

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: MUSIC EDUCATION IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND, FROM 1950 TO 1992: AN ORAL HISTORY ACCOUNT OF THREE PROMINENT MUSIC EDUCATORS AND THEIR TIMES

Judy W. Moore, Doctor of Philosophy, 2004

Dissertation directed by: Professor Marie McCarthy  
School of Music

This dissertation documents the professional lives of three prominent music educators in Prince George's County, Maryland—LeRoy Battle, Maurice Allison, and Dorothy Pickard—whose careers from 1950 to 1992 spanned the period of school desegregation and its aftermath. The professional lives of Battle, Allison, and Pickard, their philosophies of teaching, and the instructional strategies they used in building music programs of distinction are examined employing methods of oral history. The interviews of twenty-three other Prince George's County professionals, including a county executive, a superintendent, county teachers, and county administrators, combine with testimony of the three music educators in creating the fabric of this historical dissertation. Set in Prince George's County, scene of dramatic societal change between 1950 and 1992, county educational, cultural, societal, and political processes are explored to gain

understanding of the lives and times of Battle, Allison, and Pickard. Although the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling ended the era of “separate-but-equal” schooling in the United States, it was not until December 29, 1972, that a countywide system of busing of students was ordered in Prince George’s County to enforce racial balance in schools . Busing altered the racial distribution in county schools and was thought by many to have precipitated “white flight” of Prince George’s residents to surrounding jurisdictions. Remaining county residents voted to limit taxes for county services, creating a financial burden for the schools, the police, and the county government. Subsequently, the white-to-black ratio in the county and the schools altered. Through advocacy efforts of teachers, concerned residents, and students, the elective programs in Prince George’s County Public Schools were twice spared from elimination, in 1982 and again in 1991. Music education remains an active part of the Prince George’s County School curriculum due in part to the work of Battle, Allison, and Pickard, music educators who displayed creativity in the face of adversity. They set an example for other educators of how to produce, maintain, and support quality-performing groups in music education.

MUSIC EDUCATION IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND,  
FROM 1950 TO 1992: AN ORAL HISTORY ACCOUNT OF  
THREE PROMINENT MUSIC EDUCATORS AND THEIR TIMES

by

Judy W. Moore

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Marie McCarthy, Chair/Advisor  
Professor Barbara Finkelstein  
Professor Roger Folstrom  
Professor Bret P. Smith  
Professor Bruce VanSledright

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Jack Moore

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A study of education in Prince George's County Maryland, in the latter half of the twentieth century, provides a unique opportunity to investigate dramatic changes occurring in the social, political, and cultural lives of its people. The oral historian who is examining the history of music education in this period is indeed fortunate, since many who lived through it are still alive today. Relying on the voices of those creating this history, an oral historian can interpret change over time in the context of music education by focusing on the lives of music educators in Prince George's County. Educational historian, Barbara Finkelstein, explains the uniqueness of using biography in writing history:

Biography is to history what the telescope is to the stars. It reveals the invisible, extracts detail from myriad points of light, uncovers sources of illumination, and helps us disaggregate and reconstruct large heavenly pictures. Through the particularities of its own refractions and observations, biography provides a unique lens through which one can assess the relative power of political, economic, cultural, social and generational process on the life chances of individuals, and the general revelatory power of historical sense-making.<sup>1</sup>

From its beginnings in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, music education in Prince George's County developed from a fledgling discipline into a highly organized program of electives, by engaging young people in a rich and complex

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Finkelstein, "Revealing Human Agency: The Uses of Biography in the Study of Educational History," in *Writing Education Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research*, ed. Craig Kridel (New York: Garland, 1989), 45.

reproduction of American musical culture. This is the story of the power of individual creativity in developing musical excellence in the face of adverse political and economic conditions. As Prince George's County was put under federal court order to desegregate the public schools using busing in the early 1970s, the school system and its communities reacted to budget shortfalls that threatened the existence of county music education programs. Strong community support in the form of advocacy groups rescued the thriving elementary instrumental program from elimination. Despite these cycles of support—upturns and downturns—music education remained afloat in Prince George's County during turbulent times from 1950 to 1992.

#### PURPOSE

This dissertation documents the professional lives of three prominent music educators in Prince George's County, Maryland: LeRoy Battle, Maurice Allison, and Dorothy Pickard. Their lives, situated in the context of local and national political activity between the years 1950 and 1992, encompassed the Civil Rights movement, court-ordered desegregation, three budget crises, and the effects of community support. The professional lives of Battle, Allison, and Pickard, their philosophies of teaching, and the instructional strategies they used in building music programs of distinction are examined employing methods of oral history. Further, Prince George's County can be viewed in the context of national educational and political activity, beginning with the Civil Rights period and extending through the 1980s.

Educators LeRoy Battle, Maurice Allison, and Dorothy Pickard were chosen as examples of teachers who displayed high levels of creative energy in the face of adversity. They built, developed, and maintained—over many years—music programs of importance to students, administrators, and the local community, despite political upheaval and budget constraints. Between 1950 and 1992, Prince George’s County changed from a rural, farm-based economy to an urban, business-based economy. A growing, politically-active, black population pressed for civil rights. Court-ordered busing in the early 1970s was thought by many to have precipitated “white flight” of Prince George’s residents to surrounding jurisdictions.<sup>2</sup> Remaining county residents voted to limit taxes for county services, creating a financial burden for the schools, the police, and the county government. Subsequently the white-to-black ratio was reversed with the county and school populations becoming majority African American.<sup>3</sup>

Prince George’s County maintained a dual black/white school system from 1864<sup>4</sup> until the 1973 court-ordered busing despite the dictates of the

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Felegy, Superintendent of Schools from 1991 until 1995, cautions, “There are studies out there that will detail the decline in population in this metropolitan area and nationwide. There was some exodus of students to other schools, but the other thing I think happened in Prince George’s, you had a naturally occurring housing pattern turn over, not “white flight,” Edward M. Felegy, interview by author, tape recording, Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Greenbelt, MD, 9 August 2002, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>3</sup> According to the 2000 US Census population by race, Prince George’s County has 214,729 Whites and 502,550 Blacks or African Americans. Out of a total county population of 801,515 almost 63% are Black or African American.

<sup>4</sup> The first Maryland State Constitution of 1864 provided a system of free public education for its young and freed the slaves. The practice of maintaining a dual system of schooling began at this time with the “Uniform System of Public Instruction for the State of Maryland,” Maryland General Assembly, “Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the General Assembly of Maryland, together with A Bill entitled “A Uniform System of Public Instruction for the State of Maryland,” in *Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Annapolis: Richard P. Bayly, Printer, 1865).

landmark Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. LeRoy Battle, an African American, began his music-teaching career at Douglass High School (one of two Prince George's County's black high schools) in 1950, prior to the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. He was able to build an award-winning band program for his students with substantially fewer resources than those allotted to the county's white schools during the time period 1950-1968. In 1968 Battle left the music classroom to become a guidance counselor and later a vice principal. He retired in 1978.

Maurice Allison taught general music and chorus at Bladensburg Junior High School from 1956 to 1970. Allison engaged his general music students with meaningful activities, including the building of a harpsichord, learning of the music and customs of other cultures, and learning about the functions of the human voice. His choral group was frequently invited to perform at prestigious functions, such as a fundraiser for Congressman (later Prince George's County Executive) Larry Hogan and an anniversary of the Pan American Union in Washington, DC. Through an invitation of the Cheverly Rotarians, Allison formed an auditioned choral group, the Vast Majority, from selected Prince George's County teen singers. The group performed more than 82 community service functions between its formation in 1967 and its disbanding in 1972. In 1970 Allison left the classroom to become a music supervisor. Allison's supervisory experiences add a different dimension to his life story. They show how supervisors were able to negotiate funds and other services for their

teachers. Allison as supervisor supported teachers needing help with keeping a yearly inventory, teaching suggestions, acquiring materials, or planning programs. He retired in 1980.

String programs were rare in the county schools when Dorothy Pickard began teaching in 1967. Pickard built string programs in two county high schools while also preparing elementary and junior high school students to move up to her high school groups. Court-ordered busing and severe budget deficits were challenges facing the school system during Pickard's tenure. How this teacher adapted to those constraints, managed budget concerns, and still produced quality orchestral groups are topics of a portion of this dissertation. She retired in 1992.

The examination of the professional lives of these three teachers in the context of educational and political activity in Prince George's County includes scrutiny of the actions of county executives, school superintendents, teachers, students, parents, and county residents in times of crisis. Such an approach adds insight into the relationships between education policy and practice, school culture and community regulation, and policy-makers and education practitioners. Allison's career in the classroom parallels Battle's except that one teacher was white, the other black. These two careers are compared with respect to financial support from the county, administrative support from the school, and moral support from the community. Battle, Allison, and Pickard frequently were called upon to provide performing groups as entertainment or cultural

enrichment for community and school functions. The preparation of each student, stewardship of the group, and presentation of the ensemble in a finished performance are analyzed to learn how each educator's personality promoted the student's aesthetic experience of making music.

#### NEED FOR STUDY

This study explores the lives of educators in an unusually large and diverse school system to learn how they developed music programs that engaged students and had the support of parents and administrators during times of change and crisis. It explores relationships among the professional lives of teachers, school district policy, and community expectations. The illumination of the lives of these educators provides clues to classroom practice in music education. The narratives of these teachers reveal how they constructed musical opportunities for their students; how they developed their teaching craft; and how their programs survived in the face of challenge. Clear descriptions of the classroom practice of Battle, Allison, and Pickard may contribute to the body of knowledge of what works on a day-to-day basis for successful music educators. The documentation of community advocacy, important to the rescue of elementary music education in Prince George's County, becomes a necessary story to tell, not just as a way to document history, but also as a guide to possible future community efforts. Furthermore, such historical studies contribute to a greater understanding of education in the United States and feed the curiosity of

those wanting to explore and understand the professional lives of their antecedents.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary questions of the study are: How did three prominent music educators construct their professional lives during the time they worked in Prince George's County, Maryland, beginning with Battle's hiring in 1950 and ending with Pickard's retirement in 1992? How did each teacher respond to and impact the social and political milieu in which they worked? How did the music elective program survive in Prince George's County in comparison with other jurisdictions throughout the United States? Related to these main questions are these specific sub questions: how the educators funded their programs, reacted to the political and economic demands of a changing society, and aligned their programs with school and community needs.

#### MUSIC EDUCATION IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

The Prince George's County Public School System has maintained many programs recognized by surrounding jurisdictions as programs of excellence. Among these programs are the annual Kennedy Center concerts (in existence since 1976), teacher in-service training ranging from Maryland State Performance and Assessment Test development and scoring<sup>5</sup> to technology training, and development of programs for special education and reading.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Teachers from Prince George's County Schools are hired to train teachers from other school systems in developing Performance Assessment Curriculum.

<sup>6</sup>Prince George's County Board of Education, *Annual Report* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Board of Education, 1965-66), 64.

Between 1950 and the mid 1970s county educational initiatives, fueled by an economic boon and a mushrooming population, moved forward on many fronts. Music education was one of the strongest of the contenders. The county High School Chorus, first appearing in 1947 under the leadership of Leah Thorpe of the Peabody Conservatory, grew to include orchestra as well as chorus performances from 1957 to the early 1970s, under the leadership of Supervisor Frances Hill Lynch. Junior high schools in Prince George's were the first group to receive board sponsored instrumental instruction. By 1949 Lyndon Hill Junior High, according to State Department records, listed a band of 70 boys and 30 girls.<sup>7</sup> In 1950 bands became more popular. Greenbelt, Bladensburg, Hyattsville, and Lyndon Hill listed students studying instrumental music or band in the 1950 *Annual Report*. The following year, 1951, Douglass Colored School also listed band students. These were LeRoy Battle's students. When LeRoy Battle assumed the position of band director at Douglass High School in 1950, few Prince George's County Schools offered regular band instruction. Northwestern High School opened in 1950 and formed a band by 1952.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid; Maryland State Department of Education, "Eighty-Third Annual Report of the State Board of Education Showing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland," in *Annual Report of the State Board of Education* (Baltimore, MD: State Board of Education, 1949), 114.

<sup>8</sup> Maryland State Department of Education, "Eighty-Fourth Annual Report of the State Board of Education Showing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland," in *Annual Report of the State Board of Education* (Baltimore, MD: State Department of Education, 1950), 92; Maryland State Department of Education, "Eighty-Fifth Annual Report of the State Board of Education Showing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland," in *Annual Report of the State Board of Education* (Baltimore, Maryland: State Department of Education, 1951), 100; Maryland State Department of Education, "Eighty-Sixth Annual Report of the State Board of Education Showing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland," in *Annual Report of the State Board of Education* (Baltimore, MD: State Department of Education, 1952), 94.

Lynch met renowned string educator Marvin Rabin in the 1960s when he conducted youth groups at Boston University. She invited Rabin to Prince George's County in 1962 as guest conductor of the Youth Orchestra at Fairmont Heights High School with African American violinist Sylvia Gholson as soloist.<sup>9</sup> The Prince George's County Youth Orchestra also performed for the Music Educators National Conference at the Eastern Division Conference the same year.<sup>10</sup> With 17,062 students enrolled in the program, high school music offerings in 1965 included: basic musicianship, chorus, band, orchestra, music history and literature, and general music. Beginning in 1976, the annual Kennedy Center concerts—continuing to this day—showcased Prince George's musical talent and teaching.<sup>11</sup>

Starting in the early 1970s a music supervisory staff of seven assisted teachers in developing curriculum, recruiting students, and preparing performances. This successful supervisory program included one coordinating supervisor overseeing the total program, two supervisors (one vocal/general, one instrumental), and four helping teachers (three vocal/general, one

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<sup>9</sup> Sylvia Gholson is the daughter of Fairmont Heights High School's first principal, G. James Gholson.

<sup>10</sup> Prince George's County Board of Education, *Annual Report* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Board of Education, 1962-63), 52. Note, in 1962 Fairmont Heights was one of Prince George's County's two all-black junior-senior high schools. Frederick Douglass was the other.

<sup>11</sup> Maryland State Department of Education, "Ninety-Ninth Annual Report of the State Board of Education, Showing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland, for the Year Ending July 31, 1965," in *Annual Report of the State Board of Education* (Baltimore, MD: Twentieth Century Printing Company, 1965), 156-7; Prince George's County Board of Education, *Annual Report to the Citizens 1975-76 School Year* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Board of Education, 1976), Message From the Superintendent.

instrumental).<sup>12</sup> These supervisors, having the power to create and enforce policy and assist teachers, constituted a strong, system-wide advocacy group for music education. Music teachers then had the time, energy, and supplies to work with students.

The county allocation of teacher time for music was also at an all-time high. Elementary students received vocal/general instruction three times per week. Elementary students interested in playing an instrument received instruction three times per week beginning with 4<sup>th</sup> grade strings, adding wind and brass in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and continuing through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Junior high students could elect chorus or band five times per week; or they could rotate between general music for a semester and art for a semester. High school students electing chorus, band, or orchestra met every day.<sup>13</sup>

Core subjects competed for attention. Countywide curriculum workshops began in 1969 with teacher groups working on the improvement of instruction in reading, math, English, and social studies. Julie Ferris, a county teacher and reading specialist from 1967 to 1977, the period of desegregation, speaks of her experiences in Prince George's County prior to desegregation:

It was an excellent place to teach. It had a lot of structure. For instance you had the basic series that you had in the schools. But this provided a lot of continuity for students who changed from one school to the other. Yes, there was some variation. Everything was organized into clusters of various kinds with a supervisor in charge of the cluster. You had tremendous opportunities for developing curriculum, for changing the program. For instance, a group of teachers who were interested in trying

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<sup>12</sup> Helping teachers frequently met with teachers having difficulties and designed in-service and staff meetings.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Richter, personal communication, Greenbelt, Maryland, 20 March 1997.

an ungraded school could get funds to meet during the summer and plan such a program. They had all kinds of workshops during the summer in every major curricular area for the teachers.<sup>14</sup>

The county schools improved their programs, community music groups formed, more residents moved in, and Prince George's County seemed a fine place to live. Ray Danner, Acting Instrumental Supervisor in Prince George's County from 1986 to 1998, speaks of the county in the 1960s as "the place to be":

They were opening schools right and left. It was very easy to get a job. I assume it was easier in other places, but Prince George's was the place to be. But, yeah, at a time--the late 60s, early 70s, up through '81, '82, something like that—it was a heyday. It really was.<sup>15</sup>

Before becoming supervisor, Danner taught instrumental music at the elementary, junior high, and senior high levels. His final teaching assignment was band director at Bowie High School. He remembers county instrumental festivals as a thrilling listening experience:

[Y]ou could go to a festival and you could hear Bill Johnson [Oxon Hill High School band director] do a piece and the band sounded like it was a Michigan-kind of covered, really warm kind of sound and would be great; and then 10 minutes later, or 30 minutes later, Smith [Don Smith, High Point High School band director] would come on and do a Wind Ensemble routine on ya. Bergman [Dick Bergman, Crossland High School band director] would show up half an hour—an hour later—and would nail you up against the wall with a band you never heard before that has so much sound to it. It's incredible. It was a great time.<sup>16</sup>

Choral teacher Barbara Baker, who began teaching at Eleanor Roosevelt High School in 1978, felt there was a tradition of excellence in Prince George's County.

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<sup>14</sup> Julie Ferris, interview by author, tape recording, Hyattsville, MD, 18 April 1997, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>15</sup> Raymond P. Danner, interview by author, tape recording, Edgewater, MD, 12 August 2002, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

In the 1970s Baker, a recent music education doctoral graduate of the University of Maryland, could have chosen to teach in any of the Washington area jurisdictions. She chose Prince George's County because she felt there was a tradition of excellence developed by the supervisory staff and the availability of specialists to train teachers in county in-service programs. Money was available for Coordinating Supervisor Mary Haywood to hire Gregg Smith and Paul Salimonevitch from Los Angeles to work with county music teachers in the late 1970s. Baker stated:

I had very strong supervisors. They would support us. We had lots of in-service. We had specialists to fly in from all over the country to work with us. A music specialist observed me at least three times a year. He offered great suggestions about improving my teaching. He offered great support.<sup>17</sup>

Further testimony comes from Donald K. Smith who taught in the county from 1955 until 1986, first as band director and then Instrumental Music Supervisor. Referring to the 1960s and early 1970s, Smith said:

Prince George's County, in my estimation, was *crème de la crème*. We had the most successful band programs in the state. I mean there weren't bands anywhere in the state that could compete with the likes of Oxon Hill, High Point, and Crossland.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Barbara Baker, interview by author, tape recording, Greenbelt, MD, 6 May 1997, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>18</sup> Donald K. Smith, interview by author, tape recording, New Freedom, PA, 1 August 2002, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located. Available records indicate that Oxon Hill Senior High School Band, directed by Bill Johnson, performed at grade VI level in County festival from the first festival of 1960 through 1981 consistently receiving high marks. Crossland under various directors also performed grade VI level music at festival. Smith directing High Point's Symphonic Band entered the 1960 festival at grade V. After that year the group performed at grade VI level through 1977, even though Smith left to become supervisor in 1976. Prince George's County Board of Education, *Prince George's County Instrumental Music Festival*, (Prince George's County Public Schools, 1960-1992).

Smith left the classroom to guide county instrumental teachers, develop an inventory protocol, and argue for monies in support of the instrumental music program. In 1976, Smith's first year as supervisor, the county Chorus and orchestra festival moved to the Kennedy Center stage. Felegy remembers how the Kennedy Center concerts evolved:

You know the concert began in '76; and that was part of the bicentennial celebration in Washington and all of the schools in the metropolitan area were invited to do something like that at the center.<sup>19</sup>

Together with Coordinating Supervisor Mary Haywood, Smith worked to organize the 1976 concert. Robert Wagner of the Robert Wagner Chorale was hired to conduct the chorus and the orchestra. Felegy remembers the welcome received by the county schools after that first concert:

And it was well received by the public in Prince George's and by the board and everyone who had any association with it that the decision was made that if we could continue to do that independently on our own, we would. And we did.<sup>20</sup>

Later, when monies were scarce, the temptation to cancel the concert and use the funds elsewhere became an issue. Felegy continues:

And there was a lot of pressure I must tell you, from a budgetary point of view at various times, to cancel out and say, "We can't move on with that." I'm always proud of the fact that as superintendent I said, "No, you're not going to touch that program."<sup>21</sup>

Much later, when Felegy became superintendent following Murphy, the Board of Education renamed this annual music event The Edward M. Felegy Concert.

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<sup>19</sup> Felegy, interview.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

Danner and Smith speak of those heightened times in Prince George's County music education when a band director's main goal was to produce award winning festival groups. Former vocal/general music supervisor Virginia Sims speaks of another aspect of music education in Prince George's County worthy of note. Sims as supervisor undertook a rewriting of the vocal/general curriculum document. One of her mandates from State Supervisor of Art, James Tucker, was to infuse the document with the latest state curriculum initiatives. Sims felt proud that Prince George's County, under her direction, was ahead of other counties in reorganizing the curriculum document. She stated:

We were doing quite well. I think the music program at that time, as I said in my interview, I thought we had a top-notch music program in Prince George's County. I had no way of comparing, only the experiences I had in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Before coming to Prince George's I was two years in Charles County. So I could not make comparisons. But I didn't realize until I got into this job how far advanced we were, just in talking to other colleagues around the state. When I first came in I think it was strong because everything was in place and we had people who were qualified, trained, certified, had degrees in their particular areas. ...[V]ocal and general music really led the parade as far as infusing our document. I was told many, many times [by those at the State level] we were far ahead of anybody else in getting their document completed.<sup>22</sup>

The period beginning in 1940 and extending into the early 1980s was an upward spiral in the cycle of music education in Prince George's County. From the late 1940s through 1980 county school music education programs increased in number and variety. Programs in band instruction, starting in the late 1940s, grew in popularity among students and music educators. Music instruction for students at all levels and ages abounded in this fast-growing, large, and complex

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<sup>22</sup> Virginia Sims, interview by author, tape recording, Suitland, MD, 10 July 2001, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

county. Budget concerns and social unrest after 1980 fragmented efforts to support programs at previous levels. Music education fell into a downward cycle but programs were not eliminated.

#### SOURCES

The primary sources of data in this study are oral history transcripts of the three selected educators, their colleagues and students, music supervisors, a former superintendent, and policy makers. In all twenty-six professionals agreed to an oral interview. Supporting sources include Maryland State Board of Education annual reports, Prince George's County School Board records and annual reports, reports issued by Prince George's County Retired Teachers, musical programs, personal documents, photographs, newspaper articles, related dissertations, research articles, musical examples, and books.

The Maryland Room at the University of Maryland and the Prince George's County Teacher Library located at the Bonnie Johns Building in Landover house many documents and studies relating to the history and development of Prince George's County and the state of Maryland. Annual reports published by the Board of Education from the year 1946 through 1977 are available at the Maryland Room. Volumes beyond 1977 are located at the Bonnie Johns libraries.

Local newspapers from the period provided a rich source of information, recorded by those witnessing daily events as they happened. In addition, many state and local documents were used as "texts." Annual reports of both Prince

George's County and the State of Maryland supplied critical information (curriculum thrusts for a specific year) and statistical data (numbers of students enrolled in classes and some budget information).

Personal documents such as letters, concert programs, photographs, and recorded performances of performing groups illuminate the individuals under consideration, bringing them into clearer view. These same documents provide a "window" into life of the period. For example, Maurice Allison's choral group performed at a fundraiser for Congressman Larry Hogan in 1970. One can make inferences about the times from looking at the program for that event, asking questions such as: Who attended the event? Why was it held? What was Larry Hogan's connection with Prince George's County? Using reasoning based on this approach, connections between Prince George's County and its people, culture, and history are exposed.

#### METHODOLOGY

Gordon Cox presents a case for historians of music education to adopt the paradigms and practices of contemporary history. Historians, in particular those pursuing a cultural history of education, need to look beyond historical dates and events to search for meaning in artifacts and texts. Cox argues the historian can then breathe fresh air into the old traditions.<sup>23</sup>

This cultural history employs a variety of techniques to gather information about Battle, Allison, Pickard, and music education in the context of

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<sup>23</sup> Gordon Cox, "Transforming Research in Music Education History," in *The New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning*, ed. Richard Colwell and Carol Richardson (New York: Schirmer Books, 2002), 695-706.

a general history of Prince George's County. These techniques include: conducting oral histories and interviews, examining school records, newspaper reports, dissertations, personal records, and books, and analyzing data to develop a documentary history of music education in Prince George's County. Oral history, a subset of history, is the method providing the bulk of data for this study.

### *Oral history*

Oral history, passed from one generation to the next and, as an activity of myth making, is the oldest of historical methods. English historian Paul Thompson's influence on this medium is monumental. In his early work in the 1960s he brought oral history to the forefront and demonstrated its reliability as a historical method. He cautions oral historians "to keep always in mind our ultimate objective, which is to use personal memory—the unique power of personal memory—to interpret change over time."<sup>24</sup> Oral history, as all of contemporary history, has borrowed from other disciplines. Social scientists, especially anthropologists, have provided insights into methods and ways of interpreting data for oral historians. Development of collective memory, recognition of subjectivity, the use of literary forms of analysis including storytelling, and a focus on the unconscious, have provided oral historians new and richer means of interpretation. Psychoanalytic methods, such as investigating what was not said and what meaning can be derived from

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<sup>24</sup> Paul Thompson, "Believe It or Not: Rethinking the Historical Interpretation of Memory," in *Memory and History: Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience*, ed. Jaclyn Jeffrey and Gleance Edwall (Lanham, MD: University Press of America and the Institute for Oral History, 1994), 11.

forgetting, are techniques employed by some current oral historians.<sup>25</sup>

Differences in the practice of oral history, with the remapping of the roles of subject and object, are noticeable since the work of Michel Foucault and other philosophers investigating relationships defined by the use of power between people. Before Foucault's theory on power and relationships, the subject (that person in a relationship in control) played the role of an authority, a scholar. The opposing figure in such a relationship—the object—acted in a passive manner, responding to the direction of the subject. Since the influence of Foucault's work, the narrator (previously the passive "object") has become the expert on his own story. Both the narrator and the interviewer (previously "subject") collaborate on releasing and revealing the story.<sup>26</sup>

Oral historian Barbara Finkelstein, in reference to the emerging discipline of oral history, says, "There are no canons here," meaning that the field is young and developing. A set of defining doctrines is not yet in place for this practice.<sup>27</sup> Oral history can be defined in part by what it does not do. Oral history does not test a hypothesis, manipulate variables, or use deductive reasoning. Rather, oral history links a multiplicity of variables in a life context and generates hypotheses to explore theories using qualitative methods such as "grounded theory" developed by Claude Levi-Strauss and Ira Glaser, and the "thick, rich description" method of anthropologist Clifford Geertz. In fact, oral history may

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 3-11.

<sup>26</sup> Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 2.

<sup>27</sup> Barbara Finkelstein, Quote from class notes, 15 September 2001. Notes in the possession of the author.

require a combination of methods such as the use of coded data from multiple interviews correlated with other documents to produce a study.<sup>28</sup>

Oral historian Valerie Yow asks, “But what is oral history? Is it the taped memoir? Is it the typewritten transcript? Is it the research method that involves in-depth interviewing?” She answers her own question, “The term refers to all three.”<sup>29</sup>

Paul Thompson explains how the method can function effectively to reveal the past in a meaningful way.

...[O]ral history is a connecting value which moves in all sorts of different directions. It connects the old and the young, the academic world and the world outside. But more specifically it allows us to make connections in the interpretation of history...That is a unique power of oral history.<sup>30</sup>

As a powerful tool for connecting experience to events, oral history can illustrate the male experience, the female experience, the ethnic experience, the marginalized experience, and hidden histories.<sup>31</sup> For example, oral history can be used to recover the voices of those whites living in the South during the Civil Rights era that promoted desegregation against a cultural bias steeped in hatred and bigotry.<sup>32</sup> In supplying meaning and significance to artifacts in a given culture, oral history may reveal those symbols and images imbued with the importance of rituals and customs. Discovering unwritten laws or rules of a club, organization, or community, adding meaning to public documents by correlating

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<sup>28</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 5-8.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>30</sup> Thompson, "Believe It or Not," 11.

<sup>31</sup> Hidden histories may be cultural habits or conventions residing at the subconscious level, for example, symbols or conventions.

<sup>32</sup> I would like to thank colleague Brett Kennedy for suggesting this use of oral history to me.

government data with oral testimony, and interrogating societal myths are important functions of this method of data collection. Yow points to special strengths of oral history. It can be used to, "...discover habitual thinking (often below the level of conscious thinking), which comes from the evolving culture in which individuals live."<sup>33</sup> To explain the concept of "habitual thinking," Yow quotes French historian Jacques LeGoff. Habitual thinking refers to "Automatic gestures, spontaneous words, which seem to lack any origins and to be the fruits of improvisation and reflex, in fact possess deep roots in the long reverberation of systems of thought."<sup>34</sup>

Oral history permits connections to be drawn between the professional lives of Battle, Allen, and Pickard and life in Prince George's County, Maryland during upward and downward cycles of support for music education. In the process, the experience of the ordinary teacher comes alive as the history of an extraordinary music educator.

*Oral history: process and studies*

Oral history is the process of linking voices to structures; for instance, using oral history, the personal experience of soldiers in Iraq during the time of the U.S. led invasion begun in 2003 can be combined with a history of the total U.S. involvement in Iraq. As historical narrative is made of people's voices, the oral historian functions to interpret these voices. My first step in obtaining oral

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<sup>33</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 23.

<sup>34</sup> Jacques Le Goff, "Mentalities: A History of Ambiguities," in *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 170. Quoted in Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 24.

history data was to obtain personal information on each of the narrators. An interview guide/questionnaire was developed before each interview and permission was secured in writing from each. This guide/questionnaire, more flexible than a straight listing of questions, identified the topics covered and provided sample questions related to each topic. The open-ended method allowed me to pursue “hot” topics or leads initiated by the narrator.<sup>35</sup>

The power of this methodology has been outlined above. However, the success of the project depends on the transcription phase. After data collection and before beginning to write, I considered: How much privilege does the writer give to the narrator’s voice as opposed to the ongoing narrative? Do I interject portions of narrative to break up long quotes or leave the quote whole? What is the balance between the writer’s voice and that of the narrator? How much of the interview document will be used? Further, I took pains to reflect accurately the voices of the narrators questioning the intent of certain phrases. Occasionally, to clarify meaning, more information was secured through a phone call or letter to the narrator. The narrators’ voices were more useful as they became situated in the context of their lived experience.<sup>36</sup>

I drew on sources that presented the method, the theory, and “how to” information of doing oral history. In his book *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, Paul Thompson explains how to conduct oral history. The book also provides a

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<sup>35</sup> See Permission form in Appendix A and Interview Questions developed for Maurice Allison and Dorothy Pickard in Appendix B.

<sup>36</sup> Barbara Finkelstein, Class notes, 17 November 2001, College Park, Maryland, notes in possession of author.

short history of the method, and explains the theory behind new and old approaches to oral history. In addition to Thompson's work, a number of important volumes on the topic of oral history were published in the 1990s. In *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists*, Valerie Yow explains how to obtain oral histories, and how to balance the relationship between the "narrator" (the interviewee) and the interviewer. Others have assembled anthologies, essays, and records of meetings.<sup>37</sup> *Writing Educational Biography*, a collection of essays on writing and conceiving biography, is a companion to studies on oral history. Through these studies I became acquainted with the process of conducting, transcribing, and interpreting the oral history interviews used in this study.<sup>38</sup>

Oral history techniques, when used in a cultural history, can reveal what Kate Rousmaniere refers to as the "silences" in the study of education. Historical studies of actual classroom happenings, climate, and testimony are rare, according to Rousmaniere.<sup>39</sup> Although one can touch, see, and recognize a classroom, the actual teaching, that is what happens on a moment-to-moment

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<sup>37</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3d ed. (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 2000); Yow, *Recording Oral History*; David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum, eds., *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1996); Michael Frisch, *A Shared authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990); Jaclyn Jeffrey and Gleance Edwall, eds., *Memory and History: Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994); Eva M. McMahan and Kim Lacy Rogers, eds., *Interactive Oral History Interviewing* (Hillsdale: Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1994); Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds., *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>38</sup> Craig Kridel, ed., *Writing Education Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research* (New York, NY: Garland Press, 1989).

<sup>39</sup> Kate Rousmaniere, *City Teachers: Teaching and School Reform in Historical Perspective* (New York, NY: Teachers' College Press, 1999), 8.

basis, remains elusive. Grosvenor, Lawn, and Rousmaniere chides historians of education with a quote of Harold Silver, "...it is difficult to believe that historians have made almost no attempt to reconstruct the classroom, the culture of the classroom, the social relations of the classroom."<sup>40</sup> This dearth of literature on classroom happenings and climate is what Grosvenor, Lawn, and Rousmaniere refer to as "silences."<sup>41</sup> The present study fills some of the silences on the day-to-day happenings in music classrooms in Prince George's County.

#### RELATED LITERATURE

The period of Civil Rights followed by school desegregation in the United States inspired several dissertations in the history of music education. These dissertations are of particular interest in providing a basis of comparison with events in Prince George's County Schools during the same time period. Histories of music education in Seattle, Washington; Lansing, Michigan Public Schools; Chicago Public Schools; Tewksbury, Massachusetts; and the city of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee Public Schools reported a decline in school population coupled with a downturn in finances, concurrent with school desegregation. Music education suffered huge loses in personnel and funds, especially in the Seattle City Schools.

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<sup>40</sup> Harold Silver, "Knowing and Not Knowing in the History of Education," *History of Education* 21, 1 (1992), 105.

<sup>41</sup> Ian Grosvenor, Martin Lawn, and Kate Rousmaniere, eds., *Silences & Images: The Social History of the Classroom* (New York: P. Lang, 1999), 1.

*Studies of music education during the period of desegregation*

Patricia Kim described the model music education program of Seattle City Schools in the 1960s as developed by supervisor Jack Schaeffer, incorporating aspects of "Project GO," a MENC initiative that included goals and objectives. Concurrent with desegregation, taxpayer-approved funds for education dipped by 38% as inner city, middle-class whites moved to the suburbs. Teachers were let go. Schools were closed. By 1975 the award-winning city music program was dismantled as Schaeffer and other educators left for better jobs.<sup>42</sup>

Beginning in 1965, the Lansing, Michigan Public Schools received federal monies from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) supplementing the cultural enrichment of low-income areas. As was the nationwide trend, the schools grew through the 1960s. In the 1970s a halt in school-aged population growth and the defeat of popular support for education combined to reduce funding to the schools. The school board released teachers and curtailed programs including music instruction. The music teacher staff was reduced approximately 50% by 1972. By 1979 school closings began.<sup>43</sup>

Rosagitta Podrovsky's comprehensive history of music education in the Chicago Public Schools begins with the original inclusion of music in the curriculum beginning in 1933 and ends in 1978. Of particular interest to my

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<sup>42</sup> Patricia C. Kim, "Making Music Their Own: School Music, Community, and Standards of Excellence in Seattle, 1960-1975" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1999), available from ProQuest, Co.: Ann Arbor, MI (1999) DAI-A, 60/04, p. 1058, 194.

<sup>43</sup> Nancy Kay Stepp Witucki, "History and Development of Choral and Instrumental Music Education in the Lansing, Michigan Public Schools" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1995), available from ProQuest, Co.: Ann Arbor, MI (1996) DAI-A 57/02, p. 618, 105, 117.

study is the description of the period between 1966 and 1978. From 1966 to 1972, Chicago Public Schools received federal monies in the form of ESEA grants to support instrumental music study in the schools. When the federal government pulled support from these Title I grants in 1972, the Chicago School Board made a move to eliminate music and other elective programs (physical education, art, and home economics) from the curriculum. Podrovsky describes the successful advocacy campaign spearheaded by MENC, Chicago teachers, professional musicians, and national politicians such as Jesse Jackson to save the elective programs from elimination.<sup>44</sup>

Christopher Brunelle's dissertation, "Music Education in a Suburban Massachusetts School System" presents a decade-by-decade synopsis of the ups and downs of music education in the Tewksberry Public Schools. An 11% unemployment rate in the 1970s, the resulting elimination of music teachers, a taxpayer initiative reducing monies collected from property taxes, and the loss of elementary music instruction in the 1990s, reduced considerably the focus on music instruction. Introduction of block scheduling in 1997 further affected the music program.<sup>45</sup>

Paul Hancock describes the effects of desegregation on music education in the schools of the city of Nashville and surrounding Davidson County,

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<sup>44</sup> Rosagitta Podrovsky, "A History of Music Education in the Chicago City Schools" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1978), available from ProQuest, Co.: Ann Arbor, MI (1979) DAI-A 39/10, p. 6013.

<sup>45</sup> J. Christopher Brunelle, "Music Education in a Suburban Massachusetts School System: A History of the Past; Recommendations for the Future" (Master's thesis, University of Massachusetts Lowell, 2000), available from ProQuest, Co.: Ann Arbor, MI (2000) MAI-A 38/04, p. 838, 275.

Tennessee. As whites were bused into the city and blacks bused out, the once-thriving music programs were dismantled. The disrupted feeder systems reduced sizes of bands, choirs, and orchestras. At the secondary level, students' negative attitudes toward being moved from one school to another handicapped the recruitment efforts of music educators. Many music educators left the area or resigned. Gradually the music programs returned to former glories, and as negative attitudes relaxed, students resumed music study and educators adjusted to life after desegregation.<sup>46</sup>

These dissertations are important to the current study in providing points of comparison. The successful use of advocacy in the Chicago City Schools provides a possible model for other school systems facing the adverse times of budget shortfalls.

#### LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE OF STUDY

The period of this study begins in 1950, the year that LeRoy Battle was hired by Prince George's County Schools, and it ends in 1992, the year Dorothy Pickard retired from Prince George's County Schools. As a secondary focus the study discusses political, social, and economic happenings related to education in Prince George's County. Attitudes of county residents as reflected in state and county annual reports, newspaper articles, and research articles were examined to understand traditions that evolved pertaining to education. The year 1950 was

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<sup>46</sup> Paul Hancock, "A History of Music Education in Nashville and Davidson county Public Schools (1873-1975): Local reflections of National Practices in Music Education" (Ed.D. diss., George Peabody College for Teachers, 1977), available from ProQuest, Co.: Ann Arbor, MI (1977) DAI-A 38/05, p. 2637, 243.

chosen as the starting point of this investigation for two reasons. LeRoy Battle began his teaching career in that year with Prince George's County; and 1950 precedes the civil rights activities of the 1960s. Understanding the time leading up to the Civil Rights movement helps one understand the subsequent period of court-ordered busing and the financial crises that followed.

Oral history as a method has limitations. As the researcher selects the facts and the texts to be used in writing the narrative, perspective is unavoidable. Efforts to minimize perspective on the part of the researcher include the comparison of interview data with other texts, constant rereading of material and rewriting based on new insights. Further, the results presented here cannot be generalized to other situations. Results from one situation, however, can be compared with those of another situation to give suggestions for both successful and unsuccessful courses of action.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

Black: terms such as Negro, colored, blacks, black, and Afro-American have been used to designate those individuals with African roots who now live in America. This author chooses to use the term "blacks" or "black" in referring to these people and their ancestors in most instances. Such is the definition used by Ira Berlin in his history, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*.<sup>47</sup> The current accepted term for individuals, whose ancestors came from Africa, yet live in the United States, is African-American.

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<sup>47</sup> Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1998).

The term “black” is used in this study to refer to those persons brought to America from Africa or the Caribbean without consent of the individual.

White: a term used in referring to those of European ancestry.

Teacher-Time: Prince George’s County measures teacher-time in tenths. A teacher may be assigned to one school for 3/10s of the time, a second school for 4/10s of the time, and a third school for 3/10s of the time. Added together these tenths comprise a whole position. Some individuals are hired on a part-time basis. Teacher-time for these individuals would be less than 10/10 or less than a whole position. A principal in Prince George’s County is allotted teaching positions relative to the number of students assigned to the building. Both teaching positions and administrative positions fall into this count. The staffing number becomes very important to the principal wanting to build specific programs. Principals or a school governing body use allotted positions at will. For instance, some school governing bodies have elected to convert a teaching position into funds to buy materials.

