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**African-American female superintendents' perceptions of factors  
influencing their career success**

**Adams, Beulah Mitchell, Ed.D.**

**Lehigh University, 1990**

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**African American  
Female Superintendents' Perceptions of  
Factors Influencing Their Career Success**

**By  
Beulah M. Adams**

**A Dissertation  
Presented to the Graduate Committee  
of Lehigh University  
in Candidacy for the Degree  
Doctor of Education Degree**

**College of Education  
Lehigh University**

**1990**

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a  
dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education.

May 14, 1990  
(date)

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Robert H. Leight  
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Donald C. Langlois  
Joseph P. Kender  
Barbara Franke

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**This Project is Dedicated to**

**Three Pioneering African American Women**

**A Sisterhood of Spiritual Leaders who Continue to be a  
Significant Influence in my Life**

**Essamond Turner Mitchell,**

**my mother .**

**age 76**

**Eva L. Harris Johnson,**

**a best friend**

**age 63**

**Grace Blackledge Plater,**

**a mother figure**

**age 75**

## Acknowledgements

There are a number of people who contributed to the fruition of this study. Only with the assistance of the informants, two African American female superintendents, who will remain anonymous could this research have been successfully accomplished.

Genuine thanks are expressed to the members of my committee, Dr. Robert L. Leight, chairperson, Dr. Barbara Frankel, Dr. Joseph P. Kender and Dr. Donald E. Langlois.

A special note of appreciation is extended to Dr. Elvin G. Warfel, who served as a member of the examining committee. Although Dr. Warfel was on Mountaintop Campus, a state away, he constantly encouraged me through notes and calls to my home and office. After initially establishing a professor-student relationship, we fostered an enduring friendship which I will continue to value.

I am grateful to my new Plainfield professional family including Dr. Otha Porter, the first African American Superintendent of Schools in the State of New Jersey to gain tenure, who read an approved draft of the proposal and Thelma Banister for undertaking the

enormous job of typing field notes and transcripts. Ms. Banister carried out these tasks with a precise diligence. My immediate supervisors, Theodore Brown and Evelyn Baker are saluted for their kind words and deeds.

In addition to my colleagues, recognition is made of a superb secretary and independent entrepreneur, Karen L. Fiorello who efficiently prepared many drafts of this report as well as the final manuscript.

The instantaneous and encouraging support received from three ministerial leaders is gratefully acknowledged. At considerable personal expense, The Rev. Hezekiah Benton, Jr., administrative dean, at Morehouse School of Religion, shared historical information cataloging African American Baptists history. In addition, Dr. Richard F. Norris, pastor of historic, Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, granted me a face-to-face interview on a day in which he was heavily scheduled. In order to further aid my efforts, Dr. Norris personally guided me through the Allen Museum, providing commentary on the numerous artifacts. Through an April 1990 Ebony magazine article and subsequent telephone outreach, I also had the good fortune of talking to Dr. Daniel W. Jacobs, dean of Turner Theological Seminary, who

doubles as an A.M.E. history instructor with the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), a Protestant consortium of six seminaries.

Vivi M. Jackson, Shelby J. Torres and Dr. George A. Patterson are recognized for warm encouragement and insightful mentoring. They have brought a new dimension to what it means to be a friend.

Most of all, however, I acknowledge the continuing support of my husband Leon Adams and son Christopher, who endured the rigors and celebrated the "peaks" of graduate studies in tandem with Mommy.

A genuine and heartfelt note of loving appreciation is reserved for my husband because of his firm belief in me.

## Prologue

I have not written about being a Negro at such length because I expect that to be my only subject, but only because it was the gate I had to unlock before I could hope to write about anything else (James Baldwin, quoted by Begley, 1990, p. 48).

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African American  
Female Superintendents' Perceptions of  
Factors Influencing Their Career Success

Abstract

Beulah M. Adams

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there have been specific enculturation factors in the African American female superintendent's personal and family life as she herself perceives and interprets it which could plausibly have helped to prepare her for administrative advancement in an atypical environment as well as in a typical setting. Examination of these factors, even if they occurred early in the African American female's life, and long prior to the superintendency, might suggest that certain sets of life circumstances, patterns or shapes of lives, generate enhanced career aspirations and subsequent career attainment.

An interview guide featuring four-broad areas was utilized as one gauge or measurement instrument. A

questionnaire with baseline items concerning both the subjects' personal and professional lives was mailed to the informants prior to interviews. Other research components included shadowing, participant observation and document analysis. The external or social scientific approach (etic) as well as insider's view (emic) of phenomena were utilized.

The limitations of this sort of case study were such that a plausible account was created. No causal relationships could be drawn from this small number of informants. Hypotheses were proposed; however, they could not be tested or proven.

Findings indicated that the subjects' present careers were favorably influenced by (a) coming from intact nuclear families that were small in size, (b) having had a network of supportive schoolteachers, (c) forging relationships with numerous mentors and (d) being steeped in the traditional ethic of the African American led Baptist Church.

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

There has been an effort to encourage more women to become superintendents of schools. Currently, local school district outreach programs geared toward achieving this objective may range from advertisement of the district as an Equal Opportunity Employer to professionally facilitated, in-service opportunities featuring female-oriented events. Measures such as these and other more aggressive activities, often individual in nature, are geared toward achieving the desired goal of employing more female superintendents.

Notwithstanding the value of such practices, they have not been successful for recruiting and retaining African American females. While there were 29 African American female superintendents in 1985 (Revere, 1985), the number declined to 21 in 1989 (Moody, 1989).

This study examined aspects of the personal background of two African American female superintendents of schools; one who works in a vocational/technical environment and another who works in a mainly African American setting. Contextual clues suggest why a certain race/gender type turns up as

superintendent in a given setting.

With the well-established pattern of gentrification of some inner city and urban centers, life in neighboring areas might echo the refrain of sameness in various aspects of daily living (Clark, 1965; McManus & Cunningham, 1973; Williams, 1986). Should one venture into the local school system in one of these adjacent locations, one would observe that the youngsters represent a limited cross-section of people. They are mainly of low-socioeconomic status (SES), minority ethnicity and/or race (Boocock, 1972; Bowen, 1985; Lyons & O'D Walton, 1988; Galiano & Nearine, 1988; Crim, 1988). In such a district, chances are such that if the system were to employ an ethnic/racial minority and/or a female as chief school administrator, few heads would turn (Power, 1988).

A visit to a suburban or small town system outside the metropolis might produce different observations. There, the odds are that SES would find the majority of students in the middle to upper class, and the district's superintendent would be a white male (Coursen & Mazarella, 1981; The School Administrator, 1989). In the rare instances when a person who has traditionally endured socially handicapping conditions, an African American female, occupies this highest leadership position, many questions can be generated

concerning the conditions in which this woman's rise to the position of chief school administrator became possible (Fauth, 1984; University Council for Educational Administration, 1986).

Much is already known about how female educators ascend the career ladder and ultimately advance to the position of Superintendent of Schools, because their career paths have been well-researched (Keim, 1978; Chambers, 1979; Arnez, 1982; Prolman, 1982; Moody, 1983; Amodeo & Emslie, 1985; Revere, 1985; Bulls, 1986; Dopp, 1986; Maienza, 1986; Marshall, 1986; Johnston, 1987; Edson, 1988). Being mentored, having appropriate role models, and developing political savvy are consistent strands in the research reports on both lateral movement (career mobility) and career upward mobility of female professionals committed to working for schoolchildren -- from the classroom all the way to the conference room at central office (Welch, 1980; Block & Greenberg, 1985; Antler, 1987; Edson, 1988). Although nationwide superintendents as a group represent a limited range of race/gender combinations, there are a small number of African American female superintendents who are actively providing direction and leadership (Revere, 1985; Bulls, 1986; Jones, 1988). In districts where African American female superintendents are at the helm, the findings suggest

that they service a variety of community types Accordingly, their administration is not always limited to inner city, urban areas or nonvocational districts (Revere, 1985). Moreover, of this select group of school administrators, surprisingly, not all are concentrated in districts having a high percentage of poor and/or minority students (Revere, 1985).

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine whether or not there have been specific enculturation factors in the African American female superintendent's personal and family life (as she herself perceives and interprets it) which could plausibly have helped to prepare her for administrative advancement in an atypical (mainly vocational students) environment as well as in a typical (mainly minority students) setting. Examination of these factors, even when they occurred early in the African American female's life, and long prior to the superintendency, suggested that certain sets of life circumstances -- patterns or shapes of lives -- generated enhanced career aspirations and subsequent career attainment (Aschenbrenner, 1975; Cooper, 1977; Duncan, 1977; Thornton, 1977; Riley, 1988; Kessel, 1988; Mitchell, 1989).

Once the subjects had successfully completed the necessary preparation for life in the upper echelon of leadership and administration -- the equivalent of life as chief executive officer (CEO) in corporate America, was there a common profile in their families of origin and/or biographies that helped to advance them to superintendents' positions and then enabled them to sustain this level of career achievement?

### Significance of the Study

Equal access to professional career opportunities regardless of race or gender status is a common goal shared in concept by most educational leaders and policy makers. Interestingly, the African American female's experience in climbing the educational career ladder has become an area of recent study by a small number of researchers of African American descent. Since the African American woman occupies the unique position of belonging to both a racial minority and a traditionally submerged gender majority, she could suffer the double whammy -- racism as well as sexism. Being both African American and female may not be considered as enhancements for career upward mobility.

The existence of African American superintendents in atypical and typical professional settings was important to study. It could help both our educational

leaders and the concerned African American community to understand whether such individuals have in common an ability to use their personal and family backgrounds as springboards to exceptionally successful educational careers. In addition to examining personal factors and family circumstances during several such women's early formative years, this study also investigated their present nuclear and extended family status.

Though it is inevitable that each subject would possess many unique traits, discerning common patterns or profiles among these females could, in some sense, underscore common living circumstances and/or life histories. It was hoped that the research accomplished in this study would add to existing knowledge concerning African American females' career patterns and will specifically establish baseline information about African American females who have successfully competed for atypical and typical superintendencies in public school settings. It is believed that courageous African American female aspirants already in the educational pipeline could gain insights from this study which may provide significant implications for their own career development.

The specific objectives were:

1. To identify those elements of African American female superintendents' personal-life histories which they believe to have influenced upward-career mobility, culminating in winning the superintendency;

2. To identify present and past specifically family characteristics which these women perceive as having influenced upward career mobility to the superintendency.

#### Definition of Terms

For this study, the following terms are defined:

Acculturation - "This term has been used since the 19th century to describe processes of ACCOMMODATION and CHANGE in culture contact, but during the 1930s it came to be used increasingly by U S anthropologists interested in the study of cultural and social change and the problems of social disorientation and cultural decline". They defined acculturation as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of both groups." Such studies attempt "to describe and analyze the process of change" (Dictionary of Anthropology, 1986, p. 1).

African American - What Jesse Jackson suggested "that black people in the United States should begin to call themselves" (The New York Times Magazine, Part 2, April 23, 1989, p. 25). "Some people feel that making the name of the culture into a prefix ending of o weakens or demeans that culture or country; Jesse Jackson, for example, rejects Afro-American, preferring African-American, which treats both cultures equally" (The New Times Magazine, May 28, 1989, p.16).

According to National Alliance of Black School Educators, Inc. President, Dr. Patricia A. Ackerman, "African American should never be hyphenated. Omission of the hyphen symbolizes the historical separation and emphasizes the uniqueness of our identity as Americans" (NABSE Newsbriefs, 1989, p.2).

Atypical - "Not typical; varying from the type" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1975, p.86). School districts having a vocational/technical education mission who employ an African American female as Superintendent of Schools.

Career Upward Mobility - "A hierarchial progression of related occupational roles through which a person moves during her working life. Career upward mobility comprises a socially recognized patterned sequence of

occupational roles, often with increasing prestige and rewards" (A Modern Dictionary of Sociology, 1969, p.37).

Double whammy - "At double jeopardy; members of two minority groups" (Riggs, 1988, p. 18). "Consequences of gender and race stereotyping" (Carter, 1988, p.32). "At the intersection of race and gender stand women of color, torn by the lines of bias that currently divide white from nonwhite in our society, and male from female" (Carter, Pearson & Shalik, 1988, p.98).

Enculturation - "Introduced in U S cultural anthropology as a substitute or alternative for SOCIALIZATION. The concept of enculturation implies that the process of becoming incorporated into a specific culture and learning its norms and patterns is one which continues beyond childhood into adult life" (Dictionary of Anthropology, 1986, p.93-94).

Extended Family - "The members of the constituent groups of an extended family do not all live together in one dwelling. They usually live close together and engage in common activities" (International Encyclopedia of Social Science, 1968, p. 304).

Family - "The human family may be defined as an

institutionalized bio-social group made up of adults (at least two of which, unrelated by blood and of the opposite sex, are married), and children, the offspring of the maritally related adults; the minimal functions of which are the providing of satisfactions and control (over/of) affectional needs, including sexual relations, and the provisions of a sociocultural situation for the procreation, care, and socialization of offspring" (Dictionary of the Social Sciences, 1964, p. 257). "Is an institutionalized part of the social structure of every society known to us ... deeply imbedded in social norms ... " (Frankel, 1989).

Gentrification - "The social phenomenon in which homes in formerly poor, overcrowded, ghetto neighborhoods are purchased and privately rehabilitated by more affluent families for their personal dwellings or for investment. This has the effect of raising the property values, rents, and property tax rates of all the homes in the neighborhood, forcing the removal of the remaining less affluent people and their replacement by those who can afford to live there. The gentrified neighborhood may seem more desirable, but the people who are displaced have to crowd into other neighborhoods, and the resulting population pressure causes those neighborhoods to decline" (The Social Work

Dictionary, 1987, p.63).

Inner city - A term used in urbanology and other social sciences to describe an area within a city that is usually characterized by high population density, racial ghettoization, and a decaying infrastructure.

(The Social Work Dictionary, 1987, p.79). ". . . used primarily with reference to cities in the United States, and often with the implication that in the inner city there is a certain degree of anonymity, transiency, or lack of social organization in both the rich and poor areas" (Modern Dictionary of Sociology, 1969, p. 204).

Mentors - "Teachers or coaches whose functions are primarily to make introductions or to train a young person to move effectively through the system" (Edson, 1988, p.72). A person who offers sponsorship and career encouragement.

Nuclear Family - "The term. . . is most frequently used to refer to a group consisting of a man, woman, and their socially recognized children. . . it refers to concrete groups, and the qualification 'nuclear' suggests that this is the unit out of which more extensive family groups are built or grow"

(International Encyclopedia of Social Science, 1968, p. 303).

Role Model - A person "considered as a standard of excellence to be imitated." Often a same-sex representative "upon which career aspirations and goals are patterned" (Edson, 1988, p.61). As used here, the reference is only to the consciously admired role model, even though much has been written about unconscious emulation of models (such as an alcoholic parent) whose behavior is not exemplary or desirable to emulate.

SES - Socioeconomic status; generally includes the "occupation of principal breadwinner, family income, parents' education, or some combination of these." Also "related to other characteristics of the family which are independently related to achievement" such as family size (Boocock, 1972, p. 36).

Superintendent - "The administrative head of a school district; the director for the entire unit or district; the executive officer for the board of education" (Revere, 1985, p. 11).

Typical - "Conforming to a type; . . . .normal, characteristic, usual (American Heritage Dictionary, 1975, p. 1388). School districts with a predominately minority-group student population who employ an African American as Superintendent of Schools.

Urban - "Is characterized by a large, heterogeneous population of high density. There is a predominance of nonagricultural occupations, a high degree of specialization resulting in a complex division of labor, and a formalized system of local government. Also there tends to be a prevalence of impersonal relations and dependence on formal social control" (A Modern Dictionary of Sociology, 1969, p.251).

## CHAPTER II

### Review of the Literature

This chapter presents a summary of literature and research studies concerning personal and family life in relation to career mobility influences having racial and/or gender underpinnings. Also, in conjunction with the companion purpose to study African American female superintendents, the review covers a synopsis of knowledge appropriate to achieving this end. In order to facilitate a coherent and reasonably comprehensive examination of the related material, the review of literature is divided into five-broad sections [with side headings outlined in the subsequent narrative] as delineated below:

- (1) Personal and Family Life from a Feminine Perspective
- (2) Educational and Career Pursuits
- (3) A Selected View of Religious Life
- (4) African American Females in School Administration
- (5) The Minority Superintendency

The literature review sequence attempts loosely to follow an Eriksonian-lifestage progression, from

childhood through adolescence and on to a multitiered adult stage (Steinberg, 1989). Accordingly, the early formative years of a child's life are the starting point. From there, the literature survey moves to educational pursuits and the subsequent evolution of career aspirations. The final component of Section Two covers studies of sustaining career success. Enculturation as well as acculturation, a central theme, is consistently evident and is a common thread interwoven throughout this broad area.

Review of historical sources and literature pertaining to religious life was also appropriate. Next, parallels are examined between African American females and their counterparts of other races/ethnicities in the school administration subarea. Initially, the superintendency is treated without regard to genre, then we narrow the review to the topic of this research effort -- the atypical African American female superintendent.

With each passage from one stage of human growth to the next we, too, must shed a protective structure. We are left exposed and vulnerable - but also yeasty and embryonic again, capable of stretching in ways we hadn't known before (Sheehy, 1976, p. 29).

Personal and Family Life from a Feminine  
Perspective

Early nurturing

Unless people have the encouragement that makes them aspire to great things they are not often unaware of their capabilities. If this is so, does early nurturing serve to deny a segment of our American society aspirations? Gallese (1985) offered, for the woman business executive and others, glimpses of such an occurrence in her quantitatively researched book regarding the personal and professional lives of her female informants. Using a variety of ethnographic strategies ranging from open-ended questions and tape recording of subject's responses, Mary Pat's "childhood days in the moribund industrial city of Allentown, Pennsylvania" was described (p. 138). The daughter of a "lower-middle class Roman Catholic", Gallese documented how Mary Pat broke away from a state trooper father and a mother fearful of her daughter not fitting in at Harvard Business School, to achieve middle management success in the corporate world. Five other females from the Harvard Business School's Class of '75 are also covered in this research effort.

Recently, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), through an informational booklet and extensive promotional mailing to their 18,674

members, targeted parents similar to Mary Pat's mother and father as part of a nationwide parenting skills focus (Amundson, 1989). Emphasizing the first year of an infant's life, the toddler stage as well as the preschool years, AASA has suggested that school administrators develop linkage with parental groups. In so doing, children from the homes of involved parents will begin their formal schooling with internalized-discipline boundaries, intact-attention spans and sufficient-language skills. Using "Nurturing America's Primary Assets" as a subtitle in her article, Edelman's (1987/88) concerns about our nation's young were similar to those articulated by AASA. Edelman posited, "The survival and quality of our children, youths, and families are the most important determinants of the quality of our nation's future (p. 24).

Handel and Goldsmith (1989) conducted a case study of reading practices in low-income, urban homes of African Americans and Hispanics. "Building on the strong parental motivation, the plan sought to operationalize research on the critical role of the family in developing children's literacy and on the need for intergenerational efforts." (p. 1). In so doing, the female parents were cast as tutors for their children. The researchers found a powerful interaction

between the mothers' own aspirations and their willingness to provide home-based enrichment experiences for their children.

Dullea (1977) in a special article to the New York Times recounted a rather impoverished beginning for an African American family -- the Thornton family of Long Branch, New Jersey. She traced the six African American female children's rise from a government-housing subsidized start as they tried to fulfill their father's dream that they all become medical doctors. Highlighted in the article is how their early musical training provided a disciplinary regime, ego-satisfying experiences and financial amenities. The article featured the accomplishments of the daughters. Though these were not identical with their father's early articulated aspirations for his all-female family, they were quite compatible with them.

Adams (1977), a resident in a low-income housing project since the authorities opened its doors to tenants, reported that the Thornton family moved into a unit for large families in the early 1950s. Even though they were polite, she remembered that the family consistently stayed to themselves. Moreover, Adams recalled that the children were not permitted outside to play with others. The Thorntons' nonattendance at church was another family practice that she mentioned.

Boocock (1972) posited that race or ethnic group as well as family attributes are strongly related to scholastic attainment and later life achievement. Child isolation is practiced by some low-income mothers who have high aspirations for their children. Boocock, for example, described this practice of parents such as the Thorntons:

. . . low income mothers with high aspirations for their children often use a strategy of keeping them inside the home almost all the time they are not in school, thus protecting them from stimuli that might fault the good student role (p. 66).

