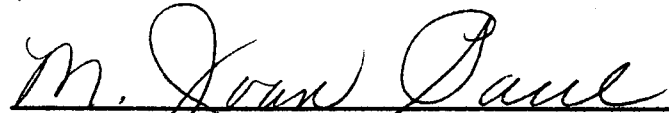


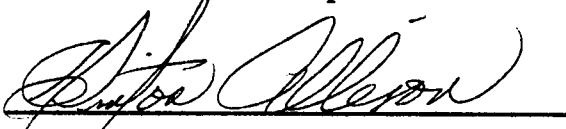
To the Graduate Council:

We are submitting herewith a dissertation written by Kellie Wilkinson McGarrh entitled "Hangin' in Tough: The Life of Superintendent Mildred E. Doyle, 1904-1989." We have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in curriculum and instruction.


Joy T. DeSensi, Major Professor


Mary Joan Paul, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:




Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of The Graduate School

HANGIN' IN TOUGH: THE LIFE OF SUPERINTENDENT

MILDRED E. DOYLE, 1904-1989

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Education

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Kellie Wilkinson McGarrh

August 1995

Copyright © Kellie Wilkinson McGarrh, 1995
All rights reserved

DEDICATION

To Rae Gaines for never giving up.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

After I began research into the life of Mildred Doyle in the fall of 1993, I discovered that, not only did many of her colleagues and family want to see her life story be written, but Miss Doyle had secretly desired it as well. Thus, I feel privileged to have happened upon this project, and truly excited over the degree to which I have enjoyed the work. I want to thank those individuals who, particularly through lengthy interviews, gave their time and crucial insights into the life of Mildred Doyle. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Mildred M. Patterson who provided not only an essential source of rich information, but who is a really delightful, articulate woman.

I am grateful to the members of doctoral committee for their support of my work. Clinton B. Allison, Professor in Cultural Studies, actually "introduced" me to Miss Doyle and to the idea of writing her life. To him I express tremendous appreciation as I, being an "outsider" to East Tennessee, may have missed out on the Mildred Doyle experience had he been less generous with his knowledge. To Kermit Blank, Professor in Inclusive Early Childhood Education, I express appreciation for his support of biographical research and for his healthy perspective on life in general. Finally, I owe inexpressible gratitude to my co-chairs, Joan Paul and Joy DeSensi, both Professors in Cultural Studies. These women are blessed with integrity unparalleled in any persons I have yet to encounter. Their sensitivity and guidance coupled with their faith in me will be neither underestimated nor forgotten.

Further, I deeply thank Diane Cudahy Creitz, fellow doctoral student in Cultural Studies for her unwavering emotional and intellectual support throughout my entire program of study at The University of Tennessee. Finally, I thank Melba Wilkins, truly my guardian angel, for literally keeping me sane with her wisdom, warmheartedness, generosity, and love.

ABSTRACT

Mildred Eloise Doyle (1904-1989) is best remembered by residents of Knox County, Tennessee as superintendent of the public school system for 30 years--from 1946-1976. With her father's support and political clout coupled with her own visionary determination, she was elected superintendent, attaining the unthinkable in both a time period and a field where men were the leaders and traditional roles for women reigned supreme. During her tenure, the salty "Miss Doyle" transformed an antiquated postwar school system into one with updated physical facilities, innovative curricula and better educated teachers, offering an overall environment much more conducive to learning. In the process, the charismatic Mildred Doyle became a well-respected and powerful educational leader and politician through her uncanny ability to communicate with a broad spectrum of people, her down-home sense of humor, and her accessibility to the public. Despite her scolding temper accompanied by strong language which could prove intimidating, her "big presence" gained enormous popularity over the years as she exhibited tireless dedication to public service until the time of her death.

Mildred Doyle's life exemplifies what can happen when a woman follows instincts without falling prey to the limitations that often accompany societal expectations for women. She never, however, adopted a publicly critical stance toward the patriarchal power elite. Rather, she necessarily joined it herself in order to realize her ultimate potential as an educator and child advocate. Mildred Doyle

amassed enough support of her own to move up the political ladder despite possible limitations posed by her gender. However, she chose to remain in education.

Miss Doyle lived by the only script that made sense to her, ignoring gender convention for the most part--not because she was an ardent feminist or because she disagreed with socially expected roles for women, but because she had difficulty ascribing to them at the personal level. However, by her very existence, she did much to further possibilities for women. Mildred Doyle served as a role model for women who do not fit traditional social patterns with respect to gender role expectations. She demonstrated that it is indeed possible to be a successful, respected, and unmarried female educational administrator and politician. Her experience with gender constructs serves to highlight the importance of tapping into one's complete potential, regardless of whether gender norms are violated. She clearly crossed gender lines without apology, and apparently without self-consciousness. Her life illuminates contradictions inherent in the social construction of gender, suggesting the importance of recognizing life-models built upon pure instinct which surpass gender as a limiting social construct.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Mildred Doyle's Personal Flair	3
Combinations for success	4
Communication and accessibility	5
Hot temper	9
Sense of humor	12
Hidden sentimentality	15
The Doyle Family--Power in County Government	17
2. NEGOTIATING GENDER CONSTRUCTS	21
Mildred's Early Life in Rural Knox County	22
Mildred and Athletics	25
Mildred's Move Into Education	34
The "Flapper Case"	37
Politics and Charter Doyle as a Role Model	42
Gender and the Leadership Role as Superintendent	47
Gender Constructs and the Personal Life of Mildred Doyle	54
Concluding Remarks	61
3. "WHAT'S BEST FOR THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF KNOX COUNTY"	63
Mildred Doyle's Philosophy of Education	63

The Superintendency--Significant Events and Reforms	72
Relationships with the school board	74
Personnel development programs in the Knox County Schools	76
Building an empire	79
Early curricular reform	85
Annexation and a new building program	95
Desegregation	100
Introduction of the middle school concept	108
Extended school year plan and system-wide curriculum project	111
The End of an Era	115
4. OLD HABITS DIE HARD: LIFE AFTER THE SUPERINTENDENCY	125
Saying Goodbye to the Central Office	126
The Alternative Center for Learning	130
Helping Pregnant Teens and Unwed Mothers	140
The Charter E. Doyle Memorial Park	143
A Lifetime of Achievement--Awards, Honors, and Service	149
Diagnosis with Cancer	155
Mildred's Final Weeks	157
The Funeral Service of Mildred Doyle	160
Concluding Remarks	162

5. CONCLUSION	164
A Contribution to the History of Women	166
The Role of Instinct in the Life of Mildred Doyle	168
BIBLIOGRAPHY	174
APPENDIX	190
VITA	193

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The year was 1946. Thousands of American women faced inevitable layoffs from jobs obtained during World War II. Servicemen returning from active duty expected their prewar jobs to be waiting. The importance of "Rosie the Riveter" to the nation's economic mindset faded somewhat after the turmoil of war had eased. Many women who welcomed the wartime work commonly reserved for men were told by employers that their place was no longer in American industry, but back in the home. With a surplus of employable males, this scenario repeated itself for women across the country, especially for those working in business and industry at jobs considered nontraditional with respect to gender.

The teaching profession, by contrast, had been largely dominated by women after the success of the American Common School in the mid-nineteenth century. Women teachers had not, however, followed smooth pathways into positions of educational leadership which were held almost exclusively by men.¹ Despite the postwar availability of male administrators for occupations in educational leadership,

¹ This pattern has been amply documented by educational researchers. For examples, see Michael Apple, "Teaching and 'Women's Work': A Comparative Historical and Ideological Analysis, Teachers College Record 86 (1985): 455-473; Sari Biklen and Marilyn Brannigan, eds., Women and Educational Leadership (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1980); Myra Strober and David Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage? A Report on Research on Schools," Signs 5 (1980): 494-503; David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980 (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

Mildred Eloise Doyle proved an exception to the traditional pattern by winning election to the highest position in educational administration at the local level. On July 11, 1946 "Miss Doyle" was sworn in at age 42 as the first female superintendent of schools in Knox County, Tennessee--a post she retained for 30 years.

Tough and determined, the gritty Miss Doyle prepared to meet the challenge of her lifetime as she took on the "big, two-fisted man's job"² of bringing a badly neglected school system up to twentieth century standards. Having devoted 20 years to working her way up the ladder from elementary school teacher beginning in 1924 to principal to supervisor of elementary education, Mildred was no stranger to the business of schooling. It was her position of supervisor, however, that took her out into the field where she witnessed with dismay deplorable conditions in which many of the 80 county schools existed in the mid 1940s. As most available funds and building materials were absorbed by the war effort, Knox County schools' physical facilities were in a state of untended obsolescence. Over one-half of the schools lacked indoor plumbing and some operated without electric lights or telephones. Many teachers coasted along with very little schooling themselves.³

Mildred, both ambitious and appalled, envisioned this as the perfect time to run for superintendent in hopes of making a positive difference, not only in the

² Squire H.T. Seymour of the Knox County Court characterized the superintendency as such when commenting on Doyle's success at her duties in "More About 'Lost Day'," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 28 Feb. 1960, B8.

