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GRADUATE COLLEGE

Perceptions of Female School Superintendents

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

ROSEMARY EILEEN KERBER

Norman, Oklahoma

2002

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PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

AND POLICY STUDIES

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Special appreciation is expressed to the female superintendents who participated in this study. I am most grateful for their warmth and generosity in sharing their stories about themselves and their careers. Their openness and willingness to participate in this research project has made this endeavor possible as well as personally fulfilling.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Bill Kerber, without whose love, support and sacrifices, I would not have been able to fulfill my dreams. To my oldest daughters, Mary and Judy, who encouraged me at mid-life to pursue my dreams by entering graduate school. To my four younger children: Jennifer, William, Marianne and John, who persevered through the trials of a working mom who was also a graduate student. To my father, Stephen Horvath, who instilled in me a belief in the value of an education at a time when these doors were just beginning to open for women.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study involved female superintendents in the state of Oklahoma. A survey questionnaire designed to gather demographic information was sent to the 48 practicing female superintendents during the 2000-2001 school year. A 50% response rate revealed that the female superintendents in the state were younger than the national average. They spent an average of 8.45 years in the classroom before becoming administrators. The number of female rural school superintendents was 10% higher than the national average. The most commonly followed track to the superintendency was that of teacher, central office. In depth interviews were conducted with 15 female superintendents. The phenomenological methodology was utilized for data collection and data analysis. Thirteen of the 15 female participants belonged to the first generation of women that attended college in large numbers. The women in this study evolved into the superintendency; career options were limited to them when they graduated from college. Relocation and familial responsibilities were not barriers to the superintendency. Gender issues were present, but were not an obstacle. The women in this study received support from their spouses, family and community. They received mentorship and have mentored others in their organizations. These women had a commitment to their profession, their students and hard work; they believed they could make a difference. The female administrators in this study were successful in the superintendency primarily because of their internal beliefs rather than their management skills.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Problem Introduction

Many of the accomplishments of women are absent from the written record of educational history. While much has been written about Horace Mann, Johann Pestalozzi and Frederich Froebel, little has been written about Mary Lyon, Susan Blow and Ella Flagg Young. Women, in general, have been unable to attain positions of prominence in high level executive positions in all disciplines including education. As we begin the millennium, it appears that the current situation for females is changing in some professions such as medicine and law. In the field of education, however, women have always been in the minority with regard to administrative positions in schools; and they are still underrepresented in the field of educational administration. A survey conducted by Marshall in 1985 indicated that female superintendents headed 2.5% of the nation's public school districts. By 1994, national data revealed that while 52% of the elementary principals were female; only 26% of the secondary principals were female and just 7% of the public school superintendents were female (Shakeshaft, 1998). When Glass, Bjork and Brunner (2000) conducted their study of the school superintendency, 13.2% of the respondents to their national survey were female superintendents (p. iii).

A review of the literature on the subject of female superintendents presents little information for the women who are aspiring to achieve these career goals as chief executive officer of a school district. Professional educational publications have oriented their information to an androcentric

perspective of the superintendency. Shakeshaft (1995) stated that "research on men is mainstream and central, while research on women and/or gender issues (both male and female) is often considered a special topic and not central to the understanding of organizational behavior" (p. 141).

To gain a better understanding of female superintendents, and perhaps women in general and how they have been educated, it became necessary to return to the literature. Contemporary literature revealed that there may be inequalities in the manner in which women are educated in public schools.

Twentieth Century Research on Women

Gender Differences between Males and Females

Gender differences have been specifically identified as either "male" or "female." The following attributes are cultivated in women: "dependency, passivity, deference, sweetness, softness, helplessness, agreeableness and weakness" (Bornstein, 1979, p. 332). Men, on the other hand, have been portrayed as "being strong, aggressive and independent" (Gillis, 1981, p. 182). A study conducted at Yale University in 1979 indicated that the "four personal characteristics most important for managerial jobs are emotional stability, aggressiveness, leadership ability and self-reliance; characteristics that are nurtured in men" (Bornstein, 1979, p. 332). However, if women display the aforementioned attributes, they are considered "pushy, brash, aggressive, abrasive and masculine" (Bornstein, 1979, p. 332).

Shakeshaft (1995) concluded that gender, a cultural term, has a

tremendous effect on behavior, perceptions and effectiveness. Supervision of school employees is affected by the gender and perceptions of the supervisor as evidenced by Shakeshaft's research. Shakeshaft (1995) also stated that "hiring practices, organizational climate, and team building practices are all affected by fears, discomfort, or displays of sexuality"... because of the gender expectation of a woman's sexual purpose (p. 147).

Sex Discrimination and Sexual Stereotyping in Schools

Sex discrimination is one of the reasons that women fail to gain administrative positions (McGrath, 1991). This assertion rests on the fact that, on the average, usually female administrators have higher levels of certification than their male counterparts in the same position. Women administrators have essentially been limited to two specific areas of work: positions in the central office as staff specialists or elementary principalships.

Gillis (1981) suggested that sexual stereotyping can occur in schools. According to Gillis, most teachers perpetuate sexual stereotyping through the manner in which they organize their classroom, their interactions with students and the language used in schools. While children come to school already aware of the stereotypes associated with each sex, the teachers influence the students by advocating different behavioral and academic expectations for male and female students. The organization of schools that reflects females as the workers and males as the administrators with more power and status, also limits the role models for both boys and girls.

Research on classroom interactions in elementary schools, secondary schools and institutions of higher learning concluded the following: male students are given more time to talk in class; they receive more attention from teachers; and educators are generally unaware of the presence or impact of this bias (Sadker & Sadker, 1986). "Girls learn silence early in the classroom ...and gender norms are unchanged after two decades" (Kimmel & Rudolph, 1998, p. 45).

A gender gap occurs in communications between males and females (Sadker & Sadker, 1986). During group meetings, males are more likely to dominate the discussion. Men usually emerge as the group leaders and are more successful in influencing groups to accept new ideas. Men interrupt females more than males, and they gain dominance by answering questions not addressed to them (Sadker & Sadker, 1986).

Statement of the Problem

A historical review of the literature revealed that the perception of women by men and the importance of women in society has evolved over centuries. According to Boulding (1992), Bullough (1973) and Hays (1964), religious beliefs and attitudes of the Middle Ages influenced European civilizations and helped develop stereotypical perceptions of men's and women's roles in society. First, these stereotypical perceptions were adopted by European cultures and were integrated into Colonial American schools and have affected the education of American women for over 400 years. Inequality in the education of females in the United States from early colonial

times until the nineteenth century perpetuated the problem of male dominance and female subordination (Bornstein, 1979; Bullough, 1973; Button & Provenzo, 1989).

Education for females in the United States only began changing in the twentieth century. Women's suffrage, the advent of the Civil Rights Movement, legal decisions by the courts and federal intervention through funding, specifically the enforcement of Title IX in 1972, affected how American women were being treated in society and how they were being educated in public schools.

Second, gender bias in the forms of sexual stereotyping, sexual discrimination and sexual harassment may be a continuing and unresolved dilemma in the field of education. Bornstein (1979), Gillis (1981), Kimmel & Rudolph (1998) and Sadker & Sadker (1986) have all identified gender bias problems that occur in schools. Kimmel & Rudolph (1998) and Sadker & Sadker (1986) stated that communication problems between males and females occur while children are in school. Sexual stereotyping by teachers in their classrooms and their interactions with students affect how females are perceived and treated by educators (Gillis, 1981). Teachers have the power to exhibit this bias or to show equity. Research has shown that gender discrimination does occur, but that this discrimination can be alleviated when teachers are properly prepared to be aware of their own biases and to use non-sexist teaching methods in the classroom. "Bias in classroom interaction

inhibits student achievement; bias in workplace interaction inhibits the nation's productivity and efficiency" (Sadker & Sadker, 1986, p. 515).

McGrath (1991) has identified sex discrimination as the primary reason women fail to gain administrative positions. Shakeshaft has stated that supervision of employees is affected by the gender and perceptions of the supervisor. The Yale Studies of 1979 identified male characteristics that were perceived as important for managerial success. When these characteristics are displayed in women, the women are considered to be aggressive and masculine.

Third, women have not made significant inroads into the field of educational administration. In 1909, Ella Flagg Young, the first female superintendent of Chicago Public Schools, predicted there would be more women than men in charge of the educational system in the country because it was a woman's natural field. As recently as the year 2000, however, only 13.2% of the nation's school superintendents were females (Glass, et al., 2000, p. iii).

Significance of the Study

This project is significant for several reasons. (1) The theory base for women in educational administration is still an emerging field of research. This study should contribute to that theory base by refining and corroborating the common factors that have led to the success of these female superintendents from rural, urban and suburban school districts. (2) Nationally and regionally, male superintendents have been the norm for

studies regarding the superintendency. Shakeshaft indicated that the knowledge base for educational administration was inadequate because theory in this field was based purely on an androcentric perspective of organizational theory. This study will add to the current literature regarding the experiences and perspectives of female administrators by focusing on women who are engaged in the role of the school superintendent. (3) The present study could assist aspiring female administrators by providing them with relevant information regarding another career goal option; namely, that of school superintendent. (4) This study could provide insight to school administrators, both male and female, regarding how these female superintendents achieved success in the superintendency.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study included interviews with 15 female superintendents in a southwestern state that can be characterized as primarily rural. There are two major cities with suburban development and many small towns scattered throughout the state. Interviewees represented all four quadrants of the state's geographical regions. The 15 female superintendents represented districts that were classified by the state as Kindergarten-8th grade, Kindergarten-12th grade and Pre-Kindergarten-12th grade. The size of the districts ranged from just under 100 students to over 12,000 students.

Limitations to the Study

Due to the design of the study, the researcher was the primary investigator and the primary research tool. The elements of subjectivity and

bias are always present in a perspective-seeking research project. The researcher was responsible for analyzing the data and interpreting meaning from the personal life experiences that the participants shared with her during the interview process. Another limitation to this study was the absence of any knowledge of the effectiveness of the superintendents. Gender and position were the exclusive qualifying criteria for participation in the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review was threefold. First, the emphasis of this study was female superintendents who are an anomaly in that they have succeeded in attaining positions that are traditionally held by their male counterparts. It was critical for the researcher to review the history of women and to develop an understanding of how attitudes and beliefs from previous civilizations and cultures impacted the treatment of women, defined the roles women have played throughout history and affected the education of females in the United States. The historical study of women provided a sociological and philosophical base for the way that women have been treated over the centuries and is relevant to the education of white females in America. American public schools have been instrumental in maintaining the status quo regarding the gender roles of males and females in American society. Included in this section of the review is the role schools have played in the socialization of males and females in society. The second section of the literature reviewed explored the hierarchial organization of schools and constraints on women's abilities to become school administrators. Third, as stated in the significance of the study, the theory base for women in educational administration is still an emerging field of research. This section of the literature review presents the research on women in educational administration for the past 20 years. Incorporated into this section is the research on female superintendents that has been conducted by doctoral level

students; this research also adds to the knowledge base regarding female superintendents.

Historical Influences on the Education of Women in the United States

In order to gain a better understanding of how attitudes toward men and women have developed, it became necessary to delve into the cultural traditions of past civilizations as well as to view the influence religion had on the treatment of women. Ancient civilizations and religious beliefs eventually developed into the prejudices and stereotypes of western civilization prevalent during the Middle Ages. The culture of Colonial America was impacted by the traditions of Western Europe. These European attitudes were present in the early American educational systems and provided the basis for the education of white females in America.

Exploring the history of women from a sociological and cultural perspective, one finds numerous examples of how the male dominance theory was perpetuated in civilization. Women, typically, have been considered subordinate to men since civilization began. Women from ancient civilizations were not educated and were always under the control of a male figure, either the father who could make arrangements for her marriage or her husband once she was married. Thus, women became economically dependent upon males. Bullough (1973) stated that women's biological differences may have contributed to their physical weakness and their inability to assert themselves.

In addition, religion has influenced the treatment of women. Bullough (1973) stated that in Judaism, women were clearly subordinate to men.

Women were created to assist men, save them and act as their companions. Yet, women were held responsible for sexually enticing men and were perceived as being more sexually aggressive than men; thus women were considered more evil than men. A rigid code of sexual morality developed. Bullough (1973) also suggested that Christianity has been a dominant influence in shaping Western civilization. Christianity has permeated institutions, provided the moral basis for laws and formed our ideals. While there have been a few women-centered cultures revealed in history, some anthropologists, Barbara Mertz and Leo Oppenheim, suggest that these societies were matrilineal rather than female governed.

According to the anthropologist H. R. Hays (1964), males projected their fears and antagonisms in derogatory attitudes toward women by insisting that "women are evil, inferior and valueless" (p. 281). Hays (1964) stated that women were made to obey, kept in their place or assigned to a role that neutralized them and removed them from the sphere of competition (p. 281). Bullough (1973) stated that these practices evolved into the traditions and stereotypes that have justified male domination of the female. As recently as June, 1998, the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination, amended its official statement of beliefs to include the declaration "that a wife must submit herself graciously to her husband's leadership" (Warner, 1998, p. 1).

European Influence on American Education

The status of women fluctuated depending on who held the power of the monarchy. In France, during the 17th century, Louis XIV was instrumental in raising the status of women. Louis XIV's death in 1715 brought about a social and intellectual change in French society (Boulding, 1992). Leadership under Louis XV changed the status of women in the 18th century. Male writers during this era portrayed women as victims of their passions, motivated by vanity and pleasure. Hostility toward women increased. The French philosopher Voltaire, who based his reasoning on natural law, promulgated the theory that women's defects were the fault of the conditions under which they lived. By changing the conditions, women's shortcomings could be eradicated (Bullough, 1993).

After the French Revolution, however, the middle class adopted the attitudes of the philosopher Rousseau toward women rather than those of Voltaire. Rousseau's greatest impact was in the field of education. Rousseau believed that the intellect of women was more feeble than that of men and that women should not govern or enter the ministry. Women were not trained in the branches of knowledge that dealt with politics, philosophy, theology and jurisprudence; nor did they study the classics. In Emile (1762), Rousseau advocated that females existed only to please and obey men. One sex should have the power and the will; the other sex should be subordinate (Boulding, 1992; Bullough, 1973).

Eighteenth century European women were conservative in their approach to women's rights. Most advocated that women should be content to accept their status; their education should pursue the acquisition of knowledge in the arts—history, poetry, music, dancing and moral philosophy. Many women and most of society considered those women who advocated equality for women in their writings as deviant (Boulding, 1992; Bullough, 1973).

The Industrial Revolution was a major factor in influencing change in the role of women in society. Wives from the middle class were no longer seen as an economic necessity. Their roles shifted from that of a working-woman to one who was a homemaker and mother. The belief was that proper women did not work in factories. A beautiful, well-dressed wife became a status symbol for the middle class male. While motherhood granted women special status, it also granted them a sense of inferiority because they now had to devote their lives to homemaking, a task that had not been regarded as particularly important. Working-class women, on the other hand, could still be employed in the factories. They and their children were perceived as a liability to the workingman (Boulding, 1992; Bullough, 1973; Hughes & Hughes, 1997).

Researching the history of women from the beginning of early civilizations indicated little change in the manner in which women were perceived for almost three thousand years. Initially, women were perceived to be a commodity, a thing that could be bought or sold. Over time, women's importance increased and they became necessary for the economic survival of

the family; but they continued to be dependent on men for survival. Even the great revolutions in history, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, while changing the role of women in society did not change their status. Religious beliefs and attitudes also influenced how women were perceived and treated. The perception that women were evil or the source of evil persisted throughout the Middle Ages and influenced European Civilization. The influence of the European countries on the development of American culture is evident in the early beginnings of education in the United States.

The History of Education for White Females in America

While the history of education in American only spans four centuries, the American colonists brought with them many of the European attitudes toward women. The early education of American females appears to be a reflection of these European attitudes. Colonial women were perceived to be inferior and corruptible (Bullough, 1973; Button & Provenzo, 1989). Their education consisted of learning to read the scriptures, basic math and writing. Female education was restrictive because of the belief that the mental capacities of females were inferior to that of males. Often girls received special textbooks designed to limit the strain on their mental faculties (Bullough, 1973). Latin grammar schools that were established in the colonies were designed to prepare only the white males from wealthy families for college and the study of theology, medicine or the classics.

During the 1700s, America began to experience social and cultural change consistent with the changes that were occurring in Europe at that time. Privately controlled and privately funded academies that offered a broad range of practical subjects were established. Parents paid the masters to teach whatever subjects the parents thought appropriate. Girls were accepted into beginning schools where they could study English, Latin or feminine skills—needlework, playing the harpsichord or spinet (Button & Provenzo, 1989).

Following the American Revolution, the teaching of the classics began declining in the United States. Schools were no longer staffed by the masters, but rather by teachers. The Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Ordinance of 1787 provided free lands for the institution of schools. Financial support for these district schools was meager. The status of teaching was low due to the clientele of the schools. Parents who could afford to send their children to academies continued to do so (Button & Provenzo, 1989).

Territorial expansion in the early 19th century, along with the rapid increase in population, both natural and due to immigration, stimulated the need for a common school system for children. America became urbanized due to the settling of immigrants in homogeneous clusters in the large cities where they could find work. By 1832, "two-fifths of all laborers in factories were children, few of whom had an opportunity to learn to read or write" (Thayer, 1965, p. 76). Horace Mann's common school was an effort to reach the poor immigrant children and to share the values, ideals and controls held by the rest of society. The common school taught common subjects and

values; all children were enrolled in school so that they could become socialized. Mann's school, which was patterned after the Pestalozzian model, emphasized improving a child's character so that he/she could take his/her place in society (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Church & Sedlak, 1976). In spite of this new trend in education in the United States, females were still considered subordinate and their education remained gender biased.

The impact of the French Revolution and the teachings of Rousseau affected the education of women not only in England and France, but also those in the United States (Boulding, 1992; Hughes & Hughes, 1997). Philosophy, theology, politics and law were not acceptable courses of study for American females until the late 1800s. When white women were finally accepted into law schools in the late 1800s, it was assumed that they did not have the "mentality to study law" (Bornstein, 1979, p. 332). Quotas were imposed upon the number of women accepted into law school or medical school. As late as 1945, the quota for women in medical school was about five percent (Bornstein, 1979).

During the 19th century, American women were still considered second-class citizens and were entitled to an education only in the summers when boys vacated the classrooms to return to work on the family farms. School curricula during this era could definitely be classified as gender oriented, specifically male or female. American females were being educated in the social skills—music, dancing, handwriting, drawing, a little French and some religious reading (Bornstein, 1979).

Bornstein (1979) wrote "the history of women in American society is a sorry record of deprivation and oppression, guised in protection" (p. 331). Coser (1981) and Novarra (1980) were in agreement with Bornstein. Not only have women been held back in the development of their skills; but traditionally, they have been associated with occupations outside the home in which there was no advancement—secretaries, receptionists, salesgirls and nurses (Coser, 1981).

