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The purpose of this study was to conduct research on the impact of desegregation, under the *Brown vs. Board of Education* of Topeka, Kansas Court case decision, on African American principals. My focus was to explore the life of African American principals who served during the desegregation of Greensboro Public Schools in Greensboro, North Carolina. Very little research has been done on the effects of school desegregation on African American principals. Statistics do show that most African American school administrators lost their jobs or were demoted when public schools desegregated, but there are few accounts of their actual experiences.

Narrative research was used to collect and study the lives of African American principals who worked during desegregation. Three school leaders were interviewed and their stories were shared with historical context. The research questions for this study were: (a) How do African American principals describe their experiences during desegregation? and (b) What leadership qualities and traits appear in the life stories of these African American principals? The lives of these three African American principals were compared and evaluated on the characteristics of effective school leaders according to two educational theorists.

Several themes emerged from the narratives of these three men. First, all three leaders were highly respected members of the black and white community. They were able to bring students, parents, and school staff members together in a very tense situation. Second, there is a clear focus on how dedicated these men were to their work.

They seldom mentioned family life. Finally, each principal has a different account of desegregation, but they were all positive. They all spoke about a relatively smooth transition into school integration. All of these points are addressed in the study.

STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY: EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLIC  
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS DURING DESEGREGATION

by

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I dedicate this doctoral dissertation to my parents,  
Lewis and Carolyne Burgman.

Your love and guidance have encouraged me to believe in myself  
and your support has gotten me through this long journey.

Thank you for teaching me that hard work and discipline are the path to success.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of  
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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the limited collection of documented African American principals' experiences when public schools desegregated in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I explore the question of the effects school desegregation had on African American school leaders. The topic I chose to research is important to not only African American leaders, but to all school principals in general.

I am concerned about lifting these stories because most black principals lost their jobs or were demoted when schools were desegregated (Patterson, 2001). A Florida study revealed that black high school principals were reduced from 103 to 13 during the period of 1965-1971. This trend occurred in other southern states as well. Between 1967 and 1970, the number of black principals in North Carolina dropped from 620 to 170, in Alabama from 250 to 40 and Mississippi lost almost all of its 250 black principals during the same period. Often black principals were demoted to serve as assistants to white principals or moved to central office where there really wasn't much for them to do (Haney, 1978).

#### **The Historical Context**

The subject of school desegregation is a widely debated topic. There are many accounts of African American students and teachers struggles before and after America's schools were racially integrated. However, there are few documented reports of the

difficulties that African American public school principals faced during these uncertain times. A significant number of black public school administrators throughout the nation were adversely affected as school districts were faced with the task of implementing school desegregation (Abney, 1980).

After slavery was abolished in 1865, black people were still treated as second class citizens without any rights. Black students attended separate schools that were not equal to white schools. Many black students didn't attend schools at all because of the distance and the need to work and/or help their families. Those that did go to school often endured deplorable conditions. Michael Fultz describes the physical condition of many African American schools as "a pervasive state of disrepair that potentially undermined the delivery of instructional services" (Fultz, 1995, p. 403).

Even though blacks knew this was unfair only a few brave heroes dared to speak out about it. W.E.B. DuBois chronicled his feelings about segregated schools in the paper *Does the Negro need separate schools?* He concludes that because white people did not value educating black people, separate schools were needed. He felt that the proper education of any people includes sympathetic touch between teacher and pupil; knowledge on the part of the teacher, not simply of the individual taught, but of his surroundings and background, and the history of his class and group (DuBois, 1935). Because of the racial prejudice in 1935, DuBois believed that black students could not receive an education equal to white students.

The historic court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka, Kansas in 1954 challenged white and black America's view of education. After the legislation, most

Southern school systems still refused to desegregate their schools. Some school systems offered voluntary student desegregation in which students could choose to attend schools that were formerly all white or all black. This attempt at desegregation failed because the few black students that chose to attend all white schools were teased and ridiculed daily. They were harassed by other students, their families lost jobs and teachers ignored them. The strength these students showed during this trying time in their lives is remarkable. However, most black families ended up putting their children back in all black schools for their own safety and well being the next year.

Most white students didn't want to go to black schools. White students did not choose to attend schools that were all black because these schools usually had inferior facilities and supplies (Patterson, 2001). White families also didn't want their children mixing with black children because of their own racial prejudice. Several white parents were opposed to integrating schools and they moved their children to private schools or kept them at home. Since the Supreme Court refused to give a compliance date for full desegregation, the local school systems slowly chose a few black students to attend the white schools.

Finally, in the late 1960s and early 1970s school systems in the south began busing black and white students in another attempt to desegregate. This effort met with violent opposition from some white parents, but most systems continued the practice. The 1971 *Swann vs. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* court case upheld school systems rights to bus students to different schools in order to achieve desegregation. However, in 1974 the *Milliken vs. Bradley* court case limited busing by stating that the federal court will not

mandate busing across district lines. This was the first in a series of cases in which the Supreme Court began retreating from mandating desegregation.

During this time little thought was given to what effects desegregation would have on black educators that taught more than two million black students enrolled in segregated schools (Haney, 1978). As many as ninety percent of black principals lost their jobs in some states as school systems attempted to desegregate by closing black schools and busing the black children to predominately white schools (Lowe, 2004). Abney (1980) states that in Florida during the 1964-65 school year, none of the school districts were without at least one minority principal. Ten years later, after school systems complied with desegregation laws, 85% of the 67 school districts showed a significant decrease in the number of minority leaders. The effects of the Brown decision also had a horrendous effect on the African American teachers.

When the Supreme Court issued its ruling in the 1954 case there were approximately 82,000 Blacks teaching in the various segregated schools throughout the nation. In the large school districts many were fairly safe, but in the small districts they were caught in a process of attrition as their schools were desegregated and absorbed by larger and better facilitated white schools. In too many cases this meant that fewer of those in the smaller systems would be reappointed after the Supreme Court decision was implemented. (Haney, 1978, p. 89)

Many black teachers were demoted to teacher assistant positions, had their contracts non-renewed, were suddenly required to have certain scores on the National Teachers' Examination or outright dismissed. When white school superintendents in North Carolina were asked about hiring black teachers, 128 out of 131 responded that it would be "impracticable to use Negro teachers" in schools under their jurisdiction (Haney, 1978).

In the midst of busing litigation, white flight to private schools, and students from both races going to school together for the first time, principals were charged with leading newly formed schools of students that weren't sure what to expect from their classmates or teachers. Most of the black principals that were chosen to lead these newly integrated schools had never worked with white students or teachers before and they not only had the task of ensuring that everyone was educated, but also safe and free from harassment.

### **My Research Project**

This research project answers the following questions:

- How do African American principals describe their experiences during desegregation?
- What leadership qualities and traits appear in the life stories of these African American principals?

In order to find answers to these questions I interviewed African American principals that worked during desegregation. These men were able to keep their administrative positions when their school system desegregated and they were highly respected members of the black community. What can we learn from these particular principals?

Since I grew up in Greensboro, North Carolina I was particularly interested in talking to principals who could speak to what happened when Greensboro Public Schools fully desegregated in 1971. I thought about all of the different principals I knew from church and other social groups and began calling them to see if they were interested.

Luckily, I was able to secure interviews with three retired African American principals after only a few phone calls. These men seemed eager to tell their stories and I was excited to hear them. Each interview was tape recorded and transcribed. I used narrative research to analyze the interviews. Narrative research allowed me to interweave analysis with data collection (Kleinman & Copp, 1993).

In this study, I also conducted an analysis of educational leadership while presenting the stories of these three African American principals. I selected the leadership models from theorists Thomas Sergiovanni and Cynthia Dillard to further analyze the qualities of these African American leaders. Their models offer a multi-dimensional method of analyzing leadership from distinctive angles that include practical and humanistic character traits.

### **Overview of the Chapters**

Chapter II offers a review of the literature on America's segregated schools in the 1800's and early 1900's. It also, gives a historical perspective of desegregation in Greensboro Public School system and how African American communities reacted to desegregation. Finally there is an analysis of African American school leaders, as well as, the dimensions of excellence in school leadership.

Chapter III presents my background as the researcher and the research design of the study I conducted. Also included in this chapter is the narrative research methodology that is used in collecting stories for this study. I give a description of the participants and how they were chosen.



Chapters IV, V and VI are the personal narratives of the three men I interviewed for the study. Their stories are presented with selected narrative texts to show the emotion and feeling of their stories. I also include historical text to illustrate and give context to their stories.

Chapter VII is an analysis of the personal narratives using my own reflection as a clinical practitioner. I lift out patterns and silences from the narratives to analyze. Finally, I compare the leadership styles of each principal to the qualities of excellence of two theorists.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I review literature which gives a perspective into the reality of desegregation that permanently changed the lives of many African American public school administrators. Scores of African American principals were negatively affected by the desegregation of public schools (Abney, 1980; Haney, 1978; Siddle Walker, 2001). In order to answer the questions of how African Americans understood their experiences during desegregation and the leadership qualities and traits they possessed, it is important to review literature on the following topics: racial segregation, racial desegregation, the African American community's perspective on desegregation, and research on the general nature of African American educational leadership before and after 1954. In addition, I consider case studies of African American school leaders in an effort to link common successful leadership practices.

#### **Early African American Communities and Segregated Schools**

After slavery was abolished in 1865, there was a brief period in which ex-slaves were allowed to enter the new social system of capitalism, Republican government, and wage labor (Anderson, 1988). Their desire for education was strong and they were angry at slavery for keeping them illiterate. Harriet Beecher Stowe described the newly freed slaves thirst for education: "They rushed not to the grog-shop but to the schoolroom—

they cried for the spelling-book as bread, and pleaded for teachers as a necessity of life” (as cited in Anderson, 1988, p. 5). Ex-slaves campaigned for state supported public education, but this was met with violent opposition. The elite white Southerners tolerated educating some poor whites as a charity, but they didn’t believe in state enforced public education and they perceived educating all children as a threat to the natural evolution of society. Even state officials declared that mixing the races in integrated schools could not be accomplished and it would lead to the end of the public school system (Harris, 1956). It wasn’t long before well-structured white organizations undermined all of the progress of the ex-slaves and they were stripped of all rights. From this point until the 1960s, black southerners were trapped in a social system that denied them citizenship and all the rights therein.

Oppression did not squelch the ex-slaves desire for education though. Booker T. Washington states: “Few people who were not right in the midst of the scenes can form any exact idea of the intense desire which the people of my race showed for education. It was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn” (Anderson, 1988, p. 5). As black people began to settle in communities, they built their own schools. They accepted help from northern missionary societies, the Freedmen’s Bureau, and some southern whites (Anderson, 1988), but were determined to be as self sufficient as possible to educate their people. Even churches became sponsors of schools and provided basic literacy education to ex-slaves of all ages. These schools were called Sabbath Schools and many of them operated in the evening or the weekends to accommodate the schedule of working people.

By the mid 1880s, Southern whites slowly began changing their views about universal education. They realized that it was not wise to make any efforts towards reversing the school campaign of former slaves, as that would invite greater black resistance and possible northern intervention. One group of Southern whites decided it was in their best interest to support a curriculum that would serve the needs of middle to upper class white families. This curriculum would be primarily industrial-based and was met with a great deal of controversy from blacks and whites. Some blacks felt that any education was better than none at all, but others saw through this attempt by white Southerners to keep blacks in low wage jobs.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the opportunities for black children to be educated grew in the sense that the black people in many communities banded together to support their own schools and recruit teachers from the few Normal Schools that educated black teachers. However, nearly two-thirds of the black school-age children were not in school because there were not enough schools or teachers to educate them. Only Virginia, Alabama, Maryland and North Carolina had schools that would educate black teachers and four of the seven schools were in North Carolina. Seeing this problem, some black educators looked to convert some high schools, like Fort Valley High and Industrial School in Georgia, into teacher education institutions. Fort Valley High and Industrial School was started by Atlanta University graduate John W. Davison as a private school, but chartered as a public normal and industrial school in 1895.

Principal Davison, unable to secure funds from public or private agencies, was forced to invest his own money to maintain the school from year to year. He relied mainly on Fort Valley's black community for additional support. The

desperate need for economic assistance pointed the Fort Valley educator north in search of capital from wealthy whites.

With Davison's approval, Assistant Principal Torbert sought to solve Fort Valley's financial difficulties by cultivating relationships with whites who could give large, continuous donations to the school. From 1900 to 1904, Torbert campaigned successfully to stack Fort Valley's Board of Trustees with northern industrial philanthropists who were becoming increasingly interested in contributing their capital to southern educational reform. (Anderson, 1988, p. 157)

After securing funding it proved to be very difficult when Principal Davison attempted to move from industrial education to a classical liberal education. He was forced to resign and the Board of Trustees sought to replace him with a business manager that favored industrial education. This was one of many failed attempts to gain more institutions for black educators.

Black students attended separate schools that were not equal to white schools. Many black students didn't attend schools at all because of the distance and the need to work and/or help their families. Those that did go to school endured deplorable conditions. Michael Fultz (1995) describes the physical condition of many African American schools as

a pervasive state of disrepair that potentially undermined the delivery of instructional services. Among the signs of neglect were rickety benches with and without backs, holes in the floor and the roof, inadequate heating, poor lighting, unpainted walls, dilapidated steps, unkempt surroundings, and a lack of desks and other educational supplies and materials. (p. 403)

It is also well documented that states spent less than a quarter of their budget on educating black students as they did on white students. In the mid to late 1920s, an

NAACP study reported that Georgia spent \$4.59 per year on each black child as opposed to \$36.29 on each white child (Lowe, 2004).

In a report of the North Carolina Governor's Commission written in 1935 and chronicled by Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) as she painted one side of the segregated schools picture, it was noted:

In a great many instances the school buildings now in use for the colored children are in a poor state of repair. Generally many are poorly lighted and heated, and in many instances are too small to give adequate accommodations to the pupils . . . In many of the classrooms the furniture is antiquated, the blackboards are insufficient in size and badly abused . . . Very few rural colored schools are equipped with modern single desks. Little or no provision is made for teaching health and sanitation. Laboratories for science and the vocational subjects are few and inadequate. (p. 2)

Even though the school buildings that many black students attended were obviously not equal to those for white students, Siddle Walker (1996) suggests the “environment of the segregated school had affective traits, institutional policies, and community support that helped black children learn in spite of the neglect” (p. 3). As the all black high school in Greensboro, NC, Dudley High School prided itself on being run efficiently and effectively. It was the only high school in the city able to maintain a rigid dress code and prohibit students from leaving campus for lunch (Chafe, 1980). This reputation of strict discipline coupled with educational excellence earned Dudley a place among the top black high schools in the country (Lowe, 2004).

Often white school boards, refused to fund facilities and equipment for black students. This had a counteractive effect, as many black communities came together to raise money to build their own schools. A teacher from Caswell County recalled selling

ice cream to raise money for school supplies (Siddle Walker, 1996). Booker T. Washington called for black community members to organize and gain the support of influential white leaders.

Don't make the mistake of feeling that the white people in the community know about the condition of your school. The white people may be divided into four classes; first, those who do not know and do not care about the schools; second, those entirely indifferent; third, those who are ignorant, but who want to know; fourth, those already interested . . . Try to know the people, know the sheriff, the county clerk, the police officers, the local judge, and the county superintendent. Try to get these [people] to visit your school. (Fultz, 1995, p. 41)

Many black, and some white, community members provided money and buildings for educating black students. Even old warehouses and vacant buildings were converted into school houses. However, county taxes were used to provide buildings and supplies for white students to be educated. Blacks were frustrated with this unfair treatment, but many were afraid to say anything because retaliation from white people could result in loss of their livelihood or even their life.

### **African American Communities and Desegregation**

There were two very distinct points of view about desegregation in the African American community. The majority and more vocal opinion was that integrated schools were the only way for African American students to receive a quality education (Anderson, 1988). It was thought that mixing the races of black and white students in the classroom “would weaken hateful stereotypes and promote interracial understanding among the young and in time among society at large” (Patterson, 2001, p. xviii). However there were leaders in the African American community that didn't believe

white-dominated courts would support any legal justice for African Americans. They were concerned about what desegregation would really mean and that it would destroy the pride that had been established in segregated black schools (Siddle Walker, 1996).

W.E.B. DuBois was a strong proponent for integration until the 1930s when he believed that racial prejudice in the United States was so powerful that it would be impossible for African American children to get a proper education in integrated schools. He stated:

A separate Negro school, where children are treated like human beings, trained by teachers of their own race, who know what it means to be black . . . is infinitely better than making our boys and girls doormats to be spit and trampled upon and lied to by ignorant social climbers, whose sole claim to superiority is ability to kick 'niggers' when they are down. (as cited in Patterson, 2001, p. 9)

Others agreed with DuBois and felt that African Americans should fight for equality in schools and not desegregation. N. L. Dillard, the principal of Caswell County Training School, an all black high school located in North Carolina, posed these questions about desegregation: What will happen to the children? Would teachers and administrators unfamiliar with the historic mission and task of teaching in the African American community be willing to understand and embrace the type of teaching that had aided in racial uplift? Would the new academic environment still encourage black students to learn? (Siddle Walker, 1996).

Desegregation challenged white and black America's view of education. After the 1954 court ruling, most Southern school systems refused to acknowledge the decision and desegregate. The School Board in Greensboro, North Carolina was among the first in



the nation to take a step towards desegregation. The night after the Supreme Court decision, a resolution was adopted by the Board recognizing that the decision of the Court constitutes the law of the land and is binding upon the Board (Fulmore, 1975).

**Greensboro Public Schools  
Board of Education's Resolution of May 18, 1954**

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States has rendered a decision to the effect that the segregation of pupils in public schools solely upon the basis of differences in race violates the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and is thus invalid and unlawful; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Greensboro City Administrative Unit, the governing body of the public schools of the Greater Greensboro School District, recognizes that the decision of the Court constitutes the law of the land and is binding upon the Board;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board instruct the Superintendent to study and report to the Board regarding ways and means for complying with the Court's decision.

Dr. Ben L. Smith, Greensboro Public Schools' superintendent, said, "It is unthinkable, that we will try to evade the decision. Any effort to evade the decision would be a disaster to the country and signify the end of democracy" (as cited in Chafe, 1980, p. 13). This declaration was surprising because North Carolina governor, Hodges felt that both races would suffer if integration was forced. He went on to say that North Carolina should continue with separate schools in order to "maintain the older culture of the white race and encourage the culture of the Negro race" (Harris, 1956, p. 301). It was three years later before any real action was taken in Greensboro and it was minute.

In 1957, the Greensboro Public School Board decided to offer voluntary pupil desegregation (Chafe, 1980). Rather than trying to achieve desegregation, the School

Board was trying to contain it, to deflect federal court orders that might result in far more substantial change. Students from different races could **choose** to go to schools that were formerly all one race (Chafe, 1980). Only six black students chose to be pioneers and attend all white schools that year. Five black students [Harold Davis, Brenda Florence, Jimmy Florence, Russell Herring and Elizah Herring] went to Gillespie Park School and one went to Greensboro Senior High School [Josephine Boyd] (Hairston, 2003). Josephine Boyd's parents requested that she attend Greensboro Senior High School instead of Dudley High School because they lived closer and Josephine shouldn't have to be "subjected to the inconvenience of the extra travel distance to the Dudley School because of the mere desire to comply to unconstitutional custom" (Chafe, 1980, p. 72). These brave students were harassed by white students and community members, their families lost jobs and teachers ignored them, but they survived the year. The strength these students showed during this trying time in their lives is remarkable.