³ Mildred Doyle discussed the condition of the school system in Clinton B. Allison, Mildred Doyle: A Conversation at Eighty (Knoxville, TN: UTK College of Education Instructional Services Center, 1986), videocassette; Further, the school conditions in 1946 are amply discussed in Carol E. Baker, "Superintendent Mildred E. Doyle: Educational Leader, Politician, Woman," (Ed.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, 1977) as well as in local newspaper articles.

physical condition of the system, but in curricular matters and teaching quality. With her father's support and tremendous political clout coupled with her own visionary determination, she attained the unthinkable in an era where traditional roles for women reigned supreme. Keeping her initial campaign promises, as superintendent she diligently closed or renovated old schools and built new ones, championed innovative curricular reform, raised teaching standards, and continued to be a fervent advocate for children and youth. Before her defeat for superintendent in 1976 the powerful presence of Mildred Doyle had reached legendary proportions as she became arguably Tennessee's most effective figure in twentieth century public education with a career that spanned a total of 52 years.⁴

Mildred Doyle's Personal Flair

A combination of probity, frankness, and accessibility mixed with a scalding temper and an irrepressible sense of humor made Mildred Doyle a dynamic and charismatic individual not easily forgotten by those who crossed her path. She had a "big presence"⁵ that left lasting impressions on educators, students, politicians, and other residents of Knox County and the state of Tennessee. She utilized a blend of distinguishing trademarks to become perhaps one of the most well-respected and powerful public servants in Knox County history.

⁴ Mildred Doyle revealed her campaign intentions in "Aspirants Eye GOP Primary," The Knoxville Journal, 7 Feb. 1946, A1. Many articles from The Knoxville Journal and The Knoxville News-Sentinel attest to such a characterization of Miss Doyle.

⁵ Mildred's niece Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994.

Combinations for Success

Characterized by a unique frankness, especially for a politician with an ever present constituency to appease, Mildred sustained her belief that "the one thing you've got to do is to say what's right, not what people want to hear."⁶ She adhered to her values as best a seasoned politician can with reelection in mind; although she probably lost votes as a result. She was savvy, knowing not only what to say but when to say it. At the end of her lengthy career, she attributed her success as superintendent to the correct combination of "political know-how and knowing what you're talking about."⁷ A melange of political expertise and integrity, along with a thorough knowledge of educational issues and the placement of children's welfare first contributed to her continued reelection by the general public for over a quarter of a century.

Mildred deeply loved both politics and public service.⁸ While she never downplayed her role as a politician, as superintendent she strove to keep politics for politics' sake outside the schoolroom, arguing that her business was to "do what's best for the boys and girls of Knox County."⁹ Miss Doyle often used this phrase in

⁶ Lois Thomas, "Departing Supt. Doyle Feels Funds Pose Biggest School System Obstacle," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 29 Aug. 1976, A1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ This dual devotion was described by Mildred's cousin Gordon Sams, interviews by author, 3 Mar. 1994 and Mildred's Personnel Director and Administrative Assistant Mildred Patterson, interviews by author, 9 Mar. 1994 and 8 June 1994. Many newspaper articles from The Knoxville Journal and The Knoxville News-Sentinel attest to this as well.

⁹ Copies of speeches where Mildred Doyle frequently used this phrase were obtained from her personal files.

speeches and made it explicit that the welfare of children--not political advancement--was always her top priority. For example, in her quest to establish a high caliber teaching force, she never allowed such factors as one's political affiliation to influence hiring practices.¹⁰ Doubtlessly, Mildred Doyle, with her personal connections and influence, could easily have furthered her political career by capturing a Republican seat in the Tennessee General Assembly at practically any time during her superintendency. She chose, however, to remain at home in Knox County to oversee the education of some 750,000 students who passed through the school system between 1946 and 1976. When nominated, though not appointed to the post of U.S. Commissioner of Education in 1956 by Senator Howard Baker, Mildred expressed no real desire to further her career by going to Washington.¹¹ While she garnered tremendous political power during her career, Mildred Doyle was not appraised by the public as one who sought such influence solely for personal gain or glory. Throughout her career as an educator and politician she remained focused on her particular vision of "the best" for Knox County children and youth.

Communication and Accessibility

Essential to the success of Mildred's work was an uncanny ability to communicate with an interesting conglomeration of people from different social strata, races, educational levels, and political persuasions. Mildred's secretary Faye Cox so

¹⁰ Mildred Patterson, interviews by author, 9 Mar. 1994 and 8 June 1994.

¹¹ Ibid., 8 June 1994.

described the superintendent: "She could talk with any person on their level. She could talk with intellectuals and she could talk with these uneducated parents who came in having problems with their children. She could meet people on whatever level they were."¹² This quality enabled her to bridge potential gaps between her power position as superintendent and that of her constituency. Mildred Doyle "listened with her heart"¹³ to the concerns and suggestions of others and labored to ensure that her intentions and policy proposals were understood by all whom they affected, be they school board members, Squires on the Knox County Court, or parents of students from working class communities. She was an accessible leader, not only verbally, but she was a highly visible figure at schools and community meetings. Mildred thought nothing of hopping into her car and paying personal visits to county schools. She visited classrooms and walked the halls, frequently chatting with teachers and students. According to Faye Cox, "If the kids were out on the playground, she might pick up a ball bat and hit a few balls with them...she was a very personable person, well-liked and respected, too."¹⁴ Miss Doyle not only remembered faces, but names and details about the lives of school personnel as well as Knox County citizens. In her personal files she kept the following quote from Norman Vincent Peale which apparently reflected her beliefs and practices: "Learn to remember names. Inefficiency at this point may indicate that your interest is not

¹² Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

¹³ Ibid., 9 Mar. 1994 and 8 June 1994 and in Mildred Patterson, written introduction of Mildred Doyle for a speaking engagement at the Knoxville Exchange Club, 22 June 1972, Personal Files.

¹⁴ Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

sufficiently outgoing. A man's name is very important to him." It was important to her, both personally and from a career standpoint, to be able to maintain individual connections and cooperative relationships, particularly with residents of Knox County.

Early in her superintendency, the Knox County Schools with the help of College of Education at the University of Tennessee conducted a needs assessment of every school and community to determine countywide funding priorities and strategies for action. Miss Doyle held meetings at local schools to explain results and decisions to community members. According to Mildred Patterson, "She never held anything back from communities."¹⁵ In 1951 in a particularly crowded meeting room at Carter High School, located in a rural northeast section of the county, Mildred walked a group composed primarily of students' families, step-by-step through the results of the assessment, "putting the fodder on the ground," as she would say in her characteristic down-to-earth manner and firm voice.¹⁶ For her, this meant illuminating the fundamental elements of educational issues in simple, jargon-free language, making them accessible for a public audience.¹⁷ As she explained why one school would receive priority over another in a certain area, a Mrs. King who was sitting in the back of the room stood up in the midst of the discussion and blurted out, "Now, Miss Doyle (pronouncing Doyle as "Dial"), I jest don't understand that at

¹⁵ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 1 Mar. 1995

¹⁶ According to central office colleague Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994, Mildred often used this phrase to describe such policy explanations to the public.

¹⁷ It should be noted here that she also demystified educational issues for the Knox County Court in budget hearings. This factor has been cited as significant in developing a working relationships with court members. See Carol E. Baker, 186.

all. I want you to broaden me out." Mildred, addressing the woman by her name, promptly and patiently restated herself in different, hopefully clearer, terms in an effort to "broaden her out." When she had finished, the woman replied, "God bless you, Miss 'Dial'! Now I understands it."¹⁸

Questions or concerns expressed by a constituent were worthy of the superintendent's attention. Philosophically, it was of great importance never to allow educational events, procedures and policies to become mystified. For Mildred, the public was entitled to understand changes in the educational arena during her administration. In addition to holding public meetings in community schools, she kept extended office hours and often worked on Saturdays. She also had a weekly radio show to keep Knox Countians in touch with educational issues. Either Mildred or a staff member would go on the air on Sunday mornings, relaying school business to the public. Further, she insisted that her office door remain perpetually open as a signal of constant accessibility to staff, students, and parents.¹⁹ While remaining an accessible leader was assuredly politically expedient for Mildred, to do so was also a fundamental aspect of her personality. This characteristic represented a natural, instinctive mode of operation, contributing to her overall personal style.

¹⁸ This story was cited as an example of Mildred's patience and skill at communication by administrative assistant Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994. References to the incident were also found in Mildred Doyle's personal files.

¹⁹ The radio show was described in Cynthia Moxley, "Benevolent Dictator: For 30 Years, Mildred Doyle Got Things Done as School Chief," The Knoxville Journal, 4 July 1985, A1. Moxley also discussed Miss Doyle's "open door" policy concerning office hours as did Mildred's former secretary Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

Hot Temper

While greatly respected and loved as a public servant, the willful, red-haired woman was known for her potentially scalding temper, she freely admitted her tendency "to pop off."²⁰ Central office colleague Sam Bratton explained that "she could have a very sharp tongue, and when somebody made her mad, she would sometimes snap right back at them."²¹ Mildred Patterson humorously described the superintendent during a fit of anger: "Her hair would get redder and her eyes would pop, and she'd raise an eyebrow, and soon be over it."²² According to Patterson, Miss Doyle, while certainly capable, only occasionally held a grudge. However, Patterson said that she could count on witnessing an angry episode if Mildred perceived that a child was being wronged in any way. Patterson recalled occasions when Miss Doyle "really let parents have it sometime--[when] they weren't doing all they could for their children and letting them run wild."²³ Perhaps the opinionated superintendent overstepped her bounds in reprimanding parents for failing to adhere to her personal ideas about dealing with children. It could be argued that school personnel should concern themselves strictly with school business. On the other hand, students bring their troubles and behavior problems with them to school, and as a caring educator, it is difficult not to want to intervene on behalf of children. Likely

²⁰ Quoted in Georgiana Vines, "Women in Public Life: Miss Doyle Reminisces," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 17 June 1973, A6.

²¹ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994.

²² Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994

²³ Ibid.

Superintendent Doyle did not mean to patronize the child-rearing practices of parents, yet her rather aggressive behavior toward parents could be construed as condescending and paternalistic.