In 1952 Fairchild wrote that the type of liberal education that women received was "unnecessary and destructive" (p. 146) because women marry when they graduate from college. Fairchild (1952) stated that the "purpose of colleges for women is...to develop women who are emotionally and intellectually mature" (p. 155). He proposed instead a four-year college program in which women concentrate on learning more about the achievements of the human mind and how to use the natural talents of each person.

A review of the history of education for white females in America illustrates the male dominance and female subordination theory that has enculturated students in American schools. Colonial women were perceived as inferior and corruptible. The hidden curriculum of the common school taught the values and ideals held by society. Nineteenth century public school curricula was still gender oriented and women were limited in their opportunities to join the professions. As recently as 50 years ago, Fairchild proposed eliminating liberal education for females at the university level.

The Socialization of Males and Females in Schools

As indicated previously, education for women has been gender oriented since the 19th century. Empirical research on schools in the 1980s indicated that sexual stereotyping was still occurring and that teachers were responsible for influencing the behavior of students by advocating different behavioral and academic expectations for male and female students. Gillis (1981) stated that the organization of schools that reflects females as the workers and males as the administrators with more power and status, also limits the role models for both male and female students. Sadker and Sadker (1986) researched classroom interactions between boys and girls and found that male students were given more time to talk in class and they received more attention from the teachers. Kimmel and Rudolph (1998) found girls were still silent in the classroom and that gender norms were unchanged after two decades.

The aforementioned findings are significant in this study because they identify the manner in which schools have socialized males and females into their roles in society. The acknowledgment of different socialization patterns for male and female students has been termed the woman's place model (Estler, 1975). In schools, women have not been given the same training as men. They have not been trained to be as career-oriented as are their male counterparts. Rather, their role in society has been that of wife and mother. Both men and women have accepted these societal norms that have identified women's roles and abilities.

The role of women as wife and mother is significant in education because during the 19th century teaching became the occupation of women while administration and management became the career for men. Teaching was viewed as women's work because women were perceived as being more gentle, loving, patient and nurturing than men. Teaching seemed to fit the maternal destiny of women and has been viewed as an "extension of mothering" (Biklen, 1980, p.8).

Prospective teachers were only required to complete two years of normal school, the equivalent of a high school education. Male superintendents preferred to hire female teachers because they appeared less headstrong than male teachers. Women were more willing to continue in the occupation of teaching because they did not view it as a career (Stimpson, 1980).

Theories About Women in Educational Administration

Traditionally, educational administration has been a male-dominated profession and the literature regarding this field has been written from the male perspective. When perusing the literature that has been written about women in educational administration, it is obvious that this is still an emerging field of research. Bjork (2000) stated that within the past decade, women have authored or coauthored 61% of the empirical studies on the superintendency that have been published in journals for school leaders. From 1995 until 2000, that number increased to 79% (Bjork, 2000).

The Hierarchical Organization of Schools

Historically, women have been ignored as potential leaders in our society (Burstyn, 1980; Stimpson, 1980). The hierarchical organization that placed men in the position of leadership and women in the position of workers has impacted the ability of women to gain access into the profession of educational administration. Division of labor has socialized men and women into following different career paths in the field of education. Women in education focus on students and instruction while men focus on school management and adults. When women enter teaching, the expectation is that they will remain there. This type of system was perpetuated because of three factors. (1) Most women remain at the elementary level. (2) The perception is that it is more appropriate for women to teach children. (3) Women who are interested in administrative positions are sometimes restrained from advancing (Ortiz, 1982, p. 58).

Men, however, have been more upwardly mobile and the organization permitted the socialization of men into positions of management and leadership. Most men entered the vice-principalship after three to five years of teaching at the secondary level. The vice-principalship was not considered a true administrative position (Ortiz, 1982) but rather it was known to be a training ground for advancement into administration. It provided the candidate an opportunity to be observed by the principal.

The elementary principalship was perceived to be the lowest in the hierarchy of school administration; it provided a limited amount of opportunity

for advancement. Women normally had to complete 10 to 15 years of successful teaching in the elementary school before they became elementary principals. Yet, the elementary principalship can be assumed by anyone in the school organization regardless of their specialization (Ortiz, 1982).

The high school principalship was considered the highest hierarchical position in the organization. This position provided the individual with a great deal of visibility in the community and an opportunity to be observed by the community at the elaborate sports, music or other special programs provided by the school district (Ortiz, 1982).

Men and women followed different career paths in getting to the superintendency. In smaller communities, men became teachers, principals, then, superintendents. In larger communities, men usually progressed from teacher to principal to central office to the superintendency (Ortiz, 1982). Central office provided an individual with a continuous and direct link to the superintendent both on a formal and informal basis.

While most men left the classroom to become principals, most women left the classroom to become specialists in the central office. Women obtained an area of expertise; usually reading, special education or some other school related activity that provided them with legitimacy. Most females who left the classroom become specialists. This may or may not have increased their chances of moving into an administrative position (Ortiz, 1982). Some women left the specialists' positions and became staff supervisors. While staff supervisors worked in the central office, they usually did not advance into

higher positions in administration. Women who became principals or line supervisors had an increased chance of visibility that was afforded them at that level. But, that was still no guarantee that they would have the opportunity to advance, particularly in large school districts (Ortiz, 1982).

Constraints on Womens' Abilities to Become School Administrators

Biklen (1980) identified constraints that limited women's ability to become school administrators. Just being a woman was an initial constraint. The obligations of a family can be confining and render women place-bound, thus restricting their professional opportunities. Additionally, women with families and careers really have two jobs. They do not have the support of a wife as do their male counterparts; women in top administrative positions lack support from their peers. Society assumes that women who have careers are more masculine than other women.

Biklen (1980) also identified the constraint of marginality. Women who hold positions in traditionally male fields are usually perceived as different. Usually their peers consider them as outsiders and they are not accepted in the mainstream of their profession. Rossi's 1970 study on the phenomenon of diminishing flow, which was cited by Coser, stated that the higher the rank, prestige or power within an occupation, the smaller the number of women who are involved. Consistent with that study is Kanter's theory (1977) that when there are few women in a profession, those who are at the top can be

considered "tokens, representatives of their category rather than independent individuals" (p. 6). Women in line positions, while maintaining visibility, may be tokens (Ortiz, 1982).

Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination has been identified in the literature as the major obstacle to women's advancement into top administrative positions (Biklen, 1980; Clement, 1980; Jones-Mitchell, 1993; McGrath, 1991; Ortiz, 1982; Winkler, 1994 and Wright, 1995). Women have had "less power, prestige, position and money than men" (Stimpson, 1980, p. viii). Clement (1980) advocated that one of the reasons that women have not been successful in attaining positions of leadership in schools was because schools have been traditionally controlled by "white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, married men of rural origins" (p. 131). While women are the authorities on kindergartens and elementary schools, it was assumed that women could not lead large organizations and they should not be considered as authorities on secondary or higher education (Burstyn, 1980). Women had to see "power, influence, money, status and an increasing sense of competency" (Clement, 1980) as justifiable rewards for achieving in a high-level leadership position.

Research on Female School Superintendents from 1980 to 2000

As stated previously, information in professional publications regarding the superintendency has been primarily from an androcentric perspective. A perusal of Dissertation Abstracts Online revealed that, in the past ten years, university students at the doctoral level have been conducting a considerable

amount of research on female superintendents. At the time of this writing, studies on female administrators had been conducted in New York (Woodworth, 1996); Oklahoma (Everett, 1989; Robinson-Hornbuckle, 1991; Seay, 1993); Pennsylvania (Winkler, 1994); Tennessee (Mertz, 1990); Texas (Gilliam, 1986); the New England states (Smith, 1995); the Southeast (Wright, 1995); and 19 western states (Marietta, 1992).

The Six Stages of Research on Women in Educational Administration

Bjork (2000) stated that the research on women in educational administration has evolved through a series of six stages. Early research in the 1970s and 1980s focused on the disparity between the number of men and women in the profession from 1910 through 1971. Blount (1998) found that nationally women held 9% of the superintendent's positions in 1910. By 1930 that number had increased to 11%; yet, by 1971, the number had dropped to 1.3% nationally. Glass (1992) who was referenced by Bjork, found that in 1992 women held 6.6% of the superintendencies nationally. By 1999, the number of female superintendents in the nation had risen to 13.2% (Bjork, 2000).

The second stage of research on women in educational administration concentrated on studying the lives and accomplishments of famous women in administration. Those who were studied included Ella Flagg Young, the first female superintendent of Chicago City Schools; Grace Strachan, New York City Schools superintendent; Betty Mix Cowles, Canton, Ohio superintendent; and Carrie Chapman Catt, teacher and superintendent of Mason City, Iowa

Schools as well as leader of the National American Women Suffrage Association (Bjork, 2000, p. 8).

In the 1970s and 1980s, the third stage of research began. These studies concentrated on defining the barriers that women encountered in aspiring to administrative careers. Shakeshaft investigated stereotyping, gender bias and discriminatory attitudes towards women in administration. Tallerico studied the role of gatekeepers to the superintendency. Hart studied the role of mentors in assisting women in advancing their careers (Bjork, 2000, p. 9).

The fourth stage of research focused on women's perspectives regarding their experiences in administration. These studies focused on women's leadership styles and their perception of power in the superintendency. This research emerged in the 1990s.

Since 1999, the fifth stage began concentrating on such issues as how does gender affect the behavior of humans and how effective are women in educational administration? The sixth stage, which is also ongoing, evaluates the experiences of both men and women in school administration and searches for the similarities and differences among male and female superintendents.

Demographics of Female Superintendents

Developing a profile on female superintendents may be difficult because various factors enter the picture depending on the region that is being studied. Gilliam (1986) found that in the state of Texas while 34% of the

administrators were female; women comprised only 2% of the superintendent's positions. Female superintendents in Texas were more likely to be employed by small, rural districts while female administrators in other administrative positions tended to be employed by larger, non-rural districts.

Winkler's 1994 study of the 30 female superintendents in the state of Pennsylvania revealed that the majority of the 22 respondents (73%) were between the ages of 40 and 60. These women worked in rural, urban and suburban districts and had experience in the field of education that ranged from 16 to 37 years. Out of the 30 female superintendents in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 23 or 77% of the women had completed their doctorate degree. Wright's 1995 study on female superintendents who lived in the Southeast region of the United States indicated that most of these female superintendents were over 45 years of age, had more than 20 years of experience in education, were married with children and were employed by rural school districts.

Barriers to the Advancement of Females in Educational Administration

Several barriers to the advancement of females into the superintendency have been identified through the work of these contemporary researchers: familial responsibility, geographic limitations, lack of knowledge regarding openings in the superintendents' positions and gender discrimination or gender bias issues.

Everett (1989) and Winkler (1994) cited family responsibilities as barriers for females advancing into the position of superintendency. Linked to

that barrier was the geographic limitations factor that prevented females with families from taking positions that required relocation. McCreight (1999) stated that it was more difficult for women to relocate because married women must have husbands who were willing to relocate for their wife's new position. (Gilliam, 1986; Williams, 1983; and Wright, 1995) also identified the problem of females being unable to relocate due to family commitments. Women were rendered place-bound; thus restricting their professional opportunities.

Jones-Mitchell's study in 1993 affirmed Gilliam's research that white female superintendents were usually relegated to small, rural districts. Gilliam (1986) and Jones-Mitchell (1993) reported that female administrators lacked knowledge regarding job openings due to their limited access to networking and mentoring.

The single most reported barrier to advancement by women into the superintendency that was reported by these contemporary researchers was the issue of gender discrimination or gender bias. Williams reported in 1983 that female superintendents might have to contend with society's views of male and female roles along with the consequences of those views. Jones-Mitchell (1993), Winkler (1994) and Wright (1995) reported that gender discrimination impeded the ascendancy of their participants to the superintendency. Smith (1995) stated that gender can be a stigma that females learn to manage because of the community's expectation that the superintendent should be a male. Williams (1983) indicated that the lack of

female role models in educational administration was a barrier to the advancement of females into superintendent's positions.

Societal Norms that Affected the Advancement of Female Administrators

Everett (1989) found that societal norms influenced the backgrounds and perceptions of the black and white female administrators who participated in her study. White women grew up in families that emphasized conservative gender roles; these women were encouraged to assume restricted roles in society and their occupation. While most of them were encouraged to attend college, it was primarily for obtaining certification in the event they would seek possible employment in the future. According to Everett (1989), these women "experienced mixed messages about appropriate female behavior that continued into their adult lives" (p. 58).

Black women learned from their mothers that "the family must be maintained and protected, be socially concerned, strive to get an education, rely on God and the church for emotional and spiritual sustenance, work hard, and be proud" (Everett, 1989, p. 49). The mothers of these professional women were highly supportive of their daughters' careers. All of the women studied, regardless of their race, "exhibited a social conscience, concern for others, and a dedication to society and its youth" (Everett, 1989, p. 69).

Robinson-Hornbuckle's study of female rural superintendents and female high school principals reported the following findings: The women in this study grew up in gender-blended families where they were able to develop self-confidence and assertive behavior. The majority of these women were

from rural lower or lower-middle socioeconomic classes. Due to the absence of male siblings, they were able to perform male tasks at an early age while receiving approval from their fathers. The participants in Hornbuckle's study denied the existence of sexual discrimination in their personal and professional lives. Women's organizations were rejected as unimportant and potentially detrimental to their careers.

For most of the participants in Hornbuckle's study, teaching was not an initial career choice but rather an accommodation to meet family needs, both financial and the opportunity to spend time with their children. As administrators, these women had to justify their actions more than a male administrator because of the perception that women who behave in an authoritarian manner are perceived negatively. Career paths for the women in the study who became rural school superintendents typically began with elementary principalships as their first experience in educational administration. Generally, these women moved into administrative positions under male sponsorship rather than mentorship.

Seay's study of elementary principals who held superintendent's certificates indicated the following: Female administrators must meet expectations that are different from those for men. Female administrators must be qualified for administrative positions beyond the minimum standard. The glass ceiling exists in educational administration as it does in the business world.

Factors that Contributed to the Success of Female Administrators

Locating factors that contributed to the success of female administrators was more difficult. Two factors that kept reoccurring in the research were the concepts of encouragement or support and leadership ability. Woodworth (1996) emphasized the importance of encouragement to female administrators as a key to success. Robinson-Hornbuckle (1991) and Winkler (1994) indicated that male sponsorship was important for female administrators who wanted to be successful in the role of superintendent.

Marietti, Pavan and Winkler identified specific leadership skills. Marietti (1992) indicated that empowerment, delegation and facilitativeness were essential for success. Pavan (1996) suggested that open communication and interactive leadership were critical. Winkler (1994) stressed skills in conflict management, decision-making and time management.

Summary

Research on female school superintendents has identified the following common factors for the women who held this administrative position. First, female superintendents tended to be older, more experienced and more educated than their male counterparts. Second, familial responsibility, geographic limitations and lack of knowledge regarding openings in the superintendents' positions limited the opportunities for women wishing to advance into the superintendency. Third, gender discrimination has been the single most reported barrier to the advancement by women into the superintendency; yet, in some of the studies, female administrators denied the

existence of gender discrimination in their personal and professional lives. Fourth, societal norms affected women who became school administrators. White women had been encouraged to assume restricted roles in society and their occupation. Black women have learned that they should rely on God and the church and the family must be maintained and protected. Fifth, specific leadership skills such as empowerment, delegation and facilitativeness have been identified with the success of female administrators along with skills in conflict management, decision-making, time management and communication.

The research on female superintendents supplied demographic information and literature regarding the obstacles female administrators have had to overcome to achieve the position of school superintendent. Research studies from the mid 1990s were beginning to identify specific leadership skills that made female administrators successful. Encouragement and leadership ability surfaced in two studies as the reason for the success of female superintendents. The literature was deficient, however, in identifying the common factors that have made female administrators successful in the position of school superintendent.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Design

The introduction to the study indicated that the number of women who hold the position of school superintendent is relatively low nationwide in comparison to the number of men who hold the same position. Most of the literature that has been available on school superintendents has been written from a male perspective. The literature review revealed that American schools were created with stereotypical perceptions based on societal and religious beliefs from western civilization. For the last 400 years, American schools have socialized males and females into their roles in society. The theory of male dominance and female subordination has created a hierarchy in the organization of schools that has limited the ability of women to become school administrators. Gender bias in the field of education has been identified in schools since the mid 1970s and continues to be an area for study. In the last twenty years women have begun making strides in the field of educational administration as principals and central office staff. What is missing from the literature, however, is information about how women have been successful in the male-dominated field of the school superintendency.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the factors that contributed to the success of these female administrators in their chosen career field. The phenomenological design of the study provided the framework for conducting the research, collecting the data and analyzing the data in this project while discovering and describing the affective, social and

educational factors in the lives of the participants that contributed to their success.

Methodology

Phenomenology

Moustakas (1994) stated that "the first challenge of the researcher in a phenomenological research project... is to arrive at a topic and question that have both social meaning and personal significance" (p. 104). The topic should be intellectually and emotionally stimulating for the researcher. In addition, the researcher must have an intense interest and curiosity about the problem. Appropriate participants must be selected. These individuals become co-researchers because they have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Each participant must be willing to participate in a lengthy tape-recorded interview and their permission is necessary to publish data in a dissertation or other publication. Finally, the interview data are analyzed.

Data analysis in phenomenology is similar to case study in that interview data is broken into segments and each segment of the data is analyzed. Units and themes are compared; findings are synthesized and validated by checking with participants. Syntheses can become either a textural description or a structural description. "A textural description is an account of individuals' intuitive, pre-reflective perceptions of a phenomenon from every angle...A structural description is an account of the regularities of

thought, judgment, imagination and recollection that underlie the experience of a phenomenon and give meaning to it" (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 602).

Reasons for Selecting Phenomenology for this Project

When designing the method of inquiry for this research project, the phenomenological methodology appeared to be the most logical approach for several reasons. First, Moustakas (1994) stated that the "most frequent applications of phenomenological research as well as the development of theory, concepts and processes involved in human science inquiry come from the Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology" (p. 11). Adrian Van Kaam, a psychologist and philosopher at the university, began investigative research that utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative traditions in phenomenology. Van Kaam's phenomenological approach was a breakthrough in research because it involved the individual's return to the experience so that one could then reflect on the essence of the experience and provide a comprehensive description of the experience. At the time Van Kaam was beginning his phenomenological research, the researcher in this study was an undergraduate student at Duquesne University. As a student, the researcher in this study along with her peers was aware that Van Kaam's research was a cutting edge discovery. It seemed appropriate to utilize a methodology that influenced the researcher's philosophical and psychological thinking and development. Second, phenomenological research normally involves lengthy interviews with the participants. The interview approach to data collection can be utilized to study a wide range of phenomena in

education. As a novice researcher, the opportunity to involve participants in the study who had been school superintendents seemed to be the most direct approach to understanding the individuals' experiences. Third, the purpose for selecting this naturalistic approach was determined by the research question. The research question and sub-questions involved data that could not be analyzed quantitatively.

