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EXPLAINING COLLEGE FRESHMAN RETENTION RATES ACROSS THE US WITH APPLICATIONS TO SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA

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ABSTRACT

Regression results for a sample of 367 U.S. colleges and universities identify important determinants of differing rates of freshman-to-sophomore retention. Factors representing the quality of the institution (percentage of faculty holding PhDs, SAT scores, and admissions acceptance rates) help to explain retention rate variations between colleges. Other factors related to retention rates include the following: whether the institution is private or public, tuition levels, the percentage of freshmen housed on campus, and student performance as represented by the percentage of the freshman class in good academic standing at the end of the freshman year. The estimates from the regressions are utilized to compare predicted and actual retention rates for a sample of Virginia colleges and universities.

INTRODUCTION

Freshman retention rates vary widely among colleges and universities. The most recent College Board Data Set cites freshmen retention rates in higher education ranging from 40% to 99%. What are the determinants of these wide variations in freshman retention rates? It is clear from casual observation and previous research [see 3, 5, 7] that “better” schools—ones with higher SATs, lower acceptance rates, and more faculty with PhDs—have higher retention rates. It is, however, also clear that important variations in retention rates are present for schools which would be considered very similar based on the above criteria. What, then, determines those variations in retention rates?

The evidence presented here on retention may be useful to colleges and universities in their efforts to raise rates of freshman persistence. The resulting estimations also allow calculations for individual schools to determine whether their persistence rates are high or low as compared to predicted rates—that is, is the persistence rate for College X higher or lower than the rates that would be predicted for schools with similar characteristics? We offer such results for thirty Virginia schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been numerous studies of the determinants of retention rates at individual academic institutions. Many of these studies are based on a theoretical model by Tinto (1975) that emphasizes the importance of academic and social integration, as well as financial factors, in the determination of student persistence at an institution. Wetzel, O'Toole, and Peterson (1999) found evidence to support this theory for students at Virginia Commonwealth University. Pfitzner and Lang (2003) found similar evidence for Randolph-Macon College. Singell (2004) concluded that the decision to drop-out of the University of Oregon depends on financial aid.

Kerkvliet and Nowell (2005) include an extensive literature review that identifies four categories of determinants of retention rates. These factors include students' background characteristics, the degree of academic and social integration, the opportunity cost of education, and financial aid. They also present evidence that compares retention rate determinants across two institutions: Weber State University and Oregon State University.

St. John, Hu, and Weber (2001) studied college students in the state of Indiana and found that ill-prepared students and those with adverse socio-economic backgrounds were less likely to persist. They also concluded that the state of Indiana maintained sufficient grants in the 1990s to equalize the opportunity to persist.

A study by Astin (1997) uses longitudinal data pertaining to over 52,000 students attending 365 colleges and universities to generate formulas for predicting an institution's expected retention rate. The underlying explanatory variables include students' high school grades and standardized test scores and the racial and gender composition of the student body.

As far as we know, there are only two previous studies that attempt to explain differences in retention rates across a large number of institutions. Marcus (1989) used aggregate data to

determine that higher retention rates across private colleges can be explained by relatively few variables. He found that schools with higher student SAT scores, lower acceptance rates, and more faculty with PhDs have higher retention rates. Marcus collected his data from print “guidebooks,” such as *Lovejoy’s College Guide* and *Barron’s Profile of American Colleges*. Pfitzner, Lang, and Brat (2000) updated and extended this research using more recent data from private and public institutions and found results similar to those of Marcus. They also found that, all else equal, private schools have lower rates of retention than public schools. Their data were collected from the *College Board Common Data Set*, maintained since 1995 by the College Board, Peterson’s and *US News and World Report*.

DATA

The data in this study also come from the *College Board, Annual Survey of Colleges*, cited above. The *Annual Survey of Colleges* is a Web-based survey of nearly 4,000 accredited undergraduate colleges and universities in the U.S. The survey collects information about the characteristics of each college, including programs offered, costs, student characteristics and the like. The survey also seeks information on freshman-to-sophomore retention rates, the subject of this inquiry. Much of the survey constitutes the Common Data Set, a suite of standardized questions used by major publishers of college guidebooks. The Common Data Set peers—The College Board, Peterson’s, and *U.S. News & World Report*—have developed and maintained the Common Data Set since 1995. The *research data file* utilized in this research is available for purchase from the College Board.

In the United States there are approximately 4400 colleges and universities that offer a minimum of an associate’s degree. Of those 4400, approximately one-half are 4-year schools, and of the 2200 4-year schools, over 1500 are private schools, and many of those are “for-profit” institutions. The initial criteria for inclusion in the sample are (1) colleges must grant at least 20 bachelors degrees for the reporting year (two-year and very small schools are thus eliminated), (2) the colleges and universities must be regionally accredited, and (3) the selected schools must not be proprietary (“for-profit”) institutions. Then, of course, only institutions that reported freshman-to-sophomore retention are included for analysis. After those necessary exclusions, the initial data set contained only 971 observations.

MODELING CONSIDERATIONS

Several modeling considerations are important in attempting to estimate the effects of various variables on the retention rates across colleges and universities. The choice of explanatory variables, the form of the dependent variable, and the appropriate econometric technique are discussed in this section.

Variable Choice and the Effect on Sample Size

Many colleges and universities do not report data on every variable in the College Board Common Data Set. For example, only 1345 of almost 4000 schools report SAT scores, and (as mentioned above) only 971 schools report freshman-to-sophomore retention rates, after the exclusions described above. Thus less than one-quarter of surveyed colleges and universities across the US report retention rates (recall that many are 2-year schools), so the results of this research are not applicable to those schools choosing not to report retention. Additionally, since there is no requirement to report answers to each question on the survey, each time variables are added to a regression model, the number of observations (schools) included in the sample decreases. If the schools that remain in the sample differ in terms of retention and important explanatory variables from those schools that are excluded, the results reported here may not be applicable to those excluded schools. The appendix includes a table comparing mean scores for the major explanatory variables of those schools (of the 971) that report data on all explanatory variables with those that do not.

Though large samples are desirable, to choose a larger number of schools reporting data on a smaller subset of variables runs a competing risk of omitted variable bias. Preliminary analysis (regressions with larger numbers of schools included with fewer explanatory variables, available from the authors on request) does not suggest that either of the concerns (sample bias or omitted variable bias) is a significant problem. Even with those caveats, the sample in this paper is reasonably large ($n = 367$), contains colleges and universities from all regions in the US, and represents a mix of private and public institutions. We would argue that the sample is representative of those schools that did not omit answers to queries on the *Annual Survey of Colleges* for the variables utilized in the regressions. For consistency across our estimated regressions, we choose to report our results based on that sample of 367 schools.

Dependent Variable: Definition and Form

The data for the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate variable are reported as percentages, the vast majority of which are between 60% and 98%. (These retention rates track the entering freshman class as of the “census” date, and compute the percentage of those students who return for the sophomore year.) The dependent variable, then, varies on a relatively short interval. It is, however, roughly continuous on that interval. Fitted (predicted) values of the dependent variable are of interest since they will suggest whether a given college or university retention rate is above or below what would be predicted for a particular set of explanatory variables. If the dependent variable is modeled as a simple percentage, the predicted values from the regression are not restricted to be less than 100%. That is, some schools could have predicted retention rates exceeding 100%.¹

A common remedy for the limited range of the dependent variable measured as a percentage is to transform the retention rate by the “log of the odds”, i.e., $\ln(p/(1-p))$, where p equals the rate of retention expressed as a proportion and \ln represents the natural log. This transformation ensures a larger range of variation for the variable and that the predicted values (after taking the antilog and solving for p) will lie on the $[0, 1]$ interval.

Since it seems something of a judgment call as to which form of the dependent variable to choose, we report results with both forms. Most, but not all, results are robust with regard to the form of the dependent variable.

Econometric Technique

Marcus [5] suggests that several of the structural variables in retention regressions similar to those reported here are simultaneously determined. If true, the ordinary least squares technique results in biased and inconsistent parameter estimates. Marcus argues that at least two of the potential explanatory variables, namely SAT and the acceptance rate are *endogenous*. The endogeneity argument would be that schools with higher retention rates (perhaps because the school is rated more highly) attract students with higher SATs and such schools also have lower acceptance rates. Relatively simple tests are employed to test for

¹ We actually checked this possibility. For the model with retention rates modeled as a percentage, only M.I.T. had a predicted retention rate exceeding 100%. That predicted rate was 100.9%. All others were less than 100%.

simultaneous equation bias. We report results for both ordinary least squares and two-stage least squares. The latter technique corrects for endogeneity of explanatory variables (simultaneous equation bias).

SUMMARY STATISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Tables I and II contain some characteristics of the sample we use for the regression estimates separated by public (Table I) and private (Table II).

Several of the means are similar across the public and the private samples. The mean freshman-to-sophomore retention rates are very similar, with private schools averaging one percentage point higher. Acceptance rates and the percentage of full-time faculty holding the PhD degree are also similar. The percentage of freshmen reported in good standing is somewhat higher for the private colleges and universities as is the percentage of freshman housed on campus. SATs are slightly higher at private schools.

Of course, private tuition is higher as is reported aid to freshman. Publics average higher total freshman enrollments. Much of this is unsurprising. We also calculated the freshman class size to full-time faculty ratio and found that ratio be only slightly higher for the public schools in our sample. Of course public schools are more likely to have graduate schools and their faculty may have lower teaching loads. The database did not contain the average size of individual academic classes. In other words we do not know the student/faculty ratio for the classes in which freshmen are enrolled.

Table I: Characteristics of the Sample of Public Colleges and Universities

<i>Series</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
RETENTION RATE	76.86	8.94	52	97
% GOOD STANDING	82.98	9.59	49	100
TUITION	4730.34	2159.38	0	10590
FRESH AID	7561.83	2958.88	0	16068
ENROLLMENT (FRESH)	1990.86	1562.75	175	7076
SAT	1078.76	100.14	865	1340
% FRESH. HOUS	70.29	25.17	7	100
ACCEPT RATE	69.49	17.13	14.05	100
PHD %	80.39	15.71	1.21	100
STUDENT/FAC	3.84	1.35	1.40	11.33

n = 93

Table II: Characteristics of the Sample of Private Colleges and Universities

<i>Series</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
RETENTION RATE	77.86	10.76	45	98
% GOOD STANDING	87.14	9.72	36	100
TUITION	23777.58	6398.88	6150	37934
FRESH AID	18060.2	5383.95	2288	31935
ENROLLMENT (FRESH)	529.95	524.33	17	4124
SAT	1108.19	125.29	820	1470
% FRESH. HOUS	84.15	18.32	2	100
ACCEPT RATE	66.62	17.27	9.69	100
PHD %	78.47	16.23	0.95	100
STUDENT/FAC	3.66	1.44	0.84	16.3

n = 274

REGRESSION RESULTS

Table III contains the regression results for ordinary least squares (ols) and two-stage least squares where the dependent variable is the simple percentage retention rate (percent of bachelor's degree seeking students enrolled for a second year according to database definitions).

The explanatory variable set in each regression consists of:

SAT	= combined verbal and math SAT scores
% in good standing	= the percentage of students in good academic standing at the end of the freshman year
public/private	= 1 if a public college or university, 0 otherwise
tuition	= tuition level
% PhD	= the percentage of the faculty holding the PhD degree
% campus housing	= the percentage of freshmen students residing on campus

The coefficient estimates in Table III are generally consistent with expectations, with perhaps two exceptions which are discussed later in this paragraph. Higher SAT scores, faculty PhD percentages, and tuition rates² all indicate higher quality institutions with typically

² Even though higher tuition rates might be expected to be a detriment to persistence, it is clear that higher tuition rates are also indicative of better schools as measured by ratings such as those in *US News and World Report*.

better student performance and, therefore, greater rates of persistence, as anticipated. Note that the table does not include the acceptance rate since it was not statistically (or practically) different from zero in either OLS or 2SLS regressions. We also do not include freshman aid. That variable is highly collinear with tuition ($r = .91$) and is thus another reflection of quality of the school.

Table III: Dependent variable = percentage retention rate

<i>Parameter estimate</i>	<i>ols</i>	<i>2sls</i>
INTERCEPT	-6.73 (-2.11)	-13.94 (-2.38)
SAT	.0424 (11.63)	.0510 (5.18)
% IN GOOD STANDING	.2706 (7.80)	.2272 (4.93)
PRIVATE/PUBLIC	7.72 (5.44)	5.05 (2.17)
TUITION	.0003 (4.31)	.0002 (1.33)
% PHD	.0336 (1.64)	.0189 (0.81)
% CAMPUS HOUSING	.0508 (3.07)	.0295 (1.32)
\bar{R}^2	.716	.702
N OBSERVATIONS	367	367

(t-scores in parentheses)

Based on the OLS results, holding the effects of the other variables in the regression constant, public colleges and universities average nearly an 8% higher rate of retention. This latter result may be somewhat surprising, given that private colleges in the sample have a slightly higher retention rate than that for public institutions.³ However, private colleges differ in other respects such as significantly higher SAT scores and higher tuition. The dummy variable indicates that after controlling for the other factors represented in the estimated equation, private schools have lower

³ The result that higher tuition is associated with greater persistence is consistent with earlier research (see [5] and [6]).

rates of persistence. The persistence rate is also positively influenced by the percentage of freshmen housed on campus.

Since other research [7, 10, 11] consistently suggests that individual student retention is influenced by grades, a variable measuring the percentage of freshmen in good standing, available in the *College Board Data Set*, is employed as a proxy for grades. In every regression, the estimated parameter for that variable is statistically important.

In summary, each explanatory variable coefficient has the anticipated sign and each meets reasonable tests of statistical significance, at least for the OLS estimates. The equation explains over 70% of the variation in the retention rates across a large sample of schools.

Casual examination of the OLS and 2SLS⁴ estimates in Table III suggests little variation in the coefficient estimates between the two techniques. We performed two tests of the hypothesis of simultaneity. The first was a straightforward “Hausman” test, which tests whether the estimates of the “ β ” coefficients differ significantly between ols and 2sls techniques. This test, often cited as a test of endogeneity, is better described as a test of whether the endogeneity has a significant effect on the estimates of the β coefficients. This test indicates no significant effect of the endogeneity on the estimated coefficients. Again, comparison of the coefficient estimates between OLS and 2SLS confirms the results of this test. Another method of testing endogeneity involves capturing the residuals from first stage regressions, adding the residual series to the main regression and testing under ols that the coefficients on the residual series are zero. Under this test, the null hypothesis of no simultaneity cannot be rejected even at the $\alpha = .10$ level (see, for example, Woodridge, p. 483).

Table IV contains the estimated regressions for the transformed dependent variable. Two interesting results deserve emphasis. The acceptance rate, which is not statistically significant with percentage retention (untransformed) as the dependent variable as in Table III, *is* statistically significant for OLS, but not for 2SLS with the transformed dependent variable as shown in Table IV. The latter result may suggest that the instruments for the acceptance rate are weak.⁵ Second, the overall fit of the OLS regression is similar to

⁴ We ensure that the system is over-identified by including the additional instruments: total enrollment, student-faculty ratios, freshman aid, and a dummy variable for single gender schools in the first stage regression.

that of Table III; the 2sls equation is less impressive. Again, Hausman tests for the regressions in Table IV do not indicate that possible endogeneity significantly affects the coefficient estimates.

Since the upper bound on predicted persistence rates for the untransformed dependent variable is violated for only one school in the entire sample and since OLS is deemed appropriate by available tests, the analyses in the following sections are based on the OLS regressions from Table III.

Table IV: Dependent variable = transformed persistence, $\ln(p/(1-p))$

<i>parameter estimate</i>	<i>ols</i>	<i>2sls</i>
INTERCEPT	-3.66 (-13.29)	-8.78 (-0.76)
SAT	.0030 (12.22)	.0065 (1.28)
ACCEPT %	-.0054 (-4.28)	.0245 (0.31)
% IN GOOD STANDING	.0151 (6.89)	.0128 (1.71)
PRIVATE/PUBLIC	.5033 (5.53)	.3854 (.80)
TUITION	.0022*10 ⁻² (5.09)	.0017*10 ⁻² (2.39)
% PHD	.0010 (0.76)	-.0023 (-0.43)
% CAMPUS HOUSING	.0018 (1.76)	-.0067*10 ⁻² (-0.03)
\bar{R}^2	.762	.362
N OBSERVATIONS	367	367

(t-scores in parentheses)

⁵ In fact the first-stage regressions produced an $\bar{R}^2 = .61$ and an F-statistic of 63.4. Some authors suggest that the instrumental variables technique is unreliable if $F < 10$ (see Stock and Watson, p 441).

SENSITIVITY OF PERSISTENCE TO THE EXPLANATORY VARIABLES

One important question is how, quantitatively, does persistence respond to the explanatory variables? Here we choose to interpret effects on retention using the estimates from the OLS estimates on the (untransformed) rate of persistence.

For schools with SATs 100 points higher (this is the standard deviation of SATs for public schools) than another school, persistence would be predicted to be 4.24 percentage points higher. For schools with average retention rates, such an increase would be very significant economically and since persistence is an important variable for ratings agencies, the reputation of such schools would be enhanced. However, if schools were to attempt to raise SATs by being more selective, that would also clearly require lower acceptance rates and likely lower initial enrollments. Many colleges and universities generally attempt to attract more and better students simultaneously, and are fully aware of the trade-off involved.

Ceteris paribus, the OLS estimate for the effect of percentage of students in good standing suggests that if 10% (slightly greater than the standard deviation) more students are in good standing at the end of the freshman year, persistence would be expected to rise by 2.7%. Such a significant increase in retention would be welcomed by most schools. Many schools, however, are near the upper limit for this variable. Additionally, grading more liberally, or grade inflation may have long run detrimental consequences for the reputation of the school. On the other hand, policies aimed at better student performance—tutoring, study centers, quiet dorms and the like eventually may result in positive effects on persistence.