Mildred Patterson explained that another example in which the superintendent usually became especially angry was with regard to political exchanges in which someone was being "underhanded about things--talk[ing] one way and do[ing] another." While Patterson referred specifically to Miss Doyle's political dealings, she explained the superintendent became angered by that kind of behavior in anyone with whom she interacted.²⁴

Issues of school funding proved especially sensitive with regard to Mildred's ire as well. Knoxville newspapers had a field day reporting emotional conflagrations that raged between Superintendent Doyle and the Knox County Court, the governing body responsible for approval of the county school budget. Mildred and her staff worked diligently to present what she considered to be reasonable budget figures to the Court, thus she justified her anger over resistance on the part of Squires to accept her proposals. She was known for never padding a budget and for bringing proposals before the Court which called for spending only in ways she considered completely vital for good schooling, thus, her temper flared when the Squires did not see eye to eye with her.²⁵ Regardless of portrayals by the press, the aggressive Mildred Doyle,

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

unable to understand "what was so darn sacred about the tax rate"²⁶ played verbal hardball when fighting to secure school funding for her beloved Knox County. With regard to her interaction with the County Court, Principal John McCloud of Brickey Elementary School recalled that Superintendent Doyle "fought all our battles for us."²⁷ While Carol E. Baker states that periods of virtual war raged between Squires and Mildred Doyle, these battles resulted in "the development of a relationship of mutual respect...and there developed a pattern of reciprocal support between Judge, Squires, and Superintendent."²⁸ It should be noted, however, that questioning the sacredness of the tax rate was easier for Mildred Doyle than was it for County Court members as she never had to answer to her constituency regarding the necessity of a tax hike. Mildred Doyle, though, believed that it was the community's responsibility to support education for their children and she felt the community at large should be willing to support tax hikes for education.

According to former Tennessee Governor and U.S. Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander, Mildred usually succeeded in getting what she wanted for the school system.²⁹ While some people felt intimidated by her tendency to fly off the handle, others respected her quick temper, sharp tongue, and dauntless determination

²⁶ Kaye Franklin Veal, "Mildred Doyle Saluted for Service to Schools," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 1 Oct. 1986, A16.

²⁷ Carol E. Baker, 185; Mildred's sister Ruth Doyle Hilton, interview by author 25 Feb. 1994. Mrs. Hilton recalled that Mildred would get angry if the County Court failed to immediately approve funding for various programs

²⁸ Carol E. Baker, 185.

²⁹ Moxley, A8.

for they felt her battles, both politically and educationally, were ultimately fought on behalf of the children in her care. U.S. Senator Howard Baker referred to Mildred as "the very essence of the stern, but understanding educator" who "brought quality to the Knox County educational system that even until now it profits from."³⁰

Sense of Humor

One does not recall Mildred Doyle's temper and toughness, however, without remembering the keen sense of humor that kept Knox Countians amused for decades. Mildred had a "Rolodex" of jokes and humorous stories inside her head, which is not surprising as she kept a thick folder of such material in her filing cabinet for reference. She used jokes and humorous anecdotes extemporaneously in conversation as well as calculatedly in planned speeches. Copies of speeches made to colleagues, students, and various community groups reveal notes in the margins signaling appropriate times to add a humorous touch--a joke, an anecdote, or a story. If she indeed used all of the material noted in the margins, one can imagine routine speeches transformed into real entertainment from a stand-up comedian/educator. Naturally, she was popular at a podium, constantly in demand for speaking engagements at civic meetings and area social functions.³¹

Most often her humor was characterized by a kind of folksy, homespun, down-to-earth quality, even corny at times. Depending on her audience, she could be

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Miss Doyle's personal files containing humorous material and copies of speeches are located in the home of Mildred Patterson; Faye Cox, interview by author, Dec. 5, 1995.

somewhat risqué, but never vulgar. She detested vulgarity in any form.

Interestingly, if taken in a contemporary context, some of the jokes and stories contained in her "humor file" could be considered blatantly sexist as they, for example, portray women as nags or brow-beaters in relation to men. While Miss Doyle perpetuated such socially constructed stereotypes through her use of humor, she likely thought nothing of it. Born just after the turn of the century in 1904, her particular sense of humor was largely a function of the experience of her generation in a socially conservative area of the country. Nonetheless, she amused many Knox Countians in varying degrees throughout a half century spent in the public sphere.

People who never knew Mildred Doyle personally often express a fond awareness of her penchant for telling jokes. Rarely does her name arise in a Knoxville conversation without a tandem reference to her notable sense of humor and quick wit.³² In the spring of 1989 as Mildred lay in Knoxville's Baptist hospital gradually losing a protracted battle with bone cancer, she was visited regularly by Reverend Robert Temple who witnessed the playful sense of humor she displayed even in great pain. During one of his visits Reverend Temple asked her if she would like to have prayer. To his question the snappy Mildred answered, "Yes, if you feel

³² I found this to be repeatedly true as I mentioned Mildred's name in casual conversation with UTK faculty and staff and other Knox County citizens, usually those who had resided in the area at least ten years or more.

you need it."³³ This anecdote is but one of hundreds of collective brush strokes serving to paint Mildred Doyle the humorist.

Always seeking comic relief, Mildred spoke in an interview with The Knoxville-News Sentinel in 1986 of the ways in which children have changed over her years as an educator. She talked about a child (someone she supposedly knew) who played the role of the innkeeper in a Christmas program depicting the birth of Jesus Christ. According to Miss Doyle, "Mary and Joseph entered the scene and knocked on the door of the inn. A high little voice answered. 'I am sorry for you, but there is no room in the inn,' said the little voice, 'but would you like to come in for a beer?'"³⁴ This tale exemplifies Mildred's routine use of humor in public interaction, another trait that endeared her to people and served to narrow the potential communication gap between the powerful public official and the average citizen. With respect to running the Knox County school system, Mildred Doyle was dedicated, acutely knowledgeable, and deadly serious about her work, and her charisma and sense of humor served her well. People trusted her and their subsequent devotion and cooperation afforded her perhaps more power and community influence than is typical for the position of county school superintendent.

³³ This anecdote was taken from Reverend Temple's remarks as he officiated at Mildred Doyle's funeral ceremony. See "Funeral Service for Mildred E. Doyle," 9 May 1989. A printed copy was given to me by Mildred's sister Ruth Doyle Hilton on February 25, 1994.

³⁴ Veal, A16. This anecdote was also found in Miss Doyle's personal file of collected jokes and humorous stories to be used at her discretion.

Hidden Sentimentality

In addition to the blend of her blazing temper and playful sense of humor, Mildred Doyle had a softer, more sentimental side that she preferred to conceal from the general public. The same Mildred who fought heatedly with Knox County Court over school budgets became teary-eyed over television episodes of "Little House On the Prairie" or a particularly moving musical performance. If at home, she often left the room because she did not want to be seen crying over a movie on television with a particularly sad plot.³⁵ Paradoxically, the tough, salty superintendent's favorite day of the year was Valentine's Day, and Judy Garland's emotional "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" was the song she loved best. In fact, she arranged to have it performed at her funeral service.³⁶ Further, Mildred Doyle was often moved to tears over children who were mentally or physically disabled. She felt largely helpless because she could not do anything personally to significantly change their situation. Not only did the plight of the youngsters upset her, but her powerlessness to help did as well.³⁷

Mildred's best friend, colleague, and house-mate Mildred Patterson remembers her as "a soft-hearted person, but she did not want you to know that. She took care of many, many children--even getting them money and buying them shoes. People did not know that side of her." For example, Superintendent Doyle personally, and

³⁵ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994.

³⁶ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994.

³⁷ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994.

without fanfare, paid out-of-state tuition for a troubled girl who had been expelled from a Knox County high school, enabling the student to graduate.³⁸ When she was principal at Vestal Grammar School, located in an area of Appalachian poverty in south Knoxville, Mildred quietly had a load of coal delivered to a student's family who could not afford to heat their home for the winter.³⁹ Mildred's niece Sue Hicks told of the time her Aunt Mildred and Mildred Patterson took her to New York for a high school graduation present. The superintendent, who "was a maniac behind the wheel," got caught in a speed trap somewhere in New Jersey, was forced to appear before a judge and pay a one hundred dollar fine or go to jail. A distressed young couple who had just gotten married had been caught in the speed trap as well. Upon learning that the couple had very little money, Mildred Doyle paid their fine so they would not have to spend their wedding night in jail. Sue explained that "she was always doing stuff like that and never telling anybody."⁴⁰

While the general public was basically aware of a kind of overall goodness associated with the superintendent, many of her expressions of tenderness or sympathy were witnessed behind the scenes as she preferred to put forth a different kind of image for the public.

³⁸ Ibid., 9 Mar. 1994 and 8 June 1994. The incident concerning payment of a student's tuition was described in Mildred Patterson, written introduction of Mildred Doyle, Knoxville Exchange Club, 22 June 1972, Personal Files.

³⁹ Ruth Doyle Hilton, interview by author, 25 Feb. 1994.

⁴⁰ Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994.

Mildred Doyle chose to present herself as tough, strong, funny, capable, understanding, and caring, but never soft or sentimental. These qualities, whether common knowledge or not, comprised an indelible personal flair that contributed immeasurably to her success as an educator, politician, and powerful community leader. Mildred Patterson described her friend in this way: "Her heart was as broad as could be. She would've helped everybody if she could've."⁴¹

The Doyle Family—Power in County Government

While Doyles and Doyle descendants continue to populate south Knox County in East Tennessee, the name itself is historically synonymous with power and community influence. In 1800 Mildred's great-great-grandfather John Doyle settled in the Tennessee Valley after receiving a Revolutionary War land grant of roughly 460 acres located in the southern portion of Knox County.⁴² John Doyle became active in early county government, beginning a family tradition that would perpetuate itself well into the twentieth century.