Research Question

The central research question to be answered in this study was what are the perceptions of the female school superintendents regarding their success in a male-dominated profession, educational administration? Additional sub-questions to be answered in this study were:

(1) What factors motivated these women to pursue ascendancy into the superintendency?

(2) What role models were available to these women as they proceeded through their administrative career?

(3) As females entering a male-dominated field, how did these women overcome the possibility of gender bias in their profession?

Research Design

Preparation for the Study

Moustakas (1994) recommended three steps for exploring the research question: methods of preparation, methods of collecting data and methods of organizing and synthesizing data. Preparation methods for this research project included submission of a completed research project

application to the Institutional Review Board of the University of Oklahoma. The application included a description of the research study, the purpose of the study, the research protocol, a confidentiality statement and subject benefit/risk statement. The Superintendent's Survey Questionnaire (Appendix A), Informed Consent Form #1 (Appendix B), Informed Consent Form #2 (Appendix C) and the Interview Questionnaire (Appendix D) were included with the research project application.

Participants

The participants in this research project were female administrators who were employed as a public school superintendent in the state of Oklahoma during the 2000-2001 school year. All 48 female superintendents in the state, regardless of the size of their district or their educational credentials, were asked to participate in the study. Their names and school addresses were obtained from the State Department of Education's 2000-2001 Directory of Education.

Research Protocol

There were two components to this research project. The first section of the project was the completion of a ten-question survey (Appendix A) that was developed by the researcher. This survey was designed to gather demographic information from the female superintendents in the state. Each of the 48 female superintendents who were identified in the State Department of Education's 2000-2001 Directory of Education was sent a packet by the researcher. This packet included a cover letter that briefly described both

aspects of the research project. The Superintendent's Survey Questionnaire (Appendix A), Informed Consent Form #1 (Appendix B), and Informed Consent Form #2 (Appendix C) were included in the packets that each female superintendent received.

If participants were interested in being involved in the survey aspect of the research project, they were asked to complete the Superintendent's Survey Questionnaire (Appendix A), sign Informed Consent Form #1 (Appendix B) and return both documents in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Of the 48 female superintendents who were sent information regarding the research project, 24 superintendents, or 50% of the total number of female superintendents in the state, responded to the survey. The data collected from the survey were analyzed in the quantitative tradition through the technique of descriptive statistics. The information from the returned questionnaires is available in this chapter under the heading Superintendents' Survey Questionnaire Results.

The second section of the research project was designed to discover the factors that had contributed to the success of these female superintendents and to answer the research question and sub-questions in this research project. All female superintendents were given the option to participate in the interview portion of the project. If they were interested in participating in this aspect of the research project, the female superintendents were asked to sign Informed Consent Form #2 (Appendix C) and include a phone number so that the researcher could contact them to set a date for the

interview. Respondents were asked to participate in a 60 to 75 minute interview.

Data Collection

Female superintendents who expressed an interest in participating in the qualitative aspect of the study were contacted by telephone to schedule an appointment for the interview. The researcher met 13 of the 15 superintendents at their school sites on mutually agreed upon dates. (See Appendix E for the interview schedule.) Two of the superintendents who were willing to participate were located too far from the research site. These two women were interviewed by telephone; the interviews of these individuals were also tape-recorded. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) stated that the advantages to using telephone interviewing are significant, especially when sensitive data is involved (p. 311). Prior to commencement of the interviews, participants were assured confidentiality regarding the information they discussed with the researcher. They were also assured that the information that they shared with the researcher would be used in the dissertation in such a manner that their personal identify would not be revealed.

Interviews with participants lasted from 45 minutes to 90 minutes. The Interview Questionnaire (Appendix D) that was approved by the University's Institutional Review Board framed the questioning for the interview process. An informal conversational manner set the tone for the interviews. After preliminary introductions, the conversations began with the interviewees being asked to tell the researcher about themselves. Remarks were

spontaneous. The researcher interjected questions to clarify and interpret the participants' perspectives. The interview questionnaire was utilized as a reference point to insure focus upon the experiences that were being addressed in this study.

Of the 13 interviewees who were visited at their school site, 10 of the interviews were tape-recorded. Two of the participants asked that their interviews not be tape-recorded. The researcher was able to take notes by hand at these two interviews. At the first interview, there was mechanical difficulty with the equipment that was being used; therefore, this interview was also not taped. Handwritten notes provide the data source for this interview. Both of the telephone interviews were tape-recorded. (These two individuals had returned their signed consent form prior to the scheduled interview date.)

Of the 24 female superintendents who returned the Superintendent's Survey Questionnaire (Appendix A), 15, or 63% of those who responded to the survey agreed to be interviewed by the researcher. These 15 interviewees represented 32% of the state's total number of female superintendents.

Data Analysis

Creswell (1994) suggested that when analyzing data, the researcher should read through all of the transcriptions prior to coding specific information from each transcription. He also suggested that the researcher start with the shortest or most interesting interview and peruse it for the underlying meaning rather than just the information presented. At that time,

one can begin looking at all transcriptions for major topics. After making a list of major topics, Creswell suggested coding each individual transcription for topics by placing descriptive statements in the appropriate categories.

The superintendents' interviews resulted in a wealth of information. The 12 tapes resulted in 456 pages of double-spaced text and took a total of three months to transcribe. A transcription machine was used by the researcher, which enhanced accuracy in the verbatim transcriptions. After completion of all of the transcriptions, each individual text was reread by the researcher while listening to the specific tape on the machine. This rereading resulted in corrections and clarifications of the original statements made by both the researcher and the participants. It also aided in the early identification of general categories for analysis.

A second rereading of the text then took place. This permitted the researcher an opportunity to begin identifying the general categories for undertaking the analysis portion of processing the data that had been collected. As each individual superintendent's text was read, these general categories were identified and then color-coded with pen. After all of the text had been read and coded, the information was entered into the computer into the general categories that were identified for analysis. (See Appendix F General Categories for Analysis).

Each general category was printed into a hard copy. Each category was then read independently. As the researcher read each of these categories, she wrote descriptive notes in the margin of the printed data. This

information was then once again entered into the computer to compile the data on each superintendent who had been interviewed. This resulted in the writing of a vignette for each of the participating superintendents. These vignettes consisted of two sections. The first section included the following information: (1) administrative experience, (2) background information, (3) career aspirations, (4) educational background, (5) future plans, (6) relocation issues and (7) teaching experience. The second section of the vignettes reflected each participants' experience with the phenomena that was being studied. These experiences included the following categories: (1) mentoring and networking, (2) gender bias, (3) the most difficult tasks of female superintendents and (4) what has made these female superintendents successful in their career. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant by the researcher.

Prior to writing chapter 5, Findings of the Study, the researcher read through each vignette to peruse and verify the information that had been written about each participant. Each vignette was then reread a second and third time to compile the information into charts that were used to interpret and verify the data in each category. The findings of this study were written based upon the cumulative information that appeared in each category on the chart.

To ensure validity in the study, the researcher was able to interview 15 participants rather than ten as Moustakas (1994) suggested. Multiple perspectives allowed for triangulation of the data Use of the transcription

machine provided accuracy in the participants and researcher's statements. Moustakas (1994) suggested sending a synthesis of the description of the experience to each co-researcher and asking them to carefully examine the descriptions. In this particular study, the researcher sent copies of the vignettes to each of the participating female superintendents for their verification.

The final step in the phenomenological process was to synthesize the data that had been collected into a narrative report. Moustakas (1998) suggested that each of the following should be included in the report "meaningful units, clustering themes, advancing textural and structural descriptions and ...an integration of textural and structural descriptions into an exhaustive description of the essential invariant structure (or essence) of the experience" (p. 176). Chapter 5 is a compilation of the themes that developed during the analysis and are relevant to this study.

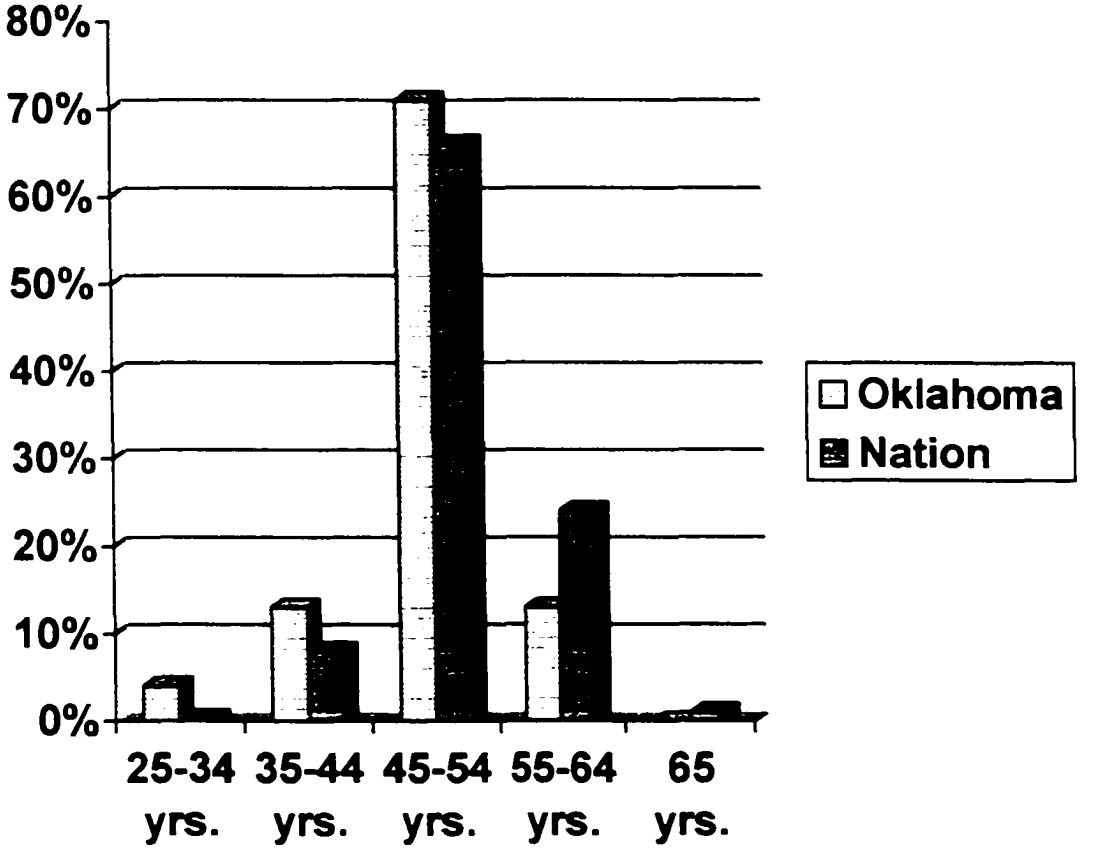
Superintendents' Survey Questionnaire Results

This aspect of the research project was designed to gather demographic information from the female superintendents in the state. The survey included questions related to the following areas: (a) the age of the superintendents (Table 1); (b) classification of the school districts they represented (Table 2); (c) the number of years these women have been superintendents (Table 3); (d) the educational level and degree of the female superintendents who responded to the survey (Table 4); (e) state certification held by the female superintendents (Table 5); (f) administrative positions held

prior to their current superintendency along with the number of years of experience (Table 6); and (g) the number of years of teaching experience of the female superintendents who responded to the survey (Table 7).

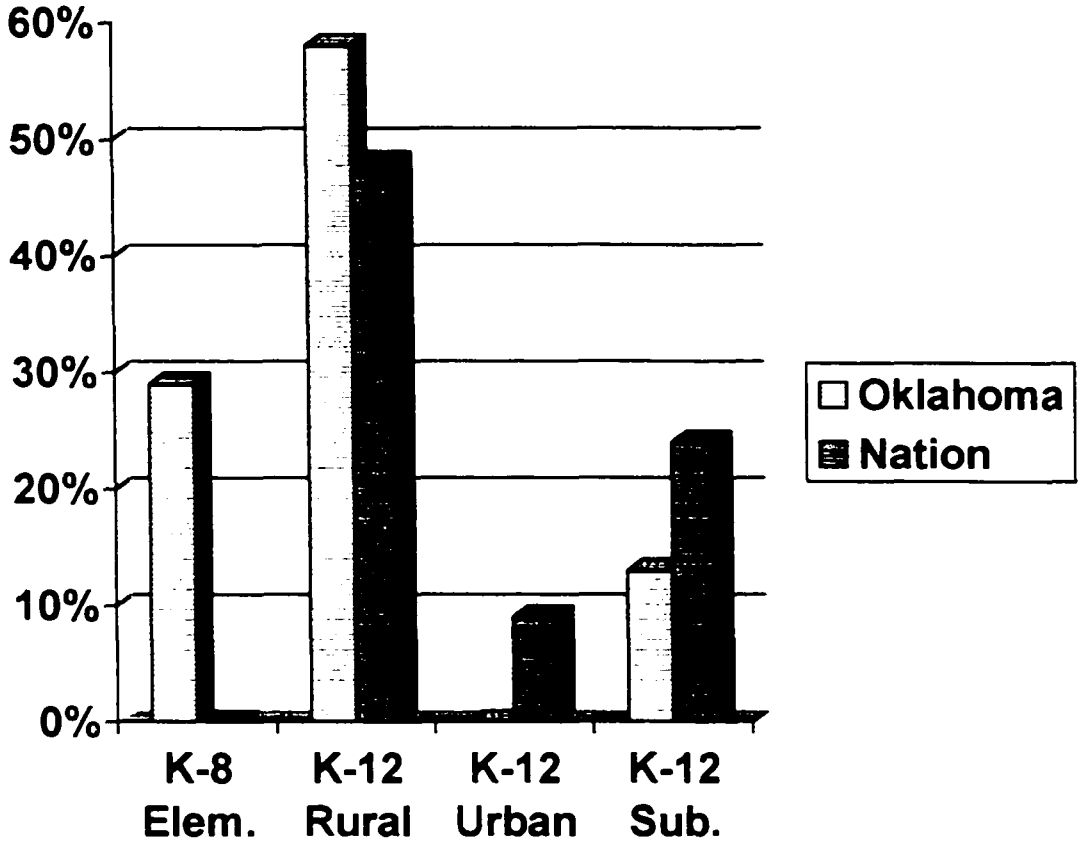
Table 1

Female Superintendents' Ages



The national statistics that were identified in this table were from The 2000 Study of the American School Superintendency (Glass, Bjork and Brunner, 2000).

Table 2
School District Classification for Participating Female Superintendents



The state of Oklahoma recognizes Kindergarten-8th grade dependent school districts. Seven of the female superintendents, who responded to the survey, led this type of district. Fourteen of the respondents oversaw the operations of K-12 rural districts. Three female superintendents headed suburban school districts.

Table 3

Distribution of Respondents to Superintendents' Survey

Number of Years of Experience in the Superintendency

	Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1 YEAR	5	20.80%
2 YEARS	6	24.00%
3 YEARS	1	4.00%
4 YEARS	3	13.00%
5 YEARS	0	0.0%
6 YEARS	0	0.0%
7 YEARS	2	8.00%
8 YEARS	0	0.00%
9 YEARS	2	8.00%
10 YEARS	0	0.00%
11 YEARS	1	4.00%
12 YEARS	1	4.00%
13 YEARS	0	0.00%
14 YEARS	1	4.00%
15 YEARS	1	4.00%
16 YEARS	1	4.00%

Table 3

In the national survey of superintendents, Glass, Bjork and Brunner (2000) found that 12.9% of the female superintendents had just completed their first year in the superintendency (p. 79). Glass et al. (2000, p. 79) reported that nationwide 58.2% of the female superintendents had from one to five years of experience. Nationwide, 25.2% of the female superintendents had more than eight years of experience (Ibid.).

Table 4

Distribution of Respondents to Superintendents' Survey

Educational Level and Degree

PHD IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP/ ADMINISTRATION	2
PHD IN CURRICLUM / INSTRUCTION	1
PHD IN APPLIIED BEHAVORIAL STUDIES	1
EDD IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION	4
MASTERS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION	9
MASTERS IN EDUCATION	2
MASTERS IN COUNSELING	4
MASTERS IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION	1

Table 4

Eight of the female superintendents who responded to the survey, or 33% of the respondents held a doctorate. When this study was conducted, there were a total of 13 female superintendents in the state with a doctorate. That would indicate that 27% of the 48 female superintendents in this state had achieved this level of education. Nationwide, 56.8% of the female superintendents held a doctorate compared to 43.7% of the male superintendents (Glass et al., 2000, p. 80). The number of female superintendents in this state who held a doctorate at the time of this survey was 30% lower than the national average.

Table 5
Distribution of Respondents to Superintendents' Survey
State Certification

ELEMENTARY TEACHER ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SUPERINTENDENT	10
ELEMENTARY TEACHER ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SECONDARY PRINCIPAL SUPERINTENDENT	3
ELEMENTARY TEACHER ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SECONDARY TEACHER SECONDARY PRINCIPAL SUPERINTENDENT	3
ELEMENTARY TEACHER ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SECONDARY TEACHER SUPERINTENDENT	2
ELEMENTARY TEACHER SECONDARY TEACHER SUPERINTENDENT	1
ELEMENTARY TEACHER SECONDARY TEACHER SECONDARY PRINCIPAL SUPERINTENDENT	1
SECONDARY TEACHER SECONDARY PRINCIPAL SUPERINTENDENT	2
SECONDARY TEACHER SECONDARY PRINCIPAL ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SUPERINTENDENT	1
SECONDARY TEACHER ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SUPERINTENDENT	1

Table 5 and Table 6

When comparing Table 5 to Table 6, one finds that twenty of the female superintendents who participated in this study were certified to be elementary principals. But, only nine of these women, or 37% of the superintendents who responded to the survey had experience as an elementary principal. Four of the women, or 16% of the respondents, had been principals in other capacities. Seven of the women, or 29%, had never served as a principal. They held the position of director, county superintendent or assistant superintendent before becoming a superintendent. Four of the female superintendents, or 16%, had no prior experience before their first superintendency. (One of these women has been a superintendent for 15 years; the other woman has been a superintendent for 14 years.)

There are two schools of thought on how one achieves ascendancy into the superintendency. Early literature on women in educational administration indicated that men and women follow different pathways to the superintendency. Ortiz (1982) found that most men are teachers, principals and central office staff prior to becoming superintendents. She also found that women leave the classroom to become specialists in the central office. Usually, women teach in the elementary school for 10 to 15 years before they become a principal Ortiz (1982). Men usually spend three to five years in a classroom before moving into administrative positions (Ortiz, 1982).

The Glass, et al. (2000) study found that women today are beginning to follow the same path to the superintendency that men follow; that is, teacher,

principal, central office. Glass et al. identified eight specific tracks to the superintendency. Three of these tracks apply to this study.