Schools with higher tuition rates do indeed have higher rates of persistence, but higher tuition rates are also associated with more highly rated colleges, hence this is not a variable that an individual college can adjust upward and expect positive changes in persistence to follow.

Finally, the percentage of PhDs and the percentage of students housed on campus have little effect on persistence (less than 1%) for one-standard deviation changes.

Generally, colleges and universities can anticipate higher rates of persistence as the quality of the student body and the institution improve. There are, of course, many other effects on retention as well.

SOME APPLICATIONS FOR VIRGINIA SCHOOLS

Not all colleges and universities in Virginia report retention rates for this database. Table V contains retention rates (sorted from highest to lowest) for those reporting Virginia schools in the 2006 *College Board Data Set*. Given the estimates and discussion above and some degree of familiarity with schools in the Commonwealth, there are (at least in our view) few, if any, surprises in the reported retention rates on the list. It is interesting that three of the top four schools in Virginia in terms of rates of retention are public schools. It is widely known that public universities in Virginia are rated very highly nationally with the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary placing consistently on most top ten lists of public schools.

One potential application of the estimates from this paper is to compare the predicted retention rates for school in the sample with the actual retention rates. Such a comparison might suggest whether individual schools are performing as well as might be expected in terms of retention, given the other characteristics important in explaining retention rates. To that end we offer Table VI with actual and predicted rates of retention for a subset of Virginia schools, with the predicted retention rates generated from the OLS estimates from Table III.

Table VI is sorted according to the (ascending) differential between the actual and predicted retention rates. A negative “difference” in the last column means that a college’s actual freshman retention rate was less than the OLS model’s prediction. Thus Averett’s retention rate was almost 11% less than the predicted rate of 74%. In other words, given similar measured characteristics (SATs, tuition, percentage of students in good standing) schools like Averett are expected to achieve freshman persistence rates of approximately 74%. At the other end of this spectrum, Christendom’s retention rate exceeded that predicted by the model by 9.6%. Thus, Christendom achieved a persistence rate considerably above what would have been predicted for a school with its characteristics as measured by the model.

Table V: Retention Rates at Virginia Colleges and Universities

<i>College</i>	<i>Retention Rate (Fr/So)</i>
University of Virginia	97
College of William and Mary	95
Washington and Lee University	94
James Madison University	92
Christendom College	90
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	89
University of Richmond	88
George Mason University	86
University of Mary Washington*	86
Hampden-Sydney College	83
Virginia Commonwealth University	82
Eastern Mennonite University	81
Sweet Briar College	80
Christopher Newport University	79
Roanoke College	77
Old Dominion University	76
Virginia Military Institute	76
Longwood University	75
Radford University	74
Randolph College	74
Randolph-Macon College	74
Bridgewater College	73
Hollins University	73
Liberty University	70
Shenandoah University	69
Lynchburg College	66
Virginia Wesleyan College	64
Averett College	63
Emory and Henry	62
University of Virginia Wise	61
Ferrum College	53
Mean	77.48

*University of Mary Washington did not report (or the College Board did not record) the retention rate for the 2005-06 year, this statistic was obtained from the web and represents an average over several years.

Table VI: Actual Versus Predicted Retention Rates at Virginia Colleges and Universities

<i>College</i>	<i>Actual Retention</i>	<i>Predicted Retention</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Averett University	63	73.77	-10.77
Lynchburg College	66	76.31	-10.31
Emory & Henry College	62	71.68	-9.68
Ferrum College	53	60.64	-7.64
Hollins University	73	80.35	-7.35
Virginia Wesleyan College*	64	70.69	-6.69
Randolph-Macon College	74	79.78	-5.78
Virginia Military Institute*	76	81.43	-5.43
Randolph College	78	82.62	-4.62
University of Richmond*	88	91.80	-3.80
Shenandoah University*	69	72.76	-3.76
Washington and Lee University	94	96.92	-2.92
Christopher Newport University	79	81.40	-2.40
Marymount University	68	68.99	-0.99
Roanoke College*	77	77.83	-0.83
University of Virginia, Wise	61	61.41	-0.41
Radford University*	74	73.87	0.13
Longwood University*	75	74.83	0.17
Bridgewater College*	73	72.50	0.50
Sweet Briar College*	80	79.46	0.54
Liberty University*	70	68.39	1.61
Old Dominion University	76	73.65	2.35
College of William and Mary	95	92.4	2.6
Virginia Tech*	89	86.31	2.69
University of Virginia	97	94.10	2.90
Hampden-Sydney College*	83	79.39	3.61
Eastern Mennonite University	81	75.40	5.60
George Mason University*	86	78.65	7.35
Virginia Commonwealth Univ.	82	74.00	8.00
James Madison University	92	82.66	9.34
Christendom College	90	80.43	9.57

*These schools did not report percentage of freshmen in good standing. We estimated that variable for those schools based on SATs, total enrollment, the percentage of freshmen housed on campus, and the public/private nature of the school.

Some of these differences are undoubtedly due to idiosyncratic differences across these schools. For example, of those schools that perform better than predicted from the OLS equation, Christendom, Eastern Mennonite, and Hampden-Sydney have significant atypical characteristics in comparison to most other schools. Christendom and Eastern Mennonite have very close religious ties, and Hampden-Sydney is an all-male school.

Of those schools that perform at lower than predicted retention rates, location and the associated economic environment may also play a role. It is possible to model some of these factors, e.g., religious affiliation, single gender schools (this variable was included in regressions, but had no explanatory power across all schools in the full sample), measures of rural/urban setting, and even the local economic environment are all possible candidates as explanatory variables in freshmen-to-sophomore retention.

CONCLUSIONS

While the regressions in this paper do not yield clear guidelines on the proper form of the dependent variable (freshman-to-sophomore retention), many of the estimated effects of the explanatory variables are robust across all regressions. It is clear that institutions with higher SATs and higher tuition rates have higher rates of retention. Furthermore, greater percentages of freshmen in good standing and the higher percentages of freshmen housed on campus are associated with higher retention rates. For given levels of the other explanatory variables, private schools have lower rates of retention than public schools.

Do the results detailed above yield any (modest) guidelines for college and university administrators and faculty who wish to increase rates of freshman-to-sophomore retention? It is clear that retention rates improve as the quality of the students that are attracted to the institution improves. Clearly then, if the student profile can be enhanced for a given institution, higher rates of retention should follow. A recommendation of this sort is not novel, (perhaps, not even valuable) since schools generally attempt to attract the most capable students possible, and the quality of students that schools see in the applicant pool is often pre-determined by other factors that are difficult to change.

Two possible policy implications seem to warrant emphasis. First, assuming that the percentage of faculty holding the PhD degree is a proxy for faculty quality, better faculty will likely increase rates

of retention, albeit it mildly. It may follow that freshman students taught by the best faculty are more likely to be retained. Second, it is clear that grades (measured by the percentage of freshmen in good standing) matter in the aggregate retention rates among colleges and universities. Policies aimed at improving student performance at the freshman level may improve retention.

We suggest that the application of the regression results to schools in Virginia points out the idiosyncratic nature of retention for many schools. The strength of religious affiliation, the local economic environment, and other unique qualities clearly are important in explaining differing rates of retention across the Virginia sample of schools. It is further obvious that the better schools in Virginia have the highest rates of retention, but that does not necessarily mean that they perform better than the model's predictions.

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APPENDIX

The sample utilized in this research is limited to regionally accredited, non-profit 4-year colleges and universities, granting more than 20 baccalaureate degrees, and reporting freshman-to-sophomore retention rates to the *College Board, Annual Survey of Colleges*. Those restrictions limited the initial sample to 971 schools. The regressions, because they employ explanatory variables of which some are not reported by all schools, are based on a sample of 367 observations. The table below compares some of the major explanatory variables for the regression sample of 367 with those who do not report on all variables.

Table: Comparison of Included and Excluded Schools

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Included Schools</i>	Excluded Schools
RETENTION (average public/private)	77.6	75.0
PRIVATE TUITION	\$23778	\$19398
PUBLIC TUITION	\$4730	\$4839
FR. ENROLLMENT (PRIVATE)	530	550
FR. ENROLLMENT (PUBLIC)	1991	1682
SAT (average public/private)	1101	1106

Retention rates and SATs reported in the table are weighted averages across public and private schools. Schools that reported all variables utilized in the regressions had slightly higher rates of retention. The full-reporting private schools had higher tuition and slightly lower freshmen enrollment than the excluded privates; the full-reporting public schools had slightly lower tuition and higher enrollment than their excluded counterparts. The SAT scores are nearly identical across the two groups.

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WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? WOMEN AS CANDIDATES IN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF VIRGINIA

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ABSTRACT

The Commonwealth of Virginia infrequently produces women candidates for elective office. Since 1917, only three women have been elected (the first in 1992) to Congress, and Virginia typically falls in the bottom quintile for the number of women serving in the state legislature. This project examines the changing political climate of Virginia and why this party - competitive, swing state has not produced more opportunities for women to run for public office. Specifically, we examine the Republican Party of Virginia's candidate training program for women, the Jennifer Byler Institute, and the ways in which it serves as a pipeline for prospective Republican women candidates.

INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth of Virginia infrequently produces women candidates for elective office. Virginia has never elected a woman governor, nor has it elected a woman to the U.S. Senate. Since 1917, only three women have been elected (the first in 1992) to Congress, and Virginia typically falls in the bottom quintile for the number of women serving in the state legislature. While many states have seen gains over the last twenty years in the number of women elected to state and federal office, Virginia's women, especially Republican women, have largely been absent from this trend. This project examines the changing political climate of Virginia and why this party - competitive, swing state has not produced more opportunities for women to run for public office. Additionally, we examine the Republican Party of Virginia's candidate training program for women, the Jennifer Byler Institute, and the ways in

which it serves as a pipeline for Republican women who wish to run for office.

An examination of historical data for elections to the Commonwealth's General Assembly and the U.S. Congress reveals the paucity of women candidates. Using election returns from the Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP) we find that since 1997, women comprised no more than twenty percent of Democratic and Republican state legislative candidates to the Virginia General Assembly.¹ Likewise, the number of Virginia women congressional candidates is exceptionally small, as fewer than ten women from each party have run under her party's label for the U.S. House or Senate in the last decade (CAWP 2000-2010).

In the most recent election cycles, Virginia's women state legislative candidates are predominantly comprised of a few incumbents running for re-election. There are very few women candidates running for open seats or as challengers against incumbents making it all the more difficult for women of either party to increase their numbers. At the state level, Virginia has ranked no higher than 30th, 6.4 percent in 1977, for its percentage of women state legislators (CAWP 2010). More consistently, however, Virginia ranks in the bottom quintile for its percentage of women state legislators. Presently, the national average for women in state legislatures is 25 percent; Virginia, at 19 percent, ranks 39th for the number of women state legislators (CAWP 2010). Virginia women fare worse at the national level. Currently, there are no women in the Virginia congressional delegation, and only three women have been elected as U.S. representatives since 1917 (Women in Congress 2010).

The small number of women legislative candidates and officeholders is also unevenly distributed between the Democratic and Republican parties. There exists a party differential with women Democrats significantly outnumbering their Republican counterparts as candidates to and members of the state legislature. With the exception of 2000 through 2004, when there was an equal number or slightly more Republican than Democratic women, over the last 35 years Democratic women have consistently outnumbered Republican women in the Virginia state legislature often by more than a two to one ratio (CAWP, 2010). In the 2010 Virginia General Assembly,

¹ The Virginia General Assembly is comprised of 100 seats in the House of Delegates and 40 seats in the State Senate. VPAP's data on candidates' vote percentages and fundraising in Virginia state elections begins with the 1996 Special Elections.

Democratic women account for nearly one-third (31 percent) of the Democratic caucus; Republican women make up only 5 percent of their party caucus (Virginia General Assembly, 2010). In other words, gains from Virginia in terms of its percentage of women state legislators has come from the election of Democratic, not Republican, women candidates. Interestingly, that party differential does not exist at the federal level. Republican women have been marginally more successful at getting elected to Congress. Of the three Virginia women ever elected to Congress, two were Republican – JoAnn Davis and Thelma Drake, from the 1st and 2nd Virginia Congressional districts, respectively.

Together, these lackluster numbers beg the question: where are the women? Previous research on candidate emergence in state legislatures suggests that political parties and elected officials play a vital role in encouraging (and sometimes discouraging) prospective candidates. Further, the presence of party support is even more important for women who often require more convincing to run for office. In light of the central role political parties play as agents of candidate recruitment, this project explores the question of women's representation by giving specific attention to the Republican Party of Virginia. If Democratic and Republican women have generally had the same, albeit limited, success in seeking election to Congress, why is there such a large party differential between Democratic and Republican women at the state level? We consider the efforts of the Republican Party of Virginia, specifically the creation of the Jennifer Byler Institute, to attract Republican women prospective candidates and encourage them to run for elected office. We focus solely on the efforts of the Jennifer Byler Institute because of its formal association with the Republican Party of Virginia and its expressed goal of recruiting women to run as Republican candidates for elective office.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Three research themes inform our understanding of the challenges women state legislative candidates face and the importance of political parties in encouraging women's candidacies: surveys of state legislative candidates; the viability of women candidates; and, Virginia's changing electoral context. We briefly highlight this previous research and relate the significance of the authors' findings to our own research on the Jennifer Byler Institute and the Republican Party of Virginia's efforts to recruit Republican women candidates.

First, surveys of state legislative candidates identify the barriers to seeking office and highlight the differences between men and women candidates. In their survey of non-incumbent state legislative candidates, Moncrief et al (2001) note the spate of uncontested races for state legislature and suggest that many otherwise interested prospective candidates view barriers to service, namely the level of compensation compared to the time and money needed to run for the legislature, as insurmountably high.² They add that when parties do recruit candidates (who have concluded the opportunity to serve outweighs the barriers), it is a function of systemic variables like the level of party competition or strength, district variables such as district partisanship, and the presence (or absence) of an incumbent, and, individual variables like a candidate's career goals and level of involvement in her community. Men and women candidates in Moncrief et al's (2001) survey shared many characteristics, most notably the lack of previous campaign experience and the expressed importance of support from local party officials for their candidacies. They differed, however, in that women were more likely to be older, have no children, or, have children no longer living at home. Women, who were more likely to conservatively assess their chances of winning, needed formal encouragement by their party or an elected official.

Sanbonmatsu et al's (2009) survey of women state legislators echoes many of Moncrief et al's findings regarding state legislative candidates. About half of women state legislators lacked previous campaign experience and most were older than their male counterparts, often because they chose to delay a political career until their children were older. And, a higher percentage of women legislators indicated that party support of their candidacy was critical to their decision to run for office. In both sets of candidate surveys, men were more likely to decide to run for office on their own. Women, in contrast, needed their political parties, a party leader, or an officeholder to push them to run. In other words, the support of political parties may be more important to the decision calculus of women candidates.

Second, while women may need to be asked to run for office, extensive research on women and elective office has firmly dispelled the myth that women candidates are less successful than their male counterparts. When controlling for the type of election, specifically the absence or presence of an incumbent in the race,

² We return to this problem of uncontested legislative seats and its effect on women candidates later in the paper.

women candidates win election as frequently as men (Burrell 1994; Seltzer, et al. 1997; Palmer and Simon 2006). Further, women candidates not only raise as much money as the men, they often out-fundraise their male counterparts in similar races (Burrell 1994; Pimlott 2010). By these measures, women show great promise as candidates for elective office. When women run women win and often raise more campaign funds than the men. There are, however, important differences between men and women prospective candidates in terms of their self-assessment of electoral viability and also how the parties assess their viability.

Unfortunately, men and women prospective candidates do not assess themselves as equally fit to seek office. Lawless and Fox (2005, 2010) find that women are significantly more likely than men to view themselves as not qualified to run for elective office. What is most remarkable about these findings is that women routinely self-assess as less qualified to run compared to men *even* when their relevant professional and political experience makes them a *more* attractive candidate. Because women are more likely than men to dismiss their credentials as prospective candidates, the opinion of electoral gatekeepers, specifically elites within political parties, may be even more influential in convincing reluctant, though certainly qualified, women to consider a bid for office.

And, women and men candidates report different experiences with political parties regarding recruitment and campaign support. Specifically, parties often treat men and women differently as prospective candidates with women faring less well than men (Sanbonmatsu 2002, 2006). Despite the fact that campaigns are largely candidate, not party, centered (Jacobson 2004), parties play an important role in candidate selection by encouraging certain individuals to run and discouraging others, even occasionally supporting one candidate over another in a party primary, from running in particular contests. Here Sanbonmatsu (2006, 87) makes a distinction between a strong party system in which parties behave as described above, and an entrepreneurial one wherein parties support candidates who “self-nominate” or seek out the party apparatus. In either scenario, women fare less well but for different reasons.

Sanbonmatsu (2006) further notes that a central problem with women and strong political parties is that candidate recruitment occurs through social networks that are largely gendered. Here legislative caucuses play a central role in recruiting candidates to run for its legislative body. Because of the low percentage of women state legislators, as is the case with the Virginia General Assembly,

the majority of either party's caucus doing the recruiting is men who, in turn, recruit other men. Therefore, women may decide to run for office where party leadership support is not needed as much like a local Board of Supervisors, city council, or school board, which are generally less partisan than state legislatures or are non-partisan and do not permit a candidate to identify with a specific political party. In these cases parties may endorse an individual but there is no official Republican or Democratic candidate.

The willingness of political parties to recruit and support women candidates may also be attributed to the disparate culture of the Republican and Democratic parties. Freeman (1987, 218) identifies the party culture of Democrats as more "pluralist" and the party culture of Republicans as more "hierarchical." According to Freeman, the Democratic Party, accustomed to different interests vying for attention, may be more receptive to those who demand greater opportunities for women candidates as compared to the Republican Party which rewards party loyalty over group-specific claims. Taken together, this research on women candidates and political parties may help explain both the low number of women candidates and also why a large party differential exists between women Democrats and Republicans.