When, more than a decade ago, this oral history of the Thornton Family (1977) of Long Branch, New Jersey was completed, it was noted that although the neighbors did not think very highly of this separation measure, it did continue as a family practice. In addition to the isolation, Mr. Thornton made an early decision that all daughters would be exposed to music. The rationale for this was the discipline factor and the envisioned financial return music lessons would yield. This determined father arranged for a number of whites in the community who read music to offer lessons to the children without charge. When interviewed, Mr. Thornton (1977) volunteered that he was careful to stay in his "place" and never informed those giving lessons of the plan he had for the musical training his daughters were receiving.

During this time, the family was subjected to a rigid schedule of practice and more practice in order to sharpen their musical skills. After a successful appearance on the "Ted Mack Amateur Hour" and a performance at the Apollo Theater in New York City, they launched a pattern of weekend engagements entertaining on the Ivy League college circuit. This experience was financially rewarding and it supplied an ego-building experience.

In 1977, when this oral history was obtained, three of the six daughters had received doctorates. Jeanette, the second daughter, had just received an Ed.D. from Rutgers (The N.J. State University) and had won acceptance into a New England medical school. Yvonne, the third daughter, was a medical doctor specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, while Linda, the fifth daughter, was an army dentist. Another daughter, Rita, the youngest, was to have received a dentistry degree at the end of the academic school year. Last year, it was learned that Rita never reached her educational goal and was experiencing severe frustration in a leadership role based at a private-New Jersey secondary school.

Rita (1977) did not hesitate to tell this researcher that her quest for educational attainment had not been easy. She summed up her negative

experiences by saying that teachers began to place obstacles in the way once it was realized that the family was achieving their goal. Further, Rita suggested that it was easier for her older sisters because the pattern had not been established. Educators could accept one or two "making good," but to continue the pattern of additional siblings becoming doctors was too much success to accept. Rita concluded the 1977 interview by cautioning that existing opportunities were quickly vanishing. Consequently, if African American females have similar aspirations, it was advisable to be aware that they should launch the effort as quickly as possible and be ever so cognizant that it would not be easy in many respects.

This African American success story has been covered by the New York Times, network television and Ebony magazine.

#### The Contemporary African American Family.

Only 7 percent of American families fit the traditional form of male worker with a homemaker wife, the kind of family the Thorntons represented, noted Lawhon (1984). There is a corresponding increase in the number of people having a large variety of family structures including intact nuclear family, nuclear dyad, nuclear remarried, kin network, and experimental

forms such as cohabitating dyads (Encyclopedia of Social Work, 1987, p. 524). Among whites, nevertheless, "81 percent (children) . . . live in two-parent families, compared with 41 percent among blacks" (Moore, Peterson & Zill, 1985, p. 13). Moreover, the Encyclopedia of Social Work studies of African American families suggested:

Black families in the United States, have shown how families are influenced in both structure and functioning by the systems and forces of contemporary society as much as by their particular history and cultural values. Black families are shaped not by how these forces affect other families or all families, but by how these forces affect black families, given such intervening forces as race, region, religion, and social class (p. 525).

Frankel (1977), using a variety of ethnographic strategies, conducted a study of low income African American females who had recently given birth in a North Philadelphia hospital ward. Although the field work was accomplished in 1968 and 1969, prior to the 1973 Supreme Court abortion decision which invalidated antiabortion laws, the relevance of this study in light of the most recent Supreme Court decision in Webster v. Reproductive & Health Services, a Roe v. Wade sequel, is unquestionable. Frankel's conclusions utilized dichotomous cultural-value themes. In taking this analysis route, she underscored the value of varying family structures such as the network of similarly

situated friends offering an array of supports for low-income mothers. The evidence concerning the personal lives of fifty informants, suggested that a "pathology, an unorganized or disorganized way of life" (Frankel, 1971, p. 107) was not the appropriate way to describe the subjects' subcultural lifestyle -- a lifestyle brimming with creative demonstrations of resourcefulness.

Raising an African American child in a society that is preoccupied with skin color is no easy assignment contended McLaughlin (1976), an African American mother. Hence, special requirements are placed upon the shoulders of African American parents as they nurture their children to feel good about themselves. At the same time, however, she warned that African American children must receive competent teaching about how to cope with the realities of society while efforts are made to eliminate "the color inferiority fallacy." The author reminded the reader that regardless of family status, children who receive emotional warmth from parents can "attain greater academic advancement, usually have a higher opinion of themselves, and show a higher regard for others" (p.xii).

## Afrocentricity

Historically, a healthy debate between two prominent African American leaders, W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington, served to structure the pursuits of African Americans. DuBois believed in the talented tenth, who, given the proper intellectual stimulation and avenues for obtaining an enlightened education could lead the masses of African American people to increased self-respect, liberation and upward mobility. DuBois, a prolific writer, left writings which have been preserved and widely studied by scholars realizing their worth as a heritage among African American people. His words are considered as a source of continual reference for many people. The Souls of Black Folk written by DuBois (1904) has been assessed by scholars as one of DuBois' finest literary works. His sketch of the spiritual life of African America described:

. . . a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity (p. 3).

On the other hand, Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, asserted that African Americans could elevate themselves to positions

of stature by excelling in industrial, manual and vocational training. His belief was that skilled artisans could lift themselves up to a better way of life by being the very best workers. Great attention was paid to discipline, hygiene habits and appropriate social demeanor at Tuskegee Institute. Students had to walk the "straight and narrow" while all aspects of their collegiate life underwent close scrutiny.

Although philosophical differences existed between DuBois and Washington, it can be argued that both schools of thought advocated educational attainment and upward mobility for the masses of African American people.

According to some African American theorists of family relationships, nurturing their offspring to develop positive self-conceptions is hard to do if the parent lacks good feelings about him/herself as a person. Thus, low self-esteem may be passed down the generations of certain families. Dr. Gwendolyn Goldsby Grant (1989), during a recent address before a predominantly ethnic-minority banquet audience at Lehigh University reiterated this phenomenon and characterized it as distaste for various attributes of our physical body that do not conform with Euro-American culture.

Similarly, Stewart (1988) reported the work of

Janice E. Hale Benson with African American children. "Black children have an enormous burden of trying to straddle two cultures in an Euro-American educational system that fails to recognize the significance of their African ancestry in learning," wrote Stewart (p. 22). This same Star Ledger reporter, in addition, revealed that sometimes school represents the only time certain African American children are in contact with the white culture because experiences and interactions at home and in the community are based on an African heritage. Hale-Benson (1988), in writing for Kansas State University's Educational Considerations pointed out that "some scholars who have attempted to study the Black experience have identified inner-city ghettos as the laboratory for studying Black life" (p. 7).

Moving from that point, Hale-Benson outlined an argument regarding Africanisms which continue to abound in African American family life. Folklore, aspects of childrearing, music, dialect and religious expressions were cited as examples of Africanisms which perpetuate the need for racial group enculturation on one hand and societal acculturation on the other hand.

Forsythe (1973) postulated that African American separatism instead of integration could remedy the "limbo or inbetween-ness" state. Labeled as marginal people, African Americans have been deliberately and

systematically molded into experiencing "blackness as a burden," charged Forsythe. A counter subsystem was advised as the avenue for launching a multidimensional attack on the larger America. Similarly, Baughman (1971) used Hortense Powdermaker's analysis of African American aggression to explain the rationale for all-African American communities, the back-to-Africa movement, and the desire for establishment of an African American nation within the United States.

Clark (1965), a strong voice for improvement of the state of affairs concerning African Americans, has been continually heard. Albeit a pessimistic note, the realistic social and economic quagmire which Clark uncovered, is a poignant call for change that addressed the high-risk urbanites of color. His hope was that ". . . the society as a whole must be mobilized and given the force of sustained action to achieve actual changes . . . so its people may have a basis for a life of humanity and dignity" (p. 222).

On the other hand, Frazier (1962), wrote a book which was once heralded as "the book that brought the shock of self-revelation to middle-class Negroes in America." Even as this literary work is read today, African American readers cannot help but wonder if Franklin goes too far in revealing countless negative professional and personal-life stresses which the

African American middle class encounter daily. Little optimism was evident as a gloomy picture for interracial acceptance was painted.

### Sowing Seeds

An Eriksonian theoretical framework was used by Williams (1987) to "explore the lives of the first cohort of black women psychologists" (p. 893). Williams' dissertation focused on the developmental stages of each subject's life from early childhood to adult life. Their experiences of growing up both black and female, "the impact of their social and cultural milieu as they grew up, their coping styles during their educational years, . . . and their management of their profession as student and as practitioner" were covered (p. 893). Of particular significance was the finding that "race more than gender dominated the developmental years" of their lives (p. 893).

In a similar vein, Lewis (1985) recounted that a nurturing home environment was central to the career paths of African American female administrators in education. In addition, more African American female administrators, including those outside of the educational field have an enhanced chance for management level opportunities if their mother possessed a "higher level of education, success and

professional achievement than the father," (Morrison, 1981, p. 697).

Whether persisters factors identified in Timberlake's (1979) study of African American female students at the secondary level are appropriate to this treatment remains to be seen. Timberlake found employment status and church involvement to be significantly related to schoolchildren continuing with school studies. Family size, the employment status of the head of the household, mother's educational achievement and the parental status of the student were outlined as factors of less importance. Both dropouts and persisters said "families were a strong supportive factor contributing to persistence towards the high school diploma" (p. 149).

### Educational and Career Pursuits

#### Primary School

In her detailed ethnographic study of classroom life in two-midwestern cities, Grant (1984) found that teachers in six different, first-grade sections encouraged African American girls to pursue social contacts, rather than focus on higher academic attainment. Grant suggested that African American females are playing a "go-between or social integrator role" in desegregated classrooms and that teachers

tended to reward such social initiative. Hence:

In subtle ways, teachers encouraged black girls to pursue social contacts, rather than press toward high achievement . . . called on black girls almost twice as frequently as on any other race gender group to help peers in nonacademic matters (p. 103, 107).

This study underscored the thinking of many African American educators today who believe the balance of academics and socialization is out of balance in our public schools, particularly for African American females, our case population. Grant's investigation verified that in two-midwestern cities this imbalance is occurring as early as the first grade -- where African American girls have wide social contacts among peers and can cross racial and gender lines with great finesse. Grant went on to point out that the study's white teachers more frequently tended to utilize African American females as the "go-between or social integrator" in matters not pertaining to academic skills. Hence stereotypical roles of African American women are perpetuated by such action and movement toward alternatives is never stressed, argued Grant.

Using a similar focus, Bell and Irvine (1989) carried out both a qualitative and quantitative analyses of what happens to elementary girls in a classroom setting. One example of "the complex nature of the interaction between human agency and structural

constraint" (p. 5), led the researchers to one fifth-grade African American student's dilemma centering around being perceived as too smart:

Wanika: Just raise your hand and like if she [the teacher] looks your way, just put it back down. When she's not looking put it back up.

Lee: No, be serious.

Wanika: No, I'm serious because she would pick on you.

Lee: The teacher?

Wanika: So then she wouldn't call on you. Like OK, say you keep on raising your hand and she keeps on calling on you. Then people are going to say, "Oh man, I have the answer too" and "I had the same answer that's right" and everything. So (giggles) ...what I do is when the teacher's not looking at me, I raise my hand and then when she's looking, I go like this [demonstrates lowering hand half-way] and raise my hand a little bit. And then I keep on going like this when she's not looking [raises hand high and waves it]. (pp. 5-6)

From this real-life illustration, Bell and Irvine reasoned that Wanika was reinforced when she played a

nurturing as opposed to a competitive role.

Proctor (1971), in a speech before a "Families of the Future" conference, envisioned how a legacy of poverty among African American families is ended when the chains of undereducation and unemployment are broken. Furthermore, Proctor noted that education is of monumental importance early in the life of children because with knowledge, African Americans "are drawn more and more into the centrifugal force of the majority" (p.112). The final warning was that if early intervention coupled with other similar, family-focused intervention efforts do not take place, all eventually pay the cost of alienation.

Morgan (1987) reported that in an attempt to bridge the achievement gap of minority students, an elementary school in Miami has borrowed a Japanese idea of Saturday school for kindergarten through sixth graders. Reading, writing and arithmetic were studied during the three-hour morning sessions. Parents played an actively supportive role by turning off televisions and providing transportation for the more than 200 schoolchildren.

#### Summary.

The importance of early education and its companion, cognitive achievement, has been emphasized. When such an ideal scenario has not translated into

real-life learning situations for students, the need for measures to encourage successful educational experiences embracing all schoolchildren was found to be urgent. Remediation and other support action were viewed as just one component of an increasingly sophisticated, research-based action plan for those of color and/or at-risk.

#### Early to Late Adolescence

Almaguer (1982) examined the self-concept of a gender and racially mixed group of 318 sixth-grade student. The study indicated that self-concept was a strong predictor of achievement, regardless of ethnicity and gender, though there was marked variation in terms of its predictive capability. Included in the population were 43 African American females.

Meanwhile, Higginbotham (1985) contended that too often African American women are wrongly perceived as an homogeneous group devoid of social class structures. Class, Higginbotham believed, can strongly determine or limit African American female access to higher education and subsequent career attainment.

Power's (1988) article, "Black Education: How far have we come?", was reviewed to determine if it could make a positive contribution to analysis of the present state-of-affairs concerning African American education. The report was not an optimistic one. In

this same NEA Today article, then NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell, an African American female is quoted as saying:

In too many circumstances, we do not expect certain children to learn . . . Neither race nor economics should be a factor in where you are placed in schools (p. 14).

During the remainder of this report, a gloomy message was advanced. Even the reform movement which is currently operational was judged to have "intensified the relative disadvantage Black students suffer in school. One major problem is: more tests, on top of those used for special education and tracking." (p. 14). Although "ending legal segregation dismantled a symbol of Black inferiority . . . that alone didn't guarantee Black children a good education" (p. 14).

A longitudinal study of low-income girls, including African American females, conducted by Kenkel (1980) pointed up that adolescents' "life plans", i.e., educational goals and occupational aspirations as well as expected age of marriage, place of residence desired, number of children desired are associated with success factors in adult life. When Reid and Robinson (1984) investigated the academic and professional achievement of 64 professional African American men and women, it was found that parental education was an important factor in the black professionals' family

background. These African American women tended to be unmarried, childless, nonreligious and coming from well-educated, middle-class families, observed Reid and Robinson.

There is no paucity of research addressing adolescent African American females' educational attainment. Misunderstanding and lack of interest in this developmental stage of our case population has been abated as we approach the year 2000. Studies indicated (a) self-image, (b) gender-role expectations, (c) family nurturance and (d) levels of aspiration have made a difference in African American females' attainment.

#### Entering Adulthood as a Student

Once the African American female has reached maturity, Campbell (1986) suggested, her early family training is demonstrated in the independent and ambitious way she goes about taking care of herself. She has been adequately forewarned that under no circumstances was she to believe that a man could be relied on for economic survival. As a result, Campbell wrote, the African American woman must continue a delicate and challenging balancing act in her relationships with men.

Orenstein (1987), in a 10-year study following the lives of 80 high school valedictorians, has unearthed

some startling comparisons of career goals between women and men. Although female valedictorians typically outperform their male counterparts all through college, early in their college sophomore year, women begin to report lower levels of intellectual self-esteem and less ambitious career aspirations than they did when they graduated from high school (Orenstein, 1987). Contingencies such as marriage and children reduced original goals.

Brazziel (1988) told us that "leaks for minority students in the education pipeline are most pronounced at the graduate level" (p. 108). The reasons more African American do not pursue doctorates range from a sluggish job market, to scoring poorly on standardized tests such as the GRE, to limited financial support.

Levine's (1968) dissertation study found that the occupational plans of single women revealed a number of different influences when her subjects were dichotomized into "Women's Career Fields" (WCF) and "Men's Career Fields" (MCF). Using a Yale University, unmarried - female student population of 79 out of a possible 103 subjects, Levine reported that:

. . . women in MCF came from higher social class backgrounds than women in the WCF. They also had mothers who were better educated than the mothers of the WCF group, even when social class was held constant. Mother's education proved to be related to family attitudes in which the purpose of college for women was viewed as broadly

educational, rather than vocational . . .  
(Levine, summary [no page #]).

Similarly, Williams and McCullers (1987) reported that females in traditional careers such as education, married and had children sooner than females in non-traditional careers.

#### Summary.

Despite the ironic, autobiographical thrust advanced in this research, it appeared that concerns about real-life obstacles to achieving in the schoolhouse and in the labor force formidably range from the consideration of residual effects of historical racism to documenting those of sexism. Social class inputs were also viewed as a significant career achievement factor.

#### Sustaining career success

Moore (1986) interviewed more than 100 couples across the country to find out if their ideals of being firmly committed to their own and their partner's careers, of sharing housework, of child care, of living together as equal partners had worked out in actual practice. Couples in their 30s and 40s are realizing that the sexism that was ingrained in their childhood is still operative in their marriages. The respondents, all members of dual-career marriages, had moved away from the "gender-defined family" where "father played out his traditional remote and

nonnurturing provider role" (p. xii). Campbell (1986) observed that mid to upper-income career women of the 80s, whether white or African American, might experience isolation because they have few people to confide in, suffer a lack of self-esteem and/or outdistance their husbands publicly.

### A Selected View of Religious Life

African Americans were long restricted from access to many social and political environments which could have helped them to develop. Their church affiliations provided a major opportunity to foster leadership and to fine-tune social skills. Also, a support network was formed. Prominent male African American leaders such as Adam Clayton Powell, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, Jesse Jackson, and William Gray, served as pastors in one of the African American churches as well as civil rights leaders.

Later in this study, the influence of participation in church activities upon the two female superintendents of this study will be probed. Background regarding the two major African American churches is provided after a concise statement applicable to many denominations and churches is offered.

Stewart (1989) reported that although "each week

40% of U.S. adults attend a church or synagogue, a percentage unchanged since 1970" (p. 116), mainline churches are learning how to market their religion because membership and financial support have declined. Islam and the Southern Baptists have been insulated from this dramatic shift and subsequent loss in adherents. Stewart went on to suggest that while theories as to why one church thrives but another does not are numerous, the bottom-line attack plan must include sound business practices to win back the flock considered vitally important to revival. The goal of transforming churches into vibrant centers of spiritual nourishment can be won if appropriate management techniques are applied, contended Stewart.

Schaller (1989) expounded upon seventeen suggestions for reaching a new generation of churchgoers. Recommendations ranged from good preaching and a strong-teaching ministry to adequate parking and quality restrooms. In addition to the extensive list of suggestions, Schaller devised four-overlapping strategies to connect with a new generation of potential members. Organizing new churches, encouraging the emergence of larger congregations, attracting "baby boomers" and localizing the characteristics of successful churches were presented as the proven route to follow. A curious omission was

reference to children who were raised in the church but no longer attend services.

Marsden (1990) observed that most solidly established denominations have declined at precipitous rates even though a 1976 Gallup poll indicated that "34 percent of the American population said they were born again" (p. 8). After adding comments on the political climate of the country in 1976, the year in which Carter was elected president, the cleric offered several explanations for the sharp decline. Since the social base for the church is now removed, the adult children have drifted away from the church, explained Marsden. Prior to the 1960s, college-educated people were likely to be active churchgoers and religious workers. Marsden also observed that few people know the differences between various denominations. Consequently, little is known about what different churches stand for.

Frazier (1963) theorized that:

Because of the local autonomy in Baptist churches in contrast to the centralized hierarchy of the Methodist church, the Negro preacher was free to exercise his gifts and to direct his followers. This also accounts in part at least for the larger number . . . who were attracted to the Baptists (p.18).

Norris (1990) concurred with the reasoning cited above, and stated that while many African Americans of the Baptist Church have achieved national recognition,

outstanding A.M.E.s such as Rosa Parks are not viewed from the perspective of denominational ties. Mrs. Park is credited with the launching the 1960s civil rights movement by quietly refusing to give up her bus seat for a white male passenger.

Writing regarding the environment of the preemancipation era, Frazier continued by underscoring salient features of what would later become two-mainline African American led denominations (A.M.E. and Baptist) -- denominations which appealed to the masses. Biblical reference, drama and singing were reported as important aspects of these ephemeral gatherings.