Based on the ancient system of English county legislative and judicial administration, Knox County was governed by the Quarterly County Court which consisted of a judge and justices of the peace, or squires, elected from various districts by popular vote. Among myriad additional responsibilities the Quarterly County Court exercised much power with regard to school matters. The Court was

⁴¹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Mar. 1994.

⁴² Mildred enjoyed history and compiled several documents concerning her family origins. They are located in her personal files in the home of Mildred Patterson.

responsible for instituting school taxes, adopting the school budget, monitoring actions of the board of education, and issuing bonds at the authorization of voters.

In 1876 at age 51, Mildred's grandfather Jacob Doyle was elected as a justice of the peace on the Knox County Quarterly Court, becoming the first family member to hold such a position. The staunch Republican, elected for a second six-year term in 1882, died in office on February 24, 1887. Of Jacob Doyle's nine children, his son Charter chose to follow his father's path into local politics. At age 42, he won election to the County Court in 1924 where he remained a squire for four terms until his death in 1949. Mildred's brother Bert followed his father by becoming a third generation squire in 1954.⁴³

Aside from positions on the County Court and Mildred's long tenure as superintendent, various members of the Doyle family served in such county governmental positions as Registrar of Deeds, Tax Assessor, and Superintendent of Roads.⁴⁴ Perhaps, however, Mildred was most directly influenced by the power accumulated by both her grandfather and father as squires on the County Court.

Mildred's initial election by the Knox County Quarterly Court in 1946 was influenced by the preeminent position of her father and mentor, Squire Charter E. Doyle, known as a veritable "old time Republican ramrod."⁴⁵ The formidable

⁴³ Carol E. Baker, 96-99; Ted York, "Third Generation of Doyle Family Attains County Court Membership," The Knoxville Journal, 6 Feb. 1955, Photocopy, Doyle Family File, McClung Collection.

⁴⁴ Gordon Sams, interview by author, 3 Mar. 1994; See Doyle Family File, McClung Collection, East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville, TN.

⁴⁵ Former County Court member Willard Yarborough describing Charter Doyle was quoted in Carol E. Baker, 167; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

Squire Doyle was considered by his contemporaries to have been one of the most powerful community leaders of his day. He strongly encouraged other court members to support his daughter for the superintendency, rendering it likely that Mildred's early success stemmed from her father's enormous political strength.⁴⁶ While her estimable father's influence might explain her initial election, Charter Doyle died of a stroke before the end of his daughter's second term as superintendent. Further, an amendment to Tennessee law, effective in the 1952 general election, transformed the position of county school superintendent to one elected by popular vote rather than by members of the Knox County Quarterly Court. This action had a diminishing effect on any lingering influence of Squire Doyle with regard to his daughter's career.

Nonetheless, Mildred Doyle ran unopposed for her third term as school chief. In fact, she faced only one opponent in the Republican primaries after 1946 and only two Democratic opponents in general elections between 1952 and 1976--a time span exceeding 20 years. Throughout her superintendency she obviously gained the people's confidence and developed a great deal of political savvy and clout all her own.⁴⁷

Why did Mildred Doyle face little or no opposition to her post over the course of 30 years? One of two possible scenarios seems likely: Perhaps would-be competitors were daunted by her considerable influence and support by the local

⁴⁶ Mildred Doyle admits to the importance of her father's political power in her first successful election. She described herself as politically naive in Baker, 167.

⁴⁷ Carol E. Baker, 167; Mildred Patterson discussed Charter Doyle's influence and Mildred's personal power acquisition, interview by author, 8 June 1994; Official Knox County Election Return Sheets between the years of 1952 and 1976 confirm infrequent opposition.

Republican Party and the overwhelming number of Republican voters in Knox County. This factor could curb the enthusiasm of Democratic candidates or of Republicans with less community clout. Further, Mildred Doyle enjoyed support of both political parties represented on the Board of Education and the County Court. This factor led subsequently to the support of both local newspapers, The Knoxville Journal and The Knoxville News-Sentinel, a tremendous source of political power. An alternative explanation is that the majority of Knox Countians were reasonably satisfied if not completely happy with Mildred's administrative record as school chief. She expanded and modernized an antiquated school system to ultimately serve hundreds of thousands of students during a period of significant increases in county population during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. In either case, Mildred proved capable of carrying her family legacy of political involvement and public service well into the latter decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Bipartisan support of Miss Doyle was described by Judge C. Howard Bozeman, interview by author, 30 Jan. 1995. Bozeman, a Democrat and longtime supporter of the Republican Miss Doyle served as County Court Judge from 1948-66 and 1974-82.

CHAPTER 2

NEGOTIATING GENDER CONSTRUCTS

Since Mildred Doyle often chose to adopt roles considered nontraditional for women of her day, some negotiation of gender constructs, whether conscious or subconscious, was inevitable. This chapter explores ways in which Mildred experienced her gendered identity, tracing her interaction with gender as a social construct during her life as a young girl, an athlete, a politician, an administrator, and a woman.

From Mildred's Appalachian mountain heritage she likely witnessed women as independent and strong, both emotionally and physically. Despite this independence and strength, however, Appalachian women often lived a commitment to more traditional gender roles as caretakers of their children and homes. Their gender identity centered largely around their homeplace, marriage, and family, while their husbands sought work in the public world of local industry.¹

Mildred Doyle fit this model with respect to her independent nature and physical and emotional strength, yet she neither married, nor cared for children of her own within the private sphere of the home. Rather, she entered and remained in the

¹ An excellent characterization of Appalachian women as seen through the eyes of Appalachian women novelists is found in Kathleen P. Bennett, "Wrenched From the Earth: Appalachian Women in Conflict," Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis: The Significance of Place, eds. Joe L. Kincheloe and William F. Pinar, (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991), 99-120. Bennett describes the economic hardship and struggle for survival faced by Appalachian mountain people after industrialization threatened farm life.

public world of paid work, supporting herself for 52 years until she faced political defeat as superintendent. It is interesting to note that regardless of her life's choice not to follow the traditional pattern of marriage and bearing children, family members and colleagues saw her as a matriarchal figure, not only of the extensive Doyle clan, but of the entire Knox County School system.² Throughout her 84 years, Mildred Doyle shattered various gender barriers and felt the constraints of others. In still other cases, she seems to have remained largely unconscious of gender as a social construct while simultaneously serving as a role model for women in educational leadership and politics.

Mildred's Early Life in Rural Knox County

The Victorian era still exerted influence when Mildred Eloise was born to Illia and Charter Doyle on December 27, 1904. Gender ideology which emphasized separate spheres for women and men continued to loom large in the minds of many Americans. Conventional beliefs about the frailty of women and their place inside the home, however, never rooted deeply in the mind of Mildred Doyle. Her background never required it of her.

Mildred's parents, Charter Doyle and Illia Burnett, married on February 16, 1895. The determined young couple braved a driving snow storm, taking a

² Colleague Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994; niece Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994; sister Ruth Doyle Hilton, interview by author, 25 Feb. 1994; best friend and colleague Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994; cousin Gordon Sams, interview by author, 3 Mar. 1994. Each either used the term "matriarch" outright or referred to her as the "head" of the family. Miss Doyle was largely responsible for organizing many Doyle family reunions and various 'get-togethers' throughout the years.

horse-drawn sleigh to the home of justice of the peace, Squire Abe Maxey, who performed their wedding ceremony.³ The marriage lasted 54 years until Charter's death in 1949, followed by Illia's death six months later. Mildred was one of six daughters and five sons born to the Doyles who lived on a 20 acre farm off Neubert Springs Road in south Knox County. The land was part of her great great grandfather John Doyle's original Revolutionary War land grant of 1800. Around 1912, the family moved to Charter Doyle's childhood home, a larger farm of 200 acres, still part of the original land grant and located on Martin Mill Pike closer to the tiny community of Vestal.⁴ Some of the farm land and the large, white two-story frame house, known as "the Homeplace," still remain in Doyle hands as the home of Mildred's younger brother Otto, or "Pinky," although the city limits of Knoxville have long since encompassed it.⁵ The Doyle family shared with other Appalachians such traditional values as family solidarity, independence, self-reliance, pride, and devotion to keeping their homeplace in the family.⁶ Although Charter Doyle worked as a timber buyer for Vestal Lumber Company for over 50 years, he kept a small

³ "Charter E. Doyles Celebrating Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 16 Feb. 1945, Photocopy, Doyle Family File, McClung Collection; "Mrs. Charter Doyle is Dead at 73," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 17 Oct. 1949, Photocopy, Doyle Family File, McClung Collection.

⁴ The Vestal community was not considered part of south Knoxville until after the completion of Chapman Highway in the 1930s when population growth and easy access contributed to development of that portion of Knoxville located "south of the river."

⁵ Clinton B. Allison, Mildred Doyle: A Conversation at Eighty (UTK College of Education Instructional Services Center, 1986), videocassette; Ruth Doyle Hilton, interview by author 25 Feb. 1994.

⁶ Bennett, 102, describes such values as being of utmost importance to Appalachian families and their desire to maintain a sense of freedom.

farming operation alive on "the Homeplace" to supply dairy products, meats, and vegetables for his family. From an economic perspective the Doyles were comfortable, neither wealthy nor poor.