Narrator: in this qualitative study relying on methods developed by oral historians, narrator is the name for that person providing the oral interview. In the context of oral history, narrator, rather than subject, reflects more of the flavor of the activity practiced by oral historians; that is, the giving and receiving of a life story.

Voice or voices: are terms used by oral historians in reference to features of a narrator’s articulated memories and perspectives about selected events in the

past. The choice of words and phrases, method of articulation, accent, and other idiomatic tendencies used by the narrator allow impressions of social, political, and/or aesthetic aspects of these events to come forth.

#### SUMMARY

In this dissertation the life stories of three Prince George's County music educators provide the window through which some of the political, educational, economic, and cultural developments in Prince George's County are revealed as they relate to music education. Conversely, the conditions that existed in Prince George's County, Maryland during the years that Battle, Allison, and Pickard were teachers, allows us to see the extraordinary nature of their lives. The "texts" for this study include interviews, county data and documents, state documents, articles, books, and personal records. The challenge is to interpret all the data and read the "texts" in such a way that a history of music education in Prince George's County unfolds and will be of benefit to those interested in music education in the context of Prince George's County history. What happened in Prince George's County, Maryland—forced busing to achieve desegregation, recurrent financial crises during the 1980s, and community advocacy—was experienced by many municipalities across the United States. This dissertation, then, situates Prince George's County, Maryland among other localities in the United States experiencing the effects of desegregation and budget crises.

Standing above these times of change are the three educators who remained almost oblivious to riots, budget shortfalls, and political turmoil

outside their classrooms as they coached, directed, and supported the young persons within their webs of influence. These teachers survived because each displayed individual creativity, passion for teaching, and belief in young people and because of the outpouring of support from parent communities.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL UNDERPINNINGS AND  
CYCLES OF SUPPORT FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Music education functions to transmit culture. It reflects societal values and trends.<sup>1</sup> In times of prosperity, individuals and society are more likely to support the arts through purchase of artworks, concert tickets, or other means. It is of interest to learn underlying reasons for support of the arts. These reasons for cycles of support lie beyond the arts themselves and can be found in activities within a society. In that regard music education historian Michael Mark states:

The roots of music education historical trends and events are usually found in societal conditions that create certain needs of the public, or of particular groups within a society.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter deals with the underpinnings of music education in the United States and more specifically Prince George's County, Maryland. A brief overview of societal conditions from 1950 to 1990 reveals periodic cycling of funding for music education. Support for education in American has varied periodically throughout its history.<sup>3</sup> These cycles will be outlined together with their

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see Harvey Siegel, "Education and Cultural Transmission/Transformation. Philosophical Reflections on the Historian's Task," *Education and Cultural Transmission* Supplementary Series, 2 (1996).

<sup>2</sup> Michael L. Mark, "The Public Policy Roots of Music Education History," *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 20, 2 (1999), 103.

<sup>3</sup> For information about music education see Edward B. Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States: New and Augmented Edition* (Virginia: Music Educators National Conference, 1966); Thurston Dox, "George Frederick Bristow, and the New York Public Schools," *The Choral Journal*

underlying causes. Included is a discussion of the advocacy movement that begun in the mid 1960s by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC). A summary of the political, social, and educational background in Prince George's County rounds out this chapter.

#### SOCIETAL CONDITIONS AFFECTING MUSIC EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The world was rocked by two events in the 1950s, the birth of rock 'n' roll and the dawning of the space age.<sup>4</sup> These two events continue to influence education policy. Rock 'n' roll, a pounding, driving form of musical entertainment grew from the African American blues form. As teens "grooved" to the music of Bill Haley, Elvis Presley, and the Beatles, pop culture was born. The launch of Sputnik in 1957 reoriented the nation's priorities. Math and science courses were stressed as the space industry searched for the next step in the cold war. The early 1960s, prior to the Civil Rights movement, witnessed increased funding for education, research, and the arts, a cycle of support for music education.<sup>5</sup>

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38, 9 (1998); James L. Fisher, "The Roots of Music Education in Baltimore," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 21, 3 (1973); Mark Fonder, "Early School Music Instruction in Wisconsin," *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 9 (1998); Charles L. Gary, "A History of Music Education in the Cincinnati Public Schools," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 11, 1 (1954); Carol Livingston, "The History of Music and Music Education in Rhode Island," *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 20, 2 (1999); Paul D. Sanders, "Early Public School Music Education in Zanesville, Ohio," *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 21, 3 (1998); Fumiko Shiraishi, "Music Education at the Dewey School 1896-1904," *Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 17 (1995); and Terese M Volk, "The Growth and Development of Music Education in the public Schools of Buffalo, New York, 1843-1988," *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 9 (1988).

<sup>4</sup> Some credit the beginning of rock 'n' roll with disc jockey Allan Freed's 1951 use of the term. Sputnik was launched in 1957.

<sup>5</sup> D. K. Peneny, [www.history-of-rock.com/](http://www.history-of-rock.com/) (November, 2003 1998 [cited 14 April 2004]); Steve Garber, [www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/sputnik/](http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/sputnik/) (NASA, 21 February, 2003 1999 [cited 14 April 2004]).

Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society program, unveiled in 1963, prompted Americans to consider what were the ingredients of a great society. Some felt that the rising pop culture aided by television would eclipse the traditional American values with a male-dominant, nuclear family. These fears motivated a group concerned about the shortage of string players in American orchestras. Meetings were held at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood during 1963 and again in 1964 to find ways to improve string instruction with the goal of increasing the number of string players in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

The decade between 1960 and 1970 was a remarkable period of change for education and the United States. Enrollment increases in the public schools produced by the "baby boom" following World War II, created a need for more teachers. Because the number of teachers needed exceeded the pool of trained teachers, many of those hired were not well qualified. Young people reacted to the Vietnam War in what became a "youth movement," gathering in groups protesting the American involvement in Vietnam. By the end of this decade, SAT scores dropped noticeably. The quality of education entered a downward spiral.<sup>7</sup>

The greatest societal influence on life in the United States from the 1960s through the 1970s was the Civil Rights movement and subsequent federal government actions to enforce the law. Following the enactment of civil rights legislation in the 1960s, the federal government, under pressure from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), took

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<sup>6</sup> Laura Reed and Laura Stenger, "ASTA in a Social, Political, and Historical Context, 1958-1970," *American String Teacher* 46, 2 (1996), 43.

<sup>7</sup> Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 17.

steps to desegregate the public schools across the nation. Mandatory busing to achieve racial balance began with the schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg in 1971.<sup>8</sup> Prince George's County, Maryland, a school system on the perimeter of the seat of the federal government, became (what some thought to be) the test case for the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.<sup>9</sup> During this period, there was a dramatic change in the racial composition of many cities. Whites sold their suburban homes and moved to communities outside disputed desegregation areas. Affluent blacks moved from the inner cities to the suburbs. Meanwhile, with property values compromised, in some cases, by hastily made decisions to move, home values decreased.<sup>10</sup> These times of change and unrest continued as financial downturns posed more problems for communities and for the educational system.

A boomerang effect characterized the decade between 1970 and 1980. Shortages in oil created high prices for the American consumer and businesses. The world economy, concerned with rising costs of oil and goods, reacted to inflation. Just as the school-aged population grew in the 1960s, it shrank in the 1970s as the "baby boomers" graduated. Educators in many jurisdictions reduced the number of periods in the school day, also reducing the number of electives

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Dobbs, "50 Years After Brown: Progress Made in City Schools, But More To Go," *The Washington Post*, 13 May 2004, Front Page, A 1.

<sup>9</sup> For background on this movement and subsequent happenings see Gary Orfied and Susan E. Eaton, *Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1978); and Susan E. Eaton and Elizabeth Crutcher, "Magnets, Media, and Mirages: Prince George's County's "Miracle" Cure," in *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education*, ed. Gary Orfied and Susan E. Eaton (New York: The New Press, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> See Maureen Walsh, "An Economic Analysis of School Desegregation In Prince George's County, Maryland" (Master's thesis, University of Maryland, 1980).

available to the average student. Fewer teachers were needed. Local school boards felt the strain of shrunken revenues and a teacher glut.<sup>11</sup> Support for education and arts education decreased further.

In 1978 a taxpayer revolt began in California with Proposition 13, which regulated the state's spending to keep pace with economic growth. Funds became scarce for education and other government services such as police, fire protection, and highway maintenance. Like a California wildfire, this movement spread, igniting voters in twenty-five other states to pass similar property tax-relief laws. Voters in Massachusetts enacted the most restrictive measure, possibly because property taxes in Massachusetts were much higher than the national average. Proposition 2-1/2 in Massachusetts held property taxes to 2-1/2% of the community assessment. Annual increases were restricted to 2-1/2%.<sup>12</sup> In Prince George's County, Maryland, voters enacted Tax Reform In Maryland (TRIM) holding property taxes at the 1978 assessment. Not so restrictive as the Massachusetts ruling, the effect of TRIM took several years to create severe budget problems for Prince Georgians.<sup>13</sup>

With school systems throughout the nation adjusting to the effects of inflation and reduced income from taxes, another blow fell to education. President Ronald Reagan in 1982 proposed a 45% decrease in funding to public

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<sup>11</sup> Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 17-18.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 110-111.

<sup>13</sup> For an explanation of TRIM see Staff, "TRIM: The Morning After," *The Washington Post*, 22 November 1978, First Section, A 18.

education at the federal level. This reduction amounted to millions of dollars for many jurisdictions.<sup>14</sup>

*A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, published in 1983 became the mantra for those seeing the need to improve the quality of public education. *A Nation at Risk* described a bleak situation: "We [the American educational system] have even squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge."<sup>15</sup> A "back-to-basics" movement, injurious to music education, preached the teaching of basic subjects: reading, writing, math, and social studies. "Frills" such as art and music were to be eliminated.<sup>16</sup> The early 1980s was indeed a low point in the cycle of support for music education as the effects of desegregation, declining student populations, and severe budget crises translated into less money for education and other social services. In this downward spiral, funds for education and music education reached the lowest level in the twentieth century.

How did music education and its supporters survive these times? What course did music educators take in living through the up and down cycles of the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s?

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<sup>14</sup> Gail Pastula, "\$10 Million School Aid Cut Feared," *The Prince George's Journal*, 23 February 1982, A-1.

<sup>15</sup> National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform," (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983). Quoted in Mark, *Contemporary Music Education*, 19.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

## NATIONAL CYCLES OF SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

Active support of arts education began in the late 1950s first with the Ford Motor Foundation's support of contemporary composers, then with organizations assembled for the purpose of assessing the course of education. The Ford Motor Foundation's ambitious project to explore arts and society placed young composers in public school systems in the United States. Known as the Young Composers Project, it began in 1959 and concluded in 1962. Young composers were paid \$5,000 a piece to compose music for specific performing organizations. In all, thirty-one composers were placed in school settings by 1962. MENC became the administrator of a second program funded by Ford in 1963. The project became known as CMP or Contemporary Music Project for Creativity in Music Education. Through this project, Ford and MENC sought to provide teachers and the public a greater understanding of contemporary music.<sup>17</sup> One anticipated goal of this exposure to contemporary music was the acceptance of contemporary music and contemporary composers by the general public as an alternative to popular music and music of European masters.

America reacted to Sputnik with a determination to regain global superiority. Groups assembled to seek solutions and determine courses of action in putting the United States back into the lead in the cold war. The first of these gatherings assembled at Woods Hole, Massachusetts in 1959. Although the purpose of this meeting centered on identifying problems with science

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 28-34.

education, outcomes recommended increased funding for all of education.<sup>18</sup> That same year the American Association of School Administrators supported a comprehensive curriculum that included the fine arts—music, drama, painting, sculpture, and architecture.<sup>19</sup>

The Yale Seminar of 1963, in part prompted by the National Science Foundation work with science curriculum in the 1950s, culminated in a federal grant to Yale University to conduct a seminar entitled *Music in Our Schools: A Search for Improvement*. The focus on improving music education continued with the Tanglewood Symposium in 1967. MENC, in cooperation with the Berkshire Music Center, the Theodore Presser Foundation, and the School of Fine and Applied Arts of Boston University, met to redefine the role of music education in American society. The exhaustive examination of current music education practice and future needs were summarized in “The Tanglewood Declaration.” The Goals and Objectives Project became the vehicle for realizing the dreams of Tanglewood. Known as the GO Project, the initiative began in 1969 with eighteen subcommittees working on different aspects of music education. From this project MENC began the development of standards for the school music program. With this bold, inclusive move, MENC became a strong spokesperson for music education. A notable outcome of “The Tanglewood Declaration” was the recognition of youth music; in other words, popular music enjoyed by teens

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 16.

and others.<sup>20</sup> This recognition had implications for music education curriculum. As a result, a more diverse palette of music for school performing groups and music history lessons was offered to educators. Previously music of European masters comprised the bulk of teaching material in the music classroom. Now musics of African Americans, other cultures, and popular music were brought into the classroom.

Yale seminars in 1963 and 1964 and the Tanglewood gathering in 1967 resulted in influential status reports. The federal government supported for education with grants and later with the formation of a cabinet level Department of Education. MENC initiated a period of arts advocacy that influences legislation to this day. Partly because of these initiatives, arts in the United States continued to be funded in the public schools, on concert stages, and in galleries.

In 1965 the federal government became involved in funding arts education. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 supported education for the disadvantaged, provided funds for library resources, established supplementary education centers, and supported state departments of education with grants-in-aid. Specifically classroom teachers were to be trained in developing aesthetic awareness, understanding the process of the arts, understanding how the arts contribute to a child's well being, and developing teachers' abilities to provide classroom activities incorporating the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 38-48.

arts. Many jurisdictions throughout the United States received funds from this act, designed to support all of education, but also focusing on the arts.<sup>21</sup>

The advocacy movement in music education began in 1966 with the appointment of Joan Gaines as publicity director of MENC. Gaines advanced the cause of music education by helping music educators redefine the need for music education as a generator of ideas, processes, and relationships. In her travels throughout the United States, Gaines encouraged music educators to take an active stance in the promotion of music education. She used radio and television announcements to outline the role of music education in society. When the national economy declined in the early 1970s, Gaines and MENC were poised to prevent the dismissal of music education from the public schools. By the 1980s the term “advocacy” came to mean connecting public policy to arts education. In this role music education advocates have influenced decisions on national, state, and local policy affecting the arts. The culmination of this advocacy effort to date is the inclusion of arts education in the Goals 2000 Act of 1994.<sup>22</sup>

#### PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY, POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND EDUCATIONAL MILIEU

To gain an understanding of life in Prince George’s County from the 1950s to the 1990s, a short background section explains social, political, and then educational movements of the times.

American teens from the late 1950s onward cultivated their own culture expressed in choices of dress, music, and behavior. Adults worked to maintain

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 86-94. Note: the Chicago City Schools and Lansing, Michigan Public Schools benefited from this grant.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 76-77.

the time of stability prior to rock 'n' roll's influence on youth. Examples of these efforts occurred at this time in Maryland. The American Legion, hoping to indoctrinate teen youths in "Americanism," used the University of Maryland in Prince George's County as a training site for classes on democratic government. "Americanism" included the opportunity for attending students to make their choices for state officials. Local playgrounds in the Baltimore and Washington area hosted supervised play and sessions for youth and teens needing summer entertainment. In financing these activities adults hoped to provide youngsters the opportunities to develop civil, social behavior.<sup>23</sup>

By 1962 the Washington Beltway, under progress, promised to relieve the beginnings of area traffic congestion. Mass-produced homes such as those of William Levitt in Bowie provided affordable living space for the growing county. The county schools experienced a period of prosperity with growth in school-aged population and funds for programs producing a cycle of support for music education.

The economic boon, fueled by population increases, halted about 1970. Because of rapid growth statewide, a state-imposed new-sewer-line construction ban stopped new home construction in Prince George's County. "White flight" in response to court-ordered busing in 1972 to desegregate the schools, further slowed the rate of growth of this once-mushrooming county. Beginning with the charter governments of Gullett (1971-1974) and Kelly (1974-1978), Prince

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<sup>23</sup> Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland, A Middle Temperament: 1634-1980* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 598-9.

George's County transformed from a tobacco-growing farm community into a metropolitan jurisdiction. The 1980s saw more of Prince George's population working in the District of Columbia than any of the surrounding counties.<sup>24</sup>

As busing drove white residents to nearby counties, blacks, Asians and others found Prince George's affordable.<sup>25</sup> County population began to grow. The economic activities between 1978 and 1990 are described elsewhere in this document. By the 1990s, the county had become a model for other communities.

Prince George's County historian, Alan Virta, writes of this time in his *Pictorial History of Prince George's County*:

The 1990 *Almanac of American Politics* declared Prince George's County to be 'one of the nation's most important counties—and a place that gives us a hopeful glimpse of a possible future.' The reason for that hope is the progress in the county in the area of race relations...[T]he *Washingtonian* magazine described Prince George's County as 'more like the real America' than any other jurisdiction in the Washington area.<sup>26</sup>

#### *Civil Rights era and desegregation in Prince George's County*

##### Civil Rights era

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 profoundly affected those living in the county possibly more than other events at that time. In 1960 the black population in Prince George's County reached an all time low comprising 9% of the total county population. In the ten years between 1960 and 1970 the black population

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<sup>24</sup> Alan Virta, *Prince George's County, A Pictorial History*, 2d ed. (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company, 1991), 213.

<sup>25</sup> Brugger, *Maryland*, 661.

<sup>26</sup> Virta, *Pictorial History*, 249.

soared from 31,000 to 92,000—13.9% of the total population.<sup>27</sup> Many of these blacks worked for the federal government. With an increase in the number of affluent blacks, the need for desegregation in the schools became more conspicuous. The federal government proceeded with plans to desegregate the county schools.

Preceding the sudden cessation in population growth in the 1970s, an “unforgettable period of violence, rebellion, and readjustment in Maryland” occurred.<sup>28</sup> H. Rap Brown punctuated his speech to the crowd assembled in Cambridge, Maryland with the words, “It’s time for Cambridge to explode, baby! Black folks built America and if America don’t come around, we’re going to burn America down!”<sup>29</sup> A Cambridge elementary school burned on July 24, 1967.

In 1968 students at Bowie College (a traditionally black college) took over the administration building as they protested the substandard conditions of classrooms and dormitories. Prince George’s County police were called in by Governor Agnew to clear classroom spaces when student unrest halted the running of classes. Agnew, in a decisive move, closed Bowie State after militant students came to Annapolis pressing for a meeting. Martin Luther King’s assassination added the spark of unrest. Baltimore burned for two days following King’s murder. Agnew summoned federal troops to quell the uprising.

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<sup>27</sup> Civil Rights Commission, *A Long Day’s Journey Into Light: School Desegregation in Prince George’s County*, ed. John Hope III (Washington, DC: Clearinghouse Publication, 1976), 50-53.

<sup>28</sup> Brugger, *Middle Temperament*, 618.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Brugger, 618.

Regular soldiers patrolling the streets occupied Baltimore. Meanwhile riots occurred in Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Los Angeles.<sup>30</sup> One Baltimorean asked, “Who will deliver us Negroes from ourselves?”<sup>31</sup>

Prince George’s County continued to be the arena for protests turned violent. National Guardsmen patrolled the University of Maryland campus on May 1970 after students protesting the Vietnam War blocked Route One and threatened local businesses.<sup>32</sup> A second incident happened during the presidential campaign of 1972. Arthur Bremer, a Wisconsin man, shot candidate George Wallace at a Laurel, Maryland shopping center. Wallace survived the shooting, but was never to walk again.<sup>33</sup>

#### Desegregation efforts

African American James Gholson, Fairmont Heights principal since 1950, accepted a promotion to the Board of Education in 1969 as assistant to George Robinson, assistant superintendent for secondary education. Gholson worked with desegregation efforts. Counseling principals experiencing student unrest became his first function. He remembered that all of this took place at the disruptive time of the Vietnam War:

And my job was to go around to the schools where the kids were rebelling and get them calmed down. I did this because there were a number of senior high schools then. I went to Bladensburg High School. I went to

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<sup>30</sup> Brugger, 625-626.

<sup>31</sup> Quote in Brugger from *Baltimore Evening Sun* of April 8 and 12, 1968.

<sup>32</sup> Virta, *Pictorial History*, 240.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

Suitland wherever, Laurel, you name it. Wherever there was a rebellion, they would call for me to come and work with the students and I did.<sup>34</sup>

Calling himself “the architect of the desegregation plan” Gholson successfully negotiated with students to calm fears and defuse racial tensions. Gholson describes his work:

And I would seat them down, get the ringleaders and take them to a quiet place in the libraries and we would sit down and talk. They would tell me all their woes and all their troubles. Some of them respected what I did with them. I developed a very wonderful relationship with kids all over the county in the schools.<sup>35</sup>

Other efforts toward desegregation at the county level included a plan of then Superintendent Carl Hassel, *Project Desegregation: Make It Happen*.

Comprised of students, teachers, administrators, and citizens, *Project Desegregation*, succeeded in some ways.<sup>36</sup> There were few reported incidents of violence following the implementation of mandatory busing.

Virginia Sims, vocal music supervisor in Prince George’s County, had experiences with desegregation efforts in both Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Prince George’s County. She felt that Prince George’s County had more plans in place to support students and teachers during this period of change than Charlotte-Mecklenburg. She began teaching in Prince George’s County in 1969 at Maryland Park Junior High. She moved to Martin Luther King Junior in 1971

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<sup>34</sup> G. James Gholson, interview by author, tape recording, Mitchellville, MD, 10 September 2002, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Prince George’s County Schools employee, Greta Henry, explains the process in her doctoral dissertation, Greta G. Henry, "Descriptive Study of the Human Relations Activities and the Process of Desegregation in the Prince George’s County Schools, 1965-1973" (Ed.D. diss., George Washington University, 1974).

after the Board of Education closed Maryland Park. She speaks about desegregation efforts in Prince George's County:

I was the first music teacher, vocal music teacher, at Martin Luther King. I had a very successful year there. Of course I was there during the time when desegregation came about.<sup>37</sup> They bused children from Thomas Johnson, Junior High School over to Martin Luther King. That was a trying time. But I must give the principal of that school credit because what he did before those students came in was to bring all the faculty and students together in the gymnasium to talk about this change; to prepare for this change; to get student reaction about this change.<sup>38</sup>

Sims left Prince George's County in 1972 to live close to her father who had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. She took a job with the local school system teaching music in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina area. During the year Sims spent with her father, she had opportunity to compare Prince George's County desegregation efforts with those of another school system. Sims speaks of her experience in Charlotte-Mecklenburg:

I got there at the time they were just desegregating. That was tough. It was hard. There were children coming in, it was a predominately white school, but the black kids would come. At that time Charlotte-Mecklenburg was experiencing riots in the schools. I got there at the tail end of all that. It was not a pleasant situation because there were children mixed up with each other who did not want to be there; and there were children who were not prepared to have them there.<sup>39</sup>

The federal government worked to enforce the 1964 Civil Rights Act throughout the United States.<sup>40</sup> Some school systems seemed more resistant to change than others. By many accounts desegregation in Prince George's County

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<sup>37</sup> Prince George's County began adjusting racial balance in the 1970-71 school year, but did not meet federal guidelines at that time.

<sup>38</sup> Sims, 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> For a detailed account of the federal government's work to desegregate Prince George's County Schools, see Civil Rights Commission, *Long Day's Journey*.

proceeded in an orderly fashion. Credit has been given to the *Project Desegregation*, Gholson, Sims' principal, and others who facilitated the process. That is not to say, however, that life in Prince George's remained the same following the 1973 court-ordered busing.

During all these times of unrest music education continued to develop in the county. How did music education continue within the backdrop of violence—riots, shootings, student protests—and the financial uncertainty of this period? As evidenced by Battle, Allison, and Pickard, good teaching rises above uncertainty especially when there exists community support for education and music education.

#### SUMMARY

Societal changes influence support for music education and the arts. Examples of societal change in the United States include the focus on the basics of education following Sputnik, the beginning of rock 'n' roll and the teenage generation, the Civil Rights movement and desegregation, the unrest of the 1970s, taxpayer revolts in the late 1970s, and a national recession in the 1980s. Upward and downward cycles of support for music education occurred as a result of these societal changes.

Active support of arts education began in the late 1950s, first with the Ford Motor Foundation's funding grants to contemporary composers, then with organizations assembled for the purpose of assessing the course of education. Those at the Yale seminars in 1963 and 1964 and those assembled at the

Tanglewood symposium in 1967, produced status reports pointing the direction for the future of music education. The federal government supported education with grants to education and later the formation of a cabinet level Department of Education. MENC initiated a period of arts advocacy that influences legislation to this day. Partly because of these initiatives, arts in the United States continued to be funded in the public schools, on concert stages, and in galleries.

Prince George's County, Maryland can be seen as a microcosm of American society following national trends. Attempts to influence teen behavior occurred in Prince George's County and elsewhere as civic groups addressed the emergence of this generation of youth. As the county population grew so did the need for highways and other infrastructure necessary to modern life that required county tax funds and manpower.

In the mid-1960s, concurrent with the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War, episodes of riots and burnings swept through parts of Maryland and Washington, D.C. An economic downturn in the 1970s became the harbinger of a taxpayer revolt, TRIM, in Prince George's County. By the 1990s prosperity had returned to the county that had been divided by desegregation and budget deficits.

The federal government actively pursued the implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Prince George's County was put under federal court order in 1972 to desegregate the schools in order to achieve racial balance. Many

individuals worked in the face of adversity to facilitate the desegregation process in Prince George's County.

## CHAPTER III

### WINDS OF CHANGE: PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY MUSIC EDUCATION

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the people and circumstances that affected music education and education in general in Prince George's County Public Schools between 1950 and 1992. Three issues dominate—desegregation, budget shortfalls, and community advocacy. Because these issues influenced the professional lives of Battle, Allison, and Pickard, it is important to understand their sequence. The story of events, characters, budgetary forces, and community advocacy is presented here as a modern day drama featuring the Prince George's County School board and its superintendents, county executives, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Federal Judge Frank Kaufman, school personnel, music supervisors, county voters, and music education advocates. In Prince George's County music programs were twice spared from elimination, in 1982 and again in 1991.

Prince George's County cradles distinct, yet diverse cultures, and occupies a large landmass—56 miles from stem to stern, 27.6 miles at its widest—and covers 485 square miles. Occupations among its residents differ, as do socio-economic status, land use, weather, and cultures. LeRoy Battle taught in Upper Marlboro, the county seat. This community, both rural and urban, saw county offices along Main Street and farms in outlying areas. Black and white

populations existed side-by-side, but mingled seldom. Bud Allison taught in Bladensburg, a mostly white, blue-collar community. Close to Fairmont Heights and Palmer Park, predominately black neighborhoods, the school was involved in desegregation efforts prior to the 1973 forced-busing. Dorothy Pickard taught first in the New Carrollton area and later in Greenbelt. New Carrollton incorporated in 1953. White middle-class professionals bought homes and raised families here. After the busing order, New Carrollton experienced an abrupt change in ethnic population as blacks moved in to occupy the homes left vacant by fleeing whites. Greenbelt began in the 1930s as a project of Eleanor Roosevelt. This experimental city was one of three Greenbelts (Others were in Ohio and Wisconsin). Many government employees and their families moved into the Greenbelt community.<sup>1</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt High School, opening after the 1973 busing took effect, did not undergo shifts in student and teacher populations to accommodate Judge Kaufman's federal decree, but later was affected by busing changes as boundaries were redrawn.

Education in Prince George's County, Maryland, between 1978 and 1991 was influenced by a series of county and state budget shortfalls, storm-like in their random appearance and devastation. Community advocacy had an impact in defusing the storms in 1982 and 1991. These budget shortfalls were in part a result of court-ordered desegregation. The analogy between a storm system and

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<sup>1</sup> Virta, *Pictorial History*, 212, 214.

the budget crises that were endured in Prince George's County from 1978 to 1991, serves to set the stage for the dramatic tale that follows.

#### THE ANALOGY

A storm system is a cluster of storms bound together by strong forces. Storms of this type are anticyclones, counter-clockwise rotating masses of air and moisture. Under appropriate atmospheric conditions, an anticyclone causes a further destabilization of the brewing weather system spawning a family of anticyclones. The rapid rise and fall of moisture in cells of warm and cool air creates turbulence. Families of anticyclones cover vast areas, thus affecting the weather over long periods of time before the energy is finally dispersed. Damage and devastation done by storms are unpredictable but certain to occur to some degree. Charting storm paths and potential damage assessment remains elusive even to the forecaster with sophisticated computer models. The budget crises in Prince George's followed one another in the unpredictable manner of anticyclonic storms.<sup>2</sup>

The financial instability in Prince George's County between 1978 and 1991 was not a predictable outcome of forced-busing. "Anticyclones" in this family of storms included forced-busing to achieve desegregation, a voter-imposed referendum limiting tax rates enacted with the election of 1978, the national recession of the 1980s affecting even the "recession proof" Washington metropolitan area, the actions of the Prince George's County Board of Education

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<sup>2</sup> Jeff Markell, *The Sailor's Weather Guide* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Sheridan House, 1988).

and county executives Larry Hogan and Parris Glendening and the reaction of county residents supporting music education.

#### PROLOGUE

*“The Land of Pleasant Living”*<sup>3</sup>

From colonial times Prince George’s County has been host to pleasantries of the Tidewater area of Maryland including boating, horse racing, baseball, and social gatherings. Originally the home of landed gentry, this county, close to the Chesapeake Bay, was in 1752 the site of the first opera production in America.<sup>4</sup> Tobacco from Prince George’s county farms was moved by ship from ports on the South River to England on a regular basis. Tobacco, similar to cotton, required manual labor—slave labor—to make it a cash crop. Prince George’s County was home to many slaves. After the Civil War and Emancipation, many blacks continued to make Prince George’s County their home. This population of blacks remained almost invisible to the whites in power; invisible that is until the winds of desegregation blew a change after 1954. For some the change seemed a long time coming.

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<sup>3</sup> In “The Land of the Pleasant Living,” according to Robert Brugger, author of *Maryland, A Middle Temperament: 1634-1980*, prosperity set in paradise provided fun and good times for all. The slogan appeared as an advertising campaign in the 1950s.

<sup>4</sup> Barry Talley, *Secular Music in Colonial Annapolis: The Tuesday Club, 1745-56*. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988). Talley makes the point that members of the Tuesday Club, an Annapolis based colonial, men’s literary club, produced John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* in a tobacco barn in Upper Marlboro. Members of the orchestra for this performance were, in fact, members of the Tuesday Club. This production could have been the first opera production in America using orchestral accompaniment as opposed to piano accompaniment. It took place in Prince George’s County.

## TOWARD DESEGREGATION

*Prince George's County School System, 1954*

Beginning in 1954 with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling and for the next eighteen years, the Prince George's County School Board exercised tactics to delay the desegregation of the schools. Although the school superintendency changed in 1970, the posture of this power source remained almost the same—recalcitrant and unwilling to permit blacks to sit next to whites in the classroom. A vocal cadre of parents and political leaders opposed to desegregation supported the racial attitudes of the board and superintendent.<sup>5</sup> Members of this group extended from county parents to the highest political figure in the nation—President Richard Nixon.

Larry Hogan, US Congressman and Prince George's County resident (later county executive), took the busing issue to President Nixon, effectively bypassing the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) that was pressing for desegregation. Hogan was quoted in the local newspaper:

It's no use talking to these people [HEW representatives pressing the county for desegregation legislation]. The President himself cannot escape responsibility for this problem. Why cannot he transfer these idiotic bureaucrats?<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Civil Rights Commission, *Long Day's Journey*; Howard Kohn, *We Had A Dream* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1998); Staff, "Sue Mills Speaks for School Board on HEW Citation," *The Prince George's Post*, 2 September 1971, 1, 8; Staff, "Hogan Praises Nixon Warning to HEW Officials," *The Prince George's Post*, 19 August 1971; Staff, "Pr. George's School Board Sues HEW, Cites 'Harassing'," *The Washington Post*, 27 October 1971, Education, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Del Malkie, "Hogan To Take School Busing Impasse to the White House," *The Prince George's Post*, 5 August 1971, A-1.

Although Nixon sided with Hogan and the Prince George's County School Board, HEW continued to press for desegregation.

The County's plan for desegregation, "Freedom of Choice," was loosely enforced from 1954 until court-ordered busing in 1973. The implementation of this plan fell short of welcoming black students into white schools. On paper the plan allowed for the transfer of a county student from one school to another at the request of the student's parent. African American parent Eloise Hall remembers requesting a transfer for her daughter: "Things were just not made comfortable," (for African Americans seeking transfer to desegregated schools). Hall was interrogated at the transfer hearing. She was asked questions of a non-educational nature: how many bedrooms, bathrooms, and television sets were in her family home? Hall decided against transferring her daughter.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Vaughns moves to Prince George's County*

In 1966 Sylvester Vaughns moved his family from Charlotte, North Carolina to Palmer Park in Prince George's County, Maryland. Vaughns came to Prince George's County because he wanted his children to have good schooling. *The Washington Post* writer Frank Ahrens in 1996, years after the original desegregation lawsuit, interviewed Vaughns about the reasons behind the family move. Ahrens reports Vaughns' views:

Black and white children started the school year at the same time in Charlotte just after World War II. But after about a month, the black schools would close for a few weeks so that children could help pick the

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<sup>7</sup> Douglas Watson, "Pr. George's School Troubles Rooted in Desegregation Delays," *The Washington Post*, 12 August 1971, F-1.

fall cotton harvest. Vaughns remembers standing up in the cotton fields to watch the yellow buses roll by, taking the white children to their lessons.<sup>8</sup>

Vaughns, equating funding with quality of education, felt that more money was spent on educating white children than black children and thus, the white children received a better education. Again Ahrens speaks for Vaughns:

It was clear that the county was spending more money on schools in white neighborhoods than black ones.

The idea of sitting a black child next to a white child in a white school had nothing to do with the white child somehow helping the black child learn better. It had to do with getting the black child where the good education was—where the white children were.<sup>9</sup>

### *Lawsuit*

In 1971 Vaughns felt he had an opportunity to realize his dream of providing better education for black children. That year the Prince George's County chapter of the NAACP, headed by Vaughns, mounted a challenge to the county's segregated school system. Local lawyers plotted a legal course; then they looked for local families brave enough to put their names on the lawsuit. Eight African American men with children in the county schools came forward—Vaughns and men with dreams such as his. The US federal courts became shields for these men and their families in their rigorous struggle for educational equality. Federal District Court Judge Frank Kaufman took on their cause and the now-famous courtroom drama began.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Frank Ahrens, "A Minority of One: Sylvester Vaughns Still Believes in Busing. In P. G. County, He's Almost alone," *The Washington Post*, 4 September 1996, B, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ovetta Wiggins, "The Man Whose Case Led to County Busing," *The Washington Post*, 13 May 2004, Prince George's, F-4. The original lawsuit filed March 27, 1972 by NAACP reads *Sylvester J. Vaughns, Jr., et al v. Prince George's County Board of Education, et al, Civil 72-325-K, (1972)*.

*Federal Courtroom*

From 1954 onward the county had received notice that to continue federal funding for the schools, a desegregation plan should be on file with HEW. Although some efforts to change were noticeable, county policy continued to be the inadequate "Freedom of Choice" plan. Judge Kaufman, up to the final hour before his ruling, gave the county power to devise its own plan. On December 29, 1972, during winter break for students and teachers, he decided in favor of Vaughns, realizing that the county was unable to produce a plan to meet HEW requirements. Since the county had not satisfied court and federal guidelines, Judge Kaufman gave the order to use forced busing to desegregate Prince George's County Schools.<sup>11</sup> The storm gathered its forces.

Kaufman's plan of forced busing to achieve racial desegregation was implemented on January 29, 1973, just one month from the date of his decision. His order stated that, "regardless of the reason why, the Prince George's County School Board has disregarded the mandates of the highest court of our land."<sup>12</sup> Under Kaufman's plan, there was an increase of only 8% in the number of students bused than before the court-imposed plan. High school seniors were given an extra semester to prepare for the move. The schools were closed for three days in preparation for an event eighteen years in the making. On February 1, 1973 some students attended a different school than before. Some parents elected to remove their students from the public schools. Some students attended

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<sup>11</sup> Civil Rights Commission, *Long Day's Journey*, 343.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

the same school as before; but nothing was quite the same.<sup>13</sup> The barometer fell as the approaching low-pressure system brought in a storm.<sup>14</sup>

#### BUDGET STORMS

Quickly the county demographics altered. Prince George's County School population peaked (to date) in 1971, two years before court-ordered busing, with 162,828 students: 76% white, 22% black. By 1980—seven years into court-ordered busing—county figures show 127,108 students: 46% white, and 49% black. The majority white/black population reversed itself.<sup>15</sup> Although desegregation itself proceeded peacefully in most quarters, the aftermath—just as the tidal surge following a hurricane's passing—proved to be more turbulent than expected.

#### *Effects of desegregation*

The storms accompanying forced busing to desegregate Prince George's County schools effected a change in the core of the social structure. The population redistribution caused by "white flight" and a declining school-age population produced a recirculation of cultures as blacks and Asians moved into homes left by whites. As African Americans succeeded in their quest for civil

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 344.

<sup>14</sup> The enactment of Vaughn's dream of "getting the black child where the good education was—where the white children were," did not necessarily improve the lot of black children in Prince George's County. It is not clear the effects of forced busing as a means to integration produced the desired results for blacks in Prince George's County. The chronic under-funding of Prince George's County Schools that followed the enactment of TRIM and the budget crisis of 1979 continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Students in Prince George's County Schools are reported scoring near the bottom in statewide assessments, Lisa Frazier, "County's Schools Are Near Bottom On State Tests; 29.2% of Students Met Standards," *The Washington Post*, 18 December 1997, Weekly-Maryland, M 1; and Nancy Trejos, "County's High Schools Score Poorly On New Test; State Exam Highlights Racial Achievement Gap," *The Washington Post*, 12 December 2002, T 3.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix C, Prince George's County Board of Education, *Report on School Racial Composition by Year*.

rights, their concerns for equality rose to the surface. All in all, desegregation in Prince George's County proceeded more peacefully than many other jurisdictions of the United States. Although by some accounts the process appeared seamless,<sup>16</sup> its effects unraveled over the next fifteen years starting with school closings in 1977. From a high of 162,828 students in 1971, the school roster dropped to 102,500 during the 1985-86 school year, a decline of almost 60,000.<sup>17</sup> The decline in the number of school-aged children resulted in the closing of 65 county schools. With these closings many neighborhood schools disappeared; many students, who previously walked to school, rode buses to school. Secondly, a group of citizens successfully put through a referendum to freeze property taxes. Reduced county funds and a \$10 million reduction in federal aid precipitated unexpected budget shortfalls extending from 1979 through 1983. In total, 550 teaching positions were eliminated from the county schools payroll as a result of the first budget crisis in 1979. The 1982 budget crisis—what seemed to many as a wrenching ordeal—took 827 positions.<sup>18</sup>

Desegregation affected music education in the classroom to varying degrees. Jerry Boarman began teaching social studies at Fairmont Heights in 1971. At that time the school was one of the two all-black high schools, although the board began to desegregate Fairmont Heights in the 1970-71 school year. Boarman talks about his experience and the music program at Fairmont Heights:

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<sup>16</sup> Henry, "Human Relations Activities;" Sims, 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Prince George's County Board of Education, *Report on School Racial Composition by Year* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> Leon Wynter and Tom Vesey, "Prince George's Schools Notify 827 of July 1 Layoffs," *The Washington Post*, 10 June 1982, Metro, B1.