Boyd (1982) compiled a pictorial history of Richard Allen, the A.M.E. church founder. (This booklet is used in connection with the Allen Museum and Tomb, located in the basement of historic Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church.) After walking out of predominantly white St. George's Methodist Church located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Allen utilized a blacksmith shop as an interim facility until the first African Methodist Episcopal church was erected at Sixth and Lombard Streets in Philadelphia.

Williams (1972) chronicled the development of Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church through four different buildings, starting with the A.M.E. Church which Bishop Allen established in 1787. All were situated at the

Lombard location. The lot, "purchased by Richard Allen in 1787, is the oldest parcel of real estate owned continuously by colored people in the United States" (no page #). Of additional significance is the year in which this action took place, 1787. Allen is recognized for starting the first independent African American Church in the U.S. Moreover, it should be noted that this church was not supervised by whites.

Sanders (1989) suggested that African American Baptists have projected forward-looking leadership as a result of erecting a new \$10 million world center. This headquarters building located in Nashville, Tennessee provides needed facilities for top-convention officials, departments and auxiliaries. Considered the largest African American organization in the world, with an estimated 7.5 million members, the convention is comprised of a network of independent Baptist churches.

Fitts (1985) observed that while closely supervised by whites, the African American Baptist movement got its start in South Carolina and Georgia. Rev. George Liele, considered a pioneer African American missionary preacher, had a number of prominent converts, including Andrew Bryan. Later, though he had not been manumitted, Liele would be credited with organizing the first African American Baptist church in

Savannah, Georgia on January 20, 1788. Andrew Bryan received the first official church certification in Silver Bluff, Aiken County, South Carolina. The document read as follows:

This is to certify that upon examination into the experiences and characters of a number of the Ethiopians at and adjacent to Savannah, it appears that God has brought them out of Darkness into the light of the Gospel, and given them fellowship one with the other; believing that it is the will of Christ, we have constituted them a Church of Jesus Christ, to keep his worship and ordinances. January 19, 1788.

A. Marshall, V.D.M. (Fitts, p. 36).

Reference to the indentured group as Ethiopians and the date, January 19, 1777, were two significant pieces of information. It would appear that Bryan's pioneering work eclipsed Liele's effort by only one day. Rev. Abraham Marshall, a white minister, issued certification, however, after worship had been taking place for almost two years. This early reference to Africans bound in servitude by a specific motherland country was also of particular interest.

Woodson (1985) a forerunner in the field of African American Church history corroborated much of Fitts' research work. Detailed information is evident in his book, The History of the Negro Church. This publication is currently in its third edition and is highly regarded for its authoritative account of African American churches.

## African-American Females in School Administration

### Employment constraints

By reviewing a paper presented before a national professional association, Amodeo and Emslie's (1985) charge that the career path of African American women into administration is different from other race/gender configurations can be followed. These authors asserted that, as a consequence, such women may be inadequately prepared for school administration because they are deficient in their understanding of organizational structure and external environment.

Recently, Contreras (1989) investigated the employment practices of a wider educational group of ethnic and racial minorities and found that:

. . . prior to school desegregation in the southern and border states, black school administrators in segregated schools comprised a substantial proportion of the executive workforce. Unanticipatedly, as a consequence of desegregation, there was a large reduction in the number of black school administrators . . . in those states (p. 7).

This phenomenon is not an isolated one. According to Dickie (1989), a professor of psychology, the insidious assumption that "minority staff can meet only the needs of minority people, but white staff can meet the needs of everyone" (p. 14) is institutional racism. Prejudice plus power was, in short, seen as the formula for racism. Dickie continued by offering this

perception:

I now see that racism is a white problem and that it runs deeply in the North American psyche. It influences our lives by maintaining privilege and power for the few and denying it to many others. Racism affects whites as well as people of color and it exists even if there are no blacks around (p. 14).

As victims of both racial and sex discrimination, women of color face special obstacles to achieving success and equity, argued Carter, Pearson and Shavlik (1988). African American, Hispanic, American Indian and Asian American women are the focal point of this article. Although in the graduate student population, African American females are more heavily represented, proportionately, than African American males or white females, African American women continue to be seriously underrepresented in tenured faculty positions. A similar underrepresentation is also present in school administration.

#### Leadership qualities

Notwithstanding these observations, it is still true that even after decades of civil rights and feminist activities, nearly all educational administrators continue to be white males. Coursen and Mazzarella (1981) made a case for diversified educational leadership. Specific remediation suggestions are made for remedying the imbalance that are focused on aspiring women and African Americans.

Not only do the career paths of male and female elementary principals differ in terms of the number of years spent as classroom teachers, but Prolman (1982) told us that women are handicapped because they have scant experience in terms of working with adult populations from a position of leadership and authority. In her dissertation, Galloway (1986) corroborated the Kelly & Kelly (1981) study covering eight female and eight male elementary principals. Further findings of Galloway's study were that most minority female principals are placed in elementary schools, that they lack adequate professional preparation, and that they are employed in schools where they represent the ethnic make-up of the community. Galloway's study was designed to investigate the status and trends of minority women's employment in specific administrative positions in Texas public schools, and to develop a profile of such women that would be useful to school systems. A part of this profile was the finding that minority women were decidedly underrepresented in the administrative ranks in Texas Public Schools.

#### Sex and/or gender bias

A book by Edson (1988) contained candid quotes from both minority and nonminority women seeking school administrative positions. Notwithstanding the women's

movement and legislation designed to correct the lack of women in such positions, the reader was introduced to a wide array of problems female educators face as they attempt to pursue administrative careers.

Results of an evaluation of 135-graduate students in educational administration are reported by Frasher and Frasher (1982). Hypothetical incidents concerning male and female superintendents' role conduct suggested that sex bias has operated to the disadvantage of women and to that of the education profession.

Korporaal (1985) theorized that the way in which a female principal goes about attending to her various administrative tasks and leadership functions is different from the way a male principal would handle the same position. Moreover, Counts (1985) maintained that our female dominated workforce in schools require leaders with relational skills savvy who can bring people together on a collaborative basis. Counts' research led him to conclude that schools require the abilities of women with strengths congruent with the needs of our modern school organizational structure. He had some questions concerning whether this imperative is being addressed.

In a study of African American women in administrative employment in California public schools, Roberts (1982) argued that white-female administrators

have become the chief beneficiaries of affirmative action, Title IX and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The greatest gains for African American female administrators were found to be "in staff, rather than line, positions." Coursen & Mazzarella (1981) concurred with Roberts, determining that even after decades of feminist activities and civil rights, nearly all educational administrators are still white males. Indeed, as Coursen & Mazzarella observed, fewer women or minorities are in educational administration than there were thirty years ago.

#### When they succeed

Fifty-two African American women executives were the focus of a descriptive study on selected individual, educational and professional characteristics. Morrison (1981) disclosed that these women generally attended historically black colleges for undergraduate studies and white institutions for graduate work. Subjects tended to be employed in private, service areas or government sectors.

Finally, Jones (1988) and Edson (1988) appeared to be in accord regarding the special nature and characteristics of African American women in school administration and/or African American female aspirants. Edson conceded that it was difficult to find a large number of African American females to

participate in her national study of women aspiring to or already in administration. The Northwest was cited as an area posing a particularly formidable challenge. The historical plight of "Sister White" and "Sister Black" has been and continues to this day to be different. Consequently, when this premise was applied to the African American subjects of Edson's study, there was a flavor of overt ambivalence about whether being both African American and female is a double whammy (a road block) or a double token (an enhancer as it relates to upward mobility). Jones graphically details the participation of women, and racial minorities in the principalship. However, due to the way in which the statistical information is presented, it is impossible to discern if African American female principals are represented in the 3% gain since the 1984-85 survey.

In preparation for dissertation research, a minicase study of Dr. G.P.B. was recently conducted. The study corroborated Kelly and Kelly's findings that female administrators typically spent about 20 years teaching in an elementary classroom. In so doing, the writer (Adams, 1988) underscored the value of gasing (behaviors aspiring teachers employ to get the attention of administrators) and sponsorship. Conclusions in that "pilot" are summarized below:

Although Dr. B.'s leadership in South Ridge's elementary school can be characterized as an atypical situation for an African American woman, it is paradoxical that she spent the typical amount of time -- about 20 years -- at classroom teacher status prior to her ascension into the ranks of administration. Unique to Dr. B. is her career mobility without the upward component. She moved from one similarly ranked instructional situation to another with some degree of frequency, unlike many female administrators mentioned in this literature review. Professional work opportunities in several school districts, as well as work experience at the college level, also helped to set her career path apart from other women.

Further, the minicase study revealed that Dr. B. could be classified as typical in another way, at least, because most female principals receive appointments to elementary school principalships. However, few African American females have the advantage of a multipurpose mentor as she did. If Dr. Langlois, then a white-male superintendent, had not discovered G.B. at that South Ridge college, chances are she might have relied upon family members for career guidance. That is the more typical profile of African American female, upwardly mobile educators.

Meanwhile, Lewis (1985) traced the career paths of

African American administrators in education through the university-required dissertation work. The value of mentors such as Dr. Langlois was underscored in this research's conclusion. Lewis reiterated the fact that African American female administrators have not had the services of all-purpose mentors who shape and guide their careers.

Prolman (1982) examined male and female elementary principals' career paths. One salient piece of information revealed was that a larger percentage of women than men had served as teachers for a longer period of time. Females also were more likely than males to have no expectation of moving from their teacher role. Despite the gloomy picture for African American females who continue to aspire to educational advancement while essentially remaining at their original administrative level, Prolman advised African American female administrators to develop personalized action plans even if their districts do not take the desired stance toward recruitment, selection and promotion of female administrators.

Roberts (1982) in a dissertation which has been mentioned earlier (see p. 49), found that white females had become the chief beneficiaries of affirmative action, while African American women were left behind.

When Reid and Robinson (1984) investigated the

academic and professional achievement of 64 African American men and women who had completed doctoral degrees, several factors were identified as strongly associated with career success. Working with subjects who were college professors, dentists, physicians, educators and scientists, the researchers decided from the outset to use a positive perspective rather than to consider African Americans as deviants from a majority group. In so doing, this minority group was used as a "legitimate" population. They found that African American women's achievements tended to be marked by a slightly different set of contributing factors than those of men, such as coming from middle-class, well-educated families. African American women were also more likely to be childless, unmarried and expressing no religious affiliation than were the men. Nuwanyakpa's (1984) findings in a study of primarily white male and female senior academic administrators were similar.

Since the number of women in public school administration has continued to decline nationwide, Smith et al. (1981) sought to assess the effectiveness of four current advocacy models. The models included an individual membership organization, an internship program, a regional educational laboratory and an information exchange. Through a 353-page school

leadership handbook, the authors focused on how the survival of our schools depends on the quality of leadership -- a leadership which was characterized by a paucity of African Americans and female leaders. This dilemma is emphasized by Hodgkinson (1985) prediction:

. . . by around the year 2000, America will be a nation in which one of every three of us will be non-white. And minorities will cover a broader socioeconomic range than ever before, making simplistic treatment of their needs even less useful (p. 7).

At least one reason to address the manner in which racism, sexism, and other constraints impede the careers of African American female administrators was, thus, brought into clear focus. Hodgkinson's projection might serve as impetus for reforms in the way public schools select and promote their leaders -- their administrators.

### The Minority Superintendency

#### Career paths

Keim (1978) examined the career paths of female superintendents and found that "women's career paths to the superintendency" significantly differed from those of their male counterparts. More interruptions in their careers, earning advanced degrees later in life and working at classroom positions for a longer period of time set female superintendents apart from their male colleagues.

Ehinger and Guier (1985) studied the Management

Development Program (MDP) at the University of Tulsa, a program designed to identify and develop the managerial skills of administrators in 16 school districts surrounding Tulsa, Oklahoma. Seventy-four males and twenty-nine females, all public school administrators, participated in a MDP study. Based upon the results of extensive job analyses, the administrators were appraised on seven dimensions which covered leadership ability, problem solving, organizational ability, decision making, communication skills, interpersonal competency and stress tolerance.

After the assessment phase in which the administrative and interpersonal skills of incumbent school leaders were examined, a pooled variance t-test was used to scrutinize their scores on a variety of performance and paper/pencil measures. Although the researchers looked for gender differences, there were no significant gender differences among these leaders. The findings were that female administrators performed significantly better on the in-basket exercise, oral presentation and one leaderless group discussion. In addition, significant gender differences were found in the managerial and adjustment scales. Men scored higher on the realistic scale, while women scored significantly higher on the artistic and conventional scales. However, the report noted that except for the

female superintendents demonstrating a higher significant difference, the total assessment did not yield significant gender differences.

African American women currently serving as superintendents were listed in Arnez's (1982) article. Ruth B. Love and Barbara Sizemore, both African American, formerly typically employed superintendents (i.e., superintendents in predominantly African American districts), were given detailed attention through an in-depth description of their backgrounds, experiences, goals and accomplishments.

Drawing from a nationwide population of 29 African-American female superintendents in public school settings, Bulls' (1986) dissertation made a descriptive study of their careers. According to Bulls, an ethnographic case study research design was used. The structure was provided through a four-question interview guide. Two sixty-minute, face-to-face interviews, and seven thirty-minute telephone interviews were tape recorded.

Bulls deliberately restricted her research focus to her subjects' perceptions of the behavioral strategies which favorably influenced their own career upward mobility. She carried out her task through the medium of richly revealing field notes and the candid contents of transcribed tape recordings.

Especially important in Bulls' account of these women's strategies were "tapping, the process of signaling an individual within an organization about opportunities and "gasing", the term used for the behaviors aspiring teachers employ to get the attention of administrators.

Although she mentioned efforts through the American Association of School Administrators, Ebony magazine, and the Congressional Black Caucus to obtain a representative sample, Bulls cautioned that her findings were only applicable to the subject of her study, and that her findings were not to be extrapolated. Mentorship, obtaining a doctorate, utilizing particular kinds of behavior strategies, achieving a balance between traditionally "feminine" and "masculine" qualities and central office work experience were perceived as significant prerequisites to obtaining a public school superintendency by these African American female.

Chambers' (1979) dissertation study sought to determine if there are problems in school administration at the superintendency level that are unique to sexual and/or racial minorities. Members of the National Black Alliance were among the study's participants. African American females reported a lack of female superintendent role models as a definite

problem for them which must be confronted.

### Barriers to opportunity

Career problems and the developmental phases in the lives of women who aspire to the superintendency are brought into focus along with major career barriers faced by females, in research done by Dopp and Sloan (1986). Three recent studies about women in the position of superintendent are summarized in this work.

Coggins, Goth & Wiggins' (1984) introduction focused on a review of Kanter's work concerning female employment patterns -- patterns characterized by a lack of opportunity and power. In addition to the emphasis on Kanter's account of the underrepresentation of women in the context of business organizations, other sources were used to document just how widespread this phenomenon has become in education as well.

Coggins et al. indicated that this pervasive theme in the literature on issues related to gender and equity led them to their basic research problem: Are school board members inclined to favor male archetypes as superintendents in selection processes? Ancillary research questions addressed preferences associated with the candidate's type of terminal degree (Ed.D. and Ph.D.), years of experience, types of experience, membership in professional organizations, and scholarly production.

Central Oklahoma school board members in 15 school districts, classified as small, medium and large districts, were selected to participate in this study. Three members were randomly selected from each of the 15 districts to answer these questions. With a sample size of 43, the researchers asked each subject to complete a forced-choice summary ranking of hypothetical, prototypic profiles and resumes. Virtually identical qualifications for male and female "applicants" were featured in the profiles and resumes. Thirty-two usable responses were received. The null hypothesis statement predicting no significant differences in the choices (between male and female candidates) made by the board members was not supported.

#### Agents of change

Ewell (1982) postulated that African American women should become the primary change agents as educational institutions struggle to meet the ever-changing educational requirements of today's society. African American leaders in particular were asked in this ERIC document to become sensitive to the systemic nature of education's problems, even though the author admitted that discrimination and bias have gone further underground for the African American female administrators than for others.

Another exploratory study by Gabriel (1981) centered on an investigation of how four-urban superintendents perceive the school politics in which they are engulfed, as well as the political realities of the communities they serve. In a two-part study, subjects were selected through an elaborate screening process. Collective bargaining, desegregation and decentralization were found to be crucial issues in the middle-size urban school districts which the superintendents represented. Political training was recommended for role aspirants because the superintendency has become increasingly publicized.

Johnston (1987) conducted a study to determine if a relationship existed between variables describing the role and role expectations of African American school superintendents, and the relative importance of immediate and future school related problems. The strongest predictors of problem importance were years in the position and school district size.

#### Career savvy

Maienza's (1986) analysis of data on access to the superintendency indicated that women differed from men in terms of sponsorship and professional networks but instead relied on visibility for upward mobility. Social class was found to be significantly related to access to the superintendency for females.

Marshall (1986) noted that a recent survey revealed that 2.4 percent of our public school superintendents are female. Reasons for underrepresentation are given, and the barriers and constraints facing the female leader are described. Advice is given to women aspiring to the top spot.

Moody (1983) found that school boards disproportionately selected white consultants to advise them on hiring decisions. He concluded that sponsorship, networking and mentorship control and limit minority access to the superintendency and other positions. Implications for the placement of the black school superintendent are explored.

As part of Revere's (1985) dissertation research, the career success of 22 of the 29 African American women superintendents were surveyed through personal interviews which Revere taped. This descriptive dissertation was produced by an African American female researcher, who came from a family of 11 brothers and sisters.

One of Revere's findings was that there were in 1985, 29 African American women public school superintendents in the United States. Another significant fact was that there had been one African American female superintendent prior to 1956. Revere's data led to several conclusions including the

following profile:

. . . the typical black woman superintendent is 46 years of age or older. She is married and has two or more children. She had several sisters and brothers when she grew up. She is likely the first-born or middle child in her family (p. 183).

An outline of African American history was supplied as a basis for interpreting scholarly work about African American female superintendents. In addition, the political context of the black educational struggle was reviewed. Sizemore's (1986) framework for the future success of African American superintendents was used as a basis for prediction.

Weiss (1988) presented a critical view of Chancellor Green's short tenure as New York City educational CEO. Many contrasts are drawn between the Minneapolis school leadership position from which Green had come and the top spot in New York. Early career-sponsorship activities were covered in detail, as were the political undercurrents of the New York Public Schools. Many informed observers believed that New York Public Schools' complexities required Green to pay the ultimate price for his career success -- his untimely death.

Young's (1984) gender-mixed sample of 100 superintendents reported no difference in male and female job satisfaction. Advancement and supervision were viewed by females as the most important job

factors. Males identified responsibility, working conditions, and interpersonal relationships as most significant.

Dr. Lee Etta Powell, the superintendent of schools in Cincinnati, was included in an impressive listing of one hundred of the best and brightest school executives (The Executive Educator, 1990). Three months earlier, Powell had been the focus of another Executive Educator article written by Andrew Trotter (1989). This African American female superintendent was credited with turning the city's public schools around through collaboration with teacher-union officials. Inclusion, shared leadership and teacher empowerment have characterized Powell's leadership style, reported the writer. Although the powerful union continues to flex its muscular framework, Superintendent Powell contended that, "one of my druthers would be for the administration to recognize it's not them and us" (p.30).

Harrington-Leuker (1990) portrayed Dr. Constance Clayton, Philadelphia Public Schools Superintendent as "indefatigable" in writing for The Executive Educator. Routinely working a 16-hour day, Clayton is the first African American "and the first woman to head the fifth-largest school system in the U.S." (p.13). Described as strong-willed, incisive and meticulous,

Dr. Clayton argued that she can make the hard decisions related to high dropout rates, low-test scores and limited resources and still remain gracious. How the at-risk portion of the student population will be affected by the deficit-influenced streamlining of operations was reported as an area for the public to watch.

Similarly, Bell (1989) offered a positive assessment of Clayton's leadership by flatly stating, her "national reputation no longer matches the reality of her local actions" (p. 51) which is not authoritarian as some have been led to believe. To substantiate this assertion, the writer pointed to the school-rebuilding partnership she has fashioned with parents, district staff and the business community. In addition to the school reform effort, Clayton was able to garner \$8.3 million from a charitable organization, negotiate a new four-year contract with teachers ahead of schedule and convinced a national organization to select Philadelphia schools as a model district for science education.

#### Summary.

There was one African American female Superintendent of Schools in 1956. Thirty years later, there were only 29. The importance of studying the resources and strategies African American female

superintendents have used to obtain top administrative posts looms large, since such achievements are still a rarity. It is clear that knowledge, ability, certification, and experience alone do not ensure upward career mobility for all classes and groups of administrative aspirants. It would appear from the findings of a preponderance of the research already done that "soft" skills such as human interaction abilities and obtaining the proper sponsorship are vital to reaching the top.