Finally, any assessment of Virginia's women candidates over time must consider the changing electoral context of the last several decades in which Virginia moved from reliably Democratic to reliably Republican and now to a party-competitive, swing state. McKee (2009) notes that beginning in the 1960's, the Republican and Democratic parties aligned on opposing sides of social and economic issues. Voters, in turn, aligned accordingly with southern white conservatives embracing Ronald Reagan, the "Religious Right", and the Republican Party. Redistricting in the last two decades helped cement these loyalties with more Republican-friendly districts across the South, including Virginia.

Atkinson (2006) considers changes in Virginia political parties over a similar time period and the effect on the Commonwealth's state legislature and executive. Atkinson (2006) notes that the changing electoral dynamics were felt first in the Virginia General Assembly with a shift from nearly 100 years of Democratic control to an even split between Democrats and Republicans in the State Senate and, a few years later, to the House of Delegates. More recently, Democrats and Republicans have wrestled for control over the governor's seat and majority party status in the General Assembly. Bullock and Rozell (2010, 143) similarly find that lopsided Democratic Party majorities in the

Virginia General Assembly during the 1970's gave way in subsequent decades to periods of slim Democratic majorities and even Republican Party majorities in 1999, 2003, and 2005. However, the increased competition between the Democratic and Republican parties in Virginia for state and federal legislative elections has not translated into more opportunities for women candidates. As such, we directly evaluate the efforts of the Republican Party of Virginia to recruit and support women to run under its party label.

FINDINGS

The main focus of our project is to assess the Republican Party of Virginia's efforts to recruit women to run as candidates and encourage their involvement in party politics more broadly. First, we examine electoral data from Virginia state legislative races to determine where, and how frequently, women run. We then supplement our election data with in-depth interviews of approximately 25 Republican Party of Virginia officials, officeholders, and activists as well as other Virginia politics observers and leaders. We focus on the efforts of the Jennifer Byler Institute (JBI) which was created to help the Republican Party of Virginia reach out to young Republican women.³ Our interviewees included women Republican state legislators, current and former Republican Party of Virginia unit chairs, chairs of the College Republican Federation of Virginia, the President of a local Republican women's group, graduates of the Jennifer Byler Institute (JBI), the Director of the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership (a non-partisan political leadership training program based at the University of Virginia), and, several of the Sorensen Institute's graduates. Together, these measures provide a comprehensive assessment of the opportunities and challenges faced by the Republican Party of Virginia in attracting women candidates to run for elective office.

³ To be sure, the Republican Party of Virginia is comprised of several affiliated organizations designed to encourage and expand participation, including the College Republican Federation of Virginia and the Virginia Federation of Republican Women. Unlike the Jennifer Byler Institute, however, neither of these organizations has specific initiatives to recruit, fund, or support female candidates and are therefore not included in this study.

Women Candidates and Virginia State Legislative Elections

Tables 1 and 2 list the number of Democratic and Republican women candidates running as incumbents, challengers, and as candidates for open seats in Virginia State Senate and House elections, respectively, from 1996 through 2010. Each table lists the total number of open seat contests per election year per chamber and also lists the number of uncontested seats in which an incumbent faced no major party opposition.

Table 1, Virginia State Senate Elections, 1996 – 2010*

Year	Open Seats		Women Incumbents		Women Challengers		Uncontested Seats	
	Dem	Total Seats	Dem	GOP	Dem	GOP	Dem (women)	GOP (women)
2007	0 Dem 2 GOP	6	7	1	2	1	9 (6)	8 (0)
2003	1 Dem 1 GOP	4	6	0	1	0	7 (2)	12 (0)
1999	1 Dem 0 GOP	1	6	1	2	2	5 (2)	14 (0)

*There are 40 seats in the Virginia State Senate; State Senators serve terms of 4 years. Reported results are for regularly scheduled elections. 15 additional special senate elections were held from 1996 to 2010 featuring 4 Democratic women candidates and 1 Republican woman candidate. No female candidate won a special Senate election during this period.

Source: Virginia State Senate Elections, 1996 - 2010. Virginia Public Access Project, www.vpap.org. Data compiled by authors.

Table 1 shows the paucity of Republican women state senate candidates in *any* type of election contest, particularly in competitive open seat contests in 1999, 2003, and 2007. Indeed, during this period only *one* Republican woman candidate for an open seat won her contest. Republican women candidates are basically absent from State Senate contests. In all three election cycles Republicans had a larger number of uncontested seats where incumbents (all men) faced

no major party opposition as compared to their Democratic counterparts. Interestingly, several Democratic women incumbents ran in uncontested races which ensured their re-election.

Table 2 demonstrates that while Republican women were more numerous as candidates for the House of Delegates, particularly as incumbents, women Republicans were less likely than their Democratic counterparts to run as candidates in open seat contests. In three election cycles, 2001 through 2005, all of which were favorable to Republicans, *no* Republican women candidates ran in open seats and only one Republican woman ran against a Democratic incumbent. In other words, in election cycles where Republicans increased their numbers by picking off vulnerable Democratic incumbents and winning open seat contests in the Virginia legislature, the gains were made by Republican men, not women. The small number of women Republican delegates is instead a function of women incumbents winning re-election. Unlike many of their male partisan colleagues, however, women Republican legislators ran in contested races to gain re-election. The number of women Republican delegates fluctuated during this time period from relative parity with their Democratic counterparts to an imbalance with more Democratic women Delegates running as incumbents in the two more recent election cycles.⁴

Together, Tables 1 and 2 detail the many challenges facing Republican women candidates. First, relatively few women Republicans run as state Senate or House candidates, especially in election contests like open seats that could increase their numbers. Republican women candidates are much less likely to run in special elections. And, Republican women legislators must work harder to keep their seats as they are much more likely than the men to face election opponents.

⁴ The party differential between women Republican and Democratic candidates and officeholders may not be attributed to the Democratic Party offering better candidate training than the Republican Party. The Democratic Party of Virginia (DPV) does not offer a comparable program to JBI but has the "Farm Team" which is a political action committee. The Farm Team affiliates itself with DPV and is focused on raising money for female candidates. According to its website, the Farm Team was created in September 2008 by a group of women who gathered at the home of former Attorney General, Mary Sue Terry, the only woman to ever be elected to statewide office in Virginia. However, the Farm Team's main objective is fundraising and does not offer any formal candidate training or programs.

Table 2, Virginia State House Elections, 1996 – 2010*

Year	Open Seats		Women Incumbents		Women Challengers		Uncontested Seats	
	Dem	Total # Seats	Dem	GOP	Dem	GOP	Dem (Fem)	GOP (Fem)
2009	3 Dem 1 GOP	11	10	3	6	5	9 (3)	21 (2)
2007	1 Dem 1 GOP	8	8	5	4	0	31 (6)	28 (3)
2005	4 Dem 0 GOP	12	6	5	3	1	14 (1)	35 (4)
2003	2 Dem 0 GOP	11	6	8	2	0	22 (2)	39 (4)
2001	4 Dem 0 GOP	18	7	8	5	0	14 (1)	25 (1)
1999	2 Dem 1 GOP	6	7	6	1	2	23 (3)	25 (3)
1997	3 Dem 2 GOP	7	9	1	3	4	25 (2)	24 (2)

*There are 100 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates; Delegates serve terms of 2 years. Reported results are for regularly scheduled elections. 29 additional special delegate elections were held from 1996 to 2010 featuring 11 Democratic women candidates and 6 Republican woman candidates. Six women Democrats and three women Republicans won special Delegate elections during this period.

Source: Virginia State Delegate Elections, 1996 - 2010. Virginia Public Access Project, www.vpap.org. Data compiled by authors.

Virginia Republican Party and Its Outreach to Women Candidates

The small number of women Republican candidates running for the Virginia state legislature, particularly as candidates for open seat contests, indicates that the Republican Party of Virginia does not aggressively recruit women candidates. That the Party does not actively court prospective women candidates was a belief echoed by many interviewees who stated that while the Party is open and welcoming to women, it does not explicitly seek out women candidates. No interviewee offered a distinct reason why this is the case other than a lack of a strong candidate recruitment mechanism within the party structure. Interestingly, women interviewees were also ambivalent about whether their Party *should* actively seek out women as prospective candidates as many stressed the importance of the Party supporting the *best* candidate, male or female. Many Republican women wanted to see more women as party candidates but were reluctant to require the Party to do so.

The fact that Republican women feel ambivalent about whether their party should seek out women candidates belies the frustration many women partisans feel about the assumed closeness of women and the Democratic Party. Many interviewees noted that one problem facing the Republican Party and prospective women candidates is an assumption that the Democratic Party is the pro-woman party, especially given the number of women's organizations like EMILY's List that promote and fund women Democratic candidates.⁵ Several interviewees were quick to identify ways in which the Republican Party of Virginia could portray itself as being friendlier to prospective women candidates. Lena Morrill, former Chair of the Virginia College Republicans, noted the many businesswomen, college students, and other women active in the Republican Party and the prominent role women played in the campaign of Governor Bob McDonnell. Similarly, Rachel Schoenewald, Chair of the Albemarle County Republican Committee, believes that it is not the case that the Democratic Party is more woman-friendly but rather that the Democratic Party does a better job of promoting itself to women. She maintains that the Republican Party tends to take a more 'one size fits all' approach,

⁵ In 2001, EMILY's List created its Political Opportunity Program (POP) which recruits and trains women to run for local and state elective office. On its website POP identifies 11 women Democratic state legislators they helped elect, eight of whom currently serve in the Virginia General Assembly.

while the Democratic Party more explicitly tailors its message to specific groups, including women.

Instead, most of the interviewees agreed that prospective candidates for state and/or local office in Virginia seek out the party rather than the other way around. Women partisans play a key role in encouraging women to run as prospective women Republican candidates are more frequently approached by other Republican women. One former delegate stated she was urged to run by a female friend who was a perennial volunteer in local Republican elections. Delegate Brenda Pogge, currently serving in the Virginia General Assembly, indicated she was asked to run by then-Delegate Melanie Rapp, who was planning to retire. These candidates were eventually supported by the party structure, even if they were not specifically recruited by it. Upon winning their respective primary contests, these women candidates then received campaign funds from the State Party and the Republican House Caucus.

Jennifer Byler Institute (JBI) Program and Goals

Perhaps in response to the lack of a strong candidate recruitment mechanism within the Party for women, women partisans created such an organization. In 2003, the Republican Party of Virginia, then chaired by Kate Obenshain, founded the Jennifer Byler Institute (JBI), as a candidate training program for Republican women. According to the Republican Party of Virginia's website,

“The Mission of the Jennifer Byler Institute is to increase the number of effective Republican women in public service and Party leadership by providing extensive training and support as these women pursue their political and/or professional goals. The successful completion of this political leadership development program will prepare, motivate and inspire women to assume key roles in both political and public service.”

A key component of the program is geared towards introducing promising young women partisans into existing Republican Party social networks. Participants in the Jennifer Byler Institute are required to complete an application and find a sponsor, identified as a “fellow Republican and/or a business or civic leader in the community.” Once accepted (based on the recommendation of JBI's Board of Directors which includes several Republican Governors' wives as well as former Republican women legislators), participants attend monthly workshops over an eight month period on several campaign related themes including Virginia political history, Republican Party philosophy, campaign strategy and

planning, the Party nomination process, grassroots activism, and campaign finance. The workshops feature speakers active in Republican Party politics, from campaign operatives to officeholders. Despite the specific instruction on how to run (or work for) a campaign, JBI does not provide any start-up funds or related resources for prospective candidates. Candidates often do receive donor lists, contributions, and, in some instances, political party operatives from the Republican Party of Virginia. In the absence of providing direct campaign resources, the purpose of JBI seems focused on removing candidacy barriers by bringing young women partisans into the party system and expanding their networking opportunities.

Interviewees (those who are graduates of the Institute and those who spoke from knowledge of the program) gave mixed reviews as to how well the Jennifer Byler Institute accomplishes its goals. One issue seems to be the fact that presently Republican women officeholders and JBI participants are two distinct groups. Current and former Republican women state legislators were familiar with JBI and supportive of its mission but did not participate in the Institute's training. Indeed, several legislators indicated they believed the purpose of JBI was to provide training for younger partisans, specifically college-age Republican women.

Since JBI began accepting students in 2005, nearly 150 women have completed the Leadership Program. Their website indicates that at least a few women have made the leap from partisan to candidate, however many graduates view JBI as a means to get more involved in Republican party politics but not necessarily as candidates for elective office. Respondents strongly believe their participation in JBI was valuable in terms of party networking. Amber Vervalin, who participated in JBI's inaugural class as an undergraduate student, stated that while she was already knowledgeable about the party and the political process, participating in JBI helped her to be more confident in her political ideas. Vervalin also believes that JBI was a great place to meet and network with other conservative women. While Vervalin indicated she has no plans to run for office, she agreed that JBI was a positive and supportive place for women who were planning to run for office to discuss their plans and seek constructive feedback.

Table 3: Training Opportunities for Political Women in Virginia, A Comparison of Jennifer Byler and Sorensen Institutes

	Sorensen Institute	Jennifer Byler Institute
Date Founded	1993	2003
Founded By	Leigh Middleditch and Michael Bills; businessmen from Charlottesville	Kate Obenshain; then-Chair of the Republican Party of Virginia
Program Focus	To improve political leadership in Virginia which in turn will improve governance of Virginia	To educate Republican women about the political system, encourage them to seek elected office, and help create a support network for them
Eligibility Criteria	**Must be a Virginia resident who is eligible to run for political office	Must be a female Republican and a high school graduate
Demographic Makeup of Participants	Both male and female, ranging political ideologies	All female; politically conservative
Length of Program	Ten months, with classes meeting one weekend per month	Eight months, with classes meeting one weekend per month
Notable Alumni	18 members of the 2010 General Assembly	Five graduate classes totaling nearly 150 Republican women

**Eligibility criteria are for the Sorensen Candidate Training Program, which is most comparable to Jennifer Byler Institute. The other three Sorensen programs have varied eligibility requirements.

Bob Gibson, the Director of the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia (Sorensen) believes that JBI is a valuable tool offered by the Republican Party of Virginia for women. Sorensen's goals are similar to those of JBI; however, Sorensen is independent of party and accepts participants from across the political spectrum. Table 3 summarizes the mission and work of both JBI and Sorensen.⁶ Gibson believes that one way that JBI could improve its outreach to Republican women is to introduce them to Democratic women as all prospective candidates have shared concerns about how to move from party activist to candidate. Gibson maintains that a political system is at its best when friendly competition exists between parties who ultimately share similar goals but have different beliefs about which policies are best able to achieve those goals.

JBI operates in much the same way as Sorensen's Political Leaders Program and Candidate Training Program in both are spread out over an eight month period, with participants meeting one weekend a month. The majority of JBI's sessions take place at the Republican Party of Virginia headquarters in Richmond, with a few sessions in varied locations. Similarly, one of Sorensen's goals is to have the group meet in different locations throughout Virginia to increase participants' familiarity with all parts of the Commonwealth.

CONCLUSION

Our interviews suggest that the Republican Party of Virginia is more "entrepreneurial" in its candidate outreach by encouraging candidates to find the party as opposed to the party finding candidates. While the Republican Party of Virginia has many organizations designed to increase women's participation within the party, the Party does not actively recruit women candidates. Consequently, few women Republicans run as candidates for state legislative office, and the number of women Republican elected as

⁶ The Democratic Party of Virginia has two groups of interest to Democratic women: the Farm Team, a PAC for Democratic women candidates, and a Virginia Democratic Women's Caucus (VDWC) whose purpose is to, "...encourage, educate, and finance Democratic women who aspire to public office." It should be noted that many Democrats participate in the Sorensen program, perhaps due to the absence of a formal partisan training program. Neither the Farm Team nor VDWC offers formal candidate training similar to programs offered by JBI or Sorensen and thus are excluded from this study.

state senators and delegates has actually *decreased* over time. Sanbonmatsu's (2006) assertion that an entrepreneurial system deters women candidates is evident with the small number of women candidates in the Republican Party of Virginia. Men, not women, are stepping forward to run for state legislature. And, the Virginia Republican Party misses out on an important opportunity to expand women's presence in the General Assembly by not actively encouraging prospective candidates to run. The Republican Party's lackluster efforts to recruit women candidates is further complicated by the fact that many women partisans are ambivalent about whether the party *should* reach out to prospective women candidates unless they are clearly the *best* candidate.

What the Republican Party of Virginia does have is the Jennifer Byler Institute which encourages the political development of young women partisans, not just as voters but as prospective candidates. JBI seeks to reduce barriers to political candidacy by introducing young women to party activists, candidates, and operatives. JBI's activity is clearly valuable in this regard but its potential has not yet been fully realized given the dearth of Republican women state legislative candidates. And, as our interviews made clear, the development of candidates takes time; only a few JBI graduates have run for local elective office.

In the short term, JBI's effect is limited by two factors; the age of its graduates, and, its policy of not funding candidates for elective office. As previously stated, many JBI participants are young women partisans who are either in or have recently graduated from college. Those who show interest in running for office likely view that goal as an eventual, not immediate, undertaking. To that end, the networking that is an integral part of the JBI program has its utility for prospective women candidates because it may help these women gain future entry into the circles from which prospective candidates are identified. Another limitation of the Jennifer Byler Institute is that it provides no campaign funds or similar resources to women who want to run for office as Republicans unlike EMILY's List Political Opportunity Program which both trains and funds endorsed local and state Democratic women candidates. JBI should consider both endorsing and funding promising Republican women candidates to further reduce candidacy barriers for these women.