At that particular point when you go in—I was the only white teacher there—so all the music teachers are black and they had the gospel choirs, they had the rhythm, and they had the marching band that did the kind of jazzy things we do now in some of the colleges. Music was a big part of that school. They had not just bands, but a wind ensemble group. They had the chorus group. They had a gospel choir group.<sup>19</sup>

Boarman enjoyed the spirit of the students involved in music and athletics at

Fairmont Heights:

You have to understand that Douglass and Fairmont Heights, being the only two black schools in the county, both in music and athletics, got a richness that didn't exist anywhere else.<sup>20</sup>

Later, after desegregation, Boarman felt something appeared to be lost:

From a musical standpoint there was no question we had fewer kids, because we lost some of the kids and our black faculty. They both were taken out of our school and sent to Bladensburg and to other places. We lost some of those kids. In my opinion I don't think the chorus or the band was ever as good because of the numbers. The white kids coming in at the beginning, they wouldn't join any of that stuff—they wouldn't join the choirs.<sup>21</sup>

Betty Scott, music teacher at University Park Elementary School since 1969,

continued most of her normal teaching habits following the 1973 transfer of

students:

Well it didn't really affect my program; and I think again, partly, because I'm an entertaining teacher and so on; but it did affect the school. But all things considered, it really went pretty smoothly. A couple [of] years

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<sup>19</sup> Gerald Boarman, interview by author, tape recording, Greenbelt, MD, 15 March 2001, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located. Fairmont Heights opened in 1950. G. James Gholson, an African American, was selected to be the first principal. Gholson and his wife, Elsie, appreciated culture and music. Performing groups at Fairmont Heights included choir, band, and orchestra. Gholson's daughter, Sylvia, played the violin. She performed a concerto with the Prince George's All-County Orchestra under the leadership of Marvin Rabin in 1962. G. James Gholson, interview by author, tape recording, Mitchellville, MD, 10 September 2002, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>20</sup> Boarman, 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

down the pike and so on by time, let's say, that we came over here [into a refurbished building], uh, that, our community had really, I mean, those kids felt really comfortable here.<sup>22</sup>

African American Betty Green, a vocal/general elementary teacher with Prince George's County for 33 years, feels differently about the 1973 desegregation process. She called the process "integration." Green said:

I think integration was the worst thing that ever happened to the black child. Because, when the children were in—when we had all black schools—your parents stood behind you 100%. Once the schools were integrated, your black parents stopped supporting the schools.<sup>23</sup>

Green felt that black parents were reluctant to support a school in another community. She seems to feel as though she speak for those black parents as she said:

Well, they had to go out of the neighborhood. And another thing, the PTA—the black parents felt they were no longer in charge of the PTA. They were just onlookers. They really didn't feel a real part of the school.<sup>24</sup>

### *School closings*

An outside, impartial observer could have noticed the stratified society present in Prince George's County. Layers of this society included forced busing to desegregate the schools, "Whites Only" drinking fountain at the county courthouse, gerrymandering of housing to maintain the school boundaries, and a vocal white population refusing to have white children seated next to black children in the schoolroom even after the 1973 court-ordered desegregation.

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<sup>22</sup> Betty Scott, interview by author, tape recording, Hyattsville, MD, 13 October 2003, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located. Students originally bused into all-white University Park Elementary School came from all-black Fairmont Heights Elementary School.

<sup>23</sup> Betty Wheeler Green, interview by author, tape recording, Upper Marlboro, MD, 18 April 2000, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

William Goodman and David Bird, two Prince Georgians living in Lanham, Maryland, may be credited with starting a tax revolt in Maryland—Tax Reform Initiative by Marylanders or TRIM. Empowered by the success of voters in California on Proposition 13 and elsewhere, these men organized a grassroots rebellion in Prince George’s County in the mid 1970s. Their simple referendum to hold property taxes at the 1978 level became a *cause célèbre* for those voting for the referendum. In a *Washington Post* article Goodman spoke of the movement. Petitions were collected as people left grocery stores or shopping centers.<sup>25</sup> Goodman was quoted in *The Washington Post*, “The response has been overwhelming. Everyone wants to be part of this.”<sup>26</sup>

Two voter decisions in the November 7, 1978 election altered the financial status of the county schools. They were the election of Lawrence Hogan as County Executive and the passage of the referendum (TRIM) to hold property taxes at the 1978 level.

After serving a term in the US Congress, Hogan was anxious to get more involved with the day-to-day running of government. Hogan reminisced:

I was very frustrated in Congress because I thought I was really a manager rather than a legislator. Being a legislator is very frustrating. You really can’t make things happen there. You just, you’re reacting to someone else’s initiatives...In retrospect I’m extremely proud of the county’s accomplishments under my term.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> David A. Maraniss, "Referendum for P. G. Property Tax Freeze Gains Strength; Referendum Drive on Property Tax Is Gaining Strength," *The Washington Post*, 13 June 1978, Metro, C1.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Lawrence Hogan, interview by author, tape recording, Frederick, MD, 15 April 2001, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

As County Executive, Hogan won 14 national awards for management initiatives, increased the budget for county police, created the Prince George's Arts Council, refurbished the Prince George's County Equestrian Center, and presided over the largest county schools' budget cut to date.<sup>28</sup>

Some feel that Hogan and the schoolteachers were on a collision course. This drama began before Hogan's election, with the closing of 10 schools in Prince George's County in 1977 brought on by population decreases. The public school age population declined, due in part to migrations of county residents to other counties or states, parents moving children from the public schools to private schools, and a nationwide population decline.<sup>29</sup> School Superintendent Feeney announced school closings. The schools held two weeks of public hearings allowing residents to voice opinions concerning the process. Both white and black parents felt the neighborhood school was a key ingredient to the culture and society of their communities. Felegy remembered those times as he said:

It was heart-wrenching, really, for a number of communities to give up those schools. We went through a process where we tried to involve the public. We threw open the question. We, you know, we broke the county into large sectors and formed citizens to say, "Examine this sector demographically, programmatically, any way you want to. Here's the trend in enrollment. Are we justified in closing one or more schools in this sector, first of all?" And most of these committees, having studied the objective data, would come back and say, "Yes." Then the hard question

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> According to Felegy, "I think if you look at the statistics that are available—and there are studies out there that will detail the decline in population in this metropolitan area and nationwide—because of the general demographic turn in the population, now we have the "echo baby boom" and we've got, you know, and things are on the upswing again, Prince George's was fairly consistent with that," Felegy, interview.

was, “Which one do you, or which ones do you recommend?” Some of which, as an administrative staff, we agreed with their recommendations and for the most part, followed. Occasionally we disagreed and would offer an alternative school.<sup>30</sup>

Rather than evaluate the results of test scores, plan for curriculum changes, or hire teachers, Feeney’s administration was preoccupied with school closings.

Felegy describes Feeney’s tenure:

But that process [school closings], you know, consumed a good portion of the time and energy of the Feeney administration, frankly, to negotiate. Endless hearings.<sup>31</sup>

*Middle school concept*

At this time Feeney and the board worked hard to keep the programs established in the 1960s and mid 1970s. A new custodial arrangement became popular—the middle school concept. By 1980 the board had closed 11 of the 41 junior highs in the county. Starting in 1980, the remaining junior highs were phased into middle schools with ninth graders moving to high schools. The middle school program had a negative effect on instrumental music, as the continuous chain of instruction from elementary school through high school was broken. Ray Danner remembers his experience teaching instrumental music in a junior high school:

Junior high was 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>. But you had them every day and you had leveled ensembles. You could have your symphonic bands with your four horns and two oboes, two bassoons, 9 clarinets—like I had. So I was doing grade 4 and getting 1s at festival in 1974-1975.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Felegy, interview.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Danner, interview. Band and orchestra music in Prince George’s County is graded from I, the least difficult level, to VI, the most challenging level. Most high school bands perform music at grade III and IV level. At county festival, bands and orchestras are rated on a scale from 1 to 5, 1

Danner feels that the middle school program caused irreparable harm to instrumental music:

The schedule broke the chain. Well, the two-year thing I don't think would have bothered me that much. It was the not rehearsing every day and not having leveled ensembles.<sup>33</sup>

Most middle schools moved to what is known as an "A day/B day" format, alternating schedules between a two-day period. Scheduling of students revolved around core classes; thus, band and orchestra students were scheduled by grade or section, not by musical ability. Middle school instrumental teachers were forced to accommodate beginners and advanced players during the same class period. Many frustrated instrumental teachers moved to other counties or left music teaching.<sup>34</sup>

#### *1979 Tropical Depression*

Meanwhile Larry Hogan and the school board developed an adversarial posture. When asked by Hogan at a preliminary budget hearing in January of 1979 to submit a list of possible cuts to the school budget, the board refused to do so.<sup>35</sup> Possibly the timing was unfortunate as the board was still in the process of assessing its needs for the coming year. In fact, they had closed schools and eliminated part of the sports program. Hogan, on the other hand, was aware that education consumed more than two thirds of the county budget. Crime appeared

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being the highest rating. Danner's junior high band performed music at the high school level and received top marks.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Jackson Diehl, "P.G. School Board Defies Hogan on Budget Reduction," *The Washington Post*, 30 January 1979, Metro, C1.

to be on the rise. Hogan had other services to manage—the police, the firemen, and his administrative staff. He opposed busing, predicting that desegregation would not work. Hogan argued that busing would create a one-race county as he said to Vaughns, “Sylvester, if you want Prince George’s County to be an all-black county, this is gonna’ do it.”<sup>36</sup>

In May of 1979, Hogan, having set a 3% pay increase for county workers, threatened that jobs would be lost if more than a 3% pay increase was negotiated for county teachers.<sup>37</sup> The school board and teachers’ union negotiated 4.7% pay increase for teachers by eliminating staff positions to fund the pay increase. Ignoring county Executive Hogan’s recommendation, the Prince George’s County Council staff recommended that “rather than renegotiate the teacher’s contract, the council approve a reduction in the education work force which Hogan has said would be the consequence of funding the full negotiated contract.” Hogan countered by asking for an increase in student class size to reduce the number of teachers needed.<sup>38</sup>

In December of 1979, the first year under TRIM, Feeney proposed a budget of \$287.6 million. The schools adapted by eliminating junior high school sports, closing schools, and cutting 536 positions: 55 administrators, 356 teachers, 100 custodians, and 25 bus drivers. Angry residents attended a January meeting

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<sup>36</sup> Hogan, interview.

<sup>37</sup> Anne Czupryn, “Job Action Draws Hogan Ultimatum,” *The Prince George’s Journal*, 23 May 1979, A-1.

<sup>38</sup> Carolyn Teague, “School Budget Approved,” *The Washington Post*, 18 May.

on the school budget. Although Prince Georgians had voted 2 to 1 for TRIM, the reality was unpleasant. Some called for the “trimming” of Larry Hogan.<sup>39</sup>

The teachers eliminated from the workforce, known as RIFs (for Reduction In Force), had varying degrees of difficulty with the adjustment. Music Supervisor Maurice Allison decided to retire rather than risk being sent back into the classroom. Michael Reidy, a science teacher, felt “empty, disappointed, and angry” when he received his notice in June of 1980. Barbara Baker, vocal music teacher at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, received her notice in 1980.<sup>40</sup> Baker remembers:

It was like being run over by a Mack truck. My choir had just won a gold medal in a music festival in Boston. I became a staff reduction because my numbers were down.<sup>41</sup>

Unfortunately, the number of students electing to take choir dropped in 1980.

Baker’s principal, having hired her, did not want to lose her. He assigned her a non-music class to teach. She recalled:

However, the principal managed to keep me by giving me a class out of my field. The next year I taught student government and sponsored the student government association in addition to teaching a concert choir of 80, a gospel choir of 20, a madrigal choir of 16, and theory. At that time, and now, staffing in the high school is determined by the number of students who elect to take each course.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Michael Eastman, "P.G. Parents, Teachers Attack Austere School Budget," *The Washington Post*, 17 January 1980, Maryland Weekly, Maryland Weekly-2.

<sup>40</sup> Maurice Allison, personal communication, telephone conversation, 10 March 1997; Michael Reidy, personal communication, interview, 21 April 1997, Greenbelt, Maryland, notes in possession of author; Baker, interview 1997.

<sup>41</sup> Baker, interview 1997.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

The RIFs of 1980, the school closings, the middle school concept, the worsening economy, the decline in school-age population, and TRIM contributed to a crisis for music education and the county schools.

### *1982 Hurricane*

In February of 1982, Hogan spoke to a gathered ensemble of county business leaders:

I truly believe that Prince George's County is on the verge of an economic boom...The climate of business is excellent...The biggest single problem is the interest rate...But beyond that, I am very optimistic about the county.<sup>43</sup>

Hogan probably wished he could retract his statement. The very next day, February 23, 1982, *The Prince George's Journal* headline read, "\$10 Million School Aid Cut Feared."<sup>44</sup> President Reagan proposed a 45% cut in funding for schools at the federal level. School officials reacting to Hogan's proposed reduction of the education budget stated that elementary education would suffer the most. Proposed cuts in elementary education included reducing the number of librarians, guidance counselors, and vice principals. At the secondary level, reductions in the number of teachers and vice principals would be necessary. Hogan's suggestion to the teachers further distanced him from their sympathies:

Librarians can be replaced by volunteers and classroom teachers...Volunteers also can replace numerous school health aides...[C]ustodial job duties can be restructured so fewer maintenance employees are needed to keep up the appearance of buildings.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Peter D. Pichaske, "Hogan, Politicos Say County Economy Rosy," *The Prince George's Journal*, 22 February 1982, B-1.

<sup>44</sup> Gail Pastula, "\$10 Million School Aid Cut Feared," *The Prince George's Journal*, 23 February, A-1.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Hogan's choice of words seemed to dismiss trained school employees as non-essential to the education of children. By using language such as "keeping up the appearance of buildings" and having "volunteers replace numerous school health aides," Hogan lost the respect of the education community. His words carried the assumption to some that anyone could do these jobs with little or no training.

By early May, budget decisions were made. Hogan chose safety over education, giving budget increases for the year 1982-1983 to the police and the firemen but severely curtailing the education budget.<sup>46</sup> A front-page article in *The Prince George's Journal* summarized Hogan's budget with large arrows pointing upward or downward to indicate decreases or increases in budget money to specific services: Public Safety, Schools, Human Services, Transportation, Metro, Criminal Justice, and Corrections. All services but the schools were increased. The tone of the article pointed to the injustice done to county schools.<sup>47</sup>

As reported in *The Journal*, Board of Education statistics for the 1981-1982 school year listed an employment of 11,967 people, and 6,815 of those employees were teachers.<sup>48</sup> On June 2, 1982, just before the end of 1981-1982 school year, *The Washington Post* headline warned: "900 School Jobs May Be Trimmed."<sup>49</sup> The Board of Education had met the previous evening to review Feeney's proposed budget based on Hogan's allotment for the schools. The presented school budget

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<sup>46</sup> Peter D. Pichaske, "Budget Bites," *The Prince George's Journal*, 6 May 1982, A-1.

<sup>47</sup> Gail Pastula, "Hogan Slashes School Funds by \$36 Million," *The Prince George's Journal*, 1 April.

<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth Rathbun, "Schools' choice—More Pay or Jobs," *The Prince George's Journal*, 13 May.

<sup>49</sup> Leon Wynter and Michael McQueen, "Principals Told To Pinpoint Jobs for Layoffs," *The Washington Post*, 4 June 1982, B-1.

was \$37.5 million less than the budget sent to the county council. Feeney, committed to granting negotiated pay increases to school employees, chose to sacrifice elementary instrumental music instruction.<sup>50</sup> At 12:13 AM the board recessed, agreeing to meet at 3:30 PM on June 3. Altogether the board proposed to eliminate 923.5 positions saving \$37.5 millions. This reduction amounted to almost 10% of the total board employees at that time. Of 923.5 positions proposed for elimination, 366 were teachers. The remaining 577 positions were supervisors and administrators.<sup>51</sup>

On June 3, 1982, directly below a picture of Royal Marine guards on duty in the takeover of the Falkland Islands group, Prince George's County is once more featured in *The Washington Post* with the caption, "Drastic Cuts Adopted by P.G. Schools." Elementary and secondary teachers, librarians, vice-principals, bus drivers, custodians and maintenance workers represented the bulk of the reduction of work force. Elementary instrumental music was to be eliminated entirely. One can imagine Feeney's grief as he made the announcement of cuts, "We are undoing tonight some of the things that we spent years doing. It is tearing me apart."<sup>52</sup>

Hogan, who was running for the GOP nomination for the U.S. Senate,<sup>53</sup> continued to say that no jobs would be lost if teachers would renegotiate their

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<sup>50</sup> Leon Wynter, "Prince George's School Chief Says He'll Honor Negotiated Pay Raises," *The Washington Post*, 17 April, Metro, B7.

<sup>51</sup> Prince George's County Board of Education, "Resolution #176-184," in *Meeting Notes From 2 June* (1982).

<sup>52</sup> Leon Wynter and Tom Vesey, "Drastic Cuts Adopted by P.G. Schools," *The Washington Post*, 3 June 1982, A-1.

cost-of-living raises.<sup>54</sup> Shortly thereafter Superintendent Feeney called together the entire coordinating supervisor corps to inform them that their positions would be eliminated at the end of the school year. This removed one supervisory position from each subject, reducing the number of upper level positions. The move also curtailed support to teachers in the form of teaching assistance.<sup>55</sup>

By June 4, principals, following Feeney's directive, were in the process of deciding who would receive RIF notices. Each school received a quota of teaching positions to be eliminated. Confusion and anger among those receiving notice resulted in part from an unwritten board policy that did not allow transfers from elementary positions to secondary positions. Some elementary teachers with a great deal of experience were released while less-experienced secondary teachers remained in their positions.<sup>56</sup>

Kathy Rodeffer, an Instrumental Music Specialist, at that time remembers the injustice of the board decisions:

And they cut up to eleven and a half years of teaching experience in the elementary school staff in music. But they didn't touch any secondary teachers at all including the non-tenured teachers. So I was at four years of teaching but three of those years were in elementary and I moved the year before the cuts, before the RIFs. And I didn't get the slip. But, dear friends who I had taught with or who I had known, uh, got axed who had, you know, seven years more teaching than I did.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Although popular with the electorate at one point, Hogan did not succeed in becoming a senator.

<sup>54</sup> Stephen Deane, "Hogan Predicts Zero Job Loss," *The Prince George's Journal*, 3 June 1982, A-1.

<sup>55</sup> Virginia Sims, personal communication, interview, Greenbelt, MD, 8 April 1997.

<sup>56</sup> Prince George's County Board of Education, "Resolution #239-79," in *Meeting notes from 14 June (1979)*.

<sup>57</sup> Kathryn Rodeffer, interview by author, tape recording, Greenbelt, MD, 13 May 2003, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

Wanting to use a personal touch Felegy instructed that these RIF notices were to be hand delivered by the principals, not in a letter through the mail.<sup>58</sup>

*Community support for music education*

Those concerned about music education understood the exigencies of this situation. Elementary vocal instruction provided a staffing need agreed to by the board. While the music teacher worked with children, the regular classroom teacher was free to plan future lessons, call parents of children needing special attention, or take a break. The vocal music teacher and physical education teachers relieved the regular classroom teachers on a periodic basis every day. If the board eliminated elementary music or physical education the board would still need to provide break time for the regular classroom teachers as outlined in the negotiated agreement. On the other hand, elementary instrumental students were taken out ("pulled out") of regular classes for music lessons. Elementary instrumental music thus became dispensable.

Bob Holloway, county string specialist and teacher from 1965 to 1990, remembers Don Smith's phone call in early June of 1982, the morning following Feeney's proposed cuts to music. Smith's call drew Holloway out of class, away from his students. Smith said to Holloway, "Bob, they just cancelled the whole elementary music program. What are we going to do?" Holloway was left almost

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<sup>58</sup> Wynter and McQueen, "Principals Told."

speechless by Smith's desperate question. Finally Holloway said, "We'll think about this and do something."<sup>59</sup>

Realizing that Smith, as supervisor, felt uncomfortable in promoting political activity in response to the proposed cuts, but realizing that elementary instrumental music needed an advocate, Holloway organized interested parents to lobby in favor of music education. He assembled parents to plan a strategy countering the proposed elimination of instrumental music. Holloway remembers that meeting he organized:

Well, I remember the meeting very well. I was talking to the people and explaining to them what happened. At one point I finally said, "Now you folks are going to have to do it. So, I'm going to step down off this platform and some of you are going to come up and take this over." There was this deathly silence for a while. Finally somebody came up. I think he had come in late to the meeting. But he was obviously a person who was a good leader and done this sort of thing before. I don't remember much about him now. But he came up and he agreed to take over the thing. And that's how the thing got started. The parents really did work on this. They went to the board meetings and so on.<sup>60</sup>

Parents, teachers, and students appeared *en masse* at budget hearings to protest Hogan's budget cuts in education.<sup>61</sup>

*"The Plan for Offering Elementary Music"*<sup>62</sup>

Ultimately, elementary instrumental music was not eliminated. National Symphony director Mstislav Rostropovich, in support of the importance of

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<sup>59</sup> Bob and Jeri Holloway, interview by author, tape recording, Greenbelt, 9 January 2004, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Gail Pastula, "Harsh Words Greet Budget," *The Prince George's Journal*, 22 April 1982, A-1.

<sup>62</sup> This is the title of the plan devised by Mary Haywood, Don Smith, and Lin McIlvaine, at the request of the board, to combine elementary vocal and instrumental music, thus saving elementary instrumental music from elimination.

instrumental music instruction to our culture, wrote a letter to board chair Doris Eugene. His carefully chosen words were printed in *The Prince George's Journal* on July 12, 1982:

I sincerely hope that closer examination of all the ramifications will result in your decision to continue to allow our children to learn and grow strong through their studies of music.<sup>63</sup>

Supervisors Mary Haywood, Don Smith, and Lin McIlvaine wrote "The Plan for Offering Elementary Music Instruction for the 1982-83 School Year." This was presented to the board on July 19, 1982, saving elementary instrumental instruction but at some sacrifice to the elementary vocal/general program. The plan proposed that elementary children in grades one through six receive vocal/general music lessons twice per week, a reduction from three times per week. Elementary instrumental music would be provided twice weekly for interested 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders, eliminating 4<sup>th</sup> grade instrumental music.<sup>64</sup> The elimination of 4<sup>th</sup> grade instrumental music affected the budding strings program in Prince George's schools. Jeri Holloway, county instrumental teacher from 1966 until 1999, remembers, "For about five years, from 1970 or so...fourth grade was only strings." Her husband, Bob Holloway, string specialist and orchestra director with the county from 1965 to 1990, added:

That was a significant change because people would get started on strings. If you wait until fifth grade, then very often many of them wanted to be in the band.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Stephen Deane, "A Maestro's Plea," *The Prince George's Journal*, 12 July 1982, A-1.

<sup>64</sup> Prince George's County Board of Education, "Resolution #228-230," in *Meeting notes from 19 July* (1982).

<sup>65</sup> Holloway, interview.

The plan reduced the number of elementary vocal/general positions from 124 to 81.1, a loss of 42.9 positions. Elementary instrumental staffing dropped from 38.5 to 20.5, a total of 18 positions. Cuts were sustained at the secondary level also, with elimination of 9.3 of 52 secondary instrumental positions (leaving 42.7 positions) and 2.2 of 58 vocal/general positions (leaving 49.8 positions). The coordinating supervisor line, occupied at the time by Mary Haywood, was also removed. With the loss of 72.4 staff positions cut (of a proposed 366), music sustained one-fifth of the total RIFs to the teaching staff, in 1982.<sup>66</sup>

#### AFTER THE STORMS

##### *Damage assessment*

Despite budget concerns many teaching positions were returned to music and other subjects by the late 1980s, following the drastic cuts of 1982. In 1988 the number of elementary vocal/general positions had climbed to 130 from a low of 81.5 in for the 1983 school year. Elementary instrumental positions increased to 29 in 1988 from a low of 20.5 in 1983.<sup>67</sup> By 1986 both Don Smith and Mary Haywood left Prince George's County. Instrumental supervisor Don Smith retired in 1986, unhappy with the state of music education under the current Superintendent John Murphy's tenure. Ray Danner moved from the classroom to supervision to carry on the work begun by Smith.<sup>68</sup> By 1991 Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students received vocal/general music instruction every other

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<sup>66</sup> Prince George's County Public Schools, "Budget Report," FY-83 II-15, II-17, II-29, II-30, FY-84 II-33, II-34, FY-85 II-33.

<sup>67</sup> Prince George's County Public Schools, "Budget Report," FY-89, II-35 and II-30.

<sup>68</sup> Barbara Vobejda, "Prince George's Considers School Cuts," *The Washington Post*, 24 April 1984, Metro, B1; Smith, interview by author; Danner, 2002.

day. Chorus was available to interested 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students twice weekly as a pullout program. Elementary instrumental instruction continued to be available for interested 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders also as a pullout program. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade string program was not reinstated. Electives in the middle school included general music, art, home economics, and industrial education. Students rotated every 9 weeks during the school year to a different subject. Chorus, band, and orchestra operated year round, frequently on an A/B day schedule. High school offerings included band, choir, orchestra, guitar/piano, and in some cases music theory and music survey. Depending on the availability, classes met daily in each high school.<sup>69</sup>

### *The mercury rises*

John Murphy came to Prince George's County in 1984 to lead the county school system. Hired by the school board after Feeney's resignation in 1984, Murphy and the schools rode to national prominence on reports of elevated test scores, in particular among blacks, and new models for achieving desegregation. Magnet schools existed before Murphy's vision for Prince George's County Schools,<sup>70</sup> but Murphy convinced the NAACP, Judge Kaufman, Prince George's County residents, and the nation of the feasibility of his plan to use magnet schools to desegregate Prince George's County schools. A master at public relations, Murphy produced an extraordinary grand opening for the 1985 school year. All teachers from the county assembled at the Prince George's County

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<sup>69</sup> Virginia Sims, personal communication, interview, Greenbelt, MD, 8 April 1991.

<sup>70</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt High School opened in 1976 under Feeney's tenure as a magnet for science and technology.

Capital Center to hear talented county youth in performance. The keynote speakers were NASA Teachers-in-Space Christa McAuliffe<sup>71</sup> and David Zahren, two former Prince George's County teachers. Each presented lofty statements about teaching and new opportunities for teachers in Prince George's County. The stage set, Murphy strode on to announce, "Great Things Are Happening in Prince George's County"<sup>72</sup> and that he had "High Expectations for All."<sup>73</sup> The spirit of these two slogans permeated his administration that created magnet schools in black neighborhoods to attract white students, reduced the expulsion rate in county schools by 300%, promoted a 300% gain in scholarship money to county students, and raised test scores. Magnet school concepts popular with parents of school aged-children included performing and fine arts magnets, college preparatory magnets, and foreign language magnets.<sup>74</sup>

Murphy brought glamour as well as national recognition to an embattled school system. In 1988 President Reagan visited Suitland High School. Sitting behind a banner reading "Prince George's County, A School System of Choices," Murphy watched as President Reagan and his Education Secretary announced plans for federal support of magnet schools.<sup>75</sup> Murphy's political savvy, coupled with an eye for the latest educational trends and a talent for marketing, assisted

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<sup>71</sup> McAuliffe, NASA's first "teachernaut" died in a tragic accident during the first minutes of Challenger's January 28, 1986 flight, Tom Shales, "Horror of the Fire in the Sky: Cruel Visions Over and Over, Bring the Nightmare Home," *The Washington Post*, 29 January 1986, Style, B1.

<sup>72</sup> Posters of this message soon appeared in the schools, annual reports, and in publicity shots with Murphy.

<sup>73</sup> These two slogans became Murphy's mantra with Prince George's County Schools.

<sup>74</sup> Lisa Leff, "Revolutionary Superintendent Quietly Moves On; Murphy's Vision Remains," *The Washington Post*, 1 July 1991, Metro, D1.

<sup>75</sup> Prince George's County Board of Education, "A School System of Choices," in *Annual Report* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Board of Education, 1988).

his plan to push teachers, students, and administrators beyond previous limits. He resigned in 1991, looking over the horizon to see a decline in test scores and the approach of another tropical storm—a budget battle with the board, the County Council, and the State of Maryland.<sup>76</sup>

*Winds from the South: Furloughs of 1991*

The budget winds of 1991 were fierce. The County Council reduced the education budget by \$29 million, yet the numbers of teachers or staff were not reduced although teachers and staff were furloughed to temporarily bridge the financial gap. This period in the budget history of Prince George's County featured vocal groups of citizens, teachers, and students—advocates for the music program. Those wanting more educational services resented the TRIM initiative, in part responsible for the crises of 1982 and 1979. Also affecting the budget process was Deputy Superintendent Felegy and an unexpected delay in the teacher contract vote.

In January of 1991, school principals learned that County Executive Parris Glendening withheld monies promised to the schools. With no warning, the county reneged on its monthly installment to the board. The board, now weathered by previous storms, reacted in several ways. Money normally used to pay substitutes was moved to cover operating expenses. Central office staff and school administrators were put into substitute positions in addition to covering their normal workloads. No substitutes were hired from January until April of

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<sup>76</sup> Leff, "Quietly Moves On." For information and assessment of Murphy's work with magnet schools in Prince George's County, see Eaton and Crutcher, "Magnets, Media, and Mirages: Prince George's County's 'Miracle' Cure."

1991.<sup>77</sup> Ridgecrest Elementary Principal Christel Cady remembers substituting in physical education:

I could do my obligation for the county and sub [substitute] but not be tied up the whole day. And if a crisis happened it wasn't like I was there for the whole day. In twenty minutes or a half an hour a teacher was going to return. I could say to the next teacher, I can't get you right now, but in another half an hour I'll give you a break; and I'll take your class. I had some flexibility.<sup>78</sup>

Music Supervisor Joseph Richter was redeployed back to the classroom. He remembers the frustration and discomfort of that time:

I was the music supervisor selected to go out. I was told that before it happened. If a music person were to resign or leave the system, I would be the one to replace that person. So, the last day before Christmas vacation, I got a call from director of personnel, Ms. Carolyn Bloom, that I was to report to Melwood Elementary School the day after New Years. And, uh, I had been told by Ray Ogden, who was my boss at the time, that when this, when and if, this occurred, I would be given 10 days to prepare to go into that assignment. So I asked Carolyn, I said, "Carolyn are the Christmas holidays, my 10 days?" She said, "Yes." "Thank you, Carolyn."<sup>79</sup>

In this very matter-of-fact manner Richter and Bloom concluded the conversation that changed his life during the winter of 1991. The irony in Richter's situation was that the redeployment into the classroom did not relieve him of his duties as supervisor. After leaving his temporary classroom at Melwood each day, Richter went back to the area office to keep up with his duties as supervisor:

So I went in my office during the holidays—course during the holidays there was no heat in the building. We couldn't afford heat. And it was okay the first day but the 2nd and 3rd day, it was real tough. It was really, really cold. My hands got so cold you could hardly move your hands to

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<sup>77</sup> Boarman, interview 1997.

<sup>78</sup> Christel Cady, interview by author, tape recording, Hyattsville, MD, 12 March 1997, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>79</sup> Joseph Richter, interview by author, tape recording, Capital Heights, MD, 29 June 2001, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

do anything. But I did what I could to get my stuff together. And then once I was at Melwood, I would go back to the office at night and do what I could. And everything went on as fairly normal.<sup>80</sup>

Early in 1991, anticipating a budget shortfall, the board began to develop a strategy. The elimination of all music programs was one solution proposed by some board members.<sup>81</sup> Barbara Baker organized the “Concerned Prince George’s Music Teachers” group in reaction to this new threat to music education. Many county music teachers attended the initial meeting on March 18, 1991, at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. Speakers included Gerald Boarman, Principal of Eleanor Roosevelt High School; Marjorie Spierer, Teachers Association President; and Edward Felegy, Deputy Superintendent of Schools. The group received information of the pending crisis and information on how to keep music in the schools. A steering committee was elected and plans for future action were made.<sup>82</sup>

Virginia Sims remembers the assembly of music students, dressed in their school uniforms, at a crucial board meeting. She also remembers the television crews on hand to inform the metro area communities of this support for education and music education.<sup>83</sup> Members of a grassroots organization, “Save Our Schools,” began collecting signatures in support of quality education. Henry Woodard, parent of an Eleanor Roosevelt High School band student, in the two weeks preceding March 23, 1991, collected 2500 signatures on a petition sheet

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Boarman, interview 1997.

<sup>82</sup> Concerned Prince George's Music Teachers Group, "Minutes from meetings," (unpublished, 1991).

<sup>83</sup> Sims, interview 1997.

reading “Music Makes The Difference.”<sup>84</sup> Because his son participated in the band program, Woodward was committed to act to safeguard the instrumental music program in Prince George’s County.<sup>85</sup> On April 25, 1991 the signed petitions were presented to Catherine Burch, Chairman of the Board of Education, stating “we support appropriate tax and spending measures to insure quality education.”<sup>86</sup>

When asked about the impact of that meeting, in his mind’s eye Felegy saw that gathering, remembering the voices and facial expressions of music teachers once again concerned about the fate of jobs and of music education. An avid opera fan, he felt music education to be essential to the nurturing of young minds as he said:

It did have some impact on me, yeah. Because, you got to understand, I really basically believe strongly in the value of the music program. I just don’t think you can credibly educate youngsters today without giving them exposure to the structure in *music*. I mean, it is just part of the warp and woof of human existence at this point. Incredibly important and it has to be preserved. But I was trying just to strategize away, finesse a budget crisis at that point.<sup>87</sup>

Felegy worried about losing the elective programs altogether if they were eliminated through budget shortfalls. Lessons learned from California’s

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<sup>84</sup> “Music Makes the Difference” was a slogan developed by The National Commission on Music Education, a sub group of Music Educators National Conference. The petition read, “Yes! I want to make music education a driving force in America’s schools. If our children are to succeed in the workforce and world of the future, they must be provided with a well-rounded educational curriculum incorporating music and the other arts.” This is one example of the advocacy efforts of MENC.

<sup>85</sup> Henry Woodward, Petitions supporting music education delivered to Delegate Joseph Vallario, Senator Albert Wynn, Senator Leo Green, letters, 15 March 1991.

<sup>86</sup> John H. Moore, personal communication, interview, 25 April 1991, Hyattsville, Maryland, notes in possession of author.

<sup>87</sup> Felegy, interview.

experience with Proposition 13, where programs were eliminated and never reinstated, came to his mind as he said:

My concept was that we should try to defuse the impact of those cuts as broadly as possible and not eliminate any program. Because, what I said to board members and others, some of whom advocated, "Cut the music program. Cut art."

"We just can't..." I said, "If you..." Their assumption was, if we have to cut it this year, we'd get it back. I said, "You'll never get it back." California being the great example of when Proposition 13 went in, California and the California schools suffered terribly. Many of them did lose programs: music, guidance, art, what have you. And then there was never the funding source. There may have been the popular impulse to restore some of them, but there was no way to get them back.<sup>88</sup>

#### *Felegy becomes superintendent*

In 1991 John Murphy, the much-lauded school superintendent, decided to leave Prince George's County. As Murphy was in negotiation for other positions, his second-in-command, Felegy, assumed day-to-day operation of the schools. Felegy had lived through desegregation, school closings, and budget crises with former superintendent Feeney. For five years he had been Murphy's Assistant Superintendent. Felegy became superintendent in August of 1991.<sup>89</sup> During his thirty-three years with Prince George's County Schools, he put a great deal of thought into how to make the system work.<sup>90</sup> Because he supported music and the arts, Felegy received a Kennedy Center award in 1993. The board renamed the Kennedy Center Concert to the "Edward M. Felegy Kennedy Center

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Lisa Leff, "Profiles In Education: New Superintendents Take Charge in Local Schools," *The Washington Post*, 4 August 1991, Book World, R4.

<sup>90</sup> Felegy retired after 37 years with Prince George's County Schools, Felegy, interview.

Concert" in his honor. During a time of crisis he had defended the music program.

The headline of *The Prince George's Journal* on June 7, 1991 read, "Teachers delay vote on contract." County Executive Parris Glendening asked unions to delay their pay raises to help offset an \$80 million deficit in the county budget.<sup>91</sup> The unions voted against accepting the contract offers, in effect delaying any pay raises. The teachers' vote to deny the contract offer put themselves at the mercy of the board and in a position of uncertainty. Possibly, the contracts were constructed to be unpalatable to the teachers and other workers. Hogan had asked for teacher concessions during two waves of hardship but had been denied. In 1991 this came to be.

#### EPILOGUE

The Board of Education left all current educational programs in place at the end of the 1991 school year. Several factors may have influenced this board's decision. The public showed a strong support for education in rallies held at Annapolis and Upper Marlboro during the spring of 1991. Education supporters rallied despite inclement weather. On a cold day in early March, Prince George's County residents assembled in front of the Maryland State House. Demonstrators, hoping to influence Governor Donald Schaefer's agenda in favor of education, carried signs and wore green ribbons to symbolize support for education. Music students from Thomas Pullen Arts Magnet School played

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<sup>91</sup> W. Christopher Cason, "Teachers Delay Vote on Contract," *The Prince George's Journal*, 7 June 1991, A-1.

selections on their violins showing support for school music instruction. Two weeks later, on a rainy Saturday, residents attended a rally in Upper Marlboro beneath Parris Glendening's office window.<sup>92</sup> Felegy, a vocal supporter of the elective programs, music in particular, worked behind the scenes promoting alternatives to staff reductions and program eliminations. He chose to enact furloughs spaced over the school year rather than layoffs. In this way the effect of the budget shortfall was absorbed by all, the students, teachers, administrators, and staff. The teacher contract vote came at the end of the school year. The timing was such that the teachers' union was not able to stage another contract negotiation and contract vote before summer recess.

#### CONCLUSION

Music education in the Prince George's County Public Schools has survived the tumultuous times of desegregation and three budget storms. The words of music education historian Michael Mark come to mind:

The roots of music education historical trends and events are usually found in societal conditions that create certain needs of the public, or of particular groups within a society.<sup>93</sup>

When faced with the elimination of instrumental music, the community reacted. Many, including the artistic director of the National Symphony, wrote letters decrying this possibility. String specialist Bob Holloway organized parents to

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<sup>92</sup> Lisa Leff, "Prince George's Residents Young and Old Rally for School Funds Outside State House," *The Washington Post*, 9 March 1991, Metro, B4; Lisa Leff, "Concerned Parents Rally in the Rain: 200 Prince George's Residents Demand Full School Funding," *The Washington Post*, 24 March 1991, Metro, B3.

<sup>93</sup> Michael L. Mark, "The Public Policy Roots of Music Education History," *The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education* 20, 2 (1999), 103.

speak for music during the 1982 crisis. Barbara Baker organized a support group of teachers in 1991 to counter rumors that music programs were to be eliminated.

In 1991, remembering the tropical storm of 1979 and the hurricane of 1982, parents, teachers, and residents twice demonstrated their support of music education by attending rallies in Annapolis and Upper Marlboro. Henry Woodward and other parents collected signatures on a petition calling for music and the other arts to be maintained part of the Prince George's County Schools curriculum during the 1991 crisis.

Prince George's County music education survived desegregation and budget shortfalls. Today bands continue to rehearse, choirs perform, and the Kennedy Center Concert, now the Edward M. Felegy Concert, is staged annually. Eager music students participate in county-sponsored solo and ensemble festivals and large group festivals. Band, orchestra, and choir teachers continue to travel with their groups to festivals within and outside of the United States.

School superintendents and county executives reacted at different times to make decisions about funding for music instruction in county schools. Felegy profited from the hard choices made during the difficult times of his predecessors. Vocal action by teachers, parents, and students affected political motives in the reinstatement of elementary instrumental music in 1982 and Felegy's decision to maintain all instructional programs during the early 1991.

Budget crises, like storms, remain cyclic occurrences. Predicting the course, preparing for the damage, and living with the aftermath of these

whirlwinds remains a constant challenge. Both frequently arrive at the most inopportune of moments. Astute leadership at these moments of crisis is essential to maintain programs built over years of concentrated recruiting, teaching, and nurturing by dedicated educators.

This example in Prince George's County showed the power of human beings in the face of adversity. The budget storms created cycles of upward and downward support for the music education program. Community members twice stepped in to provide that boost needed by the board of education to continue funding music education.

## CHAPTER IV

LEROY (“BOOTS”<sup>1</sup>) BATTLE: BAND EDUCATOR/JAZZ MUSICIAN

## POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MILIEU: BATTLE’S TERRAIN

In 1950, the roads leading to Douglass Junior/Senior High School in Upper Marlboro where Battle taught were lined with tobacco fields, the crop that made Maryland the colonial shipping capitol of the Chesapeake Bay. A highly developed social structure, maintained from colonial times, continued where “important people” hosted social events catering to lawyers, landowners, and merchants. Vestiges of attitudes prevalent at a time when farming was dependent on slave labor carried over into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Upper Marlboro was and remains the Prince George’s County seat. A courthouse and offices important to the running of the county government face Main Street, where from time to time community activities such as parades occur. Attitudes toward race formed in colonial times by a slave-holding state continue to influence behavior. At the county courthouse in Upper Marlboro, “Whites Only” drinking fountains remained up to the 1960s.<sup>2</sup>

By the time that Battle assumed his music teaching position in Prince George’s County in 1950, attitudes at work since the colonial period promoted whites over blacks to the point of ridiculing them. Battle describes clowns in “blackface” at county parades:

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<sup>1</sup> Battle received the nickname “Boots” from his childhood habit of climbing into his Uncle Walter’s boots, Battle, *Easier Said*, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Kohn, *We Had A Dream*, 31.