If a stagnant economy has fostered resistance to racial equality and stalled the African American females' opportunities to rise to school superintendency, then perhaps lessons can be learned from these success histories -- lessons that could hold potential for application to other spheres of our living.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

A comparison was made of two African American female superintendents currently employed in public school leadership settings -- one in an atypical situation, another in a typical environment. The study obtained data concerning personal and family life factors that the subjects perceived to have influenced their career attainment. Through inductive reasoning and thematic conceptual emphasis, factors which served to impede and/or helped to advance these African American female superintendents' careers were analyzed.

This study is descriptive in nature and combined the techniques of a written questionnaire, observation, interviewing, and use of personal documents. The objective was to describe the current status of these women and to delineate the social living circumstances that they believe have affected their professional lives, with an eye to developing hypotheses about the factors that have led to their success. It was meant to be suggestive rather than conclusive, since the universe and sample were too small for firm generalizations to be warranted. It is

through such studies, however, that "grounded theory" is generated, eventually to be tested by other means (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Preliminary procedures included contact with the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) for an initial listing of all African American superintendents of schools in the United States. Although written three years earlier than AASA's publication, Revere's (1985) dissertation concerning African American female superintendents provided an invaluable source for cross-referencing and gender verification (See Appendix A). In an effort to obtain the most recent listing of African American female superintendents, the National Alliance of Black School Educators, Inc. (NABSE) was also contacted. Acting on a referral from NABSE, Dr. C.D. Moody, Sr. of the University of Michigan, was telephoned for an updated list of African American female superintendents. Dr. Moody mailed this researcher his most recent, copyrighted list, dated May 1989 (See Appendix B). The subjects were finally, delimited to those employed in Middle Atlantic State.

In order to do in-depth case studies of two African American female superintendents in this country, a four-pronged approach was utilized. First, each subject was asked to complete a questionnaire with

items concerning their personal and professional lives. This questionnaire was sent to the respondents several weeks prior to the interview (See Appendix C). The researcher obtained permission to "shadow" - i.e., observe - each subject in the context of her professional life over a period equivalent to three and one-half days. After this "shadowing" and participant-observation in each subject's professional context, a semistructured interview was conducted and tape-recorded. Finally, personal documents (e.g., office photographs) were used both to stimulate interview responses and to gain further data for interpretation.

The research method used, as has been mentioned above, is usually called the "case study" approach. A case study approach is sometimes considered most appropriate because of its usefulness for collecting personal information, and data on perceptions and attitudes (Bulls, 1986).

#### Cases to be Studied

The study was limited to two African American female public school superintendents. One was identified in March 1988 by the American Association of School Administrators, the other was recommended through a collegial relationship. The individual's

present employment status served as the basis for subject selection.

#### Population from which Cases are Drawn

The initial subject pool for this study was a list supplied by the American Association of School Administrators. Later, Revere's (1985) pioneering dissertation helped to further delimit the pool of subjects as did Moody's (1989) list of African American female superintendents in the United States. The list was further delimited to those presently employed as superintendents of schools in Middle Atlantic State.

#### Background of the Problem

The problem has evolved from many years of reading and reflection concerning family life in general and its influences upon females of African descent. Moreover, it was hoped that this effort would provide a framework for studies of very specific aspects of African American and women studies.

#### Procedures

As has been mentioned above, the research design for this study included techniques of shadow observation, interviewing, and a preliminary questionnaire devoted to securing baseline biographical

information.

Selections were also based, in part, on this researcher's network of social and professional contacts, which helped in gaining access to the targeted individuals. Due to the personal nature of this research effort, such contacts also served to enhance rapport between researcher and subjects. An extraordinary amount of trust existed before the study was successfully carried out.

The researcher wrote personal letters of introducing herself to both subjects. One subject agreed to participate immediately. Numerous follow-up telephone calls were made in order to obtain the participation of the second subject. At least six weeks of intermittent telephoning finally produced the sought after results: Superintendent Two agreed to be a subject.

#### Procedure - Step One: Questionnaire

Revisions were made to Revere's (1985) jury-tested questionnaire. Once the modifications were completed, the instrument was mailed to each subject and utilized to gather baseline data concerning the superintendents' personal and family lives, and selected aspects of their professional lives. The use of the instrument was for convenience in preparing for face-to-face interviews, and ensured that similar

points were covered for all subjects. It was also believed that time would be saved at the semistructured interview stage, so that more probing questions could be posed.

Procedure - Step Two: "Shadowing" the Subjects and Participant Observation

The "shadowing" and participant observation was similar to this researcher's November 12, 1987 coverage of Eastside principal, Joe Clark.. Field notes were kept according to the procedures used that day, and were congruent with recommended qualitative procedures (Powdermaker, 1969; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Dobbert, 1982; Merriam, 1988; Crane & Angrosino, 1984; Fetterman, 1989). Collay (1989) and Seifert & Atkinson (1989) in two separate and very different kinds of descriptive studies used participant observation as one of several ethnographic techniques. In addition, Valentine (1968) noted that during the general process of data collection, observation should be a part of a flexible blend of ethnographic procedures. This enabled the researcher to add to the quality of her field work. Recently, Foster (1988) used a "shadowing" strategy as part of his Lehigh University dissertation work, which covered a school principal.

Reflecting upon the striking insights gained by this researcher through "shadowing" Joe Clark, a valid

argument can be made for the use of an ethnographic strategy. It enabled the observer to use all five senses during this step of the data-collection process; the researcher was able to hear, see, smell, taste and feel the various dimensions of the informant's professional and personal life through close-up, first-hand observation. In so doing, it was possible to pick up the myriad contextual clues that are necessary as a basis for higher-order inductive reasoning.

#### Procedure - Step Three: Semi-Structured Interview

During a semistructured interview, the researcher asked questions emphasizing the respondents' attitude toward and perception of significant personal/family life events (Frankel, 1970; Mishler, 1986). It was anticipated that the tenor of the nurturing and fostering process would come into clear focus because the interviewer did "assume a non-argumentative, supportive, and sympathetically understanding attitude" during the course of the interview session (Mishler, p.30). The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed (see Appendix E) using a system of notations recommended by Mishler that reveals not only the informants' words, but their hesitations, false starts and breaks in what linguists call "turn-taking" -- all of which help to highlight the emotional qualities of

the interviews.

#### Procedure - Step Four: Perusing Archival Materials

Relevant archival materials were secured from the two subjects of the study. Each person's files of family history, including (but not limited to) photograph albums and scrapbooks, it was believed, would hold potential for triangulation and amplification of data gathered or data to be secured. Such materials serve as memory stimulators and elicitors of specific feelings or facts, also produce to supporting data for material orally reported. Photo albums are useful for more than this even. They symbolize the social network thought worthy of recording in family "archives" e.g., what contacts in or out of the family this person takes pride in, or has special feeling toward (Plotnicov, 1967).

Bogdan & Biklen (1982) reported on the work of Allport and other noted authorities concerning personal documents such as intimate diaries, personal letters, autobiographies, official documents and photographs, characterizing such materials as "another source of rich qualitative data" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 99) which supplies "detailed evidence as to how social situations appear to actors in them and what meaning various factors have for participants" (p. 97).

Allport (1942), in writing for the Social Science

Research Council's Committee on Appraisal of Research made a case for the inclusion of personal documents.

His opinion was as follows:

The only reasonable thing to do if one wishes to study a phenomenon is to put a specimen before one's eyes and look at it repeatedly until its essential features sink indelibly into one's mind. . . .[m]atter so unfathomably complex needs more than the usual amount of concrete inspection before analysis and abstraction . . . with . . . regard for the concrete personal life. In the personal document can be found the needed touchstone of reality (p. 143).

Although Allport (1942) did not entirely discount behavioral observation such as "shadowing", he viewed it as a strategy for obtaining "an initial view of certain aspects of conduct, but . . . inferior to the personal document when it comes to the important region of subjective meaning" (p. 144). Three years later, Gottschalk, Kluckhohn & Angell (1945) issued a sequel essay for the same organization based upon an anthropological perspective. These researchers corroborated the value of studying personal documents and in so doing, set the course for an enduring scholarly acceptance of this methodology.

#### Summary of Intent

The overall thrust of the study was to determine whether personal and family-life factors seemed to have led these African American female administrators to

compete successfully for a public school superintendency in an atypical or typical setting. Although it was assumed that the questionnaire, observation experience, and interviews would yield much richly descriptive data, the final component of this research design was the review of personal documents which the researcher sought to "place in a proper context" (Gottschalk, Kluckhohn & Angell, p. 103). The final product was an analysis of personal and family life factors which the two subjects perceived as having impeded or enhanced their career attainment.

Specifically, the study sought to answer these research questions:

#### Self-Perceived Characterization

How would you characterize your social origins and background?

#### Probes if necessary

- Family origin (immigrant or native U.S.)
- Class status (self-perceived)
  - Educational level in family (e.g., other professionals)
  - Economic resources in family (was way paid)
- Family size and structure (e.g., 3 generation household, lots of siblings, no father/mother)

#### Success Factors

What factors do you perceive as important to your career success?

Probes if necessary

- Early family socialization (ambitious)
- Kinds of schools attended, precollege and college
- Events or persons having helped or supported in and out of the family
- Choice of profession/course of study

Current Family Status

Describe your current family situation?

Probes if necessary

- Married
- Number of children; if few, was this intentional because of career?
- Household arrangements; housekeeping help, family sharing of tasks, etc., whether or not these facilitate career aims.

Religious/Moral Background and Affiliation(s)

Were you raised in a church? (How strict?)

Probes if necessary

- If so, attendance pattern, then and now
- Is religion (or some other moral framework defining a useful and good life, such as a political activist faith) important?

**Does it relate to career choices?**

## CHAPTER IV

### Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there have been specific enculturation factors in the African American female superintendent's personal and family life as she herself perceives and interprets it which could have plausibly helped to prepare her for administrative advancement in either an atypical environment or in a typical setting. An interview guide featuring four broad areas was utilized as one gauge or measurement instrument. In addition, a questionnaire with baseline items concerning both the subjects' personal and professional lives was mailed to the informants prior to interviews. Other research components included shadowing, participant observation and document analysis.

This chapter presents a qualitative analysis and a thematic summary of the research findings. Open-ended research questions served to define four broad topical sections of the interviews, while follow-up probes and shadowing have added more detailed information. After two biographical sketches, the data will be reported as delineated below:

**(1) Self-Perceived Characterization**

How would you characterize your social origins and background?

- Family origin
- Class status
  - Educational level in family
  - Family size and structure

**(2) Success Factors**

What factors do you perceive as important to your career success?

- Early family socialization
- Kinds of schools attended, precollege and college
- Events or persons offering help or support, in and out of the family
- Choice of profession/course of study

**(3) Current Family Status**

Describe your current family situation.

- Married
- Number of children
- Household arrangements

**(4) Religious/Moral Background and Affiliation**

Were you raised in a church?

- Attendance pattern
- Moral Framework
- Relationship to career choice

Following this are data concerning the subjects' leadership in the school districts where they currently serve as Superintendents of Schools.

Pseudonyms are used and contextual clues have been masked to safeguard the subjects' confidentiality. Findings are reflective of these efforts to disguise geographical locations and proper names. In so doing, the identities and actual school districts have been concealed. Anonymity of the subjects has been further protected by deleting all personal references to family or associates and substituting pseudonyms when transcripts and/or personal documents are quoted.

## Superintendent Joan Geraldine Harvey

### A Biographical Sketch

Superintendent One, Joan Geraldine Harvey is now employed by Wideway School District. She was one of two children born to native African American parents. Living in a large, segregated East Coast city, Superintendent Harvey's early life revolved around her nuclear and extended family as well as school. Joan's father was born in Capitol City, South State, where he grew up on a farm. Once he left home, the father worked in the steel mills of a Middle Atlantic State. Later, after moving to Middletown, he met and married a second generation Middletowner, a former co-ed who had received an undergraduate degree from the McFarland School of that same city.

Joan's father came from a family in which females were encouraged to pursue higher education. Male children, however, were only expected to finish the eighth grade, which was usually taught by family members. It was not until Mr. Geraldine established roots in Middletown that he was able to obtain a high school diploma by attending night school. Another contributing factor to her educational values was Joan's paternal grandmother who had been a teacher in South State. An established pattern of educationally

influenced career choices was indeed evident through her father's lineage.

During the course of the taped interview, Mrs. Harvey candidly revealed that:

...the old book, the Black Bourgeoisie, would have characterized Middletown

[

ah

life

kind of stratified

[

ah

some color distinctions, lots of color distinctions on that and lots of social distinctions based upon your having a family which had a long-term professional kind of background.

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ah

When queried more closely, Superintendent Harvey indicated that she would classify her family among:

...the lower, lower, middle class ones.

[

ah

You know you had to be a child of a doctor

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ah

MD type

[

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maybe

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ah

a Ph.D. working at a prominent African  
American university. Those were the folk

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er

on that.

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er

I think we kind of straddled

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er

the blue collar because my father was blue-  
collar with the publishing house; that was  
not during the days when you got to be the  
reporter or

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er

any of those kinds of things on that. But I don't think my parents ever led me that it made a difference.

The four persons in Superintendent Harvey's family of origin set them apart as a small unit by contemporary standards of that day. Her maternal grandmother's presence in the home or neighborhood throughout Joan Geraldine's childhood established them as a part of an extended family network.

The informant credited the warmth and parenting expertise of her college-educated mother as significant to her early growth and development. At one point during Joan's formative years, the household was comprised of three generations because her grandmother actually lived with their nuclear family. When grandmother no longer lived with them, her supportive presence continued, for this elder family member resided only a short distance from the Geraldine home.

Superintendent Harvey's recollection of early family socialization included the following memories:

. . . I was always kind of secure in who I was. My mother's mother lived with us a part of that extended family

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er  
[

ah

When (pause) we were children and when she I think it may have been a couple of years she lived around the corner so that

[

ah

we always had her too. So I always kind of had a sense of being connected to (pause) lots of people

[

er

on that; lots of people who went looking to you to do something.

When the informant was probed further concerning her childhood, the questions elicited the following response:

I think for the socialization of it, it's funny you should ask that and I'm smiling because my daughter was talking about differences in (pause) women and in administration. And she was talking; she was comparing me with another woman superintendent and she had seen the title of that "Steel Magnolias"<sup>1</sup>. And she (pause)

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<sup>1</sup>"Steel Magnolias," a play by Robert Harling concerning a group of southern ladies..."deeply revealing of the strength and purposefulness which underlies the antic banter..." (p. 54).

mentioned that differently perhaps than women who are getting business training now, she characterized us as being very strong women who look perhaps delicate and who always

[

er

are careful with

[

er

manners and (pause) social amenities but underneath it all are the steel magnolias

[

er

on (pause) that and I think I'm very much conscious. I think I came along in the era when women

[

er

were expected to wear the gloves and wear the hats and to always use certain courtesies. And I think I (pause) carry that. But on the other side,

[

er

I think if you grow up in the rough and tumble politics of black Baptist churches,

you learn the parliamentary procedure and how  
to get things done--

[

er

how to deal with

[

ah, ah

as my brother used to call it -- the  
curbstone meetings; the real meeting inside  
and then outside where the decisions are  
made. So I think that I was really exposed  
to that kind of stuff and it has stood me,  
stood me well

[

er

on that.

[

er

I think on the thing on socialization is that  
maybe women of my era who may in some ways be  
stronger because we came along when there  
were no real role models to (pause) look at  
and you kind of just found your way.

[

er

Often the (pause) courtesy, the manners is

often perceived in some as weakness. . .

Data gleaned from completed questionnaires and transcriptions revealed that Superintendent Harvey attended segregated public schools and later historically black colleges for both the bachelor's and master's degrees. Two local Middletown colleges, Renim Teachers and I.D. Teachers were her undergraduate and graduate institutions of higher education. Hence, no formal education was reported to have been received outside of her native city.

Superintendent Harvey's first encounter with the force of a warm and nurturing educational environment came during primary school. She said that:

Many people have heard me say that I had

[

ah

some speech difficulty as (pause) a child. I didn't do blends well; still don't do them well. But my mother and kindergarten teacher decided that I would lose the shyness that went along with not being able to speak, and my mother pushed me at church to speak. She signed me always to stand up in front of the audience. My teacher made sure that I didn't do what I started to do: I had my best friend answer for me all of the time because

I really didn't want (to) do the speaking. I was already in the family group.

[

er

[

But and I tell people now that probably I would have been classified [researcher's note: "classified" means placed in special education] had I come along now, but I had a parent and a teacher who believed, and instilled in me, that I could talk. So I often tell people now that if I fluff a word I can live with it and don't have the ego damage

[

that I might have.

[

er

And I probably would not have learned to speak, but they were hard task masters. Coupled with that was that my mother was very active in our church. So that I say a lot of the socializing that went on in the black community at that time (with) church,

[

ah

(with) teas, and

[

er

socials, and the talking and introducing  
people

[

ah

and all, was (pause) very much a part. My  
brother and I joke, we used to say that we  
must have slept on every Baptist church bench  
in Washington;

[

laughed

Having the best teachers, though the system was a  
segregated one, was perceived as significant to  
Superintendent Harvey's developing intellect. In  
addition, high parental and teacher expectations and  
being prodded by a variety of people were seen as vital  
ingredients for academic success. The informant summed  
up her feelings as follows:

. . . schools were segregated, so we had the  
very best of the teachers because they didn't  
have any place else to teach other than  
prominent African American University or in  
the public schools, so we had people who had

[

ah

a doctorate from prestigious Elliott University who came back to teach in (pause) public schools there. So we really got an extremely fine education. When I finished from (pause) Parrish High School, the whole middle section of the auditorium would be National Honor Society people. And it was just expected that you could perform

[

er

And people saw and I (pause) often say that people prodded me

[

er

to do the best. They were never content that you just did something; they prodded you to do your best...

Much later, after Superintendent Harvey's graduate studies had concluded and she had successfully launched a career in school administration, the ability to travel and hold her own both professionally and personally in unfamiliar and distant parts of the country, where often she would be "the only minority in the town [italics added]," was viewed as both meritorious and important to career success.

Superintendent Harvey indicated geography as her major field of study for both the B.S. and M.A. Ten years after she received her bachelor's degree from a teacher's college in her native city, she was awarded a master's degree from another local historically black college.

When the topic of marital status was raised, Mrs. Harvey, confessed:

I was the first person in my family to be divorced. I guess I'm-you know, my family, you know -

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but now they deal with it well.

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I remarried and now I'm widowed.

Although it has been at least seven years since her second husband's death and even more time since her family tradition shattering divorce, upon reviewing the transcript of the face-to-face interview and field notes, this researcher discerned some incoherence. Mrs. Harvey appeared to be reluctant to disclose additional information regarding her former spouses. This was an evident departure from an otherwise openly candid exchange.

At age 21, Mrs. Harvey gave birth to her sole

child, a daughter. This daughter, Heatherly Beth Dasher, would later receive a bachelor's and master's degree and professionally establish herself in the field of psychology and social work. Superintendent Harvey was pleased to report that her daughter recently made a career change to public school education. Since the move, Heatherly Beth is reportedly enjoying a measure professional success of her own by serving as an administrator for a local system.

Though Superintendent Harvey employed household help when her terminally ill second husband was on dialysis, she does not have any domestic assistance now. Mrs. Harvey went on to characterize her home, situated in an urban neighborhood, as a "den of dust." In addition to the informant, her daughter, son-in-law and grandson reside in the family home which is valued at \$150,000 - \$199,999.

Even though Superintendent Harvey did not specify whether her daughter and son-in-law share family chores, she spoke in glowing terms about the welcome she receives from 3 1/2-year-old grandson Donovan, and sheepdog Rex, upon her arrival home each evening. The informant placed reading minimally a book a week and decorating her home ahead of less enjoyable tasks such as washing dishes.

When queried closely regarding the church, the

subject spiritedly reviewed her early religious experience. Mrs. Harvey reported that "we didn't dance there," but that much of the family's social life revolved around the church. She listed a variety of activities which now preclude regular church attendance.