The Jennifer Byler Institute was developed to give young women experience and exposure within the Party. With its growing list of graduates, JBI is a valuable tool in preparing and encouraging women to seek elective office as Republicans. What Republican women candidates need now is greater attention, recognition, and

resources from their party. Even with the Jennifer Byler Institute, the Republican Party of Virginia both can and should do more to recruit and support women candidates for elective office.

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THE ROLE OF UTILIZATION AND RETENTION ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF MERIT AID

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ABSTRACT

While significant attention has been paid to how demographic factors influence which students earn merit scholarships, less attention has been paid to identifying the characteristics of students who utilize their earned scholarships and whether they retain them once they utilize the awards. In an attempt to better understand the distribution of merit aid, this research explores how demographic and socioeconomic factors influence the utilization and retention of merit scholarships. An analysis of school-level data finds that utilization and retention rates of Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) awards decrease significantly for students from schools on the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum. This supports previous research that merit scholarships disproportionately benefit students who have higher socioeconomic status and negatively impact students with lower socioeconomic status. In addition, the findings suggest that policy makers need to take into account factors that shape the utilization and retention of merit scholarships as well as whether or not these scholarships are an effective policy tool for addressing educational policy goals.

INTRODUCTION

In April 1998, the Commonwealth of Kentucky joined a growing list of states when it created a lottery-funded, broad-based merit scholarship program. Senate Bill 21 enacted by the Kentucky General Assembly established the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES). The legislature designated a portion of state lottery revenues to fund this merit-based scholarship. Explaining the general goals of the program, the bill states that:

“The general assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky hereby declares that the best interest of the Commonwealth

mandates that financial assistance be provided to ensure access for Kentucky citizens to public and private postsecondary education at the postsecondary educational institutions of the Commonwealth. It is the intent and purpose of the General Assembly that the enactment of Sections 1 to 6 of this Act shall be constructed as a long term financial commitment to postsecondary education..."

In addition to the explicit goals of ensuring access and providing a long-term commitment to post-secondary education, the sponsors of KEES argue that the scholarships also serve as a mechanism for keeping talented students in state (KLTPRC, 2003; Hopkins, 2004).

While significant attention has been paid to how demographic factors influence which students earn merit scholarships, less attention has been paid to identifying the characteristics of students who use their earned scholarships (utilization) and whether they retain them once they utilize the awards (retention). In an attempt to better understand the distribution of merit aid, this research explores how demographic and socioeconomic factors influence the utilization and retention of merit scholarships. Using aggregate school-level data from the Kentucky case, we find the utilization rates for KEES drop at schools with a higher percentage of students who receive free or subsidized lunches. The percentage of students who are able to retain their merit scholarships also is lower for schools with more students receiving free or subsidized lunches. This finding that KEES is used less frequently and retained less often by students at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale suggests an increasing regressivity as we look at smaller subsets of students receiving merit aid. In other words, as the number of students who benefit from merit scholarships becomes smaller due to effects of utilization and retention, the regressiveness of merit aid is compounded. Since one of the stated goals of the program is to "ensure access" to post secondary education, the findings raise questions about how to best structure broad-based merit programs.

THE IMPACT OF BROAD-BASED MERIT AID

Since the inception of Georgia's HOPE Scholarship in 1993, over a dozen additional states have established broad-based merit scholarship programs. While many of the programs have key structural differences, merit aid has received widespread criticism for being regressive. The regressiveness of the programs stems from findings that show that the scholarships disproportionately benefit

students who come from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, while students from lower socioeconomic status receive fewer benefits from broad-based merit aid. Much of the critique on the regressive nature of merit scholarships comes from two reports provided by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University. These reports explore the consequences of broad-based merit scholarships in Georgia and several other states including Florida, Michigan, New Mexico, Alaska, and Kentucky.

The first report, *Who Should We Help? The Negative Consequences of Merit Scholarships*, investigates theories behind the use of these scholarships as well as how the different definitions of merit affect the distribution of awards (Heller & Marin, 2002). The researchers focus on the effects of how different definitions of merit in the structure of scholarship programs shape access to college for racial minorities and students from low-income families. The study also investigates how the presence of merit scholarships may shape tuition rates and financial aid packages from colleges within states implementing such programs.

Several general conclusions emerge from the report. Definitions of merit and the structures of many existing merit scholarships overlook students with the greatest financial need. This exacerbates existing disparities for minority and low-income students. Broad-based merit scholarships do not greatly expand access to college, instead they tend to benefit those students who would attend college anyway. In particular, scholarships seem to shape school choice by students who qualify for them. Merit scholarships also seem to influence tuition and financial aid decisions at some institutions which has the potential to increase the cost of going to college for students who do not qualify for the scholarships (Heller & Marin, 2002).

The follow up study by the Civil Rights Project, *State Merit Scholarship Programs and Racial Inequality*, looks in greater detail at the effects of scholarships on low income and minority groups (Heller & Marin, 2004). This report confirms the earlier report's conclusion that while the effects of merit scholarships may vary by state and structure, they tend to contribute to existing inequalities in access to college and the reception of awards by students who most need the support. The study also includes one of the few quantitative analyses of the Kentucky Education Excellence Scholarship. In a comparative analysis of five states, Patricia Farrell (2004) finds a substantive gap between the size of KEES awards earned by White and Black high school students.

There is also evidence that structural characteristics of merit aid programs impact the degree to which the distribution of merit aid is regressive. Ness and Noland (2007) find that changing the eligibility standards for merit aid can have a substantive effect on the number of students who receive awards. Several states (i.e. FL, LA, and WV) set standards where students must meet minimum GPA and ACT requirements. However, students in Tennessee are eligible for merit aid if they reach the minimum GPA or ACT requirements. Ness and Noland find that if Florida, Louisiana, and West Virginia implemented the relaxed standards used in Tennessee it would disproportionately benefit African-American students and students who come from lower SES backgrounds.

Whether the award is based on GPA or on standardized test scores can also impact the distributive effects of merit aid. In Kentucky, merit awards based on test scores are more regressive than awards based on high school GPA. The correlation between the % of students who receive free lunch and the % of the students who earned the base KEES scholarship (award is based on GPA) was a relatively modest .33 for the 2002-03 school year. The correlation between the % of students receiving free lunch and the % of students who received the KEES bonus award (based on ACT score) was nearly twice as strong at .64 (Kash and Lasley 2009). Campbell and Finney (2005) find evidence that local variations in grading standards help to dampen the differences in Georgia's HOPE scholarship distributions between lower and higher income households.

While merit scholarships have vocal critics, some programs earn praise from scholars. For example, Ackerman, Young, and Young (2005) argue that Nevada's Millennium Scholarship Program has been successful in achieving many of its goals. They provide evidence that the Millennium Scholarship Program improves access to higher education and encourages students to attend in-state institutions. The program also seems to promote persistence among award recipients. The authors note the importance of having funding for the scholarship program tied to a stable source of revenue.

Several studies find that Georgia's HOPE scholarship has increased overall college attendance in the state (e.g., Cornwell, Mustard, and Sridhar, 2006; Dynarski, 2004). Dynarski finds that HOPE may have increased the likelihood of college attendance by about 7% when compared to other southern states. Less clear is whether HOPE has been successful in increasing college attendance for all students or if the impact is felt only at the higher SES levels. While the issue has received relatively little attention, there is

evidence that HOPE has helped improve access for needier students. Singell, Waddell, and Curs (2006) conclude that the introduction of merit aid in Georgia has improved access for needier students, in part through the leverage of greater Pell assistance.

As is the case with many politically expedient programs, it takes time to fully understand the impact of unintended consequences of such programs. Student responses to the rules and guidelines governing merit aid are one source of these indirect effects. The implementation of the HOPE program has been associated with a decrease in students taking full loads and increases in the number of course withdrawals and the number of credits earned during summer (Cornwell, Lee, and Mustard, 2005). Cornwell, Lee, and Mustard (2006) also find that HOPE scholarships may impact the types of courses that students take and the majors they select. There is also some evidence linking merit aid with car sales. Cornwell and Mustard (2007) find a relationship between the number of HOPE recipients and the number of vehicle registrations in counties with higher levels of income. The implication is that the money previously earmarked to offset college costs is redirected toward other purchases. These findings from the literature suggest that from a broader policy perspective changing definitions of merit and eligibility standards within existing merit scholarships has the potential to change the number and type of students using the scholarships. It is not clear, however, what conditions and causal chains lead to the most effective way to address the potential for regressive outcomes or whether or not tinkering with existing programs is the most effective way to address the policy goals attributed to merit scholarships.

While many studies have explored the distributive effects of merit aid, there has been less attention focused on the impact of utilization and retention of awards. The relationship between the characteristics of students who actually use and maintain merit scholarships is important because the receipt of merit aid promotes student retention and graduation, but the benefits disappear if the aid is lost (Henry, Rubenstein, and Bugler, 2004). Students who received then lost their HOPE scholarship fared no better or worse than those who did not receive the aid in the first place. This is particularly relevant since a large percentage of HOPE recipients lose their aid after their first year. The ability to maintain HOPE scholarships also seems to be affected by choice of major. Georgia Tech students with majors in science, engineering, and computing were more likely to lose their scholarships than students from other majors (Dee and Jackson, 1999). Demographic factors did not lead

to significantly different outcomes. These findings suggest that this study is important for three reasons. First, the utilization and retention of scholarships by targeted groups are necessary conditions for educational success, thus finding out who is successfully using merit scholarships provides a basis for defining success. Second, in a time where state and federal education budgets are limited, it is important to identify which students benefit the most from existing scholarships to help policy makers more effectively target their policies. Third, the findings have the potential to reveal why policy goals are not being met thus allowing scholars and policy makers to readjust goals or develop alternative policy tools.

This study of the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship adds to our understanding on the ultimate impact of merit aid by identifying more precisely the characteristics of student groups that utilize and successfully maintain scholarships. In the sections that follow, we investigate the utilization and retention rates in different schools by GPA range. We then investigate the relationships between utilization and retention rates and variables that measure socioeconomic status, race and gender. The results provide another opportunity to expand the study of the impact of merit aid outside of Georgia. More importantly, it allows for a better understanding of what factors shape the utilization and retention rates for KEES. After examining what factors affect the utilization and retention of KEES awards, we discuss some of the implications for policymaking and future research.

THE KENTUCKY EDUCATION EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP

One characteristic that makes KEES relatively unique is its graduated reward schedule. KEES awards are based on two measurements of merit, a base amount that is calculated from students' high school GPAs and a supplemental amount based on students' ACT scores. The base award ranges from \$125 for a high school GPA of 2.5 to \$500 for a GPA of 4.00. Students earn a base award for each of the four years of high school with a cumulative maximum base award of \$2000.

The supplemental award also increases the amount of money received by students with improving ACT scores. Students who score a 15 on the ACT receive \$36 a year while those scoring 28 or above receive \$500. Students have five years to claim eight semesters worth of awards. The maximum they can earn in a year is \$2,500 with a maximum total of \$10,000 over the eight semesters.

There is no application that students must file to earn or utilize KEES awards. Students automatically earn KEES awards as they progress through high school. The awards are sent from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) directly to a college when the school informs the KHEAA that a KEES recipient is attending classes. Therefore, the utilization of the KEES awards occurs when the student enrolls at an institution of higher education.

Once in college, students must maintain a baseline GPA to continue receiving their full awards. After the first award period, they must maintain a 2.5 or above to receive the full amount. After the second award period, they must maintain a 3.0 to receive full funding. The graduated structure of KEES in the calculation of the award amounts and the retention criteria both influence what type of students benefit from the scholarships. This has implications for how well KEES meets its policy goals.

EFFECTS OF UTILIZATION AND RETENTION

Previous analysis of KEES data establishes that the initial distribution of the merit-based awards goes disproportionately to schools where fewer students receive free or reduced price lunches. The percentage of students who receive free or reduced lunch serves as a proxy variable to identify socioeconomic variation among schools. Free lunch data are collected as part of the Common Core of Data program by the Department of Education. The Department of Education collects fiscal and education information on public schools across the country. In addition to earning a higher percentage of awards, students from higher socioeconomic status schools also receive larger average KEES awards. These findings support that the initial distribution of KEES awards is regressive in nature (Kash and Lasley 2009). The focus here, however, is on identifying factors that relate to schools' rates of utilization and retention. In particular, we test the hypothesis that as the socioeconomic status of schools declines the utilization and retention rates for KEES awards drop. This suggests that the conditions that lead to lower utilization and retention rates make the KEES scholarships even more regressive than when we just take into account the structure of the scholarship. This hypothesis is tested using school-level data available through the KHEAA.¹ The bulk of the data for this study comes from the *2004 Kentucky Education Excellence Scholarship Data Report*. The report includes utilization and retention information for Kentucky high schools for the 2003-04

school year. Additional demographic data for public schools come from the Common Core of Data available through the Department of Education.

Means tests and multi-variate regression analysis are used to explore the effects of socioeconomic status, race, and gender on the utilization and retention of KEES scholarships. We focus on three dependent variables: % of earned awards utilized, % of utilized awards retained, and % of earned awards retained. The % of earned awards utilized measures the initial usage rate of KEES scholarships by students who earned KEES awards. The % of utilized awards retained measures the success rate for retaining KEES support by the students who utilized them. Finally, the % of earned awards retained is a measure of the net effect of the utilization and retention of KEES scholarships. This measure reveals the proportion of the students who retain the scholarship relative to the number of students who initially earned a KEES award. Using regression analysis, we also test the effect of the same independent variables on a fourth dependent variable that measures the percentage of all students who initially earned KEES awards. The inclusion of this dependent variable provides a baseline to improve our understanding of utilization and retention because it illustrates the distributive effect of socioeconomic status on the initial earning of awards before utilization and retention are factored into the analysis.

What is important to note about the choice of the utilization and retention variables is that they represent decreasingly smaller subsets of the population of students receiving KEES awards. In a previous study of KEES, we investigated the overall number of earned KEES awards by school and found that the pattern is regressive where the schools receiving the least number of KEES awards and smallest average monetary awards are the schools with the lowest socioeconomic status as measured by percentage of students receiving free lunches. For example, two-thirds of students at the wealthiest 20 schools earned KEES awards compared to just 52% of students at the poorest 20 (Kash and Lasley 2009). The % of earned awards utilized variable discussed above is a subset of the population of students who earned awards from the initial study. The % of utilized awards that are retained is a subset of the utilized awards from this study. These smaller subsets become important for our hypothesis because if we continue to find relationships between the dependent variables and socioeconomic status as we move to smaller subsets, this will suggest an increasing level of regressivity. The increased regressivity results because the number of students

who benefit from KEES is being reduced at each stage of the process.

Table 1 presents results from t-tests for independent means to measure the differences between the 20 schools with the most students receiving subsidized lunch and the 20 with the fewest. The subsidized lunch program is a federally established program that allows it to be a common basis of comparison. We use it as a proxy variable to measure the general socioeconomic status of the schools in the study. Utilization rates at the wealthiest 20 schools run about 13% higher than the rates at the bottom 20. The retention gap (11%) for utilized awards is similar. In both cases, the difference in means is statistically significant at the .01 level.

The differences between school categories reveal more interesting patterns when they are broken down by GPA range. The high school graduates from 2003 are split into three categories: students with a 2.50-2.99 GPA, those with a 3.00-3.49, and those with a 3.50 and higher. For students between 2.50 and 2.99 GPA, the significant difference between the schools with higher and lower percentages of students receiving free or reduced lunch is in utilization rates (14%). Statistical and substantive significance is attained for the difference in utilization rates, but not for the other two measures. Interestingly, just 10% of students who initially earned KEES awards with a GPA between 2.50 and 2.99 retain their awards for their second year of college.

The utilization gap also exists for students with high school GPAs between 3.00 and 3.49. The retention of utilized rewards is just six percentage points different, but the utilization gap is large enough where the difference between % of earned awards retained is statistically significant. When looking at students that initially earned KEES awards in this GPA range, students from the wealthier 20 schools were almost twice as likely to retain awards for their second year. For upper level students with GPAs between 3.50-4.00, the largest gap between wealthy and poor schools comes from retention of awards. While the utilization gap is just 6%, there is about a 15% gap in terms of retention. It is the only group of students for which the difference between % of utilized rewards retained is significant across schools. Although the results are not shown here, a comparison of means between the upper and lower quartiles (based on # of student receiving free or reduced lunches) of schools reveals the same pattern. In some cases, the results are even more robust.²

Table 1: Percentage of Students Utilizing and Retaining KEES Awards by GPA Range

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Students in GPA Range</i>	<i>Mean for Low 20</i>	<i>Mean for High 20</i>	<i>Statistical Significance</i>
% of Earned Awards Utilized	2.50 to 2.99	33.8%	20.1%	0.001
% of Utilized Awards Retained	2.50 to 2.99	37.4%	27.4%	
% of Earned Awards Retained	2.50 to 2.99	9.8%	6.3%	
% of Earned Awards Utilized	3.00 to 3.49	52.8%	37.9%	0.008
% of Utilized Awards Retained	3.00 to 3.49	41.8%	35.1%	
% of Earned Awards Retained	3.00 to 3.49	23.1%	12.9%	0.006
% of Earned Awards Utilized	3.50 to 4.00	74.2%	68.0%	0.083
% of Utilized Awards Retained	3.50 to 4.00	78.3%	63.8%	0.000
% of Earned Awards Retained	3.50 to 4.00	57.8%	43.8%	0.000
% of Earned Awards Utilized	All	60.3%	47.2%	0.000
% of Utilized Awards Retained	All	64.6%	53.8%	0.002
% of Earned Awards Retained	All	38.9%	25.9%	0.000

OLS Regression is used to provide a multi-variate test of the effect that a school's economic status has on the utilization and retention rates of KEES awards for that school's graduates. The base model employed here is:

$$Y_{(1,2,3,4)} = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

where Y_1 is the percentage of students who earned KEES awards, Y_2 is the percentage of earned KEES awards that were utilized at each school, Y_3 is the number of utilized awards that were retained, Y_4 is

the number of earned awards that were retained. X_1 is the percentage of student who received free or reduced lunch at each school, X_2 is the percentage of students that are white, and X_3 is the percentage of students that are female.³

Overall the multivariate analysis presented in Table 2 provides compelling evidence that not only is the KEES scholarship regressive in the initial earning of awards, but becomes increasingly regressive at the utilization and retention stages of the process. The results presented in the first column of the table show the impact that the composition of a school's student body has on the percentage of students who earned KEES awards. Schools that have fewer students receiving subsidized lunches and have a higher percentage of white and female students will have a greater share of students that initially earn awards.

