanently. It would appear that the “acting principal” strategy had worked in this situation.

Equity in hiring. By the decade of the 1990s “affirmative action” had converted to “diversity management.” According to Olin (2003), who was Assistant Superintendent of

Personnel at the time, the affirmative action plan insinuated that people were not qualified for the positions even though they were. By changing the focus to diversity, the school district could make sure that there was representation of both genders and all races in leadership positions throughout the system. This philosophy promoted a global perspective of the school system instead of a school-by-school approach to hiring principals.

School system initiatives. Henderson and Union County continued to add initiatives as the decade of the 1990s began. The implementation of the middle school philosophy changed the organization of grades 7 and 8 from one that resembled a mini-high school to one that provided a bridge between elementary and high school and met the specific needs of the pre-adolescent child through teams, interdisciplinary teaching, advisory periods, exploratory opportunities, and age-appropriate guidance programs. This change in philosophy provided an advantage for aspiring women administrators.

With the implementation of the new initiative, the middle school was seen more as the “upper” of the elementary program rather than the “bottom” of the high school. With the emphasis on meeting the needs and nurturing the potential of the whole child, women who were readily accepted by society as principals at the elementary level were now applying and being accepted as principals of the middle schools. Women who had experiences at both the elementary and middle school levels now took advantage of this opportunity to be principals at the middle school level. Where it was once considered appropriate for only men, women proved that they could be successful leaders at the middle school level as well. If they could be successful with the once unthinkable middle school student, then it could be possible for women to be successful as principals at the high school level:

I think the shift to middle school was very healthy for women. It was a door opener for women, because up to then it had always been a little mini-high school. But when the middle school movement came in, it brought with it a lot of elementary women to the middle school who had never been there before. And suddenly their expertise was very valued because of the team structure and the whole child, and the way we looked at middle schools. I think that if the middle schools had remained mini-high schools we would have had a much greater struggle... (Baker, 2003, lines 645 – 661)

This change of view of women as middle and high school principals may have helped the women in this study, but only in indirect ways. Xavier applied to middle school principal positions but she did not obtain any; her destiny was high school. Yates began her administrative career as a special projects teacher in a middle school. She had taught middle school students when she was a planetarium director, but within a few years she had returned to the high school level. For Xavier and Yates, the acceptance of women principals at the middle school level may have surreptitiously provided support for their own aspirations of principalship at the high school level.

In addition to the change to middle schools, the school system initiated a series of informational meetings for assistant principals in order to acquaint them with school district departments and procedures. Some of these meetings provided opportunities to strengthen their preparedness for principalships, such as practicing for interviews. Xavier reported that this provided aspiring principals with up-close meetings with the leadership of the school system, the people who were determining the career advancements for employees in the system.

Changes in philosophy. Seen as a system initiative, the switch to middle schools involved changes in school system philosophy regarding schools for grades 6 – 8, including

instructional practices and student management. The middle school philosophy incorporated the formation of teams of students with common teachers who had common planning time and were clustered in the same area of the school building. The middle school philosophy also included the inclusion of advisory periods, a strong guidance program, the provision of exploratory programs during the day, and extracurricular activities after school. With the creation of an instructional program that was differentiated and appropriate for the grade level and age group, the organization of grades 7 and 8 was no longer considered a “mini-high school.” This change in philosophy for the middle grades placed an emphasis on and expectation that the principal was an instructional leader, not simply a building manager. The importance of being an instructional leader was moving from the elementary to the secondary level via the middle school philosophy.

Olin noted a shift in school district philosophy regarding the high school principal as an instructional leader. This shift impacted the acceptance of women as high school principals:

So there were some system-wide initiatives. Mostly people just recognized there was an evolution that high school principals weren't former white male PE teachers, because that was sort of who it was. And we were valuing instructional leadership and, and men who had strong academic backgrounds, and women, who certainly had strong academic backgrounds, became much more into the forefront. And, it then sort of, it then sort of happened exponentially as more women got promoted, they were helping see to it that there were more women becoming assistant principals and the pipeline got seeded, and over a very rapid period of time. (Olin, 2003, lines 202 – 220)

Baker lamented that the middle school reform did not continue into the high school, although the implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning tests in the mid-1990s forced high school principals to focus on instruction and academic accountability.

In addition to the change in philosophy regarding instructional leadership, school system teachers and staff were also faced with a necessary change in philosophy regarding a multicultural student population. Starting in the 1980s, the student population in Union County continued to become more culturally diverse in more schools throughout the 1990s. Immigrants from Hispanic and Asian cultures challenged the resources and understanding of the school system and local communities. It was not only the students who needed help and guidance in this new configuration of the student populations, but also parents who needed assistance in dealing with the concepts of acceptance and cooperation. Xavier discovered this need first hand as she was called upon to use her human relation skills in confronting and working through the prejudices of the parents at her school.

Support. Xavier gained support as she worked in various schools; people got to know her and asked for her advice as “Dr. Xavier.” The time that she spent as a human relations specialist for Region North and Personnel introduced her to leaders at the upper level of school district management, the same leaders who would later recommend her for the acting position as principal at Newland. In addition, Xavier accepted opportunities to substitute for absent administrators, opportunities that demonstrated and proved her ability to be a successful leader. Xavier did not report using networking as a strategy during her climb to principalship.

Like the women before her, Xavier reported that her family was supportive of her desire to become principal of a high school. Like Williams, Xavier was also the oldest in a family with six siblings. Xavier reported that her parents and husband were proud of her promotion to principal and not surprised that others also believed that she could do the job.

The district superintendent. Henderson continued in the position of district superintendent until 1997, during which time more women were hired as high school principals.

He accepted the advice and actions of his assistant superintendents and region superintendents, depending on them to know the people in the pool of aspiring principals. When Olin, Jackson, and Thompson recommended placing Xavier at Newland High School as “acting principal,” he agreed without hesitation and trusted their judgment in recommending this move.

Changes in School Culture

Accepting women as secondary administrators. As the 1990s began there were six women principals at Maxwell Secondary School and North Point, Newland, Highland, Hercules, and Dominion High Schools. As the decade progressed the number of women increased to twelve by the end of the decade. The school system and community were accepting women as viable leaders of high schools.

Finding new ways of identification. Eligibility panels continued to be used at the beginning of the 1990s, but people started to notice that the panels were no longer serving their original purpose. Ingles (2002) noted that there was a disconnect between those people selected by the eligibility panels and the actual needs of the schools. It became more important by the late 1990s that there be a “best match” between potential principal and school.

School leaders continued to find new ways of identifying leaders among their female employees, such as appointing personnel to “acting principal” positions in order to have time to prove their ability to lead a school successfully and effectively. Since it was no longer acceptable for the district or region superintendent to simply place someone in a vacancy, this strategy enabled either superintendent to “temporarily” place someone in a position while the staff and community became acquainted to the person and appreciative of her diverse leadership skills.

Just as a “trial balloon” was used twenty years earlier, school leadership used the strategy of “acting principal” to place Xavier in her first position in 1991 as high school principal at Newland High School in Region South. When the previous principal was promoted after the start of the school year, Region and Central Office people believed that they needed to get someone in the position quickly. A survey of the parents – a common practice conducted at that time to solicit parent/community input - indicated that a black female was their last choice for principal. Because many people in the school district believed that Xavier was the right choice to lead Newland High School, they chose to appoint Xavier as “acting principal” in order to give the community the chance to know her before the official panel process would begin the following spring. Xavier used her extensive skills in human relations and communications, and her competitiveness as an athlete, to bring opposing parents groups together through supportive activities of the school. The “acting principal” tactic worked, as parents overwhelmingly at the end of the year wanted her to stay and the naysayers gave their apologies and pledged their support.

Handling diversity. As with the other women in this study, Xavier dealt with a changing diversity in her school. In addition, there was a growing chasm between the “haves” and “have nots,” and the impact of poverty on students and school expectations. Unlike Goldman and Williams, Xavier dealt more with the conflicts of adults, staff and parents, than with students. When Xavier arrived, she dealt with diversity training that was already in place for teachers and the warring factions between parent leaders in the school. Knowing these problems, central office staff needed a person in the principal’s position who knew how to handle a variety of human and race relation problems, skills that Xavier had and had demonstrated in her earlier positions in the school system.

Impacting male candidates. Some people in the school system believed that the increase of women in high school principal positions occurred to the detriment of males who were just as qualified and available for promotions:

I would say that if you asked some white male assistant principals during that time they would say that they were slighted in terms of the direction that the system seemed to want to go to get a gender balance. I would say that there would be white males who would say, “I didn’t have, I really didn’t have a fair shot.” (Young, 2002, lines 1389 – 1398)

Xavier noted that it was still a challenge for the men in the early 1990s to deal with women in the ranks of high school principal:

It was interesting, but I think the men were beginning to see a trend, because within a short period of time they went from, maybe, one female high school principal to six, I would say, formed in a matter of three or four years. And, you could just sort of see that the culture was changing. At that time some of the men were feeling uncomfortable having the females around; they couldn’t talk their usual talk... By the time I left the principal position, the women, first of all the number of women had increased significantly, and the men were really taking a back step, and saying, “You do what you want to do.” Very few of them actually participated verbally, or action-wise, into what we were doing, as if “You women have come in and taken over our organization.”

(Appendix E, lines 591 – 602, 632 – 641)

With the increase of women high school principals, men in the school system not only saw an increase in competition but also a loss in power at meetings. According to Xavier the men were literally giving up and letting women principals take over the direction of the high school agenda. As Ingles (2002) pointed out, so many women were becoming administrators

that it was becoming more common to find all-women high school administrative staffs who were looking for men to diversity their team.

Changes in Women's Aspirations

Beyond the classroom teacher. In comparison to the hesitation in the 1970s by women to leave the classroom and teaching, women in the 1990s did not hesitate to join cohort administrative programs and to apply for positions throughout the school system. The time had come for women such as Xavier to move away from the question of “could” to “when” a woman could become a high school principal. By the 1990s, there were no questions by family, colleagues, or society when a woman decided to pursue a career in education beyond teaching.

Traits of the women. Through her experiences as a high school coach, Xavier developed the traits of team player and tenacity. Colleagues took advantage of her trait of approachability, as they were able to talk with and get advice from Xavier. Xavier's ability to support and work well with others was a characteristic needed for Newland at the time of her appointment. While she was able to deal well with difficult people, Xavier was not a push over and not easily intimidated. Xavier had confidence in her ability as a high school principal and confronted those who were oppositional, reminding them that she was “going to do what's right” for her school and her students.

In addition to having human relations skills and the ability to understand others, Xavier also displayed the characteristics of competitiveness and team player. Her humor and determination to win were instrumental, as well, in her success of obtaining her position of high school principal and surviving the first year. At one point during that first year, Xavier received a call of support from assistant district superintendent Bob Jackson, who reminded her of her athletic past and tenaciousness:

But, he was always very encouraging, and, once, when we were talking on the telephone, and he said, “Remember, Georgia,” he said, “You are a former athlete. You ran track.”

And he said, “You don’t finish until you cross that line.” (Appendix E, lines 889 – 896)

Career paths. Xavier taught in another school system before coming to Union County Public Schools. After coming to Union County, she taught physical education at the high and middle school levels, taught math at the middle school level, and coached a high school sport. Xavier was the only one of the four women in this study to report taking maternity leave during her career.

Prior to principalship, Xavier served in positions in central and region offices. Several times she substituted as an assistant principal when that person was out. In one substituting case, Xavier helped to bridge a difficult situation during the spring when one high school was closing and moving to merge with another high school. When she became assistant principal at Oak Ridge High School, Xavier was recognized for taking care of the school when the principal was out.

Like Williams, Xavier had to pass eligibility panels in order to be approved and considered for administrative positions. Although she had passed and was on the list of eligible candidates for high school principalships, members of central office decided to have her serve as an “acting principal” in order to demonstrate her ability to be an effective principal and to ensure her promotion to the position. This also countered the possibility or chance of underlying problems and challenges from school board members at the time.

Visibility. Xavier participated in a variety of activities that provided visibility and proof of her leadership capabilities. Compared to Goldman and Williams, Xavier held a higher number of both line and staff positions in a greater number of locations prior to her promotion to

principalship. Why the need for more positions and locations prior to promotion is unclear, but this increase suggests that either the competition for positions was greater or that women had to do more to prove their skills and abilities to school leaders as time progressed.

When the middle school philosophy was implemented by Union County at the beginning of the 1990s, the focus was on the education of the whole child, which included instructional strategies to meet the needs of the student in transition. The middle school philosophy continued many of the components found at the elementary level, including the nurturing of individual children and the close supervision by teachers of small groups of students. With these foci on instruction and nurturing, it became more acceptable for women to become principals at the middle school level. Once at the middle school level, female principals showed school and community leaders that women could effectively handle the management and supervision of a secondary school. Xavier was the only one of the four women highlighted in this research who reported applying for principalships at the middle school level.

When the new teacher evaluation system was implemented in the mid 1980s, Xavier was part of this change as she undertook the new training, followed the qualitative process involved in the evaluation system, and was successful in “being fair and tough on your evaluations and how you present to a review board when a teacher appeals, getting through the challenge, and all that stuff” (Young, 2002, lines 926 – 930). According to Henderson (2003), this was an invaluable way for aspiring principals to be noticed and promoted.

Approaches to obtaining positions. The decade of the 1990s called for women who were risk-takers and willing to handle changes occurring within the school system, including diversity and multiculturalism. These women began to be recognized on their own merits while taking

advantage of the school system's shifts in philosophy to "diversity management." Of the four women in the case studies for this research, only Xavier was African American.

Xavier believed that central office leaders recognized her for the leadership abilities that she had demonstrated in her many positions in the school system. Henderson agreed that by doing one's job successfully "you can promote yourself on the job" (2003, lines 496 – 497). Xavier had been recommended for promotion "through the Region office, through other nominations, and so on, so there was a larger group that came up to" Henderson (Henderson, 2003, lines 471 – 475) to recommend Xavier for the position at Newland High School.

By the early 1980s, the school system had changed its hiring practices from "affirmative action" to "diversity management." This supported conscientious efforts to have a leadership team throughout the school district that represented different gender, races, and cultures. Although not reported by anyone interviewed for this study, it may have supported "diversity management" in promoting Xavier, who represented both women and African Americans.

Support through role models and mentors. Xavier had the support of men and women in the school system, but she did not report a specific mentor or role model during her career. At the time of her promotion to principalship, Xavier had the support of her principal, Oscar Young, her Region Superintendent, Bob Jackson, the previous principal of Newland, Nancy Thompson, and the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, Fred Olin. Xavier talked about the support of other principals during her first years as principal, particularly those who had schools near her.

Support through networking. Xavier did not report using networking as a strategy in obtaining a position as principal. The many positions that she held in the school system, under the supervision of different men, provided informal opportunities for networking as she handled human relation concerns and substituted for absent administrators in schools throughout the

system. While Xavier did not report being part of the “G.O.P” women’s network, other African American women, such as Otelia Garden, were reported by Baker (2003) as being part of the group and their activities.

Women helping women. Xavier expected that her promotion to principalship would be based on the leadership abilities that she had demonstrated throughout her career. While acknowledging the support of men in the school system, Xavier did not report on support provided by women in the system. Olin (2003) reported that the previous principal of Newland, Nancy Thompson, was instrumental in placing Xavier at Newland as principal. Due to the size of the school system, it is likely that Xavier did not know, or did not remember, Thompson’s role in her promotion.

*Decade of the 2000s**Changes in School District Policies*

Identification and hiring procedures. In the mid-1990s budget restraints impacted services provided by the Department of Personnel. Many of the activities handled by the Department of Personnel were given to the Region Offices to provide, including the interviewing and hiring of administrators. It was also decided to stop the eligibility panels because they were not doing the job that was intended. According to Olin (2003), they were serving as a funnel that more often than not kept people out of consideration for positions as principals.

Even though the school system was moving to a new procedure that was centered on hiring through the smaller geographical regions of the school district, the community still wanted to have input for the principals in their schools. William Ingles remembered creating the first process for Region North when the interview process for principals moved from Personnel to the Region Office in the early 1990s:

I wasn't at the Region very long before we were really involved in panels. And I was involved in setting up the first model from a panel interview involving parents and staff... (P)arents asked the Superintendent to come up with a way that parents could be involved in the selections... So one of the things I did is look back at the eligibility panels – How were they organized? How were they structured? How did they run? – when Personnel had the eligibility lists, and picked up some of their pieces of time limits, and questions, and, uh, and then looked at three parents and three staff – it was really my coming up with that. (Ingles, 2002, lines 396 – 422)

By the late 1990s, the principal panels at the high school level had expanded to “include Student Government, president or designee, so there's a student. And we go out and talk to

students about the process” (Ingles, 2002, lines 622 – 626). When the position of principal at Norman High School became open in 2000, the Region Superintendent attempted to place a woman in the position that she believed was qualified. There was no information regarding whether this was going to be an “acting” position, as had been done previously with Xavier and other aspiring principals. Before that part of the appointment could be formally announced, school staff and community erupted at the perceived insult: how could the Region Superintendent place someone in the position when another high school with a principal opening in another Region was advertising nationally for applicants:

...(T)he Region Superintendent wanted to do an appointment, went out to meet – and I really warned against this – but when she met with the faculty, there was an uproar as to “how can Columbia advertise nationally, go through a process involving everybody, and yet at Norman you just want to make an appointment? What are you saying to us – we don’t rate?”... And it came out so strong and so loud that she realized right away: no appointment; we’ve got to go through the process; we’ve got to involve everybody.

Norman wants to be involved. (Ingles, 2002, lines 712 – 733)

As a result, the Region Superintendent reverted to the process that she had used with principal vacancies at other schools. The position at Norman was advertised through the school system’s newsletter and posted on the district’s web site for potential candidates outside the system to see. After conducting a paper screening of all the candidates, the Region Superintendent selected candidates for a panel interview with the school, community, and student representatives. Following recommendations from the school-based panel, the Region Superintendent conducted her own interviews of the top candidates. She recommended Olivia Yates for the position to the district superintendent and School Board members, which they

approved. The staff and community appreciated having the same selection process as other schools, as well as having a principal that they had had a part in selecting.

Unlike Williams and Xavier, Yates did not have to go through eligibility panels as she moved through the levels of administration. She vaguely remembered a panel when she applied for the regional curriculum specialist in 1988, but she thought that that was done because this was her first administrative position. In actuality, by the time Yates was advancing through administrative positions, the eligibility panels were already a thing of the past (Olin, 2003).

Equity in hiring. By the appointment of Yates in 2000, the school system had moved from “diversity management” to a procedure that looked at the “best match” between administrative candidate and school. The school system made the process of matching “a recognized goal and focus of principal selection” (Ingles, 2002, lines 560 – 561). By focusing on finding the “best match” between school and principal, the school system was “setting them up for success, that’s critical” (Ingles, 2002, lines 596 – 597). It did not appear that anyone was concerned at this time with the under-representation of women in upper level administrative leadership positions, including the position of high school principal.

School system initiatives. In the mid-1990s Virginia required statewide assessments through Standards of Learning (SOL) tests for students as well training for teachers in this new state initiative. Olivia Yates was an integral part of this training through her position in the Department of Instruction, a position that provided visibility and proof of leadership ability as she traveled throughout the school system.

Changes in philosophy. The philosophy in Union County regarding the promotion of women to high school principalships was one that supported and recognized the contributions that women made to leadership at the high school level. Since Personnel was no longer handling

the panel process, the regions set up their own process with panels consisting of school-based staff members, parents, and students. Some believed that the use of panels provided an advantage to women candidates who were better able to verbally express themselves in these situations. As suggested by Olin (2003) and Henderson (2003), it may not have been the ability to verbalize during the interviews as much as it was sharing actual experiences that the women had had regarding instructional issues and activities.

With the implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL), high school principals were expected to be the instructional leaders who would guide faculty, parents, and students through these new standards and high stake tests. It was no longer acceptable that the high school principal only manages the facility, people, and athletic program. The high school principal must now know the scope and sequence of all curriculum areas, methods of instruction and planning to support student achievement, strategies to assist students and teachers to further prepare for the high-stake tests, programs to remediate students who do not pass and have to re-take the tests, and methods of handling the results that are publicized through media reports and state report cards.

Support. As she advanced up the career ladder, Yates found support from two people in Union County, Rhonda Hill and William Ingles, both of whom continued to reappear throughout her career. Hill hired Yates as a special projects teacher and, later, as the high school SOL specialist in the Department of Instructional. The first position began her career in administration while the second position further demonstrated her leadership skills to school system decision-makers. In both positions, Hill gave Yates projects that stretched her ability and challenged her knowledge. Yates was the only one of the four women in this study who suggested that she had a "mentor," who also happened to be female.

William Ingles, assistant superintendent for Region North, willingly assisted Yates when she sought his advice regarding next moves in her career. Ingles, though, did not see himself as a mentor according to his definition, and referred to the more prevalent use of support groups:

We set up a principal support group at the Region. “Mentor”’s a word that I think goes beyond just “support group,” although some people use it pretty loosely, to do whatever... (S)upport group for new principals, and bringing principals together, and networking, and encouraging, that kind of networking... And I think there was, I think from those groups there was a lot of support. Now, as far as mentor, I think that goes beyond those support mechanisms. And that’s when somebody comes to you, and talks to you, and it’s over a period of time... Again, I think of a mentor, I wouldn’t describe myself as a mentor unless I was so intensely involved with someone throughout their career. (Ingles, 2002, lines 298 – 322, 507 - 510)

He labeled what he did more as “certain conversations,” conversations that spontaneously happened and, as a result, had an impact on another’s career: “And yet, sometimes, at certain times of, certain conversations can change your career, your focus, or tell you some things you need to know” (Ingles, 2002, lines 511 – 514). In order to take advantage of the value of “certain conversations,” Ingles believed it was important to obtain guidance and information from as many people as possible through support groups and networking.

In addition to the support of professionals in the school system, Yates reported that her family was a source of support. Her family was supportive of her decision to become an administrator, although her mother had “the typical motherly concerns about ‘how are you going to do it all?’” (Appendix F, lines 441 – 443). Her father, who was a school-based administrator

himself, also served as a source of inspiration for Yates as she went through school herself and later decided to have a career in education and in administration.

The district superintendent. In 1998 Warren Wilson was hired to follow Henderson as district superintendent. For the next two years, he concentrated on the Standards of Learning (SOL) requirements as well as the reorganization of a school system that had outgrown its four regions. Yates benefited from a position in central office created as part of the school system's handling of the Standards of Learning. As those in the 1980s benefited from reforms within the school system during that time, Yates benefited from the visibility that occurred throughout the school system through her leadership position in implementing Virginia's SOL requirements.

Changes in School Culture

Accepting women as secondary administrators. During his career in Union County, Ingles saw a shift from the "coach" to "instructional" leader:

The principal as instructional leader became such a strong force that it helped a lot of the women who weren't coming through the health and PE, were competing more successfully because they were bringing instructional leadership to the role (Ingles, 2002, lines 963 – 970).

Ingles also found that "today, with our panels, they're not looking for coaches, but they are looking for strong leaders" (2002, lines 989 –991), which included women. Within the school system and the community, the value shifted from high school principals as coaching managers to high school principals as instructional leaders. Olin (2003) thought that this shift in focus during the 1990s to instruction highlighted the strengths of women candidates and fostered the acceptance of women as high school principals:

I think women are able to talk about instructional issues, and I think that was more highly prized later than earlier. So, I don't know if it's more loquacious. I think women tend to be, in general, more scholarly, more instructionally focused. They know more of the background and history, and they don't, and what the instructional issues are. And so I saw that as a huge factor because when we start asking so many more questions on instructional leadership – “What would you do to improve the math or science program in this school?” – those kinds of things, the dynamics changed a lot. (lines 1091 – 1106)

Questions asked during principal panel interviews addressed a set of skills that were different from those asked twenty years earlier. These new skills dealt with instruction, multiculturalism, and human relations, and reflected the need for the contemporary principal to be able to handle an increasingly diversified student and staff populations. Women candidates were able to talk about these issues, to be more “loquacious” than male candidates, because they had experienced these issues directly through their experiences inside and outside the classroom.

Finding new ways of identification. Women had opportunities to join cohort administrative groups that were jointly sponsored by the Union County Public Schools and a local university. Principals were encouraged to identify potential leaders and advertisements were distributed through the school system's internal newsletter. Unlike what Baker (2003) experienced in the 1970s, it was no longer unusual or strange for women to self-select for inclusion in administrative courses and advanced degrees.

Handling diversity. Yates had two challenges when she was hired in 2000 for Norman High School in Region North: a highly diverse population and an academically-failing student population. The students at Norman High School had failed Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. Improving test scores called upon a different set of skills for the new principal at

Norman, skills that centered on instruction and accountability. Because of her experiences serving as assistant principal at the school earlier as well as serving as the liaison and communicator between Central Office and high schools regarding SOL tests, interpretation, and remediation actions, Yates possessed the skills needed to handle these two challenges.

Impacting male candidates. Women had become so accepted by schools and communities as leaders of high schools that it was not uncommon for the administrative staff to be comprised of all females by 2000. Williams (2002), reflecting on this change from her appointment in the 1982, understood how this could come to be as women were developing extensive resumes that outshone male candidates. As the decade of the 2000s began, the make-up of the administrative staff at many of the high schools in Union County had reversed themselves from all men in the 1970s to all women in the 2000s.

Several factors may account for this trend. Fewer men were making the decision to become administrators – some were accepting the responsibility to be more fully involved in their families while others found that they could make a better living having another job during summer and other vacation times. The 1990s also saw the lure of technology positions for educators that paid better salaries. In addition, with it no longer considered a stigma by society, women energetically sought positions that took them out of the classroom and into other areas of education, which included administration and principalship. Unlike the 1970s and 1980s, there had developed a broad pool of women candidates for administration who had extensive resumes that qualified them for administrative positions without having to have been athletic coaches.

Changes in Women's Aspirations

Beyond the classroom teacher. Other than her mother's concern about when Yates would have time for children, Yates had few worries about moving from the classroom to the

principal's office. She did not report any blocks as she made the move out of the classroom to her first position as a special projects teacher, what she considers her first step on the administrative career ladder.

Traits of the women. Like Williams, Yates did not coach sports and, again like Williams, she had a teaching background in one of the academic areas – science. Yates used the characteristics of a scientist to explore and analyze the instructional components of a high school leader and, later, to create instructional programs of value to students. Her enthusiasm and confidence enabled Yates to meet all challenges given by her supervisors throughout her career. While stakeholders may have seen Goldman as “stable,” stakeholders for Norman may have seen Yates as “loyal” as she returned to the place where she was once assistant principal.

Yates herself reported the importance of “loyalty” in her career decisions. Yates thought she was first hired at Orange because the principal at the time “felt like (she) could be loyal to him as a staff member” (Appendix F, lines 650 – 652) and that she would “be a good team player to work with him” (Appendix F, lines 637 – 638). Yates never considered changing school systems in order to obtain a principalship because she “was born, raised, educated” and had “signed on for the duration” in Union County - “sort of from the old school” of thought (Appendix F, lines 1191 – 1201). Yates was proud of having the characteristic of being “home-grown” in Union County and remaining loyal to the school system that raised her.

Career paths. In the years leading up to 2000, the number of opportunities for career advancements opened up for both men and women in the school system. By the time Olivia Yates was promoted in 2000, she perceived that there was an extensive list of “stepping stones” to the position of high school principal, career moves that she believed she had to make in order to compete with other candidates in the principal pool. When Yates continued to experience

failure in her attempts for a principalship, she was moved at one point to think, “My God, what do you have to do?” (Appendix F, lines 1016 – 1017).

Of the four women in this study, Yates was the only one who taught solely in Union County, although she took advantage of a one-year position in England as part of a Union County-sponsored Fulbright exchange program. She taught mainly at the high school level with a few years at the middle school level as a special projects teacher, a quasi-administrative position. With both of her parents working as educators in Union County, her father serving as an administrator in Union County, and Yates graduating from a high school in Union County, Yates believed in the benefit of being “home-grown” as she sought the principalship. She did not seek positions outside of the school system.

Visibility. As with Xavier, Yates participated in a variety of activities that provided visibility and proof that demonstrated her ability to leader. Also like Xavier, Yates held a variety of line and staff positions in schools and central office. These positions enabled Yates to travel around the school system and become acquainted with high schools throughout the district. These different positions also provided a platform from which Yates could get to know and be known by other leaders in the school system

The movement of instructional accountability that began in the mid-1990s had an impact on the promotion of Yates to principalship. Because she had led the high schools in Union County for two years in the implementation of Virginia’s Standards of Learning (SOL), Yates had the knowledge and basis for leadership for a high school that was not passing the SOL tests. Coupled with her other conscious preparations prior to the principalship, Yates was the perfect “match” for Norman High School:

But by developing herself from those different perspectives – now she brought an instructional piece because she went to instruction, she brought a knowledge of the school and community, and, obviously, respect already from colleagues and leaders in the school. So, she was set up as, she set herself up through her career choices, to be, to come in as the best match, with great support... (Ingles, 2002, lines 580 – 591)

Approaches to obtaining positions. By the 2000s, the number of “stepping-stones,” or rungs in the administrative career ladder, appeared to have increased in number. Unlike Goldman and Williams, Yates held both staff and line positions through many appointments in the school system. While Xavier practiced being an administrator in “acting” positions, Yates sought advice and assistance from other leaders in the school system as she maneuvered through the promotion processes of the school system.

Yates interviewed unsuccessfully for several positions before competing for the position at Norman. Because of the different positions and experiences that she had had, Yates was able to instinctively answer questions from the panel because she had lived her experiences rather than relying on textbook answers. As Ingles (2002) pointed out, all of her experiences were what had made Yates so marketable when the “best match” became available.

Support through role models and mentors. Like the women before her, Yates noted the support of men during her career, from giving her promotions to serving as sources of reflection. Of the four women in this study, Yates came the closest to identifying a female supporter, a person who continued to appear several times during her administrative career. She described Rhonda Hill as a hard-driving, pushing mentor. Although no longer in existence as a networking source, the Grand Ovarian Party, the women’s networking system from the 1980s, may still have

had residual effects as charter-member Rhonda Hill worked with Yates during her early administrative career.

Support through networking. Yates did not report networking as a specific strategy that she used to prepare and promote herself to principalship. By virtue of the fact that she held several positions in the school system that enabled her to know and be known by others in the school system, Yates was able to network in a natural manner. According to Yates, she was not a member of a professional organization that would possibly have provided additional points of contact and visibility.

In the 1980s, District Superintendent Henderson commented on the value of networking to connect with other people who can support one's career goals. The concept of "connecting" with other people was echoed by William Ingles who believed that networking, making connections with as many people as possible, was more valuable than having mentors, which depended so much on the right chemistry in order to be successful:

I think networking is critical... I say go after whoever, wherever you can find support and help, and don't limit yourself.... Network to the fullest extent possible. You know, talk to people. I think the worst thing anybody can do for their career is to reach out to those who can really help them, counsel them, coach them, maybe mentor them, but always be looking for the networking. But you can't make a mentorship happen. There's got to be a chemistry there, too. (Ingles, 2002, lines 998 – 999, 1005 – 1007, 1016 – 1025)

Because of the value Ingles saw in networking, he suggested taking advantage of what he called "certain conversations" to gather support from both males and females throughout the school system. These conversations can occur at any time, at any place, with anyone, thus making their impact more unconventional and rather spontaneous.

Women helping women. During the interview for this study, Yates realized that Rhonda Hill was a main force in her growth as an administrator. In two situations, Hill offered positions to Yates that kept her career goal of principalship moving and on track. Yates did not report other women who were of particular support in her pursuit of principalship.

Summary of Cross-case Analysis

Chapter V provided an analysis and comparison of four case studies of four women and the processes that were involved in their acquisition of high school principalships in Union County Public Schools, Virginia, in different years between 1970 and 2000. The four women who were selected, along with their dates of appointment to their first high school principalships were Wilma Goldman (1971), Theresa Williams (1982), Georgia Xavier (1991), and Olivia Yates (2000). In Chapter V the cases were presented by decade in order to include additional information gathered outside the sphere of the four women selected for this research as well as to show the changes that occurred over time as these women sought positions that were once considered appropriate for men only.

Data from the research showed that the school system received pressure to change from a variety of sources: pressures from outside influences, expectations from political activists, actions by women employees in different parts of the school system, chance occurrences through school board and system actions, changes in student population, and the placement of a forward-thinking district superintendent and other high-level administrative leaders. Further analysis of the data resulted in three overarching themes that reflected changes over time in Union County Public Schools: school district policies, the culture of the school district, and women's aspirations beyond the role of classroom teacher. These changes played significant roles in the careers of these four women and their promotions to high school principalships.