In illustrating the impact of the African American Baptist church on her life, Mrs. Harvey recalled that when she was a youngster her pastor had given her unconditional access to the musical instrument in the sanctuary. This privilege permitted her to practice the piano, and later the organ, when the building was otherwise not being used. Along with this support, Mrs. Harvey reported that when she decided to pursue a goal, there was always "a group of people that whatever you wanted to do, they just seemed to (pause) make it happen."

### Superintendent Elizabeth Beatrice Stewart

#### A Biographical Sketch

Superintendent Two, Dr. Elizabeth Beatrice Stewart is now employed by Woodstaff School District. She was born in a medium-sized town in a Middle Atlantic State, the second child of a family with just one daughter and one son. Dr. Stewart's father was a native of the

northern area of a South Eastern Gulf State and her mother, Mrs. Barbara Alice Beatrice, was also born in this same state. According to Dr. Stewart:

. . . my parents came from the South. They were both born and raised in South Eastern Gulf State.

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On my mothers's side,

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going back, maybe two generations they were Seminole Indians and on my father's side, one generation. And - of course,

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his folks came on his father's side from the Bahamas, but basically we are from the United States...

Continuing, Dr. Stewart lamented that:  
I was 10 when my mother died, and 13 when my father died. And my brother and I were raised by

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um, um

a one-parent

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er  
foster parent,

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single parent, foster parent, who raised us,  
of course, and

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saw us through school. My father, I believe,  
went no further than the fourth grade and my  
mother went through the eighth grade in  
school. And one thing that is of interest is  
that on my father's side, my grandmother

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er  
went as far as the 11th grade and back in  
those days that was virtually unheard of and

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she even became a teacher out there in the  
country,

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um, um  
way out, as they say the boonies and this  
was, of course in South Eastern Gulf State,

in the northern part of the state. And she was an elementary teacher for a while because I guess in those days, the early 1900's for a black person to have gone as far as the eleventh grade

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that was I guess analogous to going to college.

Today, in graduation from college and so she taught that. (pause)

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We, of course, as far back as I can remember,

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there were no

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college graduates on my mother's side. On my father's side,

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not of (pause) (not any) of his brothers or sisters, however, their children, many of them have gone on to college and have

graduated and gone on to graduate school."

Dr. Stewart recaptured memories of her early years prior to the death of both natural parents. Looking back in deeply personal terms, she recalled not knowing, actually, how poor she and her brother were. The superintendent's insightful remarks summed up this time in her life:

. . . so it was just myself and my brother  
and

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as far as the economic resources in the  
family,

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during that time period, well, I always felt  
that I was doing fine; three square meals a  
day and a roof over my head and it didn't  
leak. I didn't think that I was poor. But,  
by today's standards, I was living in poverty  
and didn't even know it. We weren't on  
welfare cause my father worked, my mother  
worked when (we were) (pause) small. So (I)

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ah

just don't recall ever being or feeling poor,

but as I said today's standards, I guess I was very poor.

Dr. Stewart's family of origin consisted of only four persons: father, mother, daughter and son. As many other African American families migrating north during that day experienced, Stewart's grandparents and other relatives were fifteen-hundred miles away in South Eastern Gulf State.

Orphaned at a young age, Dr. Stewart resisted pulling up roots in her northern hometown to live in South Eastern Gulf State, though she had waited in this state with her cancer-stricken mother for death to come. After her father died in a tragic car accident three years later, Elizabeth's family consisted of her natural brother, Clifford, and her foster mother. It is important to note that the Beatrice children could have moved south to join relatives who wanted them, but instead she and her older brother opted not to become a part of an already-existing family. Instead, they went through the legal procedure to "adopt" a foster parent, and a new family was formed. Their foster mother was a known member of their close-knit community and had been a good friend to Mrs. Beatrice; in fact the foster mother, Mrs. Brown, had been Elizabeth's godmother.

In deliberative reflection, Dr. Stewart confessed that although her parents died when she was relatively

young, making her an orphan, she "really got a lot of strength from" her early beginnings because of her mother and father. She gave this account of that period after her mother died and prior to the death of her father a few years later:

I guess I got my air of independence

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and my ability to

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ah

stick it out in times of need and stress and trials and tribulations. And

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um

I can recall we had a pot-belly stove in the living room and I don't know if (you're) too young to know about pot-bellied stoves, but I don't even know if you know anything about banking a stove. But we had lima beans and I'm talking about not the green ones, but the dried lima beans. Do you know anything about...

cooking lima beans? Well, you know, if you bank that stove right and if you let those beans soak the night before and you put the

water (and the) whatever in there and you sit that on the stove, by the time I got home from school, 11 or 12-years-old, that food was cooked. And maybe we would have something else besides, but that was one of the staples in our family and I became an expert at cooking lima beans and anything else that I could sit on that stove and leave it on there all day and

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that's just one illustration of having to know very early on how to do certain things. I had to clean the house on Saturdays if I wanted to go to the movies and the movies started at 12:00. And if I didn't do what I had to do, we didn't go to the movies on time and we had some stipulations about what time we had to be home, etc. and everything was always very strict for me.

Being held accountable by the adult neighbors to always do "everything right" when her father was away at work, Dr. Stewart reminiscenced about the huge responsibilities thrust upon her shoulders as a pre-teen. She summed up her responsibilities as:

I knew how to pay the phone bill, the public

service bill and sometimes I would get them mixed up. But then the man would tell me to go back and make sure I changed the bills around. But, I would still know that certain things were due certain times of the month and if my father didn't say something, I would say well you know such and such have to be paid. So, I have always had to be independent.

Starting her formal education just a few years before the landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision, Dr. Stewart was exposed to integrated education throughout her studies, beginning with preschool and ending with a doctorate from prestigious Brewton University in her native state. The subject asserted that historical documentation would verify that she was identified as an academically talented student as early as the third grade. Through what was considered innovative teaching in the late 1940s to early 1950s, Dr. Stewart was selected for foreign language study in the field of Spanish. She, her school and classmates received nationwide coverage in Life magazine.

Although little mention was made directly of her high school years, Superintendent Stewart reported that:

When I went off to college many people helped. The scholarships, the kind of money that I received

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ah

from people who know me, from teachers who were mentors. I have to make mention of

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ah, ah

a Spanish teacher who

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ah

ran interference for me and made sure that I got the right kinds of scholarships. Another family of people, one of the ladies knew something about the National Scholarship Service Fund for Negro Children. She made sure that my name got in the hat. I wound up getting a four-year supplementary scholarship from them. I got a state scholarship. I got money from a French teacher. I didn't know it until after I got out of college. She helped pay for a lot of my miscellaneous fees. And then I had received so much money from the town itself, including churches and agencies, etc., because I was orphaned and,

of course, I was qualifying myself for certain things, not only because I had good grades, but because I didn't have parents. So I had almost more money than I needed on an annual basis and it was in a trust fund and I could go and draw on this money for the various incidentals and needs that I had and the tuition was being paid for.

Elizabeth Beatrice was awarded an undergraduate degree in Spanish literature. Later, she went on to achieve advanced degrees in guidance and counseling, Spanish and educational administration.

According to the questionnaire completed by Dr. Stewart, she is currently married and childless. In her taped interview, Dr. Stewart disclosed this pertinent piece of information: "Oh my current family situation is the same as it was (pause) about 23 or 24 years ago when I married my husband." These words are worthy of closer examination. First, Dr. Stewart is not certain about the number of years she has been married and did not put forth any effort to arrive at a precise number. Add educational attainment to this equation and it appears that Dr. Stewart has an atypical African American union -- what could be called a "yuppie" marriage without children. In addition, she has neither the time nor the inclination to interact

with relatives who are less successful, though they live within 15 minutes of her present home.

From the narrow to the wide-angle view, the next sentence of the interview passage under examination revealed Superintendent Stewart's assessment of her union with Mr. Stewart: "Our marriage is still going very strong." Regardless of her regular, 20-hours plus work regime and being on call 24 hours a day for emergencies, she measured the marital relationship a success. Add to this an interesting field note secured from participant observation: that this couple had recently considered a commuter marriage, when Dr. Stewart was being courted for an employment opportunity in California.

Claiming that the idea of having children never entered her mind, the following (Stewart) statement provides a synopsis of her beliefs:

There are some people in this world who want children and there are some people who don't and I guess I must be the some people who don't because it really never entered my mind one way or the other. I have always been very interested in

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careers and

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my husband and I, we kind of knew each other as far as careers were concerned before we married. And I just

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ah

think that I was one of those people who was destined to do whatever it is that I'm doing with or without children. Now if you were to ask me do I think I would have done the same thing; I have a feeling deep down inside, probably yes. I might not have

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uh

gained certain positions at maybe an early stage, but I think I eventually would have wound up doing all of the things that I wanted to do anyway. (I) think it happens if it's going to be, it's going to be.

Continuing, perhaps a little defensively,

Superintendent Stewart asserted:

I

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have no children. I like to think that I have

many children. I think I have more than most people if you add, if you count the almost 9,000 here and the

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uh

16 close to 16,000 in Central City

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laughed

and

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uh

the 2,000 in Broadville. I think I have quite a few students,

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rather children. My

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uh, uh

as far as whether or not having children had anything to do with (pause) the

After a succession of housekeepers and other supportive arrangements, Superintendent Stewart decided to use a home-maintenance service to clean her \$400,000 home in an upper middle-class, predominantly white neighborhood. Such support, however, is scheduled only when she or Mr. Stewart are at home -- a deviance from

how similarly situated neighbors might handle the matter.

Superintendent Stewart heaped praise on her spouse for being extremely supportive by helping to dish out food at mealtime and purchasing his dinner (out) when necessary. Dr. Stewart also revealed she and her husband "have to buy so many services." Her very busy schedule and extensive travel related to Mr. Stewart's job as director of a firm made the purchase of these services mandatory, she felt.

Dr. Stewart described her early church life in the following way:

Believe me, back in those days church was the thing to do.

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it's not like today where it's almost like a casual

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thing for some people. Church

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was

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very much a part of my life in growing up.

....you know they had all kinds of pageants in those days, Easter pageants, Christmas pageants, Father's Day, whatever, Mother's Day and Children's Day. You name the day, and we had many, many things that kept us busy and we had to recite poems and all kinds of recitations and

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um

Sunday was gone, . . . but church was a very, very big part of my life.

As indicated in Chapter IV's introduction, the next section is devoted to a qualitative analysis and thematic summary of the research findings. Four categories are used.

#### Thematic Summary and Analysis

The following four-major questions were addressed during interviews with the informants:

- 1) How would you characterize your social origins and background?
- 2) What factors do you perceive as important to your career success?
- 3) What is your current family status?
- 4) Were you raised in the church?

### Family Origin

Although neither informant was born in the south, both had parents with southern roots. Mrs. Harvey's father hailed from Southern State, while both of Dr. Stewart's parents were born in South Eastern Gulf State. Mrs. Geraldine, Joan Harvey's mother, was the lone exception; she was a native of Eastern Coast City. Later, Stewart's mother demonstrated her deep affection for her native south by returning to South Eastern Gulf State to await an untimely death from progressive cancer. Elizabeth accompanied her sick mother and stayed with her until the end.

Stewart and Harvey's families of origin bore similarities because each unit contained only two children; a son and one daughter. The Geraldine configuration was different due to the fact that Grandmother Cooper resided with or near them, creating an extended family structure.

### Class Status

Mrs. Harvey's mother was college educated and had earned a bachelor's degree from Renin College. This is a historically black college where daughter, Joan, would also later graduate, following in her mother's footsteps. Her college-educated mother married Mr. Geraldine who attained a high school diploma at night. However, Mr. Geraldine was the sole breadwinner for the

family, though his education was less than his wife's formal achievement. In the highly competitive arena of segregated-public education, Mrs. Geraldine was unable to obtain a teaching position. Consequently, she became a full-time homemaker.

Mr. Geraldine worked for a publishing house but was not permitted to become a reporter because of his race. He is now 81 years old, the only parent left. He worked at two jobs during Joan's formative years and stayed on at the second job even after retirement. This family patriarch was finally forced from this job, however, when the newspaper that he was working for experienced a devastating fire.

On the other hand, Dr. Stewart's parents had significantly less formal education than the Geraldines. Mr. and Mrs. Beatrice were not high school graduates. According to Elizabeth, her father completed fourth grade and her mother finished junior high school. The subject seemed reluctant to divulge much information about the occupational status of her parents. Nevertheless, it was reported that both parents worked outside of their home. Her mother worked as a domestic for low wages, while Mr. Beatrice earned a paycheck as a construction worker. Elizabeth's brother would later follow in his father's occupational footsteps.

Due in part to the occupational status of father, the Geraldines were not considered social equals by the African American elite of their hometown. Also, their brown skin did not help to support upward mobility aspirations. The subject's assessment of her family social ranking at this point was "lower, lower middle-class." In comparison, Elizabeth now believes that they were "very poor" -- but at the time she was not fully cognizant of how severe the family circumstances actually were.

#### Family Size and Structure.

Until age 10, Elizabeth lived with her mother and father. After the death of her mother, she lived with her father. When Elizabeth was 13, her father died. During enculturation, Mrs. Harvey's maternal grandmother resided with the nuclear family. No extended family members lived with Dr. Stewart during enculturation. Their present situation is that daughter, son-in-law and grandson reside with Mrs. Harvey, while Dr. Stewart and her husband live alone.

Information presented above concerned previous and current family structure. A significant factor was that today's intact nuclear family -- families of the 80's -- are similar in size. This phenomenon of relative likeness does not run counter to prevailing practices, even when the orphaned Stewart children

received a foster mother. It appeared that how the process of forging a new structure was handled would not vary in terms of how African Americans might proceed if a contemporary context was used and if social class is held constant.

At first glance, the Geraldine tradition of having several generations living in one household is being perpetuated. So does the number of people. However, a closer look revealed variations in the family members contributing to such a family. During the previous generation, the intact nuclear family consisted of a "Dick and Jane" configuration; two children, stay-at-home mother, breadwinner dad. A grandmother became the fifth family member. Now, a generation later, the extended family includes one less child and all relatives being housed in the residence of the elder family member; a widowed grandmother.

What factors do you perceive as important to your career success?

The subjects' response to this second area of a four-item interview guide were both candid and revealing. How their upward mobility was influenced and in some cases continues to be supported was brought into clear focus. Early socialization, schooling, mentoring and professional decisions are the four-side

headings that are suggested by the data.

#### Early Family Socialization

As the data collection continued, the subjects demonstrated a great willingness to share their recollections concerning familial and social activities. Both informants elaborated on the warm and nurturing security that was present in their homes as a result of their secure-home conditions. Feelings of connectedness and strength were positively reinforced. Independence, as well as fine-tuning socially acceptable behaviors, were additional areas that were emphasized in the two families.

#### Kinds of Schools Attended, Precollege and College

Beginning with kindergarten, Superintendent Harvey's education was completely segregated. Almost 10 years Harvey's junior, Dr. Stewart, in comparison, received an integrated education starting with preschool and ending with doctoral work. The latter subject has attained two master's degrees and the doctorate. Hence, Dr. Stewart has more formal education than Mrs. Harvey, a fact that may be accounted for by the 10-year age difference, childbearing and widowhood in Harvey's life. Also, Stewart has been entirely a career woman on the move.

Interestingly enough, both subjects shared a

common profile at the bachelor and master's degree levels. How so? Although each pursued different fields of study, both shared a parallel degree pattern of continuing their subject-matter studies from the undergraduate to graduate level by remaining in the same discipline; Spanish for Superintendent Stewart and geography in Superintendent Harvey's case.

All totaled, six degrees were earned by the two subjects. Mrs. Harvey attained two (a B.A. and an M.A. in geography) and Dr. Stewart earned four (the B.A., two M.A.'s and the Ph.D. in Spanish literature, Spanish, guidance and counseling, and educational administration, respectively). The most recent degree earned by Dr. Stewart, was awarded in 1983. Mrs. Harvey earned her first degree in 1951 and her second in 1961.

The academic preparation documented above has been varied. Neither subject received a master's degree in educational administration, but in continuing her education to achieve a doctorate, Superintendent Stewart majored in educational administration. When assessing areas of specialization, Superintendent Harvey listed one area, while Superintendent Stewart indicated three areas.

Events or Persons Offering Help or Support, in and out of the Family

Harvey and Stewart found richly supportive educational environments as they ascended the ladder of academic accomplishment. Of the seven mentors cited as significant to the subjects' career success, it is instructive that in each case, African American female mentors were named first in the text of the transcriptions. Another similarity is that both superintendents indicated cross-racial/cross-gender mentoring by white males. It may or may not be significant that none of the mentors was a white female.

The number of reported mentors for Superintendent Harvey greatly exceeds the two partly credited with Dr. Stewart's career success. However, upon closer examination of field notes, historical documents and transcriptions, a more extensive network of mentors was discovered. Stewart's own words, "I could just name a whole litany of people who somewhere along the way assisted me," was one primary source of insight. In addition, both field notes and historical documents verified that in two instances Dr. Stewart was the only African American female superintendent called upon to offer leadership in connection with statewide professional initiatives. These overtures attest to the fact that a number of people recommended the subject for positions with career value. High

visibility akin to such activities was also deemed beneficial to Stewart's professional development.

A study of these subjects would not be complete without a careful analysis of the mentors who played a role in their administrative advancement whether typical or atypical in nature. Harvey's mentors included schoolteacher aunts, an assistant principal in a previous placement, her mother and several educational collaborators. On the other hand, Stewart received sponsorship from her doctoral dissertation chairperson and a former boss.

#### Choice of Profession/Course of Study

Superintendent Stewart believed that her profession enabled her to pay back the debt she owed to her community for supplying the economic and emotional base to secure a college education. On the other hand, Superintendent Harvey came from a background featuring many college-educated females. Included in this group was her mother who was unable to secure a teaching position. Continuing the family tradition of a career in education was a factor that influenced Mrs. Harvey's professional choice.

#### What is your current family status?

##### Marital Status

The subjects both have experienced married life.

Mrs. Harvey, a former divorcee, has been widowed for about seven years. Meanwhile, the Stewart union has lasted well over two decades and continues at this writing to be a strong marriage, according to the informant. Stewart has made a practice of talking about her husband's career success with her colleagues.

The academic background of spouses and children may be significant. Dr. Stewart's husband has earned an M.B.A. Mrs. Harvey did not speak about the education of either of her husbands, one divorced, one deceased. However, she was proud to share information concerning her daughter's achievements. Her daughter was a psychologist, then a social worker and now is a school-system administrator.

#### Household Arrangements

At some point in their recent professional career, both superintendents have employed domestic help. Even though Mrs. Harvey does not currently do so, she was comfortable enough about the condition of her home to invite an all-male group of central office administrators to her home for holiday cheer.

Given the location of Superintendent Stewart's suburban home in Townsend, and how her neighbors typically go about maintaining their property, her practice of retaining a cleaning service reflects community housekeeping standards. Many similarly

established families might arrange to have their houses cleaned when family members are not at home, but it is consistent with her leadership style that Superintendent Stewart oversees the work of the home maintenance workers. With precious little time to spend enjoying their expensive property, one could debate the merits of not being interrupted by cleaning.

### Were you raised in the church?

#### Attendance Pattern

Both subjects were raised within Baptist churches with a southern tradition. The importance of participation in their shared faith has not been dismissed by either subject. Yet today, regarding church attendance, Mrs. Harvey confessed: "I don't get there as frequent," while Dr. Stewart admitted that her "commitment and involvement in church today is . . . nothing compared to what it was."

Why is this so? Superintendent Stewart cited her job and the nature of her profession as the chief reason she is unable to attend church as frequently as desired, but it was Superintendent Harvey's speaking engagements, volunteer work, professional activities and sorority responsibilities that precluded regular worship. Notwithstanding this present situation of poor attendance, Mrs. Harvey reported extraordinary

support from the local minister upon the death of her mother and credited church experience for her healthy outlook on life.

The religious background and training of both subjects was steeped in provincial Southern Baptist tradition. Both of the women characterized their early religious education as "strict." Unlike many today with upward mobility career aspirations, Harvey and Stewart have not changed denominations or converted to new and fashionable denominations, but have treasured the scenes of their childhood experiences.

#### Does Church Relate to These Women's Career Choices?

The answer seemed to be yes, for most of the two subjects' early life was deeply rooted in the African American Baptist Church. Analysis of their individual transcripts indicated almost identical responses to the question asked above. Both described their roles of Sunday schoolteachers and Vacation Bible schoolteachers as significant in their decision to enter of their chosen profession. The range of positions the superintendents have held in support of the church included substitute musician, usher, vocal singer, trustee and Assistant Sunday School Superintendent. At the present time, Mrs. Harvey is a Woman's Day speaker at various churches.