Results presented in the remaining columns of Table 2 explore the impact of the independent variables on utilization and retention rates. Cumulatively, the multivariate analyses presented in columns 2 through 4 reinforce the results from the means tests. Schools with a higher percentage of students receiving subsidized lunch, have fewer students utilizing and retaining KEES awards. The subsidized lunch variables continue to achieve statistical significance ($p < .001$) in the models that control for racial and gender composition. A school where 25% of the students receive subsidized lunches has an average utilization rate that is 11 percentage points higher than a school with 75% subsidized lunches. The difference for the percentage of utilized awards retained for similar schools would be about 8%. The racial composition of a school has little effect on utilization rates, but does influence retention rates. The average retention rates are higher for schools that have a higher percentage of white students. For every 10% of the school's student population that is white, the average retention rate is one percentage point higher. A similar pattern exists for gender composition. Schools with a higher percentage of female students have a higher percentage of students who retain their awards for a second year. When the percentage of female students increases by two percentage points, retention rates would be one percent higher.

The results from the multivariate analysis provide strong evidence that as we investigate smaller and smaller subsets of the KEES award's recipients distinguished by utilization and retention the influence of socioeconomic status increases its effect. This indicates that the regressive relationship increases as we take into account utilization and retention rates. While that finding is

important, the regressive nature of merit awards is part of a larger issue. The results presented above suggest much more than the fact that KEES awards are regressive across Kentucky public schools. It suggests that the factors that shape utilization and retention may have a major impact on the successful use of merit scholarships.

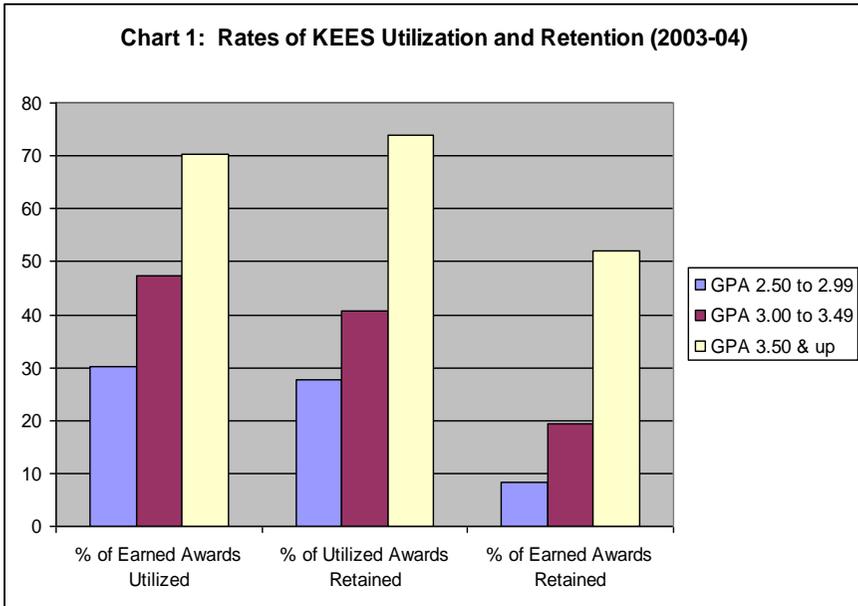
Table 2: Summary of OLS Regression Results

	% of Students Earning Awards	% of Awards Utilized	% of Utilized Awards Retained	% of Earned Awards that are Retained
% of Students Receiving Free Lunch	-0.16***	-0.22***	-0.16***	-0.21***
% of White Students	0.16***	0.08	0.11*	0.11*
% of Female Students	0.32*	0.25	.47**	0.29*
Adj. R	0.26	0.25	0.26	0.31
N	232	232	232	232

*** Statistically significant at .001 (one-tail test)

** Statistically significant at .01 (one-tail test)

* Statistically significant at .05 (one-tail test)



The following discussion suggests how these factors may affect utilization and retention decisions. We work off a relatively

simplistic model of the decision on whether or not to utilize KEES awards. We assume that the decision to utilize KEES awards reflects a student's desire and ability to attend college, the ability of a student to pay for college, and finally, the desire and opportunity to attend college outside the Commonwealth.

As illustrated by the graphs presented in Chart 1, less than one third of Kentucky students with GPAs between 2.50 and 2.99 utilize their KEES awards. Since there is little reason to believe that students with lower GPAs are disproportionately more likely to attend school out of state, the lower utilization rates reflect one of two (or both) scenarios. First, it is possible that students from this performance range are less interested in attending college. Second, it is possible that the size of the KEES awards is not enough to shift the financial equation where they feel college is an affordable alternative. In addition to low utilization rates, only about a quarter of those students with GPAs between 2.50 and 2.99 earn high enough grades during their first year of college to retain the awards. In fact, to maintain full award funding for all four years of college, students from this group need to perform significantly better in college than they did in high school. Overall, less than 8% of all awards earned by students with a GPA less than 3.00 are retained after the first year.

The utilization rates for students with high school GPAs between 3.00-3.49 also fall below 50%, while the rate of retention after the first year is about 38%. Less than one of five earned awards is retained for the second year of college. Low retention rates indicate that many KEES awards are directed toward students that are not well prepared to maintain them. Not only are many not prepared to maintain their awards, many might not be well prepared to be successful in college at all.

It isn't until you get to the students who earned 3.50 or higher in high school before you start to see a majority of students utilize and retain KEES awards. This suggests that students in this category are ones that have the greatest interest in attending school, the financial resources to facilitate it, and the ability to retain their aid. What is not clear from this and most other studies is to what extent KEES plays a role in substantively shifting the calculation in terms of financial considerations. There is reason to believe, however, that KEES directs its largest awards to those in the best position to afford college in the first place. Ultimately, this may be a reasonable strategy since students in this GPA grouping are most likely to be in position to retain their aid.

DISCUSSION

Like other merit-based scholarships, the initial distribution of merit aid through KEES is regressive, where disproportionate benefits are distributed to students from high schools with higher economic status. This study provides compelling evidence that when the rates of utilization and retention for KEES awards are taken into account the regressive nature of the program increases. The findings presented here also suggest that the likelihood of retaining scholarships is not equal across racial and gender dimensions. While the regressive nature of merit aid programs has raised concerns for many researchers, regressivity is just one of many factors that should be included in an analysis of the utility of merit programs. Perhaps the most important policy concern related to KEES and other merit aid is that of opportunity cost. While there is strong support for the conclusion that broad-based merit aid has led to higher enrollments in the states that have implemented them, there is little evidence that the programs are efficient in doing so. For policymakers looking to increase the number of college graduates, this study confirms what other studies have also found that the success or failure of merit scholarship programs needs to take into account how they measure merit, how they structure eligibility and retention requirements, and what characteristics define their target audience. There is also clearly a need to develop some alternative policy tools to achieve educational goals.

When looking specifically at the impact of utilization and retention rates as they apply to the KEES program, several issues merit further exploration. One issue to explore is the relatively low utilization rate for students with less than a 3.50 high school GPA. About 60% percent of students who earned a 3.49 GPA or lower do not use their KEES scholarship upon high school graduation. As compared with students with a 3.50 GPA or higher, students in the lower GPA range come disproportionately from schools with lower economic status. This raises some questions relating to what extent KEES is able to provide meaningful access to students with higher levels of financial need. While the question is beyond the scope of this analysis, it does set the stage for future research on whether students in this category are not going to college because it doesn't work for them financially or if it reflects a lack of interest in or preparation for pursuing higher education. It is likely that Kentucky's unique and highly graduated awards structure leads to lower utilization rates since the size of the awards decrease for students with lower high school grades and test scores. States that

have a single and higher level of merit funding are likely to encounter less trouble with low utilization rates for students near the lower margin because these students either meet the criteria and receive equivalent funding or do not meet the criteria and do not receive funding. The consequences of losing aid are greater in these states, but the dichotomous nature of the awards may also make decision on whether to go to college an easier calculation for students.

Low retention rates by KEES recipients generate even more questions relating to the overall efficiency of broad-based merit aid. Part of the problem in assessing the effectiveness of merit aid is the divergent goals that many programs attempt to meet. For example, a scholarship program designed to keep the best and brightest within a state would look quite different from a program that is created to ensure access for needier students. In a program where the primary goal is to ensure access to higher education, the main concern of low retention rates is that the standards to retain scholarships are too high. If benefits of receiving merit aid vanish when the award is lost as Henry, et al. (2004) found to be the case in Georgia, it is important to make sure that recipients have a good chance to maintain their aid. Otherwise, the initial distribution of merit aid is an investment with a low rate of return. This research, then, suggests that the more precise policymakers can define their policy's target group the greater potential for efficient policies.

An alternative perspective on relatively low retention rates is that too many high school students are receiving aid and that much of the aid is being received by students who are not well prepared to succeed at the level needed to maintain the merit aid. This approach becomes particularly salient if the primary goal of the merit aid is to keep the best and brightest home. If the goal is to attract outstanding students to in-state institutions, it is much more efficient to increase the amount of aid received by a smaller number of recipients. While answers to some of these questions require more research and discussion, the utility of KEES and other merit aid programs can improve with more precise identification of the program's primary policy objective. This will allow the program to be defined more narrowly to foster efficient attainment of the stated objective. Of course, the obvious complication and perhaps greatest obstacle is that political and policy goals are often not complementary.

Policymakers were initially attracted to the idea of merit-based scholarships because they allowed, at least in theory, equal access to college funding based on universal measures of academic performance. In short, they reward students who work hard and

perform well. Because the definitions of merit were universal and any student graduating from Kentucky high schools was eligible, the program was meant to increase the number of students seeking college-level degrees. The KEES program's graduated award structure was meant to provide incentives for better performance from students who received it. What is apparent from this research is that the students who utilize and maintain KEES funding are a smaller and skewed proportion of the students who initially earn the awards. This leads to a situation where KEES is inefficient in meeting the goal of greater access. It also highlights the importance of incorporating the effects of utilization and retention when studying the consequences of KEES and other merit aid programs. Any changes to KEES or the broader design of merit scholarships need to take into account the characteristics of students who retain the scholarships as well as the broader policy goals set by state legislatures.

NOTES

1. Since we are using data from the 2002-03 school year, it limits our ability to include comparisons between private and public schools that need measures of student size to calculate. The demographic data for public schools come from the Common Core of Data for the 2002-03 school year. Data for the Private School Universe is gathered every other year so there was not updated private school data for the 2002-03 school year.
2. Correlation analysis also reinforces the patterns found in the results for difference of means tests.
3. Controls for the locales of schools were included in the OLS Regression models. Since no substantively or statistically significant patterns emerged, they are largely ignored in the analysis presented here. The locales that were used are those that were included by the Department of Education in the Common Core of Data. They are based on definitions used by the U.S. Census and include large city, mid-size city, urban fringe of a large city, urban fringe of a mid-size city, large town, small town, rural (outside MSA), and rural (inside MSA).

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PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY AND RACIAL REDEMPTION

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ABSTRACT

Beginning in 1959, Prince Edward County closed its public schools for what turned out to be five years as it mounted extraordinary resistance to a court-ordered desegregation. In an exercise in applied history, the author revisits the scene of Virginia's, and the South's, longest school closings (about which he wrote the foundational book as the events unfolded). Bringing the story of conflict — and, as it appears, reconciliation — down to the present, he returned to the county in 2008, at the time of the dedication of a Civil Rights Memorial in Richmond and a similar gesture in Farmville, and in the aftermath he muses about the potential for modeling such success as one county has demonstrated over the past half-century.

Driving on Main Street in downtown Farmville, Virginia, one evening in July 2008, I turned right on High Street up toward old Longwood College — now Longwood University — and began to slow down. I was looking to my right for the house and I realized that my wife, beside me, was anticipating my saying something for I had said it before. There's the house where I stayed nights all those seven years of weekends, holidays, vacations. I didn't say it this time. I didn't mention the name of the elderly lady whose rented room had given me some small measure of legitimacy in town.

Longwood's bluff row of buildings loomed on the left, the Weyanoke Hotel (now a Longwood dormitory) was on the right and on the next corner the memorial statue of the Confederate soldier stood, still on duty—an old man in my days in town, a half-century older now but ever vigilant, staring as always rigidly back into the past. It was this figure's message of historical intransigence that invoked the "War Between the States" spirit that prevailed in the late 1950s, when massive resistance to school desegregation was in full cry throughout the South.

Another, very different memorial had been unveiled for us all only the day before over in Richmond on the lawn of the capitol

of the old Confederacy. It portrayed heroes from the period of the shutting down of public schools in Prince Edward County that had left African-American parents there foraging for five years (1959–1964) for scraps of education for their children. These newly memorialized African-American figures were in bronze on granite, their faces reflecting profound conviction, their eyes on the prize: sixteen-year-old Barbara Rose Johns, who led the 400-plus students on a two-week strike of R.R. Moton High School in 1951; the Rev. L. Francis Griffin, who led and held together the African-American community before, during and after the fateful years of school closings; and Spottswood Robinson and Oliver Hill Sr., NAACP attorneys who took the *Brown v. Board* case to the Supreme Court for its historic 1954 decision.

And this new statue was planted only two hundred yards from the statue of Sen. Harry Flood Byrd Sr., Virginia's political kingpin of massive resistance days, who had sworn that no African-American child would enter a "white" school in his South. Ever.

In life, Senator Byrd had been a flesh and blood son of the Confederate soldier's representation of white supremacy. What would the senator have made of — as he would have understood it — these colored people's invasion now of his sacred territory in Richmond? And what of the event scheduled for this night? Following the county commissioners' dinner, my wife and I were going downtown, near the edge of Longwood, the setting of a permanent light in the bell tower of the Prince Edward County courthouse, a light of reconciliation between whites and African Americans as equals in this Black Belt Virginia county.

He could not have conceived of any of it. Nor, I confess, could I when I left this county in 1965 with public schools finally reopened, and my book *They Closed Their Schools* just published — vowing I would never again set foot in so benighted a place.

But with these thoughts as I drove along that summer night, I experienced a feeling I had not had before in my life. It mingled my personhood and this place, sorrow and joy, in way that was different for me. It felt like a new mood settling in, and for the moment I could not fathom what that mood was. I could not even determine it's tense: Today, just now? Yesterday? How far back? I drew a mental chalk mark around it in my memory and decided to wait and see.

My main reason for renting a room in Mrs. Shelton Whitaker's house for visits in the fall of 1958 was that it was

centrally located in downtown Farmville and, most important, inexpensive. Early interviews had convinced me that a big story was looming in this sleepy, rural county sixty miles southwest of Richmond. Under orders to desegregate the schools as one of the five cases bundled together in the school desegregation decision of 1954, the board of supervisors intended instead to close all public schools in the county. Prince Edward would educate its white children in private schools. White leadership would perhaps help the African-American families find educational resources for their kids — but only if those families were willing to abandon their hard-won prize of court-ordered racial integration and settle for a return to separate but never-in-the-past equal public education. A recently-completed “black” high school stood in full view as tender to the segregationists’ purpose of reform, but it was easy to see that the rest of the buildings in the county’s public school system for African-Americans remained as living symbols of left-over, run-down, second-hand tokenism. It seemed clear to me from interviews with African-American leaders that the segregationists’ proposition to help them build more segregated schools was considered likely illegal and in any case far too little and impossibly too late. The only real hope the segregationists had — and many of them put stock in it — was that Prince Edward had gotten out of the public school business and that no court would go so far as to tell them they had to get back in. To my mind, that suggested a long legal fight ahead that would leave roughly half the children of the county with no ready means of getting education.

And this was not to be a brief closing of public schools like others that had occurred in the South. The white leadership of Prince Edward saw their private schools as the future and public schooling of any kind already a fading memory.

I could manage the two and one-half hour drives each way from my home to Farmville and back on my free time as a reporter for the *Virginian-Pilot* newspaper of Norfolk-Portsmouth, but I had to handle all expenses on a young newsman’s salary and that meant cheap lodgings and no fancy eats. A by-product of my choice was respectability of a sort. Mrs. Whitaker was an estimable Farmville lady who could report to anyone interested that my comings and goings were strictly professional and my habits regular and mild. It helped also that I was working for a southern rather than northern newspaper and that the *Virginian-Pilot* was not interested in reports at a distance on school closings that might or might not take place. I didn’t have to write published stories in a daily paper that, no matter how even-handed, might have convinced my segregationist contacts,

who harbored more than a touch of paranoia that I was there to disparage them.

For all my concern about being accepted as someone offering to take on the role of fair-minded chronicler of events, I found a high degree of cooperation wherever I went for information. J. Barrye Wall Sr., publisher of the *Farmville Herald* and leader of the segregationists, was not unhappy to have a reporter from a metropolitan Virginia paper come by again and again, taking careful notes, trying to grasp his deepest convictions. The Rev. L. Francis Griffin, the leading voice of the African-American community, managed congeniality at a time when the pressure on him from whites, and also from minority elements in the African-American community, was unrelenting. I did my best to maintain a strictly impartial reportorial demeanor, but as the day of school closings approached and tensions heightened I am sure that my sympathies with the African-American families' deepening dilemma showed.