They would have these clowns in “blackface” and these whiskey bottles. It wasn’t only up there [Upper Marlboro]. It was in Hyattsville. There was a group in the firehouse at that time, Carefree Group, as I understand it. They’re the ones who did all the hi jinks and pranks. All the firehouses had a group. They planned all this. You couldn’t see a parade without seeing them making fun of blacks and all that. The guy’d be going with a checkered thing, shoes floppin’, whiskey bottle with big X’s on it.<sup>3</sup>

This disregard for another person’s dignity was not part of Battle’s home in an integrated Brooklyn community. As a youth Battle and his family socialized with others in the adjoining back yards. Battle recalls times with neighbor Mr. Sandorian, an Italian:

And I remember once a month he’d have his whole family and we’d have my whole family, my aunt, my mother and everything. We’d meet in the back yard under the, they had a big vine, a grapevine. They had big tables and all that. We would meet there. He would bring down, his family would bring down--that’s when I first tasted olive oil in salad, you know, the ethnic thing that he would have. Lasagna and all like that. And then my aunt would fix the roast turkey. So, we’d have a good time out there.<sup>4</sup>

Battle cites other examples of obvious differences between life in New York City and in Prince George’s County during the 1950s:

The social life was very disappointing [in Prince George’s County]. What I felt was not so much for myself, see because I played music and I was out and about, but for the students. Like the movies. The blacks couldn’t go to...they had to go upstairs outside right by the printing. There was a newspaper. Right where the newspaper was on the corner. That was a movie theater; you know where the Marlboro Gazette is at now? They had steps going right up. The blacks had to go up there and the blacks sat in the balcony.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> LeRoy A. Battle, interview by author, tape recording, Harwood, Maryland, 21 March 2002, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located. The “X” on the big whiskey bottle, implying that the black man was illiterate and could not sign his own name, further jabbed at the image of the black man in Prince George’s County.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Note: At the time of this interview, Battle was 81.

Battle expressed outrage for his black students who were not permitted to enter the theater through the front door, but instead were required to climb up a wooden flight of stairs outside the building to get into the theater. Once inside blacks were relegated to the balcony of the theater.

His third example of the attitude toward blacks in Prince George's County involved the Catholic Church. Battle, ever astounded at such unfair treatment, recounts, "The blacks couldn't take communion until after the whites took it in the church and they could only sit in the back of the church." When asked, "How did you handle this internally?" Battle replied:

Oh, I felt bad. I felt bad about it but I would fight this in my own way. See what I mean. I would fight in my own way 'cause when they had the fair, for instance, parades, they would have these clowns in "blackface" and these whiskey bottles and all like that. I told them, "We're not going to march in that." And they wanted our band because we were good. Then they wouldn't let them march [the clowns in "blackface" with whiskey bottles] in the parade.<sup>6</sup>

Battle chose to promote racial equality in his way as he worked at Douglass High School.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

On New Year's Eve, 1921, LeRoy ("Boots") Battle came into this world as the only child of Walter and Margie Battle. He was born in New York at the time of the Harlem Renaissance, 1920-1930. During this ten years 117,000 whites left Harlem while 87,000 blacks moved into Harlem bringing about an attitude and a

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

culture change in New York City.<sup>7</sup> Battle lived in Harlem for most of his elementary school years. His father owned a candy store there. For reasons Battle never understood, his parents divorced. After 5<sup>th</sup> grade he and his mother left Harlem and went to live with his Aunt Bert and his grandparents in Brooklyn.<sup>8</sup>

Two childhood impressions may have hurled Battle into his career as a music teacher—a fascination with uniforms leading to an intense interest in parade marching bands, and the sound of drums. Battle describes the first time he remembers seeing a parade band.

I remember one sunny day the Knights of St. John were sponsoring a parade...There were about 300 marchers milling around—men decked out in capes, black hats with large white plumes...The ladies were dressed all in white. It was magnificent...Cymbals crashed, the heavens opened up, and a parade burst forth to the thunderous, crashing cadence of the Knights of St. John[’s] Band. It was a magical experience, and in that moment I knew that I wanted to be part of that kind of excitement someday.<sup>9</sup>

Hearing the sound of a drumbeat or drum cadence turned Battle’s head when, as a youngster, he was playing in the streets with others. Across the street from Battle’s game of stickball, an older fellow was rapping on a broken drum. Battle, following the siren song of the snare drum, left the game to pester the “older fellow” for just one chance at playing the broken drum. Battle writes:

Once I felt those sticks in my hand, and felt the sound of my own “music” resonating through my body, I was hooked. My general interest in

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<sup>7</sup> A similar process, yet on a smaller scale, occurred in Prince George’s County starting in the 1970s. Ironically the process in Prince George’s County came to be known as “white flight.” In Harlem the movement of blacks was elegantly named, “Harlem Renaissance.”

<sup>8</sup> Battle, *Easier Said*, 3-11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

parades and music and marching now had a specific focus—I decided to be a drummer.<sup>10</sup>

His resources were limited. Battle, ever persistent, began by banging on pots and pans in his Aunt Bert's kitchen. Soon, through his church and the Boy Scouts, Battle enrolled in drum lessons. In order to support herself and her son, Battle's mother worked as a beautician in Aunt Bert's salon. She also served as cook to wealthy white families. While bragging about her son, the drummer, Mom secured Battle's first student, the son of a physician who was one of her clients. Battle remembers this first teaching experience as a guide to his future career, "Since early in childhood I had been preparing myself to be a teacher. I knew I wanted to share my enthusiasm for learning with others."<sup>11</sup>

Public school music experiences provided Battle grounding for later teaching experiences in Prince George's County. With promotion to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Battle entered a racially-integrated, but gender-segregated school in Brooklyn, Alexander Hamilton High. At Hamilton High Battle came under the influence of vocal music teacher, Mrs. Carey. Battle later used Carey's teaching methods with his general music classes at Douglass High in Prince George's County. Early exposures to parades, uniforms, drumming, and public school music were to whet a lifetime interest and preoccupation with music and later teaching, and help Battle escape the life of a New York City street gang member.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 29, 113.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 30-32. For more information on Battle's techniques for avoiding gang life see "Street Gangs," pages 34-38 in *Easier Said*.

As he immersed himself in the world of music, Battle took every opportunity to hear other great drummers. Gene Krupa appeared with his orchestra at the 1939 World's Fair in New York. Krupa staged a contest for would-be drummers. Battle, a contestant, did not win the competition, but enjoyed the opportunity to show off for the assembled crowd. He did win other competitions, and was selected to play percussion for the All-City Orchestra while in high school. By 1940—still a high school student—he was hired for professional club engagements and tours with traveling bands.<sup>13</sup>

A draft notice in 1943 pulled Battle from a promising career as professional drummer in New York City to boot camp in Biloxi, Mississippi—from New York glitz to a humid, Southern town away from his family and friends. This involved leaving an integrated New York neighborhood and social community for the Deep South where attitudes favored whites and disregarded blacks. Following basic training, life at Tuskegee Institute as an aviation cadet included learning to fly and being part of the prestigious Tuskegee Airmen. Battle's core riveted to a new beat: "Stay focused. Get it done." This mantra echoed throughout squadron activities as the cadets learned to fly. Although the Airman did not take part in a military battle—the war ended before they were fully trained—they did participate in a consciousness-raising event for the military. Battle was part of 101 "Negro officer trainees" arrested while refusing to obey regulations at Freeman Field in Seymour, Indiana. By entering a "Whites

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 44-53.

Only” military club the men were arrested and threatened with court-martial. This act against segregation and racism may have emboldened him for future stands for what he thought to be the correct course of action. Charges against the men eventually were dropped and Battle received his honorable discharge two years after entering the military. From this experience he learned to fly and his inner mettle was strengthened.<sup>14</sup>

His life’s next chapter began as a music education student in Baltimore’s Morgan State College. Battle’s student-teaching experience strengthened his desire to become a music teacher. Upon graduation his advisor assisted him in getting an interview at Frederick Douglass High School in Upper Marlboro, Prince George’s County with then-principal, Robert Frisby. Battle won the job.<sup>15</sup>

#### DEVELOPING THE MUSIC PROGRAM AT DOUGLASS HIGH

Newly appointed Douglass High School band director LeRoy Battle concluded his remarks to parents at his first P. T. A. meeting in 1950, “I’d like to leave this thought with you: Let me teach your child to blow a horn and I promise you he’ll never blow a safe.”<sup>16</sup> Battle knew first-hand the experience of street life from his youth in New York City. Although he had opportunity to become a professional road musician, an Air Force pilot, or an educator, he chose to become an educator. His job was not easy at Douglass High School in Prince George’s County. Teaching in one of the two all-black high schools in the county,

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 67-99.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 102, 113.

<sup>16</sup> Battle borrowed this oft-used saying from an earlier source, Ibid., 115.

Battle was soon to learn how to build and maintain a music program of distinction amid political and social challenges.

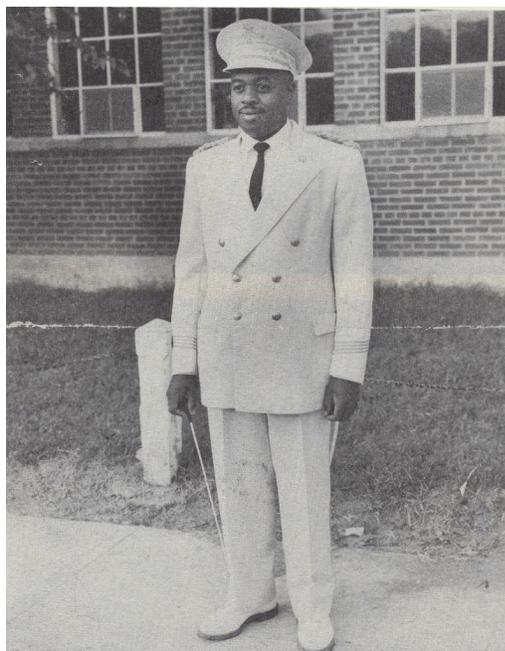


Figure 1. Battle in uniform in front of Douglass High. Photo from collection of LeRoy Battle.

Anyone who has started a new job and a new career remembers that feeling of euphoria on winning the job and fantasizing how it will be. Battle is no exception. He came to Douglass, hired to teach band, eager to work with young people and music only to learn from the school secretary, “Mr. Battle, you have no students – this is the first year that we’ve ever had instrumental music or a band, although I think they tried to have one about fifteen years ago.” When queried about how to recruit students, the same secretary replied, “I don’t really know, Mr. Battle. All of your students are scheduled in regular classes, five

required and two electives."<sup>17</sup> Battle soon learned Rule Number 1 in surviving high school as a teacher of an elective: Make your class more attractive than the other elective offerings. Cleo Whitney, the vocational-agriculture teacher, overhearing the interchange with the school secretary, invited Battle to accompany him as he checked on student agriculture projects. On this tour around the fields of Upper Marlboro, Battle wooed students and parents with his charm and the promise of exciting musical activities while Whitney made contact with his agricultural students.<sup>18</sup>

Battle achieved much in his first year at Douglass in 1950. The August P.T.A. meeting allowed him to introduce himself, his program, and his needs to parents. His goals included: providing every student the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, and developing a performing group. To that end he created a performing group of drummers and majorettes to accompany the team on football trips. The first outing of this newly formed corps taught Battle Rule Number 2: Use a situation for your own advantage. Battle gambled in taking his students to an away game while ignoring Principal Frisby's unexplained refusal to grant permission for the trip. Returning from the trip Battle came face-to-face with an angry Frisby. While Frisby lectured Battle, the phone rang. Battle watched the anger dissipate as the principal from the away game, impressed

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 114.

with Douglass' new performing group, spoke to Frisby on the phone thanking him for sending the majorettes and drummers.<sup>19</sup>

During the first two weeks of school Battle was able to convince some students to sign up for instrumental music by dropping another elective. By spring of that year Battle had formed a small stage band and a band boosters' club of interested parents, and taken his stage band to a jazz festival at Morgan State College, at the invitation of his mentor.

Battle's decision to take the stage band on a trip aligned itself with Rule Number 1: Make your subject more interesting than others. Battle remembered his own road trips as a set drummer in New York City and the excitement of performing for an audience. Former student Rose Weems<sup>20</sup> speaks of a "great time, absolutely wonderful time" as she remembers those trips:

And I used to love when we would go different places. Like, Morgan had a Homecoming every year, Morgan State College. They had bands from all around the county, you know, all around the state. We would always go as a drum-and-bugle corp. Later on when I was doing that swing band thing, we went over there for—I can't recall what it was, but it was in May 'cause it was warm and it was in the gym, I don't really know what it was—but a lot of bands from around the state was in that; and we would go for that.<sup>21</sup>

These accolades come from a person professing to not really care about music.

Yet, she remembered the trips, the thrill and excitement of hearing the bands, being with other band students, and making music.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 116-118.

<sup>20</sup> Weems taught physical education in Prince George's County before becoming an administrator. Her last assignment before retiring was vice principal at Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

<sup>21</sup> Rose Weems, interview by author, tape recording, 31 August 2001, Greenbelt, Maryland, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

*Recruiting students, nurturing a band program*

By 1958 the Douglass Marching Band had amassed 14 first place trophies in competitions. The question is, how did Battle come as an unknown into a rural, segregated area and persuade his students and their parents to change their schedule and their lives for a high school band? How did he teach the basics of music notation, phrasing, and musicianship to students who had never experienced formal music education?

That first year Battle formed a small stage band, a jazz band, for which he made arrangements from popular music of the day. Weems reminisces about Battle's first years at Douglass:

Mr. Battle, when he came there we did not have a music program as such. He started the drum and bugle corps. Didn't have anything but the drums and the bugle. Then after that he started a little swing band. With the swing band kids that could, I think you could, rent. You could rent an instrument. If you got, decided you wanted to buy, you could go ahead and buy the instrument. Then he had a little band with maybe 20 kids in it.<sup>22</sup>

The swing band of 1952 is in the picture below. One can see students of different ages, as Douglass High School housed students from 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



Figure 2. The Swing Band of 1952. Photo from collection of LeRoy Battle.

Soon Battle was teaching general music during the school day with band rehearsals after school. Mrs. Carey, Battle's early music teacher in Brooklyn, became the model for his general music sessions. In addition, Battle would teach some of the songs he played in clubs in the evening such as "I Only Have Eyes for You." After two years of this Battle developed a plan to reduce general music and add band instruction to his daily schedule of classes. Battle describes the scene with Principal Frisby.

But I only did that [taught general music] for a couple of years though, because, I quit. I quit! I told Mr. Frisby, I said, "I signed up to teach band." You see. And I said, "I want to be a band teacher." And I said, "I quit, Mr. Frisby." He said, "Now, son..." He said, "What are you goina' do?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "Son, you're making twenty-four hundred dollars-a-year." I said, "I don't know." So he said, "Hold on." So, he called and asked for Mrs. Lynch, the Supervisor. I forget her name. He said, "Now, Mrs. Lynch," he said, "Mr. Battle here is handing in his resignation." [Battle then made the sound of breath being sucked in.] She [supervisor Lynch] did like that. And so, I was sincere about that. You know what I mean? 'Cause I said, "I want to teach band!" So finally it came up, you know. She said, "Mr. Battle, would you excuse yourself and let Mr. Frisby and I talk." So, I went out in the front office. And I guess about twenty minutes later they asked me to come in. And Mrs. Lynch

said, "Mr. Battle, we've come to this understanding. If you can teach two classes of the general music, then all the rest would be instrumental. You can arrange it however you want. There is no, there are no instruments." And so forth, you see. "Does that sound all right with you?" I said, "Yes, I'll give it a try."<sup>23</sup>

Battle argued for his program successfully. This second encounter with Frisby emboldened Battle. The following summer he initiated a summer instrumental training program. Battle was negotiating all this at the beginning of Prince George's County's support of band programs according to state of Maryland annual reports.<sup>24</sup>

During the summer of 1952 Battle implemented his plan for building a band. After approaching his parent group, he arranged with members of the Navy band from Annapolis to provide private lessons to interested students for \$3 per lesson. Rental instruments were available through a local music store. These students, prodded by parents who spent money on summer lessons and instrument rental, signed up for band the coming fall. Battle taught the lessons beginning in 1953, but did not charge the students. Douglass was a junior-senior high school at that time with Frederick Douglass Elementary School close by. Battle soon developed his own feeder system in the younger grades. Thus, Battle trained some of his high school bandsmen-to-be from 4<sup>th</sup> grade on.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Battle, interview.

<sup>24</sup> See state of Maryland Annual Reports listing numbers of students in bands throughout Prince George's County: Maryland State Department of Education, "Annual Report," 1950, 92; Maryland State Department of Education, "Annual Report," 1951, 100; Maryland State Department of Education, "Annual Report," 1952, 94; Maryland State Board of Education, "Annual Report," 1953, 104.

<sup>25</sup> LeRoy A. Battle, interview by author, tape recording, Harwood, MD, 21 March 2002, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

The instrument rental was cleverly designed to include a clause of “option to buy.” At the conclusion of a three-month rental, students could pick from three options: sign up for another three-month rental, buy the instrument, and discontinue renting. Battle encouraged students to sign up for a three-month rental, beginning in July. Music reading lessons took place in July and August. School started with one more rental month remaining. As the student by this time had enrolled in band, the rental period needed to be extended for another three-month period to December until the Christmas concert was over. Some parents may have purchased the instruments as Christmas presents, further indebting themselves to the band program, or rent again. Battle reminded parents of his goals for the band program:

I said, “Our goal was to give a Christmas concert.” That was my goal, have a Christmas concert. Then the next goal, I said, “Parade,” ‘cause every May 30 they had a big parade in [Upper] Marlboro. That’s our next goal. You know, so, and these things were going on at the same time, dove tailing. Practicing after school. And in the meanwhile, the parents would be, they’d be very cooperative in as much as looking forward to having the kids...[out of the house and meaningfully occupied in the band program.]<sup>26</sup>

When speaking about the system he developed, Battle said, “The good thing was, I could chart my band from the fourth grade all the way through high school.” Starting in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, students could elect clarinet or trumpet. The following year talented students with one year’s lessons could elect a different instrument such as flute. Battle bragged to the guys in his professional swing band:

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

I could chart my band from the fourth grade all the way through high school. I could chart and I knew where these kids would move. And I said, "When this kid moves to seventh grade, he's going to be on French horn." You see. I can move him to a school instrument. So, I always kept a balanced band. So when those kids got to seventh grade, I had me a balanced group. Then I'd keep them. I wouldn't lose them. See what I mean? Why, because there weren't but so many black schools in the county.<sup>27</sup>

By 1958 Battle's award-winning marching band was featured in *Jet Magazine*.<sup>28</sup>

*A teacher's personality affects students*

It is said that we teach the way we were taught. Battle's general music teacher at Hamilton High, Mrs. Carey, provided a model for Battle's later work with students at Douglass High. In speaking of his work as a teacher, Battle confided:

I was trying to give them [his students] what I knew from my experience. You know what I mean, from Brooklyn, 'cause I had a wonderful, wonderful music career, you know.<sup>29</sup>

Battle clearly remembers his junior high school music teacher, Mrs. Carey, and the effect she had on him as a student at Alexander Hamilton High in Brooklyn. Battle remembers an auditorium full of young men, 250 strong, called to task by Carey. As Battle described with wide eyes and in tones of awe his recollections of this talented, yet flamboyant woman, her teaching came alive. The following excerpt from an interview (shown in here in typical interview style) with Battle describes his impression of music class with Carey during his

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> The band was featured in the March 20, 1958 edition of *Jet* magazine. Prince George's County Public Schools, "Student Booklet," 78. For pictures and the article from *Jet Magazine*, see *Easier Said*, pages 144-145.

<sup>29</sup> Battle, interview.

junior high years (the following is part of the transcript from an interview between Battle and the author).

**Battle:** Oh, yeh, Mrs. Carey. Boy she was—you know she'd take that whole auditorium, you know, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> and she'd do this "Opera Pinafore". And she'd get the solo voices; they'd be up on the stage going. The rest of us were the chorus. And she was something else, you know. She would have you, "k k k." Later on I'm saying this, "Could you believe that we were interested in doing that and Madame Butterfly?" [Silence] That type of thing, you know?

**Moore:** Wow [whispered]

**Battle:** But she would, she'd be up there and she uh, her name was Ms. Carey, that's right. And she was platinum blond.

**Moore:** Oh!

**Battle:** Looked like Jayne Mansfield, you know. She'd wear this stark, red lipstick against it. She'd have on green, Kelly green, shiny, you know. It was just something that, when she'd strolled across the stage, you know what I mean, it would be talkin' in the audience. You know how...

**Moore:** I know how kids are.

**Battle:** Kids. We'd be talking. This is a mixed school—blacks and whites, most, Italians, Jews, Afro-Americans. And she'd get up there, and she'd say (Battle stomped three times with his foot on the floor). She'd pat her foot like that. That's all she would do. Whew! That's all she would do. Man.

[silence]. Everybody got quiet. Then she'd call you up. "Come on up here." It would take her maybe about—she'd spend a minute with you. She could place you.

**Moore:** Oh, she was putting you into the chorus by part.

**Battle:** Yeh. She'd put it like the tenors...

**Moore:** Un huh. Was this for an assembly or for music class?

**Battle:** This for the program that...but this was our music class. But she was—  
this was how we learned music.<sup>30</sup>

Battle's junior high music classes involved learning to sing and stage masterworks. That was "how they learned music." Close to the production date Carey joined the boys from Alexander Hamilton High with the girls from the Girls' Commercial School for an unwieldy combined rehearsal.<sup>31</sup> The result would be a lavish operetta production involving much of both schools with costuming, set building, acting, and singing.<sup>32</sup>

Battle in turn had an effect on his students. He loved music, teaching, and students. His dedicated, personable ways won over many such as Douglass 1953 graduate Rose Weems. One of ten children from a musical family, Weems describes herself in the category of recalcitrant musician:

I was the kid that couldn't do nothing. I couldn't even turn on the radio and get it go right. All of my sisters and brothers, they could do something musically. They could sing; they could play the piano; I mean, they could do something. I mean they played piano by "air". I didn't even

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Battle said the students at Girls' Commercial were tracked into a career as clerk, stenographer, or the like.

<sup>32</sup> Battle, interview.

know how to play “dum dum du dum do do” [Rose hums a song during the interview]. I couldn’t do nothing. So I was determined to do something with music. Drums was the only thing I came close to. So, I played the drums in that jazz band.<sup>33</sup>

Battle taught Weems to play drums despite her professed lack of talent. Weems describes Battle’s greatest attribute as the teacher she remembered. It was:

...the fact that he really loved music and he made you love music. I didn’t care for music at all. But everyday, “Did you do your practicing? Did you do your practicing?” He would even come to check. He would come around to the house. You would be runnin’ around and here comes Mr. Battle.<sup>34</sup>

Spying Battle’s approach to the house, Weems would quickly retreat into her practice area, grab her drumsticks, and appear to have been practicing for some time. The fact is, Weems said, “You would do your work because he would just check on you to make sure.”<sup>35</sup>

Although Weems herself did not pursue a career in music, she did become a teacher and later an administrator. According to her testimony, her work with Battle helped to enrich her personal and professional life.

#### FUNDING THE PROGRAM

##### *The Band Boosters*

Battle’s band enrollment increased significantly during the years between 1950 and 1968, yet the yearly county allotment remained almost the same, between \$600 and \$700. As the band population increased so did the need for more instruments and marching band uniforms. The Band Boosters, formed

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<sup>33</sup> Weems, interview.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

during the spring of Battle's first year at Douglass, were to perform many services for him and the band program such as buying uniforms, buying instruments, chaperoning trips, and even acting as chauffeur to Battle. Battle describes his fondness for these people.

They were wonderful. I mean. I stood on their shoulders. Because I couldn't...I didn't have a car, didn't have a car [New York accent] and I lived in Chapel Oaks, which is right by Fairmont Heights. And they made themselves...every month they'd pick somebody to take me home in the evening after band practice because the only time we could practice would be after school. Yes, see. So, they, somebody would always be there to take me home [voice gets stronger] until I got my car. See what I mean. And so, they were so beautiful; I loved them all. [Battle's voice is full and reverent sounding with this statement].<sup>36</sup>

The annual Thanksgiving dinner sponsored by the Band Boosters' Club became an important community activity. Band Boosters' Club parents planted and grew all the food for these dinners, and then cooked the food in the school cafeteria. One can imagine the community these people shared in the giving of their goods and talents while working together for a cause they each considered important. The group became important to its members both as a social outlet and as a sense of community pride. Battle wrote:

I'll forever be grateful and indebted to the Douglass High School's Band Boosters' Club. It would have been impossible to accomplish all that we did without their support.<sup>37</sup>

Marching bands are known for their uniforms, large horns, and drums.

Neither uniforms nor instruments were part of the Douglass inventory when he

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<sup>36</sup> Battle, interview.

<sup>37</sup> Battle, *Easier Said*, 124.

came in 1950. Battle reminisces about the startup process for him at Douglass. He wanted a baritone horn for the band:

One year when, I think it was Holton, Holton, English company, put out baritones. They put out the four-fingered baritone. And I, we went to music demonstration at the University of Maryland. Holton had other people. And so, I said, I got to get that. But the thing, we were only getting about—budget was \$700. That’s all we got. But the horn costs \$1200.

Battle executed a bold move. Without asking permission he simply purchased the horn from a local music store familiar with his program. He describes this event and subsequent response from his music supervisor:

So I went down and I got the horn! You know what I mean. I got it from Megan and Baldwin in Baltimore. There’s a company called Megan and Baldwin in Baltimore. I did a lot of business with them. But, uh, he said, [Megan and Baldwin salesman] “Go ahead. You can pay us when you [get the bill].” But anyway, I took it to the Band Boosters at that time. So they raised it. We paid for it. But the supervisor, Mrs. Lynch, she was very upset.<sup>38</sup>

When asked why Mrs. Lynch [county music supervisor] was upset, Battle quoted her, ““This is seven hundred dollars. You could’ve got...”” and she ticked off little things.” But I said:

“Why tantalize us with the quality if you don’t want us to get things? We [Battle and some band parents] took a day off to go.” So, that sort of stopped her in her tracks. She says, “This is all you get. We’re not giving you anymore.” I said, “OK.” ‘Cause the Band Boosters had said they’d back me up. They were wonderful. I mean, I stood on their shoulders, because I couldn’t [drive]. I didn’t have a car.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Battle, interview.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



Figure 3. The Band Boosters of 1956 with Gary Weems (Rose's father) seated in front. Photo from collection of LeRoy Battle.

*"That was sort of the way that it went"*

Both Battle and Weems remembered aspects of life in one of Prince George's County black schools during the 1950s. When asked about whether she noticed a discrepancy between allotments for the white and black schools Weems, in an offhand manner, replied:

No. I was not even aware. You didn't even expect it. When the white kids finished with their books you gottem.' That was sort of the way that it went. [Pause] That was par for the course. Let's put it that way. We didn't get new books every year. We got books that the white kids finished with.<sup>40</sup>

When asked about the quality of her education at Douglass, Weems had positive recollections. She states, "I got more from that than anything I can...I don't want to say that it was better then, but it was good for me. I'll put it that way." She felt the teachers more than compensated for hand-me-down books and lack of

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<sup>40</sup> Weems, interview.

materials because her teachers brought a commitment and a passion to their work. Weems remembers:

The teachers were really interested in you. The teachers were genuinely interested in the kids. It was nothing to see for a teacher to come to your house.<sup>41</sup>

Battle gave an example of this devotion in Cleo Whitney, the vocational-agriculture teacher who in late August visited each of his students checking up on the progress of projects.

Battle had other recollections of how the county allocated materials for the black schools. Some years he worked in the summer as a handyman for the Board of Education. He tells about the time that:

I worked in the summer. The board would hire the teachers to work on, to work in any department like, uh, school buses, you know, scraping and painting the buses. You could work on gym floors, taking up the paint, 'cause every year they would paint the floors. You could work as a carpenter. You know, any job. And you got something like 90 cents an hour. You know, in the summers. But that was good money at that time. Good money, because, you see that thing is you had to get, so we had to pay our rent in the summertime. Our salary would stop. So we had to do that, so we worked for the board. And, so if you started at 90 cents this summer, next summer you'd get 95 cents. You got a nickel raise each [year]. So I would work with the carpenters, with the sanders, you know, I'd sand the floor with the tiles and stuff like that.<sup>42</sup>

One summer Battle worked painting bleachers at Hyattsville Junior High School in the northern part of the county. While working at Hyattsville, Battle noticed a stack of math books. He spoke about the fate of these books discarded at Hyattsville Junior High School:

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Battle, interview.

Now, I remember, I was working there, with the cement group, and I saw all these books, uh, outside in the... We talked. We said, "What's going to happen to these?" I looked at them. They were math books and all like that. And they said, "We're getting", oh, one of the vice-principals said, "We're getting new books." I said, "What's going to happen to these?" He said, "Oh, these are going to Douglass."<sup>43</sup>

Books discarded by Hyattsville Junior High School were sent to Douglass High School. This event stuck in Battle's "craw." That someone decided to send books discarded from a white school as hand-me-downs to a black school did not digest well with Battle.<sup>44</sup> Without being bitter or vituperative, but still holding the moment in his mind, he moved on from this event.

Most band directors fund at least a portion of their programs through a sales campaign and parental help. Battle is no exception in this regard. He was special in his ability to reach out to these parents who had never experienced such an organization. Battle and the parents bonded, each doing more than was asked or expected. Weems' father headed the group for many years. Weems speaks about some of the things the Band Boosters and her father did for the band, "They would raise money for uniforms. He would drive the buses on trips they would go, just whatever needed to be done."<sup>45</sup> Each of the band parents felt a pride in contributing to this cause, a contribution for family, for community, and for society.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Battle's sentiment is later reflected in Sylvester Vaughn's words: "It was clear that the county was spending more money on schools in white neighborhoods than black ones," Ahrens, "Minority of One."

<sup>45</sup> Weems, interview.

## CHANGING TIMES, CHANGING ATTITUDES

*Battle works for racial equality*

Battle was raised in New York City amidst an integrated Brooklyn community. As a teacher his actions in dealing with situations of racial inequality were direct but non-threatening. Experiences while in the military shaped Battle's sense of fairness and his desire to see equality for blacks. Some of these experiences are described below, followed by examples of Battle's actions to achieve racial equality.

Battle brought the "focus" developed during his time with the military into his teaching life. During his second year at Douglass he decided: "One of my goals for the band...was to march in the traditional Memorial Day Parade."<sup>46</sup> The traditional Memorial Day Parade in Upper Marlboro drew larger white crowds than black observers. Battle wanted to change tradition. Frederick Sasscer, the local white high school, led the parade followed by floats. In 1951, the Douglass Marching Band brought up the rear of the parade. The news that this band—an all-black group—was to march in the parade spread through social networks in town. Many blacks and whites lined the streets watching parade activity. The crowd cheered as Douglass drummers beat a new cadence (Battle used four bass drums, creating a thunderous sound) in front of the reviewing stand. Douglass

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<sup>46</sup> Battle, *Easier Said*, 122.

Marching Band became the leadoff band from that point onward. Battle met his goal. He changed tradition and some attitudes.<sup>47</sup>

Several years later the Douglass Marching Band was invited to lead the parade opening the Prince George's County Fair, a four-day event held at the Marlboro Race Track. This was quite an honor for the all-black band in a traditionally white arena. Although the band had participated previously, this was the first time it served as leadoff band. As the band fell into formation Battle noticed clowns in "blackface" about to join the parade. Battle describes the conclusion of this episode:

After they [the clowns in "blackface"] and the fire truck passed, the parade [M]arshall ran up to me and yelled in a not too friendly voice, "C'mon, get the band going." I shot back, "This band stays put until you get those clowns out of the parade..." After about ten minutes I saw several "dignitaries" talking to the clowns... Finally, I saw the clowns, and the offensive racial stereotyping they represented, step out of the parade spot and wander off until they were lost in the crowd.<sup>48</sup>

Battle's bandsmen supported him with remarks such as, "Good, Mr. Battle. You sure told him."<sup>49</sup>

Battle's choice to confront directly the situation achieved several things. The Marshal was not expecting such a bold move from a black man. As Douglass was leadoff band, the parade was delayed while negotiations took place. In all likelihood most of the crowd did not understand what was happening. When the "dignitaries" decided to remove the "clowns," the tense situation was defused, a potential mob reaction was averted, and the fair began. Only the clowns and

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 122-123.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

those supporting this type of “offensive racial stereotyping” were deprived of their fun. The Douglass Band then marched with dignity, having won a victory for equal rights.

During his teaching career, Battle performed many such services for his race. In the late 1950s many of the Prince George’s County white high schools—but not the two black high schools—moved from “flag football” to “tackle football.” One day at lunch Battle, the gym teacher, and the industrial arts teacher complained about this discrepancy. Just by chance the Board of Education building was across the street from Douglass High School. In his direct way, Battle led the two teachers across the street to the board building. Inside the building the trio met a white supervisor. The supervisor bristled, as Battle described how the white schools, but not the black schools, had tackle football teams. The supervisor first told Battle that he “took care of the schools in his charge.” Then—trying to intimidate—he asked Battle if principal Frisby knew of this visit. Battle admitted that Frisby did not know that Battle and his fellow teachers had crossed the street from Douglass to the Board of Education. Gathering courage, Battle explained to the supervisor how Douglass High School was treated unfairly when math books discarded from Northwestern, a white school, were sent to Douglass, a black school. The example showed the supervisor that he had not taken “care of all the schools in his charge.” The result

of this interaction between Battle and the board supervisor brought tackle football to the Douglass field the following year.<sup>50</sup>

In this encounter with a person in authority Battle quickly determined who had the upper hand. Without getting flustered or putting himself in a subservient position, Battle spoke his mind to the supervisor.

*Douglass "Eagle" Band breaks barriers*

Sports and music groups compete in categories designated by school size. In the 1950s marching bands from large high schools were placed in Class "A." At the opposite end of the spectrum, marching bands from small schools were placed in from a Class "D." Douglass, a Class "C" school, frequently competed with Northwestern High School, a Class "A" school. This rivalry reached a peak between 1957 and 1959. Battle tells of a hot, July night in Hyattsville when a Douglass band of 75 faced a Northwestern band of 150. Battle had successfully coached his band from the drum line to the majorettes, the slide trombones, and others, to stage a showy, yet tasteful presentation. Battle writes about the moment the band approached the judges' reviewing stand:

When the search light shown on our band, the gold shirts became sunbursts, the ground was shaking from our devastating cadence, and the silvery air was punctuated with the flourish of Douglass High's instruments being set to the players' lips as the sound of "them basses" [the four bass drums Battle used with his band] echoed throughout Hyattsville. As my trombone players had predicted, Douglass High School was awarded the first place trophy. We had met and defeated the Northwestern High School Band on their own turf.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 131-132.

Winning these competitions encouraged Battle and his Douglass “Eagle” band to go beyond the county encounters. At this time the AAA sponsored a yearly parade concurrent with the cherry blossom festival in Washington, D.C.. In this outing Douglass competed with groups nationwide. Battle writes of this victory: “We were delirious when Douglass won the trophy for our category.”<sup>52</sup>

Douglass “Eagle” band was honored, after winning 14 trophies in the space of two years when it was selected for “First Chair of America,” a yearbook recognizing high levels of achievement in band. Douglass was the first “negro” band to receive this distinction.

Battle entered Prince George’s County music education at a time when band education was becoming popular.<sup>53</sup> Frisby, Battle’s principal, hired a musician to build a band at his black high school in Upper Marlboro. Frisby may have sensed Battle’s interest in developing a marching band and teaching students but he may not have known that Battle in his youth had developed an intense interest in parades, music, and teaching.

Battle brought the visions of earlier experiences to his work with the “Eagle” band and imparted his aspirations to his band students in Upper Marlboro. His healthy self-esteem and success with the Douglass music program encouraged Battle to move into areas not yet open to blacks in Prince George’s County.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>53</sup> According to state annual reports, the first instrumental music educator was placed in county schools during 1947. By 1953, 11 secondary schools recorded students enrolled in band, Maryland State Board of Education, “Annual Report,” from 1947 through 1953.

## CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS, CHANGING CULTURE

Music was not Battle's only preoccupation. Examples above provide indication of Battle's intense, direct, and successful ways of working for equal representation of his race. In previously cited vignettes Battle acted within legal limits. In 1963 he participated in a trip to Dansville, Virginia for the purpose of supporting the desegregation efforts in Prince Edward County. At this time he was accompanied by a trio of trumpeters from his "Eagle" band, their parents, and members of the Altones, a professional swing band for whom Battle played drums. Battle realized that if Frisby or the school board learned of his actions, his job could be threatened.<sup>54</sup>

According to Battle the situation was precipitated by the NAACP's call for a giant rally of support to be staged in Danville, Virginia in the spring of 1963. The black clergy in Upper Marlboro contacted Al Winfield of the Altones to represent the group for the event. Battle's band students learned of the rally and pressured Battle for permission to attend. Battle decided against taking the whole band. He agreed to take a trio of trumpet players who were to play Leroy Anderson's *Bugler's Holiday* at the rally. During the program held in an armory, the Altones performed selections followed by the student group. *Bugler's Holiday* performed by Douglass "Eagle" Bandsmen in uniform concluded with the

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 137.

deafening applause of the 2,000 in attendance as they showed appreciation and admiration.<sup>55</sup>

Battle's decision to take the students without the school's permission seemed worth the risk as the Danville organizing committee thanked the musicians for being part of the rally. Battle wrote, "It was very sad to see all those faces, [of black students shut out of their schools in Virginia] eager to learn, having to struggle so hard for an opportunity that should have been theirs without asking."<sup>56</sup>

Battle risked his job to support a cause in which he believed. Although Douglass High School lacked some of the facilities that could be found in neighboring white schools, Battle appreciated the opportunities available to him and his students in Prince George's County.

#### ALIGNING MUSIC PROGRAMS WITH SCHOOL NEEDS

Defining the needs of education vacillates from one educational thrust to the next. Curriculum development in Prince George's schools between 1950 and 1970 centered on a "core" group of studies. Marguerite Simpson, Douglass Social Studies teacher explains her concept of the core program:

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 137-138.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 139. Schools closed in Prince Edward County, Virginia from 1959 until September of 1964 because the county refused to fund public education when so doing would force integration. During the time the schools were closed, a Quaker organization opened schools for interested blacks in churches and other places with the cooperation of the NAACP. Some other students were sent to homes throughout the US as guests of families wanting to support integration. Some blacks did not attend school during the closing. Finally John F. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy assisted by others brought pressure on the federal effort for integration. The US Supreme Court ordered the Prince Edward County schools to open for all in 1964. For more information see Donald P. Baker, "Closed," *The Washington Post Magazine*, 4 March 2001, 8-13, 21-26 and the website archive at [www.afsc.org/archives/princeedward/pecarchives.htm](http://www.afsc.org/archives/princeedward/pecarchives.htm).

“Core” was a correlation of subjects taught in a two-hour block. At the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students combined language arts with science and health. At the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level language arts and American history were taught in this same two-hour block. By 9<sup>th</sup> grade language arts and social studies 1, which was civics, came together. I enjoyed this program as it gave me a chance to learn some things. As I recall the curriculum was designed on the State or county level.<sup>57</sup>

Along with learning math, English, social studies, and science, students at Douglass learned to value beauty, communicate, and solve problems of living. Music groups provide opportunities for communication and problem solving. In addition, students in the music program belong to a community of learners. Examples of positive social behavior appear in every successful band class as students cooperate in group behavior focused on achieving an educational goal. On a daily basis, students achieve goals established by the instructor or by the group. Further, personal satisfaction from achieving these shared goals, promotes the development of healthy self-attitudes on the part of group members.

Earl Tolson, Jr., a former student of Battle, speaks of the legacy of band involvement in high school:

LeRoy ‘Boots’ Battle taught me the rudiments of the trumpet as well as he did with each student with their own instrument, and I am proud to have been one of the original buglers of that (first) Drum and Bugle Corps and the 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet of the original Douglass High School Band.