The latter portions of both interviews were

replete with references to service in the capacities as outlined above. Both subjects spoke with affection and pride of the various positions they had held.

The final aspect of the research findings is two administrative overviews. First, Superintendent Harvey's summary is reported. Then Superintendent Stewart's administrative overview follows.

Superintendent Joan Geraldine Harvey

An Administrative Overview through Field Notes

Mrs. Harvey's office is located in an urban area adjacent to a busy interstate highway and her administrative day typically starts between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. Her job as superintendent of a county vocational/technical school district in Middle Atlantic State covers five educational centers, each at a different city location. It is typical of the personal style of this highly likable woman that she might arrive for work with a paper shopping bag in one hand and a cake in the other, warmly greeting all as she walks to her office.

For a glimpse into the inner sanctum of how she operates the day-to-day business of a school district, excerpted field notes with analysis are provided.

Field Notes.

11:20 a.m.           The cabinet meeting ends. I did

not take notes during this session as I thought it would have been totally inappropriate. Mrs. Harvey had sat at the head of the table. Present were Dr. Theodore Prodromo, Frank Szemere and Ralph Weinfeld. Operating without an agenda, Mrs. Harvey went around the table, offering each participant a chance to outline his concerns. The biggest issue was the death of a special education student during the previous week. As the chain of events was described, the kind of medical care the child received at a local hospital was detailed. During this narration, Mrs. Harvey gave those present wide latitude with regard to input. Joint decisions and action plans were developed to address this matter and other issues. All present solicited feedback and insights from each other. Mrs. Harvey's seasoned political abilities and administrative savvy were always subtly present. At the conclusion of this meeting, Harvey handed out directions to her home, because she's having a holiday gathering for her inner cabinet. (Later she makes it clear that I am not invited, while emphasizing that she's inviting them to her "den of dust.")

12:00 p.m. I was invited to lunch at a Chinese restaurant by Theodore and Frank. I asked if Mrs. Harvey would be coming. The guys got her to join us, so that we were a foursome. The brief walk to and from

the eating establishment was a pleasant time for conversation relating to hobbies. Conversations over lunch tended to be more work-related or professionally focused. I learned over lunch, though, that Mrs. Harvey likes chocolates and manages to stay fit by walking in malls and riding a stationery bike at home. Her sorority is a big part of her social life. Recently, she was invited to campaign for Grand Baselius. She notes that that's how Henriette Upperman (a former African American superintendent) lost her job.

2:30 p.m.           The private, closed-door session with Dr. Prodromo has concluded and we have a chat. He believes that Superintendent Harvey is an innovator and helps motivate staff to make things happen. By the way, it is interesting to note that Joan does perceive herself as someone who prods people to extend themselves. [Ted cites two projects that Harvey initiated, the Shop-Rite Center and the proposed Mainlawn megastructure as examples of the superintendent's visionary leadership.] During this interlude, I reflect upon the fact that Joan is surrounded by white males in leadership positions at Central. In addition, the female clerical ranks possess few minority-group members. This has certainly changed since four years ago when I interviewed for a

position in the district. I reflected on Ted, who came from an upper income suburban area to a very urban Middle Atlantic State County. By his own admission, Joan's "soft" skills are the reason he's here and feeling so fulfilled.

The school board convened at 4:59 p.m. Using the agenda for the regular board meeting, Monday, December 11, 1989 as the guide, the Board zipped through most items. One Board member, John Foster, inquired about a previously requested Superintendent's report. Mrs. Harvey stated a willingness to alter the format if the Board desired. Through her careful and deliberate response to John and other board members, she let them know that she is directed by a Board, not by just one member.

Mrs. Harvey introduced me at this point. I rose from my seat in the front row of the spectator section, smiled while visually surveying the Board, nodded and said "good evening."

Mrs. Harvey's forehead and brow take on additional lines during deliberations. She also frequently adjusts her glasses and folds her arms and hands in front of her. Her thin lips are pursed and unpursed.

5:26 p.m. The Board approved a resolution to retire into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel.

Mrs. Harvey approached me and advised me to go to my 7:00 p.m. commitment before another Board of Education meeting.

Analysis.

This petite lady uses a soft and gentle approach to accomplish things through others. In keeping with her democratic leadership style, when someone does a good job, Superintendent Harvey finds a way to reward their efforts. Regardless of the incessant tasks involved in administering the district's five centers, she is careful to maintain a balance so that she does not become too serious about small matters. Focusing her attention on larger objectives is ultimately deemed more productive, it appears.

Maintaining an open-door policy, this skilled and experienced superintendent believes that she gleans much because she is accessible to the staff. Mrs. Harvey contends that she can discreetly supervise and remain in touch with the day-to-day operations in district administration through this practice.

She considers herself a "steel magnolia," i.e., soft on the outside but tough on the inside. She also says that she places her health concerns above further advancement in her career (which by virtue of her age could end within the next few years, as she is eligible for retirement).

Two years ago, when the Board of Education went looking for a new superintendent, they advertised for a veteran, not someone who would have to grow in the job. They got just what they wanted in Mrs. Harvey.

Superintendent Elizabeth Beatrice Stewart

An Administrative Overview through Field Notes

Based upon 1980 census statistics, Woodstaff has an estimated population of 62,251 and it is slowly increasing in the number of reported inhabitants. Demographics indicate 34,268 white citizens and 23,397 African Americans. Per capita income is listed at \$10,281.00. The high school graduation rate is 58 percent. In 1986, the district enrollment was 8,965 students, The district uses a K-8-4 plan and employs 486 classroom teachers. With a per-pupil cost of \$3,598.00 for the 1985-86 school year, the total budget for that year was \$38,556,266.00 (Hornor, 1989).

A view of the inner workings of the school district Dr. Stewart administers is supplied through selected field notes and analysis.

Field Notes.

8:25 a.m. I arrive at 50 Central Avenue, Woodstaff, Middle Atlantic State. This urban area is a well-maintained business and cultural section of the community. One exception is the front view of the

Board of Education Office. The brick stairs appear to be rickety; there is litter and the shrubbery has not been trimmed.

8:48 a.m. Dr. Stewart arrives to a chorus of "good morning, Dr. Stewart." I glance up from public relations materials that I have been leafing through to catch a quick glimpse of a medium height African American woman attired in black walking briskly to her office. Soon, one of the superintendent's secretaries acknowledges my presence and helps me to settle in for the day ahead by showing me to the basement level. She informs me that Dr. Stewart would be with me before long.

10:05 a.m. I am greeted by Dr. Stewart. After considerable interaction beforehand, the interview takes place.

11:25 a.m. Tanya Haman introduces Tereska Brown and we begin to go through Dr. Stewart's mail while seated in a reception area behind an elegant 18th century secretary's desk. We sit in an area not far from the Superintendent's office. Tereska Brown is a secretary/clerk who has worked for the Board for two years in April. She is single parent, recently divorced, with three school-aged children. Tereska is pleased with the new superintendent.

Dr. Stewart stops by our desk to say that she's on

her way to visit the business office because a neighboring district had a school which burned down during the holiday break. Dr. Stewart states that she's concerned, and that the district will volunteer to help in any way possible. The superintendent worries that the recent lease agreement signed with county vocational school district might be in jeopardy because of the fire and the need to house school children in another facility.

In reviewing the mail, the materials pertaining to state report card results were of particular interest. Page after page of quantified data indicated how the 600 plus school districts in the state fared on 10 different measures of achievement. Dr. Stewart is a member of the statewide committee supervising the oversight effort in connection with this new reporting requirement. I recognize the names of other committee members.

Analysis.

Dr. Stewart is a self-assured, resourceful and relatively young professional with high energy. She knows how to make a real impact on her audience and has a considerable number of soft skills at her disposal. She can turn on the charm and warmth as quickly as she turns it off. This petite lady is administratively skilled. Her leadership has been described by comments

ranging from she is a "blessing" for our students to she is the "best role model that I will ever have." In short, her staff respects her and is pleased that she is the new Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Stewart knows that she's in charge and does not hesitate in pointing out what she would like someone to do and how she would like it to be done. Nevertheless, she makes certain to connect with each person through body language, verbal exchange or some other extrinsic means.

This little lady with a booming strong voice is one tough leader who carries a big stick with grace and boldness, demonstrating firm direct action. Dr. Harvey's leadership style is such that she enjoys having her hand in every aspect of district operation, and is willing to work around the clock to be sure that she stays on top of it all. In addition, she is a risk-taker and is not afraid to go the extra mile in recruiting talent for the district.

The lame duck Board of Education in Woodstaff will lose their seats when the system moves from a Type 2 to Type 1 -- from an appointed body to an elected group. One of their final official acts, having far-reaching implications, was to grant Superintendent Stewart a three-year extension on her existing contract. This action granted Stewart tenure for life prior to the

seating of new educational officials.

### Summary

Thanks to the cooperation and self-disclosure of two-seasoned African American female administrators -- informants who are trusted and respected by their peers -- those studying the African American experience might now gain insight from the superintendents' real life success stories. Readers can learn how the triple whammy of gender, race and class was used from the outset of the subjects' lives to achieve impressive educational and professional goals. Their achievements, fine models for our African American community, have been widely recognized.

The obstacles which these women of color encountered were, by their own recollection of the past, overcome through earlier familial, religious and educational interventions. When compared to one another, the subjects are found to have strikingly similar backgrounds in terms of family origin, support given by teachers, and strong assimilation into the ethic of the African American Baptist church.

## CHAPTER V .

### Conclusions and Recommendations

This study was designed using a biographical perspective to determine if certain sets of life circumstances -- patterns or shapes of personal and family lives -- seem to generate high aspirations and/or exceptional subsequent career attainment for the African American female superintendents under scrutiny. Specifically, the researcher wished to discover if there was a common profile in their biographies, and particularly in their families of origin, that may have helped to advance them to the superintendency (in atypical or typical settings) and then enabled the informants to sustain this level of career achievement. In addition, they were observed through "shadowing" in order to get a sense of their leadership styles and their effectiveness in the positions they currently hold.

No matter how credible the data, there are severe limits to the inferences that can legitimately be drawn from them. The limitations of this sort of study are such that a sample of two, no matter how similar their life histories, cannot demonstrate a causal

relationship between the women's backgrounds and their success. Perhaps a plausible account has been created, but not a definitive one. Therefore, this study can only suggest or propose hypotheses. It cannot test or prove them.

### Conclusions

Some tentative conclusions can be drawn from the summarized findings of this investigation. These may serve as hypotheses for which to base future research.

1. The subjects' families of origin were both intact nuclear family structures, but were not economically affluent. Nevertheless, the informants (though Stewart's mother died when she was only 10 and her father died when she was 13) derived great strength from their families and considered their parents to be outstanding role models.
2. The women studied had very different childhoods. One flourished under the ever watchful eyes of neighbors in an integrated suburban community, while the other was nurtured by a concerned cadre of friends and relatives in a large, racially segregated U.S. city. One lost her parents at a tender age; the other had not only parents but a

grandmother who was an important part of the picture until she was mature.

3. Each subject reported only one sibling, a brother. As a consequence of this small-nuclear family size (by African American standards of their era), each informant shared parental attention with only one other child in the household..
4. Although Superintendent Stewart was orphaned at age 13, the time spent as an intact nuclear family was judged by this researcher to be a vital factor in imparting specific behavior patterns later exhibited during mid to late adolescence. These patterns include acting in a strongly independent and self-reliant manner. Today, this same superintendent demonstrates superior ability to weather the storms inherent in being at the helm of a public school district in an urban area. What are the clues? Being in charge while exuding strength, equanimity and human relations skills are some of the indicators. Early enculturation can last a lifetime.
5. As the subjects under study developed intellectually as youngsters, they were

encouraged by a supportive network of schoolteachers. Traits reinforced by this support included the ability to interact effectively with others in various settings. Moreover, their self-concepts was nurtured in this context.

6. The two women's educational experiences (both early and later) contrasted significantly, especially regarding the racial context. Superintendent Harvey was educated in a predominantly segregated educational setting, but feels that this did not present a handicap to her later when she served as county superintendent of schools in a large area with a minuscule 20% minority population. On the other hand, although Stewart had an integrated education (starting with preschool), her present and previous administrative posts have been in districts with minority student populations of more than 50 percent.
7. These women, aspiring to be leaders, felt that they had received significant support and encouragement from numerous mentors. The sources of such support ranged from family members to teachers and superiors, including

several well-established white males.

Interestingly, white females were not among these mentors, a curious fact that bears further scrutiny in future research.

8. The course of study at the bachelor and master's level bore no direct relationship to their present careers in educational administration. The second informant received a doctorate in educational administration after she had already entered the ranks of school leadership. Mrs. Harvey's degrees in geography had little to do with her present job, where she complements her administrative training and experience with her native intelligence and skill at human relationships.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

It is clear that African American female superintendents, always an underrepresented group among chief school administrators, are currently (see Chapter I -Introduction) declining in numbers. Future research should be focused on the reasons for this if we are to halt this phenomenon. Equal opportunity to compete for upper echelon positions is frequently a bone of contention for those who implement equal access policy.

How this practice develops in the countless systems across America is another matter. Often questions are raised concerning the induces or measures of acting affirmatively. Should the number of minority candidates screened and later interviewed for a job count toward verifying equal opportunity? Or, should only those who actually receive a position be counted? These questions and other thorny equity issues suggest areas for investigation.

#### Specific Recommendations

1. Consideration might be given to chronicling the complete life story of Superintendent Harvey, who believes that she is the only female in the United States of American, white or minority, who has held four different superintendencies. She accomplished this feat, at least in part, using the education she obtained in segregated public schools and historically black colleges. Other social or individual characteristics that seem to have contributed to this exceptional career include impeccable manners and maintaining a warmly personable manner when interacting with others within a professional context.

Proving that she can not only hold a

job, Mrs. Harvey has ably demonstrated that career success need not preclude an active social life. She has not been "married" to her job, and actively pursues a wide range of interests.

2. The influence of small family size might be further researched to see whether the hypothesis that this is a positive influence on career success is supported by data on a larger number of people (African American or white, male or female)..
3. An established national organization with sufficient resources to do so should maintain historical records on all superintendents of schools, with the potential of "breaking out" parts of the database by sex, race, age, and type of educational background: segregated/ desegregated, disciplines, number of degrees, etc. In Chapter III, the methodology section, the problems of identifying a single, updated listing of potential subjects have been described. One source of the sought after information was not available. Rather than data on African American superintendents only, it would be more useful (and it is more likely that resources for

such a data bank would be forthcoming) if the entire population of superintendents were surveyed.

4. The apparent career benefits of early immersion into the ethic of African American Baptist church might prove worthy of further exploration. Whether early religious experience has similar impact on individuals in other denominations, African American led and otherwise, might prove worthy of study. [E.g., what of African Americans educated in the Catholic parochial schools? These are strict, but not segregated. What of A.M.E.s who experienced early immersion into the ethic of their church?] (See Robert Bellah and the work of other sociologists of religion in Habits of the Heart.)

Since the African American Baptists' membership outnumbers other ethnic-minority denominations (in this country), this rather recent phenomenon of African American Baptists achieving prominence might be assessed from a historical perspective. Although the African American Baptists were permitted supervised worship beginning in 1788, well-documented records indicate that

the Methodists were credited with establishing the first independent church in 1787. Then why have the Baptist leaders attained such high visibility? In addition to having a larger membership, the structure of their national organization is such that grassroots leadership does not pose a threat. One hypothesis is that the absence of a hierarchy within the context of the African American Baptist church has encouraged African American leaders in greater numbers than in the A.M.E. church (see Norris and Fitts, Chapter II).

5. The absence of white females serving as career mentors for the African American females in this study might be further researched. [E.g., is this merely due to chance, or was it due to animus or insecurity among white females encountered by these women?]

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**APPENDIX A**

**A Directory of Black Female Superintendents of Public  
School Districts in the United States**

**PLEASE NOTE:**

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160-161

164-167

**U·M·I**



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## *The University of Dayton*

May 1, 1990

Beulah Adams  
11 Nancy St.  
Kendall Park, New Jersey  
08824

Dear Ms. Adams:

I received your telephone message requesting permission to use Tables 1, 19, and 26 from my dissertation. Permission is granted to use the data provided that credit is given to the author. I am pleased that you found the information helpful toward completion of your doctoral defense.

Much success with your defense and subsequent career. I would really like to read your study if you should have an extra copy.

Again, the best to you!

Sincerely,

Amie B. Revere, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor

ABR/kld

**APPENDIX B**

**Identified Black Female Superintendents  
in the United States  
and  
Related Correspondence**

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**BEULAH M. ADAMS**  
**Eleven Nancy Street**  
**Kendall Park, NJ 08824**  
**(201) 297-4982**

July 6, 1989

Dr. Charles D. Moody, Sr.  
The Office of Minority Affairs  
The University of Michigan  
503 Thompson Street  
1042 Fleming Administration Bldg.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1340

Dear Dr. Moody:

Thank you for your copyrighted list of African American female superintendents in the United States.

As indicated during our recent telephone discussion, I am currently fine-tuning my dissertation proposal which will eventually form the first three chapters of the final study report. In conjunction with this effort, would you grant written authorization to include your listing in the appendices of my present work? The committee supervising my work believes that including your list would add measurably to the documentation section.

Several weeks ago, I had the pleasure of meeting the new Superintendent of Schools for Mercer County. Current information reflective of movement among this elite group of educational leaders has been included.

Again, I extend sincere thanks for the time that you were able to spend with me and appreciation for the sharing which has already taken place.

Sincerely,



Beulah M. Adams  
Enclosure

RECEIVED  
SEP 25 1989

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION  
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We the undersigned hereby request permission to reproduce the publication entitled:

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Name: BEULAH M. ADAMS

Title: Graduate Student / Vocational Supervisor

Address: Eleven Nancy Street  
Kendall Park, NJ 08824

Permission Granted:

Permission Denied:

If denied reason(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Charles D. Moody, Sr.

Charles D. Moody, Sr.  
Vice Provost for Diversity of the Office of Minority Affairs  
University of Michigan

Vice Provost for Minority Affairs, Office of the Provost and  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

**APPENDIX C**  
**Questionnaire**

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions. Unless otherwise noted, kindly indicate only one answer per question.

1. Age: 30-39 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50-59 \_\_\_\_\_ 60 or older \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many brother(s) and sister(s) did you have when you were growing up?  
brother(s) \_\_\_\_\_ sister(s) \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your current marital status?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Never married                      \_\_\_\_\_ Separated                      \_\_\_\_\_ Widowed  
\_\_\_\_\_ Married                                      \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced
4. Do you have children? \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_ Ages \_\_\_\_\_
5. If you have natural children, at what age did you first give birth? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Have you ever adopted? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, was it a same race adoption \_\_\_\_\_
7. What degree(s) do you hold? Indicate year, institution, and major field of study. Kindly place a "S" in front of the degree level if the education was segregated or an "I" in front of the degree level if the education was integrated.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree                      \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ Master's degree                                      \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ Specialist's degree                                      \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ Doctorate degree                                      \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)                                      \_\_\_\_\_
8. If married, what is your husband's highest level of educational and career attainment?  
education \_\_\_\_\_ career \_\_\_\_\_
9. If you are a parent, what is the highest level of each child's educational and career attainment?
  - a. Child #1                      \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Child #2                      \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Child #3                      \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Child #4                      \_\_\_\_\_
10. Has a search consultant ever invited you to apply for a superintendency? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Did your family ever relocate with you because of a lateral or vertical career move? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Indicate all the administrative positions you have held.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Superintendent
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Assistant/Associate Superintendent
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Supervisor
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Elementary Principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Elementary Assistant Principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. Middle School Principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. Middle School Assistant Principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. Secondary Principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. Secondary Assistant Principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ j. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Questions 13-17 apply to your 1985 "atypical" superintendency status.