The most frequently followed tracks, the percentage of women nationwide who followed these tracks and the findings from this survey are stated below. Nationwide, 45.9% of the women followed the teacher, principal, central office track (Glass et al., 2000, p. 86). In this study, only 25% of the female superintendents followed the teacher, principal, central office track. Nationally, 20.6% of the women followed the teacher, principal track (Ibid.). That percentage compares to 33% of the respondents in this study who followed the teacher, principal track. Nationwide, 17.2% of the women followed the teacher, central office track (Ibid.) In this study, 42% of the female superintendents followed the teacher, central office track.

What is significant about this information is the fact that in this study the percentage of female superintendents who followed the teacher, central office track was 25% higher than the national average. The number of female superintendents in this study who followed the teacher, principal, central office track was 21% lower than the national average.

Table 6

Distribution of Respondents to Superintendents' Survey

Service in Administrative Positions Prior to Current Position

SUPERINTENDENT	15 YEARS
SUPERINTENDENT	14 YEARS
SUPERINTENDENT	9 YEARS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	1 YEAR
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL	7 YEARS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	1 YEAR
FEDERAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR	NOT DECLARED
SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR	NOT DECLARED
DEPENDENT PRINCIPAL	2 YEARS
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL	NOT DECLARED
K-8 SUPERINTENDENT	6 YEARS
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS	3 YEARS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	3 YEARS
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	2 YEARS
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL	5 YEARS
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	5 YEARS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	4 YEARS
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL	NOT DECLARED
COUNSELOR	NOT DECLARED
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT	2 YEARS
FEDERAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR	9 YEARS
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL	12 YEARS
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL	10 YEARS

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL	1 YEAR
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL	NOT DECLARED
SUPERINTENDENT (K-8)	NOT DECLARED
PRINCIPAL (K-12)	NOT DECLARED
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	NOT DECLARED
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	NOT DECLARED
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION DIRECTOR	NOT DECLARED
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION	NOT DECLARED
DIRECTOR OF TESTING	NOT DECLARED
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS	NOT DECLARED
SUPERINTENDENT	1 YEAR
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT	12 YEARS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	NOT DECLARED
CURRICULUM DIRECTOR	NOT DECLARED
HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL	4 YEARS
MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL	2 YEARS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	4 YEARS
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL	7 YEARS
DIRECTOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD	2 YEARS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT/PRINCIPAL (K-12)	1 YEAR
PRINCIPAL (7-8)	5 YEARS
HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL	1 YEAR
NO PRIOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE	(2 RESPONDENTS)

Table 7

Distribution of Respondents to Superintendents' Survey

Teaching Experience and Number of Years

RESPONDENT	ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL	TOTAL
1	1	13	1	15.0
2	7			7.0
3	6			6.0
4	6	2		8.0
5	4			4.0
6	5			5.0
7	1		10	11.0
8	3			3.0
9	7			7.0
10		8		8.0
11	12			12.0
12		5		5.0
13	10	5	3	18.0
14	0.5	6		6.5
15	3			3.0
16	7			7.0
17			18	18.0
18		12		12.0
19	2			2.0
20	5	3	4	12.0
21	1	1	1	3.0
22			7	7.0
23	2	3		5.0
24	4.5	2	12	18.5
TOTAL	87	60	56	203.0

Table 7

Table 7 indicates that the female superintendents who participated in this study spent much less time as a classroom teacher than was originally reported in the earlier studies on female superintendents. The average number of years of teaching experience for all 24 superintendents who responded to this survey was 8.45 years.

Glass, et al. (2000) found that 20.2% of the female superintendents nationwide had zero to five years of teaching experience (p. 83). Nationwide, 40.4% of the female superintendents had six to ten years of teaching experience (Ibid.). Nationally, 23.6% of the female superintendents had 11 to 15 years of teaching experience and 11.4% of the female superintendents in the nation had 16 or more years of teaching experience (Ibid.).

What is significant about this table is that while 60% of the female superintendents in the nation had between zero and ten years of teaching experience, the percentage of female superintendents in Oklahoma who had between zero and five years of teaching experience was almost 13% higher than the national average. The number of female superintendents in Oklahoma who had between 6 and 10 years of teaching experience was almost 10% lower than the national average. There wasn't a significant difference between the percentages of female superintendents with ten or more years of experience in Oklahoma and the nation.

Summary

The Superintendents' Survey Questionnaire was a precursor to the qualitative study in this research project. The questionnaire provided demographic information on the female superintendents in the state during the 2000-2001 school year. The Oklahoma superintendents, as a group, were younger in all age categories than the national average. Rural districts in the state employed 10% more female superintendents while suburban districts employed 10% fewer female superintendents than the national average. Of the female superintendents who responded to the survey, 21% had just completed their first year in the superintendency compared to 12.9% nationwide. The number of female superintendents in the survey who had seven or more years of experience was 12% higher than the national average. In this study, the number of women with a doctorate was 30% lower than the national average. The female superintendents who responded to this survey spent fewer years in the classroom as a teacher than the female superintendents in the national survey.

One of the most significant findings of this survey was the fact that the female superintendents in the state of Oklahoma while following three specific tracks to the superintendency did not comply with the national findings of Glass et al. (2000). The number of female superintendents in Oklahoma who followed the teacher, central office track was 25% higher than the national average. The number of women administrators in this study who followed the teacher, principal track was 12% higher than the national figures. The least

pursued track for female superintendents in Oklahoma was the teacher, principal, central office track.

A Profile of the Female Participants in the Qualitative Aspect of the Study Based on the Superintendents' Survey Questionnaire

The purpose of this study was to understand the common factors that contributed to the success of these female administrators in a male-dominated field. In order to triangulate the data, it was the goal of this researcher to incorporate a large enough sample of the population to provide validity to the study. This was the first comprehensive study that looked at all of the female superintendents in the state, regardless of the size of the district in which they were employed or the location of their district. Fifteen of the 24 respondents to the Superintendents' Survey Questionnaire (Appendix A), or 63%, participated in the interview portion of this study.

Of the 15 female superintendents who were interviewed, three were Kindergarten-8th grade superintendents. Their schools ranged in size from 100 students to 500 students. Four of the superintendents were located in school districts that were classified as Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. Their student body totaled from 1700 students to over 12,000 students. Two of these districts were classified suburban by the state and two of them were classified as rural schools. The remaining eight superintendents oversaw the operations of Kindergarten-12th grade rural schools. Their student size began at just under 100; the largest Kindergarten-12th grade district had close to 1500 students.

Interviewees represented all four quadrants of the state's geographical regions. School districts closest to the state's borders were Kindergarten-12th grade rural districts. Kindergarten-8th grade elementary school districts and additional Kindergarten-12th grade rural school districts were scattered throughout the state in all four regions. Suburban school districts were clustered around the two major cities in the state.

There was a wide representation of the age categories in this study. The superintendent who was in the 25 to 34 age range was interviewed along with the superintendent who was in the 35 to 44 age range. Eleven of the seventeen women between the ages of 45 to 54 were interviewed. Two of the three women who were between the ages of 55 to 64 were also interviewed (Table 1).

The breakdown of the female superintendents who were interviewed based on their number of years of experience is listed below. Seven of the superintendents who had seven or more years of experience were interviewed. Two superintendents had four years of experience. One superintendent had three years of experience and two superintendents had two years of experience. Three of the women who had just completed their first year as a superintendent were also interviewed (Table 3).

When looking at the salary ranges of the women who participated in the interview process, the following information was available. Two of the six female superintendents in the state who made between $50,000 and $59,000 were interviewed. Two of the five women with salaries in the $60,000 to

$69,000 range were interviewed. Eleven of the twelve women who had salaries above $70,000 participated in the interview process.

Six of the women who participated in the interview portion of the study had their doctorates. Four women had a Master's Degree in Educational Administration. Three women had a Master's Degree in Counseling. One woman had a Master's Degree in Education and one woman had a Master's Degree in Elementary Education (Table 4).

Chapter 4: Participants' Perspectives

Introduction

Qualitative research involves the study of participants in a naturalistic setting. Usually this results in the collection of data that is highly descriptive of the lives of the participants. The participants in this study were practicing female superintendents. Each of them gave freely of her time and interest so that this research project could be completed. In order to understand the analysis portion of this dissertation, it is essential to gain some insight into the key players who have contributed to this study.

Each of these women is a unique individual with special talents and gifts. They shared information about their lives to help the researcher personally gain a better understanding of what it means to be a female superintendent working in a profession that affects the lives of so many people. These women talked about their families, their schools, their profession, their past and their future plans. It would be impossible and impractical, however, to include in this study all of the data that were collected during the interview process.

Because this research design utilizes a holistic approach to the study of a specific phenomenon, it would be highly unethical, for this researcher, to introduce the participants in this study as non-entities and refer to them only by a number. Therefore, a brief life history and career experiences have been woven into a vignette about each of the participants. In order to

maintain their anonymity, each of these female superintendents has been assigned a pseudonym.

Madeline Wright

Madeline grew up in a small town. She worked as a teacher and assistant superintendent in the same district where she attended high school. When Madeline graduated from high school, she got married and started a family. Shortly after her first child was born, she decided to attend college. Madeline was interested in becoming an architect; but her stepfather suggested that she go into education. She completed her bachelor's degree in three and a half years with a major in accounting. With her business background, she was able to become a vocational business teacher. While working in the district, she became involved in grant-writing for the district.

When the position of assistant superintendent came open in her district, she decided to apply for the position. The superintendent who hired her became her mentor. She stated, "He told me he would teach me everything I needed to know to be a superintendent" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001). Madeline related that when she was the assistant superintendent, she was the detail person and the superintendent was the visionary person. She was able to help bridge the gap from administration to the faculty. She added, "without...I'm not sure what direction my life would have taken" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001).

Madeline related that administration was really not her goal. "It was not something that I ever considered" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001). She stated that she wanted to work with adults and had aspirations of becoming a college professor. Madeline commented that she believes "the biggest hindrance for women getting into administration is taking care of their children. Administration takes a lot of time and energy" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001). She waited until her daughter graduated from high school before she became an administrator.

When Madeline moved into administration, women couldn't understand why she made that decision. She commented "You are stepping out of your boundaries when you become an administrator. Women have a certain role; women shouldn't be in administration" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001). She was the first woman in her district who ever moved into the central office. She stated, "I just needed a challenge. The other women just didn't seem to understand that" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001).

Madeline remarked that one of the biggest obstacles to women getting into administration is getting their first job. Madeline worked in her home district for 18 years before leaving to become a school superintendent in a much smaller district. She could not become the superintendent in her home district because of the good old boy system. She stated, "they made a huge investment in me; but I had to leave" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001). She talked about her current position as superintendent and commented "the school just needed someone to love it" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001). When discussing her

superintendency, Madeline discussed what she considers the most satisfying aspects of her job. She commented

> I enjoy making a difference in the kid's lives. It's rewarding to know there are kids you have helped. They come back all the time. They like to come back and touch base. Just being there and helping makes a difference. (M. Wright, June 19, 2001)

The state's first year superintendency program gave Madeline an opportunity to bond with other people. She related that it took a while to build relationships with other females in the state. She also stated that, "networking is the most powerful tool women need to get into administration. You need someone to call and they can call you" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001).

Madeline stated that, "women administrators have to be willing to give time. The secret is in the mentoring" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001). You have to have a mentor, male or female, who can help you. "Those women who are successful are still being mentored" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001). Madeline doesn't consider gender bias any more of an issue than age.

Madeline never had to relocate because the district where she was superintendent was relatively close to where she lives. When discussing the future, she commented that she doesn't know if she would consider another position as a public school superintendent. She would eventually like to become the superintendent of a vocational technical school.

Michelle Quinn

Michelle has been an elementary teacher, a counselor, an elementary principal, an assistant superintendent and a superintendent. As a young girl, her family moved around quite a bit. She started school in an urban school district; but she graduated from high school in a much smaller school district. When talking about her childhood, Michelle related that she believes she was brought up differently than children today because they are allowed to express themselves at an early age. As a young girl, she stated that she was brought up to listen rather than talk around adults. She stated, "At my house, you could be seen, but you could not be heard. People would say don't do this; don't do that...don't talk; the adults are talking" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001). Michelle added that her dad set the expectations for her as a young girl.

Michelle completed some junior college work, then, she worked while her husband finished college. She then had an opportunity to return to school and finish her degree. Her bachelor's degree was in elementary education; she taught fourth grade for five years in a small rural school district. When she was teaching, Michelle noticed that she "had an affinity for working with individual students and trying to help them through whatever it was that their issues were" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001). She completed her master's degree in counseling and went to a larger suburban district. While she was a counselor, she realized that she had an impact not only on the kids but also the adults "because people did come to you with their issues" (M. Quinn, June

21, 2001). As a counselor, "you're not supposed to tell people what to do" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001). She decided to return to school to get her administrator's certificate.

> Michelle had no interest in going into the central office. She stated, I very much enjoyed the day-to-day routine with kids and adults. Circumstances were such that I ended up applying for a job at the central office. I was encouraged to, plus, I felt driven. I can't tell you why. I have a belief in a higher power and that's really why I think I ended up there. (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001)

She became the Administrative Assistant for Elementary Education. After two years, a change in the superintendency occurred. The new superintendent and she were on the same page philosophically. She became the Assistant Superintendent for Kindergarten through 5th grade. When she went into the central office, she was able to complete her doctorate in educational administration in two and a half years. She became the Assistant Superintendent for Kindergarten through 12th grade. The new superintendent left after a term of seven years and Michelle was appointed the interim superintendent for one year. At the end of that year, she "actively sought other positions, in particular, this one" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001).

Michelle related that when you get into the central office, your influence is much more limited. She believes that the most powerful positions in education are the classroom teacher and the principal. She stated

> When you are teaching in a classroom, you have total control over that classroom. Whatever happens in the classroom is directly impacted by me... Principal is the best job in the world because you set the tone for that building, nobody else. You have no excuses. You are the person who sets the tone for the building. If you have a vision, you sell your people on that vision. (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001)

When you get to be a superintendent in a district the size where she was the chief executive officer, she believed that you can have a pretty dramatic influence on the district. She stated, "It's almost like being a principal of a really big school" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001).

When discussing her superintendency, Michelle related that when she became an administrator, there were not a lot of women in administration. "It was a societal thing at that point. Women just hadn't been there" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001). She also stated that, "it is easier for men in administration to have a family than it is for women because of their traditional role" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001). She also discussed the issue of gender bias. She believes female administrators sometimes lack support from their female staff.

Barbara Adams

Barbara has been a school superintendent in the state since 1992. She was a teacher for three years. She then became a dependent elementary school principal. After serving one term as a county superintendent, she applied for and became the superintendent in the district where she has been employed for the past nine years. Barbara grew up in an

adjoining state. When she first started college, Barbara wanted to be a history teacher. Her academic advisor at that time suggested that her job opportunities would be better if she had a degree in elementary education rather than history.

Barbara began her career in education by being a substitute teacher and a janitor. She was working for a female principal at that time who was her idol. She stated, "I wanted to be like her" (B. Adams, June 22, 2001). Upon completion of her bachelor's degree, Barbara began working on her master's degree. She commented,

> I knew that before I even completed my bachelors degree, because working with Patty and that school system; seeing what she did, and what she had influence over and how she could direct the school district; I knew that's what I wanted to do. (B. Adams, June 22, 2001)

She finished her master's degree in elementary administration in May 1980 and got her first administrative position the next school year as a dependent school principal. She stayed in that position until 1986. Dependent school principals were the chief administrative officer of each school; but they were called principals because they were under a county superintendent. Eventually, the title of the dependent principals was changed to Elementary School Superintendent. Barbara stated, "the job was the same, but the title changed" (B. Adams, June 22, 2001).

Barbara believes that the person who had the greatest impact on her life was her mother. Her mother, who dropped out of school in the 4th grade,

was not educated. She was in two bad marriages and she told Barbara "you better get a good education, you better get a good job. She constantly drilled that into me...that made me want to be very, very independent" (B. Adams, June 22, 2001).

When asked if she would select another career if given the opportunity, Barbara replied

> Well, I love this job and I have been real successful with it you know. I would hate to say that I would pick another career but if I knew what I know now, I would go into something that women didn't go into in 1969. Be a lawyer, be a doctor, or something I never considered. (B. Adams, June 22, 2001)

When Barbara was asked if she had encountered any obstacles in becoming an administrator, she replied

> I just think people see women first of all as being the nurturer in the home and that the woman is going to put the child first or the family first. I think that when they interview men, they don't see man as putting family first. They see man as putting his job first and I think that's part of it. That is just an assumption they make. (B. Adams, June 22, 2001)

The other thing that I have seen is that "they think they can get women cheaper and keep them cheaper" (B. Adams, June 22, 2001). She added,

> I think that most of the time we work harder. We're more sincere. I think we care a lot more. I know one thing that I have seen over the

years; most women must do very well at their job. If women do a good job, they can move and get another good job. If women mess up, they'll never get another job. Men, on the other hand, can go to a school, mess it up royally and then get another job. (B. Adams, June 22, 2001)

When asked the question as to whether female superintendents in the state network, Barbara's reply was

> From my point of view, I don't think we network well at all. I have a really good relationship with ... because I knew her before I came here. So she and I talk every once in a while. We meet two or three times a year with other small schools. (B. Adams, June 22, 2001)

One of the reasons that Barbara believed that the female superintendents didn't network well is because "we're all scattered out...In this county, there are two other female superintendents. They have very big schools. We don't have a lot in common. Their problems are not my problems" (B. Adams, June 22, 2001). She added,

> If they are like me, I like to be here. I want to know what is going on. So I don't go to a whole lot of meetings. If I think I can learn something I will go. But I know male superintendents who are at meetings three times a week. They are never on campus. You can go to a meeting every day. But you can't get your job done if you're gone. The paperwork keeps coming in, whether you're here or not. (B. Adams, June 22, 2001)

When asked what she considered her most satisfying aspect of the job, Barbara commented,

> To see the school improve, to see us grow, and offer more things so the students can learn, grow and achieve. To see children graduate with success and have them come back to you when they graduate from high school and when they get college scholarships. I already have two valedictorians this year at the neighboring high school. To see the children grow up and be successful is the most satisfying part of the job. (B. Adams, June 22, 2001)

When asked about her future plans, Barbara commented that she will be able to retire in four years. Her plans remain uncertain at this time.

Linda Taylor

Linda has been a superintendent in the state for the past 16 years. She grew up in an adjoining state and graduated with her bachelor's degree in 1970. She moved to Oklahoma with her husband right after graduation and worked as a substitute teacher for the first three years that she lived in the state. Linda's father was a plumber and her mother would take the money and put it in Linda' savings account for college. Linda stated

> My mother pushed education. My mother said that if I didn't go to college, she would use my money and go instead. She is the only one of all of my aunts and uncles and my father and grandparents, who

graduated from high school. Education was very important to her. (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001)

When she was nine years old, Linda was showing cattle. She was the one who drove the tractor. She stated "my place was on the tractor, not doing the heavy work. I didn't have to work out there as hard as my brothers, but I was the only one" (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001). As a young woman, she would go with her husband when he showed cattle. Sometimes, there were no showers for the women, so she would have to go to the area where they were showing horses to shower. She stated "just getting used to being in a male-dominated area probably had a lot to do with shaping my life" (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001).