Most white students didn't dare or care to go to black schools. Several white parents were opposed to integrating schools and they moved their children to private schools or kept them at home to avoid having their children attend schools that were barely integrated. Since the Supreme Court refused to give a compliance date for complete desegregation, the local school systems were in no hurry to create a solution. In Greensboro, more African American parents applied for their children to attend all white schools, but only a few of the applications were approved (Chafe, 1980).

Many Black parents wanted their children to receive a good education, but did not want them to face blatant racial prejudice at school daily. They were concerned about the

safety of their children and even those who had originally supported desegregating schools by sending their children to formerly all white schools when given a choice, withdrew their children because of fear for their safety (Cecelski, 1994).

As Brenda Florence walked to her first day of school at Gillespie Elementary School, hecklers yelled “Go home, Nigger.” A year later she returned to an all-black school, her family unwilling to have their daughter endure any longer the trauma of white rejection. (Chafe, 1980, p. 72)

Also in Greensboro, there was a group of black parents that mobilized to oppose forced integration.

With integration, these parents believed, Black children would be made to feel inferior. Black culture and leadership would be de-emphasized, and Negro pupils would lose the positive sense of identity associated with schools such as Dudley and Lincoln. Some Blacks perceived the integration order as ‘a calculated plan to keep our people down’ through the destruction of black pride and institutions. (Chafe, 1980, p. 229)

However, Black parents that opposed desegregation did identify with the reasons for integrating schools. They wanted their children to receive a quality education that would enable them to compete with white students in higher educational institutions and the workforce. Even though Black parents may have appeared divided in how to best achieve equality in education for their children, they were united in their interest of the importance of education.

The Greensboro School Board decided to slowly begin integrating school faculty members. One or two African American teachers were asked to move to all white schools and vice versa. This practice continued throughout the late 1950s and 1960s with very

little integration. Often African American teachers felt isolated from their white colleagues and were mistreated by parents who felt they were not qualified to teach their children.

This slow attempt at desegregation in Greensboro did not satisfy the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). In April 1968 the HEW came to Greensboro and reviewed the school systems effort toward desegregation. They also interviewed students at Dudley High School and compared their learning experiences with those in integrated school settings. Subsequently, HEW required Greensboro City Schools to submit plans for further desegregation because the 'Freedom of Choice' plan had been ineffective (Chafe, 1980) and placed all federal funding on hold until compliance was met.

Two years later and after a law suit demanding the immediate desegregation of Greensboro's schools lead by a prominent African American doctor, the Greensboro School Board was finally able to create a plan for full desegregation that would be implemented in the fall of 1971. However, with success came an uphill battle of truly integrating students, staff and providing equity and training for all involved.

### **African American School Leaders**

The experiences of African American school leaders are conspicuously absent from most chronicles of the effects of desegregation (Dillard, 1995). This omission is baffling when

it was the Black principal who led the closed system of segregated schooling for Blacks, primarily in the South. The Black principal represented the Black community; was regarded as the authority on educational, social and economic

issues; and was responsible for establishing the all-Black school as the cultural symbol of the Black community. (Tillman, 2006, p. 28)

As community leaders, Black principals often fulfilled a fatherly or motherly role for students, as well as, staff members. One Black principal in North Carolina would often lecture his teachers on payday about how to save some of their money and not squander it all at a local department store (Siddle Walker, 1996).

One theme throughout the literature on African American principals is their sense of caring (Dillard, 1995; Pollard, 1997; Reitzug & Patterson, 1998). Caring for children was not optional for Black principals. They felt a sense of obligation to their community to ensure that all students achieved at their highest potential and they created environments in all-Black schools that nurtured this notion (Siddle Walker, 1996). One result of desegregation as African American administrators lost their jobs was a loss of influence over African American students. Moving to schools in which African American students were the minority or larger school systems impaired the African American administrators from having an impact on the experiences that influenced the educational success of African American students (Pollard, 1997). Fultz (1995) maintains that the African American educator realized that he was not bound by the school building or the boys and girls that entered it. Schools were responsible for the “mental, moral, religious and physical status of the people immediately touching it” (p. 406). African American principals served as activist in the community and often educated community members about political and social agendas.

In several case studies of African American principals, it is apparent that building relationships and empowering staff and students are key practices when leading a successful school (Benham, 1997). Gips (1989) found that women administrators focused on interactions with students/staff and instructional activities. Reitzug and Patterson (1998) chronicle the account of one African American female principal, who describes how she interprets her role as an administrator:

I see my role as a principal being facilitating learning . . . in whatever capacity I can . . . I see one of my major responsibilities as empowering others . . . Academic excellence comes after the healthy child. I'd like to see a healthy child enjoying what we call life. Understanding that there is a tomorrow. A healthy child with goals or at least a future in mind. Understanding that we all make mistakes. That drives me. And the academic excellence, I believe, we should want for all of our children, but not at the expense of the healthy child. (p. 155)

Pollard (1997) notes that African American women face dispelling the myth that they are incompetent and unable to handle positions of authority when they assume principalship roles. This is coupled with the overwhelming trend for African American principals to be placed in schools that are in need of repair. Jones (1983) believes this is due to the fact that it is believed African American administrators can solve major problems quickly. Examples of such problems could include; student conflict, school district mandates, parent demands, staff morale, etc. In a majority of the case studies featuring women principals, these administrators have been brought to a school to 'clean it up.' The populations of the schools they are leading are primarily students of low economic, minority status.

It is important to note here that Cynthia Dillard (1995) lists several characteristics of effective leadership she found in her research of prominent literature on the subject.

She criticizes the list below as “problematic at best, faulty at worst”:

- I. School-site Management
- II. Strong Instructional Leadership
- III. Staff Stability
- IV. Curriculum Articulation and Organization
- V. Schoolwide Staff Development
- VI. Parental Involvement and Support
- VII. Schoolwide Recognition of Academic Success
- VIII. Maximized Learning Time
- IX. District Support for School
- X. Positive School Climate and/or Culture (Dillard, 1995, p. 541)

Dillard goes on to explain that she believes the perspective of African Americans is noticeably missing from this list. She notes that there is a “glaring absence in the effective schools literature of the role of social, cultural, and political contexts in promoting or undermining school effectiveness” (p. 541). In order to capture sociocultural theories of leadership, Dillard suggests “including narratives of the principalship from those whose voices have much to tell us about relevant issues of leadership through diversity” (p. 540). This is exactly what my own research is about. In one of Dillard’s case studies, she notes that the principal sees her job as working on “behalf of African Americans” (p. 549), and that she must nurture and protect them. Therefore, being an effective principal is more than just scientific theories, but in fact it is political and related to one’s particular values.

Prior to and after schools were desegregated African American principals had to draw upon many of these characteristics to establish schools, as well as, re-establish integrated schools. As the demographics of schools have changed over the last 55 years, so have the demands of school leaders. However, African American leaders still regard education as the path to a better life and the common thread to success.

### **Multiple Dimensions of Excellence in School Leadership**

In analyzing my narratives, I also make reference to the qualities of excellent school leaders according to Thomas Sergiovanni (1984). Sergiovanni encapsulates the “forces” of a school leader “which contributes uniquely to school competence and to school excellence” (p. 6). Sergiovanni breaks down these components into five behaviors or traits. He calls them forces because they are a “means available to administrator . . . to bring about or preserve changes needed to improve schooling” (p. 6). I will describe each force and in Chapter IV, I will discuss which ones are prevalent in the lives of the school principals that I interviewed and how they are displayed.

The first force is technical and Sergiovanni describes it as a “management engineer” (p. 6). The technical school leader is focused on coordinating and organizing the life of the school. Ensuring that schedules are effective and the school day runs smoothly is the goal of this leader. He or she is a planner and time management is important. I believe being a technical leader is important in creating an excellent school because it relieves the teachers and students of worrying about what may come next or any uncertainty. When things are well planned, they run smoother.



Next is the human leader, or encourager. The human leader is a motivator and spends a great deal of time building and maintaining positive morale. A cheerleader for teachers and students, this leader ensures that relationships are built and stakeholders have a role in decision making. I can relate to this type of leader because everyone has a personal life outside of school that can affect how he or she acts at school. When a leader recognizes this and spends time getting to know and understand the people in a school, it helps every person feel valued.

The third force is educational. The educational leader is an expert in the best teaching practices and a “clinical practitioner.” Helping “diagnose educational problems” and providing specialized professional development is part of this educational leader’s repertoire. This skill is very important when administrators evaluate teachers and try to counsel them on areas of weakness. It is also essential for teacher effectiveness.

The next force is the symbolic leader. Sergiovanni (1984) states that the symbolic leader “assumes the role of ‘chief’ and by emphasizing selective attention signals to others what is of importance and value” (p. 7). A figure head of sorts, this leader emphasizes appearances and is always front and center for public occasions. Similar to the human leader, the symbolic leader spends time with students and ensures that this is seen by others. He or she wants the public to see what school is all about and accentuates the “basic purpose” of school.

Finally, the cultural leader “seeks to define, strengthen, and articulate those enduring values, beliefs and cultural strands that give the school its unique identity” (p. 9). Basically it is the way we do things at this school and it is distinctive. Creating an

allegiance to the school through activities, rituals and common language, is part of the cultural leader's way of operation.

Sergiovanni outlines the qualities that are needed in effective school leadership. Each force plays a vital role in the day to day operations of a school's life. As I reflect on my own practice as an administrator, I can see value in each force. I am more of a technical and human leader than the other traits; although I do see traces of symbolic leadership throughout my work. I feel that it is important to make everyone in the school building feel important and valued. Anal to a fault, I am organized and want everything to be planned out.

### **Comparison of Dillard and Sergiovanni**

In this section I will compare and contrast the characteristics Sergiovanni (1984) and Dillard (1995) find essential for effective school leaders. These theorists have several similarities in what it takes for an educational leader to be effective.

Sergiovanni and Dillard agree that effective school leaders must have a strong knowledge of the curriculum and ability to support teachers. Dillard's (1995) case study of one female principal describes that she prominently displays her diplomas and educational degrees on the wall. She goes on to say this principal refers to herself as a "teaching principal" and she teaches a course to some of her students daily. This certainly shows her staff that she understands their plight and knows what type of staff development they need to improve their craft. Sergiovanni's educational leader also brings "expert professional knowledge and bearing as they relate to teaching

effectiveness, educational program development and clinical supervision” (Sergiovanni, 1984, p. 6).

However, Dillard believes that this female principal’s decision to teach is a “conscious political act” and she is exerting control over who works with her students because she perceives there are no qualified candidates available to teach her students. This could also be seen as Sergiovanni’s symbolic leadership. Symbolic leaders “model” what is of importance and value; in this case, instruction.

Throughout my career as a principal, I have also felt my position was a duty to help all students learn, but especially black students. I have taken on educating young people as Dillard (1995) referred to it as a “conscious political act” (p. 548). I gravitate towards students that I feel may not have the same opportunities as the others and I ensure they have a fighting chance at success while they are in my school.

From Sergiovanni’s (1984) perspective, effective principals value interpersonal relationships. He says “people achieve high satisfaction of their interpersonal needs” (p. 12). This is highlighted by Dillard, as well, when she describes her own care for others as she serves as a mentor for students. She also ties in the story of a principal signing all of the students’ report cards and having good communication with parents, as common for effective principals.

Finally, Dillard (1995) contends that effective principals must view schools as “social and cultural sites” (p. 559) with diverse ethnic populations. Being an advocate for all students with their individual needs is critical. Sergiovanni fails to focus directly on meeting the students’ individual needs, but he does emphasize that building a unique

school culture in the school is important. He says helping indoctrinate new members (students or staff) to the way things are done at a school is part of building the tradition and legacy.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, I explain the methodology I used while doing research for this dissertation. I explore myself as the researcher, detail the procedures used while gathering information for the interviews and explain why I chose narrative research for my dissertation.

#### **Myself as the Researcher**

In order to gain perspective for my research I need to specify my own personal context. It is important to explore my upbringing in order to figure out where my values and beliefs originated. My parents were the first in their families to attend and graduate from college in the early 1960s. Their parents were hard working/low wage earners and had the high expectation for their children to be well behaved and do well in school. My parents attended segregated and very unequal schools in Southern Georgia and Florida

My father was born and reared in Lowndes County, which is located in the southern part of Georgia. He was the fifth of eight children born in the racially segregated south in 1940. His family owned a farm and they raised animals, as well as planted vegetables and other crops. My father and his siblings had to walk pass the brand new school for white students to reach the dilapidated lean-to he spent his early years of learning in. Education was important to my dad because he knew that would be his ticket

out of poverty. His parents did not emphasize education because farming was their primary focus; however they did expect him to do attend school and do well.

My mother, on the other hand, was the product of an unwed teenage mother and a father who lived in another state. She was born in Dawson, Georgia in 1943 and was an only child. My maternal grandmother had a large family and everyone joined together to help rear my mother because my grandmother was sickly. When my mother turned thirteen she had to move to Florida where her father lived because her mother was dying from kidney cancer. This move was difficult because my mother had never spent much time with her father and now she had to move in with him, his wife and their three children. School became a safe haven for my mother because she was successful there. She loved going to school because of the opportunity to choose many different books to read and she enjoyed interacting with other children. She was not aware of the obvious limitations of the segregated situation.

My parents both chose to go to college to get away from the poverty they had grown up in. They didn't have money to attend college, but they worked throughout the summers and during the school year to afford their tuitions. They met at Fort Valley State College in Fort Valley, Georgia and married soon after my mother graduated in 1965. My father went on to earn his doctorate degree in veterinary medicine from Tuskegee Institute and my mother earned a masters degree in library science from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The importance of education was instilled in me at an early age.

My father's job as a veterinarian with the United States Department of Agriculture caused us to move twice before I turned three years old. We lived in LaGrange, Georgia; Alexandria, Virginia and finally settled in Greensboro, North Carolina. My mother did not work outside the home until I went to kindergarten. She chose to stay home and prepare my older sister and me for school. I think this sacrifice on her part taught me the family ethics and values I still have today. My family is very important to me and I cherish our close relationship.

I began school in 1974 at Guilford Primary School in Greensboro, North Carolina's Guilford County School System and clearly remember attending a predominantly white school. Since we were the only black family in my white neighborhood, this wasn't an uncomfortable environment for me. My Kindergarten class was the first of its kind in the county schools system. Previously, five year olds in Guilford County had to attend private or church kindergarten classes and they entered public school for their first grade year. The school system had been recently desegregated in 1971 (Patterson, 2001) and the primary school didn't have enough space to house the two new Kindergarten classes. It was decided that the Kindergartners would attend school at the nearby Guilford Junior High School campus.

Before attending school, I never thought it was unusual that my family was the only black family in a white middle class neighborhood. Our neighbors were friendly and my older sister and I had several neighborhood friends. My mother spent a lot of time teaching me how to read and do basic math before I went to school. My white Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Phillips, was fascinated that I already knew the information

she was teaching the other students. I remember my mother commenting that she must not have ever seen a black child enter school knowing how to read and write. I enjoyed school and there were students from different races and socio-economic levels in my class. I flourished under Mrs. Phillips attention and had a very successful year, but first grade was another story.

In first grade I had a team of teachers and they were all white. Mrs. Welborn, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Gilbert, and Mrs. Sparks were very strict disciplinarians and they expected perfection. They were not enamored with my intelligence and often sent me home with 'bad notes' because I would talk with other classmates when I finished my work. My parents came in to conference with them and they complained that I refused to stay in my seat. They said that I distracted the other students and something had to be done. My father asked about my academic work and they admitted that I did very well in all subjects. My parents asked more questions and discovered that the teachers expected me to sit perfectly still after I completed my work until the other students were finished. My father told the teachers that they needed to give me some more work when I finished early, but the teachers became offended and told him that they knew how to do their job. Seeing no future for me in that school, my parents began exploring other educational venues for me.

At the end of my first grade school year, our family moved further into the city of Greensboro. We were still the only black family in our neighborhood and someone painted our door black on the day we moved in. According to my mother, we moved several things in that day, but spent the night at our old house. When we returned to the



new house the next morning, someone had painted the door back green. Our family didn't speak about this mystery at the time, but I remember it vividly. I think my parents didn't talk about it with my sister and me because they didn't want to dwell on the negativity. They wanted us to be happy about the move and look forward to making new friends.

Our move into the city meant that my sister and I changed schools. I attended Claxton Primary and she went to Bluford Elementary in the Greensboro Public School System. Claxton served students in Kindergarten through third grade and Bluford had students in grades four through six. At Claxton, I experienced my first black teacher, Mrs. Ethel Holmes, and black principal, Mr. Calvin Murrow. These positive black role models inspired me to dream of being an educator one day. Mrs. Holmes saw the potential in me to be a leader and she had me help children that were having difficulty with their work. She made me feel good about myself as a student.

My classmates at Claxton continued to be from different races and socio economic levels. I do not recall teachers treating me differently because of the color of my skin. I do remember being placed in a program for the Gifted and Talented. There were not any other black students in this program, but that didn't bother me because again in my neighborhood, I was used to being the only black child.

During this time I also remember going to church and being involved in several charity projects. My parents and pastor often spoke about not looking down on people who didn't have enough to eat or a place to call home. I was taught to help and appreciate all people, no matter where life's circumstances may have brought them.

I left Claxton to attend Bluford Elementary for the fourth grade. Claxton was very close to my neighborhood, but Bluford was on the opposite side of town near my church, St. Matthews United Methodist Church. I remember riding the bus for a long time to reach Bluford. Busing was Greensboro's, as well as several other southern cities, answer to integrate schools because of residential segregation (Patterson, 2001). I encountered several problems at Bluford because my mother was the media specialist at the school and teachers felt the need to report my every action to her. My mother tried to be patient and she asked my teachers to treat her as they would any other parent. Unfortunately, I gave my teachers plenty of ammunition to share with my mother; therefore my parents decided that I would do better at another school and I moved to Erwin Open School after the first grading period.

Erwin was a very different experience for me. There were two teachers in each classroom and there weren't any walls to separate the classrooms. My two teachers, Mrs. Linnie Foster and Mrs. Debbie Baugh, complemented each other well. Mrs. Foster was black and she was a very strict disciplinarian. Mrs. Baugh was white and she had a softer touch, but she was just as effective as Mrs. Foster. Their teaching styles continued to inspire my dream to teach one day.

The next three years of my education were wonderful and I became a very good student. Mrs. Foster took a special interest in me and she had very high expectations for my academics and behavior. At nine years old, I was more interested in socializing and learning new things from my new friends than academics. Mrs. Foster kept a close eye on me and communicated any shortcomings I displayed to my parents. At the time I resented

her constant correction and mistook it for minding my business. However, as an adult I can appreciate the potential she saw in me to achieve more than the effort I was putting forth.

Erwin adopted the open school concept and a large portion of the school day was spent in small groups working on assignments independently. I enjoyed this because I didn't feel restricted and could move about the room at my own pace. I also had the opportunity to talk with my classmates, as long as we were working too. Erwin felt that the arts were just as important as academics and there was a great emphasis placed on performances, writing, and creative work. Every Friday each unit or class would perform for the whole school. I remember reciting poetry and singing the Black National Anthem 'Lift Every Voice and Sing'. We had to learn all three verses of the song and I still have it memorized to this day. Erwin provided me with a solid academic and cultural foundation.