The Doyle children, including the girls, were an active crew, expected to help with multiple chores around the farm. Mildred's sister Ruth recalls, "We didn't have a dainty way of life, I'll tell you that, because there was too much to do."⁷ In an interview in 1976 Mildred remembered her early life on the farm:

We had chickens, cows, a horse I nearly rode to death. We lived the life of a regular farm family for the most part . . . it was a good life; I enjoyed it. I milked cows, churned butter, helped take care of the garden, picked blackberries.⁸

When her three older brothers served in the Army during World War I, the young Mildred willingly helped with strenuous tasks around the farm that would normally have been assigned to Bert, Eugene, or Thomas. In one particular incident her father had a large alfalfa field that needed cutting before an imminent East Tennessee rain shower. Mildred told him confidently, "If you'll hitch that team of mules to the mowing machine, I'll mow it and we'll rake it and get it into the barn."⁹ Needless to say, they beat the rain. The superintendent recalled the physical results of those busy years: "I got to be strong as an ox."¹⁰ An active life on the farm did

⁷ Ruth Doyle Hilton, interview by author, 25 Feb. 1994.

⁸ Carol E. Baker, "Superintendent Mildred E. Doyle: Educational Leader, Politician, Woman" (Ed.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, 1977), 100.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Cynthia Moxley, "Benevolent Dictator: For 30 Years Mildred Doyle Got Things Done as School Chief," The Knoxville Journal, 4 July 1985, A1.

not leave much time for this free spirit to contemplate rigid gender roles evident in the broader society, nor did her practical Appalachian parents expect it of her. They needed her help in the fields; Mildred enjoyed the challenge. It was that simple. Consequently, the young and independent Mildred developed an appreciation for hard work, for the outdoors, and an unwavering confidence in her physical capabilities. From this nascent sense of her personal strength sprang the instinctive drive which later propelled her into educational leadership positions in Knox County never before held by a woman. First, however, the energetic young girl became captivated by athletics, a love she would possess her entire life.

Mildred and Athletics

Mildred Doyle was a natural athlete; she felt right at home in the sporting world which has been considered a "male preserve" since ancient and medieval times.¹¹ During Mildred's days as an athlete in the first half of the twentieth century, opportunities for women were severely limited, due both to societal expectations of appropriate behavior for women and lack of financial backing for organized women's athletics. She participated in sports long before the 1970s when women fought for equality with men's athletic programs through such efforts as the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendment Act. Written into law in 1972, Title IX mandated that sex discrimination be eliminated from programs receiving federal

¹¹ William J. Baker, Sports in the Western World, (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1982), 2, 21-22, 295, 300-303; Nancy Theberge, "Toward a Feminist Alternative to Sport as a Male Preserve," Quest 37 (1986), 193-202; Susan Birrell and Diana Richter, "Is a Diamond Forever? Feminist Transformations of Sport," Women's Studies International Forum 10 (1987), 395-409.

funding of any nature. While the legislation significantly enhanced opportunities for girls' and women's athletic programs in public schools and universities across the country, its implementation has weakened during the last 20 years. Since the 1970s, social attitudes have become somewhat more accepting of female participation in sports, yet a decidedly male bias pervades, as readily exemplified by continued inequalities in funding men's and women's programs and in the virtual absence of opportunities for women's athletic participation at the professional level.¹² Despite such obvious inequities, Mildred Doyle appreciated the advances made in girls' athletics that she witnessed in her lifetime. In a newspaper interview six years before her death, she commented on advantages for girls that were absent in her day: "They have the equipment and the facilities and the coaching. We were pretty much on our own. It's good to see people recognizing the fact that girls can be really outstanding athletes."¹³ Any increases in opportunity or changes in social perception seemed significant to her as she had lived the experience of being denied an opportunity for recognition as a female professional athlete. Although Mildred's introduction to sports began in informal family settings, she eventually played basketball in high school and, later, basketball and softball on independent leagues in the Knoxville area. Mildred's love for sports ran so deeply that had there been the slightest opening for women, she would have sprinted through the gate to professional athletic

¹² William J. Baker, 298-301.

¹³ Ben Byrd, "Byrd's Eye View," The Knoxville Journal, 24 June 1983, B1.

competition. To be recognized as a professional athlete was her dream--truly a dream deferred.

The Doyle family "lived and breathed sports, especially baseball."¹⁴ Rather than discourage their female children from participation in outdoor sports, Charter and Illia Doyle regularly organized baseball games at "the Homeplace" for the entire family and any neighboring children who happened by. In an interview just after her election to the superintendency in 1946, Mildred told a reporter, "Counting Mama, there were always enough of us at home for a real good ball game."¹⁵ Her maternal grandfather even had his own baseball team bearing his name, "The T.J. Burnetts." Throughout the warm East Tennessee summers the family youngsters challenged others in the community to afternoon ball games in Mr. Burnett's cow pasture located off of Old Sevierville Pike in south Knox County.¹⁶ It is likely that during these years of family support, Mildred began to nurture her characteristic competitive spirit and superb athletic coordination.

As an elementary student at the two-room Moore's School, Mildred the "tomboy"¹⁷ chose to hang out with the boys rather than girls at recess as they tended to be more physically active. Because of her physical strength and skill, she was

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Betsy Morris, "First Woman County Superintendent Has 21-Year Background of Teaching Here," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 10 July 1946, B1.

¹⁶ According to an autobiographical document (n.d.) entitled "Mildred E. Doyle" located in Mildred's personal files, T.J. Burnett also had a fondness for horse racing and operated a race track on his property.

¹⁷ Mildred Doyle used this term at various times to describe herself.

often chosen first in team selection. Mildred's competitive drive and prowess extended from the boys' playing field to the marble ring, and according to her sister Ruth, "she could shoot as well as any boy at Moore's School."¹⁸

Circumstances such as these likely contributed to the subconscious formation of Mildred's unique personality which enabled her as an adult to move comfortably and with great respect in the male-centered world of politics and educational leadership. According to Mildred Patterson, Mildred Doyle "thought she was as good as any man living," and while she was close to many women, "she had more men friends than she had women friends."¹⁹ Further, she believes that Mildred Doyle "thought like a man"²⁰ in that she was aggressive when going after things she wanted, a characteristic Patterson more closely associates with men than with women in American culture.

After completing grades 1-6 at Moore's School, Mildred attended Young High School as a seventh grader in 1916. She soon developed a novel reputation, not by being the only Doyle child to ride to school on a horse--bareback,²¹ but for being a mischievous student and a tough ball player with a temper to match.²² Mildred

¹⁸ This information was taken from a speech written by Mildred's sister, Ruth Doyle Hilton, and delivered by a cousin, James Doyle, to the Exchange Club of Knoxville on June 22, 1972 as part of a tribute to Mildred, Personal Files.

¹⁹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Her sister Ruth Doyle Hilton recalled that Mildred refused to go to school unless she could ride the horse. During the school day she kept the horse in a barn located behind Young High School.

²² Mildred Doyle, "Mildred E. Doyle," Autobiographical Document, Personal Files, 2.; Mildred Patterson. Interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994; Ruth Doyle Hilton, Interview by author, 25 Feb. 1994.

made the girls' basketball team as a freshman in 1918, playing as a guard for four years. The team played on outdoor courts, often dealing with windy weather conditions which affected play. The girls wore bloomers, "the standard uniform in those days."²³ Mildred's manner on the court was once described by a reporter: "Known on the court as a fierce competitor, Red Doyle was not to be reckoned with unfairly by either opponent or referee. Never one to keep her thoughts to herself on the hardwood, Doyle's spicy language sometimes got her into trouble with the officials."²⁴ Forever the successful competitor, Mildred Doyle never got used to losing at anything--including her last bid as Knox County superintendent of schools.²⁵ By her senior year, Mildred's propensity for leadership had already begun to emerge as she served as both manager and captain of the girls' team. Mildred recalled those active years as happy ones as she gained recognition as an athlete and a leader.

Upon graduation, Mildred's family made plans for her to attend Maryville College, then a Presbyterian boarding school in neighboring Blount County. Mildred consented, although she was much less interested in academics than in the fact that Maryville had a women's basketball team. She made the team and played for one season. Mildred's devotion to the basketball court during the 1922-23 school year showed up on her final grade report. In English, she made a "C" and a "D". Failing

²³ Miss Doyle quoted in Byrd, B1.

²⁴ George Roberts, "People: Mildred Doyle," Weekly Review, 31 Dec. 1985, 6.

²⁵ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

mathematics and French, she managed "C's" in Spanish and biology. Bible class was mandatory and graded on a pass/fail scale--she passed. Not surprisingly, she passed physical education as well. Clearly, academics were not the future educator's top priority as a college freshman. In addition to her marginal grades, she received a total of 9 demerits which were noted but not explained on her records.²⁶ According to the present registrar, Martha Hess, demerits were "very easy to get in those days."²⁷ A student could receive a demerit for being late to chapel or to the dormitory. Smoking cigarettes was a more serious offense. Apparently, women were not allowed to play cards in their dormitory rooms either--a temptation too great for the gamester Mildred to resist. Her sister Ruth remembers Mildred's "being campused"²⁸ for getting caught with a full deck in her footlocker which surely accounts for at least one of the nine demerits. Perhaps the boisterous freshman received another demerit for the incident in which she jumped on the running board of her visiting family's car and rode with them to the entrance gate of the college before hopping off and running back to her dorm, only to be caught by the dorm mother.²⁹

The exact reasons for Mildred's leaving Maryville College are unknown. Her record for the 1923-24 academic year states simply "Left School Before Exams -

²⁶ Mildred's academic history at Maryville College is recorded in the Office of the Registrar, Maryville College, Maryville, TN.

²⁷ Martha Hess, Registrar, Maryville College, telephone interview by author, 8 Feb. 1995.