One thing I was convinced of. The white leadership of the county had seriously misunderstood the Moton High School strike of 1951 and, as a result, had underestimated the ability of the African-American community to hold together in the face of a determined opposition. These whites thought of the teen-aged Barbara Johns as a figurehead manipulated by her elders; they completely missed her as a product of new times, a genuine leader capable of reminding her elders what it meant to believe in the message of freedom and hope. Listening to their older African-American contacts, who had long ago lost their credibility in their own community, the white leadership also underestimated the Rev. Mr. Griffin, who had these same leadership qualities and was experienced enough to know how to use them. He was in no way involved in planning the school strike, as segregation leaders thought, but he knew instinctively when it happened that it could change the life of his people in this rural Virginia county for the better. Later, when the stakes became higher, he saw that it might even leave a mark of distinction on life in America itself.

The idea of the school strike had come to Barbara Johns in increments. First there was the example of her uncle, the Rev. Vernon Johns, who had been telling African-Americans in the South that they had forever been forced to choose between their hides and their souls, that they had almost always chosen their hides, and that their hides were not worth it. The Rev. Mr. Johns lived in Montgomery, Alabama, but was a native of Prince Edward, and

Barbara spent a good bit of time figuratively at his knee. He had been pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery for several years and had been just recently succeeded there by a young man named Martin Luther King Jr. Then there was Inez Davenport, Barbara's music teacher and mentor at the Robert Russa Moton High School, named for the African-American educator who had succeeded Booker T. Washington as president of Tuskegee Institute. Barbara had complained to her about the "tar paper shacks," flimsy, leaky structures heated by pot-bellied stoves, where the students overflowing from the main building were taught. Miss Davenport, as it came much later to appear, put the idea of a strike in the mind of Barbara Johns and then later gave her organizational suggestions.

Barbara took over, involved a few key students, and lured Principal M. Boyd Jones out of the school with phone calls about students causing a problem at the bus station. After a meeting in the school auditorium she led the entire high school out into the streets, protest placards aloft. The students' initial goal was just a new school, but history intervened. When NAACP attorneys Oliver Hill and Spottswood Robinson came by to visit, the organization had just recently turned from the failed policy of separate but equal to demands for full desegregation everywhere in the country. The African-American community including the striking students themselves was split at first over going all-out for desegregation, but became united in a mass meeting when Barbara boldly spoke out against J.P. Pervall, a former Moton school principal who attempted to scold the children and sway the parents from going to court for desegregation. She stood up and addressed the parents: "Don't let Mr. Charlie or Mr. Tommy or Mr. Pervall stop you from backing us. We are depending on you." Soon afterwards petitions were signed to merge Prince Edward's case with four others that eventually made up *Brown*.

At first blush, it is surprising that the national media has made so little of the Moton strike. The strike made Prince Edward by far the most dramatic of the *Brown* cases leading to the school desegregation decree by the Supreme Court that was the lynchpin of the early years of the mid-twentieth century's civil rights reformation. The two-week strike also featured the second major element of that reformation — non-violent civil disobedience, in this case of the Virginia school attendance laws — and its community involvement presaged the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955–56. In an important sense, the strike was the first significant blow in what we have come to call the contemporary civil rights movement in America.

That it happened before the civil rights movement had attracted enough attention to merit that name accounts for sparse national coverage at the time — what after all was to be made of a few hundred African-American students striking their high school in a little county in Virginia in 1951? But it does not account for media disinterest in the years that followed.

For that I think we have to look at how citizens of Prince Edward conducted themselves once the battle lines were joined. I witnessed numerous retaliations to the court case by the white segregationist leadership in the years leading up to the desegregation order and the school closings. The Rev. Mr. Griffin and others in the community found that credit in stores where they had shopped all their lives was suddenly worthless. Many African-American homes went without adequate heat during winter months. Principal Jones and other leaders in the African-American community were terminated in their employment, whether as punishment for erroneously suspected involvement in the strike or, later on, as employees of the public schools, laid off in the closings.

A small group of whites opposing the school closing were ridiculed, bullied, and finally squelched. School Board Chairman Lester Andrews found himself cut cold by lifelong friends. A prominent minister was in effect forced to leave town for preaching against the school closings from his pulpit. Dr. Gordon Moss, dean of women at Longwood, was ostracized for his outspoken criticism of the actions of county leaders both before and after the school closings. As the educational losses of the unschooled children of Prince Edward mounted during the five years of school closings, a bitter sense of diminishment pervaded the African-American community.

Yet for all of that, there never was the violence that so wrenched the Deep South during these years of hosings in the streets, beatings, and repeated, calculated murder. In his book *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, published in 1949, V.O. Key had written insightfully: “In a word, politics in Virginia is reserved for those who can qualify as gentlemen. Rabble rousing and Negro-baiting capacities, which in Georgia or Mississippi would be a great political asset, simply mark one as not to the manor born.”

In Prince Edward, public security was not left to chance. A cross had been burned on the property of Moton back during the period of the school strike, and while there was doubt among cool-headed observers that this was the professional work of Klansmen, the message was clear. To their everlasting credit, Editor Wall and the Rev. Mr. Griffin, separately and together, importuned law-

enforcement agencies in the city and county to keep a sharp eye out for the possibility of violence on either side. Both leaders agreed: It could not be allowed to happen in Prince Edward.

With the public schools closed and white families working with privately raised money and educating their children first in churches and later in a newly constructed school, the African-American community went through a period of wholesale if piecemeal disintegration. Families were broken up with the women, often better educated, finding employment out of the county, while their children largely went unschooled except for the few who were placed in homes in other areas around the country with assistance primarily from the American Friends Service Committee. In these cases the fathers usually stayed home and farmed or minded their businesses, more often than not looking after their children under foot as best they could. Many school-age children worked the fields besides their fathers in an ugly recapitulation of slavery days.

Meanwhile, legal action instituted by the NAACP worked its way through state and federal courts at the proverbial snail's pace, one procedural delay after another. Efforts to involve the Kennedy Administration were only partially successful. Bobby Kennedy famously (for those who were paying attention) remarked in 1963: "We may observe with much sadness and irony that, outside of Africa, south of the Sahara, where education is still a difficult challenge, the only places known not to provide free, public education are Communist China, North Vietnam, Sarawak, Singapore, British Honduras, and Prince Edward County, Virginia. Something must be done about Prince Edward County."

Something was, but only eventually. With other legal efforts exhausted, the African-American community in Prince Edward challenged the county's segregationist leadership where its chain of resistance was perceived to be strongest: The issue of whether a court would order commissioners of one county in a state to appropriate money for public schools. Eventually, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the Virginia constitution called for a "system of public schools" in the state and that meant that Prince Edward, like every other county, had to serve its children — all of them — in public schools.

The public schools of the county were closed for five years. In the last year of this period a Free School system was thrown together to serve those African-American children who were available and had not given up on their education. When the public schools re-opened in September 1964, they were segregated almost as completely as they had been when they were closed five years

before.

An early assessment of the damage done educationally turned up numbers that could not have surprised anyone who had been keeping up with the story. Of the approximately 1,700 African-American students in the system when the schools closed, 1,100 had received little or no education during the five-year period. Only 25 of the total number had been to any kind of school for all five years.

But not many people outside the county had been keeping up. I think there were reasons for this both historical and cultural. First of all, the critical thrust of the civil rights movement had shifted from public schools to public accommodations — from the classroom to the streets. The Greensboro, North Carolina, lunch counter sit-ins of 1960 began that adjustment not long after massive resistance against school desegregation had collapsed, in Virginia and elsewhere.

With this shift in emphasis, the segregationists' "last stand" on school desegregation in a small, rural Virginia county could be seen as an anachronism. The keen-eyed reporters, and the television camera's lenses, were focused on the bloody battlefields with their tumultuous streets and crowded jails. Here was vivid action while in Prince Edward there was only a depleting, day-to-day educational stand-off with the accumulating damage to families and children invisible to all but those close to the scene.

In such situations, when a crisis is static, the surface peaceful, with no way of predicting solution, events are not likely to be considered news by our media even when they may be history-making. And history was in the making day by day in Prince Edward, although there was nothing obvious to report but the ongoing anguish of an African-American community bereft of what Americans everywhere had come to consider their inalienable rights. So the impossible Prince Edward case quietly slipped further into obscurity as the life chances of the county's African-American children wilted with each passing day.

The one element that could have focused the nation's attention on the county through the media was absent. There was no violence, not even an isolated instance. There were moments of rising anger between the races. In response to economic pressures on the African-American community, there was talk of an economic boycott of Farmville's business community. With African-Americans constituting the majority of the population, this was no idle threat, as became clear in the summer of 1963.

I noted in my book that for all the anger between the races, a remnant of old-school courtesy managed to survive. The Rev. Mr. Griffin had told me that to a “*degree*” — and he emphasized that word — “this still comes down to an argument among gentlemen.” I saw him one day in the height of the school closings walking down Main Street, nodding and smiling at individuals he knew hated to the depth of their being what he believed in and was fighting for. And I observed that these white segregationists were nodding back or, sometimes, initiating the courtesy.

I saw and heard other things I perhaps should have taken more seriously. Whites in the county took me aside when they were sure nobody else was watching to tell me that they sympathized with the plight of the African-American families with children out of school. I remember one prominent townsman in whose eyes tears welled up as he tried to explain why he felt he dared not publicly denounce the school closings. Several African-Americans I knew told me in hushed voices about receiving money secretly and sometimes anonymously from whites who were aware of the financial strain that accompanied the dislocation of their families.

But what I thought I saw, all too clearly, was a community fatefully divided against itself. In the persistent deadlock I could see no possibility of future reconciliation. In my mind’s eye, Prince Edward could easily soon face a dwindling population of whites as well as blacks, economic stagnation, social atrophy. Who would want to come to such a place to work and live? Who living there would not desire to leave?

Looking back at the young man I was at this time, I see now that for all of my attempts to remain outside the story, I had been pulled deeply into it. I hated what I felt was the last-ditch, destructive behavior of white leadership. I empathized deeply with the African-American community in Prince Edward and resented what I saw as the failure of outside supporters, in government and out — and even in the national African-American community itself — to come to the rescue of the children who were suffering irreversible damage. I had seen too much despair in the faces of parents, including a number of the poorer white families who had not been able to afford or were unwilling to send their children to the private school. I thought of my own child at home. I wondered what my wife and I would have done if we had lived and worked in Prince Edward county during these years.

Of course I did not live up to my oath never to set foot again

in the county. Early in 1980, a friend phoned to tell me that the Rev. Mr. Griffin was very ill. I remember driving along Main Street toward the First Baptist Church the next day and spying him walking toward it in the parking lot of the strip mall that abutted. He would take a few steps, stop, rest, take another few steps and stop to rest again. My heart sank.

I parked and walked up to him. He smiled and patted me on the back. Without a word, he ushered me into his office, sat me down, picked up the telephone, and dialed. "Gordon," he said. "You will never guess who I've got sitting here with me now." And he drew down for me that oversized smile he always seemed to have ready no matter how dire the situation. I remember the moment as my proudest to this day, for the Rev. Mr. Griffin and Dr. Gordon Moss were my personal heroes. Each had shown uncommon courage throughout the school closings. And each had stayed when he could have left — Griffin had numerous offers and Dr. Moss could easily have re-located. As I visited with these two that day, I felt that they had paid dearly in health for their decisions. The preacher died soon after my visit; the educator not many years later.

Before that episode, I had left newspaper work and taken a job in an anti-poverty non-profit, moving to North Carolina — first Chapel Hill, and then Durham — in the process. The only other references to Prince Edward County that cropped up during these years were occasional calls from friends in Virginia who had tried to borrow my book from the public library in Prince Edward. They would call to tell me that no matter when they went or how often, no copies of the book were available; the librarian invariably said that they were out on loan. One stubborn friend insisted on being informed when a copy was returned and the librarian politely wrote down his name, address and phone number. He never heard back from her. I concluded that nothing much had changed in Prince Edward.

So, years later in the mid-1990s, retired and living in Jamestown, North Carolina, I was shocked to get calls from some of these same friends with exciting if implausible news. A reporter for Long Island's *Newsday*, had toured the five *Brown* sites and concluded that four of them were still having serious problems with integration in the schools. About the fifth, he wrote: "Prince Edward is the success story of the five. The same community that treated its black children like so much trash is now a model for the nation." He wrote of the successful integration into the public schools — 60 per cent African-American and 40 percent white pupils — and said that the schools were "spawning National Merit Scholarships like

minnows.” Test scores, he noted, were at the national average. No incidents of racial conflict had been reported.

Fully awake at last, I made some phone calls and drove to Prince Edward. What I found and learned subsequently in follow-up visits had at first a fairy tale quality about it. Perhaps the most readily apparent evidence of change was in the sole significant media organ in the county, the *Farmville Herald*. From these homely offices where J. Barrye Wall once exhorted the citizens of the county to “stand steady” against efforts of the federal government to integrate the schools, a profoundly different message was issuing. The energetic, young editor of the *Herald*, Ken Woodley, had been leading people of Prince Edward in the diametrically opposite direction.

The struggle over the future of Moton High School, where the Prince Edward story began, had become a focal point of conflict. Civil rights leaders in the county wanted the building to become a civil rights museum. The county commissioners wanted to sell the property to the highest bidder, which would have removed Moton from the landscape and — its supporters feared—with that act stripped its meaning from popular memory. Woodley wrote one of those rare editorials that draw upon and make history at once. “If we are going to tear down the former R.R. Moton high school...,” he wrote, “let’s go ahead and tear down Independence Hall, too, and dump the Liberty Bell in the river.” To my amazement, he was soon thereafter able to publish a full page of letters to the editor agreeing with his editorial while receiving not one single letter with an opposing viewpoint. Just as hard for me to understand was the fact that the *Herald* was being published by Steve Wall, a grandson of J. Barrye Wall. When I asked him how to account for the things that Woodley was writing, he responded by saying: “It’s his business to say what he thinks. If I tell him what to say, I might as well do the job myself.” I pushed for more from this young man whose education had taken him from the county and brought him home again, but all he would add was that he was tired of “Prince Edward bashing.”

After Woodley’s editorial and a few other evidences that their position did not have the support of the population of Prince Edward, the commissioners decided to sell the school building to those who wanted to make a civil rights museum out of it.

It was obvious that a sea change had occurred in the county but it wasn’t easy for me to see, at first, quite how that had happened. I knew Vera Allen, an African-American educator who had lost her job when the schools closed and had come back as director of

instruction when they re-opened. She suggested that I talk with the man who had hired her back, James M. Anderson Jr., then superintendent of schools for Prince Edward. As a white principal of an integrated high school in a neighboring county, Anderson had refused under great pressure to take away from an African-American senior the valedictorian honor she had won fairly. For that act, he had been stripped of authority and banished to paperwork.

Anderson was a skillful politician as well as a gifted educator. He used what influence he had to convince the General Assembly to close down schools paid for out of state funds for the children of educators at Longwood and Hampden-Sydney and persuaded the presidents of each of these institutions to enroll their children in the public schools. Gradually, it became appropriate as well as economical to send one's children to the public schools; the private school survived but only in its eventually customary national role as an educational alternative. When Anderson retired in 1997, four out of every five school-age children were attending public schools.

In that same year, an action was taken that boded well for the future of the reconciliation effort the community had begun to mount. The board of directors of the R.R. Moton Museum invited the private school to put a member on the Moton board. The private school agreed. Spokesmen for both institutions used the word "healing" in statements about the action. Reading of that event again in a *Farmville Herald* of that day recently, I thought it a significant token of what seemed to be happening in racial relations in this county.

I met Lacy Ward Jr., then a field representative for the U.S. congressman representing Prince Edward County. Ward was actively involving himself in the battle to turn Moton into a civil rights museum. He arranged for re-publication of my book, which had long been out of print. I had a glorious moment of renewal and discovery one night in the packed Moton auditorium signing new copies of the book, with all proceeds earmarked for the museum. My wife and I met people white as well as African-American who told us that their old copies of the original edition were falling apart and being held together with tape, or the pages broken out from them and machine-made copies distributed to friends. In three hours I signed nearly 300 books and collected kind words and frequent hugs. One elderly woman spoke the words that mattered most to me. She said she had kept her copy of the book on a bedside table by the Bible. "It may not be like the Bible," she said. "But ..." and she touched the new copy I had just signed. "It's all in here ... nobody can deny it; it's

history.”

That was true to a degree, but I had missed the really exciting history, the radical reformation during the years I had been looking away, and now, back in touch, I was far out on the periphery, much older and with less energy to expend. Woodley blessedly kept me up to date. It was through reading clippings the editor sent from the *Farmville Herald* that I learned how difficult it had been to get from the creation of a civil rights museum in Farmville to the moment of inter-racial reconciliation represented by the statuary in Richmond and the light in the Prince Edward county courthouse cupola.

For it was not possible for Prince Edward to make a real run toward amity between the races without restitutive action from the General Assembly and the governor of Virginia. Woodley sought allies and lobbied in the legislature. Del. Viola Baskerville of Richmond stepped up in 2003 and successfully sponsored a resolution of “profound regret” for the school closings. The resolution’s language was passionate: “the close of Prince Edward county schools severely affected the education of African-American students, wounding the human spirit and ultimately contributing to job and home losses, family displacements and separations, and a deep sense of despair within the African-American community.” Strong words, the like seldom heard from a state’s political leadership to any body of citizens for actions state and local taken long ago.

But Woodley knew that, fine as these words were, they could not by themselves constitute the tipping point for reconciliation. He had been working for over a year on a scholarship plan to enrich what he had started calling in the Herald “massive redemption” in Virginia and Prince Edward. At his request, allies in the legislature — Delegate Viola Baskerville and Senator Benjamin Lambert — convinced their fellows to fund the scholarships.