Attending Kiser Junior High School for the seventh grade in 1981 brought another school change, as well as, hormonal ones. Kiser was formerly an all white school, but by the 1980s Greensboro's schools were fully integrated with most school populations being comprised of sixty-five percent white and thirty-five percent black. Even though the school was integrated I did observe that core subject areas were still segregated because of academic tracking.

I was very aware of the inequities in education at Kiser. Students from different cultures and socio-economic levels were represented, but the classes were very segregated. The higher level classes contained mostly white students and the remedial classes were comprised of mostly minority students. There was an obvious racial division

among the students. This division was civil, but all of the black kids did eat together in the cafeteria. I noticed very few black students in my classes and I now realize it wasn't just because they didn't want to be. We were tracked from the eighth grade and probably earlier. If you didn't take Pre Algebra in the eighth grade, you couldn't take Algebra in the ninth grade. This same philosophy was responsible for many students not taking college preparatory courses for English, Foreign Language and Science. I knew which courses to take because my parents, teachers and guidance counselors steered me towards the college track. What about the students whose parents didn't know to do this or whose teachers didn't feel they could handle those college prep courses? Those students may have had the ability, but they weren't given the opportunity to realize it. Over 90% of the students in my classes were white. I never thought to question this segregation practice, but I did not like it because I didn't have classes with many of my black friends.

The first time I experienced feeling embarrassed to live on the 'white' side of town was at Kiser. I was teased by the black students because I was the only black child they knew that got on the bus with white students to go home. I remember creating stories to explain why I was riding the 'white' bus home. I told students that my mother worked at a white family's home and I had to ride the bus to their house because she wouldn't allow me to go home alone. The only problem with that story was a large number of the students at Kiser had attended Bluford Elementary and those students knew that my mother was the media specialist there. It didn't take long for the black students to figure out that I lived on the white side of town and they thought I was rich.

My parents instilled in me and my sister at an early age that we were not rich and we only received things if we worked hard for them. I knew that my family took vacations out of state every summer and my black friends did not. However, those same friends had the latest Jordache and Calvin Klein jeans with Member's Only jackets and I didn't have those designer clothes. My father felt it was a waste to spend that much money on one item of clothing when you could buy four pieces of clothing for that same amount.

Since I wanted to be accepted by the black students, I began acting out with my behavior. I tried to develop a reputation for having a bad attitude with teachers. Instead of using proper speech, I began using slang and bad language to impress my new friends. This behavior quickly won me the acceptance I was seeking. I learned how to change my speech and attitude to reflect the person I was with at the moment. At home my parents overheard some of my telephone conversations with friends and they were appalled at my speech. It was a delicate balance to please my parents and my new friends simultaneously.

After completing the ninth grade at Kiser, I entered Grimsley Senior High School. Grimsley was simply a bigger Kiser. There were the same segregated classes and unspoken racial division in clubs and some extracurricular activities. I remember a group of my friends and I joined a civic club that didn't have any black members. We went to an interest meeting after school and felt very welcome. We quickly discovered that all the meetings were held at different members' houses and the activities were all on the 'white'

side of town. My friends didn't have consistent transportation and we eventually stopped attending the meetings.

I do have some very fond memories of Grimsley and I still enjoyed the social aspect of school. I was well known because I grew up in the neighborhood with the white kids, yet I went to church and hung out with the black kids. I was still embarrassed about where I lived, but since I was accepted by my black friends I was learning to cope with it. It was also very important for me to carve my own way because my older sister had developed the reputation of being a good athlete and student. I knew that teachers had the expectation that I would be like my sister, but I wanted to make sure they knew me for me. I was still talking back to adults, but knew to stop before I got into big trouble.

I had the unique opportunity to take a course called Child Care Services (CCS) at Grimsley. This course met for two periods a day and allowed me to work as an assistant in a first grade classroom at Joyner Elementary School daily. I had known for a long time that I wanted to teach, but after CCS, I knew it was my calling. I enjoyed working with students and helping them learn. My cooperating teacher treated me like her right hand and the experience was invaluable.

After graduating from Grimsley Senior High in 1987, I attended Appalachian State University. Even though throughout my life, all of my schools were predominantly white, I had never experienced seeing so few African American people as I did in Boone, North Carolina. All of my professors were white and there were only eight other African American students in my entire dorm. During the first semester, I considered transferring to a school closer to home because I felt so isolated. The only person I knew at

Appalachian was my roommate because we went to Grimsley together. Luckily, second semester brought many social mixers and classes more related to my major, so I decided to stay at least until the summer. My roommate and I also began tutoring students in the Learning Assistance Program, which sadly was filled with predominately African American students. This side job introduced me to the Black Student Association and I felt much better about spending the next three years at Appalachian.

During college there were many opportunities to work in the schools around Boone and Watauga County. I was fascinated to find that all of the schools in which I was assigned an internship were all white schools. My senior year I went to a school that was located in a deep valley close to the Tennessee state line and the students there had never even seen an African American person except on television. When I first arrived the students wanted to know if I knew Michael Jordan or Michael Jackson. I wasn't offended by their questions; instead I was curious about this little town that was cut off from the rest of the world. I didn't encounter anyone that was mean or rude; in fact the opposite was true. The students and parents treated me like a star and I was invited to dinner at all my students' houses. I truly enjoyed this experience and used it to educate these families.

During my senior year, I decided to do my student teaching back in Greensboro because that is where I wanted to eventually live. My parents had moved to Athens, Georgia three years earlier, but I didn't like it there. My mother was unhappy with the school system and I definitely didn't want to teach there. I was fortunate enough to get a student teaching assignment at Millis Road Elementary School in Jamestown, North

Carolina. Millis Road had about five hundred students and I worked in a second grade class with Pam Myers. She was an excellent teacher and she had a very diverse class. The students at Millis Road came from a wealthy neighborhood, a middle class neighborhood, two trailer parks and one subsidized housing apartment complex. I truly enjoyed my student teaching experience and was lucky enough to secure a teaching job there for the next school year.

When I first began teaching at Millis Road Elementary School in 1991, I was responsible for making sure my students learned the third grade curriculum. Most of my students had average to above-average ability and performance, so the task was quite achievable. The principal evaluated me three times a year and my students took standardized test each March. Otherwise, I was pretty much left alone to teach the best way I knew how. At the end of each year, I reflected on how my students had done and planned ways to improve my performance for the next year. I knew my responsibilities, but accountability was limited. When North Carolina introduced End of Grade Testing, things quickly changed. The changes included turning in lesson plans, planning on grade level, and specific plans were made to help low performing students improve achievement. I began to feel the pressure of making sure ALL of my students passed THE test. I now think of this pressure as accountability.

Teachers often think the public views them as responsible for everything. I have heard teachers say, "Parents want me to be the mother, the father, the nurse, the psychologist, the clothes provider, AND the teacher." Certainly it is true that students come to school with a number of issues that interfere with their learning, but what is the



role of a teacher? My definition is one who imparts knowledge and causes students to learn. It is important for teachers to develop and carry out their lesson plans, but they have to ensure that their students are ready to receive the information, as well. Effective teachers know that they must teach the whole child and that involves more than just the academic curriculum. As much as I enjoyed teaching, I felt that I was confined in the classroom and I wanted to positively affect more than just my twenty-five students each year.

I entered graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the fall of 1993. My principal, Peggy Johnson, encouraged me to focus on administration because she knew that I spent a great deal of time working with children outside of my classroom. She told me that she felt I would be an excellent administrator. However, I was intimidated from the moment I stepped into my first graduate school class. All of the students in my classes were nearly twice my age and very well spoken. I thought perhaps, I had made a mistake in starting graduate school so soon. At twenty-four years old, I had never failed at anything I really wanted and I wasn't about to start. So, I asked one of my professors, Penny Smith, to help me and she guided me through the next two years. Penny, a middle-age white woman, was one of the most influential people in my life. She challenged me to think out of the box and gave me the confidence to speak out in class. I went on to graduate before any of the others that started with me.

It only took two months for me to be offered an assistant principal's position. Unfortunately, the superintendent and the principal that wanted me did not agree. The superintendent thought I was too young to handle the responsibility and I was not given

the job. I find it ironic that today twenty-five year olds that haven't even been an assistant principal are offered principalships, but that is a sign of the scarcity of qualified principals. My principal told me to continue going on interviews because it was good practice for me. In January of 1996, I interviewed with Ken Wheat at Northeast Middle School. I had no desire to work in a middle school, but Mr. Wheat raved about his wonderful school that I couldn't say no. When Mr. Wheat told the superintendent that I was going to be his assistant principal, there was no resistance. A veteran administrator with a proven record obviously holds more clout and is able to insist on what he wants.

When I first became an assistant principal, I once again found myself lacking confidence. I was in a new setting with people I didn't know. These people looked to me as a leader and I had never held such responsibility in my life. My earlier varied experiences had taught me to be a good judge of character and I quickly began to learn the different personalities of the staff members. I made some very valuable friendships and concentrated on relationship building. This approach proved to be just what the staff needed. My pragmatist side chose to adjust the way things had always been done to meet the expectations being placed on schools.

Northeast Middle School was a racially diverse school, but there were racial problems with the students. It is located in the rural northeastern part of Guilford County and I encountered parents who had attended the school during segregated times. They apparently had bad experiences with desegregation and were teaching their children to resist racial harmony. I learned to listen patiently and not take anything that was said to me personally from Mr. Wheat. He was always so calm and treated everyone with

respect, even when he was being cursed out by a belligerent parent. The two years that I spent as his assistant principal, taught me how to be the successful administrator that I am today.

It stands to reason when the accountability of teachers rose, the accountability of administrators increased as well. I was responsible for books, grade level administration and exceptional children. Northeast Middle School was very different for me, but I adjusted quickly. As the sixth grade level administrator, I evaluated teachers, reviewed Individualized Education Plan paperwork, and disciplined students. Over the next three years, my responsibilities grew, as schools had to become more accountable. I soon had to attend every exceptional child's parent meeting and sign paperwork as a part of the IEP committee. I also had to document plans for improving student behavior for repeat discipline offenders. The principal expected all of my students to do well academically, as well as socially, and I passed this expectation on to the teachers. We could no longer just say we were educating all children; we had to prove it.

I became the principal of Oak Ridge Elementary School and I felt that I had stepped back in time. Oak Ridge had five hundred students and only four of them were black. I couldn't imagine that a school like this existed in 1999, but there it was. The staff was not very diverse either; there was one black teacher and one black custodian. According to the teachers, the school had never had a black principal and I wondered if I was going to encounter the same racism that I experienced at Northeast Middle. I was pleasantly surprised by the warm welcome I received from the staff, parents and students. Oak Ridge was a wonderful place to begin my career as a principal because I didn't have

many discipline issues and the students did well academically. I could focus on learning the job and really getting to know my new school community.

My new responsibilities included hiring, organizing and evaluating the staff, maintenance, assigning classes, preparing an annual budget, school safety, community relations, professional development and most importantly a whole new group of youngsters to educate. Again, I felt the pressure of accountability. North Carolina released new funds for student accountability and my school decided to provide tutoring for all low performing students. Each staff member, including myself, worked before and after school tutoring students. I knew I was responsible for making sure my school provided each child with a “good” education, but new state accountability measures caused me to take a more active role in ensuring this was done. After two years at Oak Ridge Elementary, I was moved to a very similar and larger Colfax Elementary.

Colfax proved to be another challenge because it was almost twice as large as Oak Ridge, but nothing compared to what the future held. After only one year at Colfax, my world changed dramatically. Previously I had enjoyed a safe and prescribed professional life. As a third grade teacher, I was happy and successful. My students did well and their parents loved me. I taught students whose parents valued education and therefore ensured their children were prepared for school. As a middle school assistant principal, again I did very well. I had an excellent mentor and I enjoyed working with the students. When I became the principal of an elementary school, I was a little apprehensive, but the school was already in excellent shape. Again, the students were successful and I flourished. After two years, I was promoted to a larger elementary school and continued to do well.

Then I got “the call” on October 3, 2002. The superintendent wanted to see me in his office immediately. A million things ran through my mind, but there was no way I could guess what changes my life was about to take.

The superintendent told me he had an intriguing proposal for me. He described a school in utter turmoil and said that he knew I could make a positive difference there. He told me the students were fighting uncontrollably, the parents were demanding change and the staff was ready to quit. 80% of the student body qualified for free or reduced lunch and 12% of students didn't speak English as their first language. The student body was diverse with 68% African American, 17% White, 10% Hispanic, 5% Multi-Racial and Asian. However, most of the white students came from the wealthy neighborhood on one side of the school and most of the minority students lived in three different subsidized housing apartment complexes. Therefore it appeared that the white kids were rich and the minority kids were poor. This caused a racial and socioeconomic divide. On top of that, this was a middle school and almost all of my experience was in elementary. Nothing in my life as an educator up to that point had prepared me to lead a school like that, but I accepted the challenge.

The first day I arrived, I observed students running through the halls most of the day. The office was filled with misbehaving students and staff members looked frustrated. Teachers tried without success to teach and control student behavior. There was even a huge fight during my first assembly. I wondered what in the world I had gotten myself into. Why had I left an environment where things were running smoothly to come to this chaos? The answer was obvious, these students deserved the same

opportunities in life as the students at my previous school and I was going to make sure they got it.

I began by sending the staff a survey when I first arrived with three simple questions; what works well at our school, what improvements could be made at our school, what role would you play in making those improvements? All staff members responded quickly and I read each response. Most of the teachers were frustrated with student behavior and inconsistencies in discipline. Some were veterans and remembered a time when Ferndale was a great school where parents, teachers and students worked together well. I worked with the leadership team to prioritize changes that needed to be made.

I made sure to walk around to the classrooms daily. I ate lunch in the cafeteria and began to build positive relationships with the students. When I noticed teachers yelling at students, I modeled talking in low tones. I sent out emails encouraging teachers and giving them best practices tips. I also talked with teachers about their personal lives and got to know them as people, not just teachers. Around this time, I began taking classes at UNCG and at first, this just added to my already stressful life. Slowly the content of the courses began to relate to what I was dealing with daily. In class, we discussed the impact of social institutions from the past. We listed church, family and school as the most important social institutions from the past. Today we felt the media and workplace were now very influential parts of our lives. I found this information fascinating and knew that it would help some of my veteran staff members understand the need for change. I had the staff members take a trip down memory lane by listing social institutions from the

past and present. I then had them discuss in groups societal pressures in 1975 compared to 2003. I feel this exercise really helped some staff members understand why they were not having success with our students.

As I continued to assess the needs at Ferndale, I met with the PTA Board and discovered its members were not representative of the student population. There was no diversity on the PTA Board, yet the school was very diverse. White females were making all the PTA decisions and this had never been questioned. As disturbing as this was I did not have the time or know how to address this problem immediately. Therefore, I helped the PTA focus on some areas in which their assistance was needed.

I then talked with my assistant principals about how they were dealing with students sent to the office for discipline reasons. I decided to long-term suspend some students that were continuously causing disruption. Even though I was working 14 to 16 hour days, I still felt like I was putting a Band-Aid on a school whose head had been chopped off. The whole year was just one crisis after another.

I spent the whole summer figuring out the SIMS matrix schedule, hiring teachers and preparing for the beginning teacher workdays. I hand scheduled every student in the school because one of the chief parent complaints was incorrect or incomplete student schedules at the beginning of the year. I wrote a new staff handbook because there hadn't been one in the last two years. With the new No Child Left Behind standards for hiring teachers, I spent days and nights interviewing the few highly qualified candidates available.

I also began to plan staff development for the first teacher workdays. I knew one third of my staff members were going to be new to the school and the veteran staff members might resist the changes that needed to be made for the school to progress. When the first teacher workday arrived, I was ready. I had a new administrative team and several new teachers. I held a staff meeting, articulated my vision for the school and told them we would have to work on a plan to get there. My emphasis was on the relationships with students, parents and each other. My plan included strategies focused on helping the staff members develop meaningful relationships with each other, our students and the community. Since people are our most valuable resource we must nurture relationships in order to be more successful in schools.

Each strategy was developed to help staff members learn more about students and be more sensitive to their needs. Staff members also will learn to depend on each other for assistance and ideas. Working together towards a common goal will provide more consistency and structure for the entire school.

I developed the following eight strategies to help build relationships among staff members and students:

1. Staff meeting, with small group discussions, to evaluate where all staff members are in the change process. Do they want change? If so, what are the goals?
2. Seventy-five percent of the staff members attended three sessions of the Ruby Payne “Framework to Understanding Poverty” workshops the year before. At the beginning of the school year, there were discussion groups designed around revisiting the most important aspects of these workshops.



3. Staff members will take a field trip to several of our students' neighborhoods. Each team will have a task for each neighborhood using a "Scavenger Hunt Guide" and a camera.
4. Each grade level will have an administrator. Each administrator will hold weekly grade level/encore staff meetings in which teachers will do the following:
  - Discuss ways to help struggling students
  - Plan integration of subjects
  - Compare successful lessons and what made them successful
  - Discuss weekly grade level concerns and recommendations
5. Reinstate Advisor/Advisee period for all students. This will include a character education component in which students will participate in interactive/personally reflective activities.
6. Train all staff members in Reading in the Content Area. This program will help teachers plan meaningful and more integrated lessons.
7. Introduce P.A.L. (Person Available to Listen) program. In this program, each staff member is a buddy to two at-risk students. Staff members met with each student at least twice a week. During these meetings, staff members helped students set goals, evaluate/revise those goals and counsel. Additionally, staff members developed a relationship with each student's parent and call if the student is absent.
8. Implement Breakfast with the Principal program to receive input from students. Breakfast with the Principal Program will include a student from each team meeting bi-monthly to discuss school issues with the principal. These students will be chosen randomly with different topics for each group to discuss.

The staff members were then given a guide to complete the Scavenger Hunt (see Appendix A).

This exercise proved to be enlightening for everyone. Several staff members grew up in the neighborhoods we traveled to and shared stories which gave us a historical perspective. I shared my staff's transforming experience with my classmates in one of my graduate school courses. This caused my professor to become very interested in helping

Ferndale solicit information from the community. My professor attended a Ferndale staff meeting in which an expert on the Paideia process worked with the staff on defining parent involvement. She also attended a PTA Board meeting and shared my horror at the lack of diversity. After the meeting, my professor shared some strategies I could use to assess why minority parents were not participating on the PTA Board and hopefully gain more diverse involvement.

Ferndale had experienced declining test scores, low teacher morale and increased teacher turnover rates in the past few years. There are a number of contributing factors, but I knew I needed to focus on solutions. As Ferndale's third principal in three years, I attempted to begin 'healing' our school with educating the staff members and valuing student input.

The teachers, parents and students needed to develop a new vision, mission, belief statement and list of goals for the school. I began this task by asking the staff to describe their expectations for students, parents, administration and staff members. The students and parents had the same assignment, but it was done by survey. I then formed a committee of representatives from each group to review the responses and create three mission statements. The committee developed the statements (see Appendix B) and they were adopted by all stakeholders. I believe parents, students and staff members developed a mutual respect for each other through this activity.

Three years later when I walked through the halls, students were in class or they had passes to be in the hall. The front office was no longer a holding bin for undisciplined students. Staff members were speaking to each other and even joking around with the

students. Most of the classrooms were interactive places of learning where students were challenged and also achieving success. The school simply felt better. What brought about such a dramatic change? I cannot take the credit for all of it, but I knew from my Northeast Middle experience what a middle school was supposed to be like and I went about methodically creating that same environment.