In 1973 she took her first full-time teaching position in a small town. She was a first grade teacher. After two years of teaching first grade, Linda took a position as a 7th, 8th and 9th grade remedial reading teacher in another small town. In 1977, Linda took a leave of absence to take care of some family matters. After her leave of absence, she returned to the same school as a half-day Kindergarten teacher. She then taught second grade for two years and when her principal, whom she considered to be a great principal, left the school, she decided to work on her principal's certification. Linda completed her administrator's certificate because as she stated,

> I thought I could do a better job than anybody else probably. Being an idealist, I think it goes back to that. Because I think that I was a very

good elementary teacher; I thought that I would be a very good administrator. (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001)

Upon completion of her administrator's certification, she applied for various positions as an elementary principal. She became a dependent elementary school principal with 26 students in a very small town.

Linda recalled her first meetings when she was a dependent principal.

> There was one older gentleman who never told me but he told someone to tell me that that meeting was no place for a woman...overnight meetings were definitely no place for a woman. They weren't threatened by me. They were threatened that someone would know that a female went to some meetings or might have some misgivings, or it could cause problems that way. (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001)

When discussing her superintendency, Linda related that while she didn't have any mentors when she began her administrative career, some of the older gentlemen were very accepting of women in that position and would encourage them. She stated, "I never relied on any of them, but you kind of always felt they were watching out for you" (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001). The individual who came the closest to being a mentor for her was one of her principals. Linda stated, "Mr...would be the one who would tell me never let them see you sweat...He was just one of those who would redirect me the right way" (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001).

When asked if she had encountered any obstacles in becoming an administrator, Linda stated, "To me, at times, it was women who were hurting us the most" (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001). When she interviewed for a superintendent's position, she remarked,

> I was told there couldn't be two females who could do the job...If a female does it bad, no females can do it. If a male does it bad, that person couldn't do it...I am probably a little sensitive to whenever a woman fails, because it hits all of us. I don't think my expectations of women were different than those for the men. They were high for both of them. (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001)

She also added,

> I think it's much harder for women. I think it's harder for women to get their doctorate. I think it's harder for women to be in a traditionally male role and that is because we have so many other things that we view we also have to do...A lot of the women I saw that were getting their doctorate were either single or they didn't have young children or they were in a situation where there was some support that allowed them to do that. They were in a situation where the husbands took some of the responsibilities that are traditionally female. (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001)

Linda commented that her plans for the future are uncertain. She has several options she is considering once she can retire, but she has made no definite plans at this time.

Merilee Jackson

Merilee never thought about being a teacher, principal or administrator when she was in school. When she was a young girl, she enjoyed school. She showed horses and worked in a stable. She was interested in art.

As a young woman, she stated, "we didn't have a clue as to what type of employment opportunities were there for women" (M. Jackson, July 3, 2001). When she started college, she began pursuing a career in commercial art; but she dropped out of school after two years and got married. When she returned to college to complete her degree, she was thinking about teaching art. At that time, funding for the fine arts programs in education, was not available in most districts; so she knew that being an art teacher wouldn't work as a career. Marilee completed a degree in elementary education at the age of 32.

After teaching one semester, she started working on her master's degree in counseling. During the two years that she was a teacher, a female principal mentored her. When the principal moved to another district, this aspiring superintendent was not able to move with her.

Merilee wanted to become a principal, but it was easier to move into a position as a counselor. She spent five years as a counselor before becoming a principal. Merilee worked in a large urban school district as a counselor. In that particular district, counselors were actually assistant principals. Merilee believed that going from the classroom to a counseling position was an acceptable step for administration.

After being a teacher and counselor, Merilee thought that it was time to move. The superintendency was the next logical step. She wanted to be the one who was making the decisions. As a first year superintendent, she was in what she termed a "rookie school." During Merilee's first year in the position, she had several male peers who had been helping her. She stated "some of them took me under their wing once I got in the door. One or two of them did increase my chances for becoming a superintendent. They kind of adopted me" (M. Jackson, July 3, 2001).

When talking about the superintendency, Merilee commented that being a superintendent is more like running a business. "You have to hire the best people. Life experiences are important. The more varied they are; the easier it is to be a superintendent" (M. Jackson, July 3, 2001). To be successful as a school superintendent, Merilee related that she believes that

> You have to be able to perceive the whole picture. Some people only see a small world. Community PR is important. You don't have to win the battle to win the war. You have to pick your battles. (M. Jackson, July 3, 2001)

When asked if she had experienced any obstacles in her career, she stated that she encountered resistance from female teachers who thought that the principal should have been a man. As a superintendent, she hasn't met any resistance. Merilee will be eligible for retirement in five years. She would like to go to a district of about 650 students with a staff of about 75 people. She has taught as an adjunct in a university.

Diane Jones

Diane grew up in a rural community. There were approximately 600 students when she was in school; there are still 600 students in school there today. She has only lived outside of her hometown for three years of her professional life. Her husband was a high school principal before he graduated from law school in 1981. Diane believes that he has been her greatest asset. He has always been supportive. She has one daughter, who is a family practice physician.

Diane was not interested in becoming a teacher. She wanted to be an airline stewardess. She began her college career as a fine arts and journalism major. She stated, "My mother was an elementary school teacher. It was the last thing I wanted to become" (D. Jones, July 9, 2001). Diane had aspirations of attending graduate school out of state. Her father set the parameters for her and told her "she had enough education. She needed to go and earn a living and go out in the real world" (D. Jones, July 9, 2001).

Diane taught elementary school twenty miles from where she grew up. She thought teaching was an unappreciated job. While she was a counselor, she was also the Program Director for Federal Programs. "Counselors didn't have much work to do at that time" (D. Jones, July 9, 2001). She has never held a position as an elementary principal.

The superintendent in her district suggested to the board that she become the superintendent. She negotiated with them to become the

Assistant Superintendent while working on her doctorate at that time. Diane completed her doctorate in educational administration in 1985.

When asked about whether she had to overcome any obstacles in her career, Diane stated, "Men like women to be women. They don't like women who exert too much power and control" (D. Jones, July 9, 2001). When asked how female teachers perceive female administrators, Diane replied that most women see administration as added responsibilities. Therefore, they don't want to be administrators. The classroom is very routine and very predictable with few surprises. Most women have the mindset that they only provide a second income to support the family.

When asked what it takes to become a successful administrator, Diane commented that in order to be successful, you have to be able to listen to people and know your community. You also have to be bright enough to see some of the things that are going to occur and plan ahead instead of having to react. Some of that comes from experience.

> You have to be a professional, whether it is a lady or a man, in all of your dealings every day. You have to establish credibility and trust with your board and community. You have to let them know that regardless of what happens, you are going to tell the truth even if you made a mistake. That you are going to do nothing underhanded in the finances or any way. There is a difference between being legal and being ethical. I will always be ethical. Even though it might be legal, if I don't feel that it is ethical, I will not do it. Once you have that trust

and credibility, they will pretty much give you a free rein. Once you lose that, nothing that you do will ever re-establish that. You have lost it. (D. Jones, July 9, 2001)

Diane also discussed the fact that at one time some of the female superintendents in the state belonged to separate organizations for the women. She believes that the women need to network with other superintendents, not just the females.

Diane has been a superintendent for the past 12 years. She could have retired two years ago and has been asked to apply at other school districts. Since her daughter and grandchildren have just moved to this area, she does not consider herself mobile and is unable to move.

Nancy Thomas

Nancy has been a superintendent for the last nine years. She was an assistant superintendent for one year and an elementary principal for seven years. She grew up in a medium sized town in Oklahoma and graduated from high school in 1967. She stated that when she graduated from high school "everybody went to college. You had not thought about what you wanted to do at college. You just knew that everyone from here went to college; so you were expected to go to college. So I went to college" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001). Her father died unexpectedly when she was nine years old. She stated "My dad figured he had all the time in the world. Needless to say, he didn't have. They just weren't prepared" (N. Thomas, July

23, 2001). Her mother was left with the responsibility of raising six children. Nancy's mother taught her that she needed to learn to rely on herself. Her mother has been and still is her role model today

After teaching elementary school for seven years, Nancy was called to interview for a position as a principal in another school. She decided to take the opportunity to become a principal; she then moved into a principalship in a larger school in a larger district. She was asked to become the assistant superintendent. After being an assistant superintendent for one year, Nancy decided it was time for her to become a superintendent. She completed her doctorate in educational administration in 1992. She has been a superintendent for three different school districts in the state. She stated, "There is no job security in being a superintendent... If you want to be a superintendent, you have to be willing to move" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001). Sometimes finding a place to live is not always an easy task. When her family arrived at their latest destination, there was no place to live. She stated,

> We found a house; one of our board members was going to move to a different house. We moved in as he moved out. He was literally going out the back door and we were going in the front door. We found a house to live in and now that we are not looking for a house, there are lots of houses for sale. (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001)

When discussing her superintendency, Nancy stated that one of the most difficult obstacles that women face in becoming a superintendent is

getting their first job. She stated, "Getting your first job is hard. You're competing against a lot of males" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001). The women who compete in an open market go into communities where they have no support system and they have to build one. That can be extremely challenging. Nancy believes that men are better at building networks because in small towns, "men can walk in and find the coffee shop where all of the old-timers are and sit right down and fit right in. But if a woman walks in and sits down, she does not fit right in" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001.)

During her first year in the superintendency, Nancy participated in the state sponsored mentorship program for entry year superintendents. She had a very good experience with the program. Nancy has mentored several individuals during her years as a superintendent. She currently has a female teacher that she is mentoring. Nancy also remarked that at one time there was a separate organization for the female superintendents in the state because "they were trying to encourage more women to build a network and start growing in numbers as far as the superintendency" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001).

When asked what it takes to become successful, Nancy stated that she believes that "you have to be self-directed; you also have to do the best you can and not worry about it. You can't worry about everything" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001).

As a superintendent, you have to be able to see the big picture.

> I think if anything, it is staying focused on what the kids need. Instead of focusing so much on what the teachers need; I focus on what the kids, the students need. I think that's what you have to do. I think that when the community finds out that you are there for the kids, and that's why you're there, I think that they are more supportive of you. (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001)

Nancy and her husband have always shared the responsibility of raising their children. Due to professional meetings, she would have to be gone sometimes overnight. "If I had not had a supportive husband, then, I could not have done it" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001). Nancy has to work for two more years until she can retire. She stated that if the right opportunity came up; she might consider moving to a larger district. She also stated, "there is a lot to be said about being in this type of community that has so many needs and wants" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001).

Judy Clifton

Judy lived in the city when she was growing up, but she spent most of her weekends in the country because her father owned farmland and her grandparents lived in the country. As a young girl, Judy said "I grew up where you didn't play; you worked" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001). She remembers taking vacations that were always related to her father's business rather than trips that were taken just for fun. She stated "to this very day, I feel guilty if I

am playing. I think, what could I be accomplishing right now. I need to accomplish something" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001).

She stated "my grandfather was the most important person I had in my life besides my own father...I was his favorite...he said you're young, but you start thinking about what you want to do" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001). After her grandfather's death, she stated, "my father took up the slack and he kept telling me, you are going to get a college degree. That's good insurance. You need that insurance policy in case you ever want to work" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001).

Judy graduated from college in December 1965. She originally began college as an elementary education major; but she graduated with a degree in business. She stated "I didn't really intend to do anything except stay home and have babies" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001). She stayed home with her children for about 11 years. During that time, she completed her master's degree in elementary education with a reading specialist degree.

Because of her degrees and her coursework, Judy had very marketable skills. She could teach business courses, reading courses and elementary education. Whenever they moved due to her husband's job, she was able to find a teaching position because of her multiple certifications.

Judy has never been a principal. When they returned from an adjoining state, she went to work for the State Department of Education as an administrator. She was involved in working with the state legislature and

developing the program for entry year teachers (H.B. 1017). She was also in charge of staff development programs.

One of the rural districts in the state was having difficulty maintaining superintendents. She was sent by the State Department of Education to help them complete their Title I and Title II paperwork. The board president kept asking her if she would be their superintendent. She told him she didn't want to be the superintendent so the board president asked her to talk to the teachers. She accepted the position there and remained in the superintendency for two years. Judy and her family then moved to a school with approximately 300 students where she was the superintendent; she stayed there for two years also. Then she moved to a larger school system with approximately 2,000 students; she was there for five years as the superintendent.

As Judy changed locations in the superintendency, her family moved with her. Judy's family has always moved with her because her husband traveled with his job. "Relocation was never a problem...A lot of women don't have that luxury! Their husbands live in one place and they live in another place" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001).

Judy has been a school superintendent for the past 14 years. She was worked in Oklahoma and a neighboring state as a superintendent. When she became a school superintendent, she was one of two or three female superintendents in the state. She added that she believed she had entered a

man's world. She joked about being the "token" female on some of the state boards when she was younger.

When discussing obstacles in her superintendency, Judy related that she has had the most trouble with female board members who appear to be very accepting of female administrators initially. After a year or so, they seem to turn on the female superintendent. Sometimes female teachers and women in the community have difficulty accepting women in positions of power and authority. Judy also commented

> I think that the women superintendents work harder and are more professional because we really have to prove ourselves, even this late. We have to watch our p's and q's. Because if we fail, they say it was because we are women. So we have to really make sure that we get it all going in the right direction. (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001)

Helen King

Helen has been in education for 25 years. She has been a high school English and Drama teacher, an elementary school teacher, a middle school principal, a high school principal and a Kindergarten through 12th grade principal. She lives on a ranch halfway between where she works and where she grew up. All of her educational positions have been around that same area. Helen is the mother of three children; she has two grandsons and one granddaughter. When she was a child, Helen lived on a ranch. Her mother, who had a degree in business, ran the family's 4,000 acre ranch because Helen's father passed away when she was in the fourth grade. As a young

girl, Helen was able to do a lot of the veterinarian work for her mother; and she aspired to become a veterinarian when she first attended college.

In college Helen changed her major from veterinary medicine to education with an emphasis on English and Speech. Helen taught high school English for one year and was going to be a stay-at-home mom. By the time her daughter was in the second grade, she missed teaching so she took a position as an elementary teacher in her daughter's school. She returned to college and became certified in elementary education and taught elementary school for five years.

After Helen's daughter graduated from high school, Helen returned to college to complete her administrator's certification. Her first administrative position was at a small school as the Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade principal and the assistant superintendent. She was a teaching principal through the day; she also taught GED classes after school. She thought her first job was a good partnership because the superintendent liked to coach basketball and he was really good with the plant. She was in charge of curriculum and discipline.

During her first year as a superintendent, Helen was assigned a mentor through the state program. She felt that he was unable to really help her as a mentor because he had other issues that he was dealing with at the time. She is currently mentoring a gentleman in her system, who is a coach, and who is very positive with the students. "He's an excellent teacher and I think he will be a wonderful administrator...I think that a good administrator,

like a good teacher, is going to be a coach; a good coach" (H. King, July 31, 2001).

When asked if there were any other obstacles that she had to overcome as an administrator, Helen stated that, "not everyone is accepting of females in that position" (H. King, July 31, 2001). She related that she felt that "as a woman, I would have to overcome people in the community thinking that maybe I would not have the authority that I needed" (H. King, July 31, 2001).

Helen recalled that while working as a middle school principal for four and a half years, it seemed that she ran into gender bias. She usually didn't take it too seriously though because "They were mad...It was just kind of their way to expel steam and so it didn't bother me" (H. King, July 31, 2001). She further stated that as an administrator, you can't take a lot of things personally.

> I guess because I was raised by a mother who was in a position where she was the head of the family, I've never perceived myself as having a problem because I'm a woman doing anything. I was more or less always told you could do whatever you wanted to do, be whatever you wanted to be. I never felt like I couldn't...I guess I'm just not intimidated...that's never been an issue with me. (H. King, July 31, 2001)

As an educator, Helen emphasized that she had some role models in her profession; but none of them were females. When she was growing up,

there weren't any female administrators. Some of her friends have been her role models over the years. Living and working in a small town, it is extremely important to her as the superintendent to select teachers and administrators who are good role models for the student body.

When asked what it would take to be a successful administrator, Helen replied, to be successful,

> You need to enjoy people. You need to enjoy coming to work every day. You need a lot of support. You have to remember that every aspect of our educational system is important. You have to love kids and so does your faculty. (H. King, July 31, 2001).

Donna York

Donna is married to a farmer. They are one of the last surviving family farms in their area. Her daughter is a physical therapist and her son is a surgeon. Donna has lived in the same town all of her life. She and her children have gone to the same schools where she is now the superintendent. When she was a young girl, her father had a massive coronary. Donna's mother, who had been a stay-at-home mom, went back to work as a legal secretary to support the family and help with the staggering medical expenses. When Donna was in high school, her father passed away.

Donna remarked that while her mother did not have a college degree, "it was just expected that I would attend college. My mother once told me if you have a college degree, it means nothing to you; but if you don't have one,

you miss it all your life" (D. York, August 7, 2001). Donna stated that the reason she went to college was because many of the women of her generation were more interested in getting an MRS degree (meaning they were looking for a husband), improving their minds and looking towards the future.

Donna graduated from college with a degree in sociology and after her son was born, she returned to college and completed a degree in English. After being a stay-at-home mom for six years, she re-entered the workforce as an English teacher. When she first became an educator, females viewed teaching as a temporary position rather than their life's work. Most women considered it something they could do now. Eventually it evolved into more. She remarked that "adolescent girls of today need to realize what opportunities they have that we really didn't have or didn't have the sense enough to know we had at that time" (D. York, August 7, 2001). She also stated "It was a sad commentary for our society at that time. But, if you didn't live it, you couldn't realize the magnitude" (D. York, August 7, 2001).

Donna has 24 years of experience in education. She has been a high school English teacher, a Federal Programs Director and Interim Superintendent. Her master's degree is in Counseling. She is currently serving in her first official position as superintendent. She has been the interim superintendent twice. She stated, "Never until two years ago did I even entertain a fantasy notion of being a superintendent. I like to push papers in the back office and give other people credit for a job well done" (D.

York, August 7, 2001). Donna was asked if she was not interested in the superintendency. Her response was

> ...Not interested. That is really not correct. It was beyond not being interested. I had never given it any thought. I had children and other obligations and when this opportunity came up after I had been interim several times and my kids were grown, I just suddenly decided I might discuss it with the board. It wasn't anything I thought about or planned in any way during my career. (D. York, August 7, 2001)

When discussing her superintendency, Donna was asked if she had anyone mentor her as an administrator. Donna referred to a female administrator who had been the Federal Programs Director in her district. This woman aspired to become a school superintendent; she even worked on her PhD., but she was never given any serious consideration for the job of superintendent. Donna thought that maybe this woman was "just a few years ahead of her time or she would probably have become a superintendent" (D. York, August 7, 2001). She also commented that, "as a leader, you have an obligation to provide leadership opportunities and allow other people to climb the ladder in your organization" (D. York, August 7, 2001).