Changes in School District Policies

The procedures that Union County Public Schools used to identify and promote people into principalships changed dramatically between 1970 and 2000. The interview process went from a decision by the district superintendent with no interviews in the early 1970s to a multi-

tiered interview process in the late 1990s. To be eligible for high school principalships, candidates were considered via the “good ol’ boys” network before the 1970s, accepted by “eligibility panels” in the 1980s and 1990s, and recognized by the late 1990s simply of having the requirements required by the state. In order to provide equal access to positions, the school system developed an affirmative action plan in the 1970s, moved to diversity management by the late 1980s, and searched for the “best match” in the mid-1990s.

Changes in the philosophy of the school system brought procedural and policy initiatives that unintentionally supported the promotion of women to high school principalships. When the school system re-organized from a large single district to smaller sub-divisions in the late 1960s to support the management and communication of a growing school district, women had a better chance of being known and recognized for their leadership within a smaller candidate pool. Women’s abilities to be leaders were showcased through system initiatives involving instruction and accountability, such as the 7-period day reform and new teacher evaluation system in the mid-1980s, middle school structure in the early 1990s, and accountability testing in the mid-1990s. Changes in philosophy by the school system further changed leadership skills of high school principals from those of building managers prior to the 1970s to those of instructional leaders in the 2000s who could also handle multiculturally diverse student populations.

The four women in this study did not report specific support from the school system for their career advancements. It appeared that these women were more independent in their pursuit of principalships at the high school level than might have been expected, using tactics for advancement that they identified and decided was best for themselves. These independent pursuits appeared to result from the logistical size of such a large school district, feelings of isolation and/or competitiveness on the part of the women, or a sense of uncertainty as to the

strategies to use in order to achieve positions as high school principals. The data on the four women suggested that each searched for those people who held the power and who could help them with their careers. Their strategies ranged from staying in one school, such as Goldman, to holding a wide variety of line and staff positions, such as Yates. Each of the women in this study reported more support and feedback from male colleagues than from female colleagues. The four women recognized the existence of the “good ‘ol boys club,” and the blockage that presented to women, but none reported being part of a women’s networking group, such as the 1980’s “Grand Ovarian Party.” Goldman reported that in the 1970s she had to deal with the perception of the “pushy woman” while Baker reported that in the 1980s women had to conduct support meetings secretively so as not to jeopardize their precarious standing with male colleagues.

The concept of having “the right superintendent” to support women’s promotions to high school principals was first suggested by Oscar Young during his 2002 interview. District Superintendent Quincy Washington, perhaps under pressure from women on the School Board and societal pressure from the feminist movement, hired the first woman high school principal, Wilma Goldman, in 1972. For the next 13 years only a few more women were promoted to principalship at the high school level. When Isaacson Henderson was hired as District Superintendent in 1985, the number of women promoted to high school principalships consistently increased until the end of his term in 1997. The impact of his efforts continued to influence the placement of women in positions, including the placement of Yates in 2000.

Changes in School Culture

Prior to the 1980s Union County Public Schools was considered a school district that followed Southern traditions and practices, “red-necks” who had not kept up with changes in

society. The School Board recognized this negative reputation and hired Henderson in 1985 to make the changes necessary to project a national image of a school system that was of the highest quality and a leader in educational policies and procedures. By the mid 1990s, Union County had created a school culture that identified their educational leaders through what they considered to be more productive ways, recognized the importance of instructional and human relations skills in leading high schools, accepted women as secondary administrators, and dealt with the reactions of white males who were, as a result of these changes, feeling left out and left behind.

Changes in Women's Career Aspirations

Education and teaching, along with secretarial and nursing positions, were regarded by society as acceptable places of employment for women prior to the 1970s. These were considered jobs that could be started and stopped as needed, particularly when women were pregnant, needed to attend to family needs, or had to move when husbands were transferred by their jobs. For men, a job in education included positions as teachers with a base salary, stipends for coaching, extra pay for "head of household," and positions as higher-paid administrators.

The political movements of the 1960s – particularly those for Civil Rights and Women's Rights – created expectations by society that school systems would promote women to higher levels of leadership, including high school principalships. Female teachers in the 1980s began to see themselves as educational leaders and to envision themselves as administrators at the secondary level. Whereas early promotions by women were often seen as "being in the right place at the right time" or "if we have to have one, you'll do," by the 1990s, women began to expect promotions to principalships at the high school level based on their abilities to be successful leaders in their own right. Where at one time the school system and society expected

that a high school principal had to have certain traits – which were basically male in nature – leaders in both arenas realized that these traits were no longer acceptable as the norm and that the traits of women were just as valuable in the leadership of a high school.

Henderson (2003) thought that timing and opportunity played parts in the advancement of women along their career paths to administration, along with the women's ability to take the initiative in doing what was needed for their advancements:

I think there was a convergence of timing when it was okay for women to be high school principals because there were a few. And the first few were very, very good. And then there was others saying, "I can be a high school principal, too." Because I think people feel their own restrictions.... You've got to take the initiative, because people will recognize talent. I think today, also, it's much more open, less political, in the sense that "Who's the best person?" "Who can deliver what we need?" (lines 868 – 876, 890 – 896)

The women in these case studies had career paths that were unique and reflected opportunities for career development that were different in each decade. The women willingly accepted schools that were changing and had challenging difficulties with integration of races, diversity of cultures, human relations conflicts, instructional integrity, and increased accountability. The chart below summarizes the positions held by each woman in this study prior to her first appointment as high school principal. The chart outlines the means that these women had in each decade to make themselves visible to those who in the school system who made the promotions and suggests the possible need for women in the 1990s and 2000s to have experiences in both line and staff positions prior to being promoted to positions as high school principals.

Chart 3: Outline of career positions held by the four women in this study prior to their appointments as high school principals

Positions in Union County	Woman (year of appointment)	Goldman (1971)	Williams (1982)	Xavier (1991)	Yates (2000)
Teacher, middle school				X	X
Teacher, high school		X	X	X	X
Coach		X		X	
Counselor		X			
Special projects					X
Region office				X	X
Central office				X	X
Guidance director		X			
Administrative assistant			X		
Assistant Principal I		NA	NA	X	X
Assistant Principal II		X	X	X	X
Subschool Principal		*	X		
Principal, summer school			X	X	X
Principal, middle school					
Principal, high school		X	X	X	X

NA: not available as a position during that time

* Appointed, but never served

As women in the classroom saw the successes of the early women high school principals and had opportunities to be involved in leadership activities in school system initiatives, they gained confidence in their ability to lead at the high school level. The data from the interviews for this study revealed that both men and women supported and encouraged women to leave the classroom and become high school principals. This help came from a variety of sources, from male administrators at the school level to women who were working behind the scenes in central and region offices. Between the 1970s and 2000s, women developed a range of strategies in order to achieve the position of high school principal: blending in with the men's system (1970s), pushing one's way through the male bureaucracy (1980s), expecting approval based on a woman's demonstrated abilities (1990s), and completing a checklist of stepping-stones perceived as necessary for advancement (2000s).

Summary of Findings

The analysis of the four case studies offered many insights into the processes used by four women as they progressed up the career ladder towards principalships at the high school level. The following is a summary of findings from the preceding analysis:

- The expectations and values of society were relayed to the school system, which, in turn, slowly made changes in policies and procedures in reaction to those new expectations and values.
- Changes in policies and procedures impacted and changed the culture of the school system.
- Integration, immigration, and accountability forced changes on the type of leadership needed for the high school principal, emphasizing skills in human relations and instruction.

- The district superintendent played a pivotal role in the acceptance and increase of women as high school principals.
- Women in this study accepted responsibility for their own training and promotions to principalships with little support from mentors, use of networking, or actions by the school system.
- Change did occur in Union County, although it evolved slowly over time under constant scrutiny of School Board members, school employees, and community members.

Chapter Summary

Women were no longer satisfied to remain in the classroom as teachers. Changes in expectations of society led to changes in the policies of Union County Public Schools that encouraged women to have careers in education that included principalship at the high school level. Where once communities thought only men could lead high schools, women proved since 1970 that they could successfully lead high schools in Union County Public Schools.

Chapter V described the results of the cross-case analysis of four cases centering on the career advancements of Wilma Goldman, Theresa Williams, Georgia Xavier, and Olivia Yates. The organization of the chapter by decade offered a longitudinal examination of the changes that occurred over time in the processes of their career advancements. Chapter V identified and examined three themes that had emerged from the patterns identified in Chapter IV: changes in school district policies, changes in school system culture, and changes in women's career aspirations. Chapter VI will present conclusions drawn from the analysis of the themes along with the relationship of these findings to the literature and recommendations for future research studies.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively examine the processes used by four women, each from a different decade, as they pursued promotions to the position of high school principal in Union County Public Schools, Virginia, between 1970 and 2000. The data showed that changes that had occurred over time had opened up opportunities for women to achieve leadership in a position that was once considered for men only. Chapter VI offers a conclusion derived from the findings of the four case studies, relationships of the findings from the four case studies to the literature, advice from interviewees, and recommendations for future studies.

Conclusion

Contrary to what one might have expected from a nationally known leader in education, Union County Public Schools did not create a logical and sequential plan to increase women in high school principalships between 1970 and 2000. School leaders in 1970 did not voluntarily gather together to organize and implement strategies to identify, train, hire, and promote capable women teachers into positions of administrative leadership in upper levels of the school system. The stereotype of the person who served as a high school principal – white, male, tall, athletic coach – was firmly in place in 1970. After all, men who were successful high school athletic coaches knew how to build a team, handle competition, supervise adults and students, order supplies, motivate workers, and work with the media – all of the criteria assumed to be needed for a successful high school principal. Society had expectations regarding the placement of women in leadership roles, expectations that were placed upon the institution of public education, the school system, to implement. As the school system made slow progress, the women within the system became empowered and realized that they could have higher positions

of leadership in the field of education and that they could gain the tools, skills, and support needed to obtain those positions.

Society

The criteria for high school principals came under scrutiny in 1970 just as other employee positions in the business and corporation world were being questioned and challenged by society throughout the 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement demanded equal rights and opportunities for minorities. Although considered part of that minority population, women organized their own Women's Rights Movement to specifically address their needs. They demanded acceptance by society for women to be promoted to higher positions of leadership and vocalized expectations that these higher levels of leadership would occur in all facets of the working world. The progress in meeting these demands, and the actions that ensued through the Women's Rights Movement, were recorded and reported daily by the media via print, television, and literature. Data on salaries, job responsibilities, and blockages to career advancements – coined by the media as the “glass ceiling” – were reported with increasingly more dramatic and greater shock value to viewers. Women who were homemakers also began to question the value of their roles at home and the expectation that they must, just because they were women, remain at home. Regardless of what men believed, and how much they wanted to maintain the status quo, men were not going to be permitted by society any longer to ignore the demands for equal rights for women and to take appropriate actions to meet those demands. And one of those demands was to eliminate the glass ceiling that restricted women's promotion to upper level leadership positions. For school systems, the institution of public education, this meant that women should be promoted to higher positions of leadership, including high school principals, assistant superintendents, and superintendents.

Institution of Public Education

The institution of public education began to feel the impact of society's expectations when the court decided in 1954 through *Brown v Board of Education* that separate education for races was not equal and that school systems would have to integrate their schools and classrooms. The challenges of integration at the high school level called for the skills of a different kind of principal. To successfully integrate, the principal had to use human relations skills not previously required. The principal had to welcome the integration of all students in all aspects of the school – in addition to the integration of faculty – so that all believed that they were safe and could make successful contributions for the school community. For Union County, the challenges of integration continued even into the mid-1970s, with specialized staff development training for all staff members continuing through the early 1990s.

As society expected the institution of education to handle integration, society also expected the institution of public schools to deal with an unexpected wave of immigration that began in the 1980s and continued past the time of this study. Schools had to meet the needs of these new students who frequently were illiterate in their own languages, had not attended schools in their own countries, and were lacking in basic skills, such as how to hold a pencil. Where once they were fighting with rifles and high-powered weapons in their country's civil war or in wars with neighboring countries, these same students were now expected to accept and get along with, and in many cases sit next to, these same enemies in the classrooms of their new country. As with integration, Union County had to devise ways to handle immigration so that students were safe and in appropriate learning environments. As with integration, the high school principal was called upon to use new human relation and instructional strategies to handle

the demands of a student population that was rapidly changing the demographics of the school system.

Society not only expected the institution of public education to handle integration and immigration but also to be held accountable for the learning of all students. *A Nation at Risk* challenged the ability of public schools to provide an adequate education for all children:

Our Nation is at risk... (T)he educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity... Our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them. (1983, p.5)

Schools must be held accountable for the academic achievement of their students. Society wanted students to publicly demonstrate their mastery of learning via tests at the national and state levels. The Commonwealth of Virginia required rigorous testing and increased graduation requirements with the implementation of the Virginia Literacy Passport tests in the late 1980s. Virginia further increased the expectations of student achievement with the implementation of the Standards of Learning tests in the late 1990s. The position of high school principal now required a person who could provide the instructional leadership necessary to support and increase the academic achievement of students and who would be held accountable through test scores and annual school report cards.

Society expected the institution of public education to implement whatever was needed to successfully handle integration, immigration, and accountability. These expectations forced school systems to look for a different type of leader at the high school level, one who had strong instructional skills in order to successfully handle the demands for student achievement as well as the advanced human relations skills needed to successfully manage the integration of different

cultures and races. The skills needed for integration, immigration, and accountability were naturally found in the training and experiences of women educators, a situation that coincided with the women's rights movement demand for the promotion of women to higher levels of leadership.

While these expectations occurred at national and state levels and were external to the school system, communities and individuals within Union County voiced expectations that their own school system would keep up with society's changes in values, changes that included successful implementation of integration, immigration, and accountability, and the placement of women in higher levels of leadership. In addition to private conversations, public comments by parents and community members were made regularly at School Board meetings and recorded in the minutes. The community of Union County expected their school system to make the changes necessary to handle these new values, values that were being changed by society at large through national and state activities.

The School Board of Union County Public Schools and members of the District Superintendent's leadership team tended to respond slowly to changes expected by society. Integration of the schools, for example, was not completed until the late 1960s, with racial unrest continuing within the schools well into the 1970s. Although offered a template in 1972 by the county government, the school system did not approve an affirmative action plan until 1978. Since they hired Goldman in 1971 for the position of high school principal, the school system hired only three other women as high school principals during the next ten years. When the wave of immigration began in the early 1980s, the school system had no plan in place to meet the needs of these new students. Schools such as Hercules High School were left up to their own naïve devices. The implementation of accountability, particularly of the Standards of Learning

tests, resulted in statements of relief by many principals who were glad they would be retired before the deadline of improvements required by accountability would happen.

While many of those in leadership positions preferred to maintain the appointments of high school principals “the way they used to be,” a group of leaders in Union County were ahead of their time and saw the value of women’s skills in human relations and instruction. Leaders such as District Superintendent Henderson led the school system in utilizing the leadership skills of all employees, including women as high school principals. Following a process over time that was neither smooth nor consistent, the school system slowly recognized that the high school principal of the 1950s was no longer acceptable and no longer had the skills needed in the latter part of the 20th century.

Union County found ways to promote women to high school principals. Goldman fell under the old way of promotion, even though she was not part of the “good ol’ boys” group, which was recognition by the district superintendent and a telephone call. Pressure for more equal treatment in hiring must have been given by society through school board members and community members as interview panels were created for each level of administration. As time progressed, these panels gradually included central and school-based administrations, teachers, parents, and students. The hiring practices of the school system evolved through three programs: affirmative action, “diversity management,” and “best match.” It took thirty years to get to the place where both men and women, of all races, were considered for a school opening and then promoted because he/she was the best person for that position.

“Society” for Union County included parents, community members, local activists, and employees, all of whom expressed their expectations to the institution of public education. The changes in values of the community emerged over time directly, as with the case of the woman

who wanted to be on the textbook adoption committee with Olin to insure women were appropriately included, and through the School Board, particularly through presentations and challenges at School Board meetings. The institution, perhaps recognizing that these vocalizations to appoint women to higher positions of leadership within the school system were not going to go away, began to reluctantly deal with these new expectations and values of society. An increasingly larger number of the members of society were now seeing the value in a high school principal who had the human relation and instructional skills to handle integration, immigration, and accountability. Society was also seeing the value of a woman in the role of high school principal because she had the skills in human relations and instruction. With these new values and expectations, the definition of the high school principal broadened to the point where former attributes of the 1950s high school principal were no longer accepted as the best skills for the new values and that women would be reflected in this new definition of “high school principal.”

Women

As society made these changes in values, and school systems began to address those changes, women began to realize that these changes reflected their training and abilities. Women who had observed their male administrators, and thought all along that they could do just as well if not better than males, were now given the nod by the school system to attempt this shift in career. As women saw the slow advancement of women into upper levels of leadership within the school system, such as Goldman as high school principal and Liz Sharp as Region Superintendent, they become empowered with this knowledge and proof that they could have leadership positions outside and above the walls of the elementary school level.

Male administrators at the school building level began to encourage women teachers, such as Williams and Xavier, to switch their majors in graduate school from curriculum and counseling to administration. Whereas in the beginning administrators such as Gilmore had to fight to promote a woman to the ranks of high school administration, it slowly became acceptable, even desirable, to have a woman as part of the administrative team. It was never clear during the interviews of the participants in this study why some men were so supportive and encouraging of women as high school principals. In this respect, Goldman, Williams, and Xavier were fortunate to be in the right place with men who were comfortable with women as leaders and who did not see the promotion of these women as being detrimental to males.

Recognizing that all men were not as accepting of women in high school leadership roles, and hearing the expectations from society that women would be leaders, women in the school system found the courage to develop an underground support system to recognize, train, and promote women to administrative positions at the high school level. Like their male counterparts, these women had created a “good ol’ girls” network. This group provided the tools that these women needed in order to have an equal footing with men in the interview and promotion processes: networking, mentoring, informing, training, and collaborating. While Baker reported that there were nearly 100 women involved over time with this group, none of the four women in this study reported using this group as a resource. Perhaps the women in this study truly did not use this group, or they wanted to maintain their anonymous membership, or they believed that their male colleagues played more critical roles in their promotions. The four women in this study were savvy about the politics of the times and what they needed to do to be acceptable to those who hired. Although not verbalized by the women of this study, it is possible that they knew that it was safer and that they risked less more by appearing to be alone in their

pursuit and using the help of male colleagues just as previous male administrators had done in the past. Regardless, these women took advantage of society's demands for change to serve their purposes as well as their desires to have careers in administration and to be leaders at the high school level.

While women in the early 1970s, such as Goldman and Williams, accepted whatever the male leadership in the school system would approve, by the 2000s women had no doubt that they could be principals and that it was just a matter of when. Changes in society's expectations and values decreased any inhibitions that women might have had regarding their ability to be high school principals. Women such as Xavier and Yates had less and less patience as they waited for placements at high schools – they were prepared and saw no reason why they could not be principals at the high school level. When they said, "I aspire to principalship," they meant it.

Each of these four women had developed her own internal support system, which fueled her desire and expectation to be a high school principal. If there were obstacles or roadblocks to their careers, these women did not let them deter them from their goals. From their interviews, these four women were independent and had high levels of confidence. It was apparent that these women had worked very hard and patiently in their lonely pursuit of the high school principalship. They used humor to deflect and buffer negativity and pessimistic comments and actions. They laughed when men referred to them as "the little lady" and "having the mind of a man." They enjoyed the irony that having only a handful of women at state principal meetings resulted in no lines for them at the restrooms. They reacted to threatening situations, such as racial overtures to Xavier, with lighter comments such as "Well, they haven't shot me yet." When the values of society changed, forcing the school system to change, these women developed the skills to survive and were prepared to accept high school principalships.

During the interviews with the four women it appeared that they were on their own in their pursuits of careers in administration. There was some help from one or two men, usually their principals, but they had to analyze and figure out how to survive in a man's world. Knowing that these men had successfully climbed the ladder to high school administration, and were perhaps members of the "good ol' boys" system, it is curious why they would break from tradition and support these women in their pursuit of high school principalship. Their support ranged from identification, as in the case of Xavier, to recommendations for Master's degree, as in the case of Williams, to supportive conversations, as in the case of Yates, to fervent advancement recommendations, as in the case of Goldman. There is not enough data from this study, but the question does present itself: At what point did it become acceptable for men to support women who wanted to become high school principals? It may be that these men were ahead of their time as shown by their actions, ahead of the changes that were slowly coming for the school system.

The women in this study had to decipher who held the power and how to use that knowledge to their advantage. It did become apparent, though, from interviews with additional colleagues that there was more going on in the school system regarding promotion of women to administration at the high school level than the four women either did not know about, did not participate in, or chose not to report. Granted, school district leadership was slowly reacting to these new expectations by society as they changed policies and procedures, perhaps too slowly for these driven women. These new expectations from society created changes that not only impacted policies and procedures but the culture of the school system itself. This shift from a paternal system to one that was more inclusive must have been quite a challenge for the "good ol' boys."

Society had changed, forcing a reluctant school system to change as well. As the changes were being made, women made changes in their own aspirations as educators. No longer was a certain model acceptable for the high school principalship. Rather, the person in the position needed to have the skills needed to meet the needs of a particular school. With society's changes in values regarding integration, immigration, and accountability, the institution of public education needed to change its own requirements. Women recognized that the person who served as the leader of a high school had to have the human relation and instructional skills needed to handle the new values, skills that they had long possessed as educators in the classrooms. When these changes opened up opportunities, the four women in this study – Goldman, Williams, Xavier, and Yates – responded with determination and without hesitation to the call for leadership in education. They saw the window of opportunity for leadership and took it. If men were feeling left behind and underrepresented, that was their problem and their responsibility to find their way in the new values of society and the institution of public schools.

Summary

The advancement of women in Union County up the administrative career ladder has many parallels with the advancement of hikers who navigate their way to the top of a new mountain. At first, the hikers must find their way to the mountain and use the advice of others to determine what paths to travel. The hikers obtain and learn to use the right tools for climbing so that their ascent is safe and productive. Even with the advice of experts, there will be times when a pathway leads to a dead end or to the wrong side of the mountain. These are the times when hikers cannot become discouraged; they patiently retrace their steps and start over again. The hikers continue to research and observe additional experts in order to find better pathways to the top. Since they have determined that the top of the mountain is their goal, the hikers are not

deterred by naysayers, roadblocks, dead ends, or doubts. As the hikers climb higher, coming closer to their goal, their confidence in meeting their goal increases and their decisions become more mature. They are more accurate in analyzing the climate and subtle changes in terrain. Whereas other hikers once passed them by, near the top of the mountain they gain additional momentum and they become the ones to do the passing. The final steps to the top are exhilarating and worth all the efforts involved in the ascent. The top is a lofty place of achievement and triumph over barriers and self-doubt. And so it was for the four women in this study as they transgressed the rocky pathway to the top of the administrative mountain.

The revolutionary times of the 1960s, particularly the Civil Rights and Women's movements, brought changes in the values of society regarding the roles of women and minorities. These changes recognized and valued the leadership roles that women could play in all levels of leadership, including upper levels of leadership in the field of education. These changes in values forced changes over time in Union County Public School, changes that provided opportunities for leadership for the four women in this study.

The institution of education is expected to teach the values of society, thus transforming children into productive and contributing citizens. This implies that the enterprise of public education has to determine the values of society to use in shaping the students into model citizens. As values in society change, so must education change to reflect and reinforce these new values in order to produce citizens who will represent society in the future.

Public education has a responsibility to be responsive to the values of society and the expectations of its community. Parents and educators are expected to work as partners in transferring the values of society to students, the next generation of citizens. There is also an

expectation that public education will be proactive in anticipating changes and determining the impact that these changes will have on the system, the community, and the students.

In addition to 1960s movements, an extensive wave of immigrants to Union County that began in the early 1980s forced the school system to examine the ways in which it was dealing with diversity and multiculturalism. These immigrants brought their own values, values that needed to be recognized and honored while at the same time incorporated with the values of American society. New strategies had to be developed to reach out to these immigrants in order to teach them the values of American society and to reinforce what the local community accepted.

School systems, while attempting to be responsive to changes in society, are often behind the times and slow to make changes. Union County, for example, took six years to develop an affirmative action plan that, in part, would require promotions of women to principalships at the high school level. Inactions such as this can cause constituents and employees to become impatient with delays and procrastination. This impatience can be strongly expressed and addressed through the political atmosphere of a School Board that, upon becoming an elected board, had to respond more swiftly to the concerns and requests of its constituency.

This study provided a glimpse at the transformation, albeit a slow transformation, of Union County Public Schools in Virginia following the social revolution of the 1960s. An analysis of the data saw the results of these changes over time in the careers of four women that demonstrated the changes in opportunities that were made available to each one in her time. It is a credit to the character of each woman that she recognized when the opportunity for leadership was available and actively sought to become a principal at the high school level, a position no longer considered by society as appropriate only for men.

Advice from Interviewees

At the end of the interviews, participants were asked if they had anything else that they would like to add. Being the caring educators that they are, each of the interviewees shared additional thoughts, reflections, and observations, as well as advice for aspiring administrators. The following paragraphs offer a few of these ideas from those interviewed for this research:

- ***Capitalize on networking opportunities.***

I think networking is critical... I say go after whoever, wherever you can find support and help, and don't limit yourself. Certainly, you see plenty of female role models, but you see plenty of successful male role models... You know, talk to people. I think the worse thing anybody can do for their career is not reach out to those who can really help them, counsel them, coach them, maybe mentor them, but always be looking for the networking. (Ingles, 2002, lines 998 – 1023)

- ***Take the initiative and be prepared.***

You've got to take the initiative, because people will recognize talent. I think today, also, it's much more open, less political, in the sense that "who's the best person?" "Who can deliver what we need?" ... But you always have to be ready. Some people think they're going to get there, and they don't have to prepare for it. You've got to be prepared for everything. (Henderson, 2003, lines 890 – 896; 943 – 948)

- ***Be positive and enjoy.***

(M)y memory tends to take the negative stuff and take it out of the picture. The world's full of enough stuff that you don't want to look at.... And, I guess, the other part of it is, I've always enjoyed what I've done. It's been great fun whatever I've been doing.... If you don't like what you're doing, I think you need to sort of look around and make a

change. That would be, that's kind of where I would be always, I think, philosophically in terms what to do. (Williams, Appendix D, lines 1330 – 1333; 1337 –1340; 1348 – 1354)

- ***Take the risk.***

First of all, I encourage [women] to do it [become high school principals], because, in spite of some of the past experiences I had, it's a fun, exciting place where all the activities, and people. The communities are now beginning to see that females are capable of being high school principals. So that perception is changing. And I would say, "Do it!" (Xavier, Appendix E, lines 1720 – 1728)

Relationship of Findings to the Literature

Previous research regarding the promotion of women to higher line positions in school districts, such as high school principals, found that the glass ceiling was slowly cracking but still intact in many situations. Women in other studies reported that one of the barriers that prevented them from achieving this higher level of leadership was the myth that only men could handle the high school principalship (Isaacson, 1998; Pigford and Tonnsen, 1993; VanHuss, 1996). In school districts with few, if any, women in high school principalships, this myth appeared to be a belief sustained by the district superintendent, school board members, community members, and/or colleagues within the ranks. Women not only had to fight society's cultural assumptions that they could not lead high schools but also had to fight to gain access to power within the school system (Banks, 1995). Other barriers reported by women that blocked their promotions ranged from lack of confidence to lack of support from outside resources. Gerber (1999) suggested a longitudinal study of successful female high school principals to discover how they achieved success and the obstacles they encountered along the way, thus providing information

for women who aspire to the high school principalship. This study followed that suggestion in examining the support systems and career paths of four successful women in Union County Public Schools, Virginia.

Internal Barriers

When Shakeshaft (1987) synthesized studies conducted by various researchers using different sample groupings, she identified internal barriers that blocked women's progress to positions of leadership. Goldman, Williams, Xavier, and Yates did not report having internal barriers to their career advancements. From their interviews, as well as the interviews of their colleagues (Gilmore, Young, Ingles, Olin, Henderson, and Baker), these four women possessed strong characteristics that enabled them to continue the quest for their goals of high school principalship. There was not a lack of self-esteem or confidence within them, rather an abundance of perseverance, tenaciousness, self-confidence, patience, positivism, and humor. Each one demonstrated an internal drive to be successful in her goal of high school principalship, a drive that was supported by both family and colleagues.

Administrative Programs

Each woman in this study mentioned the encouragement of a supervising administrator or, in the case of Williams, college advisor, to enter a masters program in administration and become involved in situations that would lead them to principalships. These sources of recognition and encouragement supported earlier research that women, as much as men, needed direct communication from their supervisors that they would be "perfect" for a position rather than having to find their own opportunities in cautious and discreet ways (Crow and Matthews, 1998).

Research has found that the residency of an aspiring administrator determined enrollment in principal preparation programs and that it was best that the residency be within a 25 – 50 mile commuting radius of a university (Murphy, 1992). Goldman was able to take most classes near her home, but had to travel approximately 100 miles for two summers to complete her administrative program. The other three women in this study were able to study at a university located in Union County or utilized a local extension center of a university located in another part of the state. Having the proximity to administrative masters programs may have been a major decision point for these women as they considered and planned the education programs needed for their career moves. Although being academically competent was an important attribute for women (Weinrich, 1994), only Xavier went beyond the masters to obtain a doctoral degree, which disputes the concern that women had to have doctoral degrees in order to become principals (Ryder, 1994).

In addition to successful completion of graduate programs, Shakeshaft (1987) found that by 1977 it was useful for women to have been guidance counselors prior to administration. This was true only of Goldman, who in fact went a step further as she served as director of Trinity's guidance department for two years. Xavier served for three years as a human relations specialist at the central and region office levels, which could be argued as a type of counseling position as she helped both students and teachers throughout the school system handle conflict resolution and deal with different cultures. These two positions of counselor and human relations specialist showed these two women as being able to work well with people (Weinrich, 1994).

Career Paths

Of the four women in this study, only Williams followed the traditional path of “teacher – assistant principal – principal.” Goldman followed a similar path, but served as coach,

counselor, guidance director, and assistant principal in the same school before becoming principal in the same school. Both Xavier and Yates followed extensive career paths that included a variety of experiences at school, region, and central office levels throughout the school system. Yates went between line and staff positions several times before her appointment as principal at Norman. The pathways of Xavier and Yates, to curriculum and human relation specialists, respectively, reflected findings by Glass (1992) that women, more often than men, moved from classroom teaching into a central office position or some other “non-line” position before moving into administrative positions. In a study by Shea (1983) women also followed non-traditional routes to principalships more often than men, who took the career path of “teacher – assistant principal – principal” four times more often than women.

Shakeshaft (1987) found that the three most common ways for women to enter school administration were through positions as specialists, supervisors, or elementary principalships. At the time of her appointment as principal, Yates was in a specialist position at the Instructional Department. The other three women were school-based assistant principals at the high school level prior to their appointments as high school principals.

External Support

The women in this study did not see external barriers as major problems in their pursuit of the principalship. For the most part, they found ways to deal with any setbacks or roadblocks through support systems that they had created during their advancement to principalship. Each woman reported support from their families who were not surprised by their desire to become principals. They did not appear to rely on mentors, per se, but rather on sponsors and networking to obtain guidance and assistance.

Mentors. Mentoring has traditionally been seen as a valuable asset for one's career since it could provide preparation for leadership positions, offer informal means of career development, occur on an informal basis, and serve as a valuable resource for breaking through the barriers preventing advancement (Doherty, 1999; Scanlon, 1997). Some researchers have suggested that having one or more mentors at different stages in one's career was considered valuable for attaining career goals (Scanlon, 1997). The mentors that Goldman, Williams, and Xavier reported were males, supporting the findings of Shea (1983) that women reported that their mentors were more often males than females. Yates reported a female mentor during her career advancement in the 1990s. The fact that the women in these case studies named more men than women may have been the result of a greater number of men available to mentor than women through the promotion of Xavier in 1991. By 2000, when Yates was promoted, there were many more women available throughout the school system who could offer guidance and support to aspiring women administrators.

Mentors help aspiring administrators in different ways. In some incidences, mentor and mentee work closely together, often in the same school, affording many opportunities for conversations and regular feedback and guidance. At times the mentor may serve more as a role model; the aspiring administrator can see how the role model acts as a principal and glean from those observations how a successful administrator responds to the many demands of the position. In this situation, the role model, as a subset of "mentor," provides information from a distance through demonstration rather than through conversation. Rather than having one person as a mentor, Ingles (2002) suggested the value of having "certain conversations" with different people that would occur anywhere or any time. The value of these conversations would be to

hear different points of view from a variety of people throughout one's career, viewpoints that could positively impact a person's career strategy or goal.

Sponsors and superadvocates. Rather than having mentors, the interviews with Goldman, Williams, Xavier, and Yates suggested that there was more value in having sponsors and supporters with whom they made contacts throughout their careers. While some researchers support the theory that teachers with mentors move more directly into administration than teachers who do not have mentors (Luebke and Clemens, 1994), the women in this study recognized the importance of support from supervising administrators, college-level professors, male colleagues, and family members, as they moved into administration and proceeded through the ranks.