Mr. Battle was my inspiration to go on to college and to be a confidant and motivated person, and I want to thank you Mr. Battle, for being a positive role model in my life.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Marguerite Simpson, personal communication, telephone conversation, 13 March 2004.

<sup>58</sup> Battle, *Easier Said*, 139.

Students with attitudes such as Tolson's, who are focused on learning, contribute to a positive learning climate. Well-run band and choral groups build on such behavior. Thus, the band program fills a need within the school—that of developing models for positive behavior and pride in group involvement.

The annual Christmas Concert and combined band and chorus spring concert at Douglass High fulfilled three needs within the school. First, these concerts provided a culminating activity or performance assessment for skills learned in band and choir class. Second, the concerts were a treat for the whole school, students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community. Third, social habits formed during these moments of intense group activity acted as grounding for future social encounters.

#### ALIGNING MUSIC PROGRAM WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS

Before 1950 music education in Prince George's County centered on vocal, orchestral, and general music. The 1950s in Prince George's County ushered in an era of band development. The junior/senior high school age population mushroomed between the end of the Second World War, 1945, and 1950, growing from 4,452 to 10,704. Part of the population increase resulted from State of Maryland doctrine creating junior high schools (removing the 7<sup>th</sup> graders from primary rosters) and codifying schooling statewide to twelve years.<sup>59</sup> James

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<sup>59</sup> In 1945 State of Maryland created junior high schools. Schooling for students was established at 12 years, 6 years in primary school and 6 years in junior/senior high schools. See Maryland State Department of Education, "Annual Reports" from 1945 through 1950 for individual school name changes such as that of Hyattsville High School to Hyattsville Junior High School and the inclusion of Northwestern High School in the listing.

Gholson cites the growth in county schools that he experienced as principal of Fairmont Heights, the other black school in Prince George's County:

At that time [1950] there were about 33,000 children in the public schools and they, we went from, in 1950 we went from about 33,000 to in 1969 we had a 163,000. We were the fastest-growing school district in the country.<sup>60</sup>

Music and sports activities, benefiting from a larger student pool, increased. Bands developed. Schools such as Northwestern and Douglass built marching bands and concert bands. Marching bands supported community and school activities such as special day parades and football games. Although Battle was hired to direct a band not yet formed, he looked to his college and past musical associations for models. As he succeeded at Douglass with the students and their parents, the support group, the band developed a community following.

Battle fulfilled one of his early goals in participating in the Memorial Day Parade. In the process, parents of his students and other blacks in the community developed an attachment to the band. This attachment increased as the band won trophies and succeeded in venues heretofore dominated by whites. The "Eagle" band, with Battle's powerful presence, became a rallying point for the Band Boosters' Club and the whole black community in Upper Marlboro. Activities sponsored by the Band Boosters brought the community together for

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<sup>60</sup> G. James Gholson, interview by author, tape recording, 10 September 2002, Largo, Maryland, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located. Gholson describes himself as the "architect of the desegregation plan" for Prince George's County. He retired in 1980. During his career with Prince George's Schools he was the first principal of Fairmont Heights, assistant to George Robinson, then Assistant Superintendent in charge of the Northern Area.

important social gatherings including the Thanksgiving dinner, bake sales, car washes, and other fundraisers.

#### SUMMARY

In its finest hour education goes beyond the classroom boundaries into the lives of students and their homes and communities. Battle's work with his students frequently went beyond the school classroom at Douglass into the classroom of life. Battle came to Upper Marlboro with his love for music and his love for people of all ages. His personal qualities of love for humanity and self-discipline permeated all aspects of his life both at work and at home. No one told Battle how to build a band, how to engage students in learning, or what to do next. Somehow he figured it out for himself. He remains a beacon to those around him even to this day.

Battle lived his squadron's mantra: "Stay Focused...Get It Done." As a child hearing drums played on the streets of Harlem, New York and watching marching bands, Battle seemed to know what his life's mission was to be. He set goals during his first year of teaching for himself, his students, and his bands. He worked toward these goals: providing every student the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, developing a performing group, performing in the Christmas Concert, competing successfully with the white bands in the Memorial Day Parade, helping parade organizers remove bigotry from public events, and working to uphold the dignity of his race.

Finally, Battle set himself as a model for others in writing his autobiography. A former principal, after hearing a radio interview of Battle, sent him the following note:

Every youngster in Maryland should be privileged to hear that wonderful tape [of the broadcast]. I had no idea you were with the Tuskegee Flyers. You have some real history with you. It would be wonderful if you would put some of your anecdotes in writing for the younger generation to read.<sup>61</sup>

Battle took that challenge and published his autobiography in 1995. In the forward to his autobiography he likened his life to that of his role in the swing band, “The Altones,” where he set the “back beat” for others to follow. Battle wrote:

Everybody wants to hear me solo. But you know, that’s not my thing anymore. I can solo alright, but what I really like about being a swing drummer is just setting that steady back beat—setting the tempo for the band and keeping them together. And then when I want to, you know, I can push ‘em. It’s like I’m in control, and when I start driving the band and they start responding we really get to cookin’ and that’s what I like, when we’re feeding off of each other like that.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Battle, *Easier Said*, vii.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, x.



Figure 4. Battle setting the "back beat" in about 1995. Photo from collection of LeRoy Battle.

In February of 2003, Battle was awarded the Maryland Music Educators Association's highest honor—Hall of Fame Award.



Figure 5. Battle as he received his Hall of Fame Award in 2003 standing with the author to his left. Forrest Holt, a family friend, is centered behind. Photo from collection of LeRoy Battle.

## CHAPTER V

## MAURICE (BUD) ALLISON: CHORAL DIRECTOR/MUSIC SUPERVISOR

## POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MILIEU: ALLISON'S TERRAIN

In some ways Bud Allison was insulated while teaching at Bladensburg Junior High. The school population, until forced busing, was mostly white. Superintendent William Schmidt, in place before Allison started to teach, retired the same year that Allison became supervisor, 1970. The front page of local newspaper, *The Prince George's Post*, featured articles about Bladensburg students winning the science fair, participating in homecoming activities, and women raising money for the National Symphony Orchestra. The Bladensburg Rotary Club met regularly and promoted acts of good will. Absent from the front pages of *The Prince George's Post* during the 1960s were articles about crime or civil unrest. It seems as though residents acted out an unwritten script cooperating to maintain a *status quo* until the social order was altered in the 1970s with the exodus of whites, the influx of blacks, and the budget crises. In many ways Allison was fortunate. During his fourteen years at Bladensburg he was able to teach students and pursue his life interest—the singing voice, rather than confront unruly students or distraught parents. Allison was free to practice his life's calling and he immersed himself in teaching music and the voice.

In the blue-collar neighborhood of Bladensburg, teaching at the local junior high during Allison's tenure required knowledge of student behavior and techniques for maintaining student attention to task. Carroll Dickenson, colleague of Allison's, felt Bladensburg to be a "tough area." Although principal Daugherty worked to keep criminal elements out of the school building, the teachers within the building banded together, policing the halls and helping students stay focused on learning. Dickenson talks of a time in 1965 when Civil Rights issues came to the forefront. The "Pagans," a motorcycle gang, drove by the school demanding attention from anyone within earshot of the sound of their revving motorcycles. Dickenson remembered a 1965 cross burning on school grounds:

It was a pretty tough area. We had a cross burning on the schoolyard in 1965, the Klu Klux Klan. The "Pagans", a motorcycle group, would come down the road. The kids would be all excited.

Mr. Daugherty would keep the school safe. He had to show force; he was very strict. The school was patrolled all the time. He always had someone in the bathroom. Teachers were asked to help. Daugherty and a big counselor, Mr. Callahan, patrolled the halls with ball bats. They did whatever was needed to keep order.<sup>1</sup>

Bladensburg High School, in the same community, experienced examples of tension between students. A 1968 "Lock In" drew newspaper reporters and county officials to the high school on September 20, 1968 and again during the week of September 23 through 27, 1968. Hindsight reveals that the reasons for the unrest were both administrative and student related. After a widespread pushing and shoving of students one upon the other in the cafeteria before

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<sup>1</sup> Carroll Dickenson, personal communication, telephone conversation, 16 March 2004.

school, it took some time for order to be restored as the public address system in the school malfunctioned. A report sent from Bladensburg Principal Dean to Superintendent Schmidt mentioned that students were held in class “longer than the usual ten minutes.”<sup>2</sup> In any case, this was not the only incident of student unrest during this period. Bladensburg High School choral teacher, Richard Blanchard, described one September morning in a different way:

In the fall of 68-69, the choir was getting ready to do the Messiah. We were on the ground floor. Our room overlooked the football field. The next thing we see, helicopters landing, the voice over the load speaker demanding, “Lock All Doors.” The Black Panthers came into the building inviting students to join. They beat up those who wouldn’t join. We stayed in the room for 3 hours singing our hearts out.<sup>3</sup>

In 1970, the year Allison left the classroom to become supervisor the racial mixture at Bladensburg drastically altered. With Schmidt retired, the board and new superintendent Carl Hassel started work on desegregation, targeting schools in the Fairmont Heights area close to Bladensburg. The Fairmont Heights schools, drawing students only from the city of Fairmont Heights, maintained a student population of 100% black from their beginning because the town of Fairmont Heights, created as a town for blacks and run by blacks, remained entirely black.

Deputy Superintendent Hassel instructed a memorandum be sent to teachers at Bladensburg Junior and Senior High Schools in January of 1970. The memorandum invited Bladensburg teachers to request transfer to schools in the

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<sup>2</sup> David L. Dean, Report on the Bladensburg High School situation, September 20, September 23-27, 1968, Memo, September 1968.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Blanchard, personal communication, telephone conversation, 28 April 2004.

area being desegregated for the coming school year. Although the memorandum carried a non-threatening tone, notice is given that "It will be necessary to reduce the total staff of Bladensburg Senior High School and Bladensburg Junior High School because of changes in boundaries resulting in reduced student enrollment."<sup>4</sup> Bladensburg, Fairmont Heights, newly opened Largo High School, and attending middle schools were to receive a different student population in 1970 as a result of redrawn boundaries and desegregation efforts.<sup>5</sup> At that moment Allison became supervisor of music.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Maurice ("Bud") Allison, the second child of Earl and Addie Elizabeth Allison, was born in 1930 in a small town outside of Shelby, North Carolina. His early music education began while singing hymns in church with his mother who sang alto:

In church, when I was five or six years old, she would sit and hold the hymnbook and run her fingers along under the alto notes. And I could read music before I could read words. Funny thing is I know now that she was a soprano but she always sang alto.<sup>6</sup>

Allison's mother played the piano and composed gospel songs. Spare moments were spent sending her lead sheets to publishers, hoping for acceptance. Allison fondly remembered his mother:

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<sup>4</sup> Carl McMillen, Placement for the 1970-71 School Year, Memorandum, 7 January 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Prince George's County Board of Education, "Project: Information," (Upper Marlboro, MD: Board of Education, 1970).

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Allison, interview by author, tape recording, 15 July 2002, Hyattsville, Maryland, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

She was a wonderful mother. She was an amateur songwriter. She played piano and she sent lead sheets everywhere trying to get them published. She published several songs in gospel hymnbooks.<sup>7</sup>

At the age of 9, the family moved to Birmingham, Alabama where Allison entered the third grade at Martin school. There Allison began lessons on the violin:

At Martin I took my first violin lessons. It almost drove me crazy because you had to have such a sensitive ear to play in tune. And I studied violin a couple years and sang in the choruses, always loved to sing in the choruses, but I was an instrumentalist.<sup>8</sup>

Soon musical experiences filled Allison's Saturdays with the Youth in Theology Chorus led by Rubin Martinson with Stanley Mallott on the organ.<sup>9</sup> Those choristers who attended received the salary of fifty cents per performance. For Allison, this beginning of his professional music career was "heady" stuff.

He describes the process:

The auditorium, the municipal auditorium, was just full of kids playing instruments and singing. Rubin Martinson was the supervisor of music. I remember his name well because they chose two kids from each school in the school district to be in the Youth in Theology Chorus.<sup>10</sup>

Allison, selected to sing with this group, began filling his Saturday mornings with music making:

We sang. We formed a singing group under Rubin Martinson's conducting. Stanley Mallott played the organ; and we had string bass and other instruments. Every Saturday morning we broadcast a half-hour

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Mallott's more famous brother, Albert Hay Mallott, composed the oft-performed arrangement of *The Lord's Prayer*.

<sup>10</sup> Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

program. We would go fairly early in the morning and rehearse, put the program together, and put on that program.<sup>11</sup>

Not only was the musical experience exciting, but also the remuneration allowed Allison to afford trips to the movies and the local hamburger joint. This continued through Allison's grade school years:

If you did a solo, you got paid a dollar. If you didn't sing a solo, you got paid fifty cents. But a movie was only a dime. A hamburger was like ten cents. So that was really big pay for us. And I did that until we left Birmingham.<sup>12</sup>

The family moved to Sarasota, Florida and then Arcadia, Florida during Allison's high school years. Allison explains why:

Really, we were following a minister around. My parents were just very much attached to our minister. So they would...the minister moved somewhere, my family would go too. He later became the Secretary of the Baptist Convention in Florida.<sup>13</sup>

Upon entering high school in 1945 in Arcadia, Florida, Allison decided to join the band. Up to this point his musical activities were singing and playing the violin. As neither was accepted in the band, Allison chose clarinet as his entry into band. For two years he performed with both the marching and concert bands. Allison loved the musical climate in Arcadia. Not only did he perform with the band but also he continued his first love, singing. Allison said of Arcadia:

There were wonderful musicians, both instrumental and, and vocal. It was a small town. So when it was time to give a Christmas concert or something through the churches, we would, a bunch of us would sing in

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

maybe the Baptist Church, then go down the street to the Methodist Church, then later on in the day at the Presbyterian Church.<sup>14</sup>

During his years at Arcadia, Allison formed his own jazz dance band, and met bandsman Henry Filmore who guest directed Allison's high school band. In 1952 Filmore helped Allison gain admittance to the Navy School of Music.

Henry came up and conducted our band while I was there. Later on I asked him for a letter of recommendation to the Navy School of Music which he furnished for me.<sup>15</sup>

Allison finished his high school musical career by learning the saxophone and continuing to earn money through music performance, this time with his own dance band:

And so, I finished high school in a little town called Arcadia, Florida. My parents went to work for the Florida Baptist Children's Home. I had my own dance band in the twelfth grade. Interest in music continued. I got into jazz because one of my directors wrote and published jazz arrangements for band. So he said, "You have to learn to play saxophone." Six lessons later, two weeks later, I played my first dance job for a tourist group.<sup>16</sup>

Allison attended Florida Southern College. He remembers, "I got to Florida Southern College. I had a scholarship because my mother went and got me one." There he met Nancy Lee Morrow, his wife-to-be. Allison speaks of the first time he became aware of Nancy:

I saw her when I was a sophomore, before the start of school. She was walking across the athletic field with Joan [Smith], and, something special happened right then. But we never dated until I was out of school. But every time, that was the time when kids would go out in groups. And you'd go over...some of the Pikes would go over to the Alpha Chi's and say, "Anyone wanna' go out for pizza?" So, we'd do that. I was always

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Filmore was a noted bandsman and composer. Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

very much aware of her. And I was playing in a dance band then; maybe four or five nights a week all through college. And there was no time for me to think about getting serious with her.<sup>17</sup>

At Florida Southern Allison also began his experimentation with and discoveries of the workings of the voice. Many conversations with an influential professor, Dr. Woodberry, helped Allison form his life long pursuit of understanding how the voice operates. Woodberry developed his theories to explain the workings of the human voice after inhaling gas on the battlefield, assuming his career to be finished, and then recovering. Allison explains Woodberry's premise, "Every instrument is pitched to a certain keynote...so also is the human voice pitched to one or another key."<sup>18</sup> In other words, the action of the vocal cords followed acoustical principals similar to wind, brass, and string instruments and that a person's voice had a fundamental tone or pitch. That simple assumption articulated by Woodberry gave Allison a creed to follow in his developing theories of voice production.<sup>19</sup>

After graduation in 1952, Allison left Florida for Washington, D.C. and the Navy School of Music. In 1954 he and Nancy married. For the four years from 1952 through 1956 he played clarinet with the Navy Band until a friend, Joan Smith, encouraged him to apply for a position with Prince George's County Schools. Allison took a position at Bladensburg Junior High in 1956 where he remained until 1970. Although Allison planned to leave the junior high setting

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. Later Joan Smith herself became a helping teacher with Prince George's County Schools. She encouraged Allison to join the ranks of Prince George's County music teachers.

<sup>18</sup> Maurice Allison, *The Credible Sing Machine*, 2 vols. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

after five years, it was fourteen years later that he left to become supervisor of music. From 1970 to 1980 he held two different supervisory positions. From 1970 until 1973, Allison replaced Frances Lynch to become supervisor of General and Vocal Music (grades 7 through 12) for the whole county. At that time Mary Haywood supervised the elementary grades. From 1973 until 1980 his supervisory position included the Northern Area as General and Vocal Music all grades, K through 12. He retired from Prince George's County Schools in 1980 to pursue his quest of understanding the workings of the human voice and because the county was changing the supervisory structure system-wide as a result of budget deficits brought on by TRIM.

While teaching at Bladensburg Allison pursued many activities outside the school day. He became involved with Maryland Music Educators' Association leading a "Lobby Sing" in 1958 at the State Teachers' Convention. From 1959 onward he wrote curriculum for the Prince George's County music department. He established his long relationships with Catholic University and the University of Maryland by training their student teachers in his classroom from 1959 through 1970. By 1967 he finished his Master of Music Education degree from the University of Maryland. One of his notable achievements began in 1967 with the founding of the Vast Majority, a vocal group open to all area

students of high school age through the age of 19. Entrance was through audition.<sup>20</sup>

Allison increased his extra-curricular activities after 1970, the year he became supervisor. In 1970 alone those activities included: Guest conductor for Alexandria Middle Schools, President Secondary General Music Division of the Maryland Music Educators' Association, director of the Bladensburg Junior High Choral Group in performance for a Larry Hogan fundraiser, and director of the Vast Majority in performance at the retirement dinner for William Schmidt.

From 1973 onward Allison directed numerous workshops on the human voice. His relationship with Catholic University expanded as he taught courses on "Class Voice" in 1977, and "Supervision" from 1977 through 1982. After retirement in 1980 he adjudicated choral festivals for both Prince George's County and Fairfax County. By 1982 he finished his book on the voice, which he paid to publish himself.

The Allison family had four children. Along the way they adopted a Bladensburg student named Nancy Painter to be their fifth child. Early on, while still in the Navy, Allison suspected he was diabetic. This was confirmed in 1959. Health became a continual concern for him and those around him. Later health problems, such as the need for quadruple by-pass surgery, resulted from the weakening of his heart brought on by diabetes. Although his brain continued to be alive and his sense of humor remained to the end, by mid March 2003, his

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<sup>20</sup> Maurice Allison, résumé, 1970; Allison, interview 2 March 2001; Former Vast Majority students, A Vast Majority Tribute to Bud Allison, Program booklet, 22 June 1996.

diabetic body could no longer function on its own. On March 22, 2003, Allison elected to die when he instructed his physician to discontinue any life-sustaining medication. Allison left this life with his family at his bedside.

#### DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

##### *Finding his voice*

1956 was a big year in the Allison house. Allison began his career with Prince George's County Schools at Bladensburg Junior High and fathered his first child. He quickly developed a career goal:

When I got the job of teaching in Prince George's County, I was assigned to a junior high school. I had a plan that I would teach junior high school for five years; and I would find out all I could about the changing voice. And then I would go to high school.<sup>21</sup>

Previous experiences in the Navy Band and dance band jobs had not prepared Allison for this first year with junior high school students. Although he was an experienced instrumentalist and singer, he was not yet trained in managing the junior high personality nor in teaching general music. Six sections of music students entered his classroom daily, expecting to be entertained. Allison, at first, was overwhelmed:

I had no idea of what I was doing. I had general music I had never heard of; so I taught them everything I knew in the first couple of days.<sup>22</sup>

With the knowledge that music students came into his classroom six times a day, everyday, Allison gradually realized what he wanted to teach his students:

I became aware that there were units and various things you did with rhythm instruments and so on. It just occurred to me right along the way

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<sup>21</sup> Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

that the best instrument we have is the voice. Why can't we use the voice more in general music and still learn all of these other things that someone has said is very important? And I believed them; and, so, my classes were, as time went on, more and more slanted toward singing.<sup>23</sup>

By Christmastime of that first year Allison and co-teacher Joan Kuchta presented the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade chorus in concert.<sup>24</sup>

Allison built an extra-curricular chorus program. With co-teachers he used the general music classes to both train students and advertise the chorus.

Interested 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders auditioned for the after school club—chorus. The audition consisted of both solo singing and part singing:

They would have to stand up by twos and sing a simple song. First one person would sing the melody and the other would be the harmony. Then they would flip-flop the parts to prove they could sing the part independently. And uh, which doesn't always come with reading music. You can read music but yet not be an independent part singer. So we stressed that.<sup>25</sup>

Not all students sang well enough to be selected in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade chorus:

Some of them were assigned to the chorus class as eighth graders. If they didn't make it, they knew that they could audition for it for the next year. So we kept that hope alive. That really pervaded our general music department and made it, I think, a very practical thing, effective thing.<sup>26</sup>

After teaching at Bladensburg for some years Allison reevaluated his original goal of moving to high school. He and the students bonded to build a strong choral program at the school. Later, as supervisor, Allison learned that all this time he and the students had practiced what was known as "Participatory

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Parent-Teacher's Association, "Bladensburg Junior High Annual Christmas Program," (Bladensburg, MD: P. T. A., 1956).

<sup>25</sup> Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Management," a process allowing students to participate in the decisions and actions of running a group:

I lost the desire to move to high school because these kids could do everything. I had student conductors. I had officers. I had choreographers who devised the dances, who taught the dancers the dance, and were responsible for them. We had concerts where no one would conduct except students. They all knew where to go and what to do. It's great when they're invested in it. Participatory Management. I took a three-day Participatory Management workshop, which was offered to supervisory and administrative people. It was wonderful. I found that I was doing some of the basic things they were talking about.<sup>27</sup>

### *Instructional units*

As Allison gained experience, he used his love of voice to teach songs of other lands. By 1959 Allison was writing curriculum for the county and teaching "units" of study focused on the voice, musical concepts, and music of other lands. The units of study included:

The Changing Voice

Music of the United States

The Nature of Sound and Music

Music of Western Europe and Spanish Speaking Countries.<sup>28</sup>

In class Allison constantly related the lesson to voice. For example, after playing a song on the phonograph, Allison structured the students' listening experience by asking questions such as, "What race was the singer? Describe the singer physically, tall, short or whatever."<sup>29</sup> Then class discussion might transfer to a

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<sup>27</sup> Allison, interview 2 March 2001.

<sup>28</sup> Prince George's County Board of Education, "Music Education in Prince George's County: Secondary Vocal, Elementary and Secondary Instrumental," in *Prince George's County Curriculum Resource Guides* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Board of Education, 1961).

<sup>29</sup> Allison, interview 2 March 2001.

lesson on vocal production, the vocal cords, even acoustics, or a demonstration on how to classify the voice into the four main vocal categories of soprano, alto, tenor, or bass. Occasionally Allison slipped in a “wild card.” After listening to the example, Allison might ask the class:

“How do you classify this voice, soprano, mezzo, alto?” All these designations.

I would throw in a counter-tenor, which would get them. But it wasn't like they had failed. It was like I had put one over on them. That was very good. There would always be singing in the lesson.<sup>30</sup>



Figure 1

**POSTURE**

As a tone is produced, it seeks a resonance chamber within the body for purposes of amplification. The correct position of the body assists the tone in finding this resonance. (See *Handbook for Choral Directors*, Woodbury.) Good posture is essential to good singing, as well as good health. Demand it from your pupils. Refer constantly to posture until the pupils have formed iron-clad habits and are able to assume it and maintain it during the act of singing as a matter of course. The following are requirements for good posture.

4. Hold the head back, with the feeling of lengthening the neck, rather than looking up. The chin should be back and down.

Always hold music away from the body, with elbows outward (not hugging the ribs).

Consciously relax all tension.

1. Sit back in desk or chair, with body erect (not touching back rest) with weight forward.
2. Place both feet flat on the floor.
3. When seated at a desk (Figure 1), pupil may place the right arm lightly on arm rest. The lower portion of the book may be rested on the desk if this does not produce eye strain. Pupils seated in chairs should hold music away from the body (Figure 2).

Posture and the Changing Voice:

Good posture is helpful in avoiding the break. "The upward pull of the chin often tilts the larynx, creating an awkward angle for the tensor muscles and causing unnecessary throat tiring while singing." Wolfe-Krone-Fullerton: Proudly We Sing, page vii.



Figure 2

Figure 6. Page 80 from the 1961 *Prince George's County Curriculum Resource Guides* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Board of Education, 1961) pictures of Allison modeling two singing postures.

In the curriculum, music study correlated with science, French, English, geography, reading, and social studies. This combination of disciplines had long

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

been known as “core.” Carroll Dickenson, a Bladensburg teacher from 1965 to 1968, describes the core program at Bladensburg:

For example, if we were studying Africa, we did every aspect: the food, all the geography. Then we went to the zoo to see insects from the pyramids. Bud [Allison] would do music of Africa with me. Whatever we were working on he would correlate with us. If I needed recordings he would make those available. In turn I helped him out in the evening with concerts.<sup>31</sup>

Dickenson respected Allison’s abilities in the classroom and with students. She noticed that students wanted to go to music class and wanted to be involved with the learning Allison presented. Rather than shun teen music, rock ‘n roll, Allison used students’ music as a springboard for learning in the general music class. Dickenson remembers the time some of the students said to her, “Mr. A’s really down with us today.” In fact, Allison allowed students to bring recordings of popular music on certain days. From there:

They would choose selections. They played them, and then improvised on instruments. I think he was doing everything before his time. He seemed to be able to incorporate anything with his music.<sup>32</sup>

From Bladensburg Junior High School Dickenson moved to a position with Pupil Personnel in the county. She worked 27 years in that office and became expert at evaluating students and adults with whom she worked. Of Allison, she said:

He was very talented, very gifted. The children loved him. More than that he could teach. He passed that on to children. You didn’t have people dreading to go to class when he was teaching. He had it all: love of music and caring for music. The last time I saw Bud, he was at the Kennedy

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<sup>31</sup> Dickenson, telephone conversation.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Center listening to a group from Shenandoah. He brought the same enthusiasm to listening to this group.<sup>33</sup>



Figure 7. Bladensburg Junior High School opened in 1951 and was closed in 1983. Photo from 1996 *Vast Majority Tribute to Allison* booklet.

### *Something for everybody*

Realizing that not every junior high school student wanted to sing or play an instrument, Allison devised an activity for those mechanically and not necessarily musically inclined—building a harpsichord. This project had a twofold objective: accompanying singing and meaningfully occupying general music students. Allison, with funds earned by the choir, bought a harpsichord kit from New York for only \$700. Watching students work on building the kit entertained Allison:

It was a project for not only the people who were in the chorus, but the people who were in general music to work on. The boys would bring little screwdrivers. These big, rough guys would be back there and you'd hear "oomph." That would mean that the screwdriver had slipped and gone

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

into a hole in the thumb, which he'd already made. But they enjoyed putting it together. Now this was secondary vocal/general grade 8 and 9 and it's 1966.<sup>34</sup>

This same harpsichord became the centerpiece for a school musical production. Allison enjoyed speaking of the year Bladensburg Junior High School students produced a split stage version of *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story* under his direction:

One year we did a split stage version of *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*. We had the harpsichord we had built for the *Romeo and Juliet* part; and they had appropriate costumes. The boys were saying [in a gruff voice], "I'm not going to wear that. I'm not going to wear that."<sup>35</sup>

One wonders that junior high school students possessed the skills and interest in performing literature of such sophistication. Allison became known for the outstanding work with his choirs both at the junior high school and in adjudicated performance. Co-teacher, Bert Wirth, said of Allison:

He was the kind of teacher that didn't need to recruit. Kids wanted to be a part of his world. He made them sound good, look good, and feel good about themselves.<sup>36</sup>

#### *Building choral groups*

The combined Bladensburg choirs met after school. Comprised of selected 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders, the popularity of this group increased over the years. Allison's first year chorus of 1956 sang only three songs at the "Annual Seasonal Program" held in December. By 1962 the chorus presented two concerts yearly, one in connection with the band and the other alone:

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<sup>34</sup> Allison, interview 2 March 2001; Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Bert Wirth, personal communication, e-mail correspondence, 19 April 2004.

Every year we would have two concerts, around Christmas, the winter concert, and around Easter. If we had snow and called it off, we didn't do it. Then there came the year we had about a dozen concerts. Then we had 30 concerts. And it just mushroomed.<sup>37</sup>

The 1963 "Annual Seasonal Program" featured both the band and the chorus. We learn from the program that approximately 350 students, almost one-half the student body, from all three grades took part in the program singing six selections.<sup>38</sup>

Allison's choral work caught the attention of Superintendent William Schmidt. Schmidt praised Allison's choral work in front of Bladensburg Principal Daugherty and provided some costumes to enhance the appearance of the group. Allison remembered these costumes:

He said [Schmidt said to Allison's principal.], "Your sports teams are not giving you a good image," (they were really bad back then); "and this choir, I think, could do that." So he got wholeheartedly behind us.

Along the way Frances Lynch and Dr. Schmidt got us some costumes. Red sashes, I don't remember all the parts of the costumes. We were supposed to have a Southern American look; and we went downtown and sang at some anniversary of the Pan-American Union. From there on we got lots of attention.<sup>39</sup>

Chorus class grew in popularity, and by 1966 was offered during the day, everyday. When 120 of the schools' 700 students signed up for choir, the principal complained to Allison, "What are the rest of the teachers in the school supposed to do during this block of time when you have all these students?"<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Allison, interview 2 March 2001.

<sup>38</sup> Parent-Teacher's Association, "Bladensburg Junior High Annual Seasonal Program," (Bladensburg, MD: P. T. A., 1963).

<sup>39</sup> Allison, interview 2 March 2001.

<sup>40</sup> Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

Trying to balance course offerings within the building, principal Daugherty limited to 90 the number of slots available for chorus. Allison prided himself in the numbers of males and athletes he attracted to his program:

Then the class stayed with 90, 50 boys and 40 girls, because there were more boys who were gifted vocally than girls in school. Isn't that strange? And the last year I had all of the varsity athletes, virtually every one of them in the choir, and they won every game they played in every sport, except they lost one baseball game.<sup>41</sup>

While a new teacher at Bladensburg, Allison demonstrated his athletic prowess. A tall man, Allison had excelled in sports activities in high school playing for the basketball team. After competing successfully with a pro basketball player in a faculty varsity game at the junior high school, Allison's image soared with the male athletes. He made a point of "showing off" as students watched:

When I first got there I played basketball with them after school. Dave Buckley, who was the center for Duke for four years—and they were national champions—6' 10," he scored 17 points in the faculty varsity game and I scored 17 points guarding. I was made. I wasn't an oddball. I was an athlete.<sup>42</sup>

Allison recruited male singers more easily than female singers for his chorus, contrary to most high school choirs. Male athletes were the kingpins of his productions although they complained about wearing costumes with pantaloons:

So, you didn't have a bunch of boys who weren't respected by the others—sissy singers. You had the top athletes of the school. That made a

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

big difference. They were not only good athletically; they were good musically.<sup>43</sup>

Allison enjoyed telling about the day that the athletes wanted to forfeit playing in a game to be in the show. The same students who announced refusal to wear costumes were first on stage for the performance:

The day we had the performance happened to be the championship baseball game. And that morning I walked in the cafeteria, where the chorus class was, and there was Mr. Daugherty and the coach and some of the boys. The boys had told the coach they weren't going to play in the game. I didn't have any problem 'cause we had backups for everybody. And I finally calmed their ruffled feathers and said, well, "They had to play the game." You had the major players who weren't going to be there. When it was time for the show, I looked up and there they were on stage with their pantaloons, and it seems they had won the game, raced up to the locker room to change clothes, and they were on stage for that. That's a wonderful thing.<sup>44</sup>

Allison maintained a smaller performing group among his junior high students known as the Bladensburg Junior High Choral Group. Because his groups were highly regarded, invitations to perform came frequently. In 1970 the Bladensburg Choral performed at a St. Patrick's Day Dinner honoring Congressman Larry Hogan. This was to be one of Allison's last activities as choral director at Bladensburg Junior High.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.



Figure 8. Allison with members of the Bladensburg Junior High School Choral Group, entertainers for the dinner portion of program to honor Larry Hogan. Photo from collection of Maurice Allison.

### *The Vast Majority*

In 1967 Bladensburg Rotary Club member Ollie Zinsmeister sent Allison an invitation to organize a Community Youth Chorus. For his efforts Allison was to receive a small monthly stipend and startup funds. Zinsmeister, a choir director himself, detailed the Rotary Club's thoughts about the group:

Through this organization we will be showing the good side of youth and that there are many clean cut, neat and respectable young people around today. With this in mind it has been suggested, and we believe you will concur with this, that no longhair cuts or beards be allowed on the boys.<sup>45</sup>

Zinsmeister's letter ended with a commendation for Allison:

I am most pleased that you have agreed to be the director of this group. The young people are in good hands both musically and from a

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<sup>45</sup> Ollie Zinsmeister, personal communication, letter to Maurice Allison, 7 September 1967, Xerox of letter in possession of author.

standpoint of leadership. Under your direction this group will be a superb musical ensemble and will reflect favorable credit, not only on our club, but you as well.<sup>46</sup>

With the formation of the Vast Majority Allison maintained a musical and personal relationship with former Bladensburg Junior High students. In addition, students outside Allison's Bladensburg music program had opportunity to work with him. Membership in Vast Majority was open to all high school aged (and up to the age of 19) Bladensburg area schools regardless of race. Performances for wounded veterans, local churches, and retirement homes provided a focus. Between November of 1967 and January of 1972 the Vast Majority performed publicly 82 times, almost twice per month. Twenty-five of those performances staged at the Walter Reed Hospital brought moments of pleasure to wounded and recovering Vietnam Veterans.<sup>47</sup>

An appearance important to Allison occurred in 1970—the retirement dinner of Superintendent William Schmidt. Allison maintained a congenial, professional relationship with Schmidt since Allison's hire in 1956. Allison's apparent laid-back management style appears again:

At the dinner for State Superintendents of Schools, honoring Mr. Schmidt's retirement, which was at a Holiday Inn in Baltimore. We parked the bus—we only took the top 60—and it was a self-service lot. We didn't know that there was a Clipper's game, a hockey game there, across the street that night. So, when we came back out after the, after the concert, our bus was surrounded by American-made cars—big cars. So

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Maurice Allison, Program materials from Vast Majority performances, 1968-1972, materials in possession of Allison's widow, Nancy Allison.

my guys just stationed themselves around each car, picked it up, and walked it over out of the way.<sup>48</sup>

Rather than restrain the students, Allison trusted them to take care of the situation.

The Vast Majority disbanded in early 1972. The group reassembled to present a tribute on to Allison on June 22, 1996. They produced a booklet of names, addresses, and information about the group, and a letter from Allison.

The letter, a tribute to Vast Majority, begins:

My dear friends: After our suspension of activities in early 1971, I [VM notebook shows a performance scheduled in January of 1972] supervised until my retirement in 1980, not really retiring, but leaving the school system to write, research and teach voice. I lectured at the Catholic University of America and established my "Voice Counselling" practice which I have continued to the present day.<sup>49</sup>

Blanchard, close friend of Allison who was present at the tribute, philosophizes about the cessation of Vast Majority activities:

Bud's health was starting to go. He had a new job that demanded attention. His own kids wanted his attention. It became difficult for him to conduct because of the diabetes and his heart.<sup>50</sup>

Former member Cheryl Garrett wrote in the 1996 booklet, "One of the saddest memories was the disbanding of V. M. I thought life was over."<sup>51</sup> A sampling of other "memories" are printed below:

My best school years were the ones I spent in junior high performing with the BJHS Chorus and VM, Don Bobick.

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<sup>48</sup> Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

<sup>49</sup> Former Vast Majority students, Allison tribute.

<sup>50</sup> Blanchard, telephone conversation.

<sup>51</sup> Former Vast Majority students, tribute.

My heart-felt thanks go to Bud Allison for having touched my life so deeply, Myra Cushman.

Mr. Allison provided a great role model and gave direction to all of us as we struggled to find our place in the world. Thank you for the base you gave us for the rest of our lives!, Jim and Jenny Gast.

I remember the Vast Majority singing at Walter Reed Army Medical Center about 1968. The wards were filled with wounded Viet Nam vets— young (18-19)—not much older than we were. I became a Military Hospital Chaplain for one of my tours of active duty, Rev. Elsie McKenney.

Mr. A had a way of disciplining you while leaving your dignity intact, Steve Rickey.

What amazes me today was the way Mr. Allison could shape the voices and character of kids from all corners of our world into one sound of excellence, Carla Sturgis.

All I can say is that Mr. Allison and Mrs. Wirth were two of the inspirational forces behind me dedicating the rest of my life to studying, researching, performing and teaching music!, Nancy Ziglar.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.



Figure 9. The original Vast Majority group pictured in 1967 with Allison standing at the far right. Photo from collection of Nancy Allison.

Allison exuded personal charm and warmth. His personal skills included an ability to communicate with both teenagers and adults, and a caring for humankind. Music, learned with his mother in church, was Allison's first language. Singing was simply what a person did. It was life's breath to Allison. He was a spiritual man. In a 1970 résumé Allison wrote enthusiastically about his spiritual life, "This really constitutes putting the best aside until the end."<sup>53</sup> As he was a facilitator, Allison was patient, looking to his needs after those of others.

As a role model he inspired students to follow in his ways, teaching music and guiding young people. Allison provided Vast Majority students unforgettable memories of music making on the highest order and meaningful community service.

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<sup>53</sup> Allison, résumé.