In the summer of 2005, I decided to leave Ferndale and return to the elementary school I attended as a child. I felt that I made a positive difference at Ferndale, but at that point in my life I was physically worn out from the demands of working in such a highly impacted middle school. When I heard that the principal of Claxton Elementary was retiring I felt that it was the right time to return to the place where I was inspired to be an educator.

Claxton is a very diverse school (63% White, 19% African American, 7% Asian, 6% Multi-racial, and 5% Hispanic) and most of the students come from homes in which education is very important. Regardless of their economic status, my students' parents support education. I am responsible for ensuring all of my students are safe, have an environment conducive to learning and teachers prepared to foster learning. I realize that I will be held accountable for this great responsibility in several ways. My teachers expect me to support them and give them the tools they need to be successful in the classroom. They also expect me to give them direction and guidance. My students count on me to listen to them and make fair decisions. They want a school in which opportunities for success are open to everyone. My students' parents expect me to provide an environment in which everyone feels safe and welcome. They want their

children to learn and be successful. In addition, the superintendent, my direct supervisor, and the school board expect me to lead a school with high student achievement and few discipline problems. I accept all of these expectations knowing I will be supported and given the tools I need to be successful.

As I reflect on my integrated school years and the many schools I have led administratively, I am curious about how administrators dealt with the obvious issues of race relations, parent involvement, student achievement and athletics during the initial integration of schools in North Carolina. As a current principal, I know that students have many social and academic problems. I want to know how black principals dealt with all the issues students' have in addition to trying to desegregate their schools.

### **Research**

I used a qualitative approach in this study because I wanted a firsthand account of how African American principals interpret their experiences during desegregation. Shank and Villella (2004) described qualitative research as a lantern used to illuminate dark areas so that we can see. Maxwell (2004) suggests that qualitative research recognizes that reality and the importance of its meaning as well as the interpretive nature of our understanding of that reality. Schwandt (2001) contends that "qualitative inquiry deals with human lived experience. It is the life-world as it is lived, felt, undergone, made sense of, and accomplished by human beings that is the object of study" (p. 84).

In choosing qualitative research over quantitative, I had to consider the characteristics of both. In quantitative research, data are usually presented in some numerical form and are then analyzed with statistical procedures; while in qualitative

research, the data are words which are analyzed for their meanings and relationships. Qualitative research is interpretive; it provides an opportunity for people to talk about ideas and feelings in their own language, or to be observed by the researcher for their meanings and relationships. Using a qualitative approach will help me construct a deeper understanding of what the participants tell me (Sipe & Ghiso, 2004). I do this through narrative research with unstructured interviews.

It is my intention to use narrative research methodology in presenting the stories of these African American principals. I feel that it is important to preserve the authenticity of their voices. Desegregation is the heart of my study and the edge is studying the effects desegregation had on African American administrators.

### **Research Settings and Participants**

I interviewed three African American educators who worked as principals or assistant principals in Greensboro Public Schools prior to and after desegregation. In selecting these principals, I considered the fact that I would be limited in choice of candidates due to the fact that many African American educators that worked during desegregation are no longer living or able to tell their stories. Therefore, I chose these educators because I know they played an integral part in desegregating Greensboro City Schools and they were willing to share this part of their lives with me.

I chose Mr. Julius Fulmore, who served as the principal of Hampton School from 1964-1974, because I knew that he was very much respected in the black community. Although I didn't know Mr. Fulmore personally, I had heard his name mentioned at church, school and throughout social circles while I was growing up. When I first came

to work as a teacher in Guilford County in 1991, I was aware that Mr. Fulmore was working at the central office level in the Greensboro City School System. I had friends that worked at schools within that system and they spoke of Mr. Fulmore's great knowledge and how revered he was. I was hoping that he would be willing for me to talk with him about working during desegregation and he immediately said yes when I called him. I interviewed Mr. Fulmore in his home at his request. I sat on the couch in his living room and he sat on a chair.

Mr. Charles Wallace, who was chosen to integrate the all white Gillespie Junior High School as the assistant principal in 1964 and went on to serve as principal of Mendenhall Junior High School from 1976 until 1991, was chosen because my mother suggested him. I did not know Mr. Wallace, but I had heard about him when I was in high school. There was a small pocket of students that attended Mendenhall for junior high and then went on to Grimsley Senior High School. One of those students was my good friend and roommate in college. She spoke of how strict, yet humorous, Mr. Wallace was as a principal. She said that all the students respected him and knew he would not put up with any shenanigans. When I called Mr. Wallace about my research study, he was very enthusiastic about telling his story. I interviewed Mr. Wallace in his home at his request. I sat on the living room couch and he sat in a winged back chair.

Finally, I chose Mr. Melvin Swann, who served as the principal of Price School until Greensboro City Schools fully desegregated in 1971, after which time he was appointed Director of Student Affairs at the central office level, because I have known him most of my life and I knew what a well respected educator he was. Mr. Swann

attends my church and when I was younger, I affectionately called him Uncle Mel. At church Mr. Swann participates in the choir, the United Methodist Men and several theatrical productions. I knew that he worked for Greensboro City Schools and when the school systems merged in 1993 he held the position right under the superintendent. Since I had a personal relationship with Mr. Swann, I felt that he would willingly want to talk with me about desegregation and I was correct. I interviewed Mr. Swann in my office at Claxton Elementary School at his request. We both sat in chairs facing each other in front of my desk.

The focus of my interviews is the story of these African American principals' lives. I asked them to tell me the story of their lives in hopes of finding out information about their childhood, family, and decision to become an educator, and life before and after desegregation. My question, 'Tell me the story of your life' was designed to be open-ended and unrestrictive. Since I grew up in Greensboro, NC, I am particularly interested in what happened in schools when Greensboro Public Schools desegregated in 1971.

### **Data Collection**

I collected data from February 2007 to April 2007. I conducted three interviews which were audio taped and varied in length. Mr. Fulmore's interview was one hour 22 minutes in length, Mr. Wallace's interview lasted two hours and 14 minutes and Mr. Swann's interview was two hours and 40 minutes. I transcribed each interview so that I could analyze and interpret these wonderful stories. In reviewing the transcripts, I looked for patterns, common themes and leadership characteristics. I used various sources to

ensure that I preserved the historical authenticity of each man's story. I felt that it was important to research events that were happening locally, as well as, throughout the world to set a context while retelling these stories of desegregation. Local newspapers, historical transcripts and historical books about life in Greensboro were all used to enhance each man's story.

### **Narratives and Interviews**

Personal narratives have always fascinated me because they are stories told from the perspective of those involved. Josselson and Lieblich (1999) state "Narratives have intuitive appeal to people who become weary of variables and the quantification of the positivistic approach" (p. xv). They are the interpretation of certain events by an individual and contextualized within their construction. Those event cannot be disputed because one cannot tell how another person perceives something. Casey (1995) explores the origin of narrative research and the "variety of contemporary research practices" (p. 211) in her article "The New Narrative Research in Education." She states that personal narratives are just one form of narrative research that reveals itself in a variety of ways; from oral histories to ethnobiographies.

When conducting a narrative analysis of interviews, a researcher is able to hear the stories or events of a person's life from a unique perspective. The interviewee shares interpreted experiences as he or she remembers them or how he or she wants them to be remembered. The researcher then takes their stories and looks for patterns. During analysis, the researcher can see what information is important to the interviewee and being privy to historical events, the researcher can see which events are of importance to



the interviewee. It is also important to note that certain events can be noticeably absent from the information gathered. This selectivity or even silence in what is told is just as important as the information that is shared. The researcher must analyze why information is not shared and determine patterns of priorities.

Since I wanted to hear the stories of the lives of former black principals that worked during desegregation, I chose to interview them. Interviewing is a popular way to gather personal narratives in qualitative research because talking is natural (Griffee, 2005). Interview techniques do not presuppose any statistical knowledge, and the people you interview might be close at hand and willing to talk (Griffee, 2005). As Patton (1990) stated, we interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. In this study I am interested in feelings and how people interpret the world around them. I want to know their perspective on the desegregation of public schools. I am also interested in past events that are impossible to relive (Merriam, 1988). In asking the question, Tell me the story of your life, I was attempting to see what each principal felt was important to tell about his life. Instead of formal interview questions, I wanted to be flexible and follow the lead of the interviewee (Quantz & O'Connor, 1988). This technique allowed me to note slippage and silence. I realize that when talking about their lives, people lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused and get things wrong. Yet they are revealing truths. I was able to capture the interpretation of segregation and desegregation according to three men that lived through it.

Interviews are the best way to get data for my study. Riessman (1993) states that interviews “are conversations in which both participants/teller and listener/questioner

develop meaning together, a stance requiring interview practices that give considerable freedom to both” (p. 55). While conducting the interviews, I had to be careful not to evaluate or judge anything that was said. Interpretation should be reserved for the analysis. Through one-on-one interviews, I was able to give a voice to these principals’ perspectives. According to Paul Thompson (2000), “oral history gives back to the people in their own words. And in giving them a past, it also helps them towards a future of their own making” (p. 308). With the clear benefits of using interviews to gather the stories I needed for personal narratives, I chose to interview three retired Greensboro City School administrators.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **JULIUS FULMORE**

The first interview I conducted was with Julius A. Fulmore. Mr. Fulmore began our interview session by discussing the history of Greensboro's public school system. Even though he moved to Greensboro in 1956, Mr. Fulmore seemed to be an expert on the history of education in Greensboro. He said that Quaker and Methodist settlers established colleges in Greensboro before the 1840s. I believe he was referring to Guilford College established in 1837 and Greensboro College founded 1838. By 1903, Greensboro had six colleges, including three colleges for black students; North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College, founded in 1891, Bennett College for Women, founded in 1873 by St. Matthews United Methodist Church and Palmer Memorial Institute was a junior college and preparatory school founded in 1902.

Mr. Fulmore continued giving statistical information about Greensboro's public school system and he referred to a speech he had written about the desegregation of the school system. He says that it was in the early 1900s before the public school system received much community support and 1920 before any of Greensboro's schools gained state accreditation. In 1954 the system included eighteen schools, ten for whites and eight for blacks, with one high school for each racial group. 528 teachers were employed that year and the average class size was 28 students. The total student enrollment was 14,568, of which 22% was black.

In 1957 the city annexed a portion of Guilford County resulting in a growth in student population to more than 18,000, of which 28% was black. This increase also caused the number of schools to nearly double to thirty-one. Of the thirteen new schools, twelve were for white students and only one new school was for black students. As a result, the schools for black students became overcrowded and they were already not as well maintained as the white schools.

The school board was appointed by the City Council and Guilford County Board of Education, instead of being elected. The City Council appointed six of the members and the County Board of Education appointed one member to create a seven member board. Greensboro appointed the first black school board member, Dr. David Dallas Jones, in 1953. His appointment came shortly before the *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* court case in 1954 and the demand for change in race relations was already stirring in Greensboro. As the president of Bennett College, Dr. Jones was originally from Greensboro and he led a very distinguished career with the YMCA in different areas of the United States. His mother was the first black teacher to work in Guilford County (“David Dallas Jones,” 1956). Dr. Jones had to resign in 1955, due to health reasons, but he was succeeded by another black appointee, Dr. William Hampton. Dr. Hampton was a well respected physician in the black community (Chafe, 1980).

The Greensboro City Board of Education took the first step toward desegregation in May of 1954, the night after the historic *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* decision had been made by the Supreme Court. Our Board adopted a resolution recognizing that the decision of the Court constitutes the law of the land and was binding upon the Board.

It was three years later, however, before the Board actually began desegregation. What factors intervened to delay the action? The restraining hand of state officials seems to have been a significant factor in discouraging action by local school officials. Reliable sources state that the Greensboro board was ready to begin desegregation in 1954 or 1955, but were told in a letter from a top state official that Greensboro could not move alone to desegregate but must wait until the state as a whole was ready to move on the issue. (Fulmore, 1975, p. 3)

Mr. Fulmore states that in 1971 a new pupil assignment plan was presented by the school board and it was “based on geographical attendance zones, pairing and clustering.” The plan was accepted and it included a student racial composition of 70% white to 30% black in elementary schools and 70% white to 25% black in secondary schools. Mr. Fulmore says that the transition to fully desegregate in Greensboro was an “unqualified success” and not a day of school was lost due to disruption of schools by racial incidents.

The next school year there were court-approved alterations in the desegregation plan due to some “unforeseen discrepancies which developed in individual school racial ratios.” This was largely due to white students leaving the district to attend private or parochial schools. After the first year, student racial ratio stabilized even though many white students had to return to public schools for various reasons. However, the plan remained unaltered for several years after that and attendance zones gained stability. Mr. Fulmore provides me with a copy of Greensboro Public Schools Desegregation Sequence (see Appendix C).

At this point, Mr. Fulmore pauses and begins to tell his own life story. He was born in Robeson County, North Carolina in 1925 and raised on a farm with his eight brothers and sisters. He attended the racially segregated school system of that area, but it

was unique in that there was a school for white children, one for black children and then a separate school for Native American children. Mr. Fulmore recalls that the three racial groups worked along beside each other in the fields and got along well. His family rented the land that they worked and they were able to grow most of the things that they need to live. He says that it was “not uncommon to have a black man living in one home and just up the road a piece there would be a white family and somewhere around there would be one of the Indian families” (Fulmore interview).

After graduating from high school in 1942, Mr. Fulmore received a work scholarship to attend Fayetteville Teacher’s College.

I wanted to come to A&T and thought I was perhaps going to pursue agricultural studies, reason being I had my mind set on perhaps returning to that kind of—I mean to that particular setting or that part of the state, and seeing if I could be the vehicle in helping many of the other people improve their plight, or work with them in the whole matter of trying to become landowners or to become more diversified farmers, whereby they could, you know, expect to live just a little bit more enriched kinds of lives. But it turned out I got the work scholarship and I went to a teacher’s college and ended up in education. (Carter, 1989, p. 3)

As an elementary education major and work study student, Mr. Fulmore had a busy schedule. He was responsible for doing general chores for the college president, Dr. J Ward Seabrook, and taking care of his aging mother’s home. Mr. Fulmore would often drive Dr. Seabrook to meetings or out of town, but he says his coursework always came first. He feels that Fayetteville Teachers College prepared him well to teach students in the rural areas of North Carolina.

Shortly after graduating in 1948, Mr. Fulmore secured a teaching job in Mocksville, North Carolina and moved there. He says that it was important for him to

teach his students survival skills. He wanted them to be able to relate to the environment that they would be in when they finished school. He says that he wanted to teach his students “how to use the land that around them and help in the procurement of the foodstuff that’s needed—actually, helping students to be able to use that to a good extent.” He was able to use many of the skills he had learned growing up to teach students farming skills, as well as, academic ones.

After teaching for a few years, Mr. Fulmore began taking graduate school classes at North Carolina A&T College in Greensboro, NC. He took several courses under Dr. Lewis Dowdy, who later became the Chancellor of A&T. Mr. Fulmore invited Dr. Dowdy to speak in Mocksville at the North Carolina Teachers Association Unit, as he was the local president. In turn Dr. Dowdy recommended Mr. Fulmore for a teaching position at a school in Greensboro.

The principal of the school preferred to have a male teacher who was married at that time for some strange reason. And I was not married, I was going to get married that summer and I had all that in the bag. I don’t necessarily want to get married and then take off over to Greensboro and leave my wife and everybody, her family back up in Mocksville. So I got in my car and drove back to Mocksville and went by my fiancé’s home later that evening and we talked about it briefly and she said, “You’re crazy. You should have told the man, ‘Yes, I’ll take the position’ right then and there.” (Carter, 1989, p. 7)

So even though Mr. Fulmore says he was enjoying his teaching in Mocksville, he accepted the position to come and teach at Jonesboro School in Greensboro. He completed his degree in administration while teaching there and soon was offered a “teaching principalship” at Terra Cotta School. Terra Cotta was a small community of black families that worked at the Pomona Terra Cotta Pipe Company near Norwalk Street

in Western Greensboro. It was a close knit community with its own church and sports teams (McCombs, 2010). Mr. Fulmore taught classes and served as the administrator of that school for three years. Sadly, the school closed in 1962 because of declining enrollment.

Mr. Fulmore was then assigned to serve as the assistant principal of Price School. He says that he was “an unofficial assistant principal” because he was paid a teacher’s salary. It was during this time that Mr. Fulmore recalls attending racially integrated staff meetings.

When I say staff meeting, I mean principals and supervisors meeting with the superintendent and his staff. That had been ongoing in Greensboro for many, many years before we integrated at the schoolhouse level. Good working relationships there among the principals, black and white principals in the district at that time. As time went along we began being assigned to certain system-wide committees as an integrated or mixed committee.

After two years of working at Price, Mr. Fulmore was chosen to open Hampton School in the eastern section of Greensboro in 1964. He did a community study to draw the attendance lines for Hampton before the school opened.

The board and the administration gave me the opportunity to establish my own boundaries to the north of us I used Franklin Blvd. to the south of us I used O’Henry Blvd. and to the east of us I used East Lee St. and so I actually found more students in those areas than the school would accommodate.

We only had 12 classrooms initially. The media center, the office, the multi-purpose room and that was it. Off the media center was an office for a guidance counselor. Hampton was one of two elementary schools that got guidance counselors through Title I it was called. Mt. Zion was the other one. And so as it turned out we entered the school in February and by the end of that school year because of the additional students I found in my survey, the



contractors were out there digging the trenches to add twelve additional classrooms. So it grew just that rapidly.

Hampton is located in the middle of an all black neighborhood, not too far from the Federal Subsidized Housing Apartments, Morningside Homes. When the doors of Hampton School opened, Mr. Fulmore said that he and the faculty made a commitment to the school and the students. “We didn’t care where the children came from. We have an obligation to provide the best opportunities for learning for every child that enters the building every day. And that didn’t change when the kids came out of Irving Park.”

In 1971, when Greensboro desegregated its schools, Hampton was paired with Irving Park School. Mr. Fulmore says this was shocking for black and white parents. Irving Park is nestled in one of the wealthiest communities in Greensboro and Mr. Fulmore said the pairing surprised him:

When the TV announcer said Hampton and Irving Park I nearly fell out of my chair. And my wife had already gone to bed and Irving Park!! Do you know where Hampton School is located? Well because of its location I had just earlier concluded in my mind that Hampton would either be paired or clustered with Bessemer or with Mount Zion. I just sort of concluded because of where we were located. But uh the school board on recommendation of the superintendent and the central office staff thought differently.

Mr. Fulmore believes that Hampton was chosen because it was a relatively new building and the facility was very clean. The plan was for students from both neighborhoods to attend Hampton in grades one through three and then go to Irving Park for grades four through six.

The next morning after the announcement was made one of my strongest supporters at Hampton, a lady whose husband was a lawyer and they attended the First Presbyterian Church, called and introduced herself. She said she wanted to come over and perhaps some other mothers from Irving Park would come with her because they didn't know where Hampton was. I told her OK and gave her directions.

When the 28 mothers from the Irving Park community arrived, Mr. Fulmore gave them a tour of the facility and answered all their questions. A newspaper article the next day reported the mothers were very impressed with the school. One mother said, "I don't think the parents from this school will be as pleased when they visit Irving Park."

Overall, it was a very good visit and the catalyst to easing the parents' comfort level with desegregation.