²⁸ Ruth Doyle Hilton, interview by author, 25 Feb. 1994.

²⁹ Ibid.

January 5, 1924."³⁰ Mildred's niece Sue Hicks mentioned that she had been expelled, but the record itself is ambiguous. The irony here is that the future school superintendent attended Maryville College only to play basketball, left school with a poor academic history, and was later awarded an honorary doctorate from Maryville in 1965 for her outstanding contribution to the field of education and to the community.

For whatever reason, the 1922-23 basketball season was Mildred's last in school-related athletic competition. Since no opportunities for women's participation in professional athletics existed in the 1920s, Mildred hit a concrete gender barrier for perhaps the first and only time in her life. She dreamed of recognition as a professional athlete, yet fulfilling the dream was beyond her control. This scenario must have been especially frustrating for a young woman who had never truly experienced gender as a barrier to personal aspirations and had always enjoyed a fair amount of control over her life. She later mused that she had been born a half century too soon for the realization of such a dream.³¹

While opportunities to make a living as an athlete eluded Mildred Doyle, she played basketball for approximately 20 years on independent leagues in the Knoxville area. Mildred, along with her sisters Lois and Ruth, played for a women's team sponsored by the Firestone Tire Company. They looked forward to Thursday night games at the YMCA and occasional travels to neighboring communities to compete

³⁰ Mildred Doyle's academic history, Registrar's Office, Maryville College.

³¹ Byrd, B1.

with other teams. With the aggressive Mildred as captain and manager, their team was among the first in the region to abandon the old bloomers for the newer and less modest uniform style of jerseys and shorts.³²

Basketball, however, was not the only sport Mildred enjoyed. She also played first base in softball for the Pepsi Cola Bottling Company on independent leagues from 1938 until the time she announced her candidacy for the superintendent's race. Mildred frequently told a story on herself recounting her later days in softball when she did not move as quickly as before. She hit the ball late, knocking it just over first base rather than hitting it toward the usual center or deep into right field. She said anyone else could have made it safely, but she was thrown out at first base. This happened twice, and the second time, as she headed back to the dugout, she said "some leather-lunged farmer sitting up here in the stands reared back and says, 'Come on Granny, you run like a dry spring!'" After that incident, Knox County teachers affectionately called her "Granny."³³

Shortly thereafter, "Granny" hung up her cleats--not because she was ready, but because she was about to run for superintendent and was told that "it wasn't ladylike to play softball and attempt to be superintendent of schools too."³⁴

³² "Mildred E. Doyle," 4; A photograph of the Firestone Tire Co. team in their jerseys and shorts is located in Mildred's personal files. It was photocopied from an unidentified newspaper with no date given.

³³ Allison, A Conversation; Mildred's former colleague Samuel Bratton told of this story in an interview on March 4, 1994; Former teammate Doris Sams cited in a telephone conversation on November 16, 1994 the fact that Mildred played until she practically had to hit a homerun to get to first base.

³⁴ Allison, A Conversation.

However, her natural abilities were not forgotten. In a poll conducted by The Knoxville Journal, she was named Tennessee's Outstanding Woman Athlete from 1900-1950 and was inducted into the Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame in 1983.³⁵

It is unknown exactly how Mildred reacted to the gender role constraints implicit in the suggestion that it "wasn't ladylike" to play ball and run for school superintendent. For some citizens, it "wasn't ladylike" to run for school superintendent, never mind the ball playing. It is interesting to note how Mildred chose her battles. She acquiesced to gender convention by following the advice to give up the "unladylike" softball, yet she ignored caveats from citizens regarding her aspirations that the position of school superintendent was a man's job--despite the fact that overwhelming numbers of superintendents were, and still are, men.³⁶

With regard to athletics, gender conventions made themselves real to Mildred Doyle for they largely controlled her destiny. She stated plainly many times that not only did she want more than anything to be a professional ball player, but that she "would never be an old maid school teacher."³⁷ However, the gender barrier against

³⁵ Byrd, B1; Frank Bailes, "Elite Eleven Will Be Inducted June 25," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 4 June 1983, B1; Thomas O'Toole, "Eleven Knoxville Greats Feted at Banquet," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 26 June 1983, D3; "Ten New Members To Be Inducted in Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame," The Knoxville Journal, 4 June 1983, 11.

³⁶ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994; For examples of documentation and discussion of women's underrepresentation in educational administration see Sari K. Biklen and Marilyn B. Branigan, eds., Women and Educational Leadership (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1980); J.B. Saks, "Education Vital Signs," American School Board Journal 179, no. 12 (1992): 38; Myra Strober and David Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage? A Report on Research on Schools," Signs 5, no. 3 (1980): 494-503; David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980 (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

³⁷ Carol E. Baker, 101; Allison, A Conversation. Aside from this instance, Miss Doyle made frequent references to this ironic situation.

professional opportunities for women in sport was insurmountable. Thus, she had no other real choices except to seek a career outside athletics or get married. Mildred Doyle definitely never intended to make a career of education. It was the commonly enforced policy barring married women from teaching school that actually launched Mildred's unlikely, although lengthy and productive, career as an educator. Ironically, for the unmarried Mildred, this exclusionary kind of gender-based policy welcomed her into school teaching following her stint at Maryville College.

Mildred's Move Into Education

David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot explain that early supporters of hiring women teachers "assumed that they would, of course, leave their work when married and that marriage was the goal of all proper women."³⁸ Throughout the first four decades of the twentieth century, the large majority of teachers were unmarried and there existed many official policies prohibiting married women from teaching school.³⁹ Such a policy existed in Knox County in 1924.

After leaving Maryville College, the 19 year old Mildred moved back to "the Homeplace," and continued to help with chores around the farm while squeezing in as much time for basketball and tennis as possible.⁴⁰ During the summer of 1924, Mildred's sister Lois, an elementary teacher at Anderson School got married.

³⁸ Tyack and Hansot, 191.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ "Mildred E. Doyle," 3.

Because of the Knox County Board of Education's policy concerning the prohibition of married teachers, Lois was forced to quit her job. Thus, a vacancy would have to be filled by the beginning of the fall semester.

By that time, Charter Doyle had amassed enough political clout to land a seat on the County Quarterly Court, the chief governing body of Knox County. As previously noted, the County Court exercised considerable control over school business. Further, the Court often expanded its control beyond established parameters into the domain of hiring school personnel as political favors. In an interview with Carol E. Baker, Mildred Patterson explained the hiring process in this way: "You had to know a Squire or a member of the Board to get a job, and it helped to be a Republican."⁴¹ A privileged few exercised a significant degree of social control in the community as employment was immensely prized. Charter Doyle simply asked Mildred if she would be interested in taking the position vacated by her sister at Anderson School. He then arranged her appointment with the Knox County Schools. That fall Mildred, who had vowed never to become an "old maid school teacher," accepted her first teaching job on a one-year provisional certificate issued to all high school graduates at the time.⁴²

Patriarchal policies and cultural norms for women prohibited Mildred from living the dream of becoming a professional athlete, while actually enabling her to move into the career path upon which she would subsequently devote 52 years of her

⁴¹ Carol E. Baker, 160-161.

⁴² Ibid., 97, 101, 161.

life. Mildred Doyle soon discovered that she actually enjoyed teaching, and throughout her career she became passionately convinced of the lifelong benefits of an education.

Following one year at Anderson as a teacher of the third, fourth, and fifth grades, Mildred was reassigned to Vestal Grammar School where she taught fourth and fifth grades.⁴³ Her provisionary teaching certificate expired after one year, renewable only if she continued work on her education. She enrolled at The University of Tennessee where she took night classes and diligently attended summer school every year until she received her Bachelor's degree in 1940 with a double major in history and education. She received her Master's degree in Educational Administration and Supervision in 1944.⁴⁴ A classmate remembered Mildred during their graduate work at Tennessee:

In class she was good, always active in discussions; her views were not controversial, nor was she in a rut, wanting to hold on to the old ways . . . she would say if we could find somebody to be a benevolent dictator . . . in education and government . . . somebody who really had the welfare of people and children at heart and would work to that end . . . a "papa figure". . . but then we decided that the benevolence would fade away and he would become a typical dictator.⁴⁵

⁴³ Carol E. Baker, 101; "Mildred E. Doyle", 3; Moxley, A1; Roberts, 6.

⁴⁴ "Mildred E. Doyle", 4; Carol E. Baker, 104; Roberts, 6; Permanent Professional Supervisor's Certificate, Number 89269, State of Tennessee, Department of Education, June 21, 1945; County Superintendent's Professional Certificate, Number 860, State of Tennessee, Department of Education, April 26, 1946.

⁴⁵ This excerpt was taken from an interview conducted by Carol E. Baker on May 10, 1977 with Iva Anderson Rouser, a long-time associate of Mildred Doyle (cited in Carol E. Baker, 104); Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

It is interesting to note Mildred's conception of the educational leader as a "papa figure." Whether she had set her sights on the superintendency at that point is not certain, yet it would seem by that characterization that she, too, accepted at least subconsciously, the typical pattern of males holding the vast majority of educational leadership positions. The pattern in Knox County was so persistent that, in all likelihood she took it for granted to some extent. Perhaps she actually considered herself a kind of "papa figure" as superintendent. Nevertheless, years earlier in 1929 she fractured a gender barrier in educational leadership when she became one of the first female principals in a Knox County School. While it is fair to say that, historically, women have had the greatest representation in educational administration as elementary principals, Tyack and Hansot reported that between the years of 1905 and 1973, percentages of women principals in elementary schools declined from 61.7 to 19.6. When Mildred decided to seek the principalship at Vestal, only about one-half of the nation's elementary principals were women and in Knox County, women principals, even at the elementary level, were extremely rare.⁴⁶ Mildred had a head-on collision with gender expectations and East Tennessee morality as her travels upward in the educational hierarchy created a rather serious community uproar.