This study supported the importance of having "superadvocates" (Rakovic, 1998) as well as mentors throughout an aspiring administrator's career. A mentor helps an individual learn what methods to use and strategies to use to handle problems during the person's career advancement. The superadvocate may or may not directly mentor an individual, but instead serves as the person who validates that change is needed, that change can occur, and encourages all those to whom this applies that they can indeed make those changes. While the mentor teaches by example, the superadvocate tells aspirants, "It's okay to break the barriers. You are on the right track. I'll lead the way and show you." In society, Martin Luther King, Jr., was a superadvocate for civil rights, identifying barriers and breaking those barriers through action and behavior. In education, the superadvocate validated the existence of the glass ceiling for women who aspired to upper levels of leadership within the school system and supported that the glass ceiling should be challenged and shattered.

An example of a “superadvocate” from this study may be District Superintendent Isaac Henderson, who believed in recognizing and advancing the best people for positions and modeled this philosophy in his own appointments of women to higher levels of leadership in the school system. Henderson’s actions would have countered a study by Fisher (2001) regarding career outcome disparities between males and females in Virginia, which suggested that the disparities “may be due to long held beliefs held by some superintendents that female are not geared to upper-level leadership roles” (pp. 141 – 142).

Networking. The women in this study took advantage of networking to advance in their careers, although in different ways, that led to supportive and beneficial contacts with colleagues as seen in other studies (Weinrich, 1994). Goldman attended meetings with her principal and with other high school assistant principals. This contact with current male leaders would later provide support for her appointment as principal since they knew her from these meetings. Williams worked in different schools which gave her a broader base of those who knew her and her abilities. Xavier and Yates networked with colleagues throughout the school system as they worked in schools, region office positions, and central office positions. The four women did not report strong connections with nor memberships in organizations as being vital for their promotions. This may have been a good thing since six professional education national journals continued to predominantly focus on traditional male perspectives and offered little to no support for women in the principalship (Gosetti and Rusch, 1995).

Networking for men occurred through the “good ol’ boys” network (Goldman, 2001; Olin, 2003; Williams, 2002; Xavier, 2002) and through coaching. The women who participated in a study by Doherty (1999) of retired Virginia principals found that some of the participants believed that coaching provided an informal network and quicker route to principalship. While

this may have been true for men, it was not so for the women who participated in this study. Goldman and Xavier were both coaches, but neither one reported that this was an essential requirement for their promotion. It did not appear to accelerate their appointments.

School Board. From the time of Goldman's appointment, the shift in culture of Union County Public Schools slowly accepted women as high school principals. According to minutes from the Union County school board meetings, members during the 1970s and 1980s were vocally encouraging and expectant of the promotion of women to higher levels of school district leadership. Reports from the superintendent's office showed increases in the number of women appointed to higher levels of leadership within Union County Public Schools. These actions were in contrast with other studies that showed the attitudes of superintendents and school board members were consistently unfavorable toward women in administration (Shakeshaft, 1987). More specifically, Goldman reported support from her school board member for her appointment, while Xavier received support from District Superintendent Henderson and Newland's school board member. Through their school board members, community members were saying that they also supported, and expected, the hiring of women into higher levels of leadership that included the high school principalship.

Women supporting women. In a 1994 study by LaPointe less than one-half of the women reported assistance from other women. Only Yates reported receiving assistance from other women in the school system. While the other three women did not report assistance from other women, they likely received support through actions of colleagues who worked behind the scenes and without their knowledge. In Xavier's situation, for example, the previous female principal, Nancy Thompson, worked with other members of region and central office staff to find a way for Xavier to follow her as principal at Newland High School, a fact reported by Olin but

not Xavier: “And when Nancy left Newland, she and Bob and I talked about we needed to move Georgia to, Georgia would do great at Newland” (Olin, 2003, lines 980 – 984).

Baker spent a great deal of time in her interview describing the efforts of women in the school system to form support networks, to identify potential candidates for administrative positions, and to mentor women as they were promoted. Baker utilized her own position in the Personnel Department to promote women in the field who were ready and applying for administrative positions. It is unknown, but quite probable, that the Region South superintendent’s secretary, whom Goldman knew “because she had been at Trinity as a secretary” (Appendix C, lines 209 – 211), may have in some way played an instrumental, but quiet, role in helping the superintendent decide to promote Goldman as principal at Trinity High School and as the first woman high school principal in Union County. So while the women in these case studies did not include the extent of how other women colleagues assisted them in their administrative careers, there was evidence to suggest that there were a number of women, and strategies engaged by women, throughout the school system to support the appointments of women to high school principal positions.

Promotions

Another finding in LaPointe’s 1994 study was that over half of the women believed that being in the right place at the right time was the most important factor in attaining a position.

This same believe was held by Goldman and Williams when they attained their positions:

I think that I was at the right place at the right time in my career on several occasions.

And there was a lot of push in the community to appoint women to positions in, to administrative positions. The feminist movement had started, and there was a

considerable push there, so I'm not sure I was just, I mean, I was a woman in the right place at the right time. (Goldman, Appendix C, lines 624 – 634)

I really had sort of this, like, really magic kind of timing, because I had, somebody dragged me into the administrative aide position. I applied for AP – I got that job. I applied for principalship at Hercules – and I got that job. Those were like, just kind of, just the timing, I think as much as anything. (Williams, Appendix D, lines 286 – 294)

With Xavier and Yates, the outlook for advancement was different. By 1991 and 2000, they believed that they were going to have positions as high school principals and that they would continue to do whatever was needed to prove their ability to be leaders at the high school level. They were not necessarily waiting for the “right time” or “right place” before making their moves for advancement. It was difficult for them to understand, though, when they were not promoted; they believed that they were qualified and they were ready to be high school principals. Perhaps by 1991 the school system’s policy of finding the “best match” between school and aspiring principal replaced the idea of waiting for the “right time” or “right place.”

Hiring practices. While over half the women in a 1983 study by Shea reported that hiring practices were a barrier to advancement, the women in this study did not report hiring practices as a barrier in Union County. The school system changed over time in their procedures in order to be more equitable in their hiring practices. From 1970 until 2000, the shift in hiring practices changed from a central office to a region office responsibility and continuously included more stakeholders:

- 1970: District superintendent promoted principals and accepted considerations from community members. Positions advertised in school system newsletter; interested people submitted applications to Personnel. No requirements for number of people to be

interviewed for openings. Superintendent came to the school or called directly to notify successful candidate.

- 1980: Personnel Department held eligibility panels, consisting of colleagues actively in positions, to generate lists of people who met school system requirements at each level of administration. Positions advertised in school district newsletter. Interviews conducted by small panels consisting of region and central office staff. Successful candidates were notified to come to central office, at which time they were officially promoted and had their pictures taken with the District Superintendent.
- 1990: Eligibility panels continued, with caveat that one could only be on the list for three years. Vacancies advertised through school district newsletter. Interview panels conducted at schools through Personnel Department, and included representatives from region office, central office, and teachers. Input obtained through PTA. District Superintendent had to receive approval from all School Board members prior to official promotions to principalships.
- 2000: Eligibility panels discontinued. Vacancies advertised through school system newsletter. Interview panels conducted through region offices rather than Personnel. Suggestions and needs obtained from community members through evening meetings or email. Interview panels conducted at the region office, and included representatives from region office, teachers, parents, and students. Follow-up interview for top candidates held later with the region superintendent. Region superintendent made recommendation to district superintendent. Approval needed from district superintendent and school board members prior to official appointment.

Hiring procedures. Each of the women in this study appeared to know what the procedures were for hiring and what she needed to do in order to qualify for principalship. The procedures that Union County developed from 1970 – 2000 supported findings from other studies that school districts must develop clear written policies with definable criteria about recruiting and selecting, and advertise positions with specific vacancy requirements (Anderson, 1991; Barker, 1997; Davis, 1997; Marshall, 1992). None of the women in this study reported advertisement of positions that required any qualification other than those required for the position of principal.

Resources to Other Educators

The careers of four women who attained the position of high school principal between 1970 and 2000 in Union County Public Schools offered a longitudinal and historical look at the changes in a school district that enabled these four women to break through the “glass ceiling” and progressively be accepted and promoted to positions that were once considered only for men. As described by earlier research (McGrath, 1992; The Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995), these women were recognized as being strong, knowledgeable, willing, interested, and tenacious enough for positions as high school principals. The stories of these four women high school principals from Union County Public Schools, as seen through their eyes and their contemporaries, may serve as sources of information, inspiration, and motivation to other women who are contemplating their own career paths to high school principalships, as well as to other school districts who seek to broaden their pool of candidates and appointments.

Recommendations for Future Study

The findings of this study may have applications for additional research in the areas of women as high school principals, career advancement strategies, and change over time. The following recommendations emerged from the research and are proposed by the researcher:

1. Conduct a study of another school district in which women hold a majority of the high school principalships, comparing that district with the evolution of change observed by this study.
2. Conduct a study of other women who were the first high school principals in their school districts, comparing the career paths of and strategies used by those women with Wilma Goldman from this study.
3. Conduct further research on the suggestion that implementing the middle school philosophy allowed more women to become middle school principals, which in turn opened the door for more women to be promoted to high school principal positions.
4. Conduct further research on the value of “certain conversations” in comparison with the traditional strategies of “mentoring” and “networking.”
5. Examine the suggested shift away from the use of “mentor” to the use of “superadvocate” as a strategy for career advancement.
6. Conduct research on the value and benefit of being “home grown,” a product of the same school system as Yates was, in obtaining a position as high school principal.
7. Conduct a survey of the number of women principals in Virginia between 1970 and 2000, examining the changes over time in the number of women in positions of elementary, middle, and high school principals.

8. Conduct a survey of women who were appointed principals of minority high schools in Virginia between 1970 and 2000, examining possible connections between the races of these women and the types of minorities – Hispanic, Asian, Black, etc. – that exist in the high schools.
9. Conduct a survey of high schools in Virginia between 1970 and 2000 with high, medium, and low disciplinary actions that have women principals and examine the assignment of those women in relation to their attributes – such as race and human relation skills – that might contribute to their assignments to schools with high levels of disciplinary actions.
10. Conduct research investigating how much social turbulence is needed to make changes in a school system. Chart 1 showed that in 2000 three regions of the state with the highest percentage of women in high school principalships were Region III with 39%, Region IV with 41% and Region VIII with 25%. A longitudinal examination of the colleges that replied to the survey in Chart 2 showed that, although there was a peak in 1998, more women were trained in education administration. With the increased number of qualified women, why were the percentages of women high school principals not higher in the regions throughout the state? The increase of women in Union County appeared to be a result of societal demands and expectations for changes in the school system. Why were these same social demands and expectations for changes not occurring in other school districts in the state? Does social change have a different impact on school systems of different sizes? What is the impact of the macro world and macro forces to the micro world and micro forces?

Epilogue

The final analysis and first draft of this research was nearing completion in July 2003. At a conference attended by the researcher and several administrators from the school system, a young woman, an assistant principal from a high school in Union County school district, was concerned about what she would do when it came time for her to begin applying and interviewing for principalships. She had taken one next step in applying for a position as an associate principal, one who works at a secondary school of grades 7 – 12 in a line position between building principal and assistant/subschool principal. Unbelievable to her, as well as inconceivable, she did not even receive an invitation for an interview. In her anguish, she exploded, “What the hell do I have to do?” In that brief instance, I was reminded of why I selected this topic for my dissertation: to find times that women have succeeded in becoming high school principals and to share those strategies with aspiring women principals so that they may benefit from the experiences and wisdom of the women who have succeeded before them.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent

Doctoral Dissertation Research
Carol C. Robinson
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Dissertation Title: Women in High School Principalships: A Comparison of Four Case Studies from a Virginia Public School District from 1970 - 2000

I. Purpose of Project

The purpose of this dissertation is to study the career paths and support systems of women who obtained positions as high school principals in Union County Public Schools from 1970 – 2000.

II. Procedures

Data will be acquired by the researcher who will conduct an unstructured interview of approximately one hour in length, with the possibility of additional interview time for clarification needs. The woman who is the subject of each case study will have obtained a position and served as a high school principal in Union County School System between the years of 1970 – 2000. She also volunteered to participate in this study. Additional people will be interviewed who are identified during the interviews and who voluntarily consented to participate in this study.

III. Confidentiality Statement

- A. The subject's interview will be tape-recorded and all of the information will remain confidential and anonymous. All identifying information, i.e., name of the interviewee, location of work, etc., will be excised from the transcription.
- B. The researcher is the only person who will listen to the tapes and she will either transcribe the tapes herself or have the tapes transcribed by a professional. Her analysis will be based on the information in the transcripts. Once transcribed, the original tape(s) will be kept locked in a secure location in the researcher's residence. The researcher is the only person who will have access to the tape(s).
- C. The tape(s) will be kept beyond the completion of the dissertation for purposes of verification and in the event there is a need to continue or expand the research. Once that has been accomplished, the tape(s) will be erased.
- D. The subject will be given the final version of the transcription that pertains to her interview to verify accuracy and to protect her rights to privacy. The subject will have the opportunity to correct the record at any time including names or events. In addition, the subject may withdraw at any time without penalty.

IV. Subject's Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

I understand that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct I may contact

Carol Robinson, Investigator

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Marvin G. Cline, Ph.D.
Department Institutional Review Board Officer
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Telephone: 703-538-8492
E-mail: mcline@vt.edu

I agree to have my interview(s) tape-recorded under the conditions described in Section II.

Signature

Date

Appendix B

Interview Outline

The following questions served as a guide during the interviews:

1. What positions did you hold as you followed your career path to the position of high school principal?
2. Who, or what, influenced your decision to become a high school principal?
3. Who, or what, played a role, or roles, during your advancement towards high school principalship?
4. Did you encounter any barriers as you made these advancements?
5. Did you participate in any formal programs offered by the school system that were used to identify, prepare, recruit, and hire women for high school principalship?
6. Did you participate in any informal strategies that existed in the school system to identify, prepare, recruit, and hire women for high school principalship?
7. Did you use mentoring or networking resources in preparation for principalship?
8. What role(s) did resources outside of the school system play in your identification, preparation, recruitment, and hiring for the position of high school principal?
9. Did you participate in any formal partnerships formed between the school system and local universities that identified and certified women for administration?
10. What was the school system like when you were first hired as high school principal?
11. What was your school like during that time of your first year as high school principal?
12. What were the challenges of your first year as high school principal?
13. What else was going on in the school system regarding other women in administration?
14. Is there anything that I did not ask you that you would like to add?

Appendix C

Interview of Wilma Goldman

Case Study for 1970s

(Interview conducted December 20, 2001)

C: From talking with you it seems like	1
before you became principal you were a	2
teacher for quite a while. Is that	3
correct?	4
WG: That's correct. I graduated from	6
College in eastern Virginia in 1950. And	7
started teaching - taught in one of	8
the local counties close to	9
Eastern, Eastern County 1,	10
for just one year, and then	11
transferred to Eastern County 2. At that	12
time the two Counties had, they shared a	13
superintendent. So, when I say	14
“transferred,” I ended up having the	15
same boss technically. Came to	16
Eastern County 2 and taught there for 12	17
years. Actually, when I say, “I	18
taught there for 12 years,” the last	19
two years I was there I was a	20
counselor. I, while I was at Eastern	21
County 2 I got my Masters degree and	22
Started counseling, and was a counselor	23
there for two years. And then I, in 1963,	24
I went to Union. And actually, when I	25
applied to go to Union, I was hired,	26
or recommend for hiring, by the	27
principal at Oak Ridge High School. And	28
during the summer, before I went, got	29
a letter from the Central Office	30
saying “Oops,” we had to destaff a	31
counselor at Oak Ridge and you're going	32
to be assigned to Trinity. And I got	33
the letter, and so did the principal.	34
And I don't know if he - was a	35
wonderful man - but he wasn't real	36
happy to have a counselor assigned to	37
him, one he didn't know and hadn't had	38

any part in choosing. So I called him 39
 and said I had gotten the transfer 40
 letter. I was delighted, and would 41
 like to come by and meet him. He said 42
 he'd like that. And he said, "By the 43
 way, do you have any children and are 44
 you married?" In that order. And I 45
 had worked for a principal with a 46
 marvelous sense of humor and I just 47
 assumed everybody did. So I said, 48
 "Yes, we have four children and we're 49
 married!" Dead silence. Didn't say a 50
 word. I thought, "Oops!" (laugh) 51
 But, anyway, I stayed at Trinity. I 52
 was there for 10 years. I was a 53
 counselor for three years, guidance 54
 director for two, then I became an 55
 assistant principal there and was an 56
 assistant principal for three years, 57
 and then was appointed principal in 58
 1971 to 73 was principal at Trinity 59
 high school. 60

C: At that time - Right now it is 62
 somewhat of an anomaly for an 63
 assistant principal within a building 64
 to move to a principalship within the 65
 same building. Was that the same 66
 case, or was it just a natural move? 67

WG: I don't know. To tell you the 69
 truth, I didn't know enough about the 70
 trends in the rest of the County at 71
 that time, and whether that occurred. 72
 I think that it was definitely unusual 73
 for a person to remain in the same 74
 building for eight years. And then, 75
 and to go through that succession – 76
 teacher, I mean, counselor, guidance 77
 director, assistant principal - I 78
 think that was probably a little 79
 unusual. But, actually, the, when I, 80
 prior to my being principal, in 1971 81
 was the year Indigo secondary school 82
 opened, and I had been selected to go 83
 to Indigo as sub- school principal 84

there - and that was back in the	85
winter. Went over and planned and	86
worked with the rest of the	87
administrators who were identified to	88
open that school. And then, in late	89
May, early June, was appointed	90
principal. So I never moved. I mean,	91
I continued after I was appointed to	92
Indigo. I worked all day and then	93
went over. Some days got away a	94
little early, and was able to go over	95
there to help do some of the	96
organizational things for the opening	97
of the school. But I never really	98
taught a day, or worked a day, at	99
Indigo	100
C: What was the process? Were there	102
interviews? What was the process?	103
Did they advertise?	104
WG: At the time I was appointed I	106
think the superintendent flew a	107
balloon. There was not a female	108
principal at the high school level in	109
Union at that time. In fact, I	110
think in the whole state of Virginia	111
there was one in the Hampton Roads	112
Region. I can't remember whether it was	113
Newport News or Hampton, or what.	114
Anyway, no, there was not. I was not	115
interviewed for the job. There was a	116
rumor out that I was going to get the	117
job. I heard the rumor along with	118
other people and, to this day, I think	119
it was a trial balloon that was let go	120
to see what kind of reaction there	121
would be to that. There was a	122
wonderful woman, name of Iris Wilson,	123
had been active in the Trinity school	124
community. She'd been on the school	125
PTA.	126
C: She was a parent then?	128
WG: She was a parent, but she was also	130

on the school board. And I think she	131
was one of my strongest supporters.	132
And so I'm sure that Iris had played	133
some role in my getting the - at least	134
gave her strong support to it. But	135
then, after the rumor was out there	136
for a little while, I got the word. I	137
was called and offered the job. So	138
that's the way it occurred.	139
 C: Isn't that interesting.	 141
 WG: Yes.	 143
 C: What made you - and I'm going to	 145
back up just a little bit, and I'm	146
going to come back to that part – what	147
made you decide to become a principal?	148
 WG: Well, I'm not sure. As I was a	 150
counselor, I observed the principals	151
and assistant principals, in their	152
role in Union, and I thought, “I'd	153
like to do that.” And I didn't see any	154
reason why I couldn't. There weren't	155
any females in those positions, but I	156
thought, “I could do that.” And, so	157
when a vacancy came open at Trinity	158
for assistant principal, I applied.	159
And it was, it was very interesting	160
that - We had started the	161
organization of having “Regions” at the	162
time. I don't think there were four at	163
that particular time. There may have	164
just been two, maybe three. I don't	165
think there were four. But, anyway,	166
there was an Region superintendent and	167
he, I knew him, and he knew, you know,	168
we'd met, but he wasn't enthusiastic	169
about my becoming an assistant	170
principal. And my principal came back	171
one day and said, “I don't think the	172
Region superintendent's going to approve	173
your appointment.” And I said,	174
“Okay.” I said, “Why don't we, why	175
don't I just withdraw it? And	176

there'll be another time.” And so 177
 I did. I drafted a letter, and put it 178
 – at that time we had the internal mail 179
 system – and put it in the box. And my 180
 principal called Personnel and said 181
 that “it looks like the Region 182
 superintendent's not going to approve 183
 my recommendation for assistant 184
 principal, and, so, who else, who else 185
 is out there? I mean, who are the 186
 other candidates? And, tell me about 187
 them.” The personnel director at the 188
 time said, “Hold off. I think he's 189
 going, I think he's, I think he's 190
 weakening. He's softening up.” 191
 Whatever. And so the principal came 192
 back and said, “Get that letter out of 193
 the mail!” And so I did. And he went 194
 ahead and approved my appointment. 195
 And I asked my principal, I said, “May 196
 I ask the region superintendent what his 197
 objection was to me?” I said, “It 198
 would maybe be something that would 199
 help me in the future.” And he said, 200
 “I prefer you not.” I said, “Okay.” 201
 So I didn't. So we went ahead. I was 202
 almost at the end of my first year as 203
 an assistant principal, and I was told 204
 by my principal one day to take a 205
 report in that we had, that was 206
 getting close to the deadline. I took 207
 it down, I took it to the office, to 208
 the secretary and chatted with her - I 209
 knew her because she had been at 210
 Trinity as a secretary. And the region 211
 superintendent's office was right there, 212
 but I didn't know if he was in 213
 his office or not. And so as I got 214
 ready to leave, he said, “Is that you 215
 out there?” I said, “Yes, sir.” He 216
 said, “Come on in. I want to talk to 217
 you.” And I went in. And he said, “I 218
 know you knew that I had reservations 219
 about your being appointed principal.” 220
 Being “assistant principal.” I said, 221
 “Yes.” And he said, “Well, I think 222

I think I owe you an explanation.” And	223
I said, “That would be great. And he	224
said, “Well, your principal is a very	225
mild-mannered, you know, kind of	226
laid-back, not aggressive, type of	227
person. And I know that you, I knew	228
that you were kind of strong, and I	229
was concerned that you would usurp	230
his, some of his authority.” In other	231
words, the “pushy woman syndrome.”	232
And he didn't use those terms. But he	233
said, “You haven't done any of that.	234
You've done nothing but make him look	235
better. And you've done it on his	236
behalf, and it's been, it's worked out	237
nicely.” And I thanked him, and I	238
always appreciated the fact that he	239
told me. It reaffirmed the “pushy	240
woman concept” was alive and well, or	241
had been. And it made me more aware	242
of perhaps how I had to function in	243
administration in those days. Any	244
way, that's how I got the assistant	245
principal's job when you asked me	246
about applying. But that didn't occur	247
when I was principal. I just, as I	248
said, I heard the rumor.	249
C: Isn't that interesting. Did they	251
advertise for the assistant principal	252
position?	253
WG: Yes	255
C: That was done.	257
WG: Yes.	259
C: And so the principal then, at that -	261
WG: He just wanted me. The	263
stipulations at that time, the	264
requirements were not as they are now	265
in terms of having to go through a	266
process, and being put on a list.	267
That became more formalized in later	268

years. So he was able to recommend me	269
without having gone through the other	270
interview processes.	271
C: It sounds like he was very	273
supportive of you going from	274
counseling - which is, you know,	275
there's teacher, then counselor, and	276
then administration, which is almost a	277
different career –	278
WG: Yes.	280
C: It sounds like he was very	282
supportive. Did you have other people	283
who were supporting you as you were	284
making this change?	285
WG: Um.	287
C: You mentioned Iris, Iris Wilson.	289
WG: Yes, she was really very	291
supportive, and people in the	292
community. But I don't know if they	293
were involved in that assistant	294
principal appointment. Remember there	295
were no female assistant principals at	296
the high school. I take that back.	297
There had been one at Vista and she	298
died of cancer about the same time I	299
was appointed assistant principal. So	300
she preceded me in that role and	301
probably, very likely could have been	302
the first female principal because she	303
was very well thought of. One of	304
those freak kinds of things. In those	305
days we had, the Cancer Society would	306
come and she would encourage the	307
teachers to have mammograms and she	308
got the teachers in and encouraged	309
them to do it. And she did it and	310
discovered the cancer and didn't	311
survive. But in terms of your	312
question “Was the assistant principal	313
position advertised?” - I'm sure it	314

was advertised. But there wasn't the	315
requirement to interview X number and	316
recommend two or three, or whatever	317
the process is now. Then, after two	318
years, Strickland had - let's see, this	319
was in '73; Strickland had opened five	320
years earlier than that; it was the	321
first secondary school that was built	322
in Union County - and the principal	323
there was retiring. And I was called	324
in by a new region superintendent, not	325
the one who had been in the job when I	326
was appointed assistant principal, and	327
said, "We're sending you to Strickland"	328
- and that was not, that was not	329
advertised - was sent to Strickland. So	330
I didn't apply for that job, either.	331
That, of course, could still happen.	332
Internal transfers can probably still	333
happen.	334
C: What was Trinity like that first	336
year you were principal?	337
WG: Trinity in many ways was a fairly	339
progressive school in terms of its	340
attitudes toward integration.	341
Remember, that's the era in which	342
Union County was integrated. The	343
year that I went to Trinity as, I	344
think it was the first year I went as	345
a counselor, there were two or three	346
Black students who were identified by	347
the Black community. One was in the	348
Trinity community and they sought to	349
have him placed at Trinity. Another	350
one was at Johnson. They may	351
have been the only two; I'm not	352
sure. There may have been a third one.	353
And then the following year they	354
integrated the County across the	355
board. And we had, I thought we had	356
reasonably good success. I know the	357
young man who was identified and came	358
by himself that first year- everybody	359
loved him. A great person to precede	360

that because he made that, he was such 361
a nice kid. And actually, his senior 362
year, I think, he was vice president 363
of the student government, so the kids 364
thought a lot of him, who knew him. 365

C: So you had integration. 367

WG: Had integration. It was, there 369
was a pocket in the community, a 370
couple of communities, in the Trinity 371
boundary. They were, everybody there 372
had masters degrees and beyond. So, 373
they, there were lots of people who 374
were employed by the federal 375
government in, you know, in high 376
positions. And so there, it was a 377
very liberal community. It was a 378
challenge because we had a strong 379
segment of the population that went on 380
to Ivy League schools and some of the 381
most prestigious colleges in the 382
country. And then we had a large 383
number of students who were involved 384
in vocational courses, not bound for 385
college. There were not a lot in 386
between in terms of the student 387
population. But it was interesting 388
and it was challenging. It was a kind 389
of student body I've described - the 390
Trinity student body versus the 391
Strickland student population. When I 392
went there - very different. At 393
Trinity you told a kid to do 394
something and he said, "Why?" And 395
you, you just became accustomed - you 396
told him to do something you gave him 397
the rationale for it. At Strickland, 398
you told them to do something and they 399
did it! I mean, there wasn't that 400
questioning and the kids at Trinity - 401
it wasn't disrespectful. But they had 402
been, many of them had been raised 403
that way. They had been told why they 404
had to do something. The school 405
pretty much had to do the same thing - 406

so we did. We coexisted.	407
C: Isn't it fun. At that time the school board was appointed.	409 410
WG: Correct.	412
C: How did that work? I'm looking mainly at your first year. How, was there any relationship, or anything that you did with them? Did they visit?	414 415 416 417 418
WG: The school board member for my Region, the lady whom I referred to was in and out of the school all the time. I mean, she had children there. In fact, when I was appointed principal, there had been a math teacher who had been at Trinity earlier when I was a counselor. He came to Eastern Virginia and taught at the college level. And after about five years, was, he decided he wanted to come back to public education – didn't get along with the department chair, as a matter of fact. So I was delighted to have him back because he was absolutely the best math teacher I had ever observed at the high school level. And he came back. But he had his idiosyncrasies. And one was: We were in the era, and Trinity was the kind of school where the parents, we were encouraging them to be involved with their students and they wanted to be involved with their students. Well, this teacher told his kids the first day, "If you need any help just let me know. Here's my planning period. This is where I'll be. I get here at such and such a time in the morning. I don't leave until such and such time in the afternoon. You just come and I will help you. But don't send your parents because I'm not teaching them."	420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452

(laugh) “But I'll help you.” Well, 453
 here comes Iris: “What have you done?” 454
 I said, “Iris, go home. Give him nine 455
 weeks, and if he's not the best math 456
 teacher your kids have ever had, then 457
 we'll talk.” She came back not even 458
 nine weeks and said, “You were 459
 right!” (laughter) But he wasn't 460
 quite that bad, but that was literally 461
 the message he gave to those kids. 462
 And these kids went home and told 463
 their parents and Iris came up 464
 immediately. But, so, she came not 465
 because she was a school board member 466
 but because she was a parent with 467
 students there. She was in and out 468
 of the school and I never even 469
 considered, or was concerned about the 470
 fact that she was a school board 471
 member because, you know, we had an 472
 excellent rapport. I tell you the 473
 truth: I was in the eastern part of 474
 the County. I didn't know all the 475
 politics that were going on. Maybe it 476
 wasn't as much as there is now in 477
 terms of the total school board. I 478
 didn't know most of the school board 479
 members, didn't have any reason to be 480
 worried about them. (Laugh) And so I 481
 didn't, I wasn't involved in that in 482
 terms of the school board. To tell 483
 you the truth, I really wasn't. It 484
 became more so later. After I became 485
 region superintendent, I obviously 486
 became very involved at that point. 487
 As a high school principal, I wasn't. 488
 I mean, I was, it was kind of you ran 489
 your own school, and as long as the 490
 region superintendent didn't get too 491
 many calls you were fine. (Laughter) 492

C: Well, speaking of region 494
 superintendents – was George Dennison - 495

WG: Gregory Dennison. 497

C: Gregory Dennison. Was he region superintendent when you started?	499 500
WG: Yes.	502
C: At Trinity?	504
WG: No. The first region superintendent was a different gentleman and Mr. Dennison came, followed him. And he, Gregory Dennison, is the one who sent me to Strickland.	506 507 508 509 510 511
C: To Strickland.	513
WG: Yes.	515
C: Okay. Because he was principal at Fisher -	517 518
WG: Correct.	520
C: So that is why I was interested.	522
WG: He was principal at Fisher and I think the sequence was that the man who had been region superintendent – now, where did Greg go? He didn't go directly because there was no such thing as an region superintendent. He was at Fisher after, he stayed there as the intermediate principal and then he succeeded the region superintendent. He went, the region superintendent, went to an assistant superintendency and Greg became region superintendent.	524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536
C: I see. I was just curious because when you mentioned the integration piece, and knowing that Mr. Dennison is African American, and I didn't know if there was any connection with, really, a first for Union County with his appointment and then a first	538 539 540 541 542 543 544

- for you. 545
- WG: He was definitely the first. You 547
 see, when we integrated, which was I'm 548
 never really sure if we integrated 549
 school year '64-'65, which I think is 550
 correct. But it could have been 551
 '65-'66. But was in the mid '60s. 552
 And he was at Fisher and based 553
 on my experience with the first region 554
 superintendent which, and that 555
 experience took place in about '68, 556
 Mr. Dennison then followed him. I'm 557
 not real sure whether he would have, 558
 whether he was appointed region 559
 superintendent in '69. I think that's 560
 probably the case because he had to be 561
 there a couple of years. At least, 562
 obviously, one year, because I knew 563
 him and he knew me. But, so, it was 564
 either '69 or '70 because I was 565
 appointed principal in '71. 566
- C: You had mentioned getting your 568
 masters. Was that before you came up 569
 to Union County? 570
- WG: Yes, I got my masters in '62. I 572
 was here in this Region, in the 573
 Eastern Region, and had, took 574
 some extension courses toward my 575
 masters. I was in the program, but 576
 then I got to the point that the 577
 remainder of my work had to be done on 578
 campus. So I traveled to 579
 Ruby for a year, one night 580
 a week, and then spent two summers 581
 there. I finally got my masters 582
- C: When you got your masters, was it a 584
 masters in counseling, or a masters in 585
 administration? 586
- WG: It was in counseling, in guidance. 588
 Because after I was appointed 589
 principal I had all the courses for 590

endorsement that were on the list, 591
 except, and it was, prior to my being 592
 appointed principal, I go back. But I 593
 thought, "Well, I'm in administration, 594
 if I'm going to become a principal, I 595
 have to take school law." I hadn't 596
 had school law in the program. I 597
 think that was the only course really 598
 that I needed to have me endorsed at 599
 that time for the principalship, 600
 secondary principalship. 601

C: Would you have taken that when you 603
 were assistant principal? 604

WG: Yes. I took school law while I 606
 was assistant principal. 607

C: Did you always see yourself becoming 609
 a principal? 610

WG: No. I came along in an era where 612
 there were no women in administration. 613
 So, until I got to Trinity and, and 614
 even then it wasn't one of those 615
 things that I sought. I didn't think 616
 it was a realistic expectation, to be 617
 honest with you. But, Union was 618
 certainly at the forefront for the 619
 most part in terms of for appointing 620
 women to positions. But, as we talked 621
 on the telephone, when you called to 622
 set up this appointment, one of the 623
 things that, it was, I told you, I 624
 think that I was at the right place at 625
 the right time in my career on several 626
 occasions. And there was a lot of 627
 push in the community to appoint women 628
 to positions in, to administrative 629
 positions. The feminist movement had 630
 started, and there was a considerable 631
 push there, so I'm not sure I was 632
 just, I mean, I was a woman in the 633
 right place at the right time. I 634
 always felt, said to myself if I 635
 hadn't been a woman, I would have 636

- probably been appointed earlier. I 637
 felt I had the ability to have been 638
 appointed earlier. But I wasn't in a 639
 position to be considered earlier. 640
- C: And that's interesting - I hadn't 642
 thought about, when you talked about 643
 other assistant principals, other 644
 female assistant principals - so when 645
 you became an assistant principal, as 646
 a female, did you have other women 647
 call you? And when you became 648
 principal, did you have other women 649
 call you, saying: "What did you do?" 650
 "How did you do it?" "What do I need 651
 to do?" 652
- WG: Not immediately. I think that 654
 came later. One my roles as region 655
 superintendent was to serve as a 656
 helper in terms of people wanting to 657
 go into administration, career 658
 counseling kinds of things. I did a 659
 lot of that for women, and for men. 660
 And then, when I was deputy 661
 superintendent later in my career, 662
 that was another, they saw me as being 663
 a part of that whole process. Not 664
 only did they want advice, they wanted 665
 to be seen by me so that when their 666
 name came up, I would at least put a 667
 name with a face particularly if I 668
 hadn't known them previously. They 669
 had dual motivation, and that was fine 670
 by me, because it was helpful when 671
 recommendations came through the 672
 Central Office. Because I signed off 673
 on those on behalf of the 674
 superintendent, so it was good I knew 675
 who was being recommended in Regions 676
 of the County that I hadn't had that much 677
 involvement. 678
- C: With you saying that, I think back 680
 to when you were appointed principal. 681
 Were there, were there ways that, that 682

you, I don't want to say "made
 yourself visible," but it sounds like
 you were helping other people - you
 knew who they were, they were talking
 with you, that sort of thing, and you
 were them giving career advice. Was
 the same thing happening for you, or
 were there things you were doing so,
 in turn, other people who did the
 hiring knew who you were?