Mr. Fulmore believed it was essential to make believers out of the new parents.

He told them

The teachers and staff are committed to helping children learn and they are committed to number one assessing what the learning needs of the children are and going about the business of pulling together the learning resources to fine the appropriate methodology and helping the children learn.

Some chose to pull their children out of public school and later ended up bringing them back.

A number of them went to a school up on Highway 29. There is a big church up there going towards Reidsville. They established a school out there and a number of them went out there. It lasted for a while. The minister of the church also served as head master of the school. He finally ran off with another female and he took some of the church and school's money with him. So they struggled to try to keep it going. The building is still there. Then they found out that they had to come back to public schools is what it boiled down to.

According to Mr. Fulmore those numbers were minimal and the parents figured out that their children could come to Hampton and be provided a good education in a safe environment. Reaching out to these parents and proving that Hampton was a good place for all students to learn was Mr. Fulmore's mission at that time.

Mr. Fulmore repeatedly referred to the cleanliness of Hampton School and his custodial staff.

We had one of the best custodians in the state and I think beyond. He loved that building until he retired. So much so that the superintendent tried to get him because of his skill in maintenance and so forth. The superintendent tried to get him to accept a position at the central office and pay him a little more money. And he said "I'm sorry, but I belong at Hampton School" and I still respect him for that. "Hampton School with Mr. Fulmore, those teachers and those children. I appreciate the offer. Thank you but no thank you."

And he stayed right there until he retired. I left him there. Well, I boosted his ego cause I tell everybody I'm obligated to him. And by the way no one in that building referred to him by his first name. He was Mr. Johnson. He was a member of our staff. Children and parents coming in the building that was Mr. Johnson. Teachers, nobody ever called him Kevin. That was something I believed in, it was demeaning. Nobody ever called him the janitor, he was the head housekeeper. He appreciated it and gave it his best all day, every day. Those Formica tile floors were spick and span every day.

Mr. Fulmore emphasized the importance of respecting the custodial staff and all adults. If a child was disrespectful or misbehaved, Mr. Fulmore would make them apologize and then created a task of repentance for them to complete. One time a child scratched up the floor by running down the hall and Mr. Fulmore made him clean the floor with a scrub brush and apologize to Mr. Johnson. It was very important to Mr. Fulmore for the students to maintain a clean learning environment and he felt that the lessons he taught children would help them navigate through life.

When Mr. Fulmore was attending a conference a young man walked up to him and asked if he remembered him. Mr. Fulmore didn't, but the young man told him a story that helped jog his memory.

“I just wanted you to know that I am one of your students from Hampton School.” He was a white guy, tall. He told me what his name was. I keep chuckling because these things keep coming over and over again.

This kid was in one of my best teachers' room down on one of those famous rugs. The teacher overheard him say to another boy on the rug, it was play time for them and it was supposed to be a learning experience too.

Anyway he said “you nigger” and the teacher said “Come on. You have to got see Mr. Fulmore.” And the way he helped me remember who he was he said, “I will never, ever forget that stern lecture you gave me” and I immediately remembered who he was. He had gone to law school and he was an Assistant District Attorney. He said that lecture you gave me and I said “It helped you didn't it.” And he said that and what his daddy did to his backside. Because I called his father and told him what had happened because he had been in the office and his dad said “I'll take care of him because he knows better than to talk like that.”

Well, I contended that the child had heard someone use those expressions at sometime along with way. I'm pleased that we helped to establish that kind of foundation for children not black children but children. They come back over and over again and I don't remember all of them. The experience was very positive and one that I'm proud to talk about for the families that had children to come to Hampton School.

A struggle that Mr. Fulmore encountered was convincing some of the white teachers that they could teach black children.

I told them you've taught children. You don't worry about the color they are. Let me assume the responsibility and I want you to keep foremost that they are children that need to be taught and since you have some reservations about it that is part of my responsibility to help you get over those reservations. You need to find out what the learning needs of the children are and then you teach them. You apply the teaching methodology using the appropriate teaching resources to help them learn. As a principal I can't really afford to let these black

children be ignored because they are black. I understand that I haven't worked with white children before but that is a responsibility that I've got now. I've got to give it my best all day, every day.

Some of the white teachers left after a few years, but most stayed and Mr. Fulmore helped them with the transition. It "caused his blood to boil" if he saw the white children in a classroom learning and the black children playing on the rug. He immediately talked with the teachers and told them they had to get over their fears and teach all children. There was one white teacher that Mr. Fulmore thought "could teach a door knob to read if it would stay still long enough," but she was afraid to touch black children. Mr. Fulmore worked with her and she overcame her fear. She ended up teaching at Hampton for a long time.

Mr. Fulmore says that Greensboro was very fortunate to have Dr. Ben L. Smith as a superintendent "when the Supreme Court handed down their decision." After the decision was made to fully integrate the schools, Dr. Smith had a very rough time. His home, which was right across the street from Aycock Junior High School was guarded by the police at all times. Visitors had to be cleared by security before even approaching his home.

I remember I went over there to see Dr. Smith and when I approached his home a plain clothes officer stepped out of his car. We stopped and Dr. Smith came to the door and nodded his head and said "It's all right. I'm expecting them." So he let us approach the house. It was just that tense at the time, unfortunately.

Once the students arrived at Hampton there were very few conflicts involving race. The white parents drove their children to school the first day and Mr. Fulmore allowed them

to stay as long as they needed. He chuckled as he remembers all the cars parked all over the grass and in the driveways of neighboring houses.

I know the anxiety was there. I would have had the same kinds of concern. Many of the black parents did. The first day of school . . . automobiles of white parents . . . they came and brought [their children] because they were afraid—just checking it out. I said ‘Just leave them to us; we’re going to take care of them.’ Stay as long as you will, but we need the opportunity to try to get them acclimated in the class setting in the school.

After we got the kids into the school, and they saw that we were sincere about what happened to these kids from the time they arrived until we got them back on the bus or headed them up the front walkway for those in the school community who walk to and from school, I’d say their apprehension, their anxiety began to lessen then.

Mr. Fulmore felt that the black parents were apprehensive about the white students coming to Hampton and their own children going to Irving Park School, but they allowed their children to walk to school or ride the bus. They were very supportive of both schools and wanted their children to do well.

Greensboro had open houses for all the schools before school started and this helped alleviate some fears that parents had. According to Mr. Fulmore over 30,000 people attended the open houses just before the opening of the 1971-72 school year. The school system and leaders in the community supported desegregation and they worked tirelessly to find ways to inform the community of the benefits of integrated schools for everyone. The support of the community was needed in order for desegregation to work.

A number of factors contributed to helping Hampton and other schools transition into desegregated schools with as little conflict as possible. Mr. Fulmore handed me a list (see Appendix D) that he created in which he chronicles some of them.

Mr. Fulmore credits the news media with being very supportive of desegregation. He says there was a television series that gave parents detailed information on all the schools that were involved in changing their attendance zones and there were thirty minute public service programs highlighting the positives of integration. He also recalls the local newspapers “explored the full implications of the transition in major series of articles explaining every aspect of the change.” The local media was supportive of positive race relations even prior to full desegregation. Mr. Fulmore feels “this ongoing positive program of the media relations, community relations and internal staff communications kept the public well informed and made them more receptive to the changes.”

Something else that Mr. Fulmore thought helped smooth the desegregation transition was a new federal grant that the school system received. This ESA grant provided \$456,000 in funds to be used as the district saw fit. Greensboro used the money to create several positions that would work on improving race relations with students, parents and school staff. Among these new positions were home-school coordinators, information specialist, additional guidance counselors, and a Director of Student Affairs at the central office level to coordinate these efforts. The Guilford County Commissioners also provided funds to bring in staff from the North Carolina State Department of Instruction to help the transition.

Mr. Fulmore says “I would not want to leave you with the impression that there were not problems connected with the transition. But they were brushfires of discontent,

not conflagrations of defiance and revolt.” Generally, he found the parents of Hampton School very supportive.

After the parents became more comfortable with desegregation they created clubs and other organizations that would meet at the homes of different families. The black families would travel to Irving Park and the white families would go into Morningside Homes. “I remember vividly the very first time the mothers met in Morningside Homes and one mother was so proud to have those mothers from Irving Park in her home even though it was just a small apartment, she was very proud of it” (Carter, 1989, p. 11).

We made it through and I feel real good about my experience and what happened with those parents out of Irving Park School and community. The kind of things that we as a faculty at Hampton School were able to do for children. I’m pleased that we helped to establish that kind of foundation for children. Not just black children, but for children. They come back over and over again and I don’t remember all of them. The experience was very positive and one that I’m proud to talk about for the families that had children to come to Hampton School.

Mr. Fulmore served as the principal of Hampton School from 1964 until 1975. He prided himself on knowing the names of all of his students. He wanted his students to know that he recognized them and they could come to him if they were having issues. His school was pivotal in the bridging of race relations.

In 1975, Mr. Fulmore left Hampton to work as the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools and he says that he wore many different hats before retiring in 1992. Even though Mr. Fulmore doesn’t go into detail about his work after he left Hampton School, I know that he went on to become Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and then later became Deputy Superintendent for Personnel. He also did



consultant work throughout the United States and became a much sought after speaker on best practices in education. I believe Mr. Fulmore spent more time talking about the desegregation of Hampton School because he knew the topic of my research was an African American administrator's perspective during desegregation. He also appeared to become fatigued after talking for such a long time, and realizing he was 85 years old, it is not surprising.

## CHAPTER V

### CHARLES WALLACE

The second principal I interviewed was Charles Wallace. Mr. Wallace was born in Lynchburg, Virginia and moved to Greensboro when he was only three months old. He says that his family was originally living in Greensboro, but his mother returned to her home in Brookfield for him to be born. “You know that they used to do that in the old days, go back to family.” He attended Greensboro City’s segregated schools and graduated from Dudley Senior High School. Mr. Wallace entered local North Carolina Agriculture & Technical College with the intent to go on to medical school.

I did biology chemistry and some physics and some math and I was preparing to go to medical school but I never did. When I finished they didn’t have the scholarships and the kind of things they have a now. Everything was segregated and so you couldn’t go to medical school in anywhere but Meharry, Howard or some northeast school. So I never went.

Upon graduating from NC A&T College, Mr. Wallace secured a Science teaching position at his alma mater, Dudley Senior High School. He has great pride in Dudley. “I went to school there, I taught there, all four of my children went there, so I have roots at Dudley.” Mr. Wallace says his program was considered “the best and strongest program in physics.” Students at Dudley felt that the teachers really cared for them. The teachers would push them and make do well. He says “we would coax them and pull them along and make them and threaten them and praise them and do whatever you had to do.”

While teaching at Dudley he recalls just how unequal facilities, supplies and compensation were.

I remember at Dudley we had 35 microscopes and I talked to a guy at Page that was a Science teacher and I asked him how many do you have and he said “Oh somewhere between 500-600.”

I had occasion to go to Kiser and was astonished to see how vastly superior Kiser Junior High School’s science labs were to my science labs at Dudley Senior High School.

For years I called all of Dudley’s basketball and football games. Every one of them, I was on the PA system. I got absolutely nothing and I was there for 13 years. We had to do all kinds of things and we never got a cent. When we integrated, I learned for the first time that all the white teachers who did extra-curricular duties got extra money. We didn’t know that.

We worked all those years, because we wanted our students to do as well as other students. It was just part of it, just like grading papers is part of it. But all those years the whites were getting paid for sitting there taking up tickets and I had to watch everything that was going on so I could tell the people and I got \$0.

Black teachers were told that working extra hours and having extra duties was part of their “obligation as a teacher.” Mr. Wallace says that he spoke about the inequities between black and white schools at local churches. He recalls one man standing up during one of his speeches and saying “Things have always been equal in Greensboro.” Mr. Wallace said that was ridiculous.

As the chair of Dudley’s science department he was responsible for ordering all the equipment and it frustrated him to hear that all the money was gone when he submitted an order for Dudley. He says that his students would submit their science fees and he would send them in to the person in charge at the central office. Yet, when he inquired about where their money went he was told, “Well you don’t have any money.

When the money comes in it all goes into one pot and the whole pot got spent including yours, so you don't get any." Mr. Wallace said "the whole separate, but equal thing was a joke." The black students couldn't receive an equal education without equal supplies and equipment, but Mr. Wallace says they used what they had. I see Mr. Wallace as an innovative teacher and believe that he did his best to provide the black students of Dudley with the best education he could. He was inquisitive and wanted to investigate where his students' money was going since he didn't have access to it. I know he was upset about the answer he received, but he doesn't speak about fighting to get his share of the money. I applaud his initial effort and understand that in order to continue working he was not going to 'buck' the system by insisting his students get their fair share of the money.

Mr. Wallace gave several other examples of how white staff members were treated differently from black staff members while schools and staff were still separated by race.

I was also summer school director. What we got was what we made, in other words if you have 5 students in summer school, each of them would pay \$10 a piece, then the 3 or 4 teachers that were there would split that \$50. Well the whites made a specific salary. It was like \$400 or \$500 which back then was substantial. I worked a 6 week summer school and made \$40 and there were other teachers there too.

Well one summer, I don't know why the summer school went crazy and it filled up and we made about \$700 a piece. There were just 3 of us. The principal we had at the time said we couldn't have that money because it was just too much money. So he sent the money to the central office and they gave each one of us like \$300 or \$400 which is more than we had ever made, but in the past we got whatever we made, which was never much, but that was the power of the principal. I am not a vindictive man or someone who holds a grudge, but I'll never forget that.

I find it interesting that Mr. Wallace's principal had become so jaded with unfair practices that even he didn't think they deserved to keep the money that summer when so many students were in summer school. It seems that even he feared for his job if he didn't turn in a certain amount of money to central office. I conclude that black educators had the difficult task of educating students, as well as, dealing with the harsh realities of unequal treatment, facilities and supplies. It must have been extremely difficult for them to face their students and peers, knowing that they had to work within a system that was so unfair.

In 1957 Greensboro chose voluntary pupil desegregation as an answer to the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education mandate. However only seven black students chose to integrate white schools and their families were adversely affected on their jobs and at their homes. Josephine Boyd, a Dudley High School student integrated Grimsley in 1957 and her attendance was met with taunts, jeers and other harassment (Chafe, 1980). Grimsley was originally Greensboro Senior High School and as one of the oldest high schools in North Carolina, it was all white. As a saving grace, two or three white students would ask Ms. Boyd to eat lunch with them or stand up for her against hugglers. Against all odds and daily discrimination, Ms. Boyd graduated from Greensboro Senior High in 1958. However, it would be six years before another black person integrated the school and that was only when the school system forced faculty integration in 1964.

In 1959, Greensboro enacted the Freedom of choice plan for elementary schools and then middle and high schools in 1966. Mr. Wallace says this did not really integrate schools because the "whites didn't chose to go to black schools and to be perfectly

honest” most of the white schools were “superior” to the black schools because of equipment and facilities. “Why are you going to send your child to Dudley if he could go to Page and you look at the contrast in equipment and the amount of money the schools get.” Mr. Wallace also admits that part of the reason they didn’t choose to go to black schools was also prejudice.

While Mr. Wallace was teaching at Dudley, Greensboro was experiencing national attention because four students from North Carolina A&T State College sat down at the Woolworth’s lunch counter that served white patrons only. Two of the four students, Ezell Blair and David Richmond, had attended Dudley for high school and Mr. Wallace taught them. The action of these brave young men sparked more non-violent demonstrations across the nation against segregation and unequal treatment based on race. The young men were not served that first day and they left quietly after Woolworths closed early. However the next day, other students from NC A&T, Women’s College, Bennett College and Greensboro citizens joined the demonstration and after five months, Woolworth finally decided to serve black patrons at the lunch counter. The Greensboro Sit-ins was one of the most notable events to occur during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, but it is noticeably absent from Mr. Wallace’s story of his life. Either he wasn’t involved, which is surprising given his interest in fair treatment for schools, or he didn’t feel that it was important to mention. Whichever the case, Mr. Wallace doesn’t mention the Sit-in movement at all.

Greensboro City Schools finally admitted the Freedom of Choice plan would not lead to desegregation, so staff members were chosen to integrate first. Mr. Wallace was

working as a Physics teacher at Dudley and he was asked to go to Grimsley Senior High as a physics teacher. He says declined the position at Grimsley because he felt the students at Dudley needed him more. "I would have been among the very first, but I chose not to go." Instead he decided to go back to school and get his masters degree in administration from North Carolina A&T. Soon after completing this degree in 1968, he was given a choice of three schools in which he could be the assistant principal.

There was Proximity at the time, Aycock and Gillespie. Gillespie was a poor black school, so I felt that I would do better. Aycock was where the more affluent blacks sent their children so that would have been maybe easier, but not as much of a challenge as Gillespie where everybody was or most of them were ... they lived in big houses on Asheboro/Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive which used to be sort of old mansions. They would house four or five families. They would have one room or two rooms per family.

Gillespie served students in grades first through eight and Mr. Wallace felt that he was successful there. He enjoyed working with the students and trying to help the families. The cycle of poverty disturbed him greatly. He said a lot of his students parents lived in poverty and their parents did as well. He wondered when it would stop. "Now there is racial discrimination that is more subtle and more sophisticated, but then it might be more hurtful because it tends to hurt in economic ways. Ways that effect your income, but it is not blatant."

In 1970, Mr. Wallace moved to a predominantly white neighborhood near East Market Street. He said that the man that sold him the house was "castigated" because he was considered a traitor to the neighborhood. His neighbor, a black preacher, moved into the neighborhood a few years before the Wallace family and he endured many racist acts.

“The Klan marched and they would straighten out coat hangers and throw them on the lawn so it would ruin the lawnmower.” Mr. Wallace did not say if his own family encountered racism in the neighborhood, but he does share that there was immediate white flight when the school system rezoned the schools.

When they switched this area from Page to Dudley, the people went WHOOSH! And Kings Forest was white and all around here and down where Bessemer School is all that was white. But when they told these white children that they had to go to Dudley and not Page the neighborhood changed almost overnight. Even the poorest white managed to flee.

All that is part of the integration story. Now there were a few whites left. You know old ones with no children. It was so interesting. Even if they weren't making \$2 a week. They moved. They would not go to that black school and they didn't. All of that is the determination of whites not to go to black schools. When they had the freedom of choice to do it they wouldn't and when they were forced to, they left.

During the same year that Mr. Wallace and his family moved into their new home, he was moved to be the assistant principal at predominantly white Page High School when the whole administrative team was changed.

They had difficulty out there and they said they needed two strong people and they thought I had done well at Gillespie. So the new principal and I went out there in 1970. First there was just the two of us and then the second year he got a second assistant principal.

Mr. Wallace was in charge of instruction and he work directly with the students and teachers in the classrooms. He recalls that he developed a very good relationship with students and they would come by his house because he lived within the school district. “They wanted to come by and see me and they did.”



During his second year at Page, official integration was ordered in Greensboro City Schools by the Department of Health Education and Welfare (Chafe, 1980) and the problem students changed from white to black.

Page had the affluent blacks under Freedom of Choice, so the racial thing wasn't as bad as it could have been. The problem children were the poor whites. They were the ones that were lower economics; they were the ones that got in trouble. Well, under integration we took in Morningside Homes and Claremont Homes and those children were socio-economically deprived. So that became part of the problem. These children were poor and every kind of study has shown that there is a perfect relationship between income and school success.