Table 1. Vast Majority Engagements, 1967-1972

Date	Event	Location
12/18/67	Installation of Officers	PG Chamber of Commerce
12/21/67	Rotary weekly program	
11/4/67	The Federal Schoolmen's Club	
4/12/68	Church Service	Cheverly Community Church
4/26/68	Syracuse University Annual meeting	Holiday Inn of Washington
5/13/68	Men's Club dinner meeting	St. Matthew's Parish
5/18/68	Boy Scouts of America	District Annual Dinner
6/18/68	Soroptimist Club Installation	PG Country Club
7/17/68	PG County Library	Adelphi
10/6/68	University Baptist Church	Church service
11/13/68	Concert	Kennedy-Warren Hotel
12/6/68	Concert	PG Community Center
12/3/68	Concert	McCormack Elementary
1/13/69	Southern Maryland Board of Trade	K. of C., Forestville
2/9/69	Church Service	Cheverly Comm. Church
2/14/69	Eagle Scouts	First Methodist Church of Hyattsville
4/18/69	Friday night program	Second Baptist Church, (Bud's Church)
4/28/69	Walter Reed Hospital	Sang for wounded
4/14/69	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
5/2/69	Rotary International District Conference	Annapolis Hilton
5/3/69	Boy Scouts of America Annual Dinner	Bolling Air Field
5/12/69	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
6/2/69	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
6/13/69	PG Church Bowling League Banquet	Cheverly Community Church
6/18/69	Malcolm Grow USAF Hospital	American Red Cross
7/14/69	Malcolm Grow USAF Hospital	American Red Cross
7/28/69	Veterans Administration Hospital	American Red Cross
8/25/69	Malcolm Grow USAF Hospital	American Red Cross
8/27/69	PG County Public Schools	Orientation for new teachers

9/16/69	Holy Land World Cultural Travel Club	
9/29/69	Testimonial Dinner for William S. Schmidt	U of MD, Adult Education Center
10/7/69	Woman's Missionary Org. Northeast Association	2 <sup>nd</sup> Baptist Church
10/13/69	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
10/15/69	42 <sup>nd</sup> Charter Night Rotary International	Ridgeway Inn. Bus trip. Maybe the famous one
10/18/69	Performance	Los Mercatos Shopping Center
10/27/69	Malcolm Grow USAF Hospital	American Red Cross
11/10/69	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
12/11/69	Hyattsville Lions Club	Glenridge Junior High
12/15/69	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
1/12/70	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
1/26/70	Malcolm Grow USAF Hospital	American Red Cross
2/9/70	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
2/22/70	Hillandale Baptist Church	
2/23/70	Malcolm Grow USAF Hospital	American Red Cross
2/27/70	Christian Youth Rally	University Baptist Church
2/27/70	Eagle Scout Dinner	First Methodist of Hyattsville
3/9/70	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
3/23/70	Malcolm Grow USAF Hospital	American Red Cross
4/13/70	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
4/25/70	Dimensions in Music	PG Community College
5/11/70	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
5/27/70	Salute to Fort Meade Dinner	Officer's Club
6/8/70	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
6/15/70 to 9/21/70	Backyard rehearsals and concerts	14 weekly performances or rehearsals. Student directed.
9/23/70	United Methodist Men	Cheverly United Methodist
10/12/70	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
10/19/70	Malcolm Grow USAF Hospital	American Red Cross
10/26/70	Manor Care Adelphi Nursing Home	For Mike Muziko
11/1/70	Cheverly United Methodist	8:30 and 11:00 services
11/8/70	Queen Anne School	Cheerleaders Fund-Raising Concert
11/9/70	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross

12/12/70	Laurel Center for Children, Retarded Adults	Christmas Party
12/13/70	Cheverly United Methodist	8:30 Service
12/14/70	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
12/21/70	Cheverly United Methodist	Christmas Carol Party
1/11/71	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
1/16/71	"A Night To Relax"	Cheverly Boys Club
1/31/71	Cheverly United Methodist Church	"Praise Ye The Lord" by Hovhaness
2/8/71	Walter Reed Hospital, Variety Show	American Red Cross
2/15/71	Maryland Farm and Land Brokers	Meeting entertainment
3/4/71	Cafeteria Supervisors Dinner	Francis Scott Key
3/8/71	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
3/10/71	Oxon Hill Kiwanis Club	
4/12/71	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
5/10/71	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
5/17/71	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
6/6/71	Church Service	Cheverly United Methodist
9/13/71	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
10/11/71	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
11/15/71	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross
9/22/71	United Methodist Men	Cheverly Methodist
1/17/72	Walter Reed Hospital	American Red Cross

#### FUNDING THE PROGRAM

##### *County allotment*

During Alison's years of teaching with Prince George's County Schools, teachers did not receive discretionary funds to spend as they wished. At that time music teachers could order specific items from an approved bid list. County supervisors then approved expenditures. A music teacher needing instruments, music, or uniforms/costumes, contacted the music supervisor to request the desired items. Allison remembers that he did have a budget, but it was

inadequate to meet his developing choral needs. In fact, Allison recalls the time his supervisor, Frances Lynch, attended a Bladensburg chorus rehearsal:

I remember one time Frances came around. We were singing, I forget the name of it. [Bud loosely “do’s” part of a tune] “Do-do-do, dit-dum” which the state chorus—high school chorus—had sung. And she said, [Bud imitates the pitch of her voice.] “You shouldn’t order something like that for junior high because they can’t cope with those rhythms.” All I did was [Bud sings the tune on a neutral syllable while snapping his fingers in a steady beat] yum, dum, di, dum, di, dum.” and they had it; and they loved it.<sup>54</sup>

After this encounter, it seems that Allison decided he, not his supervisor, should be in charge of selecting music for his groups, and he needed funds beyond the county allotment to do so.

#### *Bank account*

For Allison to achieve financial autonomy from the “county allotment,” the choral group needed an income and a bank account. To do this, the choir charged admission for bi-annual concerts. Three hundred fifty students drew at least one parent per child. Simple math implies that concerts netted over \$350. The group, under Allison’s leadership, used the funds for three main purchase types: buying music, hiring buses to transport the group, and purchasing equipment such as the harpsichord kit. Allison referred to this money source as a “bank account:”

We had a bank account. Every time we were gonna go somewhere that required busses or something, I could go to Mr. Daugherty and say, “Now we’d like to go to junior high state choral day. It’s going to require this many buses and cost us this much for what ever.” And I’d say, “We can cover it in our account.” He’d say “Fine.” See, he’d always ask two things,

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<sup>54</sup> Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

“Can you pay for it;” and “Will you accept the full responsibility for whatever happens?”<sup>55</sup>

The size of the bank account increased as the choral performances drew larger audiences. One year the chorus purchased flags to hang in the school. Allison explained one motivation for the purchase of the harpsichord kit, to spend money from the bank account:

So, we had money and we were trying to think of something that we could use that money for. We used the money to buy the flags I mentioned before. Uh, I don't know that we were planning to do the *Romeo and Juliet/West Side Story* thing before we built that [the harpsichord]. But it's possible that that was one reason. So we looked around and found a harpsichord kit from a store in New York. Cost about \$700, which you can't touch a harpsichord for that much now.<sup>56</sup>

Allison approached the funding of his program as he approached his career; that is, he formulated a goal without developing a rigid plan for the implementation of the goal. In a “one-day-at-a-time” approach Allison worked toward his goal of understanding and teaching the voice. In the case of funding, the chorus simply needed funds to procure music his supervisor did not approve, rent buses for travel to festivals or performances, and purchase equipment. Rather than have students sell food items or gift-wrap, Allison chose to charge admission for concerts. The system worked so well and funds accumulated beyond needs, that Allison and his student leaders were forced to search for appropriate ways to spend the accumulated funds.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

## CHANGING JOBS: ALLISON THE SUPERVISOR

*Supervisory voice*

In 1970, the year he became supervisor, Allison began a self-study of the human voice. He used the discoveries of this study in educating the music teachers of Prince George's County. Why did he leave the classroom, a venue that had worked so well for him, to take a different assignment? Allison feels his supervisory strengths centered on the work he did with understanding the operations of the human voice.

Allison maintained many professional activities in addition to his classroom assignment. Between 1959 and 1970 he obtained a Master of Music in Education from the University of Maryland and worked with student teachers from the University of Maryland. Feelings of wanting to move on to a higher level of choral activity or responsibility intensified despite the continued growth of his choral program at Bladensburg and work with the Vast Majority. Possibly Allison wanted a different challenge. Allison felt dissatisfied with the leadership of Supervisor Frances Lynch. Possibly he felt his body tired of the day-to-day demands of the classroom. In any case, he mentally prepared himself for the move that took place in the fall of 1970:

I knew several years before I got the job [supervisor of music] that I should have the job. I felt I should; and I told the screening committee that, "I am the supervisor whether they decided or not." I asked my principal, Harold Doherty, to support me in that, which he did.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Allison, interview.

Allison's appointment was announced along with others in the November 1970 issue of *A Summary of News and Events in Prince George's County*.<sup>58</sup>



Figure 10. Allison's picture in *A Summary of News and Events In Prince George's County Schools*, November 1970.

As supervisor, Allison became more involved with presenting lectures and writing on the voice. Workshops included "The Structure and Function of the Human Voice," a ten week course designed for county teachers, "Conditioning the Speaking Voice," given in conjunction with the State of Maryland, lectures at Catholic University on the voice, and a presentation for the American Choral Directors Association on his diagnostic-prescriptive voice pedagogy work, *The Credible Sing Machine*.<sup>59</sup>

Allison's supervisory position had two stages. From 1970 to 1973 he was responsible for secondary vocal/general music throughout the county. From 1973 to 1980 his charge included the Northern Area of the county, grades kindergarten through twelve. During the second phase he met Barbara Baker, choral teacher at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. Baker began teaching in Prince

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<sup>58</sup> Prince George's County Public Schools, "New Appointments," *A Summary of News and Events In Prince George's County Schools* 7, 3 (1970).

<sup>59</sup> Allison, résumé, 1978; Allison, *The Credible Sing Machine*.

George's County in 1978. Although an experienced teacher before coming to Roosevelt she was new to Prince George's County. Allison helped to provide a smooth transition for Baker into Prince George's County. Baker recalls:

Bud Allison was a marvelous music supervisor. From day one, when I was new in the county, he came over and showed me how to do inventory, showed me how to fill out all the papers, file all the forms, and just do all the necessities that a new teacher needs to know. I had taught in another system, had a Ph.D., but I didn't know Prince George's County. He was right there to support.<sup>60</sup>

Allison provided more than clerical support. He guided his teachers by first listening to their concerns and then, offering suggestions. Baker continues:

The day after a concert he would come and tell me about things on the concert or he had been to the concert, just come and sit in. When he had a free day he would come over and visit and help me. He was a fine resource just to talk to, just to bounce things off and to help me with any problems I would have. And he would do the inventory for me, which was just wonderful.<sup>61</sup>

Allison used creative ways to procure and deliver instruments; and he appreciated creativity in other people. At the time Allison was Northern Area Supervisor, Deni Foster pioneered the guitar/piano classes at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. Foster was a popular teacher and guitar a popular subject. Before long there were more students than guitars. Foster needed more instruments and she knew that one procedure for acquiring instruments was to petition the music supervisor. She called Allison repeatedly. Finally, she came upon a successful technique for approaching him:

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<sup>60</sup> Barbara Baker, interview by author, tape recording, Greenbelt, MD, 21 March 2002, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

I asked him for guitars, and I 'member what I did when I asked him for guitars at Roosevelt. So I sent him a picture of a guitar. And I said, "I'm teaching guitar with pictures because, of course, we don't have enough for everybody. It's a little awkward to hold these, these little, cardboard pictures. So, if you'd like to send me some bigger card," you know what I mean. I had the guitars within two days. I mean he just brought them right over, just hand delivered them.<sup>62</sup>

Allison faced several frustrations as supervisor, inadequate teachers and funding among them. Although unable to hire or fire teachers, Allison could provide support for struggling educators. In this role Allison's personal skills enabled him to help others. Allison spoke of his techniques for helping those in need:

My job was not to say, "You shouldn't be teaching" but to help them in areas where they needed help. Or recommend that they take certain courses. It was very frustrating because the hardest thing in the world to do, after an ineffective teacher has taught for 10 years and every year the evaluation has said..."everything is fine", is for someone to come along and say "it's not fine" and to move them. I went out to their school every month. I identified three areas they needed strengthening in. One of them had to take a class in conducting. I forget what the other two were. Just management is one of them.<sup>63</sup>

In another instance Allison did not assist the individual, but encouraged retirement:

I knew there was one unhappy lady who had been teaching a long time. She mentioned the possibility of retirement with me and I encouraged her to retire. I did so for positive reasons. I didn't feel guilty that I was "getting rid" of some one, because I was unable to get rid of anyone.<sup>64</sup>

Supervisors and administrators face the problem of removing inadequate or harmful teachers from the classroom. Allison recalled a teacher, a suspected

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<sup>62</sup> Deni Foster, interview, tape recording, Hyattsville, MD, 25 June 2001.

<sup>63</sup> Allison, interview 2 March 2001.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

sex offender, in his charge. Sadly, the suspected offender moved to another county without being prosecuted in Prince George's County:

And we had a teacher who was a sex offender, I'm sure. We got rid of him finally but he wound up in Montgomery County and he was arrested. I haven't heard anything else about him. Even so, I wrote an observation about him...[M]y office was right down the street then—I left [after filling out the negative evaluation]. A few minutes later he came storming into my office and said, "I want a copy of that." I said, "I'm just finishing now. You may have a copy." "I don't want it changed," he says; "I know my rights." That's part of the problem.<sup>65</sup>

In the midst of a supervisory job for which he had campaigned, he exercised leadership in bringing music instruction to county children by working to improve music instruction and music teacher effectiveness.

Funding the music program continuously challenged Allison and other supervisors. Techniques for coping varied as the political landscape shifted. Allison remembered trying to develop a long-range plan for providing synthesizers, accordions, and guitars for newly developed music programs. The county allocated money according to formula. At the time Allison was supervisor each teacher could order approximately \$200 worth of equipment and/or music. The teachers requesting money at the year's beginning were more fortunate:

When I was supervisor we began bringing in the piano. But you know we quit playing the claves and the maracas exclusively and then synthesizers became important. So we were able to buy synth, synthesizers for those teachers who invested in learning how to use them, took workshops or something. We bought as many of those as we could. I mean we didn't have much money. But Lin [Lin McIlvaine, one of the helping teachers] and I came up with a ten-year plan to acquire all the things that we

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

needed. And then when we reached the point in the year—it was usually in January—where they’d say, all accounts are frozen for the year. And you didn’t have a chance to buy anything.<sup>66</sup>

For Allison more rewarding aspects of the job centered on singing and choral groups. He remembered the *esprit de corps* among the high school choral teachers, how they bonded, discussed, and developed plans for their groups:

The high school teachers were really bonded back then. I got them together and tried to sit on the side and let them talk things out. Out of that came some wonderful festivals, the Chamber Chorus Festival at the East Court of the Art Gallery. I think Dick Blanchard was the one who obtained that for us the first time. It was just a wonderful time.<sup>67</sup>

This ability to lead by facilitating, allowing the input and decisions of others to guide the process, became Allison’s signature personality trait.

*Allison’s voice as the facilitator*

Allison thought of himself as a facilitator and gave voice to this self-concept, “I really considered myself to be a facilitator.”<sup>68</sup> Although he developed this style of teaching and managing from the moment he set the voice as his goal in 1956, the realization of the label, facilitator, came to Allison as his supervisory “voice” developed. By 1973, Allison, in his new position of Northern Area Supervisor, had cast himself in the role of facilitator:

But I took the attitude also, I told the teachers this, the first meeting we had, “I’m a facilitator, I want to facilitate their teaching.” And I tried to do that.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

<sup>67</sup> Allison, interview 2 March 2001.

<sup>68</sup> Allison, interview 15 July 2002.

<sup>69</sup> Allison, interview 2 March 2001.

Facilitating meant aiding or assisting students and teachers in making decisions about how to use the voice, what music to sing, or, with a teacher, what lesson to teach. Developing a teaching style or management style does not happen overnight but occurs gradually as successes and failures mold a person. Allison found that he could work with students and teachers by supporting rather than dictating. He encouraged students and teachers to choose what was right for them as in this example from the time he taught at Catholic University part time between 1977 and 1982:

They had me teaching vocal ped [pedagogy], which was just extraordinary. All of these people were studying with someone else. I would counsel them from the very beginning, "Don't you go to so-and-so and say Mr. Allison said this. You accept from me what you think is correct for you and be quiet about it." It was a wonderful experience.<sup>70</sup>

Examples surface such as his discovery that with his choir he had been practicing a management style labeled Participatory Management. His choice of pronouns when speaking of choir activities, the use of "we" rather than "I," indicates that the group, not just the director, took part in management decisions.

Bladensburg music teacher, Bert Wirth, said of Allison, "One of the finest men I ever knew was Bud Allison." Wirth joined Bladensburg staff in 1962, replacing a pregnant music teacher who was required to resign from her job according to the ruling that pregnant women were not permitted in the classroom. Her 7<sup>th</sup> grade music students were taught in a portable trailer behind

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

the school. Wirth summarizes Allison's career in the classroom and as supervisor with the following words:

I think Bud missed that [the classroom] after becoming a supervisor even though he affected many changes in the music curriculum that we had experimented with in our little portables. Guitars were added to the classroom, for one. He also was allowed more creative time to write a book on the voice and once again began teaching. He chose how he would live and in the end, when he would die. I think he made a difference in our small corner of the world.<sup>71</sup>

"Our small corner of the world" consisted of trailers behind the school building. During his fourteen years at Bladensburg, Allison taught music in a trailer, a temporary school room.

#### CHANGING TIMES

Court-ordered busing to achieve desegregation began when Allison was a supervisor. The changing boundaries and staffing percentages imposed by the county distressed Allison as supervisor. He felt the county changed gradually after court-ordered busing:

Then staffing became a problem because along with busing and changing the boundaries, you had to have certain percentage of white teachers and black teachers. I had to turn down some wonderful black teachers because I couldn't go over that percentage. I had this potentially, in my opinion, wonderful teacher who was part German and part Cherokee Indian. I called them over at personnel and I said this woman is definitely a minority group. Everything we did was not termed black and white but minority and white. They weren't talkin' about anybody but blacks. I fought the good fight. I tried to hire her and I couldn't do it.<sup>72</sup>

By 1980 change was most evident. Superintendent Feeney, attempting to deliver instruction and deal with budget problems, allowed a reorganization to

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<sup>71</sup> Wirth, e-mail.

<sup>72</sup> Allison, 2 March 2001.

take place. Allison felt that the county spread the supervisory staff too thin, keeping teachers from receiving needed services:

When they sent us out to the 3 areas—and they actually had 6 areas as I recall—the object was to get more help directly to the teacher. Well, now, the lunacy of that plan was that the problem we already had was that we did not have enough staff, supervisory staff, assistant supervisors, helping teachers, to cover anybody. So if they moved us into 3 different places we were spreading ourselves even more thinly.<sup>73</sup>

Allison anticipated one supervisory position would be cut from music in Prince George's. At this point supervisors performed many functions, not just related to music. Periodic testing and evaluation of students consumed more of the school day. Supervisors frequently monitored schools under evaluation, and administered tests. Allison reaffirmed his goal of wanting to learn all he could about the voice, evaluated his position, and decided what to do next. He retired:

Like to go into the elementary school or when a school was being evaluated—which was a three to five day process—we would have all kinds of personnel not doing their jobs but down there monitoring. Every teacher knows that the test they have to give is taken away from their teaching time.

You see I left because I knew that one position was going to be dropped. I wanted to write and wanted to teach down here [in his basement studio]. I just looked at it financially to see if I could swing it, and I could, so I did.

For the rest of his life, Allison researched the voice. He amassed a huge library of scholarly works on singing and the voice. He was in contact with others interesting in vocal workings, and he taught lessons. The basement studio of his home carried a continuous flow of those wanting to receive the fruits of his knowledge and be in his caring company.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

## ALIGNING MUSIC PROGRAM WITH SCHOOL NEEDS

Allison’s teaching reached many students. He enjoyed working with all personality types and mentalities. He encouraged all students to do their best. He engaged students in music making and thinking, while having fun at the same time. The chorus performed music from many different genres—traditional, popular, and folk choral literature—for students, parents, administrators, and the public. Allison spoke of his interactions with students:

The students I got in Bladensburg Junior, were not all from Cheverly—which was called “God’s Country”—and you expected to have the better students from there. That wasn’t the case. You had them from Brentwood and other places, which were low-income areas. I just found that if you gave young people like that a challenge that they would just do anything for you.<sup>74</sup>

In Allison’s mind the “better students” were not always those with high SAT scores or elevated GPAs. He bonded with students that responded to him, students that would “just do anything for you,” such as enjoy attending rehearsals, being engaged in singing, and attending to their individual part of the performance.

## ALIGNING MUSIC PROGRAM WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS

Allison and the Vast Majority, supported by the Bladensburg Rotary Club, performed community service engagements as they sang at Walter Reed Hospital for wounded Vietnam Veterans, retirement homes, or the 8:30 am church service at Cheverly United Methodist Church. Before “community service” became a prerequisite for high school graduation, members of the Vast

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

Majority entered into the reciprocal relationship of music making, bringing happiness to many including themselves. For four years—over 82 performances—the singers, the audience, and Allison shared in the joyful music making that Allison facilitated.

#### SUMMARY

Allison entered both his teaching and supervision careers in Prince George's County as a novice. He came to teaching with no experience in general music. As a beginning supervisor Allison realized his background included only junior high school teaching. His consuming preoccupation with the voice provided common ground upon which he and high school choral directors stood. Allison's personality, musicality, love for people, and interest in the voice carried him through each assignment.

Allison's career with Prince George's helped shape practice and policy in several ways. First, as a classroom teacher he built an outstanding choral group, an example for others. He taught his students how to sing and how to improve their singing. Students under his direction were given opportunity to learn leadership skills such as directing the group, choreographing songs and dances, or helping with the running of the chorus. When reviewing the maturity of his work at Bladensburg, one wonders that he accomplished such musical activities with junior high students. Second, as supervisor, he used his developing knowledge of the voice to inform music teachers and their students. Third, Allison guided the music teachers in his area in matters of protocol: how to do

inventory, how to fill out county forms, and how to program concerts. Fourth, Allison was an innovator in areas of curriculum. He brought the use of guitars, accordions, and pianos into the general music classroom; and he used music of the day—popular music—to motivate his general music students and choirs. Present day music students in Prince George’s County continue to study piano and guitar in general music classes.

Allison honed that skill of leading others through promoting what he called “Participatory Management,” encouraging those in the groups under his domain to make their own decisions rather than his dictating policy. He thought of himself as a facilitator, enabling others to make positive choices about vocal production or curriculum selection, all the time providing a “safety net” in the event of crash landings. Allison’s greatest contribution to those around him remains the giving of himself to those in his musical and personal spheres. In the words of co-teacher Wirth, “He was generous with his teaching tips, he lived what he believed, that talents are meant to be used and shared.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Wirth, e-mail 19 April.



Figure 11. Allison with his wife in their home, December, 2002. Photo from collection of Nancy Allison.

## CHAPTER VI

## DOROTHY PICKARD: STRING EDUCATOR/ORCHESTRA BUILDER

## POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MILIEU: PICKARD'S TERRAIN

Beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency in 1933, the number of government jobs in Washington increased dramatically. As the number of jobs doubled in the decade between 1930 and 1940, the number of Prince George's County residents increased by 50%, from 60,000 to 90,000. Roosevelt's New Deal spawned the development of the town of Greenbelt, a planned community. Greenbelt began in the 1930s as a project of Eleanor Roosevelt. This experimental city was one of three Greenbelts. Others were in Ohio and Wisconsin. Many government employees and their families moved into Greenbelt. The sense of community matured from a project to a caring, liberal-minded neighborhood with a town center including a theater, shopping, medical offices, and schools.<sup>1</sup> When the new Greenbelt high school, named for Eleanor Roosevelt, opened in 1976, Pickard became its first teacher of strings and orchestra director.

New Carrollton, located only five miles from Greenbelt along Kenilworth Avenue, incorporated in 1953. Named after Charles Carroll, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, this planned residential community housed Robert Frost, New Carrollton, and Lamont Elementary Schools, Charles Carroll Junior High School, and nearby Parkdale Senior High School. The first wave of families buying homes in New Carrollton were primarily white and middle-

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<sup>1</sup> Virta, *Pictorial History*, 212, 214.

class. After busing began in 1973, New Carrollton experienced an abrupt change in ethnic population. Whites left New Carrollton and blacks moved in to occupy their vacated homes. Pickard began her teaching career in the schools of New Carrollton. The once-successful Parkdale High School by 1980 was competing with newcomer Eleanor Roosevelt High School for talented county students.

Eleanor Roosevelt High School opened in Greenbelt in 1976 at the outset of Feeney's administration. At that time high school-aged students were decreasing in number. To justify the opening of a new high school, the board of Education proposed creating a specialized school with emphasis on science and math. The school was to target two different student populations. One-third of the students, known as "technology students," gained admittance through an entrance exam and accumulated grade point average. The remaining two-thirds of the students, known as "comprehensive students," were drawn from the Greenbelt area and later other areas within County specified boundaries. Roosevelt became Prince George's County's first magnet school.

The science and math students at Roosevelt also longed for artistic experiences: music, drama, and art. The school quickly developed into a center for academic and artistic advancement as the arts programs thrived alongside the rigorous science and math programs. County parents sought ways to enroll their children at Roosevelt without moving into the Greenbelt community. A popular county policy permitted students to transfer from one school to another seeking enrollment in specific disciplines not offered at the student's area school.

Orchestra, Russian, German, Italian, and Japanese were popular transfer subjects for students wanting to continue a string instrument or learn a foreign language other than French, Spanish, or Latin. It was in this high school that Dorothy Pickard made her primary contribution to string education.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dorothy Jane Selden was born in the small town of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin on October 14, 1921,<sup>2</sup> the only child of Stanley and Maria Selden. Her father worked as an industrial engineer designing machinery and plants for paper and pulp mills. Pickard aligned herself with the determined, dignified spirit of this man as she recounted some of the many childhood stories he liked to tell about her. With these stories Pickard caught a glimpse of herself seen through her father's eyes. In this first vignette her stubborn, yet determined nature—one of the strengths of her success as a teacher—comes forth, as a three-year-old Pickard and her mother walk along the Wisconsin River toward a rendezvous with her father:

When my father came along, he got out of the car and picked me up to put me in the car. Enjoying the walk along the river I did not want to get into the car. I squirmed out of my coat, ran off, and left him holding the coat by the sleeves. Of course he was embarrassed that I had refused his gesture to pick me up. When we got home, I got a spanking. Dad said this was the only time he ever spanked me.<sup>3</sup>

Several years later the family moved to Tacoma, Washington, where Pickard's father opened his own office and continued his practice as industrial engineer. Both parents loved and appreciated music. As in many small towns in

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<sup>2</sup> Pickard and her father shared the same birth date.

<sup>3</sup> Dorothy Pickard, personal communication, Telephone conversation, 14 March 2004.

the United States, Tacoma sponsored a community concert series. For the ten years between 1930 and 1940 Pickard, with her parents, heard many great performers on the community concert series circuit. She speaks of her home musical environment:

When we moved from Wisconsin to Washington my parents did not take the upright piano they owned. In Washington they purchased a small grand piano. Neither of my parents studied music or played the piano although my father owned a violin, a German one slightly red in color. From time to time he would try to play this violin. Both my parents enjoyed music. I started piano lessons at the age of eight. The teacher came to my home.<sup>4</sup>

Although Pickard's parents were not musicians, possibly they fed their own musical inclinations by enabling their daughter's musical study.

These musical experiences soon became the focus of life for Pickard. She remembered a day when she was in 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade. That day the music teacher had introduced the instrumental music program to Tacoma elementary students. Pickard rushed home for lunch—her father was at work—to ask her mother's permission to take the violin to school. Pickard, excited about the possibility of learning to play her father's violin with lessons at school, told her mother, "Don't tell Dad, Mom." She wanted to surprise him by learning some songs on the slightly red violin. Supposedly mother did not tell. By Christmas of that year Pickard was playing tunes on the violin. Her father, who never had the advantage of lessons, was surprised at the progress of his young daughter. This

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

prompted the first telling of his favorite “Dorothy” story, years after the event took place:

This is the story my father told his friends about me. His story, “When I was a baby, they brought me home from the hospital. Dad tried to play the violin. I screamed to high heaven. He put the violin away and said, ‘I guess there’s not going to be any music in this house.’” I heard him tell this story often.<sup>5</sup>

Pickard showed him otherwise as she became more involved with music.

Pickard speaks highly of her public school music education opportunities. One person who guided her into music was junior high, public school music teacher, Hilda Meisner. Piano teacher Leonard Jacobsen provided piano instruction and later a connection with music study at the College of Puget Sound just three blocks from home. Pickard developed into an excellent musician. By 9<sup>th</sup> grade she was herself teaching private piano lessons. Her school orchestra at Stadium High in Tacoma, Washington was “good sized” and “played well.” Musical high points in high school included travel to orchestra festivals in Oregon and being selected for All-State Orchestra.<sup>6</sup>

Pickard enjoyed her high school not just for the musical exposures she received but also for daily visual delights of the Pacific Ocean below. The high school, perched on a rock above Puget Sound, looked like a castle. Although originally designed as a fancy hotel, the building was converted into a high school after the hotel owners went bankrupt. Pickard speaks of orchestra

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

rehearsals on the third floor of this castle and opportunities for young eyes to stray from the director to scenes in the water below.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 12. Dorothy Jane Selden, during her high school years. Photo from collection of Dorothy Pickard.

Pickard remained in Washington for the first two years of her undergraduate work, receiving a scholarship to study music education at the College of Puget Sound. There she first met her husband-to-be, Hugh Pickard, a chemistry teacher. On the advice of piano teacher Jacobsen (Jacobsen himself had graduated from Northwestern), Pickard transferred to Northwestern University in Chicago, completing her degree in 1944. During the 1944-45 year Pickard began a graduate program in music history. September 4, 1945 she and Hugh married. The very next day the couple traveled from Washington State to

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Washington, D.C., where Hugh began his teaching career at the University of Maryland in College Park as a professor of physical chemistry.<sup>8</sup>

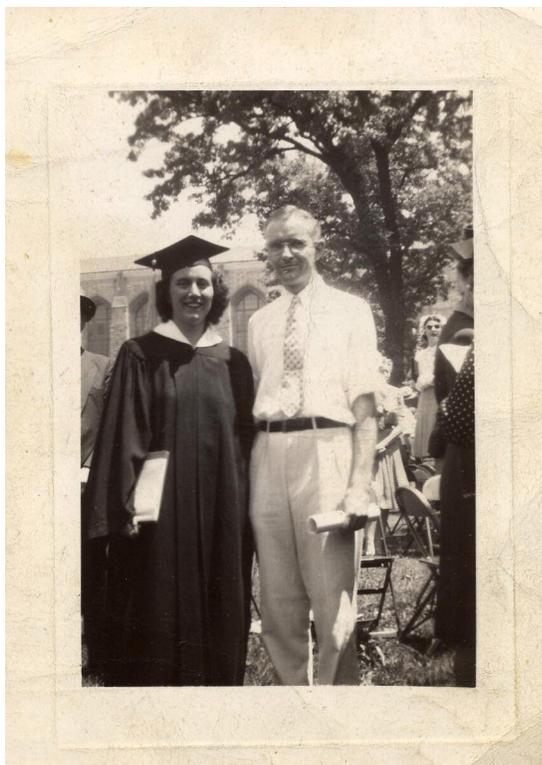


Figure 13. Pickard and her husband-to-be on her graduation day from Northwestern University. Photo from collection of Dorothy Pickard.

As a newcomer to the Washington, D.C. area, Pickard enrolled in graduate studies at the University of Maryland and searched *The Washington Post* for announcements of performance opportunities. Pickard recalls that transition from the West coast to the East coast:

I became active in SAI [Sigma Alpha Iota, a women's musical fraternity] and performing. I performed with Bebe [violinist and husband of Pickard's first public school principal]. We did a lot of chamber music playing together. I performed in the Washington Civic Orchestra. I remember that when we first moved I continuously looked in *The Washington Post* for announcements of community orchestras. I saw an ad

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid; Dorothy Pickard, personal communication, telephone conversation, 27 June 2004.

for the Washington Civic Orchestra conducted by Hendrick Essers. We met at a high school in the District.<sup>9</sup>

By 1950, after receiving her graduate degree, Pickard made time in her life for a family. Two daughters were born in 1950 and 1952, respectively. Not until 1967, at the age of 46, did Pickard begin her teaching career with Prince George's County Public Schools. In the 25 years she spent teaching music in the County, Pickard taught string students and built two internationally recognized high school orchestras. She built these orchestras from the ground up, string by string. Shortly before her retirement, Pickard was inducted into the Maryland Music Educators Hall of Fame for her work with string education in Maryland. She retired in 1992 at the age of 71.<sup>10</sup>

#### DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

##### *Recruiting Students, Nurturing the orchestra program*

Pickard and her husband joined the Riverdale Presbyterian Church situated near the University of Maryland. Church members included—among others—Maryland faculty member Dr. Bruce Wilson, and the Jenkins family—Robert, Rebecca, Davin, and John. Rebecca (“Bebe”) Jenkins, a violinist, performed frequently with Pickard. Both the Jenkins and the Pickards provided musical training for their children.

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<sup>9</sup> Pickard, conversation 27 June.

<sup>10</sup> Dorothy Pickard, interview by author, tape recording, 11 August 2001, Chestertown, Maryland, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.



Figure 14. Pickard playing the violin in her apartment in Maryland, about 1945. Photo from collection of Dorothy Pickard.

The church became an outlet for those wanting to share musical talents. In this way Pickard's talents as a teacher and player became known to Robert Jenkins, husband of Rebecca and principal of Charles Carroll Junior High in Prince George's County. Principal Jenkins speaks of his experience with junior high school instrumental music:

I remember having an orchestra director at John Hanson. Perhaps her name was C. Cheo. She and George Dietz [band director] provided the school with wonderful music. When I moved to [Charles] Carroll I was anxious to continue the experience.<sup>11</sup>

Pickard entered the ranks of Prince George's County music teaching through Jenkins' invitation to teach at Charles Carroll Junior High. In this first job Pickard practiced personal skills that were to assist future assignments, such as willingness to compromise with other teachers in the building, and accepting

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Jenkins, personal communication, e-mail correspondence, 3 April 2002.

unusual locations as rehearsal spaces. In retrospect, Jenkins remembers her ability to get along with the band director:

The selection of Dorothy [Pickard] was pure luck. We knew her well and I am sure Bebe and I talked about her in discussing who would be willing to work beside the band director, be able to persuade him to share "his" musicians and space, and also be willing to work with our feeder elementary schools in developing string players. It was a challenge no sensible person would accept.<sup>12</sup>

But, she did accept the job offer. Pickard quickly learned to work within the system, take what was given to her, and develop students into string players.

Jenkins recalls these positive aspects of Pickard's teaching talents:

Dorothy became the hardest working, smoother of [the two] strong personalities, and working all over our various schools in corners and closets to bring forth some real joy for all of us.<sup>13</sup>

From 1967 through 1974 Pickard fostered string development at Charles Carroll Junior High, and Lamont, New Carrollton, and Robert Frost elementary schools. In 1971, to maintain continuity of instruction, she followed her junior high students to high school while continuing to teach in the elementary and junior high schools. According to Pickard, Jenkins enabled this transition by donating Charles Carroll "teacher-time" to Parkdale High School when the high school principal was unwilling to release "teacher-time" to start an orchestra.

Pickard tells of this time:

When the kids I had got up to 9<sup>th</sup> grade they said, "What are we going to play in next year?" So, Bob [Jenkins] and I went over to see Dr. Sager [at Parkdale High School]. He... had studied music. He was a singer. I don't think anybody knew that. He wanted to do it. But he said, "I'm already full up with 'teacher-time'." That's when I first ran into this teacher -time

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

business...The teacher-time is based on your students in the school. He said, "I don't have any time now." So Bob spoke up and he said, "Well, I keep her on my list for next year."<sup>14</sup>

In just three years Pickard formed a 60-piece orchestra at Parkdale High School. Although not the only county orchestra, she was able to attract positive attention from her principal, Allen Sager, who originally was not able to provide staffing time for her. Following a successful band and orchestra trip to Bermuda, Sager states in a letter to school superintendent Dr. Edward Feeney:

A few days ago I received a letter from Mr. Ming [the Bermudan official who coordinated the concerts and adjudication sites of the musical festival at Bermuda] complimenting our musical organization and the conduct of our students. It was evident that we represented the Prince George's County school system as well as Parkdale in a most favorable light, and we are proud of our accomplishments in the field of music...

We wanted to share this good news with you. We hope to maintain the high quality music program in the future.<sup>15</sup>

It is obvious that the Bermudan official wanted the Parkdale musical groups to return another year. It also appears that principal Sager felt extremely proud of the musical groups in his school and wanted to share this achievement with Superintendent Feeney.

One of Pickard's teaching goals was to provide a full orchestra experience for her students. In a 1975 letter to supervisor Mary Haywood, Pickard proposed designating specific high schools and junior high schools for orchestra enrollment because the County school string population did not permit the

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<sup>14</sup> Pickard, interview. Jenkins remembers things differently. Quoting from email of Jenkins, 20 April, 2002, "I wish I could remember that...I don't remember that there was any difficulty about whose payroll she was on. The junior high allotment was more flexible than high school one in terms of which classes one could teach.

<sup>15</sup> G. Allen Sager, Letter to Superintendent Feeney, personnel communication, 15 July 1976. This letter was written three years before Feeney had to deal with the first round of budget cuts.

formation of an orchestra at every high school or junior high school. Although Pickard's proposal was not officially accepted, Pickard herself made this happen through her work in the Parkdale cluster and then the Roosevelt cluster of schools.<sup>16</sup>

By 1976 Pickard, after being hired by Principal Ray Ogden, was building a new orchestra, that of Eleanor Roosevelt High School. From 1976 through 1987, she merged the orchestras of Parkdale and Roosevelt, first waiting for the Roosevelt orchestra to mature, then, through merging the two orchestras. Rehearsals at first were held in the library at Parkdale. As the string population from Parkdale dwindled, rehearsals moved to Roosevelt. The orchestra at Roosevelt was to be her finest achievement as orchestra director.

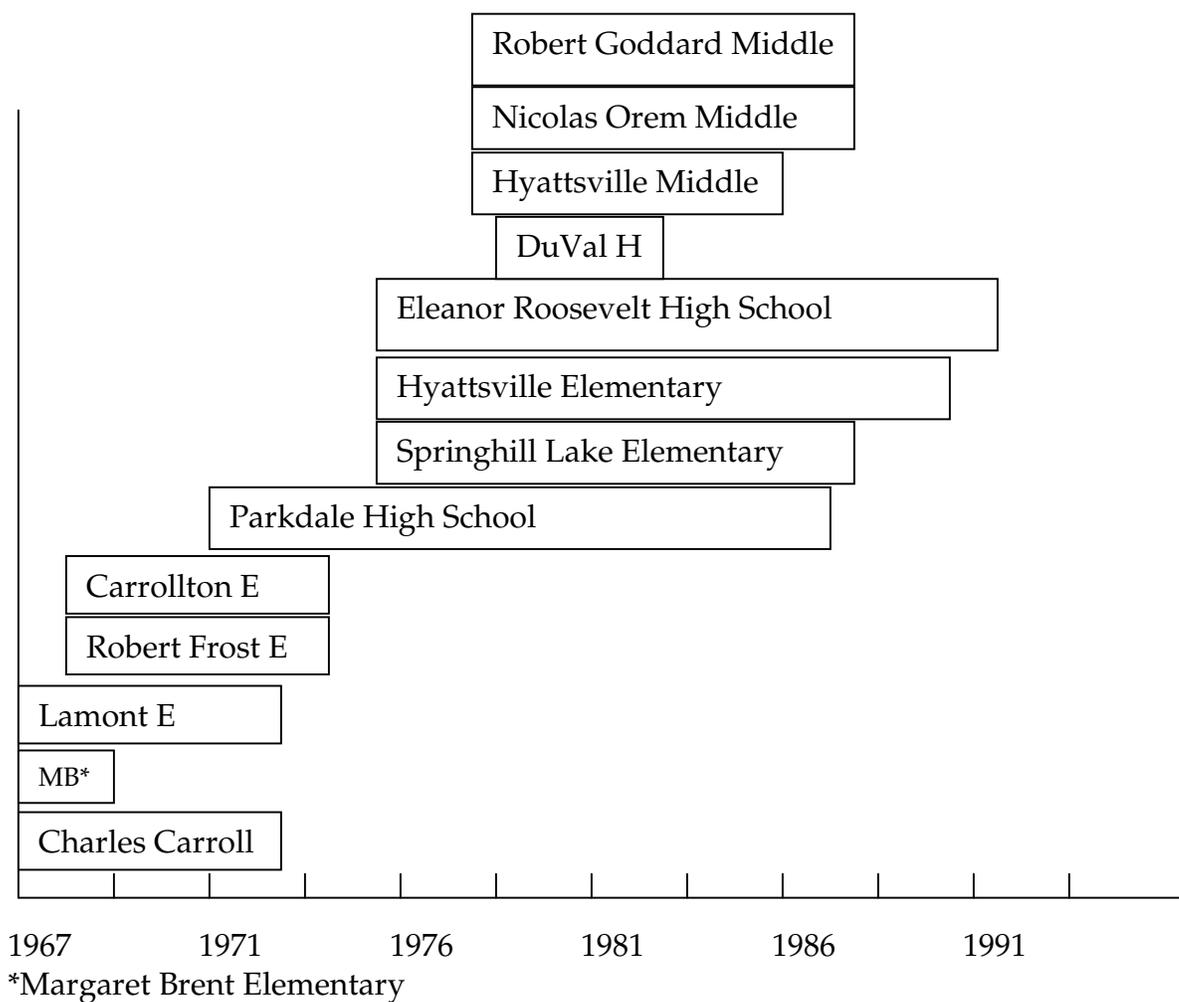
While building and directing the orchestras at Parkdale High and Eleanor Roosevelt High Schools, Pickard continued to teach at other schools. She was, in effect, her own feeder system as she taught students at elementary and junior high schools who later moved up to play in her high school orchestras. All in all, during her twenty-five year career, Pickard taught in thirteen different buildings. As her schedule varied so, sometime from year-to-year, deciphering and documenting her itinerary is difficult. The approximate timeline of her teaching history with Prince George's is below.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Dorothy Pickard, *The String Program*, letter, 29 November 1975.