WG: My principal fostered me and
 mentored me, the one who chose me as
 the guidance director. Then he chose
 me as an assistant principal, and he
 helped me in a lot of ways. He would
 take me to meetings with him, and so
 that I would, you know, knew what was
 going on. Not prior to my becoming
 assistant principal, but when I was
 assistant principal. He was very good
 at taking me to meetings with him so
 that I would get a view of what was
 going on. Some of the things he did
 for me, I realized later, were
 helpful. And when I was at Strickland,
 with the number of subschool
 principals there, a part of what I did
 was that each semester I took, one
 semester I would take one of the
 subschool principals to Region meetings
 with me, and I'd take another one to
 the central meetings with me, and
 another one, they worked with the PTA
 with me in a variety of capacities.
 And I tried to do that, and to rotate
 those assignments around so that
 everybody got to go to Region meetings
 and central meetings, everybody was
 involved with PTAs, so that they
 would, it would be a learning
 experience for them. But they would
 also be seen, for instance, at County
 meetings by other principals who might
 be, whatever, could help them.

C: Exactly. Any organizations you belonged to?	729 730
WG: Well, the regular ones. The Association for Secondary School Principals, that was probably the primary one.	732 733 734 735
C: PDK didn't have women in '71.	737
WG: But I did, I was identified later, then I became a part of, was identified and was invited to join PDK.	739 740 741 742
C: You mentioned the “pushy woman,” that stereotype. That leads me to think of another stereotype, of the “good ol' boys” network.	744 745 746 747
WG: Well there was definitely the “good ol' boys network” and I had to learn to function in that. The principals in Union County, I had served as an assistant principal for three years, and I had gotten to know the assistant principals. We had regular meetings, countywide meetings, for assistant principals at that time, so I got to know the assistant principals. And many of them went on to be principals. So when I became principal I wasn't an unknown to a lot of the principals, and they were, they really were very cooperative. I mean, I didn't feel that they gave me, in any way, anything but cooperation. David Quinton, I don't know if you got to know him, he was principal at Indigo for a long period of time. Dave had been at Trinity, and then went to Oak Ridge, and then went to Indigo. And this was kind of a left-handed compliment, I always thought. But Dave said, when I became a principal, that I thought like a	749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774

man. So, I mean, that was (Laugh) -	775
C: That was a compliment?	777
WG: That was a compliment, I guess.	779
(Laughter) But, anyway, the	780
principals in the Virginia High School	781
League - each region identifies	782
somebody to represent their region,	783
and so they identified me to represent	784
them on the Virginia executive	785
committee of the Virginia High School	786
League. Now that was a different	787
story. That was a statewide group. I	788
was the only woman there who was a	789
principal. There may have been staff	790
people from the State Department or	791
from the high school league itself,	792
females, not many, but a couple. And	793
they didn't think I belonged there.	794
They didn't think I knew anything	795
about sports, and the rules, etc.,	796
which I did. And, literally, if I	797
wanted to get some legislation	798
through, or was in favor of it, I had	799
to get somebody else. I had a couple	800
of really close friends who were on	801
there. And I'd have to get them to	802
make the motion, and I didn't second	803
it, and I have spoken against things	804
that I wanted, to get it through. So,	805
you know, you kind of learn to exist,	806
and to survive, in some of those	807
environments. I didn't, I wasn't	808
confronted with that from the	809
principals in Union County. But	810
statewide, I sure was. (Laugh)	811
C: It is different.	813
WG: It is different.	815
C: I often wonder, and perhaps you can	817
reflect on that, why is Union so	818
different, particularly in 1971?	819

WG: Well, again, I went from Eastern 821
 County 2, small, not that far 822
 geographically from Union, but a 823
 totally different world. And I 824
 recall, I mean just as an example, the 825
 year, the first year I went, I was a 826
 counselor, and there was a closet with 827
 supplies, that I could, that was very 828
 close to my counseling door. I could 829
 sit there, I could look at, and there 830
 are more supplies available for that 831
 one department than there was for the 832
 whole school at Eastern County 2. The 833
 wealth even in those days, it was a weal- 834
 thier county. The expectations of the kids 835
 of the - now this is a generalization 836
 - but the expectations of the kids, of 837
 the school system, etc., were totally 838
 different, and much more. It was a 839
 leader, as it still is in a lot of 840
 ways, certainly as far as the 841
 educational system is concerned. To 842
 some people in the state, we as 843
 principals from Union, they thought 844
 about us as the “ugly Americans.” I 845
 mean, you couldn't, I remember, on 846
 the, again with the Virginia High 847
 School League, we had to go and not 848
 take a strong Union County or 849
 upper state approach to things. 850
 We had to go and deal with, and put 851
 out, and look at the total picture 852
 because sometimes the picture wasn't 853
 the same for us as it was for 854
 principals in other parts of the 855
 state. And we had one principal in 856
 Union who was awful. He'd get up 857
 and say, “I'm so and so from Union 858
 County.” Oh, no. Because it was kind 859
 of like, just like my being a female 860
 in this group, and I had going against 861
 me the fact that I was from Union 862
 County, too. I was a female from 863
 Union County. The worst of both 864
 worlds. (Laugh) But, any way, you 865
 have to learn these techniques to get 866

along with other people in the world,	867
and if you don't, you don't,	868
make it.	869
C: I don't want to forget, and I'll	871
probably come back to some other	872
things, but you mentioned – do you	873
remember how long you were at	874
Strickland, as principal?	875
WG: Yes, I went there in '73, school	877
year '73, and I left in December of	878
1980. And they transferred me to	879
Department of Instruction and I went	880
as the coordinator, no, the Director	881
for Secondary Ed. There was a	882
position in DI for secondary. I	883
didn't know what was happening. I	884
learned later that, that they were	885
eyeing me as an Region Superintendent	886
and I had not had any central office	887
experience. And they, the	888
superintendent and the deputy, two	889
deputies at that time, decided that	890
that would be a good training for me.	891
So I, it was a lateral move, and I was	892
assigned to DI as a Director of	893
Secondary Ed. in December, 1980. And	894
then, in July, of 1981 – well, I was	895
appointed earlier - I went to Region South	896
as Region Superintendent. I was Region	897
Superintendent for four years, and	898
then I was appointed Deputy	899
Superintendent. And I was deputy	900
superintendent for four years. All	901
total I was in Union County a total	902
of 26 years. (pause) Worked for 39.	903
Was in education for 39.	904
C: I don't think I asked you what you	906
taught?	907
WG: My, I was an English major. In	909
the first year I taught, I taught	910
three classes of English and three	911
classes of physical education, which I	912

wasn't endorsed to teach. And I was 913
 probably the worst English teacher I 914
 ever knew. And didn't like it. So when 915
 I moved to Eastern County 2 – and 916
 I was a pretty good PE teacher – so when I 917
 moved to Eastern County 2, they assigned 918
 me to teach physical education, full-time. 919
 And then, while I was at Eastern County 2, 920
 I went back to Eastern Virginia. And the 921
 Dean worked out a program for me over 922
 a two-year period: before school, 923
 after school, and during my planning 924
 period – I worked for another 925
 wonderful principal - I took 24 credit 926
 hours and added physical education to 927
 my certificate. So, actually, in 928
 addition to my Bachelors degree, I had 929
 24 hours afterwards to add to physical 930
 education. So most of my teaching 931
 career – a long answer to a short, 932
 what should have been a short answer - 933
 I taught physical education, and I 934
 taught English the first year. 935

C: Did you coach sports as well? 937

WG: Yes. That's why I told I knew, 939
 you know, they didn't think I knew 940
 anything. I did. I had known the 941
 rules and followed them and tracked 942
 them pretty well. At the time I was 943
 teaching at Eastern County 2 there were 944
 only three sports for girls there. And 945
 we had field hockey in the fall, 946
 basketball in the winter, and softball 947
 in the spring. And I coached all 948
 three. And the first two years I went 949
 to Trinity, they found out that I had 950
 coached hockey. The athletic director 951
 came in and conned me into coaching. 952
 They didn't have a hockey coach, and 953
 conned me into coaching field hockey. 954
 I got there, and I had to coach 955
 varsity and JV for, because they 956
 didn't have anybody else. So, I did 957
 that for two years. 958

C: When you became principal in '71,	960
I'm thinking that's around the time,	961
perhaps, for Title IX. They were	962
talking about girls having more	963
sports.	964
WG: 'Scuse me a minute, would you. I	966
think I hear my buzzer. (pause;	967
checked to see if the cleaning ladies	968
had arrived)	969
C: We were talking about girls' sports,	971
Title IX.	972
WG: Yes, Title XI. I guess it was	974
even a little bit before, well, I	975
can't tell you when exactly, when it	976
came in, but it was the whole feminist	977
movement and Title IX was coming,	978
being pushed for, leading up to Title	979
IX in the late '60s and the early	980
'70s. I can't tell you when Title IX	981
was initiated, but it surely didn't	982
exist when I was in Eastern County 2,	983
where there were three sports. And to	984
be honest with you, there weren't that	985
many more in Union County when I	986
went there. It became, they expanded	987
the opportunities for girls. When I	988
was, I guess when I was on the	989
Virginia High School League, Title IX	990
was definitely a factor because we	991
discussed a lot of the issues as it	992
related to the state as a whole and	993
the High School League in particular.	994
C: I don't think I wrote this down:	996
When you were on the Virginia High	997
School League, on the executive	998
committee, was that when you were at	999
Trinity or Strickland?	1000
WG: Strickland.	1002
C: When you retired from Deputy	1004

Superintendent, did you continue to do	1005
anything in Union County after that?	1006
WG: I have been back on several	1008
occasions - obviously as a consultant	1009
- but I've done various things. One	1010
of those things, one of the	1011
responsibilities I had as Deputy	1012
Superintendent was to hear suspensions	1013
and expulsions hearings. Believe it	1014
or not, along with the other things I	1015
did, I had time enough in those days	1016
to do that, because there weren't that	1017
many. Well, after I retired, and, in	1018
fact, after Bob Jackson followed me,	1019
retired, it became such an issue that	1020
the Deputy didn't have time to do it.	1021
So they, Bob and I, both of us, went	1022
back and served as consultants, and	1023
heard the suspension and expulsion	1024
appeals for the school system.	1025

But then I've been back for	1040
several other things. When the	1041
county, just as Dr. Henderson left, and	1042
before Dr. Wilson – in fact, they	1043
were interviewing for that position at	1044
the time - the Assistant	1045
Superintendent for Student Services	1046
and Special Education, there was a	1047
vacancy there. I went in and filled	1048
in from, I guess, October until	1049
January, and helped organize the	1050
interview process – actually Personnel	1051
organized it – but I facilitated it.	1052

I retired in 1989.	1075
I moved back to this area in 1985.	1076

But I commuted the last four years that	1080
I worked in Union County. So when I	1081
retired, I took a year off to do not	1082
much of anything. Did some traveling.	1083
I had been pretty busy. So, I played	1084
quite a bit for a while. And I, a	1085
school board vacancy occurred in	1086

Eastern County 2. And that was, we were 1087
still in the era of appointed school 1088
boards. So I was appointed to the 1089
Eastern County 2 School Board and 1090
served on that for 7½ years. 1091

C: And that started? 1093

WG: That started in summer of '90, 1095
1990. 1096

C: That must have been fun: to be on 1098
the other side of the Board, on the 1099
other side of the table. 1100

WG: I knew, since I approached 1102
retirement, I knew that I had to do 1103
something that was going to keep me 1104
occupied, 'cause I'd been a 1105
workaholic. And so, and I did. I 1106
played a lot. I learned to play golf. 1107
I took golf lessons and learned to 1108
play golf. I went back to playing some 1109
tennis. And so those were good for 1110
me. And then I realized that probably 1111
my brain was going to atrophy because 1112
I wasn't doing anything to keep it 1113
busy. So that's when I wanted to, 1114
I've known I wanted to do something, 1115
maybe to volunteer in the community. 1116
And I saw being on the school board, 1117
in a sense, voluntary. The 1118
compensation was \$200 a month, so I 1119
didn't feel I was really being paid, 1120
nor did I worry about it. And that 1121
was, sort of, my way of being involved 1122
in the community. And it was in an 1123
area that I felt I had expertise. But 1124
it was interesting to look at things 1125
from another point of view then. I 1126
had been through teacher, 1127
administrator level, and looking at it 1128
from those points of view, and, of 1129
course, I became Region Superintendent 1130
and Deputy Superintendent, it became 1131
much more aware of what school boards 1132

did and how they functioned, etc. As	1133
I told you, I hadn't been worried	1134
about that as a high school principal.	1135
Didn't have to. As a teacher, I	1136
wasn't, definitely wasn't. So it was	1137
an interesting experience. I enjoyed	1138
it.	1139
C: When you say 7½ years, is that, at	1141
that time did it become an elected	1142
school board?	1143
WG: Correct. It was in January of,	1145
after the 7½ years, they went to the	1146
elected school board. And I would	1147
have to had run for the position. I'd	1148
been there at that time for seven	1149
years and just decided I didn't want	1150
to do that. I wasn't, and am	1151
still not, convinced that the elected	1152
school board is the best	1153
representative. Although I didn't	1154
speak out against it at the time,	1155
because I felt that being on the board	1156
at that time might be somewhat of a	1157
conflict. But I didn't, I still don't	1158
think it is the best way to do things.	1159
It's become so political. I don't	1160
think the appointed boards were that	1161
political. So I thought it would have	1162
been a little hypocritical for me to	1163
run as an elected member. My time	1164
that I'd been on the school board was	1165
sufficient. They needed somebody,	1166
and I needed to move on, and other	1167
people needed to come in.	1168
C: One thing we really didn't talk	1170
about, and maybe should have more at	1171
the beginning: in the '60s, in the	1172
'50s, families understood when women	1173
wanted to become teachers. That	1174
seemed almost "natural." What did	1175
your family think when you became	1176
assistant principal, and then	1177
principal?	1178

- WG: Well, in terms, by the time I 1180
 became assistant principal and, first 1181
 of all, I had four children, and my 1182
 husband was supportive of my doing 1183
 that. It definitely took time, 1184
 because you know how consuming the 1185
 jobs are. I'll never forget when I 1186
 first became an assistant principal, I 1187
 was at Trinity then. One of the 1188
 responsibilities, I was Assistant 1189
 Principal for Instruction. At that 1190
 time the system had APIs, assistant 1191
 principal for instruction, and APAs, 1192
 assistant principals for 1193
 administration, and I was the API. 1194
 One of my responsibilities was to have 1195
 all of the textbooks in the teachers' 1196
 classrooms when they reported for 1197
 duty. So it was a hot, hot August 1198
 day. And I took my preteen children 1199
 up and they helped me count the books 1200
 out and get them taken to the rooms. 1201
 And the child who was about ten years 1202
 old, I guess, at the time, maybe a 1203
 little older, said, "Momma, I thought 1204
 you'd gotten an important job!" 1205
 (Laugh) 1206
- C: From the mouths of babes. 1208
- WG: I mean, really, if they hadn't 1210
 helped me... It was hot hot. It was a 1211
 hot, hot day, in a 1212
 non-air-conditioned building. 1213
- C: When you became principal of 1215
 Trinity, was there any kind of 1216
 special ceremony, or anything like 1217
 that? 1218
- WG: I don't think so. I don't recall. 1220
 (Laugh) I just went to work! I was 1221
 offered the job. The Superintendent 1222
 actually came to Trinity and told me 1223
 that I was going to be appointed 1224

principal – did I accept it? And I 1225
 did. And then - I know you've heard 1226
 of Mr. Yancey – well, Mr. 1227
 Yancey was, I guess, Deputy 1228
 Superintendent at that time, or he may 1229
 have been the assistant superintendent 1230
 in Personnel. But, anyway, he called 1231
 after the Superintendent appointed me, 1232
 and it had been announced. And I 1233
 called up and said, “I forgot to ask 1234
 what my salary was going to be?” And 1235
 Mr. Yancey gets out his chart, and 1236
 it was going to be \$11 more. I said, 1237
 “Dan, I'm not doing this. You, you 1238
 all go get somebody else. That 1239
 wouldn't buy the aspirin that it will 1240
 take.” (Laugh) He said, “Let me 1241
 see what I can do.” So they went and 1242
 made an adjustment to my salary. 1243
 (Laugh) 1244

C: A little negotiating. 1246

WG: Yes, a little bit there. 1248

C: That's great. Now, unfortunately, 1250
 1971 is before I became involved in 1251
 Union. At some point, Mr. 1252
 Yancey was Superintendent of the 1253
 schools, but at that time was that 1254
 Quincy Washington? 1255

WG: Dr. Washington was Superintendent 1257
 at that time. Correct. 1258

C: I don't even know how long he was 1260
 here. 1261

WG: I don't know that I can. He 1263
 appointed me principal. 1264

C: To Trinity? 1266

WG: To Trinity. Orlando Ward. There 1268
 was a man after Dr. Washington left and 1269
 went to the State Department. There 1270

was a man who was here for a year - I	1271
cannot think of his name - he finished	1272
the year, went on vacation, had a	1273
heart attack, and died.	1274
C: I'll have to look. I think I saw	1276
his name on something.	1277
WG: And then they did a search and	1279
brought in Dr. Ward, and Dr. Ward is	1280
the one who, I guess he was here the	1281
year I went to Strickland, and also was	1282
the one who appointed me to Region	1283
Superintendent. Then Mr. Yancey	1284
became, when Dr. Ward left, he became	1285
Superintendent and I was appointed	1286
Deputy Superintendent, kind of at the	1287
end of Mr. Yancey's term. But Dr.	1288
Henderson had been identified, and the	1289
vacancy was there, and I was on a	1290
leave of absence that spring. My	1291
youngest son, the one I think I	1292
pointed to, he died of cancer. He	1293
had, this was almost four years since	1294
he had been diagnosed, and things had	1295
not worked out. He was to go to Johns	1296
Hopkins to have a bone marrow	1297
transplant. It was an experimental	1298
kind of thing – ended up not working.	1299
But, anyway, when he went to Johns	1300
Hoskins I asked for a leave of absence	1301
and stayed there most of the – he went	1302
in in early April and died in June -	1303
and I stayed right there. And it was	1304
during that period of time that Dr.	1305
Henderson was interviewed and hired.	1306
He was actually hired before I went on	1307
leave. But, anyway, Mr. Yancey	1308
was still there until July 1st. And,	1309
so, my son died in June. And I really	1310
had planned to retire, because had he	1311
lived he was going to need a lot of	1312
help and support, physical things, the	1313
chemo and everything had done to him.	1314
So, I had in my mind decided I would	1315
retire, and they had brought somebody	1316

- in on an interim basis to the Region 1317
 superintendency. So one day I went 1318
 back up, it was in, you know, in 1319
 mid-July, latter part of June. The 1320
 secretary at the Region Office – I 1321
 wasn't working, I hadn't gone back to 1322
 work, I was not ready to go back – she 1323
 said, “Mr. Yancey is trying to 1324
 reach you. He said he wants you to 1325
 call him.” So I called, and he said, 1326
 “Do you have time to come over and 1327
 talk to me?” I figured he wants to 1328
 know, “When are you going to put in 1329
 your resignation so we can move on 1330
 officially?” I knew it was something 1331
 I was preparing to do. So I went over 1332
 and he offered me this deputy's 1333
 position! (Laugh) 1334
- C: Surprise! 1336
- WG: I was surprised. It was, when Mr. 1338
 Yancey left, during his tenure 1339
 there had been one deputy and, then, 1340
 in the interim they had expanded it to 1341
 two. That was the organization Dr. 1342
 Henderson wanted. And, they had hired 1343
 the other deputy. That was Dr. 1344
 Sharp. But with the deputy for 1345
 administrative affairs had not been 1346
 hired. I mean, I had really been so 1347
 involved with my son's health and all 1348
 of that, that I hadn't kept up with 1349
 what was going on. I knew that Dr. 1350
 Sharp had been hired, and hadn't 1351
 heard any rumors as to who the other 1352
 person was going to be. So it was a 1353
 real surprise. That was not one of 1354
 the rumors that got to me before the 1355
 offer did! (laugh) 1356
- C: It's surprising – it's such a big 1358
 system, how things travel quickly. 1359
- WG: No doubt... (laughter) 1361

C: Well, I've asked you a lot of 1363
 questions. Is there anything, before 1364
 we close, that you want to share, that 1365
 I may not have asked you, about 1366
 becoming principal or your first year 1367
 as principal at Trinity? 1368

WG: I'm not sure, but there's anything 1370
 I can add. I think, and I've said 1371
 this - and it's not a Pollyanna kind 1372
 of comment - Union County was a 1373
 great place to work and to be. I was 1374
 given opportunities, and granted there 1375
 were probably, and I know there were 1376
 pressures on them, at least when I 1377
 started out in an administrator 1378
 capacity, really was a good place to 1379
 work. I felt like it was fair to me. 1380
 It gave me lots of, I can (muffled), I 1381
 would not have had in other places, at 1382
 least in Virginia, which is what I 1383
 most interested in. I don't think, I 1384
 might have passed that opportunity to 1385
 be an assistant principal and a 1386
 principal and not really been eligible 1387
 or considered for positions that I had 1388
 later, which were, was the Region 1389
 Superintendent and Deputy 1390
 Superintendent. I told the school 1391
 board, the night they gave me my 1392
 plaque when I retired, I said, "There 1393
 is one thing about this system. You 1394
 are all good to people. You let us 1395
 work as hard as we want to." (Laugh) 1396
 It was a compliment, but also I wanted 1397
 to get their attention that people 1398
 were out there working pretty hard. I 1399
 think they knew it, but I don't think 1400
 they did anything. (Laugh) I don't 1401
 think they've made any improvements in 1402
 that area. I enjoyed it. I think I 1403
 could have been happy in almost any of 1404
 the jobs. I didn't like DI. I could 1405
 not have been happy in that, in the 1406
 nature of that. As a classroom 1407
 teacher you can go in the room, close 1408

the door, and you pretty much 1409
 determine, if you're good, you're 1410
 conscientious, people don't both you. 1411
 Same was true as a high school 1412
 principal in those days. As long as 1413
 there weren't too many calls to the 1414
 Region Superintendent, I was kind of 1415
 master of my own fate. The Region 1416
 Superintendency was somewhat the same, 1417
 a little bit more in a fishbowl, if 1418
 you will. You had a job to do, and 1419
 as long as you did it, well, nobody 1420
 bothered you. I enjoyed that. I hope 1421
 I, as an administrator, I did that 1422
 with the people I worked with. I like 1423
 to think I did. That was certainly 1424
 the way I was allowed to flourish, and 1425
 I think other people do the same. 1426

Appendix D

Interview of Theresa Williams

Case Study for 1980s

(Interview conducted April 17, 2002)

C: I noticed while you were out	3
is your picture over there –	4
but I don't know what grade that is.	5
TW: Fourth.	7
C: Ah, that's your fourth grade! Where	9
is that?	10
TW: Forestdale, Louisiana.	12
C: I look at that and I think, “Is that	45
when you decided to go into education?	46
TW: Lord, no! Who knows what I was	48
about in the fourth grade! I tell you	49
the truth, I think that as early as the	50
second grade, I was lining, I had a	51
little chalkboard that was on the wall	52
a little dilly like that. I would line	53
up the chairs, and put the dolls on the	54
chairs, and I would teach. Now that	55
was, I think, in the second grade, so	56
guess I got over that first grade	57
trauma. When I was in first grade I	58
moved from Mississippi to Louisiana, a	59
I moved in the spring. And when I got	60
to first grade, in like the last six	61
weeks - the teacher was a lovely, love	62
lady, and who remained a family friend	63
for forever - and she said. “My dear,	64
you are going to have to do a little	65
extra reading in order to be up to grade	66
level with everyone else.” Not exactly	67
those terms, but she was very sweet.	68
And so I spent the whole summer reading	69
books, try to get caught up, because I	70

was a little behind the curve in the	71
first grade. But I guess I had gotten	72
over it by the second grade. My mom was	73
a teacher, so it was really easy for me	74
to sort of fall into that. So I was	75
inspired early to be in education.	76
C: How wonderful! And when you taught,	78
what did you teach?	79
TW: I taught English and journalism	81
and a couple of years of French when I	82
was in south Louisiana. But mostly it	83
was, I think the heart of what I was	84
doing was with the journalism. There	85
were a couple of years when I taught	86
full English, but then journalism came	87
open and English would be like one or	88
two sections, working up to full	89
journalism for three years in Texas and	90
then, never full journalism here in	91
Union County but four periods of	92
journalism and one period of English.	93
C: So when you taught up here, how many	95
years, how many years total did you	96
teach, and how many years in Union	97
County?	98
TW: Twelve years total, six in Union	100
County. I taught in south Louisiana,	101
then Texas, then here.	102
C: And which high school did you teach	104
in?	105
TW: Dominion High School.	107
C: Really!	109
TW: Yeah. So it was sort of full	111
cycle. Teaching there, and then going	112
to Region South. Then, at Region South, I was at	113
Trinity, Newland. Then I went to	114
Hercules as principal, then	115
Superintendent's office, and then Dominion.	116

So I sort of just did a	117
big loop.	118
C: Oh, my goodness! How did you come	120
about deciding to go from teaching into	121
administration?	122
TW: That is a really good question.	124
Not many people ask me that. I think	125
they just assume I just automatically	126
gravitated to that. I was very happy	127
doing what I was doing. I loved	128
journalism. I loved working. I had the	129
newspaper at Dominion. I loved	130
kids. I loved the interaction. My	131
assistant principal, Wally Unger, had other	132
ideas: “You need to get your masters.	133
You need to get certified to be, go in	134
administration. You'd make a great AP	135
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. But I did	136
start working on my masters and I was,	137
started off in curriculum and	138
instruction, because I really felt that	139
what I really needed control of – and,	140
see, this is really, part of this is	141
about control - if you just had the	142
control you could make this a lot better	143
than where it is for kids. You know,	144
you fall into that thinking. So I	145
started in curriculum and instruction	146
and then, when in one of my conferences	147
with my adviser at Tucker, he	148
said, “What are you going to do with	149
this when you are done, because this	150
isn't going to take you any where? You	151
know there aren't a lot of jobs open	152
around here. Do you plan to move or	153
something?” No! So that's when I	154
changed the focus of the masters to	155
administration. Wally Unger moved to	156
principalship at Trinity, and it was	157
the year that Trinity was moving from	158
the old school to the new school. And	159
had just finished my masters that	160
summer, and he hired me as, what they	161
called, an administrative aide in	162

administration that summer, as well.	163
C: At Trinity?	165
TW: At Trinity.	167
C: Here's a challenge: what year was that?	169 170
TW: That was '76.	172
C: '76.	174
TW: It was a great challenge. Dominion High School was the prep school of Union County. Trinity High School was like about as far stretch away, like going across the tracks, as you could ever expect to be. It was a culture shock.	176 177 178 179 180 181 182
C: Was Trinity in the Richardson building or the...	184 185
TW: It was in its first year in the new building.	187 188
C: Which is now Dickerson?	190
TW: Yes, exactly.	192
C: OK. And then Wally Unger was principal at that time.	194 195
TW: He moved from, he was in the, I guess he was in the old building for a year. Then he moved to the new building - or maybe he moved in the same year. I've sort of lost that in my little memory bank. But he was principal in the new building the year they went in. I joined them – I think they must have been there a year before I joined them I had two years as an administrative aide position there. Administrative aide - I don't know whether you	197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208

remember, you don't have the history -	209
but the administrative aide position	210
was, it was an administrative title.	211
But you did all the work that	212
administrators didn't want to do. You	213
weren't allowed to evaluate teachers.	214
You could do observations but you	215
couldn't do the evaluations. So, that	216
meant you did all kinds of discipline	217
with kids, you did all the textbooks a	218
the supplies, and all that other kind	219
stuff.	220
C: Was the idea to prepare people to go	222
into AP positions?	223
TW: It was, exactly. It was the track	225
much like the API (one) is to the APII	226
(two) now. There was no API (one) the	227
for high school. So, it was, you did	228
administrative aide and then, by the end	229
of the second year, you moved, entered	230
into API (one), AP position, but you had	231
to apply for those.	232
C: Apply for the API?	234
TW: Yeah, it wasn't "one," it was just	236
called AP then. But you had to apply.	237
So there were people who stayed	238
administrative aides forever, who did	239
never get a job as an AP. But that's	240
what it was, a kind of training ground	241
C: Then, the next step was assistant	243
principal. Was that at Trinity as	244
well?	245
TW: No, that was at Newland. I	247
interviewed for and got the position a	248
an assistant principal – actually, it	249
was as a sub school principal - at	250
Newland. I was their first female	251
administrator.	252
C: Who was the principal then?	254