The "Flapper Case"

Mildred had taught for three years at Vestal School in south Knox County when the male principal requested a transfer to Anderson School. The ambitious and

⁴⁶ Tyack and Hansot, 183-189; Ruth Doyle Hilton, interview by author, 25 Feb. 1994.

aggressive 23-year old teacher considered herself qualified to fill Mr. Weaver's shoes as principal at Vestal, a four-room school with an auditorium and a staff of three female teachers (including herself).⁴⁷ Of her decision she told Carol E. Baker in 1977: ". . . I decided I could do a better job than some others. I felt I could be a pretty good principal. I applied for the job and got it."⁴⁸ Then the fireworks began. Apparently, Mildred had not considered that her gender might pose a problem for some residents of the community.

Fifteen members of the Vestal Parent-Teacher Association brought written charges against Mildred Doyle before the Knox County Board of Education on September 11, 1929, two days after the opening of fall semester classes. The PTA had been grumbling about her application for several months prior to submitting their formal charges to the board. A series of articles spanning a two-month period appeared in Knoxville newspapers, keeping citizens informed of developments in the "Flapper Case." The PTA charged that Miss Doyle was "a product of the reckless, thoughtless, don't care flapper age," and requested that "a man of high Christian morals" be appointed to take her place.⁴⁹ Further, they asserted that she kept late hours and "even cussed a little bit," citing that members had witnessed Mildred's use of indecent language in her home three years prior.⁵⁰ The PTA also expressed

⁴⁷ Mildred Doyle, Notes on Vestal School found in Mildred Doyle's personal files.

⁴⁸ Carol E. Baker, 102.

⁴⁹ "Knox School Board Sighs Relief as 'Flapper' Case is Postponed," The Knoxville Journal, 17 Sept. 1929. Photocopy, Doyle Family File, McClung Collection.

⁵⁰ "Board Decides Miss Doyle is Downright Good Teacher," The Knoxville Journal, 1 Oct. 1929, 16.

concern that Miss Doyle was too young and inexperienced to handle the job and explained to the school board that members of the association would be "willing to transfer her in exchange for the principal of any school of any district in which a member of the school board may reside."⁵¹

Mildred, too busy at Vestal School to attend the meetings, responded through her attorney with a written motion to dismiss the charges.⁵² Although they postponed a hearing for as long as possible, hoping the issue would settle itself, the county school board finally held a special meeting on September 30 to address the charges. Mildred's attorney John Jennings, Jr. argued eloquently that the charges were vague and indefinite while members of the PTA and their attorney S.E. Hodges looked on. Jennings built a strong case for which he had gathered sworn statements from supporters of Mildred such as former Vestal principal Ebb King attesting to his belief in her: "She is a young woman of sterling character. Her moral and private life can not [sic] be questioned."⁵³

Ultimately board members voted unanimously to dismiss all charges against Mildred. Board member A.W. Mays made a motion to look into the possibility of a transfer for Miss Doyle to another school, a plan he had suggested in a previous

⁵¹ "Board To Consider Miss Doyle's Case at Meeting Today," The Knoxville Journal, 30 Sept. 1929. Photocopy, Doyle Family File, McClung Collection.

⁵² "Knox School Board Sighs Relief."

⁵³ Ebb King, Affidavit to the Knox County Board of Education, 28 Aug. 1929, Mildred Doyle's Personal Files.

meeting. Although the motion received a second, nothing ever materialized in subsequent meetings.⁵⁴

Members of the Vestal PTA were unaccustomed to seeing women appointed to positions of educational leadership in Knox County. Somewhat provincial and resistant to change, they were genuinely concerned about a young woman's capabilities with regard to running their community school--particularly a woman they considered to be a "flapper." Having expressed these concerns to the school board and the County Court prior to Mildred's appointment, members of the PTA were angry because they felt like Squire Charter Doyle ignored them and influenced Mildred's appointment despite their concerns.⁵⁵

In all likelihood Mildred's appointment was politically influenced and school board members would have voted anyway to dismiss the charges had they been more substantial. Charter Doyle was a powerful man and the board's reticence to hear the case suggests that members desired to avoid political controversy if possible. They resisted being wedged between the power of Charter Doyle and the wishes of a disgruntled Knox County citizens group. However, attendance records on the first day of school at Vestal bespeak the confidence that many parents had in the "flapper" principal, despite the Vestal PTA's preference for a male with Christian morals. According to Superintendent W.W. Morris, Vestal School opened with a record enrollment of 257 students with only two families keeping their students out of school

⁵⁴ "Board Decides," 16.

⁵⁵ "Written Charge Demanded in School Affair," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 5 Sept. 1929, 2; "Mildred E. Doyle," 5; Carol E. Baker, 102-3.

due to charges against Miss Doyle. In his testimony at the board hearing on September 30, the superintendent told of a visit he made to the school the previous week: "Discipline was good and classes were regular. No complaints have come to me since school opened as to Miss Doyle's inability to keep good order."⁵⁶ Perhaps the record enrollment figures should be considered the most solid signal that many residents of the Vestal community felt comfortable with Miss Doyle as their new principal. In 1983 Principal Leland Lyon awarded Mildred a Certificate of Commemoration from Vestal Elementary School for her services as teacher, principal, and superintendent.⁵⁷

When Mildred was asked years later whether she felt discriminated against as a woman, she recalled that "being as aggressive as I was, it didn't occur to me at the time that I was being discriminated against."⁵⁸ During the controversy, she considered the charges "a general indictment of the younger generation"⁵⁹ rather than a case of gender discrimination against her personally.

Mildred clearly did not see herself as incapable of handling the job, nor did she consider herself a flapper. Rather, a "tomboy" is how she retrospectively

⁵⁶ Morris quoted in "Board Decides," 16; "Board Wrangles Hour Over Doyle Case; To Meet Again," The Knoxville Journal, 12 Sept. 1929, 3; "Knox School Board Sighs Relief;" "Board To Consider Miss Doyle's Case."

⁵⁷ Vestal Elementary School Certificate of Commemoration awarded to Mildred E. Doyle, 1983, Personal Files.

⁵⁸ Allison, A Conversation.

⁵⁹ "Knox School Board Sighs Relief."

characterized herself in 1929.⁶⁰ In all likelihood this "tomboy" was not conscious of the fact that, as one of the first women principals in Knox County, she inadvertently paved the way for women to follow in leadership positions.

Politics and Charter Doyle as a Role Model

As in athletics and educational administration, women have historically been excluded from politics as its domain falls squarely within "man's sphere" in the gender hierarchy. Again, Mildred Doyle stepped outside cultural norms when she became thoroughly intertwined with Knox County Republican politics, beginning with a fascination that developed as a young girl and lasted throughout her life.

As previously asserted, the men of the Doyle family were characterized by a deep interest in politics and their participation in Knox County government for decades. Mildred's father Charter Doyle had a particular reputation for possessing tremendous political strength. With a combination of charisma and a sense of humor, he was known as "a foremost public leader, a man who knew politics, a man who got what he wanted."⁶¹ Charter Doyle served as a role model and mentor for his daughter Mildred. In effect, she idolized him and grew to become known as "a chip off the old block."⁶²

⁶⁰ Allison, A Conversation; Moxley, A8.

⁶¹ Willard Yarborough, former member of Knox County Court, quoted in Carol E. Baker, 99; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

⁶² Squire H.T. Seymour so described Mildred in Homer Clonts "More About 'Lost Day'." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 28 Feb. 1960, B8.

Mildred and her father shared a close relationship, beginning in her early years on the farm when Mildred helped him in the fields in the absence of her older brothers. Further, she began accompanying him to Republican rallies when she was just "so high," and in 1946 she told a reporter that given a choice, she would opt for a political meeting over any kind of social affair.⁶³ Through the years she became her father's companion, eagerly driving him about the forested East Tennessee hills as he negotiated with land owners while buying timber for Vestal Lumber Company.⁶⁴ This exposure to the region enabled Mildred to understand the Appalachian people and their culture from an early age. Such an understanding is not only a likely source of her dedication to public service and to the people of Knox County and East Tennessee, but her subsequent political effectiveness.

Learning to move comfortably within her father's "sphere" provided her with personal connections, a knowledge base, and a particular posture that would prove invaluable to her political career as a public official. Charter Doyle was Mildred's entree into the "good old boy network" of East Tennessee politics where she operated with amazing aplomb from early in her career until her death in 1989.

When Mildred, as newly appointed supervisor of elementary education, saw the dismal conditions of the school system in the mid 1940s, Charter Doyle encouraged his daughter to run for superintendent despite the fact that a woman had never before held the post in Knox County. Squire Doyle saw his daughter as highly

⁶³ Morris, B1.

⁶⁴ Moxley, A8.

competent and did not consider gender to be a barrier to her career aspirations.⁶⁵ It is not clear whether Charter Doyle was as 'liberated' with respect to gender convention across the board, or if he was simply confident in the capabilities of his daughter who was endowed with a similar kind of charisma, direct sense of humor, and fascination with politics. In any case, his political power clearly ensured her initial election to the superintendency in 1946. His influence on her thought processes, mannerisms, and self-esteem contributed to her repeated success in dealing with the male-dominated world of politics at local, state, and national levels across party lines.