Mr. Wallace felt that integration was a good thing and that students shouldn't be separated because of their race, but he was disappointed that some teachers "didn't know how to handle black children and some were not enthusiastic about trying." I believe that Mr. Wallace meant that some teachers had low expectations for black children based on their own segregated past. He says that

we lost some black youngsters out of the system in those days, but the effort was noble and it was worthwhile and it did help in many cases. However, I'm not sure how well it worked the way we did it because a lot of the lower economic level children just did badly.

Mr. Wallace felt that there were problems with integration and some were related to race and some were not. "Much of what appeared to be racial was socio-economic."

The summer before the students were integrated, the high school administrators had to decide how to fully integrate the teachers. The principals from Grimsley, Page, and Smith (another predominately white high school) were "allowed to select the white teacher that would go to Dudley." Mr. Wallace said

It takes no vivid imagination to see who went as a matter of fact my job as director of instruction was to select this list and then the principal selected a list. Well of course I knew the poorest teachers and I knew what we were supposed to do. It was interesting that our list were absolutely identical. Except one and that was a religious issue. It had nothing to do with the teacher's competency in the classroom. He wanted her on the list, but I didn't put her on the list. But anyway she wound up on the final list.

After leaving Page in 1973, Mr. Wallace went back to Gillespie as the principal. Gillespie was now a junior high school and predominately black. Mr. Wallace remained there for three years, but he doesn't say anything else about that assignment. I believe things must have gone smoothly in his first principalship or there was nothing of note that he felt it was important to share.

In 1976, Mr. Wallace became the principal of Mendenhall Junior High School, where he remained until he retired in 1991. Mendenhall is located in one of the wealthiest, predominately white neighborhoods in Greensboro.

You had rich whites, wealthy and upper middle class whites and very poor housing project type blacks. We used to call that a bi-modal distribution. Of course that caused some friction and where Mendenhall is located, in the most affluent area. The poor black children of Morningside Homes had to pass through and see all that.

Once again, Mr. Wallace found himself working with the children of Morningside Homes. This neighborhood was the site of the Greensboro Massacre of 1979, which was during Mr. Wallace tenure at Mendenhall. During this notorious slaughter, five communist protestors were killed by members of the Klu Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party. The protest was an effort to bring local textile and industrial workers together and organize their disapproval of social and economic injustice. According to Chafe

(Chafe, 1980) the demonstration was a “Death to the Klan” rally that resulted in Klan and Nazi members opening fire against the Communist Worker’s Party. “At the time Greensboro’s white leaders insisted that the violence had nothing to do with Greensboro itself.” They believed race relations to be good. Instead they claimed that this was an isolated incident between two extremist groups. Less than a year later some of the Nazi and Klan members were tried for first degree murder and acquitted of all charges by an all white jury. Black residents in Greensboro felt that justice was not served. In 1985, survivors filed a civil law suit and won \$350,000 against the Klu Klux Klan and American Nazi Party. Twenty years later, in 2005, a local group of concerned citizens initiated the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate exactly what happened on November 3, 1979 and their findings of corruption provided some closure to a very bad situation.

After arriving as the first black principal of Mendenhall, Mr. Wallace felt he had to prove himself as a competent administrator. His secretary greeted him on the first day by saying she believed Mendenhall was ready for a black principal. Mr. Wallace told her that “Mendenhall was ready for a good principal.” The first year was very challenging with race riots and many student discipline issues. Students were fighting with each other, urinating in the halls and challenging his leadership.

My first year there I short term suspended 438 children and 38 students were dismissed for the entire year. I had to establish authority. I ran a tight ship and as soon as they saw that I was competent, then they started gravitating towards me. At first they had to see if I were any good. They weren’t hostile, but they were sort of non-committal. After that first year they saw how things were going, that I was very firm, but fair. We had discipline.

Mr. Wallace also had to deal with pressure from the affluent, white parents to give in to favoritism. They wanted to choose their children's teachers and preferential treatment in regards to the dress code. Students were not allowed to wear short shorts or halter tops. Mr. Wallace stood firm and did not concede to the parents' demands for leniency. Eventually, the parents stopped asking and came to respect his decisions. "I told them the dress code says anything that can be disruptive or draws attention away from school cannot be worn. In some schools they let them wear shorts up to the white meat. That was the term. But I wouldn't." Mr. Wallace says that "it got to the point where I was enormously respected. They don't have to like you to respect you."

Earning the support and respect of the lower income parents was not easy either. After getting little to no response from going to Morningside and Claremont Homes with a bus to transport parents to PTA meetings or from holding both a day and night parent meeting to accommodate working parents' schedules, Mr. Wallace became discouraged.

Part of it was the socio-economic background of the parents. Not that they were necessarily 'sorry' as they say, but being a part of school just wasn't a part of their culture. You see most of them hadn't finished school. Theoretically their children would and then their children would and pretty soon most people would be pretty decent economically. But that didn't happen.

Since he couldn't get the lower income parents to come to school, Mr. Wallace worked through the children. He held meetings with the small groups of students and found out things that were going on in their lives. He made students feel important by offering several different opportunities around the school for involvement. Students felt

comfortable enough to share gang and drug secrets with him. Mr. Wallace gave them advice on how to handle difficult situations.

My children liked and respected me enough to come in and talk with me about it. They told me how they were organized into little groups and each little group was a sales group and the leader was always whoever was the oldest person in that gang. So they would get money even if they themselves didn't sell. It was organized.

I asked a little child and this was some years ago, how much have you made personally this week, and he said \$500. And this was back in the early to mid 80s. Now they didn't make that every week of course, but if they had a particularly good group working and they turned over some stuff that time. And of course, I wasn't making \$500 a week.

Mr. Wallace also listened to his students and made changes when he agreed with their suggestions for change. "Boys could not wear hats in the building. The boys told me it was discriminatory that girls can wear hats and boys can't. They were right so I said nobody could wear hats." He says that he was very friendly with the students by "shaking hands, hugging, or something. I was friendly, but not buddy buddy with them."

Mr. Wallace says his teachers also appreciated him because he tried to make life easier for them. If central office wanted something from the teachers, he would usually do it himself because he wanted teachers to spend their time teaching and not worrying about extraneous things. He also gave the teachers a schedule at the beginning of the year with all the meetings they would need to attend and he stuck to that schedule. Planning time was sacred at Mendenhall and he says the staff appreciated it. "During the workdays I would have a loose schedule and they knew where they were supposed to be then. I would try to avoid teachers' meetings because it is supposed to be planning time."

The PTA at Mendenhall was very supportive of Mr. Wallace and the teachers. “We got pretty much anything we wanted. If they respected you there wasn’t anything they wouldn’t do for you. We had enough money to buy anything.” Mr. Wallace believes the parents were so supportive because they recognized all the hard work and time he and the staff put into making sure the school was a good place for students to learn. He arrived to work before the teachers and stayed late. He also worked most weekends.

It is no wonder the parents, students and teachers joined forces to convince Mr. Wallace to stay and not retire after thirteen years at Mendenhall. He agreed to stay two more years and when he finally did retire they gave him a send off he says he will always remember and cherish. The PTA gave him and his wife a two week, all expense paid trip to Hawaii including spending money.

They said they didn’t want me to spend one penny. One of my parents came by one morning and said “I couldn’t come to your meeting where they were doing your trip but I certainly wanted to be a part of that and I want to add my little two cents worth,” and he gave me \$100. In addition they added two days to the trip because I have children in Los Angeles and they wanted me to be able to see them.

After his retirement, Mr. Wallace stayed away from Mendenhall for a few years to allow the new principal time to establish his own way of doing things. He says that he “missed the heck out of it” and he slowly began going back over to the school after four years to judge Science Fairs and attend award ceremonies. There is a C.C. Wallace Citizenship Award given to a deserving student every year and a Charles C. Wallace Scholarship. Mendenhall also dedicated a C. C. Wallace garden in memory of the time

and commitment Mr. Wallace gave to the school. He gushes that “it became about the best job a principal could have.”

**CHAPTER VI**  
**MELVIN C. SWANN, JR.**

Melvin C. Swann, Jr. was born in Alabama City, Alabama in 1936 to a Methodist minister and a school teacher. Reverend Melvin C. Swann, Sr. was originally from Baltimore, Maryland and he met his wife while preaching a revival service in Raleigh, North Carolina where she was a student at Shaw University. Rev. Swann's first assignment was in Alabama City, but he and his family didn't stay there long. In the Methodist Church, ministers are assigned to their church by the district superintendent of their region annually. Therefore, it is very common for Methodist ministers to move frequently. After two years, the Swanns moved to Bakersfield, California where young Melvin, Jr. eventually began school. His father's job caused them to move six more times before he entered high school.

Mr. Swann learned to talk while in Bakersfield, California and his accent fascinated his classmates when his family moved to Raleigh, North Carolina to take care of his ailing grandmother in 1942. They said he talked 'proper' and would always ask him to say things over and over. In California he attended integrated schools and this was his first experience in an all black school. While living in Raleigh, Mr. Swann recalled encountering racism for the first time:

My mother and I were getting on the bus and she was paying and I went and sat in my seat. My seat was behind the driver, that's where my seat was on the bus when we were in other places and I had to ride the bus.



So I went and jumped in my seat and my mother grabbed my hand and said “Let’s go back here.” and I said “No, this is my seat. You know we sit up here all the time.” And my mom said “No, come on.” and I kept asking why and she wouldn’t say anything. She just sort of drug me to the back and I can remember white faces looking at me as if to say “Oh, this little boy ain’t from round here.”

Raleigh, like most Southern cities, regulated black patrons to the back of the bus. Black riders also had to give up their seats to white patrons if there were no other seats left on the bus. Blacks and whites could not occupy the same row on a bus either, which often resulted in blacks giving up their seat so that a white person could have a whole row to him or herself. This practice was written into law in many cities and resulted in black people being arrested if they refused to sit in the back or give up their seats. Such laws were called Jim Crow: “the state sponsored, constitutionally protected system of racial discrimination and segregation that deliberately disadvantaged more than 10 million black people in the South and parts of the border states” (Patterson, 2001, p. xvi). Later, Mr. Swann’s mother tried to explain the Jim Crow laws of the South to him, but he says he still didn’t understand and wanted to go back to California.

Luckily, Mr. Swann’s grandmother began feeling better and they did not have to stay in Raleigh very long. Since his father was a Methodist minister, Mr. Swann enjoyed the different assignments his father was given. It allowed him to see the world and have many varied experiences. Most of his schooling was in integrated school systems in California, Kansas, Pennsylvania and even Germany. He also attended segregated schools in North Carolina and Maryland.

In 1944 at age eight, Mr. Swann and his mother traveled to join his father at an Army Base in Nuremberg, Germany.

We went by troop ship; the kind of ship that the Army Transportation Corp. used to transport soldiers. They didn't have state rooms and things like that. We slept in bays, like hammocks and they were double-decker. Several families slept in one bay. Of course we had a social director that would have activities for us kids. We would do calisthenics, all on the deck of the ship.

When the Swanns arrived in Nuremberg, the United States was at the height of World War II, but Mr. Swann does not mention the war when describing his life. By that point England, the Soviet Union, France and the United States had banded together with several other small countries to form the Allies. The Allies entered Germany on September 11, 1944 and were finally able to take over Aachen, Germany a month later in October. This coup was the beginning of the end of the war. Mr. Swann and his family were in Nuremberg when the war ended and even during the famous Nuremberg Trials (famous military trials in which the Allied Forces prosecuted well known members of the political, military, and economic leadership of the fallen Nazis), however any mention of this is notably absent from Mr. Swann's accounts of his life there. I believe the Army base shielded its inhabitants from the war and Mr. Swann's parents protected him from it, as well.

There weren't many children on the base and the Army had to build them a school. Mr. Swann was the only black child and the grades ranged from one to seven. Since there was only one teacher, the students did a lot of peer learning. The class also did a lot of experiential learning by visiting places on the base and in the town. They went to the bakery to learn how bread was baked and they also went ice skating when the lake froze over. "I was the only African American, but I didn't know it because the kids

didn't seem to be prejudiced and we did everything together and the teacher sort of kept us together.”

Mr. Swann's family owned a dog, Bells, during this time. Bells was a German Shepherd and he could “look a six foot man in the eye.” Bells had free reign over the Army Base and was well liked by everyone. Wherever Mr. Swann went on the post, he could count on Bells to find him and escort him home. Bells also proved to be pretty resourceful in that he knew where the mess halls were and would get fed at every meal. The smile on Mr. Swann's face shows the joy he feels as he recounts the humorous stories of Bells jumping out of a two story window and meeting the Swann family outside the movie theater after a picture show. Bells was obviously very important in Mr. Swann's life during this time in Nuremberg, even though World War II was being fought right outside the Army compound.

Another fond memory of Germany for Mr. Swann was visiting the home of one of their maids, Lottie. Lottie invited the Swanns to join her family as they celebrated Kris Kringle. Mr. Swann recalls that he was about nine years old (1945) and this celebration was very different from Christmas in the United States. The family baked bread outside in a kiln and this fascinated Mr. Swann. They would put the dough on a paddle, shove it in the kiln and close the door. When the bread was finished cooking, it was be round and they would take it out of the kiln and put it in the window. Neighbors would come by, take the bread from the window and shove it under their arms to take home. Mr. Swann thought it was funny that they didn't wrap up the bread or even slice it.

The Swanns remained in Germany until Mr. Swann completed the eighth grade. After returning to the United States, Mr. Swann's family moved to Baltimore, Maryland. His father had grown up there and his grandparents were well known members of the community. His grandfather owned the Comedy Club on Pennsylvania Avenue in downtown Baltimore. The Comedy Club had a bar in the front and a club in the back. This was an upscale establishment because male patrons were required to wear ties and jackets and if they didn't have them, they could rent these items for the night. Famous musicians, like Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday would come and play at the Comedy Club because Grandfather Swann was a skilled drummer and would often have jam sessions with them.

Mr. Swann says he learned many valuable lessons by watching how his grandfather conducted his business. He would go down to the club when his grandfather knew a famous act was going to be in town and sit up on the stool behind the counter with him. When he questioned his grandfather about not being out there mingling with the crowd since he was the boss, Grandfather Swann quickly told him "If you have a business, you better watch the money and if anybody else is handling the money you better make sure they have as much to lose as you have." The waitresses were given twenty dollars at the beginning of the night and when they came to get drinks for their customers, they would pay for the drinks. It would then be the waitresses' responsibility to get their money back from the customers. These creative business practices kept Grandfather Swann in business for a many years.

Mr. Swann was very interested in attending St. Emma Military Academy in Rockcastle, Virginia for high school. It was the only black military academy in the nation at that time and Mr. Swann recalls when he first heard about it:

I went to a family reunion in Raleigh and my cousin was there in his uniform. He went to military school and they had the West Point type uniforms. I saw that and I wanted to go to that school cause I wanted to wear a uniform. So I asked my father and he said "Son, I am saving all the money I can to send you to college and you're going to college." So I asked him if I could go if I got the money and he said "Yeah," thinking I wouldn't get the money.

Mr. Swann explained to his grandfather his dilemma of wanting to go to St. Emma, but lacking the funds. His grandfather said "Bring me all the information" and he brought him the catalog, "which I used to sleep with and he asked if that was all that I needed." It was, so his secretary wrote a check for the tuition to St. Emma.

Attending the St. Emma Military Academy was a good experience for Mr. Swann. The school was run by the Catholic Church and they had Holy Ghost Fathers, as well as, lay people as teachers. There was a girls' school about a half mile down the road called St. Francis. On the weekends, the boys of St. Emmas would march over there for dances and the girls would come over for ball games, but during the week there was no co-ed interaction.

At St. Emmas, all the students learned a trade. It was common in 1940s and 50s for black students to expect to have an occupation using their hands instead of their intelligence. Booker T. Washington, a revered educator and black political leader at the turn of the twentieth century, was instrumental in bringing agriculture and woodworking to the forefront as an occupation for many black Americans. Washington was the first

president of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute and he believed that cooperation with white people was the way to overcome racism in the end. Promoting agriculture, mechanics, and domestic work for black people was Washington's platform, and in his famous Atlanta Exposition Speech in 1895 he says, "In all things purely social we can be as separate as the five fingers, and yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress" (as cited in Harlan, 1974, p. 220).

Washington's former colleague and friend, W.E.B. DuBois, disagreed with this philosophy and felt that such a passive outlook would not advance black people. DuBois felt that black people should pursue their interests, whether it was mechanics or liberal arts. He also publically criticized Washington in his book, *The Souls of Black Folks*. He says:

So far as Mr. Washington preaches Thrift, Patience, and Industrial Training for the masses, we must hold up his hands and strive with him, rejoicing in his honors and glorying in the strength of this Joshua called of God and of man to lead the headless host. But so far as Mr. Washington apologizes for injustice, North or South, does not rightly value the privilege and duty of voting, belittles the emasculating effects of caste distinctions, and opposes the higher training and ambition of our brighter minds,—so far as he, the South, or the Nation, does this,—we must unceasingly and firmly oppose them.

By every civilized and peaceful method we must strive for the rights which the world accords to men, clinging unwaveringly to those great words which the sons of the Fathers would fain forget: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." (Du Bois, 1903, p. 59)

Fifty years later, black males were still being steered into manual labor professions. The boys of St. Emma could choose agriculture, tailoring, carpentry, auto

mechanics, metalwork or electricity as a focus of their studies. All of the instructors had shops that focused on a specific trade and they supported the school. Students that studied agriculture were responsible for the farm that grew vegetables and fruits. The cafeteria used everything that was grown on the farm. Mr. Swann chose auto mechanics and learned through courses like ironworks, woodworks and upholstery. He also learned how to repair horse saddles and farm equipment.

Mr. Swann received an Academic and ROTC diploma, as well as, a Trade certificate upon graduating from St. Emmas Military Academy and he looked forward to attending college at Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia. By this time his parents had moved from Baltimore to Greensboro, North Carolina and Mr. Swann declared that he would never live there. One summer while he was at St. Emma he had to go to Greensboro to earn some money and he worked at Hargett Funeral Home. At that time Hargett made their own caskets behind the funeral home and they also had their own ambulance service. Mr. Swann referred to it as 'one stop shopping' because if you paid your monthly burial insurance your entire funeral service was taken care of. The black community in Greensboro, like in most southern towns, had developed all the businesses that a person would need to survive without going to the white side of town.

Instead of spending the summer in Greensboro before he went to Hampton Institute, Mr. Swann traveled with a friend of his.

So we went to Baltimore and Philadelphia and that area. While we were up there I saw my aunt and she said that she could get me a job at Pennsylvania Hospital. So I called my parents and got permission and I stayed in Philadelphia until a week before it was time to go to Hampton. I worked in the laundry up there because I didn't like Greensboro.

After graduating as a Science and Physical Education major from Hampton Institute, Mr. Swann taught high school in Winton, North Carolina for one year. He also served as assistant football coach there. Because he continued to be involved in ROTC at Hampton, he was commissioned into the Army at Fort Gordon and was assigned to the military police. Since it was not war time, Mr. Swann was able to do a lot of training and learned to parachute.

After he left the Army in February of 1960, Mr. Swann's parents had moved to Durham. He joined them there and began substitute teaching while he was waiting to hear about employment up north.

I was on my way back to Baltimore and I thought I wanted to get involved in YMCA work. And in the little time I had spent in Greensboro, I had met some people like Mr. Peeler and Mr. Morehead.