Donna doesn't believe that her staff treats her any differently because she is a female. When she became the superintendent in her district, she experienced a sense of support from her community because they knew her. They knew her family. She felt that it was more of a situation that "one of

their own" (D. York, August 7, 2001) had become successful rather than having anything to do with being a male/female thing.

She is happiest when she is working with her friends. Her goal is "to create a better school for our kids...by creating a loving and nurturing environment for all of the students" (D. York, August 7, 2001).

Donna has had several calls from other schools for job opportunities, but she's probably not interested in moving. She stated

> I can't move the family farm. It is very flattering that for the first time in my life; I think that I might have some career choices. But I really haven't given it much thought. But it has been fun to have several inquiries. (D. York, August 7, 2001)

Sherry Brown

Sherry has been an assistant elementary principal, an early childhood director, an elementary principal, principal of an early childhood center and an assistant superintendent. She grew up on a farm where she handled a lot of responsibility at a very young age. By the time she was 12 years of age, she was driving heavy farm equipment. She stated, "It was a real good background, I think, for me. It's probably one of the reasons why I went in the direction of administration...the culture probably helped to mold me in some of the direction I've taken" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001).

She was the first person in her family to graduate from college. Her father was a farmer with an eighth grade education and her mother had a

high school education. When Sherry graduated from high school, there weren't many opportunities for women. "People didn't open their eyes; they gave us directions for what they thought we should do. Education was what most women went into" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001). Most of the young people from her hometown went to the local regional university. Her parents told her she could go if she wanted. She related that her folks were very supportive of her getting an education.

After two or three years of teaching, Sherry decided to go into administration. She thought that she had something to offer—leadership skills, the ability to work with the staff and the ability to help students achieve. She believed that she could make a difference as an administrator. It was not difficult for her to get her first administrative position. She remarked, "I felt like I was a good classroom teacher. I was a teacher who took pride in what I did. I took pride in the fact that my students did well. I think that others saw that" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001).

Sherry believes that people don't just happen into situations. When Sherry was asked how she got her first administrative position, she stated

> I think people saw in me some capabilities. In all of us, I don't think you ever get into positions where there is not someone else who mentors us or observes what they believe to be the qualities of an individual in this position. I don't think anybody singly by themselves achieves without others being there to support and help. I had some good principals that I worked with that recognized my capabilities and

put in a good word for me. I think that is basically how I managed to get my first position...All of us have a little bit of help and I think that we have a responsibility to do that too. (S. Brown, August 8, 2001).

Sherry taught sixth grade for six years. When she first became an administrator, she was in a fairly large suburban district. At that time, there were two or three other women in administration. She stated, "That was very helpful; I wasn't the only one" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001). Otherwise, she felt that she was pretty much on her own. The district had no official mentoring program for new administrators.

It is Sherry's belief that there are so few women in administration that most of them have experienced gender bias in one form or another. When she was just beginning on the administrative track, she was an assistant principal, but she applied for a position as a principal. Her immediate supervisor advised her that she was the next person in line for the position and that the position would be hers. When they met with the superintendent, however, the superintendent informed her that she would not be getting the position; but rather, a young gentleman with less experience was getting the job. She was offered another administrative position as a director; and at the suggestion of her immediate supervisor, she took that position.

Sherry left that district and became a principal in another district. The female superintendent who hired her took another position and a new, inexperienced superintendent replaced her. He asked Sherry to become the Curriculum Director for the district. When talking about the experience, she

stated, "we kind of learned together along the way" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001). While she was Director of Curriculum, she was working on superintendent's certification. Sherry was then appointed to be the Assistant Superintendent. When the superintendent left, she was asked to be the interim superintendent. At that time, she had to make a decision as to whether she wanted to apply for the position or wait and see whom she would be working with. She chose to apply for the superintendency and was selected to the position that she currently holds.

Sherry remarked that sometimes females have to work harder for the credibility factor. When she was the Assistant Superintendent, she believes that she was viewed as the worker. The superintendent told her that she should be the superintendent because she could do the job. She added, "females tend to think that they need more experience and more education" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001).

Sherry calls her friends who are also superintendents. "I depend on them. I network; I have to" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001). She has one friend that she referred to as "guru" whom she calls when she needs advice. She stated that "She is a very humble person and she will tell you I don't have all of the answers, but if you give her a scenario, she will respond to that" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001). You pretty much have to deal with your own set of circumstances. But she is comfortable having an experienced peer whom she can "bounce things off of" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001).

Sherry believes that many times good teachers often end up going the administrative route because of how the school organization is set up. She stated, "If you want to be independent and you want to achieve personally and professionally, administration is the direction to go" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001).

Peggy White

Peggy has 27 years of experience in education. She has been an elementary teacher, a middle school principal, a high school principal and a superintendent. She has a PhD. in Secondary Administration. As a child, Peggy attended city schools. When she was in high school, she stated, "I wanted to be a nurse, a secretary or a teacher. That's all that was offered when I was in school" (P. White, August 10, 2001). She wishes her mother had told her that she could become a doctor or a lawyer. Peggy has a daughter who is an attorney. Peggy stated

> I'm probably going to be a little bit different from your interviewees because I never wanted to be a superintendent. It's just by virtue of where I've been located and it's worked on the two occasions that I have been the superintendent...Superintendent was just not the job that I would aspire to do. It's a great job if it works well. (P. White, August 10, 2001)

Peggy worked for an urban school district for 20 years. She began her career in education as an elementary special education teacher; she then taught

special education in the middle school. Peggy stated, "I wanted to teach little kids and I wanted to teach special kids " (P. White, August 10, 2001). She attributes that to her compassionate side, the caregiver in her. She wanted to become a counselor because she liked working with kids and helping them work through their problems. "Being a counselor coincided with being a special education teacher. The problem with counseling was it was often difficult to get a job" (P. White, August 10, 2001).

At the age of 26, Peggy became an assistant middle school principal. Peggy became an administrator at a time when there weren't a lot of female administrators. She didn't consider it a difficult task and didn't really see any obstacles in her way. As a young inexperienced administrator, Peggy believed that she had other administrators she could turn to, both male and female. She called women administrators in the district that she did not know and made appointments to talk to them. She related that they were always very gracious and would usually give her some missing piece of information.

As an administrator, Peggy believes that she was thrown into the same responsibilities as a man. When she was an Assistant High School Principal, she was given the toughest hall in the school. She assumed that she got the assignment because that was the job that was open. "They threw everything at me that they did to everybody else. Gender was never really an issue" (P. White, August 10, 2001).

Peggy was considering retirement so she moved from the city to a rural area. After her move, she became a Curriculum Director and then the Assistant Superintendent for a rural school district. She considered herself a "hands-on technician" when she was the Assistant Superintendent because she performed a variety of jobs.

While in rural Oklahoma, she had the opportunity to work with rural schools in one of the counties. She was paid to be the superintendent and did the personnel, grants and special education for the schools. She administered the programs in their districts and they were the school board. She returned home a few years ago to help care for her aging father. She stated that when she returned home, the job here was probably the most rural job to match my experience for the last seven years" (P. White, August 10, 2001).

When discussing her superintendency, Peggy stated that one of the most pleasant aspects of her position is "seeing kids achieve and have success and fun while in school" (P. White, August 10, 2001). As a superintendent, Peggy has taken an active role in giving others in her district the opportunity to grow. She has been a mentor to others in her district. She stated

> Absolutely, I have mentored. I have returned the mentoring that I have received and I try to do that. I've mentored people in my district and tried to develop professional plans for them to move from position to position over a three to five year period. (P. White, August 10, 2001)

Peggy commented that she believes there is a really strong female network in the state. She has been invited to attend the meetings and related, "I'm not interested in doing that. It's not that I don't need it because I could probably grow from it" (P. White, August 10, 2001). She added that she has the opportunity to network, but she chooses not to. If she has an issue to deal with, she remarked that she feels very comfortable calling other superintendents that she knows in the area. "They have always been receptive" (P. White, August 10, 2001).

When Peggy was asked what she thought it would take to be a successful administrator, she replied "To be successful, you have to be in the right place at the right time and be on the edge. You can't be afraid to get out there and get turned down or try for something" (P. White, August 10, 2001). She doesn't believe that women have to work harder than men; they just have to work hard. Women also have to acquire some basic skills.

> You have to be a salesman. You have to be outgoing. You have to be aggressive. You have to be right to the edge. You have to be willing to say that I made a mistake. You have to be a good problem solver. You have to be a good communicator. You have to walk the walk and talk the talk. (P. White, August 10, 2001)

Peggy believes that her upbringing has contributed to her success. Her mother was very optimistic and encouraged her to reach for her dreams. She learned self-confidence early in life and was taught that she could do anything. "Whether we could do it or not, we didn't know it all the time. My

mother sure made us believe that we could" (P. White, August 10, 2001). She was inspired with the words "you have to leave something better on earth than when we came; that whole upbringing thing gets you out there" (P. White, August 10, 2001). Peggy has one year left on her contract with the school district. Her plans for the future are uncertain.

Julia Gibbs

Julia has a PhD. in Psychology. She has worked in private practice. She has been the Director of Testing, a Coordinator for Psychological Services and an Assistant Superintendent. As a child, Julia lived in the city. Her mother was employed by an urban school district for 32 years as a teacher and a counselor. When she was 2 and ½ years old, her father passed away. Her mother raised her and her older brother after her father's death. She considers her mother to be a very strong role model for her. As a young girl, she was exposed to her mother's friends who were also professional women. By the time she was eight years old, Julia knew that she wanted to become a psychologist because one of her mother's friends whom she admired was a psychologist. She stated, "I wanted to grow up and be like my mother or her" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001).

Upon completing her undergraduate degree, Julia was recruited by the superintendent of a local suburban school district and was responsible for setting up the learning disabilities program for the district. She taught in that district for two years. When Julia began her teaching career, she stated, " I

didn't have any mentors; I was pretty isolated. I was thrown into a program and kids were bussed in from all over the city" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001).

She then moved back to her hometown to become a school psychometrist, something she had always set her sights on. After her first daughter was born, Julia was recruited to work part-time as a psychometrist for the Early Childhood Program. The head of her department was a female administrator whom she considered to be a strong individual. She commented "I probably learned a lot from her about things to do and things not to do" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001). She added "I appreciated her leadership...It was kind of nice to work under a woman because I would have thought that my potential was kind of limited by just being female" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001). Working at the child development center, she remarked, "was a life changing experience for me because it made me understand the importance of early childhood education and the importance of quality programs" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001). As Julia stated during the interview, "we are a business with children at the heart" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001).

Later in her career, Julia moved into a smaller district as a central office employee. She stated that there were men and women there who gave her the opportunity to grow. She is very indebted to the superintendent who gave her an opportunity to become an Assistant Superintendent. She stated: "He wasn't looking at gender or credentials. He was looking at what would make the program work" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001).

Julia related that when she was looking at life choices, the superintendency never entered her mind. When she was a child, the superintendent, whom she described as this "god-like figure," was a well-known educator who had led the district for 30 years. "No one ever saw him and I never would have envisioned myself in his position" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001). Julia never intended to be a teacher. She remarked, "I didn't aspire to administration either; doors just kept opening and it just kind of evolved. It gave me the opportunity and I was always there with the right kind of education to take advantage of those opportunities" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001).

Julia believes that she is an alternative kind of person for the superintendency because she didn't come through the traditional steps of teaching, coaching, and being a building principal. She considers herself a generalist and believes that she came through a different kind of pathway to the superintendency. She also believes that you don't have to experience each type of job to know how they all fit in the big picture. She stated

> Being a superintendent is actually an actualization of psychology as far as I'm concerned. What I do is work with people, mobilize groups, facilitate decisions for a group process and hopefully act as a catalyst for good decision-making, pulling people together. (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001)

She believes that her duties as a superintendent include hiring the very best people that she can find and then helping them actualize their own careers. She remarked

> I feel that my job is to make sure they have exposure to everything they can have exposure to and help them grow so they will have opportunities...It's so much fun to watch people who aspire to different positions. (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001)

Mentoring is also noticeable in the students. A new program was initiated for fifth grade female students.

> These young girls are exposed to a lot of different women in a lot of different positions so that they could see what their options are because they were coming up with statements such as 'Oh, I can't do that because I am a girl. (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001)

Julia has never seen gender as an issue for her personally. She is the first female superintendent in her district. She commented that when she first became an Assistant Superintendent, she was the only woman in the meetings. She believes that her presence "added a new perspective, a softer, gentler approach" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001).

When discussing her superintendency and what might have made her successful in her career, Julia commented that she did not consider herself a success because she is in a male-dominated field. She stated,

> My opportunities have come because I have been at a place and a time where I could take advantage of the opportunities...I think it

comes down to being a centered enough person so that you know what your values are, what your passion in life is all about. I really believe in what I do and I like what I do, and I am very comfortable with what I do. (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001)

Julia would like to stay in her current position until she retires. While she can retire now, she feels that she has a lot of unfinished business to do and she would like to stay and make the district better. She also has the option of going back to private practice as a psychologist.

Sue Smith

Sue has a doctorate in educational administration and has been an educator for almost 30 years. She has been a superintendent for the past 23 years, but she has never been a principal. Sue spent 6 ½ years in the classroom as an elementary teacher before she became an administrator. She decided to go into education because when she was a high school senior, she had the opportunity to work in the elementary school as a secretary.

As a child, Sue spent a lot of time with her dad who was an electrician. Sue's father gave her the following advice.

> Be the best that you can be. Be the best you can at everything; don't settle for mediocrity. Think first; think about the consequences before you do anything. You have to know how to operate in this world with everybody. (S. Smith, August 15, 2001)

While working at a dependent school from January 1975 until May 1981, Sue would go into the County Superintendent's office to get films for the teachers at her school. She became acquainted with the secretary in the office and the county superintendent; he suggested that she run for his position. A master's degree was the only educational requirement for the office. Sue began working on her master's degree, but decided not to run for public office. The county superintendent that she knew and respected retired and another candidate won the election. Sue found that the services being provided to the schools were not as good as they had been under the old county superintendent.

When Sue completed her master's degree, she really didn't aspire to become a public school superintendent. Neither was she interested in becoming a principal. During the next election, she ran for the county superintendent's position. Sue was elected for three terms; terms were four years long. Sue related that three gentlemen mentored her when she first assumed the county superintendent's position. She stated:

> I had known these gentlemen and they just kind of took me under their wing. They told me that if I really wanted to be a superintendent, I really had to do this...I've had nothing but male mentors all the way through from the time I began. I've never had a problem fitting in with male superintendents...It was male superintendents who helped me and recommended me for this job. (S. Smith, August 15, 2001)

The county superintendents' positions were eliminated by the state legislature in 1991. Sue then took a position as a school superintendent in a rural school. When Sue was hired for her first school superintendent's position, a three-member board that consisted of two men and one woman hired her. She stated the board "thought that I could do the job, but the patrons in the district really thought there was no way that a woman could step in here and do that job" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001). She believed that eventually they ended up feeling that she had done a good job during her one year there; but while she was there, she believed that she was tested quite a bit.

Sue recalled the very first state superintendents' meeting that she attended. There were only two or three females and she was one of them. She stated, "I could tell by the remarks that were made that I was expected to fail at this job; and I was just going to show everybody that I would not" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001). When you are only one of three females in a meeting with 300 to 400 men, you sometimes feel uncomfortable. So it would have been easy to go and stand in a corner. But "I would seek out people that I knew...If the guys were talking and you knew one or two of them, the one who knew you would usually speak to you" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001). Sue also remarked that she believes that "women have been trained to take a submissive role and perhaps a lot of men expect that. If you're forceful, that's not the role that is expected of a female" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001).

In order to be successful in her career, Sue related that she has

followed the advice that her father gave her many years ago. She also added,

> You have to set goals for yourself. Communicate and keep those doors of communication open. You need to sell your school...we do ourselves a grave injustice. We don't sell our schools with what is right with education. You have to understand the financial aspect of running a school district...It's also important to know the children, and they should also know you. (S. Smith, August 15, 2001)

When asked if she was able to network with other female superintendents in the state, Sue replied, "the female superintendents in Oklahoma don't know one another" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001). While she knows the names of many of the female superintendents, she doesn't really know them. Her perception was that possibly the women have a tendency to remain with their peers from their particular counties when they attend state meetings and; therefore, they do not interact with the other women who are present.

She stated that "part of them feel that if they network, they are removing themselves from the entire network...I don't know if we need to network to the point that we alienate ourselves; but I think it would be great if we knew one another" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001). She added "I miss sometimes not having some female friends whenever I go to these meetings" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001).

Sue is faced with the possibility of retiring soon; she is uncertain about what she would do at that time. She stated, "I know that I want to work after retirement" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001).

Anne Nichols

As a student, Anne felt that she had some female teachers who were exceptional women and very influential on her when she was young. Even though most of them have moved away from the district, she still keeps in touch with them. Her best friend's mother worked as the high school secretary; that helped Anne feel very comfortable in a school setting. In addition, school was easy for her and she didn't have any bad experiences at school.

Anne was the first person in her family to graduate from high school and college. She taught for two years in a small rural system and then went back to her hometown for three years as a school counselor. Anne had just completed her first year as a superintendent when she was interviewed.

When Anne decided to enter administration, it was her decision. She stated that she is "very lucky in that aspect; my husband is very supportive" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001). The reason Anne considered administration was because moving is not an option for her because of her husband's occupation. Anne stated that she has an excellent family situation because she has a very supportive husband who is very open-minded. When Anne's children were very young, her husband who farms and ranches, would take

the children with him even when they were in diapers because she was at school. She stated, "it is very important to him to be very active with them" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001).

When Anne became a superintendent, she was 29 years old. The district needed a superintendent and she related "they knew that I had my master's and principal's certification. They called to see if I would be interested because it is difficult to get people to come to this part of the state" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001). Anne thought that she would become an elementary principal first, but the superintendency came open and that's what she took.

During her first year as a superintendent, Anne had an official mentor through the State Department of Education's First Year Superintendents' Program. He was a retired superintendent with a reputation for being a leader in the field of education. He would visit her every month when she first assumed her duties. After that, he would keep in contact with her or come and visit for brief periods of time. "He might only be here for 30 or 45 minutes and visit with me about things that I faced. He was always willing to help me over the phone when a problem arose" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001). She felt fortunate that she had a really good mentor who helped her through that first year. A teacher in Anne's district has just begun working on her master's degree. She stated "I hate to lose her as a teacher; but I think she would make an excellent administrator. She is cut out for the job" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001).

Anne has two small children of her own, a five year old and a six year old, who go to school with her every day. She enjoys the fact that she is "able to be involved in their education" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001). She also really enjoys being able to walk through the buildings and see her children daily because the school campus is very small. Because of the size of the school, Anne can interact with the students on a daily basis. She is able to know each of students by name. "I get the best of both worlds here" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001).

When asked about networking, Anne answered that the administrators from the three counties meet once a month. The other women in her area meet informally. They have had lunch on several occasions. "It was real informal, but also real informative" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001).