13. Indicate the student racial/ethnic breakdown in your district by indicating the percent of the following groups:

- \_\_\_\_\_ African-American
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic
- \_\_\_\_\_ White

14. Indicate how many schools there were in your district. \_\_\_\_\_

15. Indicate the student population of your district. \_\_\_\_\_

16. What was your annual budget for your district. \_\_\_\_\_

17. What was your annual salary as a superintendent? \_\_\_\_\_

---

18. Which price category do you feel best describes the present value of your home?

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ Less than \$100,000   | _____ \$250,000 - \$299,999 |
| _____ \$100,000 - \$149,999 | _____ \$300,000 - \$349,999 |
| _____ \$150,000 - \$199,999 | _____ \$350,000 - \$399,999 |
| _____ \$200,000 - \$249,999 | _____ \$400,000 - +         |

19. How would you characterize the neighborhood in which you live?  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. What is your current position? \_\_\_\_\_

21. What is your current salary? \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D**

**Racial/Ethnic Student Population of Districts  
Headed by Black Female Superintendent  
and  
Types of Black Female Superintendents**

Table 26

RACIAL/ETHNIC STUDENT POPULATION OF DISTRICTS HEADED BY BLACK FEMALE SUPERINTENDENT

	Percent of minority students	Number of districts reporting	Percent of total responding	Percent of minority students	Number of districts reporting	Percent of total responding
1	1	1	4.5	59	1	4.5
2	2	2	9.1	65	1	4.5
10	1	1	4.5	75	1	4.5
15	1	1	4.5	80	1	4.5
18	1	1	4.5	95	1	4.5
20	2	2	9.1	96	1	4.5
25	1	1	4.5	97	1	4.5
27	1	1	4.5	98	1	4.5
53	1	1	4.5	99	3	13.6
				Total	22	100.0

Note: From A Description of Black Female School Superintendents (p. 118) by A. B. Revere, 1985, Michigan: University Microfilms. Reprinted by permission.

Table 19

TYPES OF BLACK FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS

Type of Superintendent	Number of black female superintendents	Percent of total responding
City	16	72.8
Rural/Suburban	2	9.1
Community school district	1	4.5
County	$\frac{3}{22}$	$\frac{13.6}{100.0}$

Note: From A Description of Black Female School Superintendents (p. 118) by A. B. Revere, 1985, Michigan: University Microfilms. Reprinted by permission.

**APPENDIX E**  
**Transcriptions**

The transcriptions' style is a system of notation recommended by Mishler that reveals not only the informants' words, but their hesitations, false starts and breaks in what linguists call "turn-taking." This style helped to highlight the emotional qualities of the interviews.

B I finally meet you.

G [ ah hah

B I've read so much about you

G [ ah huh ah huh

B last summer

G [ ah huh

B and I've read with great interest the things that you're doing for the Vocational District.

G I'm trying.

B [ laughed

B Oh, you've gotten some excellent coverage in the press,

G [ yes, yes

B and I guess I've admired you from

G [ ah huh ah huh

B a distance. Today for the purpose of my dissertation, I've isolated four general question areas.

G [ uh huh uh huh

B We call it an interview guide-and what I wanted to do is to get your perceptions as to whether some personal and family life inputs had anything to do with

G [ uh huh

B atypical and the exceptional kind of career success that you've enjoyed-over the years.

G [ uh huh

B I started reading about you when you came to Lawnview

G [ yes, yes

B and then New County

G [ un huh uh huh

B was able to somehow steal you from

G [ yes

B Lawnview

G I just sort of skip around.

B Recently an AASA journal talked about you as atypically employed because you are the first female to head a vocational district in the country.

G I'm also the only one to head, I hold the record, that's the best way to describe it on that I'm the only woman regardless of racial group who has held four superintendencies. On that, they have checked (P) they think that they have two on the two, but no one has gotten to four.

B My, my what a legacy.

G Yea, and I did not set out to do it intentionally it just (P) you have to always be prepared for opportunity.

B I know about three superintendencies.

G [ uh huh

B Where did you get your start in terms of Chief School Administrator?

G In West Gate . I was acting in West Gate for two years before I came to Lawnview.

B I see.

G [ Ah

B on that and then from Lawnview on to New and then here. If I were to take a retrospective journey

B [ uh huh

B how would you categorize your social origins and background?

G I grew up in

G [ ah

B Middletown

B [ er

B at a time

B [ ah

B that it was a segregated town.

B [ Ah

B I lived across the street from the one black high school

B [ ah

B in the city. On my father's side I had five aunts, all of whom taught and my grandmother

came to South State from Landing to teach. So I had always  
been around

[  
ah

people who taught. My mother had gone to the McFarland School  
in Middletown.

[  
ah

[  
ah

but

[  
Ah

it was much more difficult to get a job then

[  
ah er

there

[  
ah

and she never taught. On that, so I think I always had people who  
talked about, who knew about teaching and I was always aware  
that going to school (was) a part of it. My father worked for a  
publishing house which serviced

[  
ah

National Geographic was their biggest account. So we always  
had books and I was always the one with my head in a book and  
my (P) family always encouraged that to the point that it was said  
that I could get out of doing dishes (P) if I just picked up a book  
and

[  
ah

started (P) to read. So I think I had a family who were very subtle  
pushers.

[  
ah

B  
G

Yes.  
Many people have heard me say that I had

[  
ah

some speech difficulty as (P) a child. I didn't do blends well, still  
don't do them well. But my mother and kindergarten teacher  
decided that I would lose the shyness that went along with not  
being able to speak and my mother pushed me at church to speak.

She signed me always to stand up in front of the audience. My teacher made sure that I didn't do what I started to do. I had my best friend answer for me all of the time because I really didn't want (to) do the speaking. I was already in a family group.

B [ Yes

G [ Er

but and I tell people now that probably I would have been classified had I come along now, but I had a parent and a teacher who believed and instilled in me that I could talk so I often tell people now that if I fluff a word I can live with it and don't have the ego damage

B [ Yes

G that I might have

G [ er

and I probably would not have learned to speak but they were hard task masters. Coupled with that was that my mother was very active in our church. So that I say a lot of the socializing that went on in the black community at that time (with) church

(with) teas and [ ah

socials and the talking and introducing people [ er

and all was (P) very much a part. My brother and I joke, we used to say that we must have slept on every Baptist church bench in Middletown; [ ah

B [ Laughed

G on that but a very fine group of supportive people

on (P) [ ah

G [ Er

that even when I learned music

on that, I started

[  
Er

on the violin and decided I wanted to learn the piano

[  
Er

[  
Er

I would go into the church and when I switched from the piano to the organ

[  
Ah

the pastor just told the custodian just let her in. So I had a group of people that whatever you wanted to do they just seemed to (P) make it happen. As I mentioned, Middletown schools were segregated so we had the very best of the teachers because they didn't have any place else to teach other than Lee University or in the public schools. So we had people who had

[  
ah

a doctorate from Olde who came back to teach in (P) public schools there. So we really got an extremely fine education. When I finished from (P) Truth High School, the whole middle section of the auditorium would be National Honor Society people. And it was just expected that you could perform.

[  
Er

and people saw and I (P) often say that people prodded me

[  
Ah

to do the best; they were never content that you just did something. They prodded you to do your best and I think that's carried over that I do tend to prod people to extend themselves

[  
er

on that. That's a rambling answer.

B No, it's fascinating to hear

[  
Uh huh uh huh

G  
B about your

[  
Uh huh uh huh

G  
B early life

G [ Uh huh uh huh

B in Middletown.

B You spoke of your mother and father. Were either of them immigrants or were both of them born here in this country?

G Both born here. My (P) father from Headt; in fact, last week I was there taking care of some business and found out that the farm on which my father grew up was purchased 100 years ago last January the first . On that, so that his family was from South State near Headt. On that, and he left home

G [ Um  
 educated the girls; all the girls went to college . Boys finished the eighth grade, generally taught by somebody in my family, an aunt or something and my father left home and went to Middle Atlantic State to the steel mills and then came to Middletown and went to high school here at night and finished got his high school diploma and worked as I said for the publishing company. My mother is originally from Middletown.

[ Er  
 so that makes me third generation Middletown person

[ Ah  
 on that and she went through the schools in fact we attended the same high school and (P) the same college, she as McFarland Normal and I at Renim Teacher's College.

[ Ah, on that

B We got a sense of history hearing about your family.

G Yea, yea. I think it ' s kind of important and that maybe a part of it that I was always kind of secure in who I was. My mother's mother lived with us a part of that extended family

[ Er  
 [ Ah  
 when (P) we were children and when she I think it may have been a couple of years she lived around the corner so that

[ Ah  
 we always had her too. So I always kind of had a sense of being connected to (P) lots of people.

[

Er

B on that lots of people who went looking to you to do something.  
Well. Were you into social class at that point?

G Oh yes, oh yes in those early nurturing days very much in  
Washington. I guess the old book, the Black Bourgeoisie would  
have characterized Middletown

[  
Ah

life

[  
Ah

kind of stratified

[  
Ah

some color distinctions, lots of color distinctions on that and lots of  
social distinctions based upon your having a family which had a  
long-term professional kind of

[  
Ah

G background. Interesting enough and I think differently  
from the way schools function now with (P) structure, even  
if you were not

[  
Ah

a part of the privileged or if you were born brown as opposed to  
very fair, teachers taught you the same

[  
Ah

on that

[  
Ah

and had the same expectations from you so that and friends and I  
laughed about this the other week. I have friends in Middletown  
who started and one, my best friend we started kindergarten  
together she used to be my talker person.

[  
Ah

We talked about

[  
Ah

the fact that even though you knew you were not going to be  
chosen maybe to be on the stage for the spring play, to flit around  
in the costume

[

Er  
on that you were in the Honor Society and we picked a niche that  
we could do.

B  
G Yes.  
Well

[  
Ah  
we had tennis at our high school then when now most high  
schools didn't

[  
Er  
we had golf on that

[  
Er  
and I had my first exposure to learning to play tennis in a  
segregated

[  
Er  
high school. Now, when I look at the high schools now, kids aren't  
exposed

[  
Er  
at all to that. The symphony, national symphony,

[  
Er  
played two concerts at that time. One for the white kids and one  
for the black kids.

[  
Er  
It was just known that the whole class went and if you didn't have  
the money - I don't know how they did it now, but we (P) and I saw  
the lady playing the harp

[  
Ah ah  
then I always wanted to you know play the harp, but in spite of the  
fact that we differed in social and economic class you were still,  
the exposure was there which we don't do with our children now  
unfortunately.

[  
Er  
On that, Middletown still has some remnants of that, it has broken  
some, but those of us who are old time people there know who  
was and who wasn't within the community there. But I don't think it  
ever concerned me

and I just did those things that I could do best

[  
Er

on that.

[  
Er

B If I'm hearing you correctly, you were very much a part of the established middle class in Middletown then?

G Well, I'd say the lower-lower middle class ones.

[  
Ah

You know you had to be a child of a doctor

[  
Ah

MD type

[  
Er

maybe

[  
Ah

a Ph.D. working at Lee . Those were the folk

[  
Er

on that

[  
Er

I think we kind of straddled

[  
Er

the blue collar because my father was blue collar with the publishing house that was not during the days when you got to be the reporter or

[  
Er

any of those kinds of things on that but I don't think my parents ever led me that it made a difference.

B What factor do you perceive as important to your career

[  
Ah

such as early family socialization

[  
Ah

kinds of schools that you might have attended

G  
B

prior to

[  
Uh huh uh huh

G  
B

college and

[  
Yes

G  
B  
G

so forth?

I think I touched upon the kind of school life in Middletown which I think was very rich

[  
Yes

[  
Er

we had a great reunion of both all of the classes from Truth and all of the classes from the Renim Teacher's College, small teacher's college, which has produced four superintendents of schools - unusual for a

black

[  
Ah

B  
G

a black college,

[  
I'll say

[  
Er

on that so I think I had a really rich experience in what were segregated schools

[  
Er

in Middletown. I think for the socialization of it, it's funny you should ask that and I'm smiling because my daughter was talking about differences in (P) women and in administration. And she was talking, she was comparing me with another woman superintendent and she had seen the title of that steel magnolias and she (P) mentioned that differently perhaps than women who are getting business training now, she characterized us as being very strong women who look perhaps delicate and who always

[  
Er

are careful with

[  
Er

manners and (P) social amenities but underneath it all are the steel magnolias

[  
Er  
on (P) that and I think I'm very much conscious. I think I came  
along in the era when women

[  
Er  
were expected to wear the gloves and wear the hats and to always  
use certain courtesies and I think I (P) carry that. But on the other  
side

[  
Er  
I think if you grow up in the rough and tumble politics of black  
Baptist churches, you learn the parliamentary procedure and how  
to get things done

[  
Er  
how to deal with

[  
Ah ah  
as my brother used to call it the curbstome meetings, the real  
meeting inside and then outside where the decisions are made so  
I think that I was really exposed to that kind of stuff and it has stood  
me, stood me well

[  
Er  
I think on the; thing on socialization is that maybe women of my  
era who may in some ways be stronger because we came along  
when there were no real role models to (P) look at and you kind of  
just found your way.

[  
Er  
Often the (P) courtesy, the manners is often perceived in some as  
weakness

[  
Er  
as the literature now on business is (P) a jungle but I think some of  
the stuff on leadership style show that

[  
Er  
as long as you got the task done I know that I'm often high on (P)  
relationships because of (P) that but

[  
Er  
I think folk don't like it, that's their problem, it's not mine.

**B** Can you think of any specific event or person who has helped or supported you that's in or outside your family in terms of (p) (your)  
**G** I think all of my series of aunts who showed me how you wipe down blackboards

at least as I used to go to school

[  
Er (laughter)

with them I think of the person for whom I

[  
Er

worked first as an assistant principal

[  
Ah

all of my teaching was done in one school

[  
Er

in (P) Middletown , Fanlou Junior High School which is adjacent to Lee University. And we saw the community change around (P) the university and I think this one male

[  
Er

principal saw in me something that would steer me and while I don't think I (P) had any aspirations at all for administration at that time,

[  
Er

he propelled me into it. The assistant principal, long-term person who had served, became ill and went out for major surgery. And

[  
Er

he told the assistant superintendent that I would be filling in as assistant principal and the

[  
Er

in about six weeks, he too became ill and I've never know yet whether it was convenient or (P) not, but

[  
Er

he left me to run the building. He said you can do it, you can do the schedule and anything else that you really want to do and I never went back to the classroom after that time. My mother was concerned because she said you are an excellent teacher, the

[  
Ah

children need you I think more in the classroom than they do in administration. So I had to pull between her side and his and maybe I was down for a change more than that, but I never went back. But I talk to him now, he's still living and

[  
Er

I call him up occasionally for (P) mentoring and I, you know, he said hey, I saw that you could do it and I put you there and I never went back after that time to the classroom.

[  
Ah

G My mother, my aunts, he, I (P) was fortunate to meet two other people I think who were major impactors on me professionally.

[  
Er

When I became a principal

[  
Er

I got a call to come down to the administrative building in Middletown for a meeting. I didn't know who I was meeting with, you know they said come. I came and I met Dave Day who at that time was with secondary school principals and he was just beginning his model schools project and

[  
Ah

the assistant superintendent had been interested in getting a Middletown School in and they hadn't made a decision on it and they said would you like to go to North City, North day after tomorrow for a meeting and

[  
Er

I said who's paying and you know the school said oh we'll pay, we'll pay so I went and got to meet Dave.

[  
Er

Got invited to be

[  
Er

one of the I think there were 30 some schools in the country that were in that

[  
Er

that project

[

at that  
time  
got exposed to a lot of ideas in education a lot of (P) people that I  
only had read  
about and I really think that it really teased me and I became a less  
provincial person probably gave me the courage to leave  
Middletown.  
that and the other person I'm going to mention because  
I realized there was a world outside of Middletown  
that had been my world, big city world but still that  
the last person I guess was Shermab Han, Jr. and through Dave  
Day I met Sher as he's called  
on that and was invited to become an associate in a small  
educational foundation that he was setting up in (p) Dover on that,  
here again  
people were not exposed to people who were talking about  
planning with objectives even before these were business people  
were (P) talking about it  
did work for them. The original work on school climate was done  
by our group and I did field testing for them.  
The original Gallup Poll on what the nation thinks about schools  
came out of this group and I was one of the early panelists with Dr.

Er

[  
Er

[  
Er

[  
Er

[  
Er

[  
Er

[  
Er

[  
Ah

[  
Er

[  
Er

[  
Ah

Gallup.

[  
Er

On that so I got the opportunity to be in so many things and after Sher died and we (P) changed the name of the foundation and became self-supporting at that point. I had just finished up

[  
Ah

a term when I served as President of the

[  
Eh

foundation

[  
Ah

and I often think you know from a kid growing up on First Street in (P) Middletown and I often pinch myself and say you know, did you really go there did you really meet those

[  
Ah

people, those, but I think getting out, getting

[  
Ah

that exposure first hand

[  
Er

was something that now I say I go where angels fear to tread.

[  
Er

On that I think those would be the primary people. I think it would be them that would be important. Interesting that for the most part other than my mother and aunts, they are men and as I recounted that to you

[  
Er

I thought about that but they were men who primarily mentored me.

B Research would document that that's

[  
Uh huh uh huh

G  
B the route

[  
Uh huh uh huh

G  
B that educational aspirants of the female gender

[

G Uh huh uh huh  
 B who are in the pipeline;

G [ Uh huh uh huh  
 B they're going to need that cross-racial

G [ Yea yea  
 B and cross-gender

B [ Yea yea  
 mentoring and I think it's their ability to (P) work with

[ Er  
 multiple groups, multiple situations.

G [ Er  
 I ended up one summer in southern N.W.State

[ Er  
 for a summer session with a group. I was the only minority

[ Ah  
 in the town even at

[ Er  
 that time and I think

[ Er  
 it takes some coping skills to

[ Ah  
 be able to do one or two things focus on what you're there for and  
 then to be resistant to the fact that sometimes in situations you get  
 a lot of ego stroking and I have seen people who have either been  
 destroyed or been destructive to themselves because they  
 believed all of the things people might tell you about your own  
 worth and value, in an effort to use you for their own purposes and  
 I think you always have to be mindful of that.

B How would you describe your family situation today?  
 G Well (P) I am

[ Ah  
 I was the first person in my family to be divorced. Guess I'm you  
 know-my family-you know

but now they deal with it well [ Eh  
 I remarried and now I'm widowed. Hey (I) touch all the bases. [ Er  
 On that, my mother [ Ah  
 just died a year and a half ago. My father still lives in Middletown [ Er  
 with my brother.  
 On that, I get to Washington once a month to [ Er  
 see them. I have a grown daughter who I despaired was going to [ Ah  
 come into education and at her own time and own pace she came  
 back last year and  
 (s̄he) she's doing, she's working with the school system now and I [ Er  
 have a 3-year-old grandson who is named for his paternal  
 grandfather.  
 That's a part of carrying on; we do a lot of talking to him about [ Er  
 what it is he carries on so he has that strength as to who he is too. [ Ah  
 B This is an exciting time for you I sense.  
 G Oh (yes) and they live with me.  
 B O-h.  
 G So at least I know that two people are happy to see me everyday,  
 my grandson and my dog.  
 B Once you get home do you have things such as housekeeping [ Smile  
 and household help?  
 G Don't have any household help now. [ Ah

when I was in Lawnview and my husband was ill and at home, he was terminally ill for three years on dialysis

[  
Ah

and interesting enough that's an interesting thing,

[  
Ah

just before his illness was when I became superintendent on that so for the initial years

[  
Ah ah ah ah

my work as the superintendent, I was also responsible for a terminally ill husband who was in the hospital more than

[  
Ah

he was out so I did have help then at home. Since then, I kind of live like

[  
Ah

a modified slob. I can tolerate a lot more dust than I could at

[  
Uh

one time

[  
Uh

on that I (P) when I get home I

[  
Ah

love antiques. I probably might have considered interior decorating for a career if I had known about it at that time, So I like that. My daughter says I decorate a lot. I don't clean a lot. I read a book a week

[  
Uh

minimum still on that so I always have something at the house to read and I still would rather read than to wash dishes any

[  
Uh

any old day. I'm active in my sorority,

[  
Uh

I'm currently the baselius of

[  
Uh uh

the York chapter with 130 sorors

[  
Uh

in it.

[  
Uh

not as active now in my church as I once was

[  
Uh

I was on the trustee board once (I) just find (I) could not give the time that I liked to on that and I'm on the (I) really cut back. I think other than that, I'm on the board of Hope House for the homeless here on that so other than

[  
Ah

that, shopping centers, that's it.

B You lived a full life and you continue on living a full

[  
I try

G and active life.

B I had a friend who said to me when my husband died that

[  
Uh

my style was to have a full cup, it might be half full of joy and half full of sorrow but I like a full cup of life. I really think I do. I enjoy life.