<sup>17</sup> These dates were gleaned from Pickard's personal records of employment with Prince George's County.

Table 2: Pickard's Teaching Timeline by School



#### PICKARD'S TEACHING STYLE

Several components characterize Pickard's teaching style. Each will be discussed and illustrated with statements from students, teachers, or administrators. The components include Pickard's ability to simply get on with the process of education, her ability to mold each student, and her successful teaching strategies.

*Getting on with it*

When Pickard began in 1967 at Charles Carroll Junior High, she also taught elementary string students at three nearby schools. Students from New Carrollton, Lamont, and Robert Frost Elementary Schools fed into Charles Carroll. She visited the elementary schools on a bi-weekly basis, pulling students from their regular instruction for string lessons. Charles Carroll students saw Pickard daily. She started to teach in Parkdale High School after her 9<sup>th</sup> graders at Charles Carroll asked her, “What are we going to play in next year?” and Principal Jenkins arranged for her to teach part-time at Parkdale. This arrangement worked well until the 1973 desegregation busing shifted students from one location to another. Pickard remembers how a string population of 45 at Charles Carroll became a population of 20 overnight with the start of forced busing on February 1, 1973:

The thing I remember about it in particular [desegregation], at that point I had 45 string players at Charles Carroll. Well, see I recruited in those 4 elementaries all that time. And I’m pretty sure it was 45, I remember the number. But, when they desegregated they took 25 of those kids and sent ‘em to places where they didn’t have any instruments.

At any rate, so then, in return I got one little black girl who said she could [play]. For the 24 that were taken away I got one back...<sup>18</sup>

Pickard seemed to have a sixth sense about where to locate string players.

As one situation “dried up” she moved on to another. By the time she “quit going” to Charles Carroll and Parkdale, Pickard was engrossed with the

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<sup>18</sup> Pickard, interview 11 August 2001. Pickard’s numbers do not add correctly. The point is that she remembers losing many students that she had trained and received only one student in the exchange.

orchestras at Roosevelt and the feeder systems at Hyattsville, Nicholas Orem, and Robert Goddard. In some ways Pickard dictated her own schedule. She explains:

The kids from Charles Carroll dried up. The kids from Greenbelt [Springhill Lake] dried up. There were just a few kids left at Parkdale. And I said, you know this is ridiculous. I finally quit going there. Until I did, I'd have the kids from Parkdale come over [to Roosevelt] for several rehearsals.<sup>19</sup>

Testimony from Bob Holloway, county string specialist and teacher from 1965 to 1990, helps to put Pickard's career in perspective as his career ran parallel to hers. Holloway started teaching strings with Prince George's County in 1965, two years before Pickard. He taught teachers string methods for a portion of the day as "String Specialist" from 1965 through 1969. For the remainder of the day he was assigned to several schools to work directly with elementary and junior high school students. During the 1980s Supervisor Don Smith assigned Holloway to work primarily with middle school string students. Two times during his career with Prince George's County Holloway conducted his own high school orchestras at High Point (where he first came in contact with Don Smith), and at Bowie. Holloway explains some of the history of the string program in Prince George's County:

We didn't have a whole lot of guidance in our programs. So, we went out to these schools and we fixed it up the best that we could, you know. The three of us did different things, but that was sort of an unusual thing for a while. Then there was a problem that if you taught in an elementary school and you taught in a middle school, you had a real conflict going there.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

They had the middle schools on the A day/B day; then next week B/A and so forth. Then when you try to schedule your elementary kids, they would always...you know, you tell them to come on Tuesday and Friday or whatever. In elementary school you didn't have this reversing every other week. So that was a problem for us, a real problem.<sup>20</sup>

Both Pickard and Holloway seemed to create their own job definitions.

Both were considered "experts" on string music. A memorandum from Don Smith of October 13, 1976 (Smith's first year as supervisor) instructed instrumental music teachers to have string materials for String Solo and Ensemble Festival or the Northern and Southern area Youth Orchestras approved by Pickard or Holloway. Between 1976 and 1980 Smith created a task force to increase string instruction in the county. He sent a survey to all instrumental teachers on the number of string students enrolled and pleaded for more "teacher time" for string teachers or band teachers teaching strings. Through the survey Smith learned that many string players did not continue instruction after elementary school. Smith was not entirely successful in persuading the county to increase "teacher time" for strings. He did create the Northern and Southern Area Youth Orchestras to provide an outlet for those string players wanting an orchestral experience. Pickard was instrumental in the formation of the Northern Area Youth Orchestra and she directed it for a number of years.<sup>21</sup>

Pickard seemed focused on working with string students. Either she managed to fall into positions with string students or she developed her own

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<sup>20</sup> Holloway, interview.

<sup>21</sup> Donald K. Smith, Availability of String Materials for Festival Use, Memorandum, 13 October 1976.

players. After Pickard learned from a newspaper article that a new high school was opening in Greenbelt, she became interested in starting an orchestra at the school in advance of its opening. She knew that Greenbelt housed many professional families interested in the arts. The children of these families frequently played musical instruments and were given access to private lessons. Many of these students attended Parkdale before the 1976 opening of Eleanor Roosevelt. Thus, Pickard anticipated that Parkdale would be losing strings and Roosevelt gaining strings. Little did she know that Roosevelt would become a Mecca for county string players.

The students attending Roosevelt would be those currently attending Greenbelt Junior High and Charles Carroll Junior High, two of her feeder schools. Pickard, in her direct style, wrote a letter to new school principal, Ray Ogden. She explained that she wanted to start an orchestra at Roosevelt with the incoming students whom she had trained. Ogden replied to the request, "If you can find enough students you can start an orchestra." After Pickard located "about 9 string players" intending to matriculate at Roosevelt, Ogden permitted her to begin this next chapter of her teaching career.<sup>22</sup>

Because of the success at Roosevelt, Pickard's teaching day became more predictable. Until 1989 she continued to visit feeder elementary and middle schools. Pickard became full-time at Eleanor Roosevelt at the end of her career. Before securing a dedicated rehearsal classroom, Pickard rehearsed on the

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<sup>22</sup> Dorothy Pickard, interview by author, field notes, 3 May 2002; Dorothy Pickard, personal communication, Letter to Ray Ogden, 21 June 1976, Xerox in possession of author.

Roosevelt auditorium stage. Frequently the stage was needed for other events such as visiting productions, testing, or school photos. Patient to a point, Pickard exploded one day after being ousted for a school function for the fifth time in five days. Co-worker Sally Wagner clearly remembers Pickard's personality change over the issue of auditorium scheduling:

Now she used to rehearse in the auditorium and little-by-little that space started being used by other people. Other groups were scheduled in there during the day, which displaced her. And there really wasn't anywhere else for her to go. And that finally--Oh, my goodness, I don't ever remember seeing her that worked up about anything. It got to the point where at least one day a week she was moved out of her place. So she went on the warpath.<sup>23</sup>

Pickard and other members of the Music Department took the request for classroom space to Principal Ray Ogden. Ogden granted the request by allowing the orchestra to use a large classroom space that backed up to the band rehearsal room. The displaced English teacher moved to another location in the building. Although Pickard was content to teach small numbers of students in "corners and closets," her hackles bristled when deprived of a workspace. Only when denied a workspace did Pickard react as a mother bear in defending her cubs. Principal Jenkins noticed early in her career that Pickard's main goal was to work with students regardless of the setting. Pickard's attitude of simply getting on with it and not waste time—after all, she started teaching at the age of 46—helped her maximize her effectiveness. She wasn't concerned with having the

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<sup>23</sup> Sally Wagner, interview by author, tape recording, 16 April 2002, Greenbelt, Maryland, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

largest classroom or a room with a view. She simply wanted to teach string technique to students in any suitable location.



Figure 15. Eleanor Roosevelt Symphony Orchestra, 1985. Pickard stands at the right. Photo courtesy the Eleanor Roosevelt High School Year Book.

### *Ability to mold each student*

As Pickard began her first assignment at Charles Carroll Junior High, Principal Jenkins made an “all-call” to the entire school for any string player to report to the office. Twelve guitar players responded. Pickard simply transformed some of the guitar players into violin, viola, cello, and bass players and recruited other students to form a functioning group. Jenkins remembered that, “She started with some of them and trained what she needed” to form an orchestra.<sup>24</sup>

Pickard continuously searched for bass students to replace graduating players. She devoted a successful technique for developing bass players when she needed them. She simply recruited electric bass or guitar players to play in

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<sup>24</sup> Jenkins, e-mail.

her orchestras. As these students already knew the tuning and other aspects of bass playing, Pickard was able to arrange lessons with an upright bass teacher. Usually this occurred at the end of the school year giving the student a whole summer to make the conversion from playing by ear and reading guitar/bass tablature to reading notes on the staff and playing classical bass parts. Through this method she obtained some of her most musical and devoted bass players. Andrew Brown and Ted Whitten are two examples. Both students joined the orchestra toward the end of their time at Roosevelt. Each performed with the orchestra on out-of-the-country trips.

Band director Sally Wagner and orchestra director Pickard shared an office and students for eleven years at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. The second year Wagner taught at Roosevelt, 1982, Pickard's orchestra responded to an invitation to compete in an international competition in Vienna, Austria. At this stage in her career Wagner was taking notes on how other directors made sense of their jobs. As she walked behind the kids "sitting at the back of the section" Wagner noticed that their music was different from the music of the first chair players. Pickard knew some of her students were more advanced than others. She was interested in providing a satisfying orchestral experience for each student. She also wanted a full sounding group with as many players as possible. She rearranged the difficult parts for some of her players into an easier version, one with uncomplicated rhythms and runs. Wagner observed:

One way Dorothy was able to incorporate string players of lesser abilities was by writing a simplified part of them. Thus some of the players in the

back of the section might be playing whole notes or half notes while the 1st and 2nds would be playing eighth notes or sixteenth notes.<sup>25</sup>

From time to time Pickard provided mentoring to a student in need.

African American student Cornell Wells arrived in the mid 1980s. Pickard met him as she coached at Robert Goddard Middle School:

He sort of attached himself to me. He would call me up in the evenings and talk with me for an hour or more. He'd come in after school or before school and talk for an hour. I used to talk, more or less, listen. What I said, I don't remember. But it seemed to help him. He was a pretty mixed up kid.<sup>26</sup>

Pickard remembers Wells as intelligent and somewhat gifted as a player and a learner:

I can remember his sitting there in class. He sat there and figured out how to do vibrato all by himself. He eventually did take lessons, but that was later.<sup>27</sup>

Wells seemed quite the outcast to those in his family. Pickard recounts:

One of his teachers at Goddard told me that his parents, or his grandmother, couldn't understand why he wanted to practice on the cello rather than play out on the street with the kids.<sup>28</sup>

In subtle ways she provided an under girding to Wells' aspirations as a cellist.

Pickard recalls the pinnacle of Wells' cello performance while a student at

Roosevelt:

He played in the D.C. Youth Orchestra. He gave a recital, a solo recital, at the Kennedy Center. I met his grandmother there. They had refreshments afterward. It was in one of the rooms upstairs.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Wagner, interview 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Pickard, telephone conversation 27 June.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Wells, underprivileged, unsure of himself, and possibly depressed, sat in the same cello section as his idol, white, sure-of-himself, and privileged. Wells' idol, the privileged son of a Maryland University Department of Music Professor, attended Roosevelt rather than a private school to play in Pickard's orchestra. Pickard had an ability to manage the diverse personalities of the players under her baton.

*Successful teaching strategies*

Pickard found a way of relating to each student in the orchestra, of persuading each of them to perform at a high level, "I tried to make the kids do more than they thought they could." She expected each player to perform at a personal best and that expectation became reality when on stage her baton would raise and the performance began. Students wanted to play the music she selected. They wanted to hear themselves and their orchestral colleagues playing this "exciting" music the way it sounded on the recordings of the New York Philharmonic or some other major orchestra. The players wanted to perform as a seasoned ensemble. Among them they found ways of improving ensemble and intonation problems. They watched for her every cue and listened to her words each time she stopped for corrections.<sup>30</sup>

Successful tuning was the prelude to this main goal as an orchestra teacher. Tuning required an inordinate amount of time and patience on the part

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<sup>30</sup> Pickard, interview 3 May 2002.

of the students and teacher. The procedure began the daily rehearsal or lesson.

She convinced her orchestras to play musically:

My main thrust was to play musically. I tried to get them to play in tune, to play music instead of notes. We tuned. Used a Korg. With a young group I went around to each person. Tested individually if necessary. I worked on interpretation.<sup>31</sup>

To this end she focused on problems that could be corrected. By using advanced players to coach less advanced players, she was able to make efficient use of the time she had with the students.

Pickard maintained a positive attitude that assisted her interactions with students and faculty. She seldom spoke unkind words about anyone. With this positive attitude many doors were opened to her because principals and students wanted to work with her. Pickard recalls no problems with any of her 13 principals, "From the time I started in '67 all the principals I worked with were easy to work with."<sup>32</sup> Pickard never raised her voice to students. Wagner commented on the soft-spoken, undemonstrative nature of Pickard's teaching. She simply told them what to do, and they did what she said. In Wagner's words:

She was very [pause] um, "sotto voce." She would, it was a very understated style. She would stop the group and she would say, "You need to do this here. And you need to do that there." Then she would start again. It was very matter of fact and just very plainly stated as though she expected the very first time that's what you'd do. After she said what she wanted, then you'd do it, by golly.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Wagner, interview 2002.

To encourage the development of musicality Pickard promoted quartet playing among her string students. Several quartets rehearsed regularly with music selected by Pickard (in some cases she provided music from her personal library). The Roosevelt music office phone rang frequently with requests for a quartet as background music for Board of Education functions, to accompany wedding processions, or background for county political functions. In this way both Pickard and Roosevelt music came to the attention of county school superintendents and politicians.

Pickard did not use the method employed by many music teachers of demonstrating on her instrument how to play a passage. Rather, she would physically move the student's hand, arm, or finger to obtain the desired results. Wagner observed Pickard teaching students frequently during the time they taught together:

Oh, she'd just get right down there and put their fingers right on the string and show'em where to do it. She never demonstrated that I saw. I don't remember her ever having her instrument. Like, Scott and Lisa [Roosevelt string teachers following Pickard] always have their instrument handy. It's right there under their desk. She didn't have her instrument in hand ever. But she got right there and put their fingers on it and she'd wobble [imitating vibrato on a stringed instrument] their arms and she'd lift it up.<sup>34</sup>

Pickard seemed to relate directly to each of her students. She showed concern for each and constantly worked to improve the playing level of each student. Former student and now professional violinist, Laura Millman Knutson, succinctly summarizes Pickard's strengths as a teacher:

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

Playing under Dorothy was an extremely valuable experience primarily because she treats everyone with dignity and respect—rare among musical directors. Good decisions seemed to be effortless for her. She never created complications, unlike most musicians I have met since. These qualities are always the basis for successful musical education and collaboration. Roosevelt HS has always had a unique pool of talent and wonderful personalities among the student population, but Dorothy had the musical expertise and a kind of quiet, driving energy to create successful experiences.<sup>35</sup>

#### ORCHESTRA TRIPS

Participating in an international festival boosts the visibility of a group in the eyes of its members, members' parents, school personnel, and the community. Preparing for these events provides a tangible performance goal. Evaluations from festival performance present feedback and instruction for the group and the director. Pickard used these trips as a recruiting and training device both at the Parkdale cluster and the Roosevelt cluster.

Pickard and her orchestras participated in a number of international festivals, most in conjunction with the school band director and the director's bandmen. The orchestra shared wind players with the band. Pickard cooperated with two band directors at Parkdale in trips to Bermuda. In 1974 Pickard and Bruce Nales accompanied groups to the "Third Spring Music Festival" in Bermuda. Pickard and new band director Edward Kerman led Parkdale groups in Bermuda in 1975.<sup>36</sup>

For the purpose of trips in 1978 and 1980, Pickard combined string players from Parkdale, Duval, and Eleanor Roosevelt High Schools and wind players

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<sup>35</sup> Laura Knutson, personal communication, e-mail correspondence, 22 April 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Sager, letter.

from Eleanor Roosevelt to form a symphony orchestra. She also prepared the Roosevelt orchestra for a 1987 trip to the Bahamas. Unfortunately her husband, Hugh, fell ill at the time of the trip. Band director and colleague Wagner, with four days notice, led the group in her place. Hugh died later that year.<sup>37</sup>

In 1982 Pickard traveled to Austria to compete in the 11<sup>th</sup> International Youth and Music Festival. Wagner speaks of the preparation for this trip:

The year they went to Vienna, there were so many kids sitting at the back of the violin section who really couldn't play the music; couldn't do it at all. But they would contribute at some level, and they would kind of be swallowed by the whole and the kids who could play. And because there was only one orchestra—and it included everybody from here, and everybody from Parkdale, and everybody from Duval—that's how it was set up when I first came here. And they were all in there and no matter what their level, and some of them were really...early intermediate players. I can remember a couple of them in particular.<sup>38</sup>

Wagner observed the group from the vantage point of the percussion section.

Pickard, needing to augment the percussion section for Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*, had several of the "back of the section" violinists play triangle. As these were the students for whom Pickard simplified parts, reading complicated rhythms challenged their abilities. Wagner explains how she assisted Pickard at this time:

So I was helping her rehearse the percussion on the overture to *Candide*, and we pulled out some of the second violins to play triangle and what not, and they really couldn't read the rhythms. And part of that is, at the time, most of the string literature only required them to do even eighth notes or sixteenth even notes. It was constant; and rests really threw them off. But part of it was, "I've never seen music this hard," you know. And, "I can't play this." The fact that it was a solo instrument, there was

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<sup>37</sup> Dorothy Pickard, résumé, 2001; Sally Wagner, personal communication, e-mail correspondence, 17 March 2004.

<sup>38</sup> Wagner, interview 2002.

something that said, "I don't want to do this. I want to go back and play violin."<sup>39</sup>

That the violin students did master the solo triangle parts and remain with the transfer to percussion, illustrates one of Pickard's strengths as a teacher. As to the violinists in the back of the section, Wagner observed:

And the amazing thing was that she got them all wrapped up into the music to the point that nobody noticed that there were some people sitting in the back of the section who were just kind of ghosting along and just playing what they could play.<sup>40</sup>

Pickard was truly interested in the musical development of all of her students. Her accommodating nature included traveling many times during her teaching day to reach her students, sometimes transporting students from one school to another for rehearsals, teaching lessons in "corners and closets," and arranging orchestral parts for less advanced students.

#### FUNDING AND SUPPORTING THE PROGRAM

An orchestra program requires money for school instruments, basses, cellos, violas, and some violins. Most serious instrumentalists buy their own instruments. Usually the school provides basses even if the student has an instrument at home because the size of the instrument discourages daily transportation to and from school. Because cellos are quite expensive, many high school cellists depend on the school for an instrument. Prince George's County provided Pickard with these large instruments when she started orchestras at Parkdale and Eleanor Roosevelt.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

The on-going costs of an orchestra program include a yearly allotment for the purchase of music, rental of music (some scores and parts are not available for purchase and must be rented), repair of school-owned instruments, replacement of worn music stands, and the purchase of other equipment such as tuners. In the 1990s additional funds were devoted to computer hardware and software. New instruments are needed to replace worn and damaged school instruments. Funds are needed for travel to festivals.

Music teachers become adept at fund-raising because funds from the yearly school allotments seldom provide enough to maintain a vigorous music program. Both at Parkdale High School and Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Pickard was an important member of a dynamic, full-service music program. Full-service music programs provide students a wide opportunity of music electives including band, chorus, orchestra, guitar, piano, theory, and sometimes a music history or music survey course. Maintaining such programs requires money beyond the county allotment. The music department frequently undertook many fund raising activities.

At Parkdale, Pickard and her orchestra members sold citrus fruit to fund travel to out-of-country festivals. Fruit sales became a part of the Eleanor Roosevelt orchestra program when Pickard moved there in 1976. Both at Parkdale and Roosevelt many parents helped with fund raising for the band and orchestra.

In a 1982 *Roosevelt Yearbook* article, a discussion of funding the Vienna trip lies below a double page spread of the orchestra on stage. The total cost for 80 students and parent chaperones came to \$104,000 or \$1,300 per person to cover airfare, food, and travel for 13 days and 12 nights in Europe. In some cases parents paid for their children. Most students took advantage of the fund raising program offered by Pickard and the parent group. The *Yearbook* article details fund raising and a quote from Pickard:

Some of the ways students raised money were by selling submarine sandwiches, washing cars, holding flea markets, and selling citrus. They also asked for donations.

"This isn't a bad price when you consider travel costs," Mrs. Pickard said. "We're going to be touring southern Germany and Austria, and we'll be in Vienna for seven days."<sup>41</sup>

#### *The Band and Orchestra Parents' Association*

The mechanics of running a large music program are staggering. Necessities of the program include instruments, uniforms, and music. The director must provide storage for the instruments, the uniforms, and the music. At concerts or on trips students need chaperones. If the director is on stage with one group, the remaining groups need supervision. The director's time at school is divided among teaching classes, directing rehearsals, working with small groups of students in sectionals, or making arrangements concerning the program. This leaves precious little time to manage other necessities of the group. Parent Booster Clubs are used to assist the director with the day-to-day

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<sup>41</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt High School Students, "Orchestras," in *Valkyrie, The Eleanor Roosevelt High School Yearbook*, vol. VI (Greenbelt, MD: 1982).

running of the organization. An active parent booster club will have officers, raise funds for equipment, distribute uniforms, and chaperone students. Fundraising is among the most important functions of these booster clubs. It should be noted that the need for parent booster organization differs among band, orchestra, and chorus. Choral directors may decide to have each student pay for his or her uniform. Because a primary function of the parent booster group is to raise funds, choral groups may not need the support of a parent group all year.

Parents of Greenbelt string players became quite fond of Pickard. She remembered one family, "I had all three kids. The parents were either government employees or worked at NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration]. The school is adjacent to NASA."<sup>42</sup> Parents influence course selections of students. The orchestra elective program remained popular with parents and students wanting upper level course selections. For this reason Pickard's groups continuously attracted students strong in academics and trained in music.

In 1981 Wagner joined the Eleanor Roosevelt faculty as band director. She and Pickard jointly shared the parent organization. Most years there were three parent meetings a year—October, January, and May. At the May meetings elections were held for president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. This group performed many functions for the band and orchestra. Wagner summarizes the parent committees and their functions:

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<sup>42</sup> Pickard, telephone conversation 14 March.

Parents organized and ran concessions at concerts (Hospitality Committee), raised money (Fruit Committee), assisted with alumni band/orchestra (alumni dinner committee), helped with awards (Awards committee), circulated info to area newspapers/newsletters (Publicity Committee), ushered (Ushering Committee) and recorded the concerts (Audio Committee). They also sat in the homerooms during Festival as required by Festival procedures.<sup>43</sup>

Pickard felt that, "We were fortunate. They thought we did a good enough job and they wanted to help." The Band and Orchestra Parents' Association at Roosevelt became a model for parent involvement at Roosevelt, as the school reached out to parents and community under Principal Boarman's administration.<sup>44</sup> "I had a lot of support from the parents," Pickard said. "When I got the Vienna invitation in 1981, I didn't tell the kids. I called the parents and had a meeting with them first."<sup>45</sup>



Figure 16. Pickard rehearsing the orchestra in preparation for Vienna. Photo by Lon Slepicka from *The Prince George's Journal*, Oct. 14, 1981, A3.

<sup>43</sup> Wagner, 17 March E-mail.

<sup>44</sup> Boarman, interview 2001.

<sup>45</sup> Pickard, telephone conversation 14 March.

Pickard knew the parents to be one of her best assets. In many ways the parents took over the organization and management of the trips. Pickard remembers their generosity during the Vienna trip:

When I went to Vienna they were a big help. I never had to ask for volunteers. People just stepped right up. They were happy with what we did. They were always willing to help.<sup>46</sup>

At this point, it must be emphasized that Pickard's attitude, ever positive, carried her forward in this quest to teach strings and develop orchestras. Of the parent group, she said:

They thought we did a good enough job and they wanted to help. When we called a meeting, they showed up. They were always willing to help. They chaperoned and helped with fundraisers such as dinners and fruit sales. These parents promoted you for awards.<sup>47</sup>

Pickard won many awards and citations. Parents, students, other teachers, and administrators nominated her for awards wrote letters in support of her nomination. An article in *The Washington Post*, July 20, 1982, sings the praises of Pickard and her students:

Yesterday afternoon they [the students] gave credit for the entire trip to orchestra director Dorothy Pickard. "She's a fantastic lady," said Martha Gates of Lanham, whose son Eric plays trombone.

"And she refused to let them pay her way over [to Vienna]," added Andy B. Gravatt, of Riverdale, the father of another trombone player, who carried a big "Welcome Home" sign for Andy Jr.

"With teachers like this and students like this, the future is secure," said Gravatt, a former Army trombone player.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Leon Wynter, "Youthful Musicians Savor European Triumph: High School Orchestra Scores at Vienna Fete," *The Washington Post*, 20 July 1982, Metro, C1.

These parents provided more than assistance with funding. During the budget crises of 1982 and 1991, the band and orchestra parents were among the vocal supporters of the Prince George's County music program. These parents wrote letters to members of the Board of Education, collected signatures on petitions, organized groups of individuals to lobby at the state house and county executive offices, and drove performing groups to Board of Education meetings. These parents were among the music education advocates who rescued elementary music education in 1982. The success of Pickard's teaching was one reason for this outpouring of support.

#### ADAPTING TO A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT AND POPULATION

Pickard showed a willingness to do whatever she could to develop an orchestra: teach part time, drive around the county, or find instruments for students. From the moment she first taught junior high school students in a hot, stuffy sewing room at Charles Carroll, to the awards she received for outstanding service to string education, Pickard pursued the same goal—creating and nurturing orchestras. She found in her adaptation to the changing environment and population in Prince George's County, however, that she needed to change to meet this goal of creating and nurturing orchestras. Pickard changed when she sought a position at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. This change came three years after the start of forced-busing and desegregation. Roosevelt attracted students interested in science and technology, a focused group of students. These students also excelled in music, drama, and creative

aspects of life. They enjoyed the orchestral experience and being in the company of others of similar interests.

Pickard changed again in 1989 when she formed a select orchestra from among her pool of players. Of these select students Pickard said, "These kids could read anything."<sup>49</sup> For these students no simplified parts were necessary. This chamber orchestra became an elite group, perpetuating the mystique of musical excellence at Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

The program grew with over 100 string students enrolled. Pickard, feeling the need to engage players at all levels, created four orchestras from among the students. Unfortunately, Pickard no longer prepared incoming students. In 1989 when she taught at Roosevelt only, her system of feeding the orchestral ranks with younger players whom she trained, gradually ceased. Pickard adapted one more time. She retired in 1992.

The orchestras Pickard built were so important to Eleanor Roosevelt High School that the principal, Jerry Boarman, and the music faculty undertook a national search for Pickard's replacement. Candidates from all over the United States came to Eleanor Roosevelt to meet with the music faculty and principal and audition with the orchestra. Finally Scott Laird from Pennsylvania was selected to become the orchestra's second conductor.

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<sup>49</sup> Pickard, telephone conversation 3 May 2002.

## MEMORIES OF PAST PERFORMANCES

Making music with students consumed Pickard's life. Some of the peak experiences of the moments with her orchestra sustained her after retirement. After retirement, when tired or depressed, Pickard frequently listened to the recording from the Vienna concert in 1982. She remembered the Vienna experience vividly as she told me:

In Munich we played on a make shift stage. It was evening, outside, dark. We couldn't see. We got to play the Dvorak. Those darn kids played that from memory. One student gave me a little penlight flashlight [to use as a baton]. The next Christmas when the kids who had graduated returned from college, three of the trombone players played the *New World* from the balcony of Roosevelt. My main thrust was to get them to play musically.<sup>50</sup>

As she and I listened to this recording, crescendos and special musical effects were noticeable. At the approach to a section with a difficult horn solo Pickard remembered the concert at Roosevelt just before they left for Vienna:

At the going away concert in Greenbelt, the horn player missed the top note. She cried at the concert. At the performance in Vienna when we got to this part you could see the other kids tensing. As soon as she got through it, you could see them relax.<sup>51</sup>

As a caring person, Pickard encouraged her players to support one another. By the time her Vienna orchestra had practiced every day after school in preparation for the event, they bonded to one another. In this nurturing atmosphere, the students performed as well as they could. Concertmistress Laura Millman Knutson, in her journal of July 15, 1982, spoke of the excitement of their Vienna

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

performance, a peak experience that may have whetted Knutson's appetite for the music profession:

This morning we played in the winner's concert and discovered we won 2<sup>nd</sup> prize!! I was so happy because we played better than ever before. We got another standing ovation. The orchestra was so excited, clapping and shouting all the time. I think the trophy looks neat. It reminds me of a big flashlight.<sup>52</sup>

Many times Pickard prepared groups for festival performance. Pickard sent me a card after one of my visits with her as she had remembered an important experience with her students at festival:

After you left I thought of something I always used to do when we went to festival. I suppose you could call it "an encouragement." Just before we left the warm-up room, I used to say, "Are we going to do it?" Their reaction was always a loud, "Yes!" Sounds silly, doesn't it?<sup>53</sup>

When asked to give a two-sentence summary of Dorothy Pickard's greatness as a teacher, Wagner thought for a second, then said:

The stick is mightier than the word. She was very soft spoken and even the conducting technique—the kids used to laugh 'cause she wobbled. And, and, but somehow they played for her. They didn't, they didn't hold anything back for her. And they wanted to do well for her. I think that was part of the, they just loved her, and they wanted to do the best for her, no matter what.<sup>54</sup>

Pickard's single minded, determined preoccupation with orchestra building and musical excellence and the many quality performances she directed at Roosevelt and Parkdale live in the memories of those who worked with her—her students, colleagues, parents, and administrators.

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<sup>52</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt High School Students, "Standing Ovations," in *Valkyrie, The Eleanor Roosevelt High School Yearbook*, vol. VII (Greenbelt, MD: 1983), 17. Knutson continued with music after high school.

<sup>53</sup> Dorothy Pickard, personal communication, letter to author, 16 August 2001.

<sup>54</sup> Wagner, interview 2002.

### ALIGNING MUSIC PROGRAM WITH SCHOOL NEEDS

The strings program directed by Pickard served her students and their schools in numerous ways, some subtle and others obvious. The arts provide a means to express emotions. Pickard insisted that her students perform quality music. As she pushed students to their limits, encouraging them to do more than they thought they could, Pickard helped students develop a thought process of the highest order. Through this the students learned to think logically and emotionally and make decisions. Thus, the strings program supported school the general goals of education within the school of encouraging success for all.

The orchestras, and quartets formed of orchestra members, entertained students and parents with concerts, performances before school in the lobby, and out-of-school functions. Pickard organized the Concerto Concert. This concert developed out of a local piano teacher competition in which piano students prepared a concerto movement and performed the movement in competition. The winner then performed with Roosevelt's chamber orchestra. At some point Pickard decided that the talent existed at Roosevelt to create a whole evening of students concerto performances. The Concerto Concert, held in December, became a favorite of students, private teachers, parents, and the Roosevelt faculty.

The Music Department provided a home away from home. In many ways the Music Department acted as a family. Students and teachers shared joys and pain, became confidants, and helped one another deal with life crises. Teachers

parented students in need of counsel. This small community or family existed within a huge building at Roosevelt as daily some 3,000 students attended classes, moving from one location to another in a sea of teenage bodies. Such numbers encourage a depersonalization among students resulting in depression and even suicidal thoughts in some instances. Pickard provided frequent counsel to her students sheltering many from miserable home lives.

The school administration at Roosevelt realized that the mental health of students was important. Care was taken in scheduling to avoid conflicts among courses so that students could fulfill core subject requirements and still take part in the elective program. Partly for these reasons Pickard was able to develop a progressive system of placement for her players. After year-end auditions, players were scheduled according to ability. This system of ranking motivated students to move up to a higher level by practicing, taking lessons, and actively participating in the program. The groups thus maintained a high performance level from year-to-year.

#### ALIGNING MUSIC PROGRAM WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS

Pickard's orchestras and ensembles performed numerous community service functions in the area surrounding Eleanor Roosevelt High School. Venues for the symphony orchestra included Greenbelt Labor Day Festival (1981), Hyattsville Methodist Church concert series (1986), and Riverdale Presbyterian Church concert series (1990). Pickard trained several string quartets. Frequently a call would come to the Music Department requesting a string quartet to perform

for a reception at the county courthouse or for the school board. Weddings, receptions, and luncheons were a specialty for this group. Quartet members maintained portfolios of music suitable for any occasion.

Although these outings fell under the guise of community service, in fact, they provided performance opportunities for young musicians. At Christmas, Pickard and her musicians graced area shopping malls with seasonal music. In 1990, two years before retirement, Pickard and her select group, the Chamber Orchestra, performed for residents of the Great Oaks Center for Handicapped and Mentally Retarded.

*Recognition for outstanding service and excellence in teaching*

Listed below is a chronology of the awards and citations Pickard received for her work with students.

Table 3: Awards and Citations

Year	Award/Citation	Awarding organization
1978	Award of Excellence, Symphony Orchestra	Bermuda Festival of Music and Youth
1980	Outstanding Music Teacher of the Year	MMEA
1980	Award of Excellence, Symphony Orchestra	Bermuda Festival of Music and Youth
1982	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize, Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Austria	11 <sup>th</sup> International Youth and Music Festival
1982	Citation honoring Roosevelt Symphony Orchestra	City of Greenbelt
1983	Outstanding Service to Strings	American String Teacher's Association
1983	Conductor, Maryland All-State Junior/Middle Orchestra	MMEA
1983	Roosevelt Symphony Orchestra Performs for annual meeting	MMEA

1984	Roosevelt Symphony Orchestra Performs for annual meeting	MENC
1985	Conductor, All-County Junior/Middle Orchestra	Baltimore County Music Educators
1988	Conductor, All-County Junior/Middle Orchestra	Anne Arundel County Music Educators
1989	Citation for Orchestral Work	Prince George's Philharmonic
1990	Inducted into Hall of Fame	MMEA
1990	Outstanding Teacher	Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce
1991	Member Exemplary Music Department, State of Maryland	MMEA

Frequently parents of Pickard's students initiated these honors, and some came from her peer group. As she stewarded group after group to international competition, she developed a reputation for outstanding work with string players.

An invitation to conduct all-state groups is one type of honor awarded to directors. Although an honor, it is also a service to the music community. Pickard conducted all-state groups three times. The year following her return from Vienna, 1983, Pickard conducted the Maryland All-State Junior/Middle Orchestra. Two years later, 1985, she was invited to conduct the Baltimore County All-State Junior/Middle Orchestra. In 1988 Anne Arundel County invited Pickard to conduct its All-County Junior/Middle Orchestra.

A second type of professional award is the invitation for one's group to perform at a state level or national level meeting. Pickard's orchestra received invitation to perform at both state and national music education conferences. In 1983 the Roosevelt orchestra and Pickard were invited to perform at Maryland

Music Educators Association annual meeting. The following year Pickard's orchestra was invited to perform in Chicago for the Music Educators National Conference.<sup>55</sup>

In 1980, after the successful trips to Bermuda of 1978 and 1980, Pickard received "Outstanding Music Teacher of the Year" from Maryland Music Educators Association (MMEA). Pickard was to receive two more outstanding awards from the MMEA. In 1990 parents, teachers, administrators, and associates nominated Pickard for the MMEA "Hall of Fame," a lifetime achievement award. She received the award and was inducted into the "Hall of Fame." In 1991, the Eleanor Roosevelt Music Department was successfully nominated for "Exemplary Music Department, State of Maryland." Pickard, along with Roosevelt colleagues, was one of the five honorees named on this award.

Two other awards complete this impressive list of accomplishments for an unassuming lady who began her teaching career at the age of 46. In 1983, Pickard received recognition from the American String Teachers Association, a national teacher's organization, for "Outstanding Service to Strings." The Prince George's Philharmonic, a local orchestra, issued a "Citation" for orchestral work in 1989 because Pickard constantly provided high caliber string players to fill out the group's ranks. Pickard did not begin her career as an award-winning teacher. Over the years she learned how to produce quality orchestra performances from the students under her baton. Some of those students were of the highest caliber

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<sup>55</sup> Pickard, résumé.

players; others needed her encouragement, wisdom, and teaching skills to blossom as players. Together they made music.<sup>56</sup>

#### SUMMARY

String education in Prince George's County has known no equal to Dorothy Pickard who began a remarkable teaching career when recruited to teach at John Carroll Junior High in 1967. She built two internationally acclaimed orchestras, trained numerous string players, and provided a rich aesthetic experience for those associated with her programs in Prince George's County. Her legacy left an impact on the Parkdale and Roosevelt clusters of schools, their students, and administrators. Providing her own feeder system, she moved from school to school where she found young people who were interested in learning to play, taught them what she knew, and insured their presence at rehearsals. Because she impressed favorably those in her school musical community based on her dedication and success, she was recognized, both locally and nationally.

Although no one can reproduce her teaching strategies, one can learn from observing her practice. In working with students she insisted they play musically—in tune, play phrases (musical thoughts) rather than just notes, and play with a passion. She exhibited an indefinable ability to elicit high quality performance from students. Her passion, direct manner, honesty, and warmth won over students who worked with her, including those of privilege and those working to overcome adversity. Her teaching was inspirational to parents who

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

demonstrated in favor of music education in 1982 (just prior to the Vienna trip) and 1991.

The words of former student Laura Millman eloquently speak of the woman and capture the essence of Dorothy Pickard, string educator:

She never fostered an unhealthy sense of competition, but encouraged everyone to work their hardest. She seemed to work from the bottom up. As long as they were motivated, she always seemed to concentrate on improving the skills of the students that were having the most difficulty. She encouraged more advanced students to coach others, and was efficient in her use of time so that she could address the most important problems that might arise.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Knutson, e-mail.

## CHAPTER VII

## FINALE

## SUMMARY

In 1954, the *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision ended the era of “separate-but-equal” schooling in the United States. However, it was not until December 29, 1972, that a countywide system of busing of students was ordered in Prince George’s County to enforce racial balance. Between 1950 and 1992, Prince George’s County changed from a rural, farm-based economy to an urban, business-based economy. Busing was thought by many to have precipitated “white flight” of Prince George’s residents to surrounding jurisdictions. Remaining county residents voted to limit taxes for county services, creating a financial burden for the schools, the police, and the county government. Subsequently, the white-to-black ratio in the county was reversed with the county and school populations becoming majority African American. Through efforts of teachers, concerned residents, and the school board, the music elective program in Prince George’s County Public Schools remained alive despite severe cuts to the education budget. Such was not the case nationwide as music programs were either eliminated or curtailed in the public schools of Seattle and Chicago, among others.

This dissertation documented the professional lives of three prominent music educators in Prince George’s County, Maryland—LeRoy Battle, Maurice

Allison, and Dorothy Pickard—whose careers from 1950 to 1992 spanned the period of desegregation and its aftermath.

Prince George's County maintained a dual black/white school system from 1864 until the 1973 court-enacted busing plan. LeRoy Battle, an African American, began his music-teaching career in 1950 at Douglass High School (one of two Prince George's County's black high schools) prior to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. He was able to build an award-winning band program for his students with substantially fewer resources than those allotted to the county's white schools during the time period 1950-1968. Throughout his years of teaching, he set goals for himself, his students, and his bands. He worked toward these goals: providing every student the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, developing a performing group, performing in the Christmas Concert, competing successfully with the white bands in the Memorial Day Parade, helping parade organizers remove bigotry from public events, and working to uphold the dignity of his race. In 1968 Battle left the music classroom to become a guidance counselor and later a vice principal. He retired in 1978.