But in the Senate debate on the bill, legislators argued that the grown-up children of the school closings would not use the money for further education at this late date. Both the Senate and the House defeated budget amendments sponsored by Baskerville and Lambert. It looked as though money for the scholarships might not come from the legislature.

Woodley put the question of whether the original students would now use money for education to John Stokes, one of the key leaders of the original school strike of 1951 and the author recently

of a new book on that subject. Stokes said he was sure they would. He told Woodley that such an act would constitute “balm for Gilead.” On Wednesday, April 21, 2004, five buses filled mostly with Prince Edward people pulled into the parking lot at the State Capitol. In those loaded buses were the life stories that would give Governor Mark Warner and the legislature additional impetus for their actions.

One of the passengers on the bus was John Hurt, an African-American in his fifties who had just finished first grade when the schools closed in 1959. He was never able to complete his education and at present was suffering economically even with two jobs. “All my life has been a struggle without education,” he said. “I will be the first one on the bus if this bill is funded,” he told members of the state’s administrative and legislative leadership. “The decision you make today you have to live with. The wrong one was made in the past but today you have a chance to make the right one.” He added, thinking of his life: “It’s hard for me to stand here without crying.” Others of the closed school generation spoke out similarly.

Later Woodley stood before the group with a copy of the petition circulated by segregationist leadership in 1956, asking that the schools be closed, if necessary, to avoid integration. He tore the petition into pieces, crumbled it in his hand, and threw it on the floor. “This is a new day,” he said. “Governor Warner and the General Assembly are making a new covenant with the people.”

Governor Warner, who had already signified his support of funding for the scholarships, spoke warmly of the necessity for them during the meeting. His two million dollar budget amendment, including a private grant of one million dollars, passed handily. At this writing around 100 individuals have applied for and received scholarships to continue their education. A goodly number have gone to community or junior colleges; a few have gone on to four-year institutions.

Some time later Julian Bond, chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, told Woodley that Prince Edward was the only successful “reparation story” he knew of in contemporary civil rights history. By this time, I found myself making speeches wherever and whenever I had the chance. I was sure then as I am now that the Prince Edward story is an American redemption classic.

By July 2008, the time of the speeches in Richmond and Farmville, another somewhat miraculous event was taking place, one that I could not help but link to the Prince Edward story. A young, galvanizing African-American with the resonant name of Barack

Hussein Obama had virtually locked up the Democratic Party's nomination for president of the United States. I admired him but thought initially that his chances of winning the nomination and presidency were slim. He talked persuasively about change but I feared that asking the voters to put an African-American in the White House was probably asking too much too soon of our conservative country.

The speeches in Richmond on Sunday, July 20, 2008, for the unveiling of the statuary were to the point and the crowd packed on the lawn of the capitol, vying for shade on a bright, sunny day, was responsive. I was struck by the part played in the decision to commission the statuary by a former governor's wife and her daughter. It was Eliza, youngest daughter of then-Gov. Mark Warner and Lisa Collis, who had asked her mother why there was no statue of Rosa Parks on the grounds of the capitol. Because, her mother responded, Rosa Parks was from Alabama and the statues on the capitol lawn were of Virginians. Even as she offered the explanation, Ms. Collis realized that representation of the struggle for full equality and civil rights for African-Americans in Virginia was missing from the front lawn gallery. Something, she thought, needed to be done about that and it was she who started action in motion to commission the statuary. As I learned about this, I thought: A child leading again, just as Barbara Johns at sixteen led the way in Prince Edward a half century before. Barbara had afterwards gone on to become a preacher's wife but died young.

The main speaker at the dinner given by the county commissioners at Longwood Monday night was L. Francis "Skip" Griffin Jr., son of the minister who led the African-American community back in the days of school closings. The younger Griffin is an international management consultant who works to bring management and its workforce into agreement on personal and production goals. He set a spiritual tone for the night, reminding me in gesture and particularly in vocal style of his father. "My father told me never to make my victory be another's loss," he told the dinner audience. "He wanted to live in a community of peace characterized not just by the absence of friction (which he thought to be creative at times) but by the presence of justice and mercy. I am encouraged by the fact that government officials and the editor of the paper that once stood against us today stand with us."

The reference to "government officials" clearly was to the county board of supervisors, now an inter-racial body wholly

committed to standards of racial equality and cooperation, whereas the supervisors of Skip Griffin's father's day fostered the school closings and might have succeeded in buying the public school buildings for private use had it not been for a courageous walk-out of five of the six members of the school board, led by board chairman Lester Andrews.

Members of the "new breed" of supervisors and speakers were seated on a platform in front of the county courthouse on Main Street after dinner for the lighting of the permanent light. The supervisors read the board's resolution: "We believe that the closing of public schools in the county from 1959 to 1964 was wrong and we grieve for the way lives were forever changed, for the pain that was caused, and for how those locked doors shuttered opportunities and barricaded the dreams our children had for their own lifetimes, and for all the wounds known and unknown; we regret those past actions." (Nothing I heard during the ceremony impressed me more than the use of "our" before the word "children.") Board of Supervisors Chairman William "Buckie" Fore added: "Prince Edward County cannot deny its past. We cannot. We should not try; I think we must embrace it and learn from it."

General Sam Wilson, at 84, who had retired from the military to take over the presidency of Hampden Sydney where he mounted an impressive symposium dedicated to reconciliation, was dressed in a suit and tie this warm evening. "I sat to one side where I could see the crowd," he said. "I brought my walker (he had been recently hospitalized) and parked it strategically to see the faces. They were clearly very attentive. Rapt."

One of the speakers was Marci Wall, granddaughter of J. Barrye Wall Sr., the *Farmville Herald's* segregationist publisher. "What happened in 1959 split a community, this one," she said. "And like many families, this community had disagreements and sometimes even arguments. And it's becoming a family again."

I had old information from my days covering the developing story in the county that I was reminded of by her speech, so I telephoned her soon afterwards. I told her that I had long known that her mother, Jackie, who had recently died, had opposed the school closings at the time strongly in private arguments within the Wall family. "That's true," she said. "I'm proud of my mother for standing up for what she believed and I'm proud of my father for standing up for what he believed." J. Barrye Wall Jr. was an attorney in Farmville who supported his father's efforts to preserve segregation in the county's schools. "I really believe that if my dad was alive today he'd be standing up and fighting for what's happening in the

county now. And as for granddaddy, you have to remember that J. Barrye Wall, Sr. was born in 1898.”

I told her that I had learned from an authoritative source that on his deathbed J. Barrye Wall Sr. had sent a messenger to visit the widow of the Rev. L. Francis Griffin to apologize for him for his role in the closing of the county’s schools. “I can believe that,” she said. “That doesn’t surprise me.”

I said I was sorry to hear of her mother’s death. “Yes,” she said. “I wish she had lived long enough to see this happening. I see her up there with Barbara Johns. They are dancing around together full of joy, doing a little Irish jig together, just having a grand, old party.”

I asked her why people of both races who had lived through the school closings and even many of their children and grandchildren continued to live in Prince Edward County. “People care about each other here on an individual level. I was talking to a woman the other day from Mecklenburg County and found myself telling her that I was from Farmville although I’ve been living in Richmond.”

Might she go back to Prince Edward one day? “Could be when my youngest son gets through high school. We’ve got some property back there. Could be we’ll go back.”

I find myself fascinated with this agreement across racial lines that Prince Edward is a fine place to live, despite its history. Natives may leave the county for one reason or another but most come back home. Steve Wall, the *Herald*’s publisher, left and came back. Vera Allen, the educator, left for a job while the schools were closed and came back to work in them when they re-opened. The Rev. James Samuel Williams, another leader of the school strike, left and came back to establish his ministry in his homeplace. Lacy Ward Jr., the R.R. Moton Civil Rights Museum’s new director, left and came back. General Wilson, whose family had deep generational roots in the county, came back when his military service ended. John Stokes’ sister, Col. Martha Stokes Cleveland, whose military career carried her all over the world, re-settled in Prince Edward as soon as she had a choice of where to live. Rita Mosely, one of the students forced out of the schools when they closed, had to leave home to continue her education but returned later and is one of the members of the civil rights memorial commission. She spoke at the lighting ceremony: “This memorial means that this little girl’s mother, who took her only daughter miles away to live with strangers, can look down from heaven and know her sacrifice was worth it.”

Joan Johns Cobbs, Barbara Johns’s younger sister, lives in

New Jersey and expects that she and her husband will come back to Prince Edward in the near future. "The time will come, I believe," she told me. "I have lots of connections there. I see it clearly in my future." In her talk at the lighting ceremony, Mrs. Cobb had praise for the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors and *Herald* editor Woodley. She finished with a flourish for her sister. "And I want to say 'Barbara, this is for you.'"

Mrs. Cobbs told me over the phone that Barbara, who had been whisked away to Montgomery after the school strike by her uncle, Vernon, worried later that the actions of the strikers had resulted in lost education for the children of the community. Mrs. Cobbs was optimistic over the phone with me later about what had happened in the county since those days, but she had a reservation about the courthouse light ceremony. "I fully expected more white people to be out there. I worry that it means that some do not fully feel that it is time for reconciliation."

The question of how deep commitment is in the county is important and a fair one to ask. I put it to a dozen people of my acquaintance of both races, people who seemed to me to represent a cross-section of life and who had been around long enough to be able to speak for others rather than just for themselves.

Lacy Ward Jr. felt that a representative sample of leadership and population of the county was present. "The ceremony brought out people of standing and influence throughout the community." He thought that some people present observed that certain others were not there and assumed that they didn't want to be there. "My father wasn't there, for instance, not because he didn't want to be there but because he was in the hospital."

John Stokes was positive about it but with a caveat. "I am elated," he said. "I do know that healing has begun." He went on to note, however, that he believed that no white applicants had registered for the educational scholarship funds despite the number out of school with the African-American children. He suspects that some whites stayed away from the lighting celebration because they saw it as "of, for, and by" African Americans and felt that whites might be less than warmly welcomed.

Jim Anderson, the former school superintendent, was sitting next to a friend. He leaned toward her and said: "I'm waiting for the earthquake." She looked puzzled. "All those people from school closing days turning over in their graves," he explained. Anderson, long retired, observed that the schools of Prince Edward have not

been given as much credit as they deserve for changing attitudes in the county over a period of years. He remembers that when he became superintendent in 1972, no politician in the county would dream of having his picture taken with a school in the background. Later on, he said, they went out of their way to pose with a school and schoolchildren in the background.

Ken Woodley, the editor, was pleased with the crowd, which he estimated as between 600 and 700 people. "It was a racially mixed crowd and it represented a bridge between all of us."

Rita Mosely ventured that the lighting of the light was "one of the best things that has ever happened around here." She believes that a good bit of the change in Prince Edward is the result of "new people" coming into the county over the past twenty-five years or so. "They see a quiet town, a peaceful town. Some are rich, some come from different parts of the country, not just the South. They come with new ideas and are ready for change." She thinks that the best follow-up to the light ceremony would be deep, structured talk between members of both races about feelings of antipathy that may yet be lingering. She also hopes that some day the children and grandchildren of the school-closing classes might be eligible for the new academic scholarships.

I had another kind of question, a nagging one. Suppose one credited Prince Edward with ultimate success in showing the way to a fully tolerant American society — something no one I've met in the county thinks has happened yet. How would the lessons of a small, mainly rural county apply to more complex municipal models? Can the Prince Edward model, to use a word out of the social sciences, be replicated?

Woodley, who came up with the idea of the permanent light, feels that the principles would work anywhere else. "It's a matter of people reaching out to each other. It could work if the trouble was racial or religious, for example — or any of the differences that obscure our common humanity. You just need something that will help people move toward each other. After that, it depends on the sincerity of the effort toward reconciliation. You have to have faith ... and relentless perseverance."

I pushed this extraordinarily creative young man on how he defined faith. He told me about going out into the woods and praying for guidance on something to demonstrate the goal of tolerance and interdependence between people, something to move the process on. It was then that the idea of the permanent light came to him. I found that answer fascinating. In *They Closed Their Schools*, I had told the story of Barbara Johns' maternal grandmother, Mary Croner, going

alone into the woods frequently and making her “speaking,” a prayer for justice for her people. Later, long after publication of the book, papers of Barbara Johns were found that revealed that she, too, had gone into the woods to pray for guidance –something I do not think her grandmother knew when I interviewed her. Joan Johns Cobbs, reading Barbara’s notes, remembered in a *Farmville Herald* story following her older sister into the woods, hiding behind a tree so as not to be observed.

Woodley had some interesting news as well. He believes that earlier thwarted efforts to provide scholarship grants for the children and grandchildren of the closed-school generation may be successful soon, in part because the private money pledged was received only recently and is available, thus making it possible for the General Assembly to approve extending the scholarships to these current generations without another appropriation.

Several of the people I interviewed by telephone also stressed the spiritual side of the reconciliation. Ward spoke the Reverend Griffin’s religious devotion to the cause of freedom for all races. “He was there right through it all, from the beginning.” He said that while other museums have tried to tell the whole civil rights history, the R.R. Moton museum will concentrate on the local story. He sees Marci Wall and “Skip” Griffin as major protagonists in the museum’s eventual story line.

When I asked General Wilson to comment on what had been going on in the county in recent years, he said: “People trying to surmount the tragic events of that period [the 1950s and early ’60s] and emerge from it and learn from it and be a better people ... yes, it’s definitely a spiritual journey.”

He had a story he wanted me to hear:

“In my neighborhood on the banks of the Appomattox in the northeast corner of Prince Edward County there was once a river village older than Farmville called James Towne.... Although it thrived for some time, eventually the age of rails ended its prosperity. It was dying from the time the first train, in 1854, came through and barge traffic on the river ceased.... High up on a hill overlooking the valley was an old church, the James Towne Presbyterian Church. It was from 1821, originally the Good Hope Meeting House. White people, farmers and planters, attended. Slaves were there on a separate balcony in the rear of the church. Freed blacks, including Robert Russa Moton himself as a boy, studied there on Sunday afternoons.

“Long after the village had died and the country road running beside the church had become a rutted gully and the bridge across the river had rotted, the white Presbyterians left that church and built a new one closer to the railroad village of Rice in 1928. The blacks assumed control of the old church soon after. They remained there until the 1950s. Then they too left the old building and built their own church about one-half mile from the new white church.

“What we have now is the footprint of an old village that can hardly be seen and up on the hill an old church foundation and a cemetery in which generations of white and black ancestors sleep side by side. We have lately been having joint sessions with both white and black congregations meeting together in each other’s church. On special occasions we have met on the foundations of the old church, now referred to as the Chapel in the Woods. We do this because we each have ties to that old church and to the cemetery where our grandfathers and grandmothers are buried along with some of their children and grandchildren.

“Something wonderful has happened..., Laws don’t change what’s in people’s hearts, only people do that. We have achieved a remarkable getting together, worshipful services ... a covenant between the races ... a sisterhood and brotherhood under the Lord.

“Recently Darrell Green, the Hall of Fame pro football player, was the principal speaker, and black Baptists and white Presbyterians worshipped together and Green met and spoke with students of both races.”

General Wilson had invited my wife and me to come to that service and when I told him we could not make that date, he said that any time we were in the county, he’d like for us to stop by and join in the service. I found myself saying yes, we’d love to come, believing it wholeheartedly and beginning to discover what that strange feeling was that overtook me as my wife and I drove toward Longwood that night in July. This time a word came to me: Belonging.

I grew up in the 1930s in Forest Hills, the Borough of Queens, New York City. I would not trade that boyhood — a nickel’s subway

ride from Broadway, the jazz clubs on 52nd Street, Madison Square Garden, or the Polo Grounds — for anything. But when I ventured to return to my old haunts in the 1950s, I could not find so much as a landmark. The scenery of my childhood had been obliterated in the wink of a few years. I was adrift on strange boulevards overborne on either side by towering apartment houses. It is not an uncommon experience in the world today — I had simply been dispossessed of all traces of my deep past; only memory, with all its gaps and false notes, kept me from feeling bereft.

When I think of “home” today I think mostly of places where I have been a privileged visitor with many happy returns. The University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, where I was a student and, later on, a teacher; South Topsail Beach, near Wilmington, where I have visited regularly since the 1970s and where my wife and I feel cheated if we are not present at least once, for a week or more, in any year. My present home in Jamestown, North Carolina, feels more like a home than most of my previous living places, but that is because we have made so many friends here, have found a little church that is nurturing, and because we have lived together so long and trustfully and find nothing more precious than these present moments.

But all this is not what the people I know in Prince Edward County mean by home. They mean homeplace; they mean a lifetime place — *this* place, a place of birth and bringing up and marriage and death and more of the same in the next generation. A place to return to at last from happening to reside temporarily elsewhere. That realization underpinned what I felt driving past Longwood and looking at the hotel and the Confederate statue and the house where I stayed as a young reporter, experiencing how much the same everything seemed in Farmville. Here was a piece of my deep past, my youth, still unspoiled. Discarded angrily by me long ago and then, by the gift of my longevity, rediscovered in a transformed state yet fully recognizable — mightily different and yet so much the same.

Oddly enough I felt a thrill the next morning when we went looking for a Richmond morning paper to learn what the “big city” folks had to say about the statuary and the lighting of the light and discovered a Barnes and Noble (think of it!) and, later, an honest-to-Pete movie cineplex a bit farther out at the edge of town. Somehow these two new amenities heightened what I felt as the joy of re-discovering Farmville and Prince Edward as old shoe, unchanging and unchangeable, faithful to my old age as to my youth and all the more the same for these novelties and the deeply uplifting new spirit

that has come to inhabit a critical portion of the population.

And it came to me then that there is an important part of me that belongs in Prince Edward County if only because I seem to have to visit it, stay a while, and come back again when I have an excuse and the energy. Just as I have to visit my old university and the beach I took my kids to when I was still a young man.