TW: Glen Simmons.	256
C: So this would have been in '78?	258
TW: '78.	260
C: And the - go over the process again, as far as... they would advertise...?	262 263
TW: It was the same process for any administration positions you had to apply for. Apply for the administration assistant; apply for the assistant principal; apply for the principal. Now, the process is a little bit different for being eligible, being found eligible, to be put on the eligible list. You had to go through panel. This was a central office run panel, where you showed up and they did questions, sort of went through the drill, to declare you eligible to apply for the positions. Uhm, I'm misspeaking because there was not a panel for administrative aide. There was a panel for AP; there's a panel for principal. So, I did my panel for AP, made it through there fine, and then I applied for the subschool principalship at Newland, and got that job. So, that was kind of an okay thing. I, I really had sort of this, like, really magic kind timing, because I had somebody dragged me into the administrative aide. I applied for AP - I got that job. I applied for principalship at Hercules – and I got that job. Those were like, just kind of, just the timing, I think as much as anything. Being able to make the panel and go. I remember the first time I paneled, though, for principalship I didn't make the panel. They said, "Nah, haven't had enough experience. You're not ready yet." (laugh) You know, you have to know that	265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300

at the time that I was doing this, going	301
into administration, there weren't many	302
females. There was Wilma Goldman and	303
Kim Kindle, and that was it. So, it was	304
still one of those, "Do we have to have	305
one?" The kind of mentality, "Okay. We	306
guess, if we have to have one, you'll	307
do." So that wasn't much.	308
C: When you were at the AP level, were	310
you getting any kind of help or	311
assistant, or support, or guidance, to	312
prepare you for principalship?	313
TW: Informally, yes. Mr. Simmons was a	315
very good help in talking to me about	316
what I needed to do to be ready for a	317
principalship. Mr. Unger continued to	318
very much an advocate and a supporter	319
helping me to get ready to apply for a	320
principalship.	321
C: Did...like organizations, meetings...?	323
TW: There was no built-in kind of	325
structure to really give you what you	326
needed to move up the line in	327
administration. There was a, there were	328
a couple of efforts being made at that	329
time. Women in administration, and	330
there was a group, but it was not	331
terribly cohesive. And there was like	332
an opportunity at the Management	333
Conference – I remember one of those...	334
C: At the beginning of August?	336
TW: Right. Carol Baker was a player	338
in that group, supporting women and...	339
C: She was in Personnel at the	341
time?	342
TW: She was in Personnel. I	344
remember Cheryl Woods also being a part	345
of that. And I remember Carol talking	346

about some of the research of women in	347
leadership, and what were the	348
significant pieces about women in	349
leadership. But there was not, there	350
was no organized support system, and no	351
organized training, to promote women in	352
leadership. So I think it speaks well	353
to the women in administration in	354
Union County, because they kind of did	355
on their own. Now you see more, kind	356
organized opportunities for people to	357
learn more. It's not that it's just for	358
women, but you see more organized	359
opportunities for people, men and women	360
to prepare themselves for	361
administration, which is certainly	362
what's needed. But at that point, there	363
was not that for either, and certainly	364
much more of an informal, "good ol' boy"	365
network, for men than for women.	366
C: You mentioned Carol being in	368
Personnel. Anybody else in Personnel?	369
And you talked a little bit	370
about Region South, and then you've got	371
central office. So, I'm thinking of	372
those three areas in the school system	373
Any additional people or, I'm hearing	374
Carol, but I don't think that time she	375
was an assistant superintendent.	376
TW: She was not. She never made	378
assistant superintendent in Union	379
County. There was not a	380
structure that provided	381
support for applicants. We did staff	382
development, but we did not do staff	383
development in administrative	384
leadership. If you, it was, as I said,	385
it was a much more informal "good ol'	386
boy": who were the power brokers, who	387
knows who, how does that play? A lot of	388
the people, and there were some	389
powerful, wonderful principals back in	390
those really early days, people that I	391
was truly in awe of for what they did	392

and what they knew. They seemed to have	393
these wonderful management skills, and	394
these wonderful perspectives of how	395
systems operate. I don't know where they	396
got that, you know, but it was there,	397
they had it. I think maybe that's a	398
part of growing up in settings where you	399
get administrative positions early in	400
life. And I think your research will	401
show that women go into the leadership	402
much later in life than men do. But	403
knowing that a little bit earlier was	404
always (unclear). If the guy was a	405
really great coach of a major sport,	406
then he had a really much better chance	407
- well, that kind of left me out (laugh)	408
- having an opportunity to move forward	409
I think some of that has to do just with	410
the management of what you have to	411
manage if you're going to be a head	412
football coach or a head baseball or	413
basketball coach. You have to manage	414
many things. I can really appreciate	415
the skill you have to have to do the job	416
now. In my earlier years - "What the	417
heck did sports have to do with running	418
a school, making an education, being a	419
instructional leader, making the	420
education program work?" But I can	421
certainly see how the skills translate	422
now. That was probably your greatest	423
training route, if you will, for people	424
in administration. And maybe that's why	425
there were more men principals: lots of	426
opportunity for people to see them in	427
quasi-administrative, quasi- leadership	428
role. At least that's my best rationale	429
for it right now.	430
 C: What happened that you got Hercules -	 432
knowing all this?	433
 TW: Knowing all this? Well, you've	 435
been at Hercules. I really think that my	436
experiences in working at Newland	437
and Trinity, particular Trinity, which	438

was a much more difficult, challenging	439
school because of its population, the	440
extent of its varieties, the challenge	441
the ranges of socio-economic and ethnic	442
population there, made me a better	443
candidate. Hercules was going through	444
major changes. At that time it was a	445
whopping 35 percent minority, which was	446
the biggest in the County. And I think	447
for that reason maybe many contenders	448
weren't terribly interested in applying	449
for Hercules. So, I don't want to take	450
away from the fact that I was selected	451
but I'm not sure there were a lot of	452
really wonderful candidates for it. And	453
I think that my experience in working	454
with a diverse population at Trinity	455
made me, maybe, a better candidate than	456
some of the folks who applied.	457
C: What year was this when you went to	459
Hercules?	460
TW: '82.	462
C: So, fall of '82?	464
TW: Uh huh, the fall of '82.	466
C: So the process was: was it	468
advertised? How did you know the	469
position was open?	470
TW: It was advertised.	472
C: It was advertised. Then –	474
TW: Panel. On the way to the panel	476
for principalship. That job was	477
advertised. I applied. I had moved,	478
was at Newland for about 2 1/2	479
years. Then I moved back to Trinity,	480
as an AP. In my mind I was thinking,	481
”Wally Unger's going to retire soon and if	482
I'm back at Trinity I'll have a better	483
chance of applying for principalship	484

there.” Wally didn't retire as fast as I	485
wanted him to, and Hercules came open.	486
And so I thought, “Well, okay, I'm	487
really ready. I wanna go be a	488
principal. So that one's open, and what	489
do I know about Hercules? Well, gosh, I	490
know it's really diverse. I know what	491
diversity is.” I did not know what	492
diversity was! I thought I did. And so	493
I applied, and I got the position.	494
 C: What kind of process did they use to	496
do the interviews?	497
 TW: They did, as I said, you had to	499
panel to be on the list. And then they	500
did another panel interview, but it was	501
a much smaller, tighter group. I think	502
there were only about three people, and	503
it was a discussion group. It was more	504
an area office decision than it was a	505
there was not community members	506
involved. There was not student member	507
involved. It was much more a central,	508
area, central office decision.	509
 C: Do you have a sense or feeling of	527
what kinds of questions, or what they	528
were looking for?	529
 TW: I think they were looking for, I	531
know some pieces that were really	532
important. You know how easy it is to	533
get stuck in your office and just never	534
get out of your office? I think that's	535
what had happened to the principal	536
before me. That he had been in his	537
office and hadn't been able to get out	538
and do any mixing, spend any time with	539
kids or with teachers. And that had	540
kind of made the school feel a little	541
bit more tenuous. And there had been	542
some other kinds of issues that weren't	543
very pretty there. There had been like	544
a student walk out or something. The	545

principal had not managed it well. Oh,	546
you know, sort of suspended 500 people	547
with a wave of the wand. (laugh) You	548
can imagine how that went! And the	549
issue was: they needed someone who	550
could come in and, like, clean some	551
house - seems like I always get jobs	552
like that - and go in and be more	553
inclusive, meet with teachers, meet with	554
kids, be interactive with teachers and	555
with kids. That was one thing. And	556
then, someone who would look at the	557
diversity as a positive. Welcome it;	558
try to work with it a little bit more.	559
Those were two things that I know were	560
really important. So that was some of	561
questions, some of the discussions, as	562
recall.	563
C: How long did it take them to decide,	565
to let you know you got it?	566
TW: Gosh, it didn't take a long it	568
all.	569
C: Oh, wow!	571
TW: It was within two or three days	573
after the interview that it was done.	574
C: Jack Lincoln was the Region	576
Superintendent. Who was the	577
Superintendent at that time?	578
TW: Yancey.	580

C: So, tell me about your first year!	592
TW: Oh, my goodness. My first year.	594
Actually, I went over in something like	595
October. I believe that's when it was.	596
I have a hard time starting new school	597
on time, for whatever reason. I didn't	598
start this one on time; I didn't start	599
Hercules on time! So when I walked in,	600

was already set up. But I think the 601
 other principal had sort of been out of 602
 there for a little while, so it was not, 603
 it was like – ready. It was empty. It 604
 was ready. So, getting to meet and 605
 getting to know. I had all these 606
 things, these opportunities for teachers 607
 come in and say hello and meet me, 608
 welcome me. And they did a lovely job 609
 of that. Now, you worry a little bit 610
 because that was, of course, the first 611
 female principal that Hercules had had. 612
 So worry a little bit about that: about 613
 who is she, what does she think she is 614
 that kind of thing. But you know, you 615
 kind of know that kind of stuff will be 616
 there. For the most part, I think I was 617
 welcomed, and people were kind of 618
 excited about having somebody there who 619
 could make a difference, they felt. Of 620
 course, that was a learning experience 621
 for me being at Hercules. A learning 622
 experience as a first-year, as a 623
 principal. Regardless of what you think 624
 you know, you find out very quickly that 625
 you don't know nearly as much as you 626
 need to know. So, but, that first year 627
 was really a learning one, just trying 628
 to figure out what was going on. One of 629
 the hardest things, as I know you know 630
 is when you go into a school, trying to 631
 look at what's happening, and assimilate 632
 what's happening, and not just turn 633
 everything upside down immediately. You 634
 have to give it a little bit of time, 635
 look at what's going on before you start 636
 looking at what you need to do to make 637
 changes. So that was a real challenge, 638
 looking at the whole structure. So, 639
 instructionally, drastically it needed 640
 some changes there to accommodate the 641
 kids who were there. (pause) In terms 642
 of student relationships, a desperate 643
 need to find a way to have kids working 644
 together and understanding each other a 645
 little bit more. And then, looking at 646

the whole issue of program: where is Hercules going as a school? Because there were some real, they were facing some real challenges. They still had a wonderful football team that won all kinds of championships. But you could see the kids were, the population was changing, and the guys coming in from Cambodia really weren't very good football players. So, it wasn't going to go very far. So you can begin to see how things were changing. Just in terms of Hercules, seeing itself not as a high class school, but as a very diverse population school. And that was some of, those were, like, the three arenas where the challenges were.	647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663
C: You talked about the teachers and that they welcomed you - testing you a little bit. How did the parents react?	665 666 667
TW: uh...	669
C: Or the community?	671
TW: I think as a rule they were really very appreciative of someone that would try to do the collaboration and have the communication. As is always true with parents, it depends on what they want. You know, if they're getting what they want, than everything is wonderful. A if they don't get what they want, than everything is not wonderful at all. I think that it's always a wire that you walk, that tries to bring parents in, and make them feel welcome, and make them a part of decision-making, and a part of your group process, and still able to know where you need to go, and make those lines. Uhm, it was, Hercules was very interesting because it had Senators' and Congressmen's children and grandchildren, and then it had the immigrants and the aliens, illegal	673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692

aliens there as well. So, it was a very	693
interesting thing to do. We had some,	694
we had to look at what we were doing	695
with our program, our instructional	696
programs, to be able to accommodate the	697
range there. Then we had to look at	698
what we were doing with our	699
extracurricular activities to	700
accommodate kids. So, it was a real,	701
real challenge, particularly when you're	702
sort of new in the box and don't know	703
all the resources that are out there.	704
The parent groups, I think the athletic	705
boosters, were really very good. They	706
were very supportive. The PTA was not	707
strong one at that point, for whatever	708
reasons, either it hadn't been	709
encouraged or hadn't coordinated	710
themselves to the point that they felt	711
they were really significant in their	712
roles. So I really didn't see a lot of	713
PTA effort and support. But there were	714
still ways in which the community was	715
very supportive. You would think in a	716
population like that, that you wouldn't	717
see many parents, regardless of what	718
kind of program you put on.	719
Back-to-School Night: always popular.	720
Parents would roll in. They would have	721
conversations. I can remember	722
left-handed compliments like: I	723
remember one lady – you know how you	724
always remember the terrible things -	725
this one lady walking out, and saying,	726
“I know nobody out there likes you, but	727
I think you're doing a wonderful job.”	728
(Laugh)	729
 C: This was at Back-to-School Night?	 731
 TW: It was at one of those big group	 733
things. Yeah. And I just happened to	734
be walking with a group, and just over	735
her shoulder, “Oh, by the way...” (Laugh)	736
 C: “Thank you.”	 738

TW: Yeah. So, it was just all those	740
kinds of things that - I have to say	741
that probably I did some things that	742
wouldn't help my cause, because I was	743
really focused on making sure that,	744
number one, discipline was the	745
discipline. You know how regardless of	746
who your daddy is, the discipline is	747
still the discipline. And the	748
instructional piece: trying to be sure	749
that we were doing what we needed to do	750
for kids - and looking at teachers, and	751
trying to get teachers who weren't doing	752
what they needed to do, and that always	753
ruffles feathers. And, so, I probably	754
went a little faster than I should have	755
although you don't make change if you	756
don't start. Once you jump in there,	757
you've got things to do, you just have	758
to keep moving.	759
C: Do you think the things that you	761
encountered was a result of you being	762
first-year principal or being a woman...	763
TW: Mmmm...	765
C: ... or a combination?	767
TW: Well, some of that, I think, I	769
have to own, just being really green,	770
and not picking where I needed to go,	771
deciding what I needed to do, or having	772
a full picture, understanding, a full	773
picture of what I needed to do. I	774
suspect that there's always some at that	775
point. There was doubt if you were	776
female on some people's parts. But I	777
think, for the most part, you make you	778
own reputation. Whether that be weak	779
submissive or compliant or strong-will	780
or hardheaded or collaborative or	781
cooperative, or whatever it is. You	782
make your own reputation there.	783

C: Did the school system offer any kind of support as far as – I hear you talking about the staff development, not knowing where the resources were. Did the school system offer any other support? You mentioned two other women who were high school principals? Did you all get together?	785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792
TW: There had been.	794
C: Did you all get together?	796
TW: No, I think by that point, Wilma had moved on into an upper level of administration, and Kim was close to retirement. So, there wasn't, and that was Strickland and this was Hercules, so that was all the way across the county. So, there wasn't - and there wasn't even any, that thought of “collaboration” – because I think that at that time, we didn't think of, none of us thought of women as partnering or working together. We thought of ourselves as “How do we fit in the man's world?” “How can we make this work in a man's world?” Not “How can we make, how can we bond together as women to talk about how we support each other?” So, you know, my buddies and my support were men.	798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815
C: And did that start – really, when you were an administrative assistant? mean...	817 818 819
TW: Oh, gosh, it's always the people who have really supported me and worked with me were men in the system. So that's been where it's been.	821 822 823 824
C: When you were at Hercules, you were a high school principal. Kim Kindle was at Strickland.	826 827 828
TW: Uh, huh, and Wilma was in	830

whatever position she was in. She was in Central Office.	831 832
C: Any other female high school principals at that time?	834 835
TW: No.	837
C: Just the two of you.	839
TW: Uh, huh.	841
C: Wow.	843
TW: Uh, huh.	845
C: And, then the monthly meetings of high school principals...	847 848
TW: Right. Uh, huh. Yeah. That' the way it was. There's still an awful lot of that. That, and Northern Region, and...	850 851 852 853
C: Of Virginia High School League?	855
TW: Of Virginia High School League. Oh, my gosh, I remember when I used to go down to Virginia High School League My first experience when I went down to Virginia High School League was that it was "one school, one vote," and it was voice vote. So, I was sitting there, and we got to the first item: "All in favor, say 'Yea'." And there was this barrel of "Yea," really deep. (laugh) I was like shell shock. What if I had said "no" in this squeaky voice? I never would have known what I was doing. It was unbelievable. Truly, it was fascinating; it was really fascinating. The only good part of that was this: there was no line at the lady's restroom.	857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874
C: No line.	876

TW: No line at the ladies restroom.	878
(laugh) You could walk right in. The	879
guys had to stand in line. That was the	880
only justice I saw in the whole thing.	881
C: Oh, my goodness.	883
TW: Yea. It was really pretty	885
fascinating back then. But, of course,	886
you know, things really have changed a	887
lot. We've seen an awful lot of women	888
looking for... To tell you the truth, I	889
know why there are more women - because	890
the qualifications for the women who are	891
applying for these jobs far outweigh the	892
qualifications of many of the men. I	893
mean, I'm really, I'm excited when I	894
look at who's going into principalship	895
and the kinds of folks they are, and	896
there's also this more subtle change of	897
what the job is about. The job is no	898
longer telling people what to do. The	899
job is much more being a collaborative	900
leader, and trying to be visionary, if	901
you will, and looking at the	902
instructional program. I really think	903
that in the very early days of my	904
principalship, discussion about	905
instruction was really limited in terms	906
of principals. I don't think principals	907
talked a lot about instruction. I	908
remember, you know, just looking at those	909
kinds of things I was trying to do, I	910
just didn't find many people I could	911
talk to about what I needed to do	912
instructionally at Hercules.	913
C: It almost sounds as if you were	915
ahead of your time. Or Hercules was ahead	916
of the rest of the school system, as far	917
as changes in the demographics...	918
TW: Well, it certainly was. It was	920
sort of ahead of the curve in terms of	921
all the changes that it was going	922

through. It was sort of a precursor of	923
things to come to the other schools.	924
But as you know, I mean, some of, many	925
of the schools were leveling off and	926
Hercules just continued to change. It's	927
just really a very unique school in	928
terms of all that was going on there,	929
and continues to go on.	930
 C: What's your favorite memory from	932
that first year?	933
 TW: I don't know whether it was	935
exactly the first year or not, but one	936
of the most, one of the most striking	937
memories I have is working with a group	938
of kids, and it was like, I, we just.	939
Oh, my gosh, we had this awful thing	940
where the new Hispanics were fighting	941
the old Hispanics, and the Cambodians	942
were fighting the Vietnamese, and the	943
Afghanis were fighting anybody who	944
showed up at their doorstep, and I'm	945
talking kids, on the grounds, coming in	946
with all that history of where they had	947
been. And it was very clear that we had	948
to do something to make them a more	949
cohesive place, and make them look at	950
as something they needed to work with,	951
as opposed to against. So, very	952
fortunate in having a police officer who	953
came by often who was really more	954
interested in conflict mediation than	955
something. He really didn't work, the	956
police didn't like, the other police	957
felt like he was a wimp, you know,	958
didn't really kick butt and take names	959
as much as he was looking at how do	960
you work with kids to make them feel a	961
bit more cooperative. And he was	962
Hispanic. So I had that guy. And	963
I had Tamber Yu, who is Vietnamese, as an	964
AP. And then another person, Sonia	965
Rojas, who was basically, she was an	966
employee of the system and she was a	967
U.S. citizen born and raised. She had	968

some Hispanic heritage, which she never	969
talked about that, so nobody would ever	970
know she had a Hispanic heritage. But	971
those three guys and I sort of began to	972
develop this organization, and we named	973
it, we named it "S.A.V.E.": "Students	974
Against a Violent Environment." And	975
there probably were, oh, my gosh, I	976
guess maybe 70 kids in that group. But	977
they were like leaders that we could	978
identify, and we really had some	979
hysterical times there trying to developed	980
conversations, and plans, and students as	981
speakers who were really, I think they	982
were far ahead of their time at taking	983
leadership and ownership of talking with	984
kids about how you, how we focus at what	985
we need to be working toward. It was	986
really a very fascinating time.	987
 C: Neat.	 989
 TW: Um, hmm. That was a lot of energy	 991
and a lot of effort. Instruction was	992
obviously within the school day. There	993
wasn't any other way to pull those kids	994
together because, of course, many of	995
them were working jobs and just all	996
kinds of family issues and family	997
demands.	998
 C: Did the media ever hear about that?	 1000
Hear about it?	1001
 TW: I have no clue. I don't know. I	 1003
think maybe after the fact, after I	1004
left, I think there may be have been	1005
some press coverage of what the	1006
organization was trying to do. I think	1007
there was some bit about it. I'm not	1008
sure it was something that we were	1009
terribly proud of back then, because it	1010
was not something that you looked at -	1011
the premise was that things were, that	1012
we weren't doing as well as we needed	1013
to. So you wouldn't want to advertise	1014

that. And then the organization itself	1015
was the kind of thing that I'm not sure	1016
people wanted to hear about, even with	1017
the Hercules community. I'm not sure that	1018
some of the community were real	1019
interested in what we were doing to try	1020
to make all our minorities work	1021
together. So, I don't know if they did	1022
or didn't. It was certainly effective	1023
It was a very positive thing for us at	1024
the time, to try to work on that. As I	1025
said, we're only 35 percent minority at	1026
that point, which is very fascinating.	1027
C: Now, the media, of course, covers	1029
sports. Did they cover anything else	1030
while you were there?	1031
TW: I can recall nothing being covered	1033
other than sports. For... I guess that	1034
there were... We had a couple of kids who	1035
were pages in the state assembly, you	1036
know, pages on the Hill, and that would	1037
get a little press. But that was a	1038
political connection.	1039
C: It sounds like you had a lot of	1055
people supporting you.	1056
TW: Within that school setting,	1058
absolutely.	1059
C: Any barriers, any... You know, when	1061
you were taking your classes; when you	1062
were applying for positions?	1063
TW: Hmmm.	1065
C: Maybe "barriers" is not a good word.	1067
Maybe: Obstacles? Challenges?	1068
TW: I truly don't see much that was in	1070
the way there, and perhaps it was my own	1071
naiveté. But, that was, I started	1072
working on coursework on the doctorate	1073

then, too, so maybe there wasn't enough	1074
time to stop and think about it, where	1075
the obstacles were. Time has always	1076
been an obstacle, you know, and that had	1077
nothing to do with anybody except all	1078
those things that you need to do and you	1079
want to do – get them all done. That's	1080
been sort of a way of life for me	1081
forever. I'm trying to think. I think	1082
I did my coursework from '82 to '85.	1083
finished my coursework in '85.	1084
 C: For your doctorate?	 1086
 TW: Uh, huh. I've been going to write	 1088
that dissertation since then. (laugh)	1089
So, as a matter of fact, my adviser, I	1090
think, has just about given up on me.	1091
He keeps saying, "Hey, listen..."	1092
 C: Did you go to Tucker for that,	 1094
too?	1095
 TW: No, Easton.	 1097
 C: Oh, Easton University?	 1099
 TW: Uh, huh. Well. Well. (Pause)	 1101
When you asked about barriers, and	1102
obstacles, and such, I'm not sure that	1103
"gender" is, um, the only issue. But	1104
have to believe it is some of an issue	1105
just in terms of credibility for how you	1106
think, or credibility for your ideas or	1107
thoughts. Now, not everybody has	1108
nothing but wonderful thoughts, or	1109
nothing but wonderful ideas. But, I	1110
think that it's very difficult to, in a	1111
world that's men, get the recognition	1112
get the voice, get the platform, if you	1113
will, to be able to advance ideas. I	1114
remember that at one high school	1115
principals meeting we were talking,	1116
well, we were have this big discussion,	1117
I can't even remember what the topic	1118
was. They're trying to figure out how	1119

to do something. So everybody had an	1120
idea about it, you know, so I'm sort of,	1121
but I. And I remember Tom Monroe	1122
saying: "Wait a minute. I think the	1123
little lady has an idea." And so it	1124
was, sort of, you had to have almost an	1125
intro to the forum to be able to get a few	1126
thoughts on the table. But that was	1127
just, you know, I guess that's kind of	1128
the way it's been. Maybe you can look at	1129
that as two different things: as	1130
something else you need to do to get	1131
around or get over, or "Oh, my, there's	1132
an obstacle." I'm not really ever taken	1133
the time to work through that.	1134
C: It sounds like you had a vision –	1136
you knew where you were going, and, uhm,	1137
whatever it took	1138
TW: I think that's really and truly	1140
how I've operated. Maybe that's not	1141
always good, but, yes, you look at where	1142
you want go and then you just have to	1143
see how you're going to get there. And	1144
you just have to kind of work harder or	1145
longer or around something or through	1146
something. It's just really where I've	1147
kind've been.	1148
C: Now, your mom was a teacher.	1150
TW: Uh, hum.	1152
C: So, what, so, for you to go into	1154
teaching, that, that was a natural.	1155
TW: Uh, hum. That was natural. Uh,	1157
hum.	1158
C: So what did your family say when	1160
you said, "I wanna be a principal. I	1161
want go into administration."	1162
TW: That's a good question! I don't	1164
know, to tell you the truth. (laugh)	1165

I have lots of siblings, and I guess they	1166
were just – but I'm the oldest, so it	1167
was like, “Okay, whatever she wants to	1168
do, I guess she can do it. No doubt!”	1169
(laugh) Oh, my goodness. I think being	1170
strong-willed is a part of our family,	1171
but I also think that I have more than	1172
my share. And maybe that's kind of the	1173
way I've gotten to where I've gotten.	1174
And maybe if I hadn't been so	1175
strong-willed, I could have been in	1176
other places. I don't know. You don't	1177
know that until you sort of reflect back	1178
to where you are, and what you've done	1179
Now...	1180
C: Oh, one thing I didn't ask you	1182
about. The school board at that time	1183
was elected – no, was appointed.	1184
TW: Uh, hum.	1186
C: Was there any interactions with	1188
them as you were going through the	1189
interview process, or that first year	1190
when you were at Hercules?	1191
TW: I did not see any	1193
interactions with the school board much	1194
at all at the, in the Hercules job. I	1195
think it was just a part of the	1196
operation. The Nexton District was	1197
right down the way, and you had some	1198
interaction with Nexton District. But I	1199
didn't feel that the school board, per	1200
se, had much interaction. Now, I know	1201
a point of fact, that some of the board	1202
members were really pretty intense.	1203
And, you know, I know that at least one	1204
of my colleagues found that out running	1205
into a real buzz saw with a school board	1206
member. But that, I think, was just	1207
simply not realizing what he was walking	1208
into. But I didn't see, I didn't see	1209
much there. I did see, now, of course	1210
when I moved into the superintendent's	1211

assistant position, and that was nothing	1212
but board interaction. And that was	1213
certainly...	1214
C: That was after Hercules?	1216
TW: That was after Hercules. Right. I	1218
went from Hercules to the Superintendent	1219
Office, Dr. Henderson, as his assistant	1220
That was truly a political, uhm, it was	1221
a political position in that it was	1222
nothing but interaction with the board	1223
and other political settings. It was	1224
the time of Blue-Ribbon Commission on	1225
merit pay. There were all kinds of	1226
things that were really intense there.	1227
I would say that it was that particular	1228
point at which being a female was very	1229
difficult. And where I found the	1230
difficulty was in interaction with other	1231
female board members. It was not a	1232
pretty scene. I still to this day don't	1233
know what I did that wound up being so	1234
abrasive to some of the female board	1235
members. I think it was simply being	1236
female. And that, and that was a real	1237
struggle, you know, because I, certainly	1238
I did not view myself as building any	1239
political power. But I think that was,	1240
that was a setting, that was a learning	1241
year. It was a very difficult one. It	1242
was a learning year. And it was a year	1243
that created some perspectives for me	1244
that, that will be with me for very long	1245
time, because that was, it was not	1246
really what you said or what you	1247
thought, it was about how you were	1248
perceived as doing, what you were	1249
perceived as doing, what were your	1250
politics. It wasn't about education,	1251
about what can we do to make the	1252
educational program stronger. It was	1253
about "what are your doing for the	1254
political party?" And that was	1255
certainly not my ballgame. That wasn't	1256
what I was interested in. So that was a	1257

real struggle. It was a learning curve.	1258
It was good for me. It gave me a	1259
perspective, and it was like, “Do you	1260
wanna play in this arena or do you want to	1261
play in this arena?” and when you look	1262
at that, you know, you make your	1263
decisions. I think you have so much	1264
positive energy and so much negative.	1265
And, you know, you can spend a lot of	1266
time on negative stuff or you can decide	1267
that, where are you gonna put your	1268
energies. And if you're going to put	1269
your energies on the positive stuff,	1270
then you got, you know, decide where you	1271
want to go, where you want to work.	1272
And that was a very decision-making year	1273
for me. It was really a very much	1274
critical piece.	1275
C: So you were at Hercules for how many	1277
years?	1278
TW: Three.	1280
C: Three years. And then you did this	1282
for a year?	1283
TW: Um, hmmm.	1285
C: Very interesting.	1287
TW: And then after that year, I went	1289
to Dominion High School.	1290
C: Was, was, did you apply to go to	1292
this other position with the	1293
superintendent?	1294
TW: Um. I was asked if I would like	1296
to be considered. And I was promoted by	1297
Jack Lincoln. I know that Jack Lincoln	1298
promoted me for that position. It was	1299
shortly after Henderson came into the	1300
system, that he was looking for an	1301
assistant. So...	1302

C: What a nice opportunity.	1304
TW: Um, it was! It was a very, very much a learning curve for me. As I said, I was just beginning to, kind of get my feet like really settled in terms of the principalship. So I thought, well, of course, I knew what principalship was about at that point. don't know everything, I don't know everything yet, knew a bit more after the three years, kind of what it was like. And so then moving in to that job was, in some ways, a good one, easy to do. In other ways, still a learning curve. It was another learning curve - maybe I should say that.	1306 1307 1308 1309 1310 1311 1312 1313 1314 1315 1316 1317 1318 1319 1320
C: I've asked you a lot of questions. Is there anything that you'd like to add that maybe I didn't ask?	1322 1323 1324
TW: Well, I don't know if, I'm not. You know, one of the things is, as you sort of progress through all of this, the memory tends to fade, tends to take the, my memory tends to take the negative stuff and take it out of the picture. The world's full of enough stuff that you don't want to look at. So I think looking at the experiences that I've had, they have really been very, very interesting ones and very good ones. And, I guess, the other part of it is, I've always enjoyed what I've done. It's been great fun whatever I've been doing. And I think about people who talk about how they don't like what they do; of people who are tired of teaching but are still teaching; the people who are just kind of sitting around as administrators, as opposed to doing what they need to do. And I think, "Well, that must be terrible, a terrible way to spend your life." If you don't like what you're doing, I	1326 1327 1328 1329 1330 1331 1332 1333 1334 1335 1336 1337 1338 1339 1340 1341 1342 1343 1344 1345 1346 1347 1348 1349

think you need to sort of look around	1350
and make a change. That would be,	1351
that's kind of where I would be always	1352
I think, philosophically in terms what to	1353
do. I can't think of anything else that	1354
would help you in looking at early years	1355
of principalship and where you go. But	1356
if I come up with something else, I'd be	1357
happy to give you a yell.	1358

Appendix E

Interview of Georgia Xavier

Case Study for 1990s

(Interview conducted April 26, 2002)

C: At what point did you decide to go into education?	3 4
GX: As far back as being in elementary school. We used to play with other children in the neighborhood, and I always wanted to be the teacher. And it just evolved from that. (laugh) But at the time - when I was in high school I was trying to decide if I wanted to be a history teacher or a physical education teacher because I loved both areas, and decided I'd do the health and physical education, hoping to minor in history but was unable to do both.	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
C: So, when you went to college, you then became a PE teacher?	20 21
GX: Yes.	23
C: And what grades did you do PE?	25
GX: Elementary, middle school, high school.	27 28
C: And this was in Union County?	30
GX: All of my teaching experiences have been in Union County.	32 33

C: Where, which schools?	40
GX: The first school was Loring Elementary School. I would flip between Loring Elementary School and	42 43 44

Elm. And then the next year I was	45
all Loring Elementary, and there for	46
two years. Came to Fisher for	47
a year. And Indigo was opening up,	48
so I went to Indigo Secondary School	49
and taught the high school there. And,	50
then I left the system because of	51
children, came back teaching math and	52
science at Pine View, and then I taught	53
physical education at Pine View and then	54
went on to other areas.	55
C: My goodness! At one point did you	57
say, "I'm really enjoying teaching,	58
but now I'm going to go into	59
administration"?	60
GX: It was kind of by accident. Children	62
and adults use to come to me all the	63
time for advice, and I actually was	64
going to go into counseling. And I	65
was told by the principal at the time	66
that I was going back to school to get	67
a counseling degree, and he said, "No,	68
Georgia." He said, "I see you as a	69
principal." And he said, "That's what	70
you need to do." So I said, "Well,	71
Oh, OK." And that's when I started	72
pursuing that area.	73
C: And was this when you were at -?	75
GX: At Pine View.	77
C: At Pine View. That's interesting that	79
you were talking about counseling, and	80
the principal saying - what made him	81
suggest that you go into	82
administration?	83
GX: He said he saw things in me which he	85
said I wasn't even aware that were in	86
me. He said I just needed the	87
confidence to do it. And, I said,	88
"Well, OK. If you say I can do it, I	89
can do it."	90

C: Did he give you things to do to practice, or, I don't know – check you out? (laugh)	92 93 94
GX: Not really. No, he didn't.	96
C: Were you working with adults at the time, too?	98 99
GX: No, I wasn't, other than my colleagues. And my colleagues did have a tendency to seek me out for advice. And, even as an assistant principal years later, people come up to me – I didn't have a doctorate degree – but they came up to me and said, “OK, Dr. Xavier, I need some counseling.” Or, something like that, you know, for advice. They did that to me a lot.	101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111
C: Isn't that nice that you had that almost innate ability for people to feel comfortable to come to you. Is it something that just came naturally, or you just, you developed it?	113 114 115 116 117
GX: It's just naturally, I think.	119
C: Were you a department chair in PE?	121
GX: No, I wasn't. Which, you know, was quite surprising, and was quite complimentary, for him to insist that I go the administrative route.	123 124 125 126