Anne doesn't think that being a female is an obstacle that she has had to overcome. She stated "there are so many females in administration, I don't stand out" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001). She thinks her age makes her stand out more than being female because someone always comments about her age. She has observed that at the state superintendents meetings the women tend to sit together and the men tend to sit together. Even though she is in a small district, she hasn't noticed any problems with gender bias.

As far as her future plans are concerned, she commented that when her kids are out of school, who knows? She expressed an interest in teaching at the university level.

Chapter 5: Findings of the Study

Even though the women who participated in this study represented all regions of the state and the school districts they headed were varied, there were some commonalities that surfaced in the analysis portion of this study. While the women did not always specifically state their age, age was determined by the year they graduated from high school or other pertinent information that they related during the interview process. One of the factors that 13 of these women had in common was the fact that they were born within a 15 year time span. These 13 women were all born between 1942 and 1957; they graduated from college from 1960 until 1975.

The majority of the female superintendents in this study had their first teaching position by 1975. Most of these women made the decision to leave the classroom within the first five years of teaching; two of these women made the decision after their first semester in the classroom. Several of the women had their first administrative position by 1980, a time when there were fewer women in school administration than at any other decade in history. Bjork (2000) stated that the number of female chief executive officers dropped from 9% in 1950 to 1.3% in 1971 (p. 8). There were few female role models in administration at that time.

Barriers to the Advancement of Women in Educational Administration

The information discovered in this research project differs from some of the earlier literature on female superintendents. Early studies on women in educational administration looked at the barriers to the advancement of

women into the superintendency. Everett (1989) and Winkler (1994) focused on familial responsibility. Gilliam (1986), McCreight (1999), Williams (1983) and Wright (1995) identified the problems of female administrators being unable to relocate due to family commitments. Women were rendered place-bound, thus restricting their professional opportunities.

The barriers of familial responsibility and geographic limitations were not limiting factors in this study. Of the 15 female superintendents who participated in the qualitative aspect of the study, 14 of the women were mothers. Five of the women had one child; six women had two children; two women had three children and one woman had four children. Three of the women had the opportunity to stay at home with their children for a minimum of six years to a maximum of eleven years. One superintendent was able to work part-time in a school district while her children were pre-school age.

Relocation did not seem to be an issue with these female superintendents. One superintendent's family always moved with her because her husband traveled with his job. Another superintendent's husband also traveled so she could decide where she wanted to live.

The biggest disadvantage to relocation was sometimes finding adequate housing. As one superintendent commented "We found a house; one of our board members was going to move to a different house. We moved in as he moved out...We found a house to live in and now that we are not looking for a house, there are lots of houses for sale" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001).

Jones-Mitchell (1993) found that white women were relegated to small rural school districts. Robinson-Hornbuckle (1991) found that nine of the 12 women in her study grew up in rural areas. Many of the women in Hornbuckle's study remained in the same district or adjoining districts when they were administrators. That was not the case for the women in this particular study. Eight of the women grew up in rural areas and seven of the women grew up in urban areas. While two of the women from rural areas became the superintendent in the district where they attended school and were employed as teachers, only three of the superintendents from rural areas worked in close proximity to their original districts. The other three women, who were raised in a rural area, moved to different rural areas to become superintendents. This study also found that while seven of the women grew up in urban areas, two of the women were employed as superintendents in suburban locations close to a major city in the state. The other five women who had been raised in the city moved to smaller rural communities where they became superintendents.

Gender Discrimination

The theories of marginality and the constraints on women's abilities to become administrators are integral to the issues of gender bias and gender discrimination. Therefore, these theories will be addressed simultaneously. Kanter (1977) developed the theory of women as "tokens" when they are at the top of the organizational structure. The driving force behind this theory is that women in top positions do not represent themselves, but rather they are

symbolic for the entire female population in any particular organization. When discussing her career, one of the older and more experienced female superintendents related that she believed she was the token female who had entered a man's world when she first became a school superintendent. She was one of the first three female superintendents in the state. At that time, she was always asked to be a member on state boards or state committees. Her statement "I think that the women superintendents work harder and are more professional because we really have to prove ourselves, even this late...if we fail, they say it was because we are women" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001) is indicative of Kanter's theory. (This superintendent is the only one who used the term "token" during the interview.)

However, other superintendents echoed the above superintendent's thoughts. One superintendent stated that she believed that "it is harder sometimes for women to move into administration" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001). Another superintendent stated, "I think it's much harder for women to get their doctorate. I think it's harder for women to be in a traditionally male role and that is because we have so many other things we view we also have to do" (L.Taylor, June 25, 2001). A third superintendent commented that, "women have not had a lot of opportunity (S. Brown, August 8, 2001). She added, "females have to work harder for the credibility factors...females tend to think they need more experience and more education" (Ibid.).

Another superintendent commented on a second issue that is related to the male/female gender issue. She stated that "I think people see women

first of all as being the nurturer in the home and that the woman is going to put the child first or the family first" (B. Adams, June 22, 2001). One of the other superintendents reiterated her words. This superintendent commented that, "it is easier for men to have a family than it is for women because of the traditional roles" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001). One of the reasons women have experienced difficulty in becoming school administrators, this superintendent commented, was because "it was a societal thing at that point. Women just hadn't been there yet. There were not a lot of women in administration in our district" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001). The perspectives of the above female superintendents are consistent with the findings of Biklen (1980) and Williams (1983) who found that being a woman was a limiting factor for advancement into administration.

A third issue on gender bias that was raised by several of the superintendents was that of a lack of community support for female superintendents. One superintendent stated "the board thought I could do the job, but the patrons in the district really thought there was no way a woman could step in and do that job" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001). A second superintendent added that, "in small towns, men can walk in and find the coffee shop where all of the old-timers are and sit right down and fit right in. But if a woman walks in and sits down, they do not fit right in" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001). A third superintendent related, "not everyone is accepting of females in an administrative position" (H. King, July 31, 2001).

In addition to a lack of support from the community, some of the superintendents expressed their concern over a lack of support from their female board members and female teachers. One superintendent commented, "I have had the most trouble with female board members who appear to be very accepting of female administrators initially. After a year or so, they seem to turn on the female superintendent" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001). She also added, "sometimes, female teachers and women in the community have difficulty accepting women in positions of power and authority" (Ibid.). A second superintendent related that as a principal, she encountered resistance from female teachers who thought that the principal should have been a man.

On the other side of all of the gender bias issues, though, were five women who stated specifically that gender had never been an issue for them personally. One superintendent expressed her belief that "if you let gender become an issue, it is an issue" (H. King, July 31, 2001).

Differences Between these Female Superintendents and Previously Studied Female Administrators

When comparing the women in this study to the women in Robinson-Hornbuckle's study (1991), there were some similarities; but there are also some differences. Nine of the twelve women in Hornbuckle's study grew up in rural areas and became administrators in the same districts where they taught school. While eight of the women in this study grew up in rural areas, the remaining seven women grew up in urban areas. Five of the women with

rural backgrounds and one of the women with an urban background remained close to their home districts. The remaining nine superintendents moved to other districts to become superintendents.

The second difference between the women in Robinson-Hornbuckle's study (1991) and this study is stated below. The women in Robinson-Hornbuckle's study (1991) grew up in "gender blended" families where they developed self-confidence and assertive behavior. That varies significantly from the women in this study. Six of the women grew up in single parent homes where the mother assumed total responsibility for her children. In five cases, the mother was the sole support and provider for her children due to the death of her spouse. In one instance, the mother and father were divorced.

The mothers in these single parent families became very strong role models for their daughters. When talking about their mothers as their role models, these women stated, "I wanted to grow up and be like my mother" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001). Another superintendent commented "I guess because I was raised by a mother who was in a position where she was the head of the family, I've never perceived myself as having a problem because I'm a woman doing anything" (H. King, July 31, 2001). Because of the death of Nancy's father, Nancy's mother taught her to constantly strive for new goals and rely on herself. This superintendent commented, "They just weren't prepared. My father figured he had all the time in the world. Needless to say, he didn't" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001).

The third way in which the women in this study differ from those in Robinson-Hornbuckle's study (1991) was their pathway to the superintendency. The women in her study began their administrative careers as elementary principals. In this study, five of the 15 women who were interviewed began their administrative career in the elementary school as an elementary principal or as an assistant or interim principal. Two of the women in the study were high school principals; two were county superintendents. Four of the participants were directors of special programs and two of the women went directly into the superintendency as their first administrative position.

The fourth way in which the women in this study differ from the women in Robinson-Hornbuckle's study (1991) was their motivation for attending college and getting a degree. For the majority of the participants in Robinson-Hornbuckle's study (1991), education was an insurance policy. With the women in this study, college was expected. The problem that most of the women in this study faced was the fact that their career options were limited at the time they went to college. As one female participant stated "everybody went to college. You had not thought about what you wanted to do at college" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001). A second participant stated "my mother pushed education. She was the only one of my aunts and uncles and my father and grandparents who graduated from high school. Education was very important to her" (L. Taylor, June 25, 2001).

A third participant commented that most of the young people from her hometown went to the local regional university. She stated, "education was what most women went into" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001). Her parents told her she could go to college if she wanted. A fourth participant commented that when she was in high school, she wasn't interested in administration. But she stated, "I wanted to be a nurse, a secretary or a teacher. That's all that was offered when I was in school" (P. White, August 10, 2001). A fifth participant added, "we didn't have a clue as to what type of employment opportunities were there for women" (M. Jackson, July 3, 2001). The sixth participant stated, "it was just expected that I would attend college" (D. York, August 7, 2001).

One of the women in the 55-65 age group had a different perspective on why she attended college. Her grandfather and father were her role models when she was young. Her father told her "You are going to get a college degree...You need that insurance policy in case you ever want to work" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001). Only one of the female superintendents who was interviewed knew at a very young age why she wanted to attend college. Her mother was a school counselor. Julia related that by the time she was eight years old, she knew she wanted to become a psychologist.

Factors that Motivated these Female Administrators to Pursue the Superintendency

One of the surprising themes that developed in this study was that some of these women did not actively pursue the superintendency. As one of

the superintendents related, "when I was a child, this "god-like figure" who was well known in education was the superintendent for 30 years... She further stated "I didn't aspire to administration; doors just kept opening and it kind of evolved" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001). Another superintendent stated

> I never wanted to be a superintendent... It's just by virtue of where I have been the superintendent; the recipe has worked... it was just not the job I would aspire to do. It's a great job if it works well. (P. White, August 10, 2001). A third superintendent stated, "Never until two years ago, did I even entertain a fantasy notion of being a superintendent (D. York, August 7, 2001).

Some of the women in this study became a superintendent because they were asked by a member of the school board to take the position. One of the superintendents related "They knew that I had my master's and principal's certification. They called to see if I would be interested" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001). Another superintendent commented "I was sent by the State Department of Education to help them complete their Title I and Title II paperwork. The board president kept asking me if I would be their superintendent" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001). A third superintendent stated, "The superintendent suggested to the board that I become the superintendent" (D. Jones, July 9, 2001).

Seven of the female superintendents had the opportunity to work in the position of interim or assistant superintendent before they considered the superintendency. As one of the superintendents stated, "I was the detail

person and the superintendent was the visionary. He told me he would teach me everything I needed to know to become a superintendent" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001). Another superintendent became the Curriculum Director for the district. She was then appointed to be the Assistant Superintendent. She stated "he had no prior experience in his position...so we kind of learned together along the way" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001). A third superintendent had been the Assistant Superintendent in the district for seven years. When the superintendent left, she was appointed the superintendent for one year. At the end of the year, she stated, "I actively sought other positions, in particular, this one" (M. Quinn, June 21, 2001). A fourth superintendent related that she had moved to another district to become a principal in a larger school. In her new district, she was asked to become the Assistant Superintendent. After being the Assistant Superintendent for one year, she stated, "it was time for me to become a superintendent" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001). A fifth superintendent commented, "He wasn't looking at gender or credentials. He was looking at what would make the program work...I am very indebted to the superintendent who gave me an opportunity to become an Assistant Superintendent" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001).

How these Female Superintendents Became Successful in a Male-Dominated Field

Through the analysis aspect of this study, several themes kept reoccurring in the superintendents' interviews that could be described as their keys to success in their profession. The first theme that emerged was that of

support. Support came form their spouses, their children and their community. One of the superintendents commented, when she referred to her husband, "he was always supportive and open minded of my career" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001). A second superintendent remarked, "if I had not had a supportive husband, I could not have done it" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001). A third superintendent commented that her husband has been her greatest asset. He has always been supportive of what she wanted to do. One of the superintendents believed that her community was supporting her in her endeavors as a superintendent. She stated, "they knew one of their own was being successful" (D. York, August 7, 2001).

A second theme that emerged in the interviews was that of having a mentor. Quick (2000) defined a mentor as "someone who is elevated above you in terms of hierarchial power" (p. 28). "The mentor takes an active interest in you, recognizes some germ of potential and nurtures it...a mentor can be like a rainmaker who makes opportunities for you...or someone who opens doors for you" (Quick, 2000, p. 29).

The concept of individuals being mentored in their career is not new. Pence (1995) stated that the concept of mentorship is an ancient one and became popular again in the 1970's as a method "to actively recruit and promote women and minorities into administrative positions" (p. 126). According to Pence, mentorship is necessary for women because of the conflicting stereotypical view of being a female and the role of an administrator.

In this study, one female superintendent was mentored by another woman; the other female superintendents were mentored by men. The first superintendent related "I probably learned a lot from her about things to do and things not to do" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001). A second superintendent related, "I don't think you ever get into positions where there is not someone else who mentors us or observes what they believe to be qualities of an individual in this position" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001). A third superintendent discussed her state appointed mentor, who was considered an expert in the field of education. She added " he was always willing to help me over the phone when a problem arose" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001). A fourth superintendent commented "I had known these gentlemen and they just kind of took me under their wing. They told me that if I really wanted to be a superintendent, I really had to do this" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001). Another superintendent related that several male peers had been helping her and that "some of them took her under their wing once she got in the door" (M. Jackson, August 3, 2001).

Not only was it essential for these female superintendents to be mentored; they also believed that it was their responsibility to share in mentoring others and empowering the people in their organization. One of the superintendents remarked, "Absolutely, I have mentored. I have returned the mentoring that I have received and I try to do that" (P. White, August 10, 2001). A second superintendent related, "I try to make sure they have exposure to everything...I enjoy letting them try new experiences and giving

them the opportunity to grow" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001). Another superintendent stated, "as a leader, you have an obligation to provide leadership opportunities and allow other people to climb the ladder in your organization" (D. York, August 7, 2001). A fourth superintendent commented "All of us have a little bit of help and I think we have a responsibility to do that" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001).

Hard work was one of the factors that these women mentioned was necessary to be successful as a superintendent. "I think that most of the time we work harder. We're more sincere. I think we care a lot more" (B. Adams, June 22, 2001). A second superintendent remarked, "I think that women superintendents work harder and are more professional because we really have to prove ourselves" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001). A third superintendent commented, "Women don't have to work harder than men. They just have to work hard" (P. White, August 10, 2001).

Five of the superintendents related that they thought it was essential to understand the whole picture. "You have to be able to perceive the whole picture. Some people only see a small world...You don't have to win the battle to win the war" (M. Jackson, July 3, 2001). A second superintendent commented, "You have to be bright enough to see some of the things that are going to occur and plan ahead instead of having to react" (D. Jones, July 9, 2001). Finally, a superintendent remarked, "You have to be able to see the big picture. I think if anything, it is staying focused on what the kids need" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001).

In order to be successful, you have to enjoy what you are doing. These superintendents made the following comments regarding this statement. "You need to enjoy people. You need to enjoy coming to work every day. You have to love kids and so does your faculty" (H. King, July 31, 2001). "Seeing kids achieve and have success and fun while in school" (P. White, August 10, 2001) is the most satisfying aspect of my job. "I get the best of both worlds here" (A. Nichols, August 16, 2001).

Some of the female superintendents who were interviewed were able to identify setting goals for themselves as one of the keys to becoming successful. From listening to the perspectives of these women, this was not a skill that these women learned when they became superintendents. This was embedded in them when they were much younger. Two of the superintendents had similar beliefs in this area. "You have to be self-directed...You have to do the best you can and not worry about it" (N. Thomas, July 23, 2001). A second superintendent stated that when she was a little girl, her father taught her that she should "Be the best you can at everything. Don't settle for mediocrity" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001). A third superintendent remarked "I didn't realize it at the time, but what my grandfather was doing was teaching me to establish goals for myself. Even today, I think, what could I be accomplishing right now. I need to accomplish something" (J. Clifton, July 24, 2001). A fourth superintendent offered, "You can't be afraid to get out there and get turned down. You have to be outgoing. You have to be aggressive" (P. White, August 10, 2001).

Perhaps the most critical theme that kept emerging in the data was the belief that you can make a difference in a child's life. At least half of the superintendents who were interviewed indirectly made reference to this theme. One of the superintendent stated, "I thought I had something to offer. I took pride in the fact that students did well" (S. Brown, August 8, 2001). Another superintendent related that her goal was to "create a better school for our kids by creating a loving and nurturing environment" (D. York, August 7, 2001). As one superintendent remarked "we are a business with children at the heart" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001). One of the superintendents seemed to summarize the belief of the other superintendents. "I enjoy making a difference in the kids' lives. It's rewarding to know that there are kids you have helped" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001).

Two final themes that emerged during this research project were having varied life experiences and integrity and honesty. One of the superintendents stated, "Life experiences are important. The more varied they are; the easier it is to be a superintendent" (M. Jackson, July 3, 2001). Another superintendent remarked, "You have to be willing to say I made a mistake" (P. White, August 10, 2001). A third superintendent stated

> You have to be a professional in all of your dealings every day. You have to establish credibility and trust with you board and community. You have to let them know that regardless of what happens, you are going to tell the truth even if you made a mistake...There is a big

difference between being legal and ethical. I will always be ethical.

(D. Jones, July 9, 2001)

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the common affective, social and educational factors that may have contributed to or influenced the professional achievements of the women involved in this study. Because this project involved only female superintendents, the researcher was attempting to gain an understanding of how these women achieved success in a male dominated profession, educational administration.

In Chapter 3, the Superintendents' Survey presented demographic information about the female superintendents in the state of Oklahoma who participated in that aspect of the study. In the introduction to Chapter 5, some of the commonalities that surfaced during early analysis of the data were identified. As was stated previously, 13 of the 15 female superintendents who participated in this study were born within a specific time frame; these women were born between 1942 and 1957. From a historical perspective, one of the factors that these women had in common was the fact that they were all students, either in grade school, high school or college at a time in American history that was full of idealism as well as turmoil and violence. These women lived through the beginning of the civil rights movement; an event that initiated reform in the status and roles of women in American society.

The female superintendents began their first teaching jobs by 1975 and assumed their first administrative positions by the early 80's. The majority of these female superintendents had no female mentors when they

first began teaching. When these women began their teaching careers, the number of women administrators in 1971 was at it's lowest point in history. Only a limited number of them had access to female mentors when they moved into their first administrative positions. When many of these women became superintendents in the early to mid 1980s, there was a nationwide shortage of women administrators occupying the seat of the school superintendency.