During her career, Mildred worked closely with state and national political figures on educational policy issues and was appointed by Tennessee governors to serve on various boards such as the State Textbook Commission and the Tennessee Children's Services Commission, responsibilities she held for years. She was so highly regarded by U.S. Senator Howard Baker, Sr. that he nominated her for the cabinet position of U.S. Commissioner of Education in 1956.⁶⁶ Lamar Alexander, former Tennessee Governor and U.S. Secretary of Education under George Bush, recalled his stint in 1967 as a legislative aide to Senator Baker during which Baker bluntly interrupted a staff meeting to take an unexpected telephone call from Superintendent Mildred Doyle back home in Tennessee. After the meeting, the young

⁶⁵ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994. Mrs. Patterson considers it "pretty good for a man his age" that Mildred's gender did not enter Charter Doyle's mind when he encouraged her to run.

⁶⁶ Mildred Patterson suggested that the absence of female cabinet members in 1956 was a likely reason for her not being named to the post.

Alexander wondered aloud to Baker why he had chosen to take the call at that moment instead of returning it after the staff meeting ended. According to Alexander, Baker replied smiling, "Lamar, you'll learn. When Mildred calls, I drop everything."⁶⁷

The politically astute Alexander learned his lesson well, and came to be known affectionately by Mildred as her "Base Runner."⁶⁸ While governor, he told a reporter that he always tries "to do what she wants me to."⁶⁹ Mildred became always a fan of Alexander's, not solely because he was a fellow Republican, but because of his expressed commitment to education while Governor of Tennessee. She spoke of Alexander in a newspaper article endorsing his Better Schools Program: "Never before in the history of Tennessee have we had a governor with the nerve to put education at the top of his list."⁷⁰ Throughout his two terms as governor, Lamar Alexander appeared to sincerely appreciate her support of his education plans and her work as Chair of the Tennessee Children's Services Commission. Upon his departure from office, he wrote to his fellow party member: "Dear Mildred, I am writing to say thank you. For the last eight years, I have enjoyed the very best job in

⁶⁷ Moxley, A1.

⁶⁸ Lamar Alexander, Signed Photograph, 1982, Mildred Doyle's Personal Files.

⁶⁹ Moxley, A1.

⁷⁰ "Mildred Doyle Endorses Move Toward Better Schools in State," Newspaper article, source unknown, circa March 1983, Mildred Doyle's Personal Files; Lamar Alexander, Letter to Mildred Doyle, 24 Feb. 1983, Mildred Doyle's Personal Files. Alexander invited her to a discussion of his Better Schools Program in Nashville, TN on March 7, 1983 at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center.

the USA! Without your friendship and support, that never would have been possible."⁷¹

Mildred Doyle's personal files contain letters of congratulations, appreciation, and thanks from an array of both Democratic and Republican political figures ranging from U.S. Senator Jim Sasser, former Tennessee Governor Ned McWherter, and former White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker to Fred Flenniken of the Knox County Commission (formerly the Knox County Court). Her files also house letters from such local politicians as Ray Hill claiming, for example, that he would never have attained the primary nomination for Knox County Commission had she not offered her support to his campaign.⁷² She carried a great deal of weight when she decided to support a political candidate.

Mildred Doyle rubbed shoulders with Tennessee's good-old-boy politicians as if she were one of them herself. Perhaps in many ways she was. She could "talk the talk and walk the walk" in such a way that her gender posed no serious problem with regard to her acceptance into this highly male-dominated network. Mildred Doyle knew how to relate to men by being "one of them" rather than taking a more risky feminist position in her negotiation of gender constructs. She never adopted a publicly critical stance toward the patriarchal power elite. Rather, she necessarily joined it herself in order to realize her ultimate potential as an educator and child advocate. She had her own agenda. However, at the time of her death in 1989, her

⁷¹ Excerpted from Lamar Alexander, Letter to Mildred Doyle, 9 Jan. 1987, Personal Files.

⁷² Ray Hill, Letter to Mildred Doyle, 15 June 1984, Personal Files.

gender as a political anomaly did not go unnoticed by those with a more obvious feminist consciousness. Mildred Doyle was remembered as being ahead of her time and "as a female political force long before it was accepted in this community."⁷³

According to The Knoxville Journal:

She blazed the trail for all women in East Tennessee who aspired to political office. And each of those women who now retain high offices in this region owe a part of their political success to the legacy that she raised on her own and left behind when she retired, following her only election defeat, in 1976.⁷⁴

Truly, Mildred was a credit to her gender as a pioneer in the expansion of roles for women in a traditionally conservative area of the country. It remains unclear as to what degree she was aware of gender constraints in this context. What is obvious, however, is that she did not allow her gender to bar her from attaining the male-dominated superintendency and its concomitant power as a politician and educational leader. According to Mildred's niece Sue Hicks, she "never thought about women's rights. She just went out and did it because she didn't know she wasn't supposed to. She told me that once."⁷⁵

Gender and the Leadership Role as Superintendent

Given the already subordinated status of women in the broader society, men easily dominated available slots in educational administration throughout the twentieth

⁷³ Leon Stafford, "Doyle Helped Others Until the End," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 9 May 1989, B1.

⁷⁴ "Mildred Doyle, Political Pioneer for GOP Women," The Knoxville Journal, 8 May 1989, 6A.

⁷⁵ Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994.

century. In fact, maleness was considered an asset to the "social credit rating" of an institution.⁷⁶ While Mildred Doyle fits the typical description of twentieth century school chiefs as being "characteristically middle-aged, Protestant, upwardly mobile, from favored ethnic groups, native-born, and of rural origins," her gender clearly challenges the pattern that superintendents were "almost always married white males."⁷⁷ While it remains difficult to assess the extent to which Mildred's gender awareness influenced her decision-making and administrative action, she created unprecedented opportunities for women during the course of her tenure, and she embraced such leadership tendencies toward community building and participatory management that researchers have considered typical for women.⁷⁸

One of the first moves Mildred made as a newly elected superintendent was to equalize the dual salary schedules of elementary and secondary teachers. To remedy this inequity she abhorred, Mildred proposed to raise the salaries of elementary teachers to those of secondary teachers. She did not believe high school teachers "worked any harder" than elementary teachers as was commonly held, and should warrant more pay. Hence, she endorsed equal pay scales for elementary and

⁷⁶ Strober and Tyack; Tyack and Hansot; David Tyack, The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

⁷⁷ Tyack and Hansot, 169.

⁷⁸ For example, see Flora Ortiz and Catherine Marshall, "Women in Educational Administration," in The Handbook of Research on Educational Administration, ed. N. Boyan (New York: Longman, 1988); Charol Shakeshaft, Women in Educational Administration, 2nd ed. (Newbury Park, CA: Corwyn Press, 1989); Charol Shakeshaft, "Women in Educational Management in the United States," in Women in Education Management, ed. Janet Ouston (Harlow, UK: Longman, 1993).

secondary teachers.⁷⁹ In early April of 1947 the Knox County Board of Education approved a single salary schedule that acknowledged years of teaching experience and degrees earned.⁸⁰ The point at which this controversial policy change intersected with gender ideology lay in the fact that most elementary teachers were women, and men were represented more frequently in secondary teaching positions. Although Mildred did not see the dual salary schedule as discriminatory, per se, her policy change contributed directly to allowing women teachers more take-home pay than before in Knox County.⁸¹

Mildred's practice of naming women to administrative positions in the Central Office and to high school principalships is a related issue due to the virtual absence of female representation in these posts nationwide. Although she appointed many women to her staff, she maintained that "every applicant received identical consideration and the best person for the job would be employed."⁸² Thus, in theory, her appointments were not to be based on such characteristics as political affiliation or gender. Whether or not she consciously aimed to provide opportunities for women in administration, she appointed a number of women to her staff throughout the years so that women often outnumbered men in the Central Office. As previously mentioned, she placed women in high school principalships during her

⁷⁹ Carol E. Baker, 115-116; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994; Sam Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994.

⁸⁰ "Minutes of the Knox County Board of Education," 7 Apr. 1947.

⁸¹ Allison, A Conversation.

⁸² Carol E. Baker, 115.

administration.⁸³ This particular practice "was unheard of"⁸⁴ in Knox County and uncommon nationwide as women were usually assigned to administrative positions in which their contact was limited to female teachers. With a greater representation of males on high school teaching staffs, principals at that level were usually men.⁸⁵ While Mildred did not necessarily see being female as an asset, she clearly did not view it as a serious barrier to upward mobility in the educational hierarchy or the political arena. Four years before her death, she told a reporter that she had regularly dismissed comments "almost 'til the last time I ran for office" that the superintendency was a "man's job."⁸⁶

Mildred Doyle possessed certain characteristics that researchers associate with women's leadership styles, despite evidence suggesting that she identified closely enough with men to become a part of the good-old-boy political network. As an administrator she appears to have shared both female and male-identified leadership styles rather than leaning exclusively in one direction.

Charol Shakeshaft, in her review of research on gender and educational leadership, found men to display greater tendencies toward autocracy while women tended to exhibit a more democratic, participatory style of management that

⁸³ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994; Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994; "Mildred E. Doyle," A6; Earl Hoffmeister, interview by author, 1 Feb. 1994.

⁸⁴ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994.

⁸⁵ Tyack and Hansot, 183-188.

⁸⁶ Carmen Carter, "'Elect Woman' Session Includes Mildred Doyle," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 26 April, 1985, Photocopy, Personal Files.

encourages inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness.⁸⁷ While Mildred Doyle referred to her administrative style as being "a little bit autocratic,"⁸⁸ she worked hard to empower others on her staff by listening to opposing views and implementing staff-generated suggestions and curricular reform. Central office colleague Sam Bratton characterized Miss Doyle as "a