C: Did he offer some help as you were doing your coursework at college?	134 135
GX: Well, he, we were only there a year together before he moved on to another position. But he did, once I had my coursework completed, he did tell me let him know and he'd be more than	137 138 139 140 141

willing to put in a good word for me, and I know that he did that on several occasions.	142 143 144
C: Well, isn't that wonderful. That's nice to have that support. Were there others that were supporting you as you were going through that change, and through your education to become an administrator?	146 147 148 149 150 151
GX: Yes. There was another principal at the same school that, who on my final evaluation, he wrote that he saw me in a leadership position and that I should pursue a principalship.	153 154 155 156 157
C: That's quite a compliment. That's an encouragement.	159 160
GX: Yes.	162
C: Wow. Did you go to university around here?	164 165
GX: I went to Easton.	167
C: OK. Through the extension center, or did you have to go...	169 170
GX: I was, uh, the courses were off campus.	172 173
C: So, up here in Union County.	175
GX: Yes.	177
C: And, were there a lot of women in the classes themselves?	179 180
GX: No. No, primarily males. And most of the men were, happen to be physical education men, coaches and so on. Very few women were in the classes.	182 183 184 185
C: I didn't ask you if you coached. Did	187

you coach?	188
GX: Well, I was an assistant track coach at Norman.	190 191
C: Oh, OK. Would this have been while you were at Pine View?	193 194
GX: Yes.	196
C: So, you're going to classes. Do you remember which classes you had to take?	198 199 200
GX: (laugh) Finance, human resources, school law... (laugh)	202 203
C: Yea.	205
GX: Personnel, supervision, curriculum.	207
C: And, did it seem like it was the same group of you taking and ... You know now we have cohorts.	209 210 211
GX: Yes, there was a tendency to be the same crowd in each of the classes. Even though it wasn't a cohort group, but we got to know each other that way because we did end up in the same classes. And some of my classmates were actually interested in, not just in the principalship, but director of student activities, you know, those sorts of things. There was a variety in the courses.	213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223
C: And there were only just a few women when you were taking it?	225 226
GX: Yes.	228
C: And did they seem to have the same background as you, as far as PE, and with maybe an interest in counseling? Or were they from different	230 231 232 233

backgrounds?	234
GX: There was more a variety among the few women in the courses. A lot of them had English and social studies backgrounds.	236 237 238 239
C: Did you find yourselves working together as all women? Or, did you mingle with the guys when you did group projects?	241 242 243 244
GX: We mingled with the guys. It was a very warm group. We really assisted each other and supported each other.	246 247 248
C: Now did that support continue once you completed the program and everyone was interviewing for positions?	250 251 252
GX: Um, no, we went our separate ways. But, I did have some other experiences in the county in which I was able to some relationships with some people who eventually went into administration, and over the years those relationships continued.	254 255 256 257 258 259 260
C: And those didn't come as a result of the university classes.	262 263
GX: No. No. No. But when I got my doctorate - that group, yes. A cohort group.	265 266 267
C: I see.	269
GX: There was a closer relationship beyond the classroom. (laugh)	271 272
C: Yea. Was your doctorate with Easton, as well?	274 275
GX: No, it was with Elvington.	277
C: Elvington. Did they have an	279

extension down here, or did you have to travel?	280 281
GX: We, they had courses up here in Union County, and we had to spend two summers on campus.	283 284 285
C: Oh, I see. I see. You finish your coursework. I'm just trying to put a timeline in my mind. So, you finish your coursework at Easton. Then, um, you mentioned doing some other activities. Were those, where you got to meet other people. Were those organizations, uh...	287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294
GX: Years ago, the county had something similar to what they were having at the time, a mission, I forget the program, but years ago we had opportunities to be in classes in which people would come to us, at our site, and at that time there were quite a few of those, those aspiring administrators and we formed some relationships, and some have continued since that time. And I had a chance to, at Highland High School, one summer, to be an acting summer school principal. And some of those people I still see from time to time. And we encourage each other. So there really were opportunities. And years ago, Union County use to have program audits, and I use to be on many of the audit teams, and that gave me real good insight as to the job of a good administrative, excellent experience.	296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317
C: You got to go around to different schools?	319 320
GX: I would go around and audit curriculum programs, school climate, interview teachers and the administrative staff. And sometimes	322 323 324 325

students, depending on the level, we	326
audited the schools. And I spent	327
close to three years in the, at that	328
time, the Region South Office, working	329
actually out of two offices, HR, which	330
was Personnel at that time, and Region South	331
as a human relations specialist. So,	332
that also gave me a chance to be in	333
and out of the schools, and working	334
with adults on a different level, from	335
administrative to administrative,	336
looking at issues.	337
C: What a nice opportunity. Did you,	339
after you finished your coursework,	340
did you go into the Region Office, human	341
resources/personnel, or did you go	342
into assistant principal?	343
GX: No, I went into human relations	345
first. I was interviewing for an	346
assistant principal position, and one	347
of the, the director of the	348
organization at the time, human	349
relations, was one of the panelists	350
for assistant principal, to get your	351
name on the eligibility, so his	352
coordinator called me at school and	353
said they had an opening, would I be	354
interested in it?	355

C: That's nice. Now, these panels.	361
There was a panel for each level of	362
administration?	363
GX: Yes. First, to get your name on the	365
"list of eligibles," you first had to	366
have the coursework to be certified.	367
And then you had to present, or	368
respond to questions. And usually six	369
to eight people, and they would rate	370
you. And you would be on the list for	371
three years. And if you didn't get a	372
job in that time, then you had to go	373
back and re-interview with the panel.	374

And it was for each level. And at the	375
time, the API was “administrative	376
assistant,” that’s what they were	377
called, “administrative aide,” that’s	378
what they use to call APIs. Then you	379
had to interview for APII, and if you	380
wanted to be an associate principal.	381
Every level, you had to go before and	382
get your name on the list. And that	383
was just to get on the list. Then the	384
principal would go and look at the	385
list of eligibility and then make a	386
determination as to which applicants	387
would be interviewed.	388
C: Where was your first assistant	390
principalship?	391
GX: It was, uh, it’s difficult to say	393
because I had opportunities before I	394
was “official.” (laugh)	395
C: Practice ones!	397
GX: Yes. I had an opportunity to go to	399
Rose, to fill in behind someone. To	400
Richardson, when Richardson was a middle	401
school. And those were short terms. I	402
also had an opportunity to do a half a	403
year at the old Upton High School,	404
when it was in the process of merging	405
into, with Trinity to from Dickinson.	406
It was shortly after that	407
experience, when I had an opportunity	408
to go to Oak Ridge High School. So I was	409
official when I went to Oak Ridge.	410
C: It sounds like you were, had the	412
fortune to have many experiences to	413
really help you with administration,	414
so that when you became assistant	415
principal, and probably later as	416
principal, that that could really give	417
you some support.	418
GX: You’re right. When I think about	420

Upton, in particular, the emotions	421
were very high; teachers and community	422
very upset. So, I had to deal with	423
that as being part of that staff. And,	424
also, as being a human relations	425
specialist, I was dealing with some	426
extremely difficult cases. Sometimes,	427
staff against administration,	428
sometimes parents against parents, and	429
secretaries against secretaries. And	430
I would be called to mediate, to come	431
up with strategies so people could get	432
along better. So, yes, I had a lot of	433
good experiences that helped me go	434
into situations. And I feel I was an	435
over (garbled).	436
C: So you were assistant principal at	438
Oak Ridge. Do you remember what year that	439
was?	440
GX: Yes. 1985 – 1990. And during that	442
time, when the principal retired, I	443
was the acting principal at Oak Ridge High	444
School until the new principal arrived	445
at the school.	446
C: And then you became, your first	448
principalship was at?	449
GX: Newland High School.	451
C: Newland. And that was 1990?	453
GX: 1990. But let me kind of back step.	455
I did have an opportunity to be the	456
summer school principal at Strickland,	457
as when the summer school – the middle	458
school and the high schools were	459
combined for summer school. So, I had	460
the secondary summer school site.	461
C: That's quite a challenge when you	463
have both levels in one building.	464
GX: Yes.	466

C: That is quite a challenge! Was	468
there a reason why you decided to go	469
high school instead of middle school,	470
know that you had both levels of	471
experience?	472
GX: I really do like both levels very	474
well, very much. And I was, and I had	475
interviewed for a couple of middle	476
school positions, which, you know, of	477
course, I did not get one. So I was	478
really open to both levels.	479
C: When you interviewed for Newland,	481
how did you know the position	482
was open?	483
GX: That was different. This is a	485
different story. I officially	486
interviewed a year after I had the	487
job. But, initially, I was, uh,	488
during cafeteria duty at Oak Ridge High	489
School, and a student came to get me	490
to say that I was wanted at the main	491
office. So when I got to the main	492
office, the secretary said, "You need	493
to call Dr. Howard. He's at	494
Central Office. And you need" - Dr.	495
Howard was the Region South Superintendent	496
- "and you need to – it's urgent." So	497
I called him. "Can you be up here at	498
Central Office right away?" And I asked,	499
"Why?" And he said, "I cannot tell	500
you, but you need to be up here." He	501
said, "Call the Superintendent's	502
secretary and tell her you are on your	503
way." At that time, my hands were	504
shaking because I did not know. I	505
thought, "This is serious stuff, being	506
called up to the Superintendent's	507
Office in the middle of the day." And	508
the secretary had to dial for me	509
because my fingers just wouldn't work.	510
And his secretary said, "Be here in	511
20 minutes." So when I got	512

Central Office, there were a group of	513
personnel specialists, and my first	514
thought was that a hearing was about	515
to take place; I was the object of the	516
hearing; and this was going to be big.	517
And I was greeted by one of the Personnel	518
people, and they said, “You need to go	519
straight upstairs.” I got up there	520
and waited for a while. When I met	521
with the Superintendent, it was at	522
that time he said that the previous	523
principal had gotten promoted, was	524
going to be in a new position – this	525
was on a Friday – and he said that we	526
were thinking about who could go in	527
and replace her, and we thought that	528
you could do the job. And I had to	529
decide right then and there. I could	530
not think about it because they wanted	531
me to start that Monday.	532
C: Oh, my goodness. And they didn't	534
give you any clue that this was	535
coming?	536
GX: No – completely shocked.	538
C: Now did they, did they call it “staff	540
development”?	541
GX: “Acting principal.” Acting, they	543
called it “acting.” And at the end of	544
the year they opened it up to others,	545
and I interviewed at that time.	546
C: So, at that time, did they	548
advertise? How did they advertise?	549
GX: They advertised in the School	551
Communications B. And they had about	552
35 applicants, some outside candidates.	553
Most of the candidates were from within the	554
system.	555
C: Now, you mentioned a “she.” So, had	557
there been other female principals at	558

this school?	559
GX: No, she was the first. In fact,	561
when I was principal in this county	562
there were only six females, high	563
school principals, that sat around the	564
table of 23 principals.	565
C: Oh, my goodness. So, Newland...	567
GX: Yes. There was Hercules, with Theresa	569
Williams, Highland High School,	570
Sara Morrow at North Point, and Otelia	571
Garden at Loring, and, did I get them	572
all?	573
C: Maybe one more. Strickland?	575
GX: Umm...	577
C: Kim Kindle?	579
GX: No, Kim Kindle had left. In fact,	581
when I look back, Theresa Williams had gone	582
up to Central Office and Michelle Duncan	583
was at Hercules. I can't remember who	584
else. I do remember there were six of	585
us.	586
C: That must have been very interesting	588
to have all those men.	589
GX: It was interesting, but I think the	591
men were beginning to see a trend,	592
because within a short period of time	593
they went from, maybe, one female high	594
school principal to six, I would say,	595
formed in a matter of three or four	596
years. And, you could just sort of	597
see that the culture was changing. At	598
that time some of the men were feeling	599
uncomfortable having the females	600
around, they couldn't talk their usual	601
talk. And most of the females, well,	602
I would say all of the female	603
principals, were really about	604

instruction. I'm not saying the men	605
weren't, but the emphasis was really	606
placed highly on instruction in how	607
the meetings were being run,	608
committees to get on, our goals as an	609
organization.	610
C: Who was, did you have chair? Or a	612
president?	613
GX: Yes, Mark Rogers, when I first got	615
on-board, he was the president.	616
C: You mentioned the culture was	618
changing. What do you remember back	619
then about the culture changing?	620
GX: (laugh) Well, the men were, some	622
were somewhat hesitant to speak out as	623
I think they had done before. And	624
even by, I saw a real change in my 8 ½	625
years as principal there, so from the	626
time I was there in 1990 to the end,	627
and I could really see a gradual	628
change where the men - in the	629
beginning they were taking leadership	630
roles, some were kind of beginning to	631
withdraw. By the time I left the	632
principal position, the women, first	633
of all the number of women had	634
increased significantly, and the men	635
were really taking a back step, and	636
saying "You do what you want to do."	637
Very few of them actually participated	638
verbally, or action-wise, into what we	639
were doing, as if "You women have come	640
in and taken over our organization."	641
C: So some of them, I'm not going say	643
all of them because that wouldn't be	644
fair, but did some of them seem angry?	645
GX: I wouldn't say angry, but, "You're	648
in our territory; you're in the good	649
'ol boys club." If you think about	650

kids growing up, and you have your	651
little – the boys have their little	652
clubs, and the girls have their clubs,	653
and their little secret things to do –	654
and it was almost as if we were	655
invading secret types of things. Not	656
that they were anything bad, but just	657
the comfort level, I think. They	658
couldn't, perhaps the language	659
probably had to change somewhat, the	660
jokes, the fishing stories, and that	661
kind of thing.	662
C: Go play golf.	664
GX: Yes.	666
C: Did you, you mentioned that the	668
women seem to be more centered on	669
instruction. Did you see that make a	670
change as well over that time period?	671
GX: Yes. When I first got there, I got	673
on two committees: the instructional	674
committee and the budget committee.	675
And in the beginning there were	676
several men on the instructional	677
committee, but as time went on you saw	678
fewer and fewer men on the	679
instructional committee, maybe one.	680
And the men tended to do the facility	681
services, general services. Personnel	682
always had a good	683
representation. Special Education was	684
primarily women who met with the	685
assistant superintendent of that. So,	686
it's just all, how they decided which	687
committees - it was all voluntary, so,	688
you know, anybody could chose to be on	689
whatever committee - but I just know	690
that the women tended to go more	691
towards the instructional types of	692
committees.	693
C: When you, that first year, I'm going	695
to take you back to the first year.	696

What was the school like? What kinds	697
of, you know, of student population?	698
What kind of teachers? The first	699
year, what was it like?	700
 GX: The school was in transition. For	702
many, many years it had been an upper	703
middle class community. We were	704
cognizant of our struggling families,	705
had very few minorities, students.	706
When I got there, although the white	707
students were in the majority, it was	708
over the last couple of years it was	709
changing. There were a lot of	710
internal/external fighting.	711
Externally, parents were fighting for	712
leadership of the school and	713
leadership among the parent groups. To	714
give you an example, the president of	715
the Athletic Director's Booster	716
organization and the president of the	717
PTA were at odds with each other. And,	718
when I was assigned there, the	719
Athletic Booster president would not	720
speak to the PTA President, and it was	721
my job to try to bring them together	722
and, that was one of my projects.	723
Internally, there was discord among	724
the administrative staff. And, a lot	725
of this I had gotten from a couple of	726
APs, assistant principals. When I had	727
got there, you know, they were telling	728
me some of the issues I was going to	729
have to deal with. They said the men,	730
male administrators, depending on the	731
issues, the men administrators would	732
be opposite the female administrators.	733
And then it was a different issue if	734
it was a racial issue - then it became	735
black against white. And the	736
teachers, there were a lot of turmoil	737
among the teachers. One of the	738
assistant principals, while we touring	739
around the building on my third day on	740
the job, which was a Wednesday, she	741
said, "We need to go to the lecture	742

hall to the sensitivity meeting that	743
we have every Wednesday.” And I said,	744
“What are you talking about?” And she	745
said, “Because the teachers are	746
fighting among themselves.” So when I	747
got there, teachers were in tears,	748
they were accusing each other, showing	749
favoritism either toward the minority	750
kids or not doing their jobs. So that	751
was an issue. Fortunately, the	752
students, they were fine! (laugh)	753
 C: They were fine!	 755
 GX: Yes. Because, going in the	 757
cafeteria and in the halls, I saw a	758
good mixture of children, you know,	759
associating with each other. And when	760
there were fights that took place, it	761
tended to be within their race. And	762
it tended to be over, it was boys over	763
girls, not, very rarely, a racial	764
issue had come into play. And another	765
thing that I found that I was very	766
impressed with the students: at that	767
time Newland High School, as I	768
said was going through a transition	769
period, and we had a very, very	770
wealthy families that lived in million	771
dollar homes. And then we had a lot	772
of kids, black and white, that lived	773
in apartments, low-income apartments,	774
and trailers, because there were	775
trailer camps. And I didn't see	776
polarization among the socio-economic	777
levels. I saw kids mainly with each	778
other, and that was quite surprising	779
that the have-nots and the haves - you	780
would see them get into cars together.	781
It was just - I was impressed with	782
that.	783
 C: You wonder where they got that from.	 785
What a test for your human relation	786
skills.	787

GX: One of the things I had to face, one	789
of the biggest challenges that I had	790
to face, was being accepted by the	791
community. The teachers, fortunately,	792
for the most part, were very positive.	793
They had called around, once I got	794
there, they had called around and so	795
they got good reports about me. But	796
the community was very, very angry.	797
The black community was upset because	798
they had, I had found out, they had	799
requested that they wanted a minority	800
principal because of the changes.	801
However, they wanted a male minority.	802
They did not want a black female	803
principal because they didn't think	804
females could do the job. And, the	805
white community made it clear, the	806
number one choice was a white male,	807
the number two choice was a black	808
male, the number three choice was a	809
white female, and there was no place	810
for a black female. And I got	811
threatening, anonymous threatening	812
calls that "we'll never accept you,	813
black so-and-so, as principal of this	814
school." I got hate letters. And the	815
superintendent, the assistant	816
superintendent, came down and he said,	817
"Are you OK?" I said, "Well, as long	818
as they're not shooting at me." I	819
said, "I'm sorry. I'm going to stay	820
here as long as I, you know, intend to	821
stay here." I said, "They don't shoot	822
at me, I'm OK. They can say whatever	823
they want to say, but I'm not	824
leaving." And, so the first	825
several years were tough, but the good	826
thing about it - some of those people	827
who opposed me came out, ended up	828
being some of my biggest supporters.	829
After three or four years, I can	830
remember one leader of the community	831
came in and said, he said, "I	832
apologize." He said, "because I	833
didn't give you an opportunity to	834

demonstrate what you could do.” He	835
said, “I just made some assumptions.”	836
He said, “I can see you are here for	837
the kids and for the school. Anything	838
you want me to do, I can do.” And the	839
black men leaders in the community,	840
after the first year, became	841
supportive, and it was years later,	842
when they told me why they made a	843
change. One of, who was the president	844
of the Minority Student Achievement	845
parent group, said that (sigh) he and	846
the PTA president tried to bully me.	847
And he said when I called them at	848
their offices and said I want you in	849
my office immediately. And they both	850
came in to the Principal's Office, and	851
I told them, I said, “I'm going to	852
run this school the best way that I	853
think it should be run. You're either	854
with me, or you're not with me. But I	855
am not going to be intimidated. I am	856
not going to,” you know, “be pushed	857
around. I'm going to do what's right.”	858
When I told them that, and they said	859
they considered themselves bullies,	860
they said this lady is not going to	861
take any stuff. And they became, they	862
really became, really very supportive.	863
C: What challenges – and a lot of this	866
was your first year. How did you get	867
the support for this?	868
GX: I think a lot of it came from some	870
of those past experiences of being in	871
different situations. And, one of the	872
people that, on the Leadership Team,	873
that really I did not want to	874
disappoint him because I felt like he	875
was behind me, and that was Bob	876
Jackson. At the time, he was the one	877
who had hired me as API, or	878
administrative aide, down, when I was	879
down at Oak Ridge. He was the one who had	880

approved that, approved when I moved	881
up within the school as APII, and	882
appointed me the summer school	883
principal. And I think he had a lot	884
to do when they were looking for	885
someone to go to the school. I think	886
he had a lot to say, you know, about	887
me going in. He was Deputy	888
Superintendent at the time. But, he	889
was always very encouraging, and,	890
once, when we were talking on the	891
telephone, and he said, "Remember,	892
Georgia," he said, "You are a	893
former athlete. You ran track." And	894
he said, "You don't finish until you	895
cross that line." And he said, "You	896
are just starting. I'm behind you. I	897
know you can do the job." And as	898
long as I knew that he felt I could	899
do the job I wasn't going to	900
disappoint him, I was going to hang in	901
there.	902
C: Did you find that the assistant	904
principals that you had at Newland,	905
were they gathering to support	906
you as well?	907
GX: Well, yes and no. The female	909
assistant principals were wonderful,	910
absolutely wonderful.	911
C: How many did you have?	913
GX: I had four.	915
C: Four.	917
GX: We were in a subschool situation.	919
And, and the men weren't hostile, so	920
it wasn't a relationship where I felt	921
uncomfortable. But, one of the	922
assistant principals, within that	923
time, from Friday, when I was told by	924
the superintendent that I was going to	925
be the principal that Monday, during	926

that time period he had moved into the	927
principal's office and had sent out	928
memos to the faculty with his name and	929
“Acting Principal.” And so it wasn't	930
until Monday when I walked in that he	931
realized that I was going to be the	932
principal. So, yes, he did, he did do	933
his job. And he did, when we had our	934
meetings, our meetings, what had been	935
said to me about the internal	936
fighting, none of that took place, you	937
know, which I was glad. I just, it	938
just didn't, you know. We had to work	939
together. So I was very pleased that	940
I didn't have to deal with that. The	941
other male that was there I think he	942
had been promised that he was going to	943
move into, not principal at that	944
school, but the previous principal had	945
taken him under her wing, and he	946
wanted that same kind of attention,	947
and I just treated him just like I	948
treated the other assistant	949
principals. So he just didn't get his	950
special treatment, so he moved on.	951
C: I agree with you that our past	953
experiences do give us the strength...	954
GX: Yes.	956
C: ...when we start that new position.	958
What did your family say?	959
GX: My family, well, my family was real	961
pleased. And my mother, she said	962
something to me that I didn't even	963
realize that she thought of me in that	964
way - and, I guess, maybe that's what	965
the two principals that I told you	966
about in the middle school who said to	967
go into administration - she said that	968
- by the way, my family, my mother and	969
father, had six children and I was the	970
oldest - and she said, “Of all our	971
kids, you were always the strongest.”	972

And, so she was proud, but was not	973
surprised one bit, you know, that I	974
was able to do the job. And my	975
husband said, "If anybody wanted to	976
know about how tough she is, just"	977
(laugh) "all they have to do is ask	978
me. She sure knows how to push me	979
around!" (laugh)	980
C: Ahh.	982
GX: My demeanor is deceiving, because on	984
the surface - and I am sweet – on the	985
surface I come across sweet. I'm not	986
one, I am not a yeller. I'm not one	987
who has a big stick. But people know	988
when I mean something, they know I'm	989
serious. And, so I've not really had	990
difficulty dealing with people, or	991
people trying to push me around	992
because they know that they can only	993
go so far and I will put a stop to it.	994

C: That first year, did any of the	1002
other principals help you, or, in any	1003
way?	1004
GX: Yes. Oscar Young, who had been the	1006
principal appointed to Oak Ridge High School	1007
my last two years. He was the one	1008
after I was "acting," he was the one	1009
who was appointed. He was real	1010
pleased that, you know, I got the	1011
position. So he, and Eric Olive, and	1012
Mark Rogers, kind of took me under	1013
their wing. So, kind of going back	1014
towards the culture changing, the good	1015
thing about it, I felt that those	1016
gentlemen, you know, treated me, you	1017
know, like I was one of them. When we	1018
would have our monthly	1019
principal/athletic directors meetings	1020
at, that were normally held at Vista,	1021
we would all meet over at the Roy	1022
Rogers at the time for lunch before	1023

going there. So they really made me	1024
feel a part of it. And again, Dr.	1025
Young, he just seemed so pleased that,	1026
you know, I was given that	1027
opportunity. So I felt very good	1028
about that way. And Otelia Garden,	1029
she, you know, had a calm way of about,	1030
you know, dealing with issues, and I	1031
was able to sometimes run things by	1032
her.	1033
C: Yea, you need those people to help	1035
you with your reflections and your	1036
thoughts.	1037
GX: And, Michelle Duncan, who had such	1039
a great sense of humor. It was just	1040
sometimes just to say things to her	1041
just to get a reaction out of her, and	1042
just put everything in perspective.	1043
So, you know, it was a variety of all	1044
kinds of people, to get help.	1045
C: It's challenging when you're at the	1047
high school level because not only do	1048
you have to work together in an	1049
instructional way, and managing, and	1050
all that, but you also compete with	1051
each other.	1052
GX: That's true. That's exactly right.	1054
C: Was there ever any discussion about	1056
the men's schools did better than the	1057
ladies' schools?	1058
GX: No, no. But at some of the events,	1060
you could see people cheer, pull for	1061
their particular team to win. There's	1062
another element of being a high school	1063
principal, and again it was changing.	1064
During that time, the late 80s and	1065
early 90s, there were very few female	1066
directors of student activities. So,	1067
at the time I became a principal,	1068
there were only two females at the	1069

time that were in the position. One	1070
was at Oak Ridge, and one was at North Point.	1071
And when we would have our monthly	1072
district meetings at Vista, it would	1073
be Gloria Green, who was the female	1074
from North Point, and myself, the men	1075
athletic directors were very	1076
uncomfortable, most uncomfortable. And	1077
then, when we would have our monthly	1078
regional meetings, and the men far	1079
outnumbered the females, and then it	1080
was an uncomfortable atmosphere at	1081
that time.	1082
C: Did you ever represent this area	1084
with the Virginia High School League?	1085
GX: No, no. That as a, well, not down	1087
state, but as an officer at the	1088
district and regional levels, I was an	1089
officer at both those levels, yes. I	1090
was, at the local I was a treasurer	1091
and I was a vice chair for several	1092
years, and I was a secretary at the	1093
regional level.	1094
C: You talked about some of the	1096
challenges at Newland that first	1097
year – any fond memories, exciting	1098
things?	1099
GX: Yes. You know I had mentioned about	1101
some of the community people? Another	1102
thing that kind of turned the	1103
community people around: they had	1104
their annual talent show, and they had	1105
asked me if I would participate, at	1106
least the choral director had asked me	1107
if I would participate. So I said,	1108
“Sure, not that I had any talent in	1109
that area for that, but, you know, but	1110
I would give it a try.” So we had	1111
several numbers in which the parents	1112
and the staff, whoever participated,	1113
we did together. So, we would do	1114
rehearsals. And some of the things	1115

were serious; some of the things were	1116
just dancing and singing. So they saw	1117
me in that role. And then the thing	1118
that I did that was separate from the	1119
community, I was Gladys Knight, and I	1120
had three guys that were the Pips. And	1121
I performed, and got on my knees with	1122
the microphone. Well, the parents got	1123
to see me at that level; some of them	1124
became more supportive. You, know,	1125
“Really,” they said, “she's okay.”	1126
C: Isn't that wonderful. You have to	1128
remember those.	1129
GX: I have to remember those. And,	1131
again, I, I fool people. And as I	1132
said, people see me as sweet and	1133
quiet, but I, but I did fool people.	1134
One time we were having a pep rally,	1135
and I had a cheerleader suit on – and	1136
the staff did not know I was going to	1137
be a cheerleader – and the	1138
cheerleaders didn't know I was going	1139
to be a cheerleader. All they knew	1140
that we had this very, all they knew	1141
it that we had this very special	1142
cheerleader who was going to be	1143
joining them that day. So they formed	1144
one of those victory lines...	1145
C: Oh, my...	1147
GX: ...and they had the drums going, and	1149
as I ran in the gym with my	1150
cheerleader suit on, and, you know,	1151
they, and they said, “What! The	1152
principal?” And I was also known	1153
around Christmas time to be Mrs. Santa	1154
Claus, and the flower babies.	1155
One time when I had on my	1156
doctor's suit and I was going around.	1157
There is that side of me.	1158

C: Ah, what fun.	1184

GX: You have to have fun. And the students, they like to see people that are not so stuffy. It gave them opportunities to see me, and they would come up to talk to me. I didn't want a wall to be between me and the students. But I knew that at the high school that I had to take certain actions when it came to discipline and so on, but I didn't want people to, students to see me as somebody to fear. It was always nice when they would come see me in the cafeteria or if they came up to see me.	1186 1187 1188 1189 1190 1191 1192 1193 1194 1195 1196 1197 1198 1199
C: That's nice. That's nice. William Howard was the Region Superintendent, Region South...?	1201 1202 1203
GX: Region South.	1205
C: And then Bob Jackson was...?	1207
GX: He was the Deputy Superintendent.	1209
C: Deputy Superintendent. Personnel at that time was... was it Fred Olin?	1211 1212
GX: Yes, it was, because, you're exactly right, because Nancy Thompson was the principal that preceded me. She took Dr. Olin's place up at Central Office, and he went into Personnel, as the acting superintendent.	1214 1215 1216 1217 1218 1219
C: OK. And then, Dr. Henderson was...?	1221
GX: ... the Superintendent.	1223
C: ...Superintendent.	1225
GX: Yes.	1227
C: And he came in - '86?	1229

GX: I would say it was around eighty -.	1231
I would say, at least he was around	1232
when I was appointed assistant	1233
principal at Oak Ridge, when I was an API	1234
in '85, because at that time the	1235
superintendent, anybody who got	1236
promoted you had your picture taken	1237
with the superintendent, and this how	1238
you knew you had the job. You know,	1239
you interviewed for the position, and	1240
you anxiously wait at your job site or	1242
with the superintendent. So if you	1243
didn't get that call, you knew you	1244
didn't have the job. And so, I had	1245
gotten the call that I was to have my	1246
picture taken with Dr. Henderson and so	1247
I knew I had Oak Ridge.	1248
C: This is the first time that I've	1250
heard this. So, when you were	1251
appointed assistant principal, you	1252
were waiting for a telephone call, and	1253
then you would go to Central Office?	1254
GX: Yes, they would tell you to come up	1256
and have your picture taken with the	1257
Superintendent.	1258

C: And then you got a copy of the	1266
picture?	1267
GX: Yes.	1269
C: Isn't that interesting.	1271
GX: Now, by the time I became a	1273
principal, I think there were so many	1274
people moving into positions that it	1275
was difficult for him to schedule.	1276

C: Within a short time span,	1291
within four years, the number of	1292
female high principals increased quite	1293
a bit.	1294