So I drove over here one day to see Dave Morehead about YMCA work. The only way I knew to come in was Benbow Road. So I came down Benbow and Mr. Peeler was in the yard working. And he was a family friend so I just pulled in and started talking to him. I knew his son, Monroe, cause he had come to St. Emma's for a year. And we talked and he wanted to know what I was doing and I told him what my plans were. He said "I'm going to give you an application and you fill it out and you send it back to me." I agreed and then I went on and talked to Mr. Morehead and I went on back to Durham.

The next week Mr. Abraham H. Peeler, who was a family friend, was sitting in the living room talking to Mr. Swann's mother when he came home one day. Mr. Peeler told Mr. Swann that he had secured him a job as a Science teacher at Price School in Greensboro. Mr. Peeler was the principal of Price School and he needed someone to teach Science while another teacher was out on maternity leave. At that time Greensboro City Schools was racially segregated and Price was an all black school serving students in



grades four through nine. Mr. Swann respected Mr. Peeler and both of their fathers were Methodist ministers. Mr. Peeler was originally from Greensboro and he too had the experience of going away from home to attend high school. He went to high school at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and undergraduate school at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

As a social studies and physical science teacher, Mr. Peeler inspired his students to think beyond themselves. One of the last assignments he gave to his students before becoming a principal was to interview their older relatives and neighbors who were former slaves. These interviews are still valued today as a resource in documenting the slave experience. Mr. Peeler became the principal of Price School in 1932 and remained there for thirty-six more years.

Rationalizing that he would just work there until the summer, Mr. Swann accepted the position. He really wanted to move to Philadelphia, but he hadn't made any contacts for a job there yet. It seems that 'making contacts' and having a connection was very important in Mr. Swann's career. He secured his job in Greensboro by having a connection with Mr. Peeler and as his career continued, opportunities for advancement arose from his connections.

During the first year that Mr. Swann taught eighth grade Science and coached basketball at Price, he lived with some family members, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers. Mr. Rogers owned a barber shop downtown that only served white clients and Mrs. Rogers served as a substitute cook for the Caesar Cone family. Caesar and his brother, Moses, Cone opened two mills, Proximity Cotton Mill and Revolution Mills in Greensboro

during the late 1800s. Their company, Proximity Manufacturing Company employed a large number of Greensboro residents and they developed housing communities near their mills. Their mills were major suppliers to Levi Strauss and Company. By the time the stock market crashed in 1929, Proximity Manufacturing Company owned seven production plants and their housing communities developed into villages with grocery stores and churches. After Moses died in 1908, Ceasar continued to expand the company and created quite a lot of wealth for the Cone family. Today Greensboro's largest hospital is named after Moses Cone and there is a school named after Ceasar Cone. Several of the mills, although closed down long ago, remain standing as memorials to the textile industry that helped build the city of Greensboro.

The Rogers family lived on Lindsay Street near North Carolina Agriculture and Technical State University. This proximity to the college campus introduced Mr. Swann to many young people that became his friends. One night he was invited to join a card game in which one of his friends was trying to get introduced to a young lady. He agreed to go along and help his friend, but little did he know that he was about to meet the love of his life, Jean. Jean worked as the administrative assistant to the Dean of the School of Education at North Carolina A&T State University. After the card game, Mr. Swann and Jean began dating, but the other couple never did. The Swanns dated for a while and soon married. They have one daughter.

I taught eighth grade Science and coached basketball and had an intramural program in the afternoon. I was there for five or six years and I was still in the Army Reserve. One afternoon while I was on duty at the Reserve, Mr. Peeler called and so I left.

I went by his house and he said “I talked with Mr. Weaver.” Mr. Weaver was the superintendent of schools at the time. “Our enrollment has gone up and he is going to allot me a part time assistant principal. Would you be interested?” I said “What would I have to do?” and he went on to tell me some of the things and I agreed and he said “Well then I will recommend you.” So I taught three classes and the rest of the time I was the assistant principal.

The next year while attending a workshop, Mr. Swann was offered a unique opportunity to participate in a new program that would allow him to work on his next degree while continuing to work.

We had a workshop that involved Guilford County teachers and assistant principals in Greensboro. They had about fifteen people from each system come together and the man that taught it was named Lester Ball and he was a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Towards the end of the workshop he came to me and he said that a new program is starting and he wanted me to make an application. I asked him what it was and he said there was this organization called the Learning Institute of North Carolina and they were involved in promoting unique programs in the state. They set up this program where they would invite a certain number of educators in to work on their next degree with more hands on work than classroom work. It was learning almost by doing.

The participants could choose to attend Duke University or University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Since Professor Ball was responsible for getting him in the program, Mr. Swann knew that he was going to choose UNC at Chapel Hill. It was an integrated group of fifteen educators and Mr. Swann was one of only three black students selected. The students would meet once or twice a month as a group and then separate to the two different institutions in the summer for coursework.

You had to select a project that you had to work on and research and write up and report on and mine was modular scheduling. I met up with a guy named at Chapel

Hill and he was sort of promoting that. So he would go to Charlotte a lot because they were experimenting with modular scheduling. I was able to ride his coat tails to Charlotte and pick up on all the things that were happening there.

After two summers, Mr. Swann had earned his Master's Degree in Educational Administration and a principal's certificate from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

It just so happened that Mr. Peeler retired the year I finished. I mean things couldn't have worked out better. He retired in June and I would finish my work that July. In April, I was appointed by the board as principal of Price School. There were a lot of black principals, see we had black and white principals then . . . a lot of the black principals were upset . . . not with me, but with the process, because I was 31 years old and it wasn't heard of to get a principalship at 31. You got paid based on the number of teachers you had and Price School had a nice number of teachers and there were a lot of smaller schools where the principals had been there and I could understand how concerned they were, but it wasn't my doing.

During his second year as principal of Price School, Greensboro City Schools' teaching staff members were integrated and Mr. Swann received five white teachers. The next year, students were going to be integrated and Price would become an elementary school. Mr. Swann was notified like the rest of the community by watching the nightly news. "Now I was at home on Saturday when the NAACP finally sued the Greensboro Board and they finally worked out an agreement. I was at home having dinner and the television came on and they went through the school assignments and they said that my school would be an elementary school and I said "WHAT?!!" Mr. Swann says he was very upset because he wanted to work with junior or senior high school students. His staff was also upset because they didn't know if their jobs were secure.

So I told them to hold on and I was going to see the superintendent. So I left and the superintendent graciously saw me and he was more concerned about me because he figured that I wanted junior high and I told him that I did, but I'm concerned about my teachers and what is going to happen to them. He told me what they had planned and I made some suggestions in terms of what assignments needed to be made. All the junior high teachers had to leave. So I went back and had a staff meeting and told them what I knew.

Mr. Swann reassured his staff that everything would work out, but the junior high school teachers would be reassigned to other schools. It was a very bold move for a fairly new black principal to request a meeting with the Superintendent, but Mr. Swann spoke about it as if he felt an obligation to his teachers to do this. During their meeting the superintendent had also promised Mr. Swann the principalship of Allen Junior High School the next year, if he would stay at Price for one more year and he agreed.

He was prepared to lead Price School for one more year however; before school started he received a visit from Fred Cundiff that changed all his plans.

The Superintendent sent Fred Cundiff over to talk to me. By that time Fred was an assistant superintendent. He had taught at Washington School, but he was the first black assistant superintendent in Greensboro. He said that now we were an integrated system that we had some things that we had to work out. He said that we got a federal grant through some federal ESEA program. He said they could set up a position that would act as a buffer for the students in this integration process. We needed a position that would get a response from students and get them on board with integration of schools.

This position was being created to help smooth the integration process for the students. Mr. Swann said that Mr. Cundiff offered him this new position called Director of Student Affairs and it would be based at the central office. After accepting this

promotion, Mr. Swann became very instrumental in helping the school system transition into integration.

Mr. Swann knew he had a challenging task ahead and he solicited the assistance of Dr. Dudley Flood. Dr. Flood worked for the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction as the Director of the School Desegregation Team. Mr. Swann knew Dr. Flood because they had worked on some diversity issues together before and they attended the same educational conferences every year. Dr. Flood and his team came to Greensboro and assisted Mr. Swann in assessing all junior high and high schools. They visited each school and asked the principal vital questions to evaluate the needs of school.

We decided before some crucial questions we needed to ask them to see how they responded. We were able to do a matrix of which principals were very receptive and what schools we were going to have to work with a little bit harder and so forth.

Next, each school developed a student affairs committee. The committee was comprised of students committed to making sure desegregation worked at their school. Each committee had club and athletic representatives, as well as bus drivers and student helpers. Mr. Swann wanted to make sure the committee represented the conventional leadership (student council members, athletes, honor roll students), as well as, the non conventional leadership (students that weren't the most popular, but still wanted to make integrated schools work). The superintendent designated one of the assistant principals at each school to be in charge of student affairs. A few members of each student affairs committee served on the system wide student affairs committee and Mr. Swann met with them once or twice a month.

The largest issue that Mr. Swann and his team had to sort out was cheerleading. At that time girls only had two high profile activities: cheerleading and majorettes. Cheerleading was clearly the most important activity and the community was in an uproar because cheerleading teams had already been chosen. Some girls had already been selected to be a cheerleader at a certain high school, yet now they were reassigned to another high school.

The reason for that was a lot of the cheerleading selection was based on nepotism. If my sister was a cheerleader then she's got the uniform so all she has to do is give it to me and she knows the cheers so she can teach me. It wasn't a fair process throughout the system. Some schools were fairer than others.

So this was something that was ingrained and dear to these young ladies. Well what we did, we said: If you were a cheerleader at 'X' school and you were transferred then you were a cheerleader at the new school. We don't care if there were 20 cheerleaders. You are a cheerleader and the school was responsible for getting you a uniform, but only for that first year.

After the first year, it became obvious that a system needed to be put in place to select cheerleaders that would provide racial integration, as well as, talented cheerleaders.

Then we came up with a process for selecting cheerleaders. First of all, I worked out an agreement with Guilford College; every cheerleader would have to go to one of 3 cheerleading camps that we set up at Guilford College, free. We had a national cheerleading group to come in and conduct the workshop. And so everybody that was going to be a cheerleader had to go to camp.

At cheerleading camp it was important for the coaches to teach two different types of cheering to all participants. One of the black cheerleaders informed Mr. Swann that white cheerleaders performed in a stiff, stick-like fashion and black cheerleaders moved and

swayed their hips more. Mr. Swann told this information to the coaches and emphasized the importance of everyone learning how to do both kinds of cheering.

Every cheerleading selection team had to come from the colleges and universities instead of getting your friend at 'X' high school to come and pick. No names. Every cheerleader that tries out will have a number and the cheerleader advisors, we had a workshop for them, we said "Advisors, we are going to have 15 cheerleaders and one mascot."

Now your first responsibility is to pick the best five cheerleaders that you see trying out. I don't care if they are all black or if they are all white . . . just pick the best five. Then pick the best five white cheerleaders and then pick the best five black cheerleaders." This insured that a formerly all white school would have at least five black cheerleaders and a formerly all black school would have at least five white cheerleaders at minimum.

It was amazing how it turned out that most schools had more than the five that were in the segregated category. That is how we did it for a number of years and it went off fine.

After the cheerleading issues were resolved, Mr. Swann and his team had to work with the clubs and other athletic teams, but it was easier because they had the support of the schools' Student Affairs Committee. Sometimes they would have a large Student Affairs Committee and a long list of issues to discuss. Mr. Swann would arrange to feed the group and reserve enough time to discuss all the issues. One discussion led to the creation of bumper stickers and buttons being made for each school. The design had the colors of the school with the mascot on one end and clasped hands on the other. One hand was white and the other was brown. On the bottom of the bumper sticker or button would be the following words, 'After all we're all Pirates' or whatever the mascot of the school was. In order to receive one, a student had to commit to the diversity and concept of the school. The bumper stickers and buttons really became a symbol of hope for diversity.



At the beginning of the school year, Mr. Swann had to deal with the daily racial issues students were encountering. If there were racial disagreements at a particular school, he was called in to handle it. A lot of time was spent talking and listening to groups of students. Mr. Swann helped the different groups set up ground rules for discussions and then worked through whatever problems they were having.

We did not stop school due to racial problems. We did not lose a day of school due to an uprising or a skirmish. Like you would hear about some schools systems closing down for a cooling off period. Now I didn't say we didn't have situations, but we worked them out.

Mr. Swann recalls a particular situation at Smith High School that was about to get out of control until he showed up. When he arrived there were students fighting in the parking.

We were in the parking lot and two students were fighting and it was funny, well it wasn't funny at the time. But we separated the students and the thing that was ironic was that the students respected us. They didn't respect each other, but they respected us. So we pulled these two guys away from each other and we looked and I had the white guy and he had the black guy and all of a sudden we just switched guys. We didn't even say anything. He just took the white guy and I took the black one.

Once they were able to pull the students apart, they headed to the library to try and figure out why the students were so angry. Mr. Swann had the student council officers and other students that supported the fighters come to the library, as well. The students continued to scream at each other for a while and then everything got quiet. Mr. Swann told them that he was glad they had a chance to get all of that out and maybe now they were ready to do some work to solve the problem.

He helped them establish rules for communicating and was finally able to find out what the students were so angry about. A reporter from the newspaper did a story on superlative students and none of the black students were chosen. There was rich discussion and everyone decided that the superlatives would be null and void. The group also decided how to handle questions from other students about what happened in their discussion. It was decided that they would send two students (one black and one white) to every homeroom to explain exactly what the issue was and how they were handling it. Finally, these students held a meeting for the parents that evening and the student council explained everything that happened and what they were going to do about it. With everyone informed, the problem was resolved.

Mr. Swann worked as the Director of Student Affairs for three years before accepting the position of Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Services. Similar to the last position, he was offered this position when he least expected it:

While I was visiting Grimsley, I was leaving and walking through the parking lot and this station wagon came up. It was the Chairman of the School Board and one of the prominent board members. They were both very powerful men in Greensboro.

Anyway, they told me to get in, so I got in and we drove around the perimeter of Grimsley and I reported to them what happened and they said that everything looks fine now. Then they asked me if I had applied for the Assistant Superintendent of Personnel position. And I said "No" and they wanted to know why I hadn't applied and I said "Well, I figured that the Superintendent and people on his staff know what I'm doing and if they feel that I'm worthy of it then . . ." They interrupted me and said "You need to apply." So I said "OK," but I never did apply. So the next week, I got a call from the Superintendent's secretary and was told to come see him and that's when he offered me the assistant superintendency.

He held that position for four years and then accepted the Assistant Superintendent for Professional Support Services. In this new position Mr. Swann was responsible for all the central office staff except business, finance and maintenance. This was a combined position of what had previously been two different positions:

You see before that all these departments were separated and we used to compete for funding. Now they were together and we had to restructure the funding and I directed them to set up a budget committee made up for pupil personnel services and instructional services and all the budget items went through the budget committee. It worked out real well because the guy that was the head of it was a fine guy with a great mind.

In April they would review your budget and if you had not encumbered the rest of your money, then that money goes back into the pool. And all departments can then apply for unexpected things that they hadn't planned for or hadn't seen in their original budget. It worked out real good because people were able to do more with the budget dollars instead of letting money go back or spend it frivolously.

Next, Mr. Swann became the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools and Community Services and he felt that it was very important to take his staff away from the work environment at least once a year to reflect and plan for the upcoming year. "Every year, I would take my whole staff out to the principals' conference center and we would spend a couple of days out there. We would outline where we were going and how we would get there and who was going to be responsible."

He says that it was important to be away from all distractions and brainstorm about ways each department could improve. When he was in charge of elementary principals, he arranged for all of them to take a bus to Smith Mountain Lake for a retreat. He repeated the importance of only having the bus and one car as transportation because

he wanted everyone to be committed to working together. The principals stayed in bungalows and had their own rooms.

We had activities up there and some played tennis. Then at night we had a talent show. We had all our meals together. We had speakers to come in and talk about different aspects of leadership. We had some entertainment. We had a guy come down from the mountains and he played the dulcimer and sang songs. We went all up and down the lake on these launches. It was a good weekend.

This type of retreat proved to be very helpful in building relationships between principals and administrators from central office.

When he accepted the position of Associate Superintendent for Administration and Management, Mr. Swann told the Superintendent that he wanted to select his own people. The first person he selected was the Superintendent's assistant and this met with slight resistance. However, after Mr. Swann explained that he needed her to be in charge of Maintenance and Construction, the Superintendent agreed. Mr. Swann also chose the person in charge of School Nutrition to keep her current responsibilities and take over warehousing and the print shop. During the summer they visited every school and sat down with the principal.

We visited every principal and sat down with them and said "Tell us about your school. What are your needs." And a principal would say, "I've been trying to get those blinds fixed for the longest time." And my assistant would be sitting there and she would get someone on the phone and she would say "This is so and so and I'm over here at Claxton School and they have had a work order in about these broken blinds for a while. Could you get someone out this week to get these blinds fixed?"

And so we gained a lot of credibility because we told principals that there would be three categories that we can help you in. One of them you are going to have to help yourself more than others. One is things that can be done right away. And

you'd have to show that you have indicated that these things need to be done and they just haven't gotten around to them. And we would do those right away. Other things that you'd ask for that take more time, we would put them on a time schedule and we'd let you know when they would be done.

And they would be done within the year or within the next six months. And some things you need to put on your capital outlay and we would support you on your capital outlay. It worked real well. Those ladies stayed on top of it and did an excellent job.

In 1993 Greensboro City Schools combined with former Guilford County and High Point City Schools to form one school system called Guilford County Schools. One year before the merger, Mr. Swann held two positions. He was appointed Director of Transition in addition to his current position of Associate Superintendent. The Superintendent agreed to give Mr. Swann release time to perform the duties of his new appointment. The newly elected School Board rented office space in order to prepare for the upcoming school system. Their first job was to decide which type of organizational structure the new system would follow. Mr. Swann found various organizational structures and helped the School Board choose one. They also had to recodify all of the school board policies. This process involved looking at the three different school board policies and finding the common administrative regulations, as well as, deciphering some of the cloudy language. Mr. Swann appointed Dr. Mike Priddy and Dr. Bill Self to a committee that would work on recodifying all of the policies and they settled on sixty policies at the conclusion. Dr. Self was the former superintendent of Charlotte City Schools and was working as the Dean of the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He brought many years of experience to the committee and helped the committee reorganize three systems down to one.

Mr. Swann also had to review staff hiring. There were three different people in each position and they opened it up for others to apply. Mr. Swann selected one person from each of the current systems to interview for each position in the new system and made recommendations to the board. Doing both positions was demanding and Mr. Swann intended to retire after the new system was formed. However, the new superintendent asked Mr. Swann to stay and become the Deputy Superintendent for the district. He even allowed him to draw up his own contract. This was an offer that Mr. Swann couldn't refuse, so he worked four more years in this capacity and retired in 1997.

When he realized that he was getting ready to retire soon, Mr. Swann prepared to leave.

Before I retired I talked to all my people and wrote a summary of every department of where it was, where it is now and what I envisioned for the future. The reason I did that was I have always seen situations that people leave and if things breakdown they always blame it on the person that left. And I said, they aren't going to blame it on me. People say, why did you retire at that time? Things were going good and I say that's the best time to retire. A gentleman told me years ago when things are going good, that is the best time to leave.