One of the other common factors that emerged during this study was the fact that thirteen of these women were educated at a time when women of average means were just beginning to have the opportunity to attend college. Three of the 15 female superintendents were the first person in their family to attend college. Their parents were not college educated, but their parents supported them in their efforts to attend college. In the case of six of the female superintendents, it was more or less expected that they would go to college. The problem that these women faced was that while these women had the opportunity to attend college, their career options were still limited. Two of the superintendents' statements summarize the opportunities that were available to women during this time period. "I wanted to be a nurse, a secretary or a teacher. That's all that was offered when I was in school" (P. White, august 10, 2001). "If I knew what I know now, I would go into something that women didn't go into in 1969. Be a lawyer, be a doctor, or something I never considered" (B. Adams, June 22, 2001).

Eleven of the thirteen women grew up in a very conservative state where conservative values were taught in the home and reinforced in the schools. As one of women stated so succinctly, "you are stepping out of your boundaries when you become an administrator" (M. Jackson, July 3, 2001).

Barriers to Women in Educational Administration

The literature that was reviewed for this research project revealed that female administrators have been considered place-bound in their positions and unable to relocate due to family commitments. The women in this study were not place-bound. While six of the female superintendents stayed close to the same area where they grew up, and in five cases, began their teaching careers, the other nine women were willing to move with their families to take superintendency positions in areas which were not their hometowns.

The women of this generation had limited career options. The women who participated in this study became aware of administration only after they had attended college and had begun teaching. In two instances, the female superintendents decided to pursue a career in educational administration after having been in the classroom for just one semester. Six of the women in this study made a conscious decision to leave the classroom early in their careers and became administrators after they had been in the classroom for no more than five years.

Gender Bias

Gender bias against women in educational administration has been an issue since the early 1980s. Research literature abounds regarding the

different ways in which schools have socialized boys and girls into male and female gender roles; thus maintaining the status quo in society. The women who were born from 1942 until approximately 1949 seemed to have a different perspective of the issue of gender bias and gender discrimination than did their younger peers. The women born between 1942 and 1949 entered early adulthood at a time when the societal norm reflected that women became wives and mothers. Careers were not considered an option to the women who were born during those years. If the women had the opportunity to attend college, it was primarily as an insurance policy in the event that they might have to work at some future time in their lives. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, women from middle-income families did not have the opportunity to decide on careers upon graduation from high school because of the societal norms that dictated appropriate male and female roles at that time in history.

It appears from the study that the women who were born from 1950 until 1957 were beginning to be brought up with different expectations as females. While career options were still limited to the fields of nursing, teaching and secretarial work, these are the women who decided early in their teaching careers to leave the classroom for administration. These women still didn't have any female role models in the schools who could even suggest to them that administration, especially the superintendency, was an alternative route for women. But these women believed that they had

something to offer besides being a classroom teacher and they began to pursue the field of educational administration.

One of the major issues that surfaced during this study was the recognition by the female superintendents that gender bias was still a problem, particularly in some of the communities. These women expressed their perceptions during their interviews. One of the issues these female administrators faced was the credibility factor of women in positions of authority. While this factor did not limit these women, nonetheless, it appears to be a continuing issue. Four of the women expressed their opinion that women still have to work harder and prove their credibility when handling an administrative position. These women have the perception that if a woman makes a mistake, that mistake affects the opportunities for other women.

Two of the women in this study experienced gender bias in their early years of administration, but they were able to move beyond the specific circumstances to pursue their individual dreams. Two of the women have the perception that men with families have it easier than women with families because of society's view of a woman's role as wife and mother. Three of the female superintendents expressed their concern regarding the lack of support from the community and faculty or board members because they are women functioning in a position that has been traditionally male.

As one of the female superintendents observed when she attended her first state superintendents' meeting and she was one of three women at that meeting, "it was just expected that I would fail" (S. Smith, August 15, 2001).

The perception of these women was that their male counterparts expected them to fail because they were women who were handling what had traditionally been a male job.

These women, however, did not fail. They were determined that they were going to be successful in their careers, even in a male-dominated profession, educational administration. To many of them, gender was not viewed as an obstacle to their success. While some of these female superintendents experienced gender bias in their profession, especially in the early days when the number of female administrators was extremely small, they moved beyond that experience. Their belief was and still is that the best people should always be hired for the position; gender should never be an issue for employment in the superintendency.

The women involved in this study could be termed pioneer women in the field of educational administration in this state. They have crossed the boundaries and have stepped out of the traditional roles of women as wife and mother. They are the first generation of women in education who have devoted their lives to their professional careers, not as teachers but as school administrators responsible for making decisions that affect the common good of all involved with public education. They have lived their lives as professional women in the field of education while simultaneously accepting the role of wife and mother.

Factors that Motivated these Female School Administrators to Pursue the Superintendency

One of the questions that was to be answered in this study was what factors motivated these women to pursue ascendancy into the superintendency? Perhaps the mot surprising finding of this study was the fact that the superintendency was not an administrative position to which these women initially aspired. While the majority of these women held several administrative positions and they were comfortable moving into an administrative position as principal or director or assistant superintendent, the superintendency was more or less something that evolved for many of them.

The study shows that because of family commitments, three of the women did not actively pursue the profession of educational administration until after their children had graduated from high school. Eleven of the women became administrators while their children were of school age. One female superintendent didn't have any children when she became an administrator.

Ten of the female superintendents did not actively pursue the superintendency. It was definitely a position that evolved for them. Seven of the women in this study had the opportunity to serve in the position as an interim superintendent or assistant superintendent. These positions served to open the doors to the superintendency. Three of the women in this study became superintendents after they were asked to take the position by a board president or another individual who had the power to make that decision.

Two of the women were encouraged by friends to apply for the superintendency after they had served in the position of county superintendent. Three of the women in the study made a conscious decision that if they were going to be administrators, the superintendency gave them the opportunity to be the individual who was making decisions that affected everyone in the district.

Factors that Contributed to the Success of Female Administrators in a Male-Dominated Profession

Strictly being a female functioning in a traditionally male-dominated profession was not the reason these women considered themselves successful. What surfaced through this study was the description of factors that were not easily identified. The female superintendents in this study reinforced the theory that female administrators receive support from their spouses, their families and even their community.

Several of the women discussed their mentorship in administrative positions by both males and females who provided them with the opportunity to learn the intricacies of the position. Male superintendents mentored nine of the female superintendents who participated in this study. Five of these women were Assistant Superintendents' when the mentoring occurred. Two additional women stated that they had male mentors who took them under their wing after they were in the superintendency. The remaining two female superintendents had male mentors through the state sponsored first year superintendency program. Additionally, ten of the women who were

interviewed made reference to returning the mentoring to aspiring administrators in their district. Two of the superintendents had established programs for mentoring the female students in their districts.

The women in this study had a commitment to their profession. They believed in what they were doing. They believed that they could make a difference in the lives of the children that were entrusted to their care in their district. Some of them had varied work experiences in other areas. Integrity and honesty were discussed. Being able to admit their mistakes and move forward was an important issue. These women believed in hard work. They were able to establish goals for themselves based on prior life experiences. They had a self-confidence and knowledge of their own abilities that empowered them in their roles.

When these women began their journey to the superintendency, they were not looking at what would make them successful in a male-dominated profession. As they proceeded along each step from the classroom to the boardroom, they made decisions about their professional lives and their personal lives that affected many people including their familes, their students, their faculties and their communities.

What made these women successful in the superintendency was not just a set of skills that they learned over the years. What has made these women successful was something more ingrained and perhaps more innate. These women had a strong personal sense of identity. During the interview process, the researcher observed that these women were comfortable with

who they were, where they were in their lives and why they were there. Perhaps, it was their female identity that created their vision and moved them forward to overcome barriers to create a better world not just for their own children but for all of the children who were entrusted to their care over the last twenty years. Or perhaps, it was their internal personal belief systems that have carried them each step of the way on their journey. These women made a commitment to their profession and have endured long hours to complete their mission. They have developed visions for their communities. They have carried out the duties of their office with professionalism and integrity. They have tried to empower others to continue on their own personal journeys as students, teachers and administrators.

Recommendations for Future Studies

What this study has identified are some of the factors that led to the success of these women in the superintendency. While earlier studies specifically focused on skills, what was evident in this study was something more intangible. Collectively, what these women described as being the keys to their success are the attributes that Bennis defined in his book On Becoming a Leader. What emerged through the process of analysis of the data was an identification of the factors that Bennis has described. While gender has been an issue for the advancement of women into administrative positions for the past 20 years and societal expectations of women's roles in the workplace in some communities have remained unchanged 40 years after the advent of the Civil Rights Movement, it seems that now is the time to set

aside the issues of female/male roles in educational administration and to begin understanding what factors contribute to the effectiveness of the school leaders, regardless of their gender. As several of the women stated in the study, it is not a male/female thing, but rather who is the best person for the position?

It seems appropriate at this time that future research would continue to focus on the effectiveness of female leaders. More importantly, these women collectively identified the attributes that Bennis described as being necessary for effective leaders. To add to the continuing body of knowledge that has been developing regarding female superintendents, it seems timely to re-interview the female superintendents in this study and discover whether each of these women personally accept the attributes Bennis has described for effective leaders. It would seem relevant, also, to apply this type of study to male superintendents to see if they have the same beliefs that were identified in this study.

In addition, the women who participated in this study were not selected because others viewed them as successful individuals in their profession; but rather, they were selected because they were female administrators operating in a traditionally male role. Brunner (1997) conducted a study on 12 female superintendents throughout the country who were recommended for the study because they were considered successful in their careers. The women in this particular study also discussed some of the characteristics that Brunner applied to successful female superintendents. The women in this study

focused on the needs of the students in their district. As they stated, "You have to love kids and so does your faculty" (H. King, July , 2001). "I enjoy making a difference in the kids' lives" (M. Wright, June 19, 2001). The women believe that they bring "a softer, gentler approach" (J. Gibbs, August 15, 2001) to the boardroom. The importance of these statements was that these women bring a different perspective to educational administration. Their focus is on their students and that is consistent with their feminine nature. One of the ways in which the women in this study differed from those in Brunner's study was that the majority of the women in this particular study were still in their first marriage. Eleven of the women who were interviewed were in their first marriages. Two of the women had been married twice. One woman did not remarry after her divorce and one woman has never been married.

It seems appropriate that Brunner's study should be replicated on the female superintendents in the state. This would compare the gender expectations of the women in this study with the women in Brunner's study. It would continue to add to the growing body of knowledge regarding how gender roles affect women's leadership. Replicating Brunner's study and researching the effectiveness of male and female leaders in schools are consistent with the 5th and 6th stages of research in educational administration that were identified in the literature review.

Another theme that developed through this study, but was not discussed in chapter 5 was the concept of a networking system for female

superintendents. There appears to be a divided opinion among the female superintendents in the study as to the effectiveness of networking among themselves. Some of the female superintendents expressed their belief that networking alienates them from the male superintendents. Other female superintendents seemed to regret the fact that there were no women with whom they could share their experiences. It would appear that networking for female superintendents is another area in need of future research.

Two additional concerns regarding the ongoing issue of gender bias were perceived by the female superintendents in this study. The non-acceptance of female administrators by female teachers and the lack of support for female superintendents by female board members are issues that need to be addressed in future studies.

As stated previously, thirteen of the women who were interviewed will be retiring in the next two to five years. Along with these women, there are other female superintendents in the state who are in the same position. These women have been transitional superintendents. They became superintendents at a time when the superintendency was not even an option for women in public education. But these women are getting ready to pass on the reins to a new generation of school administrators. Hopefully, the knowledge and expertise these women have gained over the last twenty years will continue to be shared and disseminated among others in their field through their mentorship. Their experiences can be invaluable in adding to the continuing body of knowledge regarding effective female superintendents.

These women have a vast amount of knowledge and experience that can be shared with aspiring administrators. It would be a waste of a wonderful resource to let these women leave their professional lives without giving them the opportunity to share their stories and their experiences with new administrators as well as researchers who are trying to discover what makes female superintendents successful in their careers.

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SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE:

(1) Age: _____(a) 25-34 (b)_____35-44 (c)_____45-54
_____(d) 55-64 (e)_____65 +

(2) Classification of District:
(a)_____K-8 Elementary (b)_____rural (c)_____urban
(d)_____suburban

(3) Degree Completed:
(a)_____PhD in _____
(b)_____EdD in _____
©_____Master's Degree in _____
(d)_____Bachelor's Degree in _____

(4) Oklahoma State Certification:
(a)_____Elementary Teacher (b)_____Elementary Principal
©_____Secondary Teacher (d)_____Secondary Principal
Area of Concentration:_____
_____
_____
(e)_____ Superintendent
(f)_____Other: Please list:

(5) Number of years in current position: _____

(6) Other Administrative Positions You Have Held:
_____

(7) Teaching Positions You Have Held/Number of Years in Position:
_____
_____
_____

(8) Professional Organizations With Which You Are Associated:
_____
_____

(9) Professional Publications You Subscribe to:_____
_____

Salary Range:
(a)_____Under $40,000 (b)_____$40,000--$49,000
©_____$50,000-$59,000 (d)_____$60,000--$69,000
(e)_____$70,000 +

Individual Informed Consent Form for Research Being Conducted Under the Auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus
Department of Educational Administration, Curriculum and Supervision

Project Title: Female superintendents: Who are they? To what do they attribute their success?
Principal Investigator: Rosemary E. Kerber
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Michael Langenbach

Description: This is a two-part doctoral level research project. This first section of the project has been designed to identify the common characteristics that are present in currently practicing female superintendents in the state.
Approximate Duration of Subject Participants: Complete a ten-question survey. The time required to complete the survey is approximately fifteen to twenty minutes.

1. My participation is entirely voluntary; I may terminate my participation at any time prior to the completion of this study without penalty.

2. I agree to complete the attached survey. The investigator will keep this information in a locked file cabinet.

3. All information I give will be kept confidential. Information will be used in such a way that identification of me as a participant is impossible.

4. I understand that there are no foreseeable risks for participation in this study. I do not expect to receive any compensation.

5. The investigator is available to answer any questions I may have regarding this study. In case I have any questions in the future, I can reach the investigator at (405-381-3671) or I may contact Dr. Michael Langenbach (405-325-1275) Assistant Dean, College of Education, Room 100, Collings Hall; University of Oklahoma; Norman, Oklahoma 73019.

6. The Office of Research Administration (405-325-4757) may be contacted regarding the rights of research participants.

I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Informed Consent Form for Research Being Conducted Under the Auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus
Department of Educational Administration, Curriculum and Supervision

Project Title: Female superintendents: Who are they? To what do they attribute their success?
Principal Investigator: Rosemary E. Kerber
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Michael Langenbach
Description: This is a two-part doctoral level research project. This section of the project has been designed to discover the factors that have contributed to the success of these currently practicing female superintendents in the state in their chosen career field.
Approximate Duration of Subject Participant: Participant interviews should take approximately sixty to seventy-five minutes.

1. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older.

2. My participation is entirely voluntary; I may terminate my participation at any time prior to the completion of this study without penalty.

3. All information I give will be kept confidential. Information will be used in such a way that identification of me as a participant is impossible.

4. The investigator will keep this information in a locked file cabinet.

5. I understand that there are no foreseeable risks for participation in this study. I do not expect to receive any compensation.

6. The investigator is available to answer any questions I may have regarding this study. In case I have any questions in the future, I can reach the investigator at (405-381-3671) or I may contact Dr. Michael Langenbach (405-325-1275) Assistant Dean, College of Education, Room 100, Collings Hall; University of Oklahoma; Norman, Oklahoma 73019.

7. The Office of Research Administration (405-325-4757) may be contacted regarding the rights of research participants.

I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

_____Yes, I agree to allow my interview to be audio-taped.

_____No, I do not allow my interview to be audio-taped.

Print Name: _____ Date : _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE—Female Superintendents

(1) Please tell me about yourself:
(a) where you were raised,
(b) the number of children in your family,
(c) your birth order in your family,
(d) your parent's occupation,
(e) siblings who may have attended college.

(2) Discuss your elementary and secondary school years:
(a) Did you enjoy school? Were you a good student?
(b) Did any teachers specifically influence your life?
(c) Did you ever meet the school superintendent of your district?
(d) Were there any events in your childhood that made you lean towards the field of education as a career?

(3) Tell me about your college years:
(a) Where did you attend college?
(b) What diplomas, degrees and certification do you hold?
(c) Was education your first career choice while in college?
(d) Did you consider school administration as a career goal when you began college?

(4) What teaching experiences do you have?
(a) how long
(b) what areas
(c) how did you obtain these positions
(d) what motivated you to become a teacher

(5) What administrative experiences do you have?
(a) When did you consider going into the field of educational administration?
(b) Who or what motivated you to become a school administrator?
(c) Did you have a mentor in your first administrative position?
(d) What obstacles did you have to overcome to become a school superintendent?
(e) Was gender bias an obstacle to overcome in your field?
(f) Describe how you felt when you obtained your first position as a superintendent.

(6) Is your work personally satisfying to you?
(a) Would you seek another position as school superintendent?
(b) What are the stresses in your job?
(c) What are the satisfactions in your job?
(d) How does your family feel about your job?

(7) What are the high energy tasks in your job?
(a) Do you think these same tasks would be high-energy tasks for a male administrator?
(b) Please explain why or why not.

(8) Do you believe that men and women lead differently?
(a) What might account for these differences?

(9) What is your perception of female school administrators?

(10) Do you encourage female teachers to become administrators?
(a) all (b) some (c) what are your criteria?

(11) Demographically, you are an anomaly—How do you explain this?

(12) How does your professional life affect your personal life?

(13) What are your future career goals?
(a) Would you relocate to obtain a desired job in another school district?
(b) If given the opportunity, would you choose another career choice?

APPENDIX E—SUPERINTENDENTS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Madeline Wright	June 19, 2001
2. Michelle Quinn	June 21, 2001
3. Barbara Adams	June 22, 2001
4. Linda Taylor	June 25, 2001
5. Merilee Jackson	July 3, 2001
6. Diane Jones	July 9, 2001
7. Nancy Thomas	July 23, 2001
8. Judy Clifton	July 24, 2001
9. Helen King	July 31, 2001
10. Donna York	August 1, 2001
11. Sherry Brown	August 8, 2001
12. Peggy White	August 10, 2001
13. Julia Gibbs	August 15, 2001
14. Sue Smith	August 15, 2001
15. Anne Nichols	August 16, 2001

APPENDIX F

GENERAL CATEGORIES FOR ANALYSIS

Administrative Experience

Background information

Career Aspirations

Educational Background

Future Plans

Gender Bias

Keys to Success

Leadership

Mentors

Networking

Pleasant Tasks/ Problematic Tasks

Relocation Issues

Researcher Comments

School Board Relationships

Teaching Experience