GX: Yes.	1296
C: Any thoughts about why that happened?	1298 1299
GX: Well, I think the women felt that they could do the job. In the beginning, you would hear people say, "Only a man can run a high school." And, I think that there was this perception out there that – well, for a long time, people didn't feel that a female could even run a middle school. You know, they, and so things were beginning to change. So once they saw one or two females actually venture into the high school level, and surviving, then more took the chance. And, uh, back at that time, most of the females, and many of the men, not all, but many of the men, even before they took on the high school, went to middle school, or intermediate school, first.	1301 1302 1303 1304 1305 1306 1307 1308 1309 1310 1311 1312 1313 1314 1315 1316 1317 1318 1319
C: Seen as a stepping-stone?	1321
GX: Yes, uh huh.	1323
C: Did the School Board play any role when you're, in your first year at Newland High School?	1325 1326 1327
GX: Uh, yes, they did. When I, when Dr. Henderson told me that he wanted me to be at Newland on Monday, he did stipulate that he had to call all the Board people and get approval first before it could be official. And there was a concern that - at the time there was a Board person who was Hispanic down in the Newland area that they felt it was difficult to get along with and that he had disapproved of some other appointments - so they	1329 1330 1331 1332 1333 1334 1335 1336 1337 1338 1339 1340

weren't real sure if he would be	1341
supportive of it. But he said OK, and	1342
the Newland High School is	1343
actually split between two districts:	1344
Newland and Oak Ridge, and the school	1345
board person, L. T. , was at Oak Ridge,	1346
Oak Ridge district, and they were very	1347
supportive. The one at Newland	1348
area, Mr. I., if he heard, if a	1349
parent called him, he would call me,	1350
but he was always, you know,	1351
inquiring, he was never accusing,	1352
“Well, I just want you to know that	1353
this was said to me.” And he would	1354
hear my side and that would be the end	1355
of it. And, Mr. T. was extremely	1356
supportive, to the point that I had	1357
heard from several people that he	1358
stood up for me on many occasions. And	1359
he was kind of a quiet gentleman. And	1360
I went to him one time at a meeting	1361
and I thanked him for his support.	1362
And he said, “You're doing a great	1363
job.” So that meant a lot to me.	1364
 C: That's good to have that feedback.	 1366
 GX: Yes.	 1368
 C: Did they come to visit?	 1370
 GX: No. Mr. I. was there a	 1372
couple of times. He was only there a	1373
year before he went on to something	1374
else outside the system. I cannot	1375
remember Mr. T. ever being in	1376
the building, but he was hearing	1377
things and so it meant a lot. So we,	1378
after the first year, we got a new	1379
school board person, and things were a	1380
little different with that particular	1381
person. She was, had a tendency to	1382
listen to the community a little bit	1383
more without getting the facts.	1384
 C: It's interesting to see the	 1386

difference between different school board members...	1387
	1388
GX: Yes.	1390
C: ...and how they do things. But it sounds like the first year you were there you had quite a bit of support.	1392
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GX: Quite a bit of support, and the at-large board members were quite supportive. The second year I can remember an at-large board person who came down to the school several times to activities and, just very supportive.	1396
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C: That helps. Were there any special projects, any special things you did that first year?	1404
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GX: One of my things was to get, calm things down, to get the adults working together because I figured that we couldn't move forward as a school if we had all that external and internal fighting. So, my first charge was to get people working together. Once we got that going, then we were able to look at how we were going to improve instruction because with the change in the demographics, we were getting more and more students that came to school with needs, more of the English-as-a-second language as well as students coming from disadvantaged homes. And so the academic level was dropping, and that was a major concern to the upper middle class parents, black and white and Hispanic, all concerned about the reputation of the school. So after we kind've calmed things down, then we started to focus on programs. We got, one of the first things we put in place was a program called "Future," and that was a	1408
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mentoring program. And, you know, we	1433
had parents, you know, working with	1434
our kids on Wednesday evenings on	1435
that. We were the, probably the	1436
second high school that had, not the	1437
distant learning, but it was by video.	1438
You know, we had the video studio set	1439
up in one of the rooms, and we had	1440
French taught and a couple of other	1441
classes taught via the video lab. And	1442
then we got the AVID program put in -	1443
which you have the AVID program here.	1444
And Dr. Henderson was looking for two	1445
schools to put in the International	1446
Baccalaureate Program, and so Dr.	1447
Gilford met with Michelle Duncan and	1448
myself, and she said, "It's not	1449
required because it's going to take a	1450
lot of work, but this is something	1451
that you might consider." And I was	1452
really excited about it. And I had	1453
just hired a guidance director who had	1454
just from overseas who was the	1455
coordinator of IB program over seas,	1456
so it was perfect timing. And I, uh,	1457
saw that as an opportunity to, you	1458
know, take advantage of that, and so	1459
we said, "Yes," and we got that	1460
program in.	1461
 C: This was your first year?	 1463
 GX: Oh, no.	 1465
 C: Ok, it was spread out?	 1467
 GX: It was spread out. There were times	 1469
when students were having difficulties	1470
controlling their behavior, I got the	1471
ROTC Marine program put in. West	1472
Potomac at that time had had the Army,	1473
and the year before the principal had	1474
put the Army in. And so I got, well	1475
actually I was open to any of the	1476
branches, but when I said it would be	1477
a good idea to have that kind of	1478

program in, and we had people come in,	1479
and the students wanted the Marines.	1480
So, well, okay, we'll get the Marines.	1481
So those were the other little	1482
programs that, uh, in terms of	1483
discipline, leadership, academic, that	1484
we were trying to give the school a	1485
good name and provide opportunities	1486
for the kids to excel in a lot of	1487
different ways.	1488
C: That, that makes nice public	1490
relations, too...	1491
GX: Yes.	1493
C: ...for the community to see.	1495
GX: And I was very fortunate, actually,	1497
with, uh, once the first PTA	1498
president, you know, got over the fact	1499
that I was a black female, and became	1500
supportive, and, at the end of the	1501
year, when they had official	1502
interviews, I understand that the Region	1503
Superintendent met with the PTA and	1504
they all voted for me to remain. So I	1505
was very fortunate each time we had a	1506
new PTA president - and we had white,	1507
black, female, male - they were	1508
willing to work with us. But one PTA	1509
president - I would say he was	1510
president of all presidents, and that	1511
was Mr. X, and he was - worked	1512
with the Board of Education years ago,	1513
had been a teacher, could be a	1514
politician if he had wanted to, and	1515
just a very personal person, and had a	1516
way with publicity, and pulling people	1517
together - and he was in the building	1518
almost daily. And we would talk	1519
about, strategize, how to pull even	1520
more families into the school for	1521
support. So we did, we did some	1522
unusual things to do that.	1523

C: That's great.	1525
GX: We took a couple of risks, too, that turned out OK. I think if I had tried this my first two years, I don't think I would have been able to do it, because there are some things that you have to make sure that the people who work for you really trust, that it's going to be OK. And so the PTA president and I had talked about, "Let's open up the departments where each department would have a parent liaison, who would actually go into the classes, meet with departments sometimes, offer advice." And, as I said, if we had done it right away, they would not have accepted that, because they would have been leery that these people were coming in to cause trouble. But, it turned out – I told them it was going to be okay. And those parents ended up being great resources. They got computers; they got books; they got speakers. You know, because of the types of backgrounds of those families, the connections, the political and other kinds of connections, business connections they had, we got a lot of support and resources through those departments. And the PTA president, I would say, that he played a big part in that. So we were really a good team.	1527 1528 1529 1530 1531 1532 1533 1534 1535 1536 1537 1538 1539 1540 1541 1542 1543 1544 1545 1546 1547 1548 1549 1550 1551 1552 1553 1554 1555 1556 1557 1558 1559
C: That's wonderful. That's some good ideas to bring the parents in. You're right – so they feel a part of the school and they go back and send the "correct" message out.	1561 1562 1563 1564 1565
GX: Yes. Another strategy I did use with the parents. This was, I think, my third year. This is when things really started turning around and this	1567 1568 1569 1570

is one of the strategies I think 1571
 really helped. I chose the ten most 1572
 negative parents that I knew of in the 1573
 community to be on my parent advisory 1574
 committee. And, I chose some 1575
 extremely positive teachers, to 1576
 counteract on what they say, to be on 1577
 it. And, one of my first meetings 1578
 with the parents, I told them, I said, 1579
 "In addition to hearing your input, 1580
 and you going out, you know, sharing 1581
 with the community what's going on, if 1582
 you hear rumors outside, you need to 1583
 tell an administrator or a counselor," 1584
 I said, "This is your contact 1585
 person. If you can't get a hold of 1586
 them, call me." And that whole 1587
 year, they felt so good, you know, 1588
 being called in as leaders and being 1589
 on the inside. So they became 1590
 advocates for the school and 1591
 supportive of me. And when we were 1592
 beginning to look at the plans for the 1593
 renovation of the school, the design, 1594
 we had that, so we had it spread out 1595
 on the tables and they were all 1596
 looking and giving their input. And 1597
 that really, 'cause they were 1598
 hardcore, and that really, I start 1599
 turning the tides around. But that was 1600
 a chance, because they could have cut 1601
 me and sabotaged me. That was a real 1602
 risk. 1603

GX: And, one of the things, again 1628
 I give the PTA president credit for 1629
 this, not mine, and it helped. When 1630
 he was on the board for three years, 1631
 at the Back to School Night we would 1632
 have the president of every 1633
 organization seated on the stage. They 1634
 didn't say anything, but they were 1635
 seated on the stage and recognized for 1636
 their support. We had as many as 56 1637
 presidents from civic associations 1638

around there. So they're big time in that. Big time.	1639 1640
C: Very interesting.	1642
GX: I just don't know of any other community that has that many organizations.	1644 1645 1646
C: Not that much activity.	1648
GX: 56.	1650
C: Newland Gazette?	1652
GX: Yes.	1654
C: Is that, was that in existence then?	1656
GX: Yes.	1659
C: Did they help or hinder?	1661
GX: Did more hindering than helping.	1663

However, again with the PTA president – I told you he was so dynamic – we were able to get a flyer, we developed a flyer that was, and we highlighted the feeder schools and all the programs. It was very professionally done, and we got the Gazette to agree to insert it in their papers. So that was distributed to all the schools. It was really well done. And it talked, it gave a profile of the teachers, some of the IB teachers; and had my statement in it; as I said, the feeder schools, the good things that were going on.	1672 1673 1674 1675 1676 1677 1678 1679 1680 1681 1682 1683 1684 1685 1686

C: What advice do you give first year principals?	1693 1694

GX: Do a lot of listening and observing,	1696
and don't overreact. You know, just	1697
sit back and stay calm. And realize	1698
if you stay calm and keep focused,	1699
it's going to be okay. And staying	1700
calm is so important, because they	1701
look at you, the faculty, if they see	1702
that you're calm, things could be	1703
going crazy around them, but if they	1704
see that you're calm, they say, "It	1705
couldn't be that bad because she is,	1706
she doesn't seem to be upset." And	1707
that was something that, I always, I	1708
did as an assistant principal,	1709
you know, I always, on the outside, but	1710
inside I might be dying, but on the	1711
outside I would have my thoughts,	1712
"It's going to be, it's going to be	1713
okay," and that just calms people	1714
down.	1715
C: Any suggestions for females who want	1717
to become high school principals?	1718
GX: First of all, I encourage them to do	1720
it, because, in spite of some of the	1721
past experiences I had, it's a fun,	1722
exciting place where all the	1723
activities, and people, the	1724
communities are now beginning to see	1725
that females are capable of being high	1726
school principals. So that perception	1727
is changing. And I would say, "Do it.	1728
You'll get the support of the school	1729
and the community."	1730
C: I've asked you a lot of questions.	1732
Is there anything that I didn't ask	1733
that you would like to add?	1734
GX: Oh, I think you were very detailed.	1736
I think you covered it.	1737

Appendix F

Interview of Olivia Yates

Case Study for 2000s

(Interview conducted June 27, 2002)

C: I noticed on your resume that there were	4
several things that you did as a	5
teacher. Could you talk a little bit	6
about all those different subjects you	7
taught? I think the planetarium was	8
one!	9
OY: Sure. I taught a number of	11
different subjects. My training was	12
in the earth sciences, so the earth	13
sciences include oceanography,	14
astronomy, meteorology, geography, and	15
geology. So I was able to teach a	16
number of things and, of course, once	17
I got into a school, and they needed an	18
extra period of math taught, so I	19
taught math as well. And, being that	20
I had some astronomy background, at	21
one point I had the opportunity to	22
take over for the planetarium director	23
mid-year. You know, it was one of	24
those situations where someone retired	25
mid year, and, you know, I was right	26
next door, and it was an opportunity	27
that presented itself that I couldn't	28
turn down. And it was a fascinating	29
teaching position because I taught	30
everything from pre-school kids, all	31
the way to high school seniors who	32
were taking physics. And on any one	33
day, I could start the morning	34
teaching pre-school and in the evening	35
have a Latin class, or that sort of	36
thing. So there was a lot of variety.	37
And, in addition, I taught in	38
England, North King's School, on a	39
Fulbright exchange. And, when I went	40
there, I taught physical geography of	41

England. So the earth sciences 42
background helped - there was some 43
physical geology as well as physical 44
geography that we studied, so when I 45
went to England that was an easy 46
match. Even though it wasn't in the 47
science department, it was in the 48
social studies department. You know, I 49
was able to teach that because it was 50
physical geography as opposed to 51
cultural geography. So, math, 52
science, and geography is what I've 53
taught. 54

C: That is quite a spread. 56

OY: Yeah, it was very interesting. 58

C: In addition to England, you taught 60
also in Union County - any other 61
places? 62

OY: No, I've had 23 years in 64
education, all of that, it's been in 65
Union County Public Schools, with 66
the exception of the one year I taught 67
in England. And I was still employed 68
by the school system; it was an 69
exchange program. Um. 70

C: Was that something you did at the 72
beginning of your career, the middle, 73
at the end, of your teaching career? 74

OY: I did it after my third year of 76
teaching. I knew I would do it the 77
moment after I entered education 78
because you had to wait three years. 79
You had to have three years before you 80
could even apply for a Fulbright 81
Exchange. I knew I was going to do 82
thin my fourth year of teaching 83
because I grew up in a family that ran 84
exchange programs all the time with 85
English schools. And, so, I had that 86
background. And wanted to do it 87

before I got into a lot of coursework	88
and family and all those other	89
commitments that keep you from doing,	90
uprooting, and moving to a different	91
country.	92
C: Yea. When you taught in Union,	94
was it just high school? Or did you	95
do middle school? Where did you	96
actually, where did you teach?	97
OY: I taught three years at Trinity	99
High School.	100
C: Okay.	102
OY: And there I taught earth science.	104
C: Now, is this Trinity when it was	106
in the old Richardson building or Trinity	107
in what is now Dickinson?	108
OY: Trinity in what is Dickinson.	110
I started in '79. I was in the - the	111
first year I was there I was in	112
Building A. In the second year I was	113
moved to Building B, and I spent two	114
years in Building B. It was a campus.	115
C: Oh, that's right, it has separate	117
buildings.	118
OY: So, I taught just science there.	120
And after my first year of teaching	121
was the Science Department Chair for	122
two years there. Then I left Trinity	123
to go to England. And when I left,	124
the enrollment dropped in earth	125
science, so I was destaffed the year I	126
left. And, which, you know, was fine.	127
When I came back, I was hired over at	128
Sinclair and I taught science and math,	129
earth science and Algebra I, I believe	130
it was. I did that for a while, and	131
then mid-year was moved over into the	132
planetarium position.	133

C: At Sinclair?	135
OY: At Sinclair. And that was the Region	137
North planetarium, so I had students	138
from all of the Region North schools,	139
primarily elementary students who	140
came. Occasionally I would have	141
community groups – Boy Scouts, Girl	142
Scouts, pre-school, some of the	143
private schools in the area – but then I	144
would see middle school students	145
occasionally, but high school classes	146
also - science as well as Latin,	147
physics.	148
C: So, it seems like high school's	150
been where you've concentrated your...	151
OY: That's really where my training	153
has been. I spent two years in the	154
middle school, though, as a middle	155
school special projects teacher.	156
C: Is that right at the end of your	158
teaching – where did that come in?	159
OY: That came after. After I left	161
Sinclair and the planetarium to go to	162
Ivy Middle School as a special	163
projects teacher. Now, there, I	164
wasn't in charge of classes of	165
students. I was the	166
Jack-of-all-trades, as the position	167
often is. I functioned as a third	168
assistant principal. The principal	169
just said, “Look, I need three	170
assistant principals. I want you to	171
function in that way.” So: I met	172
with students; I met with parents. You	173
know, I did discipline, and supervised	174
teachers, did teacher evaluations, did	175
all the things that, that officially I	176
couldn't do, but...	177
C: Right, right.	179

OY: But the principal said, “Do it,”	181
and I did it.	182
C: Um, how did, how did you make the	184
leap from Sinclair High School	185
planetarium and science to Ivy	186
as special projects? Was it something	187
you sought, or - ?	188
OY: No, it was something that someone	190
asked me to apply for. And I did	191
because I knew it would be – well,	192
first off, this is kind of a reality	193
of being a planetarium director. As	194
you well know, having been in the	195
system, planetarium is always the	196
thing thrown up on the cut list.	197
C: Yes, it is.	199

OY: The planetarium I saw as sort of a	215
dead-end job. I was concerned about	216
the volatility of the budget and	217
whether it would stay, whether it	218
would be funded. I was also concerned	219
that the planetariums were built after	220
Sputnik, and therefore we were dealing	221
with equipment that was early 1960s	222
equipment, trying to keep it up and	223
running in the 1980s, and that was	224
problematic.	225
So, much of my time	226
was spent in maintaining the equipment	227
as opposed to actually teaching and	228
preparing.	229

But, back to your	239
question. A principal knew that I had	240
just entered a program to get my	241
masters degree in secondary school	242
administration. The principal knew	243
of, I guess, the work that I had done	244
in the classroom, and that sort of	245

thing, and said, “I have this position	246
opening up,” and it was a position	247
where she had tapped people all along	248
to fill the position because she knew	249
that they would be good at doing staff	250
development, working with student	251
groups, working with parent groups,	252
guiding an instructional program for a	253
certain department, that sort of	254
thing. So, she had this opening, and,	255
in fact, tapped me and said, “Would you	256
come?” I applied for the position and,	257
ultimately, got that position. So,	258
that's how I made that change.	259
 C: Was it, was it advertised?	 261
 OY: No.	 263
 C: Okay.	 265
 OY: No.	 267
 C: And how did you meet this	 269
principal before, through classes,	270
or...?	271
 OY: No. This is, uh, really awkward,	 273
and somewhat personal. This principal	274
moved to Union County, and was	275
hired, was an English teacher, and	276
could not get a job as an English	277
teacher in Union County at the time.	278
While she was waiting to get a jobs	279
an English teacher, my father was the	280
director for Adult Education for	281
Union County and he needed to hire a	282
secretary. He hired the secretary –	283
this English teacher. Very over	284
qualified secretary. But that is	285
where I first met her. Now what	286
evolved over time is - she ultimately	287
did get an English teaching position,	288
and she was my English teacher, at	289
Glenfield High School.	290

C: Really.	292
OY: And things evolved again. When was the next time we crossed paths? I think it was, yes, the next time was at Ivy and, so, any way, our paths kept crossing. And crossed again when I went to become the SOL coordinator, because that principal was Rhonda Hill and hired me at Instructional Center to be the SOL coordinator. So, I've worked with her twice, been her student, and, originally, she was my father's secretary.	294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305
C: The fates were at work.	307
OY: Yes.	309
C: What a fascinating story.	311
OY: Yea. But, I know what you're looking for is how do women get into administration. I mean, this is someone who early in my career, very early in my career, recognized talent and then fostered it, you know, by providing opportunities. I mean, she could have given that special projects job to any number of people, but, you know, for whatever reason, she took me, put me in that position, and then said, "This is what I want you to do." It was so far and above my ability level at the time.	313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326
C: You mentioned that you had started, or you had applied to start, your Masters.	328 329 330
OY: Right. In administration.	332

C: You started your masters in '84?	343
OY: No. Not in '84, for various	345

personal reasons. When I got back	346
from England I really needed a year to	347
get re-enculturated, you know, if you	348
will, if that's a word. But, to get	349
back into things, you know, I, just	350
personal things I had to handle,	351
like buying a house, that kind of thing.	352
 C: Right.	 354
 OY: I wasn't ready at that time, but	 356
after I was back for a year, that's	357
when I started. And, you know, what	358
prompted me to do that, I just had, I	359
had role models in my own family. My	360
father was an assistant principal. I	361
also just watched other assistant	362
principals that I had worked with and	363
got a sense of what their job was, and	364
found that really fascinating. I	365
mean, I loved to put puzzles together	366
and it seemed to me like you were	367
bringing all the puzzle pieces	368
together to do that job.	369
 C: It's kind of a scientific way to	 371
look at it, isn't it?	372
 OY: Yea. (laugh)	 374
 C: So, you taught, you went to	 376
England, you came back...	377
 OY: And taught...	 379
 C: And taught. And, in watching	 381
others, that's what helped you decide,	382
or was there something, and incident,	383
that happened?	384
 OY: Well, a couple of things. No one	 386
incident - it's more knowing my own	387
strengths and, when I said about the	388
puzzle piece, I very much enjoyed	389
teaching. I think I did a good job	390
teaching a wide variety	391

of students, kindergarten through 2th	392
grade, needy students versus, you	393
know, GT students. But I became	394
confident in those skills fairly	395
quickly, in the first five years of my	396
career, and tried it in a variety of	397
venues, you know: planetarium,	398
England, math classes, science	399
classes, and so on. So I had a wealth	400
of experiences at that point and the	401
majority were very successful	402
experiences, and I was at that point	403
that I was ready to make a bigger	404
commitment to education. And, having	405
had my father as a role model – he was	406
an assistant principal – I felt like,	407
you know, I understood the life style,	408
having lived with one. You know,	409
you're out every night and that kind	410
of thing. Also, though, I had, what	411
do I want to say, just the interest	412
and desire to learn more about my	413
profession, to learn: What does it	414
take to put together a master	415
schedule? What does it take to	416
schedule all the rooms in the	417
building? To maintain a building? To	418
be sure the supplies are in? You	419
know, all the things we do as	420
administrators was of interest to me.	421
You know, some people don't care how	422
the supplies come in, you know, but	423
others do. And, I think I just, the	424
whole, I like the idea of being able	425
to know all aspects of the job, and	426
that's why I went into the	427
administration masters program.	428
 C: What did your mom say?	 430
 OY: Uhm.	 432
 C: I can hear your dad being very	 434
excited.	435
 OY: Yea, he was very excited. I don't	 437

know, I don't remember my mom - she	438
was thrilled I was going to get my	439
Master's degree, you know, of course.	440
(laugh) But I, of course, she has the	441
typical motherly concerns about "how	442
are you going to do it all?" Of course,	443
that was even before I had children,	444
and so that wasn't an issue. But	445
just, generally, in all, she was	446
always very supportive of education,	447
you know, getting that.	448
C: You said you, did you graduate	450
from Glenfield High School?	451
OY: Yes.	453
C: So you lived in Union City?	455
OY: No, actually I lived behind	457
Dixon High School.	458
C: Oh, okay.	460
OY: I went, my first year I went to	462
Dixon, transferred to Glenfield High	463
for, again, a variety of reasons. Uhm,	464
you know, it had excellent teachers,	465
in Union. I was so blessed – oh.	466
C: A good school.	468
OY: Oh.	470
C: When, uh, when you were taking	472
your Master's, was that – which	473
university were you with?	474
OY: At Easton.	476
C: Easton – oh, good.	478
OY: Right over here.	480
C: I know – very close. Yeah. Then,	482
the special projects: it sounds like	483

it gave you a lot of experiences.	484
OY: Incredible experiences. It, and	486
in so many different areas: staff	487
development, working with student	488
groups. One of the things that – and	489
this was Rhonda Hill, and it's	490
something that just always blows my	491
mind. She would say, “I want you, I	492
want u to run a counseling group for	493
gifted and talented students.” And	494
I'd be, “Okay.” And then I'd go out	495
and figure out how to do, and do it.	496
Having no background in gifted and	497
talented education, other than I	498
taught it, you know. No formal	499
background, no certification, that kind	500
of thing. Having no background in	501
running a counselor group. But she,	502
that's how she manages. She would	503
just say, “Do it,” and you'd do it.	504
And it was amazing because you	505
learned a great deal in the process.	506
And I know that method in her madness.	507
(laugh) Same thing with, when I	508
joined the staff at Department of Instruction,	509
the DI staff, High School Instruction	510
Office. She was getting into	511
a new book	512
and she'd	513
say, “Here, Olivia, read this and	514
present how we're going to implement	515
this in Union County.” She'd say it	516
to me on a Wednesday afternoon – I had	517
to present it Thursday afternoon.	518
(laugh) And, and, you know, at times	519
you'd, I'd sit there and say, “God	520
damn it. (laugh) Who do you think I	521
am? You know - Superman?”	522
C: Yes.	524
OY: But, the amazing thing about it	526
was, you know, she set the challenge	527
there because she knew I could rise to	528
the occasion, and would learn through	529

the process. You know, that's sort of	530
a forceful way of mentoring, if you	531
will, but it worked.	532
C: Yeah.	534
OY: And it was very motivational. It	536
helped me understand what my skills	537
are, what I can do under pressure, and	538
that kind of thing. So – it was good	539
training.	540
C: At what, at what point, you're	542
doing the special projects, did you	543
finish your Master's while you were	544
doing your special projects?	545
OY: Uh, hmm.	547
C: So you finished your Master's. Then	549
did you start interviewing for	550
assistant principal positions?	551
OY: Yes. Actually what I did at that	553
point was, timing being everything, I	554
still had my interest in the area of	555
science, and the Region North science	556
curriculum specialist opened, and,	557
remember back to the old Region	558
arrangement, that those positions were	559
really key in terms of helping teachers	560
implement the new science curriculum,	561
um, and again, because I'd been in the	562
planetarium, I knew something of the	563
elementary curriculum, and felt like	564
that would be a way to enter	565
administration - that was my first	566
administrative position - but also	567
enter it from my angle, which was the	568
instructional angle. I could	569
influence science education and do	570
that through that. So that was my	571
first position, and I did that for a	572
year, knowing ultimately I wanted to	573
be in a school. Back then it was	574
almost like you had to do those	575

stepping-stones or at least that's	576
what I felt. I'd gone from Ivy	577
- I felt like before I could get a	578
full-blown assistant principalship, I	579
had to get out to the Region. And I'm	580
glad I did, because that, uhm, was my	581
first look at how the system runs from	582
the central perspective. So it gave	583
me a broader understanding of how to	584
manipulate, you know, I mean not in	585
the negative sense, how to navigate	586
the system as you're trying to get	587
things done. So, as I said, I did	588
that for a year, and then the	589
assistant principalship opened up	590
Orange, and, actually, the principal	591
called me and asked me if I would	592
apply.	593
C: Oooh. Was it advertised?	595
OY: Yes. That one was advertised. But	597
the principal at Orange at the time	598
was Alan Andrews, and Alan had been an	599
assistant principal at Glenfield High	600
School, so I knew him in that regard,	601
and he also knew I was in the system,	602
and he knew that my father was in the	603
system. My mother was also in Union	604
County. It's sort of like homegrown.	605
(laugh) She was a teacher. So, I	606
think he picked up the phone and	607
called me, because that was Alan. He	608
would always, you know, work with his	609
connections. And so when he called I	610
said, "Yes," I'd interview.	611
C: What year was that?	613
OY: That was '88 when I took, when I	615
went over to Orange.	616
C: What was, it was advertised in the	618
School Communications B?	619
OY: Yes.	621

C: So you saw it in there. What do	623
you think prompted him to call you, in	624
addition to knowing you? Can you	625
think of any other factors, or	626
anything else going on?	627
OY: Well, I can't get into his head.	629
I think, just, Alan was the type of	630
person who always worked with his	631
connections. You know, he valued his	632
connections. And, I think he felt	633
that being a person who had been	634
home-grown, you know, gone through the	635
stem, had parents in the school	636
system, that I would be a good team	637
play to work with him. And, uh, do	638
you know Alan?	639
C: A little bit.	641
OY: That I was a good match, given the	643
type of principal he was. And that I	644
was there to support what had to be	645
done at, at Orange. And I wasn't	646
going to make waves for him. He had	647
some political problems, you know,	648
and, but those weren't going to come	649
from me. So I think he felt like I	650
could be loyal to him as a staff	651
member.	652
C: How many assistant principals were	654
there?	655
OY: I'd say there were two others –	657
two or three. There were two, and an	658
administrative assistant, which is now	659
our security specialist person.	660
C: Was there such a thing as AP I and	662
AP II at that time?	663
OY: There was, and I came on as an AP	665
II, because I had, I'm not sure why	666
that was. If I remember correctly,	667

it's because I was in a Region job, and so I was automatically brought in at an AP II position.	668 669 670
C: You were going 12-month to 12-month?	672 673
OY: That's what it was.	675
C: That's what it was. Right.	677
OY: That's, that was the only difference then, the length of the contract.	679 680 681
C: And Alan, of course, is male. Were the other administrators male, female?	683 684
OY: Uh, there were two males, and then myself, and the guidance director was female, the activities director, male. So, yeah, I was the female assistant principal.	686 687 688 689 690
C: Perhaps balancing things out. So you were at Orange for ...?	692 693
OY: Eight years.	695
C: I didn't realize it was eight years.	697 698
OY: Just under.	700
C: What kinds of things did you do during those eight years that encouraged you, or you look back now and say, "Wow, that really helped me now as a principal"?	702 703 704 705 706
OY: Well, all kinds of things. In terms of curriculum and instruction, I was in charge of three of the four major core departments - science, history, and social studies - it, uh, being in charge of them, that, of	708 709 710 711 712 713

course, you know, the supervision and	714
evaluation of employees. And I had	715
outstanding employees, as well as	716
teachers who were marginal and	717
ineffective, so I got lots of	718
experience through the whole teacher	719
performance evaluation system. In	720
terms of curriculum and instruction	721
work, I worked with one of the	722
principals to take what I thought was	723
a have and have-not situation. Kids	724
were identified as being GT or not GT	725
- and this is probably a big issue for	726
middle schools, because I'm just, all	727
the sudden, understanding how the	728
middle schools do it, but, being a	729
middle school parent now – but, uh, at	730
the outset, ninth graders would come	731
to Orange and they would either be in	732
the GT Humanities program or they	733
weren't, and there was such a	734
disparity between the, what the	735
offering, the education offering in	736
the two programs that we decided to	737
take the GT curriculum and give it to	738
every student. Absolutely every	739
student did that curriculum. The only	740
difference was, there was some outside	741
reading that we didn't require the	742
general ed. students to do. When we	743
decided to do that, there was quite a	744
culture change, because all of a	745
sudden you came to Orange and you had	746
the very strong four year - and we, we	747
made the Humanities program a	748
four-year, teamed, interdisciplinary	749
program, for every student	750
 C: English and social studies?	 752
 OY: And social studies, all four	 754
years. Team teaching, the integration,	755
the interdisciplinary nature of it was	756
provided for all students, we raised	757
the quality of the curriculum and	758
lowered the D/F rate at the same time.	759

Basically, what we did is we, you 760
know, raised the expectations for all 761
of the students. We said, “You can do 762
this.” It became more interesting; 763
attendance rates were up, you know; 764
all kinds of things resulted in that. 765
But having lived through the whole 766
changeover, was real helpful in terms 767
of being principal. It gave me the 768
confidence to tackle a huge project, 769
and to see it through fruition, and 770
deal with the controversy it causes, 771
that sort of change, and so on. Uhm, 772
being in the Orange community, I had 773
a number of opportunities to deal with 774
very intelligent, very demanding 775
parents so I will never forget coming 776
from Orange to Norman as an 777
assistant principal because at one 778
point, after eight years there, William 779
Ingles got the crow bar out and said, 780
“You will move to another school!” 781
(laugh) And, this was a long 782
conversation that William and I had. I 783
needed to move because I was too 784
invested there, and I needed different 785
experiences. Orange is not a typical 786
high school in the nature of its 787
population; it's not like the rest of 788
Union County. So I needed to see 789
something different. But when I came 790
to Norman, I was just struck by the 791
difference in how parents reacted when 792
I called them as the assistant 793
principal. You know, it was like 794
“I'll be right there” “What can I do 795
to help?” “You mean my son didn't 796
follow his teacher's directions?” It 797
was all focused on “how do I help the 798
school,” “help my child with what he 799
needs to learn.” At Orange, it was a 800
very different situation. The parents 801
were very demanding, their over-all 802
focus – and, I mean, we have some of 803
those here, too – but their over-all 804
focus was keeping their kid's record 805

clean so that they would have a 806
 stellar record to apply to the best 807
 colleges in the country. And so those 808
 demands really helped me build up my 809
 skills in negotiating with parents, 810
 and, you know, conferencing with them, 811
 supporting teachers at the same time 812
 that were supporting kids. And, you 813
 know, that sort of thing. 814

C: Uh, huh. 816

OY: I worked hand in glove in working 818
 with the guidance director. At one 819
 point, the principal was removed at 820
 Orange High School, and so, you know, 821
 for a period of, I'm gonna say for 822
 five months, there were, you know, the 823
 acting principal, guidance director, we 824
 built master schedules together. So I 825
 had that opportunity. Those were just 826
 some examples. I really got the 827
 opportunity to do absolutely 828
 everything required except for one 829
 thing at Orange High School for the 830
 high school principalship. The 831
 experience I did not get was student 832
 activities and athletics. And, if I 833
 were to reflect back on what I think 834
 all principals should have in their 835
 training, it's training in that area. 836
 Because if you haven't been a DSA, you 837
 just don't know what's going to be 838
 demanded of you as a high school 839
 principal. You know, you don't have 840
 the background unless you have been an 841
 athlete yourself, you know. 842

C: Yeah. When do you think you knew 844
 you wanted to be a principal? During 845
 Orange? When you did your... 846

OY: Orange. And it was probably in 848
 1994, when I was having a lot of 849
 successes as an assistant principal, 850
 and I had a principal who was 851

extremely supportive, you know, who	852
for the most part let me run with any	853
project I wanted to do, and was there	854
saying, "Go out and apply for that job."	855
You know, I wasn't really ready, but	856
he'd say, "Go try it. Go try the	857
panel interview process. See what it	858
feels like. See if you're	859
comfortable, you know, doing that kind	860
of thing." So it was someone there	861
saying, "Try this out. I'm going to	862
support you. I'll give you feedback."	863
C: Now, you mentioned "panel." Did	865
they have the system in place where	866
you had to panel to be eligible?	867
OY: Uh, hmm.	869
C: Did they have that for, when you	871
applied for Orange for assistant	872
principal?	873
OY: Actually, that, I had to go	875
through that for the Region North Science	876
Curriculum specialist.	877
C: Oh, okay.	879
OY: They had that if you were eligible	881
to become an administrator at any	882
level you had to go through that at	883
Personnel. So, I did that early on.	884
C: So you did that before the science	886
curriculum position?	887
OY: Uh, hm.	889
C: You did not mention doing it for	891
the special projects, so you probably	892
didn't have to do that for that 'cause	893
that was teacher level.	894
OY: Right.	896