B The last area that I had some questions had to do

[  
Uh huh

G with the church

[  
Uh huh

B I believe we touched upon most of that already;

[  
Uh

the attendance pattern then and now.

[  
Uh huh

B Are you still very active in the church?

G I don't get there as frequent. I do a lot of speaking and conference things there now, and I don't often get there as frequently, but

[  
Uh

my pastor when my mother died, my pastor came to Middletown for the funeral. He's been very supportive

on that. [ Ah  
 B It's just unheard of.

[ Laughter  
 G I know, I know, he's just a real doll even though he's moving to  
 Headit at the end of the month so I was trying him and said now  
 am I going to have to move to Headit now

[ Uh  
 for you. I think though that church has been important to me

[ Uh  
 in terms of spirit. I did a speech the other day

[ Uh  
 in fact it was for Woman's Day at a church and I talked about the  
 heritage that when things got rough you could always recall a  
 word of scripture that helped you over

[ Uh  
 I sat in meetings that have been difficult and in my mind I've clung  
 to him

[ Uh  
 on that

[ Uh  
 I think the fact that I don't need an analyst at this point

[ Uh  
 is because from the church experience.

[ Uh  
 I have a way of living emotionally. Excuse me (clears throat). I  
 have a way of living emotionally that

[ Uh  
 allows me to have dealt with Boards of Education which has been  
 difficult, administrators, teachers, parents, and all of that; I think  
 that you have to hit some emotional base

[ Eh

	in life	
		[
		Ah
	in order to be able to deal with the different human demands that	
		[
B		Yes
	that you have different from the physical kinds of demands.	
		[
		Ah
B	Sounds like you found that out early on.	
G	Oh yes, yes, yes. I soon found that you didn't talk back to my mother but you knew there were times even when you kinda hummed a song that she viewed (that)	
		[
		Ah
	you might be being disrespectful	
		[
		Ah ah
	(on) that but she wouldn't get you so much for that as	
		[
		Ah
	the other	
		[
		Ah
	on that	
		[
		Uh
I		
		[
		Um
	don't know now because	
		[
		Uh
	society has changed in it 's cities and all	
		[
		Uh
	far simpler life in Middletown when I grew up (if) people get the opportunities now (to) have those kind of experiences	
		[
		Uh
	(in)	
		[
		Uh
	all	

I could go to Middletown now and there's still members of my mother's church who expect me. I got a pile over there of Thanksgiving cards (to) write out

[  
Uh

(to) them

[  
Uh

because they were important to me and they now

[  
Uh uh

I'm important to them because they say you know I held their arm or something of that kind. On this, I can teach them to pass it on. How strict was that Baptist church that you grew up in in Middletown.

B

G

We didn't dance there.

[  
Laughter

[  
Ah

[  
Uh

G

On that

[  
Uh

they did the hymns and anthems so that was a part of playing for the group and I used to be the substitute organist and

[  
Uh

we never really thought I was good enough, but my mother made me practice them

[  
Uh

it was a good experience

[  
Uh

on that

[  
Uh

these people who had belonged to church for years and

[

Uh

it continues on.

B That church commitment and connection, did it in any way influence your career choice?

G I think so, even taught Sunday school

[  
Uh

at one time I taught the Vacation Bible school

[  
Uh

In all I guess I read

[  
Um

I didn't ever seriously consider anything else other than education. (I) tell people all the time I've been fortunate. I like what I do and I don't have to come to work everyday. It's not a job job, for

[  
Ah

it's something exciting I guess I stay with it because

[  
Uh

I continue to enjoy it.

B Well I want to say thanks so much.

G Hey, easy to do. Easy to do.

[  
Laughter

A Dr. Stewart how would you (descri) characterize your social origins and background?

V Well, first of all, I'd like to say that I am a native of

[  
ah

Middle Atlantic State I was born and raised in Clifford, Middle Atlantic State and

[  
eh

my parents came from the South. They were both born and raised in South Eastern Gulf State.

[  
Er

on my mother's side,

[  
er

going back, maybe two generations they were Seminole Indians and on my father's side, one generation and, of course,

[

er

his folks came on his father's side from the Bahamas, but basically we are from the United States and,

[

er

again as I've said before, my folks are originally from South Eastern Gulf State, I was born in Clifford, Middle Atlantic State

[

er

grew up there,

[

er

my brother and I and, of course, we lost our parents when we were quite young.

[

Er

I was 10 when my mother died, and 13 when my father died and my brother and I were raised by

[

um um

one parent,

[

er

foster parent

[

er

single parent, foster parent, who raised us, of course, and

[

er

saw us through school. My father, I believe went no further than the fourth grade and my mother went through the eighth grade in school and one thing that is of interest is that on my father's side, my grandmother

[

er

went as far as the eleventh grade and back in those days that was virtually unheard of and

[

um

she even became a teacher out there in the country,

[

um um  
way out, as they say the boonies and this was, of course in South Eastern Gulf State. In the Northern part of South Eastern Gulf State and she was an elementary teacher for a while because I guess in those days, the early 1900's for a Black person to have gone as far as the eleventh grade

[  
er  
that was I guess, analogous to going to college. Today, in graduation from college and so she taught that. (P)

[  
Ah  
we, of course, as far back as I can remember,

[  
um  
there were no

[  
um  
college graduates on my mother's side. On my father's side,

[  
um  
not of (P) (not any) of his brothers or sisters, however, their children, many of them have gone on to college and have graduated and gone on to graduate school.

[  
Um,  
so it was just myself and my brother and

[  
um  
as far as the economic resources in the family,

[  
um  
during that time period, well, I always felt that I was doing fine; three square meals a day and a roof over my head and it didn't leak, I didn't think that I was poor. But, by today's standards, I was living in poverty and didn't even know it. We weren't on welfare cause my father worked, my mother worked when (we were) (P) small so (I)

[  
ah  
just don't recall ever being or feeling poor, but as I said today's standards, I guess I was very poor.

(Ah) we

can look back upon a lot of years and a lot of things that have happened and I always tell people because I know you're going to ask me the question a little bit later on, but I always tell people that I think I,

really got a lot of strength from my early beginnings because my mother and father as I said

died when we were relatively young and

we were orphans and we were raised by a foster parent (and), but, before that time period, before (my muu), my father passed away there was a three-year lapse and

during that time

and I was what 10 to 13, we kind of did everything ourselves.

my father had designated certain tasks for us to accomplish at home and we accomplished them, and

I guess I got my air of independence

and my ability to

stick it out in times of need and stress and trials and tribulations and

I can recall we had a pot-belly stove in the living room. And I don't know if (you're) too young to know about pot-bellied stoves, but i

don't even know if you know anything about banking a stove, but we had lima beans and I'm talking about not the green ones, but the dried lima bean. Do you know anything about

A

[  
Yes I do

(both laugh)

V

cooking lima beans? Well, you know, if you bank that stove right and if you let those beans soak the night before and you put the water (and the) whatever in there and you sit that on the stove, by the time I got home from school, 11 or 12 years old, that food was cooked and maybe we would have something else besides. But that was one of the staples in our family and I became an expert at cooking lima beans and anything else that I could sit on that stove and leave it on there all day and

[  
um

that's just one illustration of having to know very early on how- to do certain things. I had to clean the house on Saturdays if I wanted to go to the movies and the movies started at 12:00 and if I didn't do what I had to do, we didn't go to the movies on time. And we had some stipulations about what time we had to be home, etc. and everything was always very strict for me. Going to school was always strict. I always had to do the very best that could possibly happen. And, I was always very busy. I was in a lot of activities. I also, after I got older, I worked.

[  
Ah

there was never any time to spare. Not one single moment to spare. Sometimes people say to me, don't you think things were, (P) weren't there more problems in those days or less problems? I say, oh, there probably were a lot of problems, but all the children, at least the ones I knew, I thought the whole world was the same. We were so busy either with school work or with chores at home

[  
ah

and it was true meaning behind giving an allowance to a kid because the kid did a lot of things and I can recall having to (P)

[  
ah

pay, to divvy up the money and pay the bills.

[  
Uh

my father would give me a certain amount of money and I was a little kid. I hadn't even gotten through grammar school as they

called it, but I knew how to pay the phone bill, the public service bill and sometimes I would get them mixed up, but then the man would tell me to go back and make sure I changed the bills around. But, I would still know that certain things were due certain times of the month and if my father didn't say something, I would say well you know such and such have to be paid. So, I have always had to be independent because I didn't have a lot of folks out there (to) depend on. What I did have that I must mention is that I had a lot of people in the community who helped and did a lot for us. John Johnson for instance,

[  
uh

mentioned in one of the issues of the Ebony magazine in one of his, you know, he writes the letters

[  
er

to the readers and he had mentioned the essence of having community working together and how when you were a kid and you did something wrong, you got a spanking from the neighbor and then when you father or your mother came home, you got it all over again because the neighbor told them. The same thing where I came from in Clifford. My father didn't have to worry when he went to work because everybody was watching. They knew we didn't have a mother. Everybody was watching to make sure we did everything right and we were afraid to do something wrong. And, I got from that the

[  
uh

feeling that (I)

[  
oh, uh

the people out there, (the) general public because they somewhere along the way did something for me.

[  
Ah

and it went right straight through, it permeates my life. When I went off to college many people helped. The scholarships, the kind of money that I received

[  
ah

from people who knew me, from teachers who were mentors. I have to make mention of

[  
ah, ah

a Spanish teacher who

[  
ah

ran interference for me and made sure that I got the right kinds of scholarships. Another family of people, one of the ladies knew something about the national scholarship servicing fund for Negro children. She made sure that my name got in the hat. I wound up getting a four-year supplementary scholarship from them. I got a state scholarship. I got money from a French teacher. I didn't know it until after I got out of college. She helped pay for a lot of my miscellaneous fees and then I had received so much money from the town itself, including churches and agencies, etc., because I was orphaned and, of course, I was qualifying myself for certain things, not only because I had good grades, but because I didn't have parents. So I had almost more money than I needed on an annual basis and it was in a trust fund and I could go and draw on this money for the various incidentals and needs that I had and the tuition was being paid for. So I said all of that to say that because of the way that I came up, I guess it armed me for everything that happened. So to me, like many would say, well why would you take a job when you had so much security elsewhere? Why would you come into a position where

[  
uh

the Board is going to be dismissed where

[  
ah

there is a problem with overcrowdedness, where there's a lack of money? There is no economic base. Why would you come here when you could be out in idyllic Queen County and just sit back on your loyals and just let the world pass you by? I owe, I owe, and I owe. And I am paying back. I, (it) none of these things to me are unsurmountable tasks and I guess it goes all the way back to when I was a child growing up and how people constantly extended a hand to us. We didn't want to go to South Eastern Gulf State to live with our relatives. We wanted to stay in Middle Atlantic State. So, after my father died, a foster parent took care of both of us and saw me right straight through college. She died after I was in my first year of teaching. But, the point (is) that she, like so many others did for me and I

[  
uh

will never forget it. And, this is my way of paying back people. I

believe that you don't have to pay the same person, just pay somebody else because we are a world community. It doesn't matter and my hand has to go out to others because somebody did it and they yanked me out and that's why I have to do what I have to do and,

I hope I kind of answered your question

[  
um

for

[  
uh

A

[  
yes

V that particular section of your report.

A (What an) answer to the beginning question. Thank you Dr. Stewart.

V You're welcome.

A I'm curious. What factors do you perceive as important to your career success?

V Okay,

[  
ah

well some of them might think I kind of said, but

[  
um um

to summarize some of those things that I said. I honestly believe that because of the way that I came up and the fact that I lost my parents at an early age and the fact that I had to fend for myself a lot

[  
um

that kind of gave me all of the ammunition  
I guess it was (P)

[  
uh

that it would take to

[  
um

have the fortitude to go forward and

[  
um

I think the

[

um, um  
I'm ambitious in this true sense, in the sense that I want to do things right. I want to make a mark somewhere. I want to help somebody and so if it means that

[  
um  
I'm ambitious, then I'm ambitious. I

[  
um  
can't think of another term that I'd like to use. But I just like to go forward and go on upward.

[  
Um  
I attended the public schools in Clifford prior to going to college and then, of course, I went to Pedley, which is a part of Brewton and then, of course, I got my first Masters at Brewton University in Spanish language and literature and my second Masters at Logle College in Ville, Middle Atlantic State, which was in guidance and counseling. And then, of course,

[  
um  
back in 1983, I received a doctorate in

[  
um, um  
administration, at the Graduate School of Education of Brewton. I had a person there who was a mentor for me

[  
uh  
Dr. Doris Mack Walker, who is now in S.W., South West State and she is doing quite well. She heads up the School of Education there, she's the dean. She (P)

[  
uh  
was a person who

[  
um  
literally just took me away from my original chairperson and said I am going to guide you through this program because I like the kind of research that you intend to do and I'm going to see you through a publication and so she did. She kept her word and we published about two years ago on the principalship. So, she was another person in my life, you know I have these milestones, (P) who extended that hand and did very much for me and I think helped to mold the kind of person that I am as far as being an

administrator is concerned. (P) I think that

[  
um

I could just name a whole litany of people who somewhere along the way assisted me. A former superintendent of mine, my first superintendent,

[  
um

the one I worked (for) as a principal for many years in Clifford. Now many people say that females don't have male mentors. I honestly believe that he was one of my stronger mentors

[  
uh

along the way, he

[  
uh

paved the way for me. He taught me the things that I needed to know as an administrator, and I think that he played quite a role in seeing to it that

[  
um

I went onward and upward. He used to always say to me, now Liz , I don't want you to leave and I don't want you to get me wrong, I don't want you to think I don't want you here, but there are bigger and better things for you to do out there and if you see something that comes up, apply for it and I'll support you all the way. And he kept his word and he did that. And,

[  
um

I'm still very appreciative (P) to him for it.

[  
Um

there has been other people who have been (very) supportive of my

[  
um

striving to do the very best that I could do, and

[  
um

I am appreciative to all of them, but I honestly believe that

[  
uh

one does not have to necessarily have a family member doing all of these things because (I) value friends very much and

acquaintances who

[  
uh

try to help others and

[  
uh

I guess that's why I do as a consultant I do a lot of training

[  
uhm

and on the corporate,

[  
uh

corporate level showing people that there's always the human side of the enterprise, that you have to extend a hand to help others.

A I think you've covered all bases also with regard to question number two. Let's go on to a description of your current family situation.

V Oh my current family situation is the same as it was (P) about 23 or 24 years ago when I married my husband. Our marriage is still going very strong. I

[  
uh

have no children. I like to think that I have many children. I think I have more than most people if you add, if you count the almost 9,000 here and the

[  
uh

16 close to 16,000 in Central City

[  
laugh

and

[  
uh

the 2,000 in Broadville. I think I have quite a few students,

[  
er

rather children. My

[  
uh, uh

as far as whether or not having children had anything to do with (P) the

[  
uh

my career, etc., etc., let me just say it this way. There are some people in this world who want children and there are some people who don't and I guess I must be the some people who don't because it really never entered my mind one way or the other. I have always been very interested in

[  
uh

careers and

[  
uh

my husband and I, we kind of knew each other as far as careers were concerned before we married and I just

[  
ah

think that I was one of those people who was destined to do whatever it is that I'm doing with or without children. Now if you were to ask me do I think I would have done the same thing; I have a feeling deep down inside, probably yes. I might not have

[  
uh

gained certain positions at maybe an early stage, but I think I eventually would have wound up doing all of the things that I wanted to do anyway. (I) think it happens if it's going to be, it's going to be.

[  
Um,

household arrangements you want to know,

[  
um

my husband and I share tasks. I used to have a housecleaner, housekeeper, but it was so difficult with our hours, then I went to a service and the service works best for us because the service usually they come in with a team of people and I can work it around a vacation day or

[  
um

during weekends and

[  
um

they're much more flexible, where as a person working alone, that's their bread and butter solely and they, they have to depend on that so it never really worked out with one single person. So I have to tell people, I'm a very busy person, therefore, we have to buy so many services. We have somebody doing the yard, we

have somebody doing the snow, even though we have a snowblower.

[  
Um,

but, we're never around to do it, so we have to hire somebody to do that and, then, of course, we have the service. But, my husband will help. He will

[  
uh

help dish the food out, but he won't cook it.

[  
laugh

He will buy his dinner out

[  
uh

if he has to.

[  
Uh

but he is not so much into being the househusband. He's extremely supportive. He's

[  
uh

quite well travelled. He

[  
uh

because of his position,

[  
uh

and he's very busy himself, but he's extremely supportive of me and anyone who has a career such as the one that I have. You have to have supportive people, and then, of course, he comes from a long line of educators. His mother is a former principal of a school and

[  
uh

she, of course has been in the business for many years before retiring and then his father was not only a minister, but also a social worker. So,

[  
uh

his family, of course, goes way back as far as education is concerned.

A Thank you. Were you raised in a church, and if so, how strict was that church?

V Church was very strict, yes I was raised in a church. I don't know any

[  
ah

chest-beating Baptist

A & V

[  
laugh

V who wasn't raised in a church. Believe me, back in those days church was the thing to do.

[  
uh,

it's not like today where it's almost like a casual

[  
uh

thing for some people. Church

[  
uh

was

[  
uh

very much a part of my life in growing up. In fact, I think I had mentioned to you I used to be able to recite all of the books of the Bible because not only was I an ardent church goer, but

[  
uh

you went to church on a Sunday morning and you started out with Sunday School, and I was also Assistant Superintendent of the Sunday School, so this was not the first time I've been a Superintendent.

A & V

[  
laugh

V And,

[  
uh, uh

I (P) not only taught Sunday School, but I was a summer school Bible School teacher, and

[  
uh

you know they had all kinds of pageants in those days, Easter pageants, Christmas pageants, Father's Day, whatever, Mother's Day and Children's day. You name the day, and we had many, many things that kept us busy. And we had to recite poems and all kinds of recitations and

[

um  
Sunday was gone, Saturday was busy doing chores and every other day you were in the public school. So, I didn't have time to even get into trouble. But church was a very, very big part of my life. I belonged to the Usher Board, the choir, two different choruses, as a matter of fact, one was the Junior Choir and the other was the Jubilee Choir, or whatever it was, (but, it) Gospel Choruses, I can't even remember all the names, but I was busy, busy, busy.

A Very busy.

A & V

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Laugh

A (Uh). tell me about your commitment and involvement in church today, Dr . Stewart?

V My commitment and involvement in church today is

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nothing compared to what it was. I have a lot of commitment to church, but as far as involvement, it's hard to do that when you work at a job like this one. (This is an) and I'm not using it as an excuse, but I don't, my time isn't mine. If something happens in this district, it doesn't matter if it's 4:00 on a Saturday morning, I'm called, I'm the superintendent. So,

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Sundays are almost like seven, like the other six days to me.

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Um

I am constantly inundated with paperwork. i try not to do a lot of it

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uh

during the day when I'm at work because I'm on call to do so many different things. But then, I find if I'm not doing it here, I have to do it somewhere and when I get home at eleven or twelve at night, and this is every night of the week,

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uh

I have to do the work afterwards and so (I'm) not in church as much as I would like to be. But, I always tell people I carry my church with me everywhere I go and I think that is what God wants us to do anyway.

A I want to say thanks very much for your time today, Dr. Stewart.

V You're welcome.

## Vitae

Beulah Mitchell Adams was born on March 1, 1947 in Smyrna, Delaware, the second child of Raleigh and Essamond Mitchell. After graduation as Class of 1965 valedictorian from Louis L. Redding High School in Middletown, Delaware, she attended Delaware State College. Graduating in 1969 with honors in home economics education, Adams left her native state for New Jersey the week following commencement.

She was employed as a teacher for Red Bank Public Schools and while working in this same district graduated with a master's degree in 1974 from Rutgers - The State University. During Adams' tenure as a K-12 subject area supervisor for Franklin Township Public Schools, she earned an Ed.S. degree, also at Rutgers. The year was 1986.

Taking a leave of absence from 1987-89 to pursue doctoral duties on a full-time basis, Mrs. Adams served as graduate assistant for the Challenge for Success Program and later as council assistant for the Lehigh University School Study Council.

Currently, she is a department supervisor of vocational/technical education in Plainfield, New Jersey. Mrs. Adams holds membership in the American

Association of School Administrators, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Lehigh Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, National Alliance of Black School Educators, American Educational Research Association and several vocational organizations.

## EPILOGUE

For now we see through  
a glass, darkly; but  
I know in part; but  
then shall I know  
even as also  
I am known.

I Corinthians 13:12