Mr. Swann says he is very grateful for the people that he has worked with throughout his career. He realizes the importance of surrounding yourself with capable and competent people. "I have always been surrounded by great people. You set up the parameters and give people room enough to do what they know how to do. The superintendent used to always say 'now you are responsible for your area. If I have to do it, then I don't need you.'" He also realizes that the influence of his parents has enabled him to be successful.

You never can accomplish anything by yourself and I've learned that. My father was a minister and he relied on others and my mother was a teacher and she taught where ever my father would move us. With that kind of background I was destined to be in some type of service occupation.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the effects of desegregation on African American principals that worked before and after schools were integrated. My approach to answer this question was to interview three principals and gain their perspective on desegregation in Greensboro Public Schools. Next, I analyzed these narratives for patterns and use my own reflective practitioner's model to evaluate silence, selectivity and slippage. Finally I compare their leadership styles to theories of excellence by Sergiovanni and Dillard.

The first pattern I found was the minimal amount of time each principal mentioned their wives or children. Since I am familiar with each of the men I interviewed I know that they are all married and have children. Each man has been married for over forty years to the same woman. Even though their wives were mentioned once or twice during the interview, it is so insignificant one might have missed it. It was difficult to tell if they had children or if they were involved in their children's lives because this was absent from most of the stories. At the end of Mr. Swann's interview he does mention that he has one daughter, but the other men do not mention their children at all. I attribute this to the demanding jobs these men had. I also believe they tried to focus their stories in the direction of schools and desegregation because they knew that was what I was interested in. As an unmarried principal, I barely have time for a social life and I don't



even have to deal with many of the issues that they had to work through. I think that their wives also had to be strong people, in order to support their husbands and rear the children.

Secondly, all of the men seemed to have good memories of a relatively smooth transition into integration. There are a few stories of unequal treatment or unfair practices, but overall the desegregation experience appeared to be a positive one. It seemed to be difficult for them to think of situations that weren't pleasant, as if they didn't want the desegregation process to be perceived as bad. None of them appeared bitter as a result of their experience and they believed they played a significant part in helping students, parents and teachers adjust to desegregation. Mr. Wallace was the only one that spoke about how desegregation was not positive for black underprivileged students. He says "the lower economic level children just did badly." I think about how this still holds true today with the students at my school. I am always saddened to hear a teacher say in a surprised voice that a poor black child is 'smart' as if it is an unbelievable phenomenon.

Each of these men were highly respected in the black community and apparently thought well of in the white community, because they were among a very small number of black administrators that continued to be employed as administrators after schools desegregated. They were the chosen few black principals and obviously they took their positions seriously as they felt an obligation to help everyone transition smoothly into integration. I believe they were successful in keeping a positive outlook and helping others to do the same.

I found it interesting that Mr. Swann rose to the highest position in the Greensboro Public School system out of the three men and his background was the most varied and diverse (see Appendix E). Since he grew up in a military family and his father was a Methodist minister, he had the opportunity to experience public schools in California, Kansas, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and Germany. Mr. Fulmore and Mr. Wallace only experienced schools in North Carolina for grade school and college and I think that narrowed their perspective.

The final common theme is Science was the college major for Mr. Swann and Mr. Wallace and they shared athletics as a common interest. Mr. Swann majored in Science and Physical Education, Mr. Wallace majored in Biology and Physics and finally Mr. Fulmore majored in Elementary Education which included Science and Agriculture. I wonder if it is a coincidence or not.

### **Considering Mr. Fulmore from Sergiovanni's Effective Leadership Model**

In analyzing Mr. Fulmore's style of leadership in comparison to Sergiovanni's five leadership forces, I conclude that symbolic, educational and human forces are very prevalent. When describing Hampton School, Mr. Fulmore emphasizes how clean the building is and how important it was to maintain its cleanliness. He said "Those Formica tile floors were spick and span every day and they made reference to the cleanliness of the facility in a newspaper article." He also details spending a great deal of time and effort ensuring the white parents of Irving Park are reassured that their children's educational needs will be met. Immediately after the decision was made to fully desegregate schools, Mr. Fulmore hosted over twenty-five mothers at Hampton and gave

them a tour of the facility. When one Irving Park mother asked if her child could visit in the summer, Mr. Fulmore replied, “We have suggested it would be a marvelous idea if we could get to know some of the new children. If some of the children could get to know each other. Then they could form a nucleus to greet the others in the fall.” Both of these examples demonstrate symbolic leadership. I believe Mr. Fulmore wanted to make the very best impression on the Irving Park parents and he knew that they would not be in favor of desegregation if they felt their children weren’t safe or in a poor learning environment. During the tours, he showed the parents that the building looked conducive to learning, so they would at least bring them on the first day.

Mr. Fulmore’s description of his interaction with staff and students displays educational and human forces. He must have spent time in the classrooms observing teachers because he describes observing one white teacher neglecting her black students. He works with this teacher and counsels her into providing a challenging education for all students. I found it refreshing that Mr. Fulmore said that he assumed the responsibility of helping this teacher learn how to teach all children. He also recounts that he has to work with a teacher that was afraid to touch her black students. He appears proud that he helped her work through that fear and she remained a teacher at Hampton for many years after that. It makes me wonder if several teachers left Hampton since he emphasized how long she stayed.

Mr. Fulmore says that he knew the students’ names and how impressed visitors were with that talent; therefore displaying human and symbolic forces.

### **Considering Mr. Fulmore from Dillard's Effective Leadership Model**

Mr. Fulmore highlighted his interaction with parents and staff. This is similar to Dillard's theory and the importance of forming relationships with students, staff and parents. Dillard's case study reveals that nurturing and protecting children is a characteristic of effective leaders. Another example is when Mr. Fulmore says that he and staff made a commitment to school and the students regardless of where they were from. I believe this displays how Mr. Fulmore values relationships with his staff and students. He must have had meetings with his staff in order to develop this mission and he felt obligated to model this behavior.

Dillard also shares how one principal feels an obligation to ensure that African American children are educated. Mr. Fulmore felt that same obligation and he spoke several times about how he had to help white teachers understand that they could teach black children and they shouldn't be afraid to touch them. He felt that it was his responsibility as the school's leader to work with his staff and educate them on the best way to teach all children.

### **Considering Mr. Wallace from Sergiovanni's Effective Leadership Model**

The humorous undertones in Mr. Wallace's speech show immediately that he values relationships; therefore it is apparent he embodies the human force in Sergiovanni's leadership model. He also describes his relationships with students and parents as very trusting. As the principal of Mendenhall Junior High, Mr. Wallace says he took care of his teachers. He says he wanted teachers to spend their time teaching and not worry about "extraneous things." I interpret this to mean that he valued his teachers and

wanted to make life as easy as he could for them. He also says that he “would try to avoid teacher meetings because it is supposed to be planning time for them.” I’m sure his teachers appreciated this and ultimately his students benefited from this approach.

Mr. Wallace also displays Sergiovanni’s human “force” characteristics when working with his students. He describes listening to their opinion about the dress code and other issues that students felt were important. I’m sure this helped Mr. Wallace establish good communication and respect from his students.

I recognize Sergiovanni’s technical leadership characteristics in Mr. Wallace’s style. When he describes how he gave his teachers a schedule at the beginning of the year and “stuck to it,” I hear that he is organized. He details how important it was for him to establish authority when he first arrived at Mendenhall and he even remembers the statistics of how many students were suspended or expelled as a result. I believe Mr. Wallace felt he had to prove himself when he entered Mendenhall and he methodically went about it. He describes that “as soon as they saw that I was competent then they started gravitating towards me. This tells me that he wanted to teachers, staff and parents to respect him, but also accept and appreciate him.”

As a former science teacher of the self-described “best and strongest program in physics,” Mr. Wallace was a clinical practitioner. His educational leadership style is evidenced in many ways. Mr. Wallace always remembered his love of science and he spent a great deal of time working with local central office staff members on the science curriculum and best teaching practices. He also took great pride in knowing what his teachers needed and providing it for them.

Finally, I recognize Sergiovanni's cultural leadership traits in Mr. Wallace's practice. At Mendenhall he was focused on creating an environment in which everyone understood the 'Mendenhall way'. He takes pride in describing traditions that he established at Mendenhall and he still enjoys visiting the school to see the legacy he created.

### **Considering Mr. Wallace from Dillard's Effective Leadership Model**

In Dillard's case study, she describes a principal that effectively exerts her authority with students and staff. Commanding respect, as well as, being perceived as fair and caring. Mr. Wallace displays this talent by getting to know his students personally, but demanding their very best effort with academics and behavior. He says "I ran a tight ship and as soon as they saw that I was competent then they started gravitating towards me. After that first year, they saw how things were going, that I was very firm but fair."

Mr. Wallace also recognized the need to go out in the community where his students lived to inform parents about events at the school. He did not receive a large response, but he still went. He said "I would go to Morning Side Homes, I would go wherever the students were cause I wanted to get them involved." This is similar to the principal in Dillard's case study. She felt that as the school leader, she had to try any means necessary to inform parents about the importance of school and educating their children.

Mr. Wallace also felt the same obligation to help black children succeed above all else, which is similar to Dillard's case study principal. He speaks fondly of how black teachers worked very hard to help black students succeed when schools were segregated.

He said “I hear parents now at Dudley that I used to teach talk about when we were all black that we really cared for them and it is not like it was. And we would push them and make them go and sort of be their parents. We would coax them and pull them along and make them and threaten them and praise them and do whatever you had to do.” He feels that this type of care is not prevalent with teachers today.

### **Considering Mr. Swann from Sergiovanni’s Effective Leadership Model**

Mr. Swann held many different professional positions throughout his career and they all served schools and the community. When looking at the five leadership forces identified by Sergiovanni, I can see that Mr. Swann exemplifies excellence in all of these areas.

Throughout his career, Mr. Swann faced each challenge in a practical and matter of fact approach. He often made contacts or connections in order to advance to a different position even though he wasn’t seeking them. As the Director of Student Affairs and in other central office positions, Mr. Swann had a very methodical approach to approaching the job. He felt that planning and getting as much information as possible first was important before making any decisions. All of these examples of his great technical leadership were effective in helping him succeed.

I believe Mr. Swann also displayed Sergiovanni’s human leadership qualities because he depended on personal relationships. His description of his relationships with his staff and principals are illustrations of how important he felt these connections were. As the Associate Superintendent for Administration and Management, Mr. Swann went to visit each principal and gave them time to describe the needs of their school. In doing

this Mr. Swann showed compassion for the principals and gained credibility for working with them. This helped the principals feel valued and as if they had a voice in their school system; which showed Mr. Swann's all humanistic qualities.

I believe Mr. Swann showed Sergiovanni's educational leadership force as the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools and Community Services. On summer staff retreats, Mr. Swann brought in professional development that the principals needed to be effective leaders, but he also allowed them to share areas that they excelled in with each other. As a clinical practitioner he recognized the benefit of spotlighting the experts within, instead of always looking outside the school system for best educational practices.

As Director of Student Affairs, Mr. Swann had to help schools develop their own unique culture as they welcomed brand new faculty members and student body populations. He had to have a clear understanding of school culture in order to help principals establish their schools' way of doing things. Aiding principals in learning how to emphasize the basic purpose of school was also a task that Mr. Swann was responsible for. After parents found out that the schools were going to be integrated, they wanted to see the school their child would be attending. Mr. Swann visited all the schools and ensured that principals knew how to be symbolic leaders. His own job was really about symbolic leadership and focusing on school highlights.

### **Considering Mr. Swann from Dillard's Effective Leadership Model**

Mr. Swann understood the importance of knowing the social and political climate of a school, which displays Dillard's theory. Figuring out the complex social and political layers of each school was Mr. Swann's first task during the summer before schools



desegregated. He spent a great deal of time talking with current staff and students in an effort to figure out how and why things were done. Dillard believes that knowing and massaging the social framework of a school is essential for effective leadership. She goes on to discuss that principals lead from their own experiences and history. I believe this is true for Mr. Swann, as well. He lived in several locations as he grew up and this gave him varied school experiences with different cultures and races of people. This upbringing influenced his leadership style in that it enabled him to understand and accept a variety of ways of doing things.

### **Final Thoughts**

Unfortunately, today we find our school systems regressing back to segregation. Parents are requesting neighborhood schools and school boards are listening. School attendance lines are being redrawn to move children to schools close to their homes and because many black and white people continue to live in separate neighborhoods this has resegregated our schools. Educators' focus has shifted from integration to high achievement for all students. This shift has forgotten the need for diversity among the student bodies of our schools. Have American schools progressed since 1954? Have we become a more intergraded society? I think we have—but we have such a long way to go.

I believe that school administrators today can learn several lessons from Mr. Fulmore, Mr. Wallace and Mr. Swann. These administrators had to work carefully within political, social and educational contexts to ensure that all students were safe and learned. The way they approached this monumental task had long reaching effects on schools, students and educators today. Their positive outlook and caring approach helped comfort

the apprehension of others during desegregation. They empowered the students, parents and teachers to embrace the positive aspects of integration and therefore averted the violent rejection that occurred in other school systems.

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**APPENDIX A****FERNDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL  
SCAVENGER HUNT GUIDE****FERNDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL  
SCAVENGER HUNT**

Do you know where our students come from? Have you been to the different neighborhoods our students return to every day—impoverished, middle class, and wealthy? Well today, you will participate in an exercise that will answer these questions and more.

Each team will be given a camera to take pictures. Your job is to capture the following on film:

- Historical
- Scenic
- Shows change
- Shows growth
- Shows nature and beauty
- Something used in an advertisement
- Something that could be improved
- Any other scenes that will add to your project

When your team returns to school, take your camera and place it in the camera box in the front office (pictures will be developed by the afternoon). Each team will create a display board/collage using the pictures from the Scavenger Hunt. Be prepared to share the following information for Friday morning's staff meeting.

- I was surprised to see ...
- I wasn't surprised to see ...
- I learned ...
- I want to know more about ...

## APPENDIX B

### FERNDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT, MISSION STATEMENT, GOALS, AND BELIEF STATEMENTS

#### *Vision Statement*

*"We will create a community of lifelong learners."*

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#### *Our Mission Statement*

**"We, the staff of Ferndale Middle School, are committed to providing a safe, professional learning environment for students. As a result, our students will become responsible, productive citizens in a diverse world."**

#### *Our Goals*

1. All students will perform at or above grade level.
2. Students, parents and teachers will thrive in a positive learning environment.
3. All instructional staff will be highly qualified.
4. Strong family, community and business involvement will be evident throughout the school.
5. Resources and time will be effectively and efficiently used.

#### *Our Belief Statements*

**Public education is an essential cornerstone for the community's well-being.**

1. Good public education includes appropriate use of funds.
2. Education is a community responsibility.
3. Public education for all children is essential for a strong and lasting democracy.
4. Quality of life depends on quality of education.
5. Public education is public trust.

**Learning is a multi-faceted task that requires thoughtful planning.**

1. Students respond to high expectations.
2. Learning is a creative process.
3. All children can learn.
4. Students learn differently.
5. Learning is strengthened through the use of technology.
6. Early childhood enrichment builds success in school.
7. Good facilities promote learning.
8. Education is a lifelong process.



**Contributing to the future of schools through staff development and leadership is important.**

1. Investing in staff development is essential for good schools.
2. Leadership creates vision and strong public support.

**Schools are a place where students are respected as individuals.**

1. Each child has value.
2. Schools exist for students.
3. Diversity is of great value.

**APPENDIX C****GREENSBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
DESEGREGATION SEQUENCE**

- 1957 – Voluntary Pupil Desegregation Began
- 1958 – The First Afro-American Graduated From a Previously All White High School
- 1958 – Integration of Faculty Meetings and Administrative and Supervisory Staffs.
- 1959 – Freedom of Choice for All Elementary Students.
- 1964 – Faculty Integration Began
- 1966 – Freedom of Choice for All In Compliance With H.E.W. Guidelines
- 1968 – H.E.W. Began Administrative Enforcement Proceedings, Claiming That Freedom of Choice Plan Not in Compliance
- 1970 – Eleven African American Parents Entered A Class Action In U.S. District Court, Alleging Discrimination
- 1971 – Court Ordered Desegregation Plan Put into Effect
- 1973 – Court Action Dismissed—Greensboro Declared a Unitary School System

**APPENDIX D****POSITIVE FACTORS IN SUPPORT OF DESEGREGATION IN  
GREENSBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

1. Leadership from the school board to desegregate.
2. Leadership from the school superintendent to desegregate.
3. Clear and firm policy statement from the school board to support desegregation.
4. Clear and firm policy statement by law enforcement agencies and officials to support law and order.
5. Firm support for desegregation from the press.
6. Firm support for desegregation from civic and religious groups and leaders.

**APPENDIX E**  
**TIMELINE CHART**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>GSO CITY SCHOOLS</b>	<b>WALLACE</b>	<b>FULMORE</b>	<b>SWANN</b>
1954	Greensboro City Schools is the first in the nation to respond to the Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas by adopting a resolution recognizing the Court's decision	Attending NC A&T College	Teaching elementary school in Mocksville, NC	Graduated from St. Emma Military Academy and entered the freshman class of Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia
1955		Graduated from NC A&T College and begins teaching at Dudley	Mocksville	Hampton Institute
1956		Dudley	Began teaching at Jonesboro School in Greensboro	Hampton Institute
1957	Voluntary Pupil Desegregation began; Six black students went to formerly all white schools	Dudley	Jonesboro	Hampton Institute
1958	First A-A student graduates from previously all white high school & integration of faculty meetings and administrative staff	Dudley	Jonesboro	Graduated from Hampton Institute with a B.S. Degree in Science and Physical Education
1959	Freedom of Choice for all elementary students	Dudley	Became teaching principal of Terra Cotta School	Began teaching at C.S. Brown High
1960		Dudley	Terra Cotta	Began teaching at Price School
1962			Became assistant principal of Price School	Price
1964	Faculty integration begins	Dudley	Became the principal of Hampton School	Price

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>GSO CITY SCHOOLS</b>	<b>WALLACE</b>	<b>FULMORE</b>	<b>SWANN</b>
1966	Freedom of Choice for all in compliance with H.E. W. guidelines	Dudley	Hampton	Became assistant principal of Price School
1968	H.E.W. began administrative enforcement proceedings, claiming that Freedom of Choice plan was not in compliance	Becomes assistant principal at predominately white Gillespie Park School	Hampton	Price
1969		Gillespie	Hampton	Became principal of Price School
1970	NAACP entered a class action suit in U.S. District Court, alleging discrimination	Becomes assistant principal at Page High school	Hampton	Price
1971	Court Ordered Desegregation plan put into effect	Page	Was instrumental in creating smooth transition of Irving Park parents to Hampton School	Became Director of Student Affairs
1973	Court Action Dismissed and Greensboro declared a Unitary School System	Becomes the principal of Gillespie Junior High which is now predominately black	Hampton	
1975		Gillespie	Became Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education	Became Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services
1976		Becomes the principal of Mendenhall Junior High located in wealthy white neighborhood		
1979		Mendenhall		Became Assistant Superintendent for Professional Support Services

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>GSO CITY SCHOOLS</b>	<b>WALLACE</b>	<b>FULMORE</b>	<b>SWANN</b>
1982		Mendenhall	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	Became Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools and Community Services
1990		Mendenhall	Deputy Superintendent for Personnel	Became Associate Superintendent for Administration and Management
1991		Retired after 36 years of service		
1992			Retired after 36years of service	
1993				Became Deputy Superintendent
1997				Retired after 39 years of service