C: And then you, so you paneled for the principalship...?	898 899
OY: A couple of times. (laugh) You know, I went to, let's see, I applied for a couple of principalships before I actually got one. But, each one had a panel.	901 902 903 904 905
C: I mean the panel for eligibility.	907
OY: That I only did just one.	909
C: Right. You just... Okay. And...	911
OY: You know the - I remember what you're talking about. The eligibility panel was just to go from the teacher to administrative level in my situation. I didn't have to go through that. There was probably a paper screening in terms of eligibility. When I started applying for the principalships, but not, there was not another panel conducted by Personnel.	913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923
C: I believe – was Dr. Henderson still superintendent?	925 926
OY: Yes.	928
C: So, the positions were advertised - again, I'm going to say in the School Communications B?	930 931 932
OY: Uh, hm.	934
C: And, what did you do when you looked and you saw – I mean, were you really looking? What, what were you thinking?	936 937 938 939
OY: Hm. Early on, I wasn't thinking... okay, when I first applied, in '94, '95, I did so for two reasons. There	941 942 943

were, it was rare that a high school
 944
 principalship opened. That's not the
 945
 case any more. There have been
 946
 frequently two or three in the
 947
 past couple of years. So when the first
 948
 one opened up, I interviewed to get
 949
 the practice, interviewing in front of
 950
 the panel. It was disastrous. (laugh)
 951

C: Now who was at the panel? 953

OY: The panel was probably, I'm going 955
 to guess, 12 people, and I'm assuming, 956
 if I remember correctly, it was PTA, 957
 teacher leaders, administrators, Region 958
 North staff, you know. So it was 959
 similar to our panels now. But there 960
 could have been hundreds in that 961
 audience – it was just awful. (laugh) 962
 Worse I could do. And I was not 963
 ready for the position. It was very 964
 clear, so it was an instructive 965
 process for me. I thought, “Okay, 966
 this is what I have learned. Here is 967
 what I need to work on.” And I spent 968
 the next couple of years working on 969
 it. Then, what I was thinking later, 970
 when I was at Instruction, I knew at that 971
 point I wanted to get back to a 972
 school. After I was at Instruction six months 973
 central office isn't for me. I mean, 974
 I liked it. I did it for two years. I 975
 worked on exciting projects: Beginning 976
 Teacher Induction Program, as well as 977
 the SOL, Standards Based classrooms 978
 program. They're great projects, you 979
 know, in-the-moment type projects, and 980
 I love the opportunity. But I am so a 981
 school person, Carol, you know. I 982
 love, you know, when you drive by a 983
 playground, or a soccer field, and you 984
 hear the kids' noises – I mean, that's 985
 like birds singing to me. You know, 986
 I'm a school person. I want to be 987
 around teachers, I want to be around 988
 administrators and students, I love 989

walking in the cafeteria. Most people	990
think I'm crazy, but that's the kind	991
of activity I enjoy. Matter of fact,	992
I think I even told you once – I came	993
over to Fisher, when I was in this	994
position; it was lunchtime and I	995
walked in the building and I thought,	996
“I am home.” It was whirring, the	997
noises and the kids, that kind of	998
thing. Uh, so when I was there I	999
became more deliberate about what I	1000
would be interested in, and I applied	1001
for, let's see. Actually, sorry,	1002
before I left Orange I applied for the	1003
Orange position. Again, that's when	1004
William said I needed to move, because I	1005
didn't get it. And, William said, “It's	1006
probably best that, now's the time,	1007
it's a good time for you to go to	1008
another high school.” And he was	1009
right, absolutely right. So I was	1010
sort of crushed about Orange, then I	1011
probably applied for two more	1012
positions at that point - so four	1013
altogether. One of which I didn't	1014
even get an interview for, which, of	1015
course, I was devastated: “My God,	1016
you know, what do you have to do?” And	1017
then this one, which, you know, was	1018
successful.	1019
C: It sounds like William, who went that	1021
extra step to sit down and talk with	1022
you after that incident with Orange.	1023
Was that something that you initiated,	1024
or he initiated?	1025
OY: I did.	1027
C: Uh, hm.	1029
OY: And I wish - I don't want to say	1031
anything against William, 'cause he's so	1032
wonderful - I wish, and this is not	1033
possible, really – I wish he knew at	1034
the time how devastating it was to me	1035

to not get Orange, because he knew 1036
 that I had worked there for eight years. 1037
 He knew that I had worked there with a 1038
 principal who had been fired, 1039
 essentially. I worked there with a 1040
 principal who had commuted from 1041
 Boston. You know, so I think he had a 1042
 sense that my level of responsibility 1043
 was pretty high in that situation. 1044
 Um, and when I didn't get it, and 1045
 there wasn't a call other than the 1046
 awful letter you get in the mail, I 1047
 was, I needed, you know, at that 1048
 point, for someone to pick up the 1049
 phone and say, "Hey, Olivia, come in;
 let's talk." So I sort of stewed with 1050
 that for a while, and then I thought, 1051
 "You know, I gotta have feedback 1052
 because if I don't I won't have 1053
 learned from this process. It would 1054
 have been for naught," you know. And 1055
 at that point I said, "William, I'd like 1056
 some feedback. I'd like to hear what 1057
 the panel had to say." That feedback 1058
 session did more for me than many 1059
 things in my career. And I wrote William 1060
 a note later on saying, you know, 1061
 "That was not easy to hear, but it was 1062
 important." And it's what I needed to 1063
 hear in terms what my strengths were, 1064
 what my areas of growth needed to be, 1065
 and how people perceived me in that, 1066
 you know, in that setting, in that 1067
 interview setting. Tremendous 1068
 opportunity, and I would just say, and 1069
 I tell people this all the time, ask 1070
 for that input. That feedback is 1071
 critical to your growth. And at that 1072
 point, at the end of it, he said, 1073
 "Well, Olivia," you know, "do you want 1074
 to work for the new principal, Jeremy 1075
 Inch, or do you want to go to 1076
 another school?" Um, I knew Norman 1077
 was open. I knew Roberta Jewel. Um, 1078
 and at that point, I would have loved 1079
 to work with Jeremy Inch, but I 1080
 1081

needed a change, personally and 1082
 professionally. It was the best move 1083
 I could have made at that point. 1084

C: Do you think it helped you 1096
 personally to work with a female high 1097
 school principal? 1098

OY: Yes. Roberta? 1100

C: I don't mean to 1102
 pinpoint Roberta specifically, just the 1103
 idea of a female high school 1104
 principal? 1105

OY: No, I don't think that influenced 1107
 me at all. What influenced me more 1108
 was seeing lots of females in 1109
 administrative positions be very 1110
 successful. But directly, working 1111
 with a female high school principal – 1112
 I really didn't have that opportunity 1113
 until I came here. And, I think Roberta 1114
 would tell you this also, we were 1115
 somewhat autonomous, because, you 1116
 know, she was very knowledgeable and 1117
 skilled principal, and, yet, she'd 1118
 leave me alone to do my own thing, so 1119
 there wasn't a lot of, you know, 1120
 supervision necessary there. So, it's 1121
 not that I worked directly as a 1122
 subordinate to a strong female, it's 1123
 that I had lots of models in the 1124
 system. 1125

C: What kinds of things were you 1127
 seeing that helped you? 1128

OY: Well, let me give you an example. 1130
 I mentioned Rhonda was one of my high 1131
 school teachers. Wilhelmina Yokes – 1132
 remember that name? 1133

C: Uh, hm. 1135

OY: That was one of my high school teachers. Wilhelmina Yokes was the director of Community Relations for Union County Public Schools, so I would always read with interest what she did because I had that personal connection with her. Uh, Susan Gilford one of the most difficult teacher evaluation things I ever was involved in had to do with a teacher not following the curriculum. So I got to, through the grievance process, work with Susan Gilford. It's something that Union County expects of its teachers. Uh, so I had her as a model. Gosh – Sharon Langford I worked with. There were just so many. That just, I, in my position as assistant principal, I was able to meet these women who were so capable and knowledgeable, and to serve as excellent role models.

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C: In addition to school, were there any outside activities, groups, organizations, that also gave you those types of role models or examples?

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OY: No. You mean, like a church or community organization?

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C: Professional.

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OY: Professional organizations? No, because one thing that I regret is in my career, at this point, I have been so busy getting a masters degree and so busy raising children, so busy doing my job, I haven't spent a lot of time doing professional organizations. I look at that, sort of, down the road.

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Um, although, you know, at this point in my career, I'm branching out more, doing stuff with ASCD and that kind of thing. But no, in terms of your

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question, in terms of models, it was	1183
the people I was working with in the	1184
school system, you know.	1185
C: Did you ever consider going to	1187
another school system?	1188
OY: No. And I, that's probably	1190
because I was born, raised, educated,	1191
you know, so I might be different from	1192
a lot of people. I mean I'm a Union	1193
person, I'm sort of from the old	1194
school, you know. You know, Northwest	1195
(school system). (laugh)	1196
C: Too far.	1198
OY: No, well, it's west. But no, I	1200
mean, I signed on for the duration.	1201
And I don't think there are a lot of	1202
people that think that way, at least	1203
younger people.	1204
C: Teacher. Special projects.	1206
Curriculum specialist. AP at Orange.	1207
AP at Norman. Then, I forgot what's	1208
next.	1209
OY: Staff development and then	1211
curriculum. Basically it was staff	1212
development for two years.	1213
C: Talk a little bit about making the	1215
transition from the staff development	1216
to the principalship.	1217
OY: For me it was so natural in	1219
so many ways. As I said before,	1220
the one way I hadn't prepared myself	1221
for the position was in the area of	1222
athletics. I just didn't have – first	1223
of all, I was a high school athlete,	1224
but I wasn't a college athlete. I wasn't	1225
into the management of athletics in	1226
any way at Norman or at Orange.	1227
That was a whole new area I needed to	1228

learn. So that was rocky, initially, 1229
 and I think probably a lot of new 1230
 high school principals would say that. 1231

C: You're sitting at your desk, and 1243
 you look at the School Communications B 1244
 regarding Norman. 1245

OY: I was really excited because I 1247
 knew that, I really loved Norman. I 1248
 really loved everything about the 1249
 school when I was assistant principal. 1250
 The school is just so unique compared 1251
 to others. I'd been at six schools, 1252
 six high schools altogether, so I had a 1253
 basis of comparison, and I knew that 1254
 I'd like to be back at that school as 1255
 principal. Victor Ericson walked in 1256
 and said, you know, "I'd like to hire 1257
 you as assistant principal at 1258
 Richmond." I told Victor, "No. I've 1259
 done that job for ten years, uh, I 1260
 really want to look at something 1261
 else." And I said, I think that was 1262
 really the first time that I admitted 1263
 to, you know, a colleague there, or 1264
 another principal, that I was 1265
 interested in the principalship. And 1266
 he said, "Oh, you'd be excellent." 1267
 I mean, so that, you know, it was 1268
 immediate positive feedback. And 1269
 that's Victor. But after that, he said, 1270
 "What do you have in mind?" And I 1271
 said, "Well, Norman." And then he 1272
 told me that this other person had 1273
 been placed in the position and I was 1274
 just crushed. And then I learned that 1275
 the PTA, and the parent community, had 1276
 really, was in an uproar because they 1277
 really hadn't had the opportunity to 1278
 select their principal, to participate 1279
 in the process. One was selected for 1280
 them and put here. And so, they went 1281
 through that. 1282

C: There was a comparison to...	1284
OY: There was a comparison to Columbia, where they had done a national search for a principal and, ultimately, had some candidates, interviewed them and didn't go with anybody. It was a second time around that they had this national search. And ultimately, of course, they hired someone who was a retired principal from Union, a female. Well, at the same time as this national search, Norman had a vacancy and rather than give the parent community, the teachers any input, any say, any involvement in selecting their candidate, they went out – or, sorry, the Region North superintendent selected someone to be placed here. That didn't work out though. The community went in an uproar. That person was removed and, in the meantime, someone from Norman called me and said, “I think this is what's going on,” you know, “that we're not going to have this person coming.” And, so I sort of just waited to see what was going on. And then it was advertised again in the School Communications B, and I applied along with the other, you know, whoever knows, 12 or 50 other applicants, and went through the process, which was very exciting because this time I was ready.	1286 1287 1288 1289 1290 1291 1292 1293 1294 1295 1296 1297 1298 1299 1300 1301 1302 1303 1304 1305 1306 1307 1308 1309 1310 1311 1312 1313 1314 1315 1316 1317 1318
C: Yeah.	1320
OY: I was confident. The questions I was prepared to answer. None of the questions stumped me, or took me off-guard, or were unanticipated. The responses that I had were based on the experiences I had, and William Ingles gave me some very important feedback again. William seems to be resurfacing	1322 1323 1324 1325 1326 1327 1328 1329

in my career. But one of the things	1330
he said is, "I thought you were doomed	1331
from the minute you started your	1332
interview." And I said, "Why, William?"	1333
He said, "Because when we asked you if	1334
you had an opening statement, you	1335
said, 'No.' But you said something	1336
important afterwards: 'I want to spend	1337
the half hour together answering your	1338
questions, and then I have some things	1339
to summarize in the end to make sure	1340
you know everything it is that I want	1341
you to know about why I want this	1342
position.'" So he said that sort of	1343
won the group over. It wasn't	1344
anything I had planned to do, you	1345
know. I just walked in and thought,	1346
"These people look" - you could just	1347
look in their eyes; they were so	1348
committed to selecting the right	1349
person, and I think it's because of	1350
what had happened before, and they	1351
weren't going to get to participate,	1352
so now it was really important to	1353
them. So I wanted to be sure to	1354
answer their questions, and then come	1355
back and tell them why I think I'm the	1356
right fit here, at this school, at	1357
this time, at this place. You know.	1358
 C: And this was two years ago?	 1360
 OY: June, 2000.	 1362
 C: Wow. Congratulations!	 1364
 OY: June the first. (laugh)	 1366
 C: Happy anniversary.	 1368
 OY: It's been wonderful. It really	 1370
has.	1371
 C: And how was that first year?	 1373
 OY: It was great. As I said, I felt	 1375

prepared to do the job, with the 1376
 exception of athletics, and I had, in 1377
 my first year, two pretty high-profile 1378
 problems in athletics. Had I had 1379
 different staff working on it, had I 1380
 had more experience, you know how you do 1381
 this - hindsight that's 20/20, um - had I 1382
 had more support from Personnel with regard 1383
 to one issue I was dealing with – um, 1384
 it would have made the year a breeze, 1385
 a breeze. Because, you know, it's a 1386
 difficult job, but I felt prepared to 1387
 do everything but that area. 1388

C: The, uhm, your school board member 1390
 – was there much interaction with him 1391
 or her? 1392

OY: Eleanor Craft is. I'm 1394
 interacting more now that she and I 1395
 know each other. First year, she was 1396
 supportive, but we didn't interact 1397
 much because there really wasn't a 1398
 need to. This year this was more of a 1399
 need to. Or I recognize the need 1400
 more, here she can assist us. She, 1401
 likewise, where she can assist us. So 1402
 that we've built that relationship 1403
 over the past two years we've worked 1404
 together. But, she was, she's 1405
 tremendously supportive. I'm so 1406
 lucky. 1407

C: Any parents that first year... 1424

OY: I had a ... 1426

C: ...who really helped, hindered? 1428

OY: I had a PTA president who, I tell 1430
 you, you know, she is, she's just 1431
 incredible. She's an incredible human 1432
 being. She was on the principal's 1433
 selection panel, so she had, you know, 1434
 I used to tease her, because, I said, 1435

“You know, Patty, you selected me,” 1436
 (laugh) “so you know I gotta be good.” 1437
 You know. She's an interesting woman 1438
 because she graduated from Norman 1439
 High School along with 39 relatives. 1440
 So I'm not going to mess up this 1441
 school for her. (laugh) She is so 1442
 invested in this place. And when I 1443
 needed help I could go to Patty, and 1444
 even when, for the most part we've 1445
 agreed, or at least that's the 1446
 appearances. I mean, even if she 1447
 didn't agree with me, she was 1448
 supportive. And the best example I 1449
 can give you of that is recently: Her 1450
 daughter was one of the five who were 1451
 going to go to the prom with Local Radio Show. 1452
 I don't know if you read anything about 1453
 that in the local rags. 1454

C: (shakes head “no”) 1456

OY: One of our students 1479
 called them over spring break “Would 1480
 you go to prom with me?” And she 1481
 said, “Yes, but I'm going to bring my 1482
 four anchors, my four co-anchors. Will 1483
 you get them dates?” And, ultimately, 1484
 I said, “No, we're not doing at.” 1485
 Anyway, Patty's daughter was one of 1486
 the kids involved, my PTA president, 1487
 and... 1488

C: This was this year or last year? 1490

OY: This was just this past spring. 1492
 And they're on a two-year PTA 1493
 presidency stint. Any way, even 1494
 though her daughter was hurt, she was 1495
 able to rise above that and say, “This 1496
 isn't in the best interest of Norman 1497
 High School.” And I always tell the 1498
 students, and the teachers, and the 1499
 parents, that that's how I make my 1500
 decisions, in terms of what's in the 1501

best interests of Norman High School. I have to do that from where I sit. And sometimes that may not play out well for an individual kid. I mean, we try to be very student-centered, client-centered, too, but there are times I have to make decisions that are for the school.

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C: Last year, what were the demographics of the school?

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OY: Last school year: 20% Asian, 18% Hispanic, 14% Black, the rest of the white population.

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C: Now, how many students?

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OY: Last year: 1240. The year before, 1100. Next year, 1310.

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C: So it is going up?

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OY: We're growing.

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C: And you have the Academy? And the IB program?

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OY: Uh, hm.

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C: Were there any special programs – and I'm looking at your first year here – were there any programs that started your first year here?

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OY: No. No, when, other than, we took over MR. The MR students used to go to North Point High School and we have an MR program that we started the first year I was here. And that's, you know, for the inclusion target – we're bringing our kids back.

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C: How did you all do with your SOLs?

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OY: Great.	1556

C: Your first year?	1566
OY: When I came on board, the SOL	1568
scores for Norman High School were	1569
all below the division average. At	1570
the end of the first year, they were	1571
all above. And some of them – Algebra	1572
I for example – they were second	1573
highest in the county. I don't count	1574
Potomac. (laugh)	1575
C: Congratulations.	1577
OY: Yeah – the teachers worked really,	1579
really hard. This past spring, we got	1580
an 80% pass rate on the US/VA History.	1581
Algebra II is another matter, which	1582
we'll talk about at a later time.	1583
C: To work on. What do you think is	1585
the biggest challenge when you came	1586
here?	1587
OY: The SOL scores. That was huge,	1589
because I did not want to be part of a	1590
school that was below the average.	1591
That's not, you know, this school is	1592
so much better than that. The teachers	1593
are so much better; the kids are so	1594
much better. And we just need to focus	1595
on 'that's the work we have on hand.'"	1596
And we made huge strides the first	1597
year. So in terms of academics,	1598
that was it. In terms of leadership	1599
development, I worked real hard on	1600
that the first year. Having the	1601
Leadership Council, which is our	1602
department chair group, understand	1603
that I wasn't going to tell them what	1604
to do. We were gonna decide together.	1605
And ultimately, I have to make the	1606
decision, but we were, but I was very	1607

much into participatory management. 1608
 Some people struggle with that, with 1609
 having those extra responsibilities. 1610
 You know, the chair just wants to 1611
 count books, doesn't really want to be 1612
 in charge of making decisions. Um, 1613
 worked real hard on facility issues. 1614
 Believe it or not, Norman use to be 1615
 under 1000 in enrollment. And during 1616
 that time Roberta brought in 1617
 Transportation Training Center, 1618
 Vocational Assessment Center, all 1619
 sorts of programs to be sure this 1620
 building was totally utilized. It's 1621
 what she had to do at the time. What 1622
 I'm having to do now is pry these 1623
 people out of here. (laugh) And what 1624
 I mean by that is – we're running out 1625
 of space for our building. So I spent 1626
 a great deal of time working with 1627
 transportation, working with 1628
 facilities, working with special 1629
 education, with all of the – at one 1630
 point I had a meeting in here and there 1631
 were four assistant superintendents in 1632
 here: instruction, transportation - 1633
 or general services, facility 1634
 services, and what's the fourth one? 1635
 And the Region Director, my school 1636
 board member, to try and look out how, 1637
 how do we work with the fact that our 1638
 enrollment is going up? It has 250 in 1639
 just the two years I have been here. 1640
 That doesn't even address the Academy 1641
 enrollment that's going up by 200 kids 1642
 a year and how do I address that along 1643
 with all the other programs in the 1644
 building? And how – we've made some 1645
 headway, but it's taken two hard 1646
 years. So, those are some issues. 1647
 And, of course, safety and security is 1648
 paramount at this building. I have an 1649
 excellent security staff. 1650
 Unfortunately, one of them is moving 1651
 to Virginia Beach. But, that's 1652
 something we had to look at – how do 1653

we enhance the security, minimize	1654
fights. I mean, when I say minimize –	1655
my first year we had one, you know.	1656
Last year, a couple at the end of the	1657
year. But the reason is because we	1658
use all of our teachers to help with	1659
the halls and that kind of thing. It's	1660
just, kids just basically can't go	1661
anywhere without being seen. And	1662
that's...	1663
C: That's important. Was it last	1665
year, your first year here, when there	1666
was the shooting?	1667
OY: No. That...	1669
C: The year before?	1671
OY: It happened two weeks after I left	1673
here to go to staff development. Two	1674
weeks after.	1675
C: Was that four years ago?	1677
OY: Four years.	1679
C: Was that something in your mind	1681
when you came back here?	1682
OY: Well, it had to be, because it,	1684
you know, it's something that's always	1685
in our mind. It's part of Norman	1686
now, which is too bad. But what, what	1687
I try to do is, is, “Yeah, we gotta	1688
put that aside.” One of the things I	1689
had to deal with was the sister of the	1690
boy who was killed - came to me, and	1691
the family had such hostile, hostile	1692
feelings about the administration	1693
because you got to have hostile	1694
feelings when your child dies. And	1695
that's where they were placed. There	1696
wasn't any other reason for that. Um,	1697
but being that it was a new	1698
administration, a new face, she could	1699

come to me and say, "I'd like to do a	1700
memorial." So I had to work with her.	1701
But also the security staff, on a	1702
day-to-day basis, I want them out	1703
there. I want the kids knowing them.	1704
When I run a retreat, I want them	1705
there. I want, you, all that	1706
relationship building. You know Ted	1707
Harris. You know some of our	1708
security folks – those are people that	1709
I want the kids to think of if they	1710
are in trouble, or if they know of	1711
trouble. I want them to be the	1712
confidante, you know, the one who sits	1713
down at the lunch table with them and	1714
says, "How're you doing," so that we	1715
know what's going on all the time.	1716
That's something we work on constantly	1717
- never forget that, you know.	1718
C: That's tough. What's your fondest	1720
memory from your first year?	1721
OY: Wow. (laugh) Silly?	1723
C: We like silly.	1725
OY: Oh, goodness. You know, the first	1727
year is tough, because you get seniors	1728
who think that this new person is	1729
really, you know, messing up their	1730
life. (laugh) But I think at the end	1731
of my first year, one of the things	1732
that was really great was - they have	1733
this thing called the "Mr. Norman	1734
Contest" - it's just like a Miss	1735
America contest, only it's with boys.	1736
It's very silly, and we all come, and	1737
we all have a good time. Well, two of	1738
the boys came up to me – part of it	1739
they have to do a talent act – and two	1740
of the boys came up and said, "Mrs.	1741
Yates, will you be part of our act?"	1742
And I said, "Oh, my." (laugh)	1743
C: Uh, oh.	1745

OY: Basically what they wanted to do	1747
was, they were singing that, who does	1748
that song, “You Lost That Loving	1749
Feeling”? They were singing that to	1750
me while I was on stage. And then, at	1751
one point, they said, “Oh, enough of	1752
this,” and we had to get up and the	1753
wave together. You know, do a silly	1754
dance together. But what I liked	1755
about that is the kids were able to	1756
get over the fact that “yes, things	1757
had changed here; we tightened up some	1758
things,” but there was still – I think	1759
they had enough trust, or faith, in	1760
me where they could come and ask,	1761
“Will you do something fun with us?”	1762
And we participated in that. So I	1763
kind of think I had arrived there, you	1764
know. So that was fun. Gosh, it's so	1765
hard to narrow it down to one or two	1766
things, but that's one that stands out	1767
from the end of the first year.	1768
C: Do some of them remember you from	1770
being here before?	1771
OY: A few did, but again I was here	1773
before really only for a year and a	1774
half, and that was their freshmen	1775
year. And you know freshmen don't...	1776
C: ...Remember anything. (laugh)	1778
OY: (laugh)	1780
C: Oh, goodness. Well, I was trying	1782
to think if there were any other	1783
questions to ask you? Did you do	1784
summer school? I didn't ask you that.	1785
OY: Yes, I was summer school principal	1788
at Nelson. I don't remember when	1789
that was. It was one of the years I	1790
was at Orange.	1791

C: At Orange?	1793
OY: Yeah.	1795
C: So there were a lot of “check-off things” you did to get ready to become principal?	1797 1798 1799
OY: Oh, yeah.	1801
C: Did you start your doctoral work?	1803
OY: No. I'm raising children.	1805
C: Raising children.	1807
OY: Yes. And, I don't know if that's in my future, but, right now, because of the nature of this job, I have to really, really pick and choose what I do over and above the job and raising my children. You know, I've got an 11- and 12-year-old. And, boy, you know, young children, right now my husband and I juggle them – or they juggle us. (laugh)	1809 1810 1811 1812 1813 1814 1815 1816 1817 1818
C: I think they juggle you - I think that's more accurate. What would be your advice to women who want to become high school principals?	1820 1821 1822 1823
OY: I'm glad you asked that, because one of things that is of an interest to me now is working with people who want to become principals. I chair the Leadership Review Board – there's our latest picture (points out picture on her office wall) - and word last year with one assistant principal processes, doing the portfolio to go from API to APII. My advice would be to the person is to work with your superior, work with your, you know, your cluster director, work with your principal, work with whoever is your	1825 1826 1827 1828 1829 1830 1831 1832 1833 1834 1835 1836 1837 1838

direct supervisor, and let them know	1839
what your interest is. And ask them	1840
for the opportunities to grow in areas	1841
where you know you need growth. But	1842
you have to be very open to input from	1843
your superiors. You have to be able	1844
to be sort of analytical about where	1845
you're good, what your strengths are,	1846
but what your areas of growth need to	1847
be. And, having just gone through the	1848
Strengths Finders training – have you	1849
done that? You did that -	1850
C: Yes.	1852
OY: Okay, you know. There, you learn	1854
that, you know, your strengths, you're	1855
gonna get better at your strengths	1856
areas, but, you know, your weaknesses	1857
will continue to be your weaknesses.	1858
Yes, they will, but in this job you	1859
can't afford to, you know, just rely on	1860
that. You've got to cultivate those	1861
areas of weakness. And so, I tell	1862
people to be sure that you are working	1863
on getting experiences in all of the	1864
areas required in principalship. A	1865
good example: I did finance when I	1866
was an assistant principal . Very few	1867
principals turn that over to an	1868
assistant principal. But that was	1869
important to me to understand the	1870
finances before I took this job. Had	1871
I not, I would have been overwhelmed,	1872
I think, with that piece of it. So,	1873
get yourself in experiences where	1874
you're gonna learn what the job is.	1875
Always be looking what's the next	1876
level and how do you train for that.	1877
An area of weakness for me was in	1878
public speaking. And, it still is.	1879
You know, I'll never be great at it.	1880
It's not one of those things that come	1881
naturally to me. But it is something	1882
that I have had to work on, and I put	1883
myself in situations – some disastrous	1884

(laugh), some successful - where I've had to practice those skills because ultimately you have to have them for this job. I'd also encourage people to find a good mentor, because when I look back on my career – I had great mentors. Just, I mean, I was so blessed, being in this school district and who I've interacted with. It's because of them I am here where I am today. And, you know, I didn't start out my career wanting to be a high school principal. It's something that, you know, evolved because I think there were people who had faith in me, people who gave me, who were willing to take a risk. And I would encourage every principal who works with people who are budding principals to give them a chance, support them, give them an opportunity to fail, pick them up when they do and say, "Okay, we all fail, you know, at times. But, you know, let's look at this and see, what went wrong and how do we do it better next time?" But that support, that mentorship, the opportunities, if you rely on just on someone tapping you, you might get overlooked. And I was fortunate that I didn't get overlooked, but I worry about those who do, you know. And one of the other things I try to do, Carol, is in final evaluation conferences I say to young people, "You have tremendous leadership capabilities." Just kind of plant that seed so that they start to think about "what else can I do outside of my classroom?" Um, but you just can't rely on someone tapping you; you just can't rely on someone recognizing you. But if this is what you're interested in, you gotta link up with a mentor who's going to help you get there. And, you know, I guess that would be it. Find someone who

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you believe will support you and	1931
believe in you. And sometimes it	1932
comes from weird places, like my William	1933
Rice story, you know, I mean, I can't	1934
tell you how helpful he was, and I	1935
don't even think he knew it at the	1936
time, I've told him since. Just that	1937
thing that just made it click and all	1938
come together. "Okay, if I want this,	1939
this is what I'm going to have to do."	1940
So, seeking those opportunities for	1941
input, getting immersed in things,	1942
like the, I mentioned the finances at	1943
Orange. I didn't need that, you	1944
know, I didn't need to get involved in	1945
that, but I needed to. I had to	1946
understand it. As I said, in	1947
hindsight, I would have gotten more	1948
involved in athletics so I had a	1949
better sense of what it was, because I	1950
came into that cold.	1951
 C: I've asked you a lot of questions.	 1953
 OY: I think I just talked at you.	 1956
(laugh)	1957
 C: You've been wonderful. Is there	 1959
anything that I might not have asked	1960
you?	1961
 OY: Not that I can think of. Just in	 1963
terms of where this is headed. I	1964
don't know if you're looking at making	1965
recommendations. One of the things	1966
that has really charged me up is	1967
working on this Leadership Review	1968
Board. And actually, part of it is	1969
meeting with the applicants, and sitting	1970
down with them and saying, "Okay,	1971
here's what you're doing" and looking	1972
on does this show the impact on	1973
leadership and talking them through	1974
that. Just that mentoring is so	1975
important to getting more women in	1976
administration. More men, as well.	1977

C: An opportunity to recognize, and nurture, and grow. It's interesting that you talked about [new principal] Ned Nordstrom being homegrown. I wonder if, when you applied and paneled for Norman, they saw the same thing in you, being home-grown in Union County and having had been an assistant principal here at Norman?

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OY: Could be. I think it was, also, I was the right person at the right time for this school and what the needs were. You know, so much of it is timing.

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C: Isn't it.

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OY: Yeah. And that would be another thing I'd say to applicants: understand that it doesn't mean you're a good or a bad person if you don't get a job, understand it's timing, it's the right person at the right time at the right place. All of that's got to come together. I think, you know so many people go to those panels, and come back, they're like, "Oh, I'll never do that again." You know.

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Vita

Carol Cressa Dempsey Robinson was born in Davenport, Iowa, and raised in Jacksonville, Florida, and Virginia. It was in fourth grade in Jacksonville that she decided to become an educator. From that point forward, Robinson closely observed her teachers in order to ascertain the skills needed to be an effective teacher. Curriculum and instruction, and the strategies needed to reach all students, became her passion and challenge. It was not until she received her masters in curriculum and instruction that she decided to pursue the next rung on the education career ladder: administration.

Robinson graduated from Herndon High School, Herndon, Virginia, in 1974. In 1978 she graduated from George Mason University with a Bachelor in Music Education. After teaching four years of elementary music in Virginia public schools, she moved to San Diego County where she substituted, taught, and received a minor in English from San Diego State University. Upon returning to Virginia, Robinson taught 5 years of elementary and middle school music, English, and drama. She completed a major in English and received her Masters in Curriculum and Instruction from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 1988. A few more courses completed her certification in administration for elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Robinson began the next step of her career in administration in Virginia public schools with her appointment as Assistant Principal to the middle school in 1989. After five years at Sandburg, she was promoted to Assistant Principal at the high school level in 1994. After three adventuresome years there, she moved to an Assistant Principal opening at another middle school. In 1998 she was promoted to Principal at another third middle school, where she continues to serve at the completion of this dissertation.

In addition to her leadership roles as a teacher and administrator, Robinson was Region IX representative to the Virginia Association for Secondary School Principals, 2000 – 2004, and Area 8E Coordinator for Phi Delta Kappa International, 2000 – 2004. She has taught graduate-level courses in curriculum and instruction, teacher evaluation, and mentoring of new teachers. She was a charter member for the local Beta Zeta Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa and co-chair of a conference held for two years, 2003 and 2004, to motivate and inspire potential leaders and scholars found in at-risk, or “in-promise,” middle school girls. The planning committee, and supporters of the conference, overwhelmingly agreed to make the conference an annual event for middle school girls throughout Northern Virginia.