But while I go to the university to celebrate and remember a place where I once took occasional time off from fun to experience the possibilities of knowledge, and to the beach because I contemplate and enjoy my long life there better than anywhere else, I go to Prince Edward to see the remnant of the people who survived the old days and the new guard who are making such a great difference today. I go there to be educated, to try to learn from the experience the county and its people have had, and to express quietly my gratitude at being accepted as an old and increasingly ardent pupil.

It's a hard but useful truth that the death of a generation with that generation's belief system and the rise of another generation (and yet another) with different belief systems is to a large degree responsible for what is going on there today, just as everywhere else in the country. Prince Edward is a model-in-progress of how a southern place might take advantage of the geographical closeness of its two historic races and its regional sense of place, its religious commitment, and its deeply ingrained civility to bridge the gap that slavery and Jim Crow had forged.

I don't mean to suggest at all that what's happened in Prince Edward is applicable only in the South. As I pondered Lacy Ward's and Ken Woodley's descriptions of the vital ingredients needed for reconciliation, it occurred to me that we need not be talking about an actual geographic entity at all here. I imagined a large American city — which is often really still a complex aggregation of communities — in which in a moment of anger and confusion two policemen and three citizens were killed in a scuffle. Exactly the same means being attempted in Prince Edward would apply to members of that community desirous of bringing healing and reconciliation into being. I'm aware as well that there is a history and a literature in place already that treats this subject — the Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas dealing with long-lasting anguish to that city in the lingering wake of President John Kennedy's assassination being just one of many. And — most important — that the same principles apply to relationships between individuals, whoever and wherever they are.

I believe now that Prince Edward County has turned the corner on a grand and improbable comeback. I expect the R.R.

Moton Museum — a few years ago only a series of small exhibits — will grow and prosper and bring the curious as well as the civil rights junkies to its doors in great numbers. I hope nobody up there in Farmville ever comes to think that the building is too small and makes a move to replace it with a larger one.

The museum *is* Moton High School. And the high school *is* the museum. Years ago, on the night when I signed copies of the second edition of my book, I spent a few minutes in the late afternoon, before the crowd showed up, just listening. We were in the auditorium where it all happened and I was trying to imagine — actually, to hear — how it was when the student leaders urged teachers out of the hall and Barbara Johns took the stage to explain to the students what they had to do on this day, April 23, 1951.

And now Barbara is on a piece of grand statuary on the lawn of the capitol of the great state of Virginia, along with the Rev. L. Francis Griffin and the NAACP attorneys Spottswood Robinson and Oliver Hill Sr. Once despised, they all are now glorified. It's probably not entirely true, probably nothing more than one antique observer's quirky opinion, but it is hard for me to imagine how we might have gotten in these United States from there-and-then to here-and-now without them.

So now, in 2011 — at least in one county in this land and surely many elsewheres — we are on a path to full revolution around, from seeing whites and African-Americans permanently divided as races apart to a mutual way of imagining racial boundaries actually being obliterated, distinction by race itself becoming an anachronism. I think that the election of Barack Obama, a young man with a Caucasian mother and an African father, as president of the United States must be understood as the single national act that recognizes, as it further empowers, this critical wave of change.

As someone who lived and worked in Virginia for years, I took great pride in Obama's victory in that state in a race that quickly could be seen as a foreshadowing of the final result across the country. In my adopted state, North Carolina, the race proved tighter but eventually Obama won here as well. I'm not sure why — it certainly wasn't because I didn't care — but it took me a while to call Editor Woodley in Farmville to ask about the election there. These southerly Virginia counties have been traditional Republican strongholds in recent years and my most daring hope was that Obama had improved on John Kerry's performance there four years before.

I could almost feel Woodley's smile over the telephone as I popped the question: How did Obama fare in Prince Edward? "He won in Prince Edward." Woodley said. "He won next door in Buckingham County and he came close in Cumberland as well. In all three counties John McCain drew significantly fewer votes than President Bush did four years earlier."

No question a heavier participation of African-American voters in these southerly Virginia counties contributed to Obama's showing there, as it did across the country, but isn't it exactly to the point in our development as a democracy that we should have aspired to and now should celebrate a broader and consequently heavier participation by all eligible citizens in voting?

In 2009, just as the national Civil Rights Commission was celebrating the 50th year, Prince Edward began a year-long recognition of the 50th year since the school closings—an event that involving the county's public and private schools, its institutions of higher learning, churches, officialdom, and of course the inter-racial council and other bodies created to help bring a greater sense of true community across former racial barriers. I think it's appropriate that this national commission and this small county in a state that once seceded from the Union over the issue of slavery have concomitant celebrations. For at least in my mind, Prince Edward has become a minuscule of this nation's long and painful struggle to put away historic racial divisions forever. Surely that means that we Americans are gaining in spirit and, increasingly, in deed, in the long battle to lay the ghosts of slavery where they belong, in the murky past — not to be forgotten but to be stripped of their power to cloud our minds and diminish our better selves.

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**REMARKS FROM THE 2010
VSSA SCHOLAR AWARD RECIPIENTS**

REFLECTIONS

Remarks upon Receiving the Virginia Social Science Association
2010 Scholar Award in History
March 27, 2010

A. Roger Ekirch
Professor of History
Virginia Tech

Virginia Social Science Journal, 2011, Vol. 46, pages 84-86

Since graduating from college, I have pursued a keen interest in both the literal and metaphorical margins of the early modern world. Much of my research has revolved around men and women who inhabited the shadow-lands of that remarkable epoch. Invariably, I have found their lives as revealing as they are compelling. I have long shared the belief that by studying “human anomalies” - not only the despised and dispossessed but others, too, who transgressed boundaries (whether legal, cultural, temporal, or geographic) - we might better understand societies and their underlying values. A French prison inspector noted in 1837, “It is to the prisons that the historian must go if he is to make a sane judgment of a people’s moral state.”

This attraction first took fire during graduate school at Johns Hopkins, where in the course of specializing in early American history, I was drawn to the troubled past of eighteenth-century North Carolina, a backwater colony that, in marked contrast to other provinces, bore an intriguing reputation for corruption and mob violence. Besides a dissertation, my research resulted in a book in 1981 on the social and economic origins of political instability within the colony, as well as a long article on the North Carolina Regulator Riots, ending in 1771 at the Battle of Alamance, the largest eruption of civil violence in colonial history.

In the course of this work, I stumbled by chance across a polemic by Benjamin Franklin instructing Americans to send Mother England rattlesnakes in return for its convicted felons. The bitterly sarcastic indictment encouraged me to dig further, and I shortly discovered that “transportation,” as the banishment of British convicts to the colonies was euphemistically called, had much to say about eighteenth-century crime and society on both sides of the Atlantic. As an assistant professor at Virginia Tech, my research was barely underway when in 1981 I received a year-long appointment at

Cambridge as a Paul Mellon Research Fellow. This good fortune advanced my work immeasurably, not just because of the university's proximity to sources in London but also because of the assistance I received from several Cambridge historians interested at the time in early modern crime.

Oxford in 1987 published my book, *Bound for America*, which ignited a personal interest in the North Atlantic world - an attraction so compelling, in fact, that the British Isles and Continental Europe, even more than colonial America, became the focus of my investigation of nighttime. Moreover, this new project, though fueled by my long fascination with early modern subcultures, progressively expanded into a far broader exploration of preindustrial life than ever I once imagined. The product of twenty years of research and writing, *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past* (2005) reflected my growing recognition of night's profound importance in the centuries before gas and electric lighting. For rather than a natural hiatus, nighttime embodied a remarkably vibrant culture, an "alternate reign" in the words of an English poet, with its own customs and rituals, scents, sights, and sounds. What's more, I became steadily convinced that darkness afforded the greater part of humankind a sanctuary from the constraints of ordinary life. Especially for servants and slaves, women, adolescents, and the poor, it was a time to express inner impulses and realize repressed desires. Despite night's perils, multitudes drew fresh strength from the setting sun.

My recent research has followed two different paths. A product of my work on night, the history of sleep - that realm of human experience farthest removed from daily life - has been a major interest. Notwithstanding traditional attitudes toward human slumber as a biological constant impervious to time and space, I discovered that large segments of the preindustrial population were chronically sleep deprived, despite the efforts of households to ensure both the quality and the safety of their repose. More important, members of the medical community have taken a strong interest in my discovery that the predominant pattern of sleep before the Industrial Revolution, at least among Western Europeans, was "segmented," rather than the compressed, consolidated slumber to which we aspire today. Individuals experienced *two* intervals of sleep bridged by up to an hour or more of quiet wakefulness, during which, among other things, they prayed, completed chores, pilfered fruit from a neighbor's orchard, reflected on dreams, or made love. Apart from its historical importance, one remarkable implication of segmented sleep is that our pattern of seamless slumber for the past

two hundred years has been a surprisingly recent phenomenon, the consequence of modern culture, not the primeval past.

The interest of neurologists, psychiatrists, and other sleep specialists has lain in the likelihood that some sleep disorders that people experience today, notably waking up in the middle of the night, may be nothing more than this older form of sleep trying to reassert itself in the modern age. The upshot of their attention being numerous talks at sleep conferences, radio interviews, and articles about this discovery in such journals as *Applied Neurology* and the *Psychiatric Times* – all pretty heady stuff for someone who struggled to eke out a B in high school chemistry. Physics was even worse.

Finally, I just had a book published, entitled *Birthright*, cast as a narrative, which relates the saga of James Annesley, the presumptive heir to five aristocratic titles and sprawling estates in Ireland, England, and Wales, who in 1728 was kidnapped from Dublin at the age of twelve and shipped by his uncle to America. Only after twelve more years, as a servant in the backwoods of northern Delaware, did he successfully return to Ireland to bring his uncle, the Earl of Anglesea, to justice in one of the most sensational trials of the eighteenth century. Ultimately, *Birthright* is a story about betrayal and loss—but also endurance, survival, and, yes, even redemption. It is, at its heart, an Irish tale, played out, like most of my earlier work, in the shadow-lands of the eighteenth century.

Which is not to say, of course, that I personally am averse to public recognition, particularly by distinguished bodies like the Virginia Social Science Association. I am very honored to be with you today and thank you for having invited me.

I BELIEVE I WILL

Remarks upon Receiving the Virginia Social Science Association
2010 Scholar Award in Sociology
March 27, 2010

Kimberly A. McCabe
Professor of Sociology and Criminology and
Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Lynchburg College

Virginia Social Science Journal, 2011, Vol. 46, pages 87-88

When I received the notification of my Scholar Award from the Virginia Social Science Association, I was thrilled. When Dr. Stegmaier asked me to prepare a few words to describe my professional journey I was somewhat concerned as I certainly did not perceive my work as anywhere near complete. In fact, each day I am amazed at the number of 18 year olds that enter my office with their life set in stone and their career and personal lives planned to the detail. My advice to them and to you today is the response 'I believe I will'.

These words have fueled my career over the years and when my parents ask why I graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in math, to now work as a criminologist, I am left with a smile on my face as I think well ...why not? As stated, I graduated from Virginia Tech and of course, celebrated my graduation in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. While on the beach, I decided, I should probably get a job so I called the local school system and was hired as a high school math teacher. The job lasted one year and I then obtained a position forecasting sales for a Fortune 500 company, also based in Myrtle Beach. I loved the idea of using elements to predict changes in an outcome and was surprised when one of the company vice presidents suggested I continue my education at the University of South Carolina. So I took the GRE, reviewed the list of graduate programs on the application, thought to myself .. What in the world is criminal justice? then said 'I believe I will'. A few weeks later, I received a call from the Dean of the College of Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina who asked me if I were still interested in the graduate program of criminal justice and would I consider the position of Teaching Assistant as there was a SPSS course offered in the fall semester and no instructor. After thinking about the offer for a day I decided 'I believe I will'.

I taught my first criminology course in the fall of 1989 and loved every minute of my studies. Both of my graduate degrees were awarded from the University of South Carolina (a master of criminology and a doctorate in sociology) and each of my publications reflects my desire to build upon my areas of interest.

Specifically, for the first few years my publications were in the area of police procedures and policy. When I began teaching a class on child abuse, I searched for a book that included basic definitions about legal responses to child abuse. When my publisher suggested that I write a book on child abuse, I thought 'I believe I will'. My next book incorporated some of my material on child abuse when I wrote about school violence. When I was visiting some colleagues in the UK they asked if I was still writing on child abuse and began telling me about the discovery of a child's body with organs removed. This was human trafficking, and it suggested I begin writing about child trafficking. I thought 'I believe I will'. Today I have two books published on human trafficking and have presented empirical works on human trafficking on many occasions. I'm still interested in police policy. I'm still interested in child abuse. I'm still interested in school violence and I'm still interested in human trafficking.

So today I asked that you think about your interests, about what you want to research, and about what matters to you. However, I caution you about having your plans set in stone and ask that you simply become aware of the opportunities that are revealed everyday. I hope that someday when you're asked to research something that may seem somewhat out of your comfort zone that you respond with 'I believe I will'.

Thank you for this recognition.

BUILDING A CAREER WITH MANY HANDS

Remarks upon Receiving the Virginia Social Science Association
2010 Scholar Award in Political Science

March 27, 2010

Herman Schwartz
Professor of Politics
University of Virginia

Virginia Social Science Journal, 2011, Vol. 46, pages 89-91

It was a great pleasure to receive a VSSA scholar of the year award. The most terrifying aspect of this was the request to explain a bit about who I am and how I got here. So I'd like to talk about five people who were important in shaping me and making it possible for me to be here. The first is my uncle. He was a sheet metal worker. Back in the 1970s, when I was a young teenager, the metal working industry was much more conflictual than it is today, so strikes were common. When my uncle would be on strike, he would supplement his strike benefits by taking on independent home renovation work. He needed a helper, and as I was the oldest of the various cousins and a male to boot, he often took me along. As a result I learned many things that turned out to be useful in my domestic and professional life. On the one side, I learned how to hang wallboard, paint, run wire, do basic framing, and troubleshoot a variety of electrical and plumbing issues. This has helped keep me married, because my wife can't afford to replace me with professional repair services. Professionally, the volume of strikes and constant discussion of the issues behind them also provided a kind of professional safety net. I rarely go wrong thinking about some political economy issue when I keep the issues of money (especially who's got it or is trying to get it) and control (especially who's trying to get it or keep it) front and center. And the work itself was very rewarding, enough so that I thought about following in his footsteps. However my parents and he had other ambitions for me; the eventual collapse of sheet metal fabrication employment was

probably more evident to them than to me at the time. And they wanted me to use my head not my hands.

So they arranged to dangle a second important person in front of me. This was my mother's youngest cousin. One summer when I was 16, this newly minted lawyer showed up every other week to whisk me away in his Triumph Spitfire. Off we went to a series of free operas in Philadelphia's Fairmont Park for some experiences intended to broaden my cultural and occupational ambitions. I'd be stuffed unceremoniously and somewhat awkwardly in the carry-on suitcase sized area behind the Spitfire's only two seats. The other front seat was occupied by a different, rather beautiful woman each trip. The idea that college, and maybe specifically his college, might be the road to many attractive and interesting experiences began to percolate through my adolescent brain. The college, as I later found out, was notorious as a professor factory. Something like 30% of my graduating class became, at some point, university or college faculty.

The person who more or less assured that this fate would befall me was a professor at that college. One class I wrote the kind of arrogant and sweeping paper about world history that only a semi-auto-didactic teenager in search of the master key to history could write. After calling me into his office for a discussion, he gave me a list of four books to read: Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism*, Weber, *Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*, Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, Wallerstein, and *Modern World System*. Those of you who know these books will grasp their significance immediately, but for those of you who don't, the point is that they are disciplined causal and comparative analyses of large scale economic structures or the inner workings of entire economies, all of which can be found in a more attenuated and less polished way in my own work. These works immediately captured my imagination; I wanted to read more and do this.

A fortuitous encounter with the person who had been director of graduate studies when I was doing my doctorate allowed me to actually try my hand at this kind of project. Trying to get into a bar, I found myself sandwiched between him and a person who turned out to be an editor at one of the big publishing houses. The

former director reached over my shoulder to tap on the editor. “Remember you asked me who could write an interesting book for you? Try him,” he said, pointing at me. Unlike many editors, this one allowed me to produce something quite different from the normal political science text about the world economy, and, maybe just as important, from what he thought he had contracted. It’s safe to say that his leniency is responsible for many free trips to Europe and elsewhere, as well as the dubious privilege of getting on board airplanes early and then having to wait for everyone else to board.

Finally, like all teachers, I have learned from and benefitted from my students. About six years ago one of them inveigled my participation on a panel at the American Political Science Association annual conference. I was burrowed deep in European employment policies at that time. What she wanted, aside from using my name to secure a place for the panel at the conference, was a paper that said something about American empire and the world. Sure, I said, I can do that, only to find when I eventually sat down to write it that the whole topic puzzled me. Easily bored, I did not want to write the usual paper about bases, banks, or bullying. What to do? Fortunately, that same week, there was an article on America’s growing foreign debt. How could a global military and economic superpower have a large net foreign debt, I wondered? That simple question took me into an equally simple exploration of America’s international balance sheet. On the debit side of the ledger was an impressive volume of mortgage backed securities that had found their way into foreign hands. Mortgage backed securities, I wondered? And this led me to write a well timed book on global capital flows and the housing bubble just in time for the bursting of that bubble. This student’s dissertation also got me thinking about how regulation creates value in the American economy, which is the subject of a future project.

So like the other honorees, I owe many thanks to many people. Hard work of course played its part in this story, but so did strong hands pulling me up or opening doors.

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Presented occasionally to residents of Virginia who have made outstanding contributions to the Virginia Social Science Association. In 1995 this award was named the Mario Zamora Distinguished Service Award.

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