Maurice Allison taught general music and chorus at Bladensburg Junior High School from 1956 to 1970. Allison engaged his general music students with meaningful activities, including the building of a harpsichord, learning the music and customs of other cultures, and studying functions of the human voice. His choral group was frequently invited to perform at prestigious functions, such as a fundraiser for Congressman (later Prince George's County Executive) Larry

Hogan and an anniversary of the Pan American Union in Washington, D.C. Through an invitation of the Cheverly Rotarians, Allison formed the Vast Majority, an auditioned choral group from selected Prince George's County teen singers. They performed at more than 82 community-service functions between the group's formation in 1967 and its cessation in 1972. In 1970 Allison left the classroom to become a music supervisor. His supervisory experiences add a different dimension to his life story. They show how supervisors were able to negotiate funds and other services for their teachers. As supervisor, Allison supported teachers needing help with keeping a yearly inventory, teaching suggestions, acquiring materials, or planning concert programs. Allison recognized the emotional needs of junior high school students. He included music of the times, popular music, in his teaching lessons with junior high schools students. As a supervisor, he updated the curriculum for junior high school music students with the introduction of individualized units on guitar, piano, and accordion. Allison retired in 1980.

String programs were rare in the county schools when Dorothy Pickard began teaching strings in 1967. Pickard built orchestral programs in two county high schools while also preparing elementary and junior high school students to move up to her high school groups. In working with students she insisted they play musically—playing in tune, playing phrases (musical thoughts) rather than just notes, and playing with passion. She exhibited an ability to elicit high quality performance from students. Her passion, direct manner, honesty, and warmth

won over students who worked with her, including those of privilege and those working to overcome adversity. Court-ordered busing and severe budget deficits were challenges facing the school system during Pickard's tenure. How she adapted to those constraints, managed budget concerns, and still produced quality orchestral groups are topics addressed in this dissertation. She retired in 1992.

The philosophies of teaching and teaching strategies used by Battle, Allison, and Pickard in building music programs of distinction were examined using methods of oral history. The interviews of twenty-three other Prince George's County professionals including a county executive, a superintendent, county teachers, and county administrators combine with testimony from the three primary educators in creating the fabric of this historical study. Each oral history interview was tape recorded and transcribed to supply data for analysis. Narrator testimony was used to acquire eyewitness account for county education and music education activities, and to build the life stories of LeRoy Battle, Maurice Allison, and Dorothy Pickard. Relying on the voices of those who took part in the events between 1950 and 1992, this oral history interprets change in the evolution of music education in Prince George's County.

#### THEMES

The research questions presented in Chapter I were: How did three prominent music educators construct their professional lives during the time they worked in Prince George's County, Maryland, beginning with Battle's

hiring in 1950 and ending with Pickard's retirement in 1992? How did each teacher respond to and impact the social and political milieu in which they worked? How did the music elective program survive in Prince George's County? Related to these main questions are issues such as how the educators funded their programs, reacted to the political and economic demands of a changing society, and aligned their programs with school and community needs. Answers to these questions provide a description of teacher classroom practice, county educational policies, and the influence of attitudes of county residents on education.

This chapter uncovers and interprets themes of the study. They fall into two categories: the professional lives of Battle, Allison, and Pickard, and educational developments in Prince George's County during the same period.

#### THEMES RELATED TO THE PROFESSIONAL LIVES OF BATTLE, ALLISON, AND PICKARD

Themes related to the professional lives of Battle, Allison, and Pickard include different backgrounds, early musical influences, teacher qualities, professional achievements, and living through times of change. In studying the professional lives of Battle, Allison, and Pickard, I found a limited number of differences and a significant number of similarities. Contrasts consist of family background, gender, size, and race. Similarities include aspects of their lives as musicians, as teachers, and as program builders. Professional achievements involve the setting of educational goals, use of feeder systems, relationships to supporting organizations, and community engagement. A further similarity

among the educators' professional lives takes into account their fortuitous placement in time and their reactions to change. The three educators exhibited a passion for music and teaching, a fortuitous placement in time (being in the "right place at the right time"), strong leadership abilities, strong personal characteristics, and a desire to build community through music.

#### *Different backgrounds*

Battle, Allison, and Pickard hailed from different locales in the United States. Battle was raised in Harlem. He came to Prince George's County with experience in negotiating person-to-person interactions from his early years of navigating teenaged life on the streets of New York City. He used the lessons learned from those experiences to persuade students to join his budding band program. Allison was born and raised in the South, in a family with pride but little material wealth. More important to Allison than wealth was the love he felt coming from his parents to him. Pickard lived her early life in the Upper West. The daughter of a professional man, Pickard had many advantages growing up in Tacoma, Washington. As a youth her parents provided music lessons for her and took her to concerts of classical music. The three educators came from different corners of the country, and later settled in Prince George's County to teach music because Prince George's County provided opportunity for them as teachers.

Obvious contrasts among the educators include race, gender, size, and social status. Battle used his race as an emblem of honor, holding his head high

as he led the Douglass Eagle Band. Pickard, small in stature, sooner or later gained the respect of all she encountered as director of the Eleanor Roosevelt High School Chamber Orchestra and during the time she taught at both Parkdale and Roosevelt, as director of "Pickard's Festival Orchestra."<sup>1</sup> Allison, a tall white man from humble origins, carried himself with dignity as he endlessly investigated and taught the workings of the human voice.

They each brought all their talents, upbringing, and backgrounds to the occupation of teaching music. Their commonality was this lifelong exposure and dedication to music and teaching music in Prince George's County.

#### *Early musical influences*

Allison and Battle involved themselves with music making from an early age. It is as though they knew nothing else. They lived with musically nurturing, supportive parents; and they each profited from participation in public school music programs. As they matured, they acquired a lifelong association with music.

Battle was enthralled with marching bands in parades on the streets of New York before he went to junior high school. As a youth Allison spent Saturday mornings singing in a youth choir at his church. Pickard began piano lessons when she was just eight years old. Influential music educators guided Battle, Allison, and Pickard during their formative years. For Battle that person was his junior high music teacher Mrs. Carey, strutting about on stage with

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<sup>1</sup> County festival program listed her combined orchestra as "Pickard's Festival Orchestra."

blond hair and bright red lipstick as she coaxed adolescent males to sing light opera. Supervisor Rubin Martinson, in selecting Allison to sing in the “Youth in Theology” choir, may have planted the desire in Allison to later lead choruses and work with music educators. Pickard recalls her junior high orchestra teacher, Hilda Meisner, as that person who “guided her into music.” The educators in turn followed their dreams to major in music education, a prerequisite for public school teaching.

### *Teacher qualities*

Battle, Allison, and Pickard each possessed the basic skills and drive to corral students into performing groups, and then lead the groups in exciting musical performances and competitions. Students wanted to follow their direction, wanted to spend time with them, and respected them. Rose Weems, with eyes aglow, speaks of such an experience from her high school days with Battle:

So, I can remember going over to Morgan [Battle had graduated from Morgan.] playing in the somethin’. This great, big gym [Rose makes a large gesture with her arms and hands. Her voice emphasizes Great and Big] and our little band started playin’ and the place started jumpin’.<sup>2</sup>

Bert Wirth writes of Allison and his students:

His witty classroom teaching and his concern for the kids made him not only a teacher, but a mentor, a psychologist, a dad to one, Nancy Zimmerman Painter<sup>3</sup> (Bud also introduced her to her husband, Dan Painter), and a director for whom the students loved to perform. He also gave student directors a chance to perform. Genny Batka was the accompanist for the Vast Majority on most of their gigs. They sang for the various service clubs, Rotary, Kiwanis, school programs and at the

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<sup>2</sup> Weems, interview.

<sup>3</sup> Allison and his wife adopted this young woman.

University of Maryland for Choral Day when the different groups were rated. His choir was always tops.<sup>4</sup>

The exuberance over performing flows from a journal entry of student Laura Millman after the Roosevelt Orchestra with Pickard as director won 2<sup>nd</sup> prize at the International Festival in Vienna:

Thursday, July 15, Vienna: This morning we played in the winner's concert and discovered we won 2<sup>nd</sup> prize!! I was so happy because we played better than ever before. We got another standing ovation. The orchestra was so excited, clapping and shouting all the time. I think the trophy looks neat. It reminds me of a big flashlight.<sup>5</sup>

The students of Battle, Allison, and Pickard were special in their own right. Pickard frequently credited her success to the students with whom she worked. Co-worker Sally Wagner stated, "She was convinced that it was the kids. She was convinced that they were just great kids."<sup>6</sup> They seemed thirsty for music making such as in this example from Pickard:

I started the Elementary Youth Orchestra for children in the New Carrollton area, but it grew to include others from afar as parents heard about it. Tom Jackson helped me as he was teaching winds in New Carrollton at the time.<sup>7</sup>

Allison, in creating the Vast Majority, reached out to students beyond his school teaching environment. Some of these students continued learning with Allison in his basement studio. He spoke of "Bird Woman," "Butterfly," Michael, and John Day who came to him for vocal training:

I have students who come every week; I have students who come every two weeks; I have students who come when they're in town, I guess about

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<sup>4</sup> Wirth, e-mail.

<sup>5</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt High School Students, "Standing Ovations," 17.

<sup>6</sup> Wagner, interview 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Pickard, résumé.

30. Bird Woman and Butterfly are “World Class.” John Day is “World Class.” He didn’t sing for 13 years because he didn’t have his upper voice. He used what he called a “Voix mist.” It was a falsetto. So anytime he had to have a high Bb or C he would just fixate everything and wham, hit the chords quickly, to blast away. He went to New York. Got an accent, was really trying hard for an opera career. They kept telling him, your upper voice is just too muscular. None of them told him how to get rid of that. He just works and works and works. He’s driven to sing. For thirteen years he didn’t even sing in the church choir. Now he’s mid 40s. He’s beginning to extend his influence around and be heard. Getting operatic roles and living—living.

Michael here, he’s doing Tosca with Fort Worth Opera. Right now he’s singing there again. He’s going to be doing...Hoffman. He’s done about 20 or more operas—New York City, leading tenor. This is the guy [pointing to a different photo on the wall]; this is the guy who has a great job with computers. Not me. Then I have the two—Birdwoman and Butterfly. We call her Butterfly because she said, “I’ve been coming down here 10 years and I felt like I was an ugly old caterpillar,” she said. “Lately I’ve been flying like a butterfly.” She just has a glorious voice.<sup>8</sup>

Each of these people had a passion for life, for music, and for people.

None seemed constrained by the circumstances of their teaching assignments as they went to work each day to be with students and to make music. Battle taught in the “Annex” at Douglass High School, a small, tin-roofed building behind the school. Allison taught his entire career at Bladensburg Junior High in a trailer behind the school. Pickard for most of her career had no permanent classroom of her own. None of these teachers allowed the circumstances of their teaching environments to interfere with the main activity—delivering music instruction to students.

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<sup>8</sup> Allison, interview 2 March 2001. Michael Hays left Prince George’s County where he worked as a computer technician to sing with the Metropolitan Opera.

*Professional achievements*

## Setting Educational goals

Setting and achieving manageable goals was a prominent feature of the professional lives of Battle, Allison, and Pickard. As beginning teachers they each established goals for teaching musical skills, building performing groups and leading the players time after time in crowd-pleasing performances. Through the accomplishment of a step-by-step system of goals, Battle, Allison, and Pickard successively elevated their groups' performance level. As their groups matured so did the educators' enterprise in scheduling more complex activities and goals for the students. Through success in reaching their goals, the teachers acquired savvy in persuading their students to accept leadership. In other words, the students accepted their teacher's goals and made them their own.

Within two years of starting to teach at Douglass, Battle had formed a swing band of saxophones, trumpets, and percussion. After his 1952 showdown with Principal Frisby, Battle realized his second goal, teaching band during daily in-school rehearsals. He attained his third goal with the establishment of a feeder system of elementary and junior high students for the concert and marching bands. Battle succeeded in achieving his self-established goals as the award-winning Eagle Marching Band led off area parades previously led by bands of all-white students.

Allison did not meet his early career goal of teaching in "junior high school for five years" and then moving up to a high school position. However,

within five years of his hiring, his junior high school choirs sang high-school-level music. His groups presented outstanding musical productions, built a harpsichord, and increased significantly in number and size. In 1970, Allison achieved a career goal when becoming Northern Area Supervisor of Vocal/General Music. Then Allison began his life's goal of understanding and explaining the human singing voice. He continued to share his learning with students, music teachers, and those coming to him for private voice study. Allison spent the rest of his years preoccupied with the workings of the human singing voice.

In building orchestras, Pickard insisted, "My main thrust was to play musically. I tried to make the kids do more than they thought they could do."<sup>9</sup> Through preparing her groups for orchestra festivals and performances, Pickard encouraged musical excellence from each student. Techniques used to insure success for all included simplifying second violin parts for some students, using more advanced players to personally train less advanced students, carefully selecting appropriate orchestra literature, and courting talented players for her performing groups. Pickard used orchestra trips as both a recruitment incentive and as a means of promoting higher levels of technique and musicianship in her students. Her specific goal of forming a high school orchestra was met within four years of her being hired.

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<sup>9</sup> Pickard, telephone conversation 3 May 2002.

### Use of feeder systems

As musicians and musical groups require a special nurturing and training, the successful performances at Douglass High, Bladensburg Junior, Parkdale High, and Roosevelt High were supported by feeder systems developed by Battle, Pickard, and Allison. The feeder systems provided trained musicians and singers for the more advanced Douglass Eagle Band, the Bladensburg Junior High Choral Group, the Vast Majority, the Parkdale Orchestra, and Eleanor Roosevelt High School Orchestras. Because these teachers remained in the same school setting year after year, they learned to shape their feeder systems and maintain the appropriate instrumentation or voicing for their particular groups.

Battle's feeder system began in 1952 with interested students whose parents were willing to pay for instrument rental and lessons from Navy Band professionals. By 1953 he was teaching the lessons at no charge to the students. Because of the segregated school system in Prince George's County, all the black students in Upper Marlboro and surrounding neighborhoods attended Douglass Elementary or Douglass Senior High (Senior included grades 7 through 12). Students elected to continue once involved in the music program with its promise of exciting band trips, after-school rehearsals, and music making. Battle learned to maintain appropriate instrumentation by allowing students to start on the instrument of their choice. During the second year of study, the more adept students were sometimes rerouted to instruments such as French horn or bassoon needed to balance the group.

The general music classes at Bladensburg were Allison's feeder programs for his after-school 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade combined chorus. Together with co-teachers, Ginny Batka and Bert Wirth, students were trained to sing during general music class. The three teachers then auditioned students for the after-school group, selecting only those students who were able to sing independently.

Pickard's teaching began with the creation of a junior high group that soon became part of her feeder system. At this junior high, Charles Carroll, she formed an orchestra. Elementary students from Margaret Brent and Lamont graduated to the orchestra at Charles Carroll. Carrollton Elementary and Robert Frost Elementary were added to Pickard's schedule in her second year of teaching. With three elementary school assignments (Pickard taught at Margaret Brent only two years), she produced a number of players—enough to encourage her dream of creating a high school orchestra. Initially, at Charles Carroll, Pickard learned to retrain guitar or piano players to play strings, a technique she later used at Roosevelt when she would need string bass players or viola players.

#### Relationships with supporting organizations

Battle said of his Band Boosters, "They were wonderful. I mean, I stood on their shoulders." This group, formed during the first year he taught at Douglass, even transported Battle home from after-school rehearsals until he could afford to buy a car for himself. Pickard remembers how important the Band and Orchestra Parents were to her program:

They thought we did a good enough job and they wanted to help. When we called a meeting, they showed up. They were always willing to help.

They chaperoned and helped with fundraisers such as dinners and fruit sales. These parents promoted you for awards.

Allison did not form a parent group to assist him with his choir program at Bladensburg Junior High. The students provided the choir uniforms themselves and assisted with the day-to-day running of the chorus. Supporting Allison at the evening concerts were co-teachers and accompanists, Wirth and Batka, and Carroll Dickenson, a core teacher, who from 1965 to 1968, helped chaperone students. With the formation of The Vast Majority, parents assisted Allison with transportation of students to and from concerts and rehearsals.

The band, choir, and orchestra programs went beyond the school day into the lives of students, their families, and music teachers. Parents enjoyed the social and aesthetic aspects of their children's music making. Parents of student musicians came to know Battle, Allison, and Pickard through these activities.

#### Community engagement

Battle, Allison, and Pickard gave generously of themselves and their groups to the community. Starting in the 1950s through the 1960s, Battle and the Eagle Band became a rallying point for the black community in Upper Marlboro. The band was requested to take part in the opening of Marlton, a new community in the Upper Marlboro area. The Bladensburg Junior High Choral frequently supplied musical entertainment for community functions such as a 1970 tribute honoring Congressman Larry Hogan. Allison and the Vast Majority performed bi-monthly service calls at Walter Reed Hospital, Malcolm Grow USAF Hospital, the Rotary Club, and elsewhere in the Washington area. Before

community service was a state educational requirement, Allison and these students realized the concept. Pickard and her orchestras maintained a legendary spot in the Greenbelt community performing at Labor Day celebrations, area churches, and local shopping malls at Christmas. These communities surrounding the schools—Upper Marlboro, Bladensburg, and Greenbelt—reached out to the schools, requesting performing youth groups to provide entertainment for community functions. In turn, Battle, Allison, and Pickard brought their performers out of the schools into the community.

*Living through times of change*

Fortuitous placement in time

In part, position in time and place was the key to success. Battle arrived in Upper Marlboro to teach in a segregated school system. His personality and ability to interact with persons of all races won him prestige in the black community and respect in the white community. He rose to the top of his field as the leader of a well disciplined, award winning-marching band. His work with the students broke racial barriers in Prince George's County. Because he was a champion for Civil Rights, the Prince George's County social studies department used his life story for 6<sup>th</sup> grade study in its schools in 2002.<sup>10</sup>

Allison came to Prince George's County during at a time when music education was developing in the county. As he said, "The county was so young

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<sup>10</sup> See Prince George's County Public Schools, "Student Booklet."

back then...just a little country school system.”<sup>11</sup> Allison had the freedom to develop creative activities and programs. His work in the classroom, in curriculum writing, and later as supervisor, enriched the junior and senior high general and vocal music programs. Units on the study of foreign lands, such as Africa and Spain, introduced a multicultural element well before the popularity of multicultural education. Together with Lin McIlvaine (McIlvaine served as music supervisor in the Southern Area and helped supervisors Haywood and Smith co-author the “Plan for Offering Elementary Instruction” in 1982) and others, units were created for independent study on guitar, keyboard, and accordion. In collaboration with Coordinating Supervisor Mary Haywood, Allison initiated a high school madrigal festival at the National Gallery of Art where groups, dressed in costumes of the period, sang Renaissance music. The formation of a trans-high school singing group, The Vast Majority, happened at the beginning of the Civil Rights movement in Prince George’s County and during the Vietnam War. Based on the response of those at the military hospitals where Allison and the Vast Majority performed, the group brought joy to many patients. These students sang both popular literature of the times—the Beatles, for example—and standard, choral classics.

Between the age of 46 and 71 Pickard devoted her life to teaching strings, developing orchestras, and leading performances. She came to teaching as a mature woman with a grown family. At this point in her life she had the time

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<sup>11</sup> Allison, interview 2 March 2001.

and energy to devote to a new career. She enjoyed the success of teaching students and building orchestras, and her enthusiasm for the job increased. She stayed attuned to developments in Prince George's County, such as the opening of a new high school in Greenbelt. Her move to Roosevelt worked well for her professionally and the orchestras she built at that school. The intersection of her life with the social/political times in Prince George's County proved fortuitous.

#### Reaction to change

The educators' reactions to change fall into three general categories of budget/funding, racial/desegregation, and curriculum initiatives. It should be noted that each educator supplemented the county funding allotment. Although Prince George's County funded teacher salaries and provided classroom space for teachers, provision for money to buy and repair instruments, for bus travel to festivals, for music, and for uniforms was inadequate. The county allotment for Battle was \$700 annually. Compare this with the cost of buying one tuba for the marching band at \$1,200 to realize why Battle prized the work of his band boosters who raised money for his program. Pickard shared \$1,300 annually with Wagner (band director) during her years at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. With a combined class list of 300, Pickard and Wagner deemed fund raising a necessity in maintaining a high standard for their groups.

Early in his career Battle refused to allow the Douglass marching band to continue performing until parade "clowns" in blackface—symbolizing the inferiority of blacks—were removed from the field. He did not want his students

subjected to the ridicule promoted by those whites who enjoyed this type of humor at the expense of others. Allowing white high schools to engage in tackle football while the two black high schools were required to play a less robust form of football, touch football, seemed unfair to Battle and others at Douglass High School. Citing a discriminatory county habit of sending hand-me-downs from white schools to black schools, Battle persuaded a white county supervisor to review the county policy on touch versus tag football. During the 1960s, Battle risked censure from his principal in allowing three of his high school trumpet players to perform with him and his swing band, The Altones, in a NAACP sponsored rally in Danville, Virginia. Battle acted and spoke with courage in each of these instances, yet he maintained his dignity.

Allison was restricted by the county in assigning teachers due to court-ordered quotas for blacks and whites. The county policy, required by the Federal Courts, became a problem for Allison in his work to bring music education to county students.

Pickard, on the eve of court-ordered busing, lost 20 students in one school alone. The next day, not to be defeated, she began again; looking for students interested in learning to play stringed instruments and then taught them to play. Oblivious to race or socio-economic status of her students when training string players, she worked with students who wanted to learn. Generous to a fault, Pickard gave her music, herself, and her violin (upon retirement) to the education of students.

With the help of his parent group, Battle raised money for uniforms and instruments. Allison charged admission to choir concerts using the funds for bus travel to festivals and performances, music, harpsichord kits, and even flags for the school cafeteria. Pickard used fruit sales, hoagie sales, and other means to raise funds for trips abroad, uniforms, music, instruments, and other necessities.

Battle, Allison, and Pickard had the freedom to choose and invent curricula for their students. Battle brought popular music of his day into the classroom in making charts for his newly formed swing band. These charts were of music familiar to Battle from his work in New York clubs.

Allison employed creative strategies in meeting the needs of junior high school general music students. Under Allison's tenure guitar was added as accompaniment to junior high choirs and general music lessons. He used popular music of the day, the Beatles, Chicago, Frank Sinatra, a practice in line with the recommendations from the Tanglewood Symposium of 1967.

Pickard worked to provide a full orchestral experience for her students. She selected literature from the masters such as Beethoven, Schubert, Strauss, and Bernstein. Her students grew to appreciate these masterworks and learned to perform them with gusto.

Reacting to challenge and change, these teachers each found ingenious ways to get on with the mission of teaching music to young persons, in finding ways to negotiate racial acceptance, to fund programs, to develop feeder

programs, and to develop suitable curricula. This display of creativity in the face of adversity set these educators apart.

#### THEMES RELATED TO MUSIC EDUCATION IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

Other themes surfaced relating to county education activities, including funding for the music program, desegregation and matters of race, and advocacy.

#### *Funding*

Teacher/principal Boarman, supervisor Richter, teacher Green, piano tuner Larry Bowen, assistant superintendent Louise Waynant, former superintendent Felegy, and many others attest to a lack of funding as a system-wide concern for Prince George's County Schools. Green, beginning at Frederick Douglass in 1952 states, "You had to purchase your own [music, supplies]."<sup>12</sup> Piano tuner Larry Bowen observed that most of the pianos used by the school system were purchased between 1950 and 1970. By the mid 1970s money was no longer available for instrument purchase. Bowen attributes a decline in music education in the county to lack of funding. He stated in 2001:

The money just not there that there was years ago. Kids in these bands used to go for competitions out in the Middle West and all over the place. The youngsters can't afford that anymore. I still see music stands in elementary schools you know. But, not to the degree that I can remember back in the 'good 'ol days.'<sup>13</sup>

Even those individuals at the top of the county system felt funding to be a major stumbling block to the success of the schools. Waynant, one of the curriculum

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<sup>12</sup> Green, interview.

<sup>13</sup> Larry Bowen, interview by author, tape recording, 11 September 2001, Hyattsville, Maryland, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

and policy decision makers for many years with the school system supports

Bowen's observation:

Unfortunately in Prince George's we have had a constant struggle with resources and so, as resources became less available. Some schools made decisions regarding the arts programs that caused those programs to be less strong than they had been.<sup>14</sup>

Superintendent Felegy concludes, "This school system—to be honest about it—has never been funded at an adequate level."<sup>15</sup> Waynant and Felegy, constantly in the decision making process, would have had opportunity to compare Prince George's with neighboring systems in making these remarks.

Battle, Allison, and Pickard knew that funds allocated by the county were not sufficient to sustain their programs. Each of these teachers understood how to obtain supporting funds.

#### *Desegregation and matters of race*

When Battle began his teaching career, desegregation was not an issue. Race was not an issue inside Douglass High or Fairmont High, the two all-black high school buildings. Betty Green testified to the effects of "integration" on all-black schools. Losing the sense of community became, for many black parents, a reason to avoid the school building, boycotting PTA gatherings and other events supportive. When asked about the quality of her education at Douglass, Weems had positive recollections. She stated, "I got more from that than anything I can...I don't want to say that it was better then, but it was good for me. I'll put it

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<sup>14</sup> Louise Waynant, interview by author, tape recording, 17 July 2002, Bowie, Maryland, tape and transcript in possession of author until suitable archive can be located.

<sup>15</sup> Felegy, interview.

that way.” She felt the teachers more than compensated for hand-me-down books and lack of materials because her teachers brought a commitment and a passion to their work. Weems remembers:

The teachers were really interested in you. The teachers were genuinely interested in the kids. It was nothing to see for a teacher to come to your house.<sup>16</sup>

Neither Green nor Weems railed against the segregated society in which they lived. Green preferred the days before busing uprooted the community schools.

As the educators began their teaching careers at different periods in the desegregation process, their exposure to the impact of desegregation differed. Pickard, more than Battle or Allison, lived with the results of desegregation as a teacher. Allison and Battle both left the classroom before Judge Kaufman’s desegregation order took effect. In the role of supervisor and administrator, they worked with students and teachers regardless of race. Battle continued to guide young people to seek more education and become fully-functioning adults. Allison helped music teachers realize their abilities in working with music students.

### *Advocacy*

When faced with the elimination of instrumental music, the community reacted. Many, including the artistic director of the National Symphony, wrote letters decrying this possibility. String specialist Bob Holloway organized parents to speak for music during the 1982 crisis. Barbara Baker organized a support

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

group of teachers in 1991 to counter rumors that music programs were to be eliminated. Deputy Superintendent Felegy used his influence with the Board of Education to discourage program elimination.

During the budget crises of 1982 and 1991, the Eleanor Roosevelt High School band and orchestra parents were among the vocal supporters of the Prince George's County music program. These parents wrote letters to members of the Board of Education, collected signatures on petitions, organized groups of individuals to lobby at the state house and county executive offices, and drove performing groups to Board of Education meetings. These parents were among the music education advocates who rescued elementary music education in 1982. The success of Pickard's teaching was one reason for this outpouring of support.

In 1991, remembering the budget crises of 1979 and 1982, parents, teachers, and residents twice demonstrated their support of music education by attending rallies at state and county government buildings in Annapolis and Upper Marlboro, respectively. Eleanor Roosevelt High School music parent, Henry Woodward, and other parents collected signatures on petitions calling for music and the other arts to be maintained as part of the Prince George's County Schools curriculum during the 1991 crisis. Together with Deputy Superintendent Felegy they were successful in that no programs were removed from the county curriculum.

## CONCLUSIONS

LeRoy Battle, Maurice Allison, and Dorothy Pickard were passionate about teaching young people. They excelled because each displayed creativity in the face of adversity. Examples include Battle's holding the Memorial Day parade until clowns in "blackface" were removed; Allison's ignoring his supervisor's curriculum recommendation to program easier music for his junior high school choir; and Pickard's determination to train string players and produce orchestras in the mist of chaos following desegregation.

The three educators' success was built upon the practice of their professional lives: maintaining feeder systems, funding program activities, and inviting support from parents or students. Over time they developed elaborate ways of training students including Battle's use of summer lessons, Allison's use of the general music classes to train singers, and Pickard's daily travel from school to school training young string players. Although ways of funding programs varied among these educators, each augmented the county annual allotment to build fully-functioning musical groups. Parent groups raised funds for Battle and Pickard. Student choir members assisted Allison in the day-to-day operation of the group.

The act of setting goals, working toward goals, and achieving goals propelled Battle, Allison, and Pickard to successively higher levels in working with students in performance. Many of these goals were long term, guiding the educators through their careers.

As the educators stepped out of their classrooms into the community or on stage, each teacher developed an identity defined by their activities as group leaders or as supervisor. Battle became the Eagle Band Director; Allison, Vast Majority Director and supervisor; and Pickard, Eleanor Roosevelt High School Orchestra Director.

Music education in Prince George's County survived both the effects of desegregation and the budget storms in part because of strong communal support. A positive statement of Prince George's County residents' desire for culture and education and community support can be seen in the continuing provision for the music program and the elective program in general. Such cannot be said of Seattle Public Schools or Chicago City Schools during the same time period.

Prince George's County provided opportunity for these educators, opportunity to create, practice, and develop the craft of music instruction. Music education remains an active part of the school curriculum due in part to the work of Battle, Allison, and Pickard. They each set an example for other educators of how to produce, maintain, and support quality-performing music groups.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Many aspects of music education in Prince George's County seem worthy of further study and are amenable to the techniques of oral history. These include music in elementary education, the general music program in the high school (including guitar, piano, music survey, and recording technology), the high

school choral program, the spread of gospel music in schools and their communities, and changes in music literature and styles used by county music teachers. Self-contained, informative studies could be carried out on the continuing annual honors chorus, orchestra, and band programs that began in the bicentennial year of 1976. The Annual Kennedy Center, now The Edward M. Felegy Concert, could be used as a study to show how this participation of selected county students affected the student musicians, the county music program, and Prince George's County's reputation in the metropolitan community.

This dissertation has shown how well methods of oral history combine with investigative journalism to clarify events in the past and to uncover some of the underlying forces producing these events. Through the use of oral history much of the cut-and-dried reporting available in newspapers can be filled in with events, characters, and flavors of those making the history. Photographs help enhance the view of the characters involved in creating the history. Listening to the voices of the narrators allowed those individual personalities to speak. Their histories came alive.

One final recommendation is the recovery of the history of music education in Prince George's County from 1864, the beginnings of public education in Maryland, to 1950, the beginning year of the present study. A study of this formative period has potential for yielding understanding of a school system in its infant stages.

## FINAL NOTE

During their years of active teaching in Prince George's County, LeRoy Battle, Maurice Allison, and Dorothy Pickard each formed a partnership with the county. Both the county and the educators benefited. Parents, students, school personnel, and residents enjoyed the periodic performances presented by the teachers and their students. As the teachers reacted to the challenge of change in the county, their creative adaptations enabled them to grow in their craft. A transformation occurred. The teachers became extraordinary music educators in Prince George's County.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

**Informed Consent (revised)***Identification of Project Title*

The title of this project is "Music Education in Prince George's County, Maryland, from 1950 to 1992, an Oral History Account of Three Prominent Educators and Their Times."

*Statement of Age*

I state that I am over 18 years of age and wish to participate in the History of Music Education Project being conducted by Judy Moore, doctoral student in the School of Music, Division of Music Education, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742.

*Purpose*

The purpose of this research is to examine the professional lives of three music educators and correlate their activities with Prince George's County history during the period of the investigation. These educators are no longer teaching in Prince George's County Schools.

*Procedures*

As the bulk of this study relies on Oral History method, the procedures involve interviewing the narrator, recording the conversation on tape, and transcribing the tape. The interview protocol will vary. Sometimes specific questions will be asked of the narrator. Other times the narrator will be encouraged to recall information about a certain event or about classroom practice. A sample questionnaire is attached to this consent form.

*Confidentiality*

Prince George's County will be identified in this study. Subjects may agree to have their actual names used on documents such as dissertations or publications. The researcher plans to deposit the interview tapes and transcriptions in an appropriate oral history archive. If an archive is not located the tapes and transcripts will be destroyed within five years.

*Risk*

Participation involves risk that is no greater than that encountered in ordinary daily living.

*Freedom to withdraw**And ability to ask questions*

The research is designed to help the researcher learn more about the professional lives of three selected music educators in Prince George's County, Maryland. I am free to ask questions or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. I am free to withdraw the use of my photographs or recorded music at any time without penalty.

**Contract Information of the Institutional Review Board**

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) [irb@deans.umd.edu](mailto:irb@deans.umd.edu); (telephone) 301-405-4212.

Researcher  
Judy W. Moore  
3905 Commander Drive  
Hyattsville, MD 20782  
301-277-1553

Advisor  
Dr. Marie McCarthy  
School of Music  
Univ. of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742

I have read and understand the above statements and I

\_\_\_\_\_

Print name

\_\_\_\_\_ Agree to allow the use of my photographs in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Do not agree to allow the use of photographs and music in this study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant      Date

\_\_\_\_\_ agree to have my interview, tape and transcript, deposited in an oral history archive for other researchers to access (if a suitable site can be located).

\_\_\_\_\_ do not want my interview deposited in an oral history archive in which case my interview tape and transcript will be destroyed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant      Date

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR NARRATORS ALLISON AND PICKARD

*Maurice Allison*

Interview guide for Supervisor Bud Allison, 1<sup>st</sup> Interview

Level I

1. Please state your name and tell how many years you were a supervisor with Prince George's County Schools.
2. What was your job as supervisor?
3. How did this job change over the course of your tenure?
4. When you first started what responsibilities were you given?
5. How many teachers were under your supervision?

Level II

1. What did you enjoy about your job as supervisor?
2. What were some of the problems you encountered?
3. What do you think was the attitude of those above you toward music education during your tenure?
4. What do you perceive to be the attitude of teachers toward you and one another?
5. What do you perceive to be the attitude of the other supervisors toward you and toward the Prince George's teaching staff?

Level III

1. Talk about the difference between white and black schools when you were a supervisor. Attitudes, funding, observations.
2. Talk about the difference in music education before and after integration.

## Interview guide for Bud Allison, 2<sup>nd</sup> Interview

Level I: today I would like to clarify some of the things we talked about last time and go further in our investigation

1. Will you tell me what year you were born?
2. Just review, you started at Bladensburg Jr in 1956. Talk about getting that job, why you came to Prince George's, the interview?
3. How did this job change from 56 to 70, a span of 16 years?
4. Do you feel the students changed over this timeperiod?
5. Who was your supervisor? What did this person do for you?
6. Where did you receive your musical training?

Level II

1. How did the desire to find out more about the voice fester in you? Do you remember the first time you got the idea? How did it take over?
2. I would like to know more of what happened in the music classroom from 1970 through 1980. Will you describe one or two lessons that you recall?

Level III

1. A point of clarification: you were supervisor from 1970-1980. In 1980 you would have worked for Prince George's County for 26 years?
2. Can you be more specific about teaching at the college level? Where did you teach, when, and what?

Interview guide for the teacher and man, Bud Allison, 3<sup>rd</sup> Interview  
First a few loose ends.

1. What year did you direct "Oklahoma"?
2. Talk about George Dietz.

Now some bigger items.

1. Describe yourself.
2. What year were you married?
3. When were your children born?
4. Talk about your youth, what life was like for you.
5. What were your roots in teaching?

Respond, please, to the following statement: Many teachers (music teachers) do things unrelated to the job at hand to be able to do what they want to do. You wanted to teach chorus; yet you served on committees, played basketball with the boys, taught general music.

*Dorothy Pickard*

Interview questions prepared for Dorothy Pickard, string educator, Prince's County Music.

Level I

1. Please state your name and tell how many years you have been with Prince George's County Schools.
2. What year did you start teaching with Prince George's County?
3. Talk about your early years with Prince George's County. How did you get started? Who were the key persons in your beginning career?

Level II

1. You were influential in the development of the string program in Prince George's County. Talk about your vision for the County and how some of this came true with the formation of the fine orchestra at Eleanor Roosevelt High School.
2. What were some of the problems you encountered during those times of trying to establish orchestras in the County?
3. Do you remember which persons supported and promoted the orchestra program along with yourself?
4. Who were some of these people?
5. In what ways did they contribute to the development of string education in Prince George's?

Level III

1. What do you remember about County schools prior to court ordered desegregation in January of 1973 in regard to segregation of blacks and whites?
2. Talk about the difference—if any—in music education before and after desegregation.
3. Do you see a change in curriculum emphasis over the time you were a teacher with Prince George's?
4. Did you see a change in the student over the time you were a teacher with Prince George's?
5. You have received many awards over the years you were a string educator. Please list some of these awards you received.

APPENDIX C: PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SCHOOL POPULATION BY RACE 1970-2000

**REPORT ON RACIAL COMPOSITION, BY YEAR**

School Year	American Indian	Asian	African American	Caucasian	Hispanic	Total	American Indian	Asian	African American	Caucasian	Hispanic
70-71	86	542	31,992	127,570	477	160,667	0.10%	0.30%	19.90%	79.50%	0.30%
71-72	181	1,069	36,450	123,952	1,176	162,828	0.10%	0.70%	22.40%	76.10%	0.70%
72-73	191	1,211	40,396	119,026	1,137	161,961	0.10%	0.70%	24.90%	73.50%	0.70%
73-74	189	1,589	43,779	107,397	1,125	154,079	0.10%	1.00%	28.40%	69.70%	0.70%
74-75	147	1,824	46,553	101,757	929	151,210	0.10%	1.20%	30.80%	67.30%	0.60%
75-76	203	2,288	49,975	94,838	1,032	148,336	0.10%	1.50%	33.70%	63.90%	0.70%
76-77	232	2,640	53,667	86,939	1,054	144,532	0.20%	1.80%	37.10%	60.20%	0.70%
77-78	262	2,785	56,711	78,476	1,068	139,302	0.20%	2.00%	40.70%	56.30%	0.80%
78-79	314	3,026	58,785	70,309	1,179	133,613	0.20%	2.30%	44.00%	52.60%	0.90%
79-80	291	3,138	60,201	62,195	1,283	127,108	0.20%	2.50%	47.40%	48.90%	1.00%
80-81	273	3,414	60,793	56,031	1,382	121,893	0.20%	2.80%	49.90%	46.00%	1.10%
81-82	268	3,638	60,569	50,348	1,486	116,309	0.20%	3.10%	52.10%	43.30%	1.30%
82-83	264	3,795	60,273	45,843	1,630	111,805	0.20%	3.40%	53.90%	41.00%	1.50%
83-84	266	3,856	60,305	42,128	1,641	108,196	0.20%	3.60%	55.70%	38.90%	1.50%
84-85	234	3,958	61,118	38,816	1,704	105,830	0.20%	3.70%	57.80%	36.70%	1.60%
85-86	239	3,838	61,342	35,804	1,774	102,997	0.20%	3.70%	59.60%	34.80%	1.70%
86-87	265	3,848	62,778	33,567	2,072	102,530	0.30%	3.80%	61.20%	32.70%	2.00%
87-88	289	3,925	64,714	32,042	2,355	103,325	0.30%	3.80%	62.60%	31.00%	2.30%
88-89	321	4,044	66,219	30,968	2,588	104,140	0.30%	3.90%	63.60%	29.70%	2.50%
89-90	402	4,227	68,072	29,706	3,188	105,595	0.40%	4.00%	64.50%	28.10%	3.00%
90-91	427	4,375	70,212	28,675	3,886	107,575	0.40%	4.10%	65.30%	26.70%	3.60%
91-92	422	4,520	72,888	27,681	4,386	109,897	0.40%	4.10%	66.30%	25.20%	4.00%
92-93	404	4,690	75,165	26,079	4,794	111,132	0.40%	4.20%	67.60%	23.50%	4.30%
93-94	432	4,733	78,235	24,906	5,264	113,570	0.40%	4.20%	68.90%	21.90%	4.60%
94-95	442	4,733	81,844	23,502	5,862	116,383	0.40%	4.10%	70.30%	20.20%	5.00%
95-96	494	4,688	86,141	22,334	6,294	119,951	0.40%	3.90%	71.80%	18.60%	5.20%
96-97	535	4,746	89,990	20,665	6,895	122,831	0.40%	3.90%	73.30%	16.80%	5.60%
97-98	586	4,591	93,838	19,272	7,350	125,637	0.50%	3.70%	74.70%	15.30%	5.90%
98-99	650	4,461	96,619	17,767	7,902	127,399	0.51%	3.50%	75.84%	13.95%	6.20%
99-00	641	4,454	98,567	16,258	8,581	128,501	0.50%	3.47%	76.71%	12.65%	6.68%
00-01	692	4,355	101,088	14,929	9,649	130,713	0.53%	3.33%	77.34%	11.42%	7.38%
01-02	714	4,275	102,319	13,539	11,064	131,911	0.54%	3.24%	77.57%	10.26%	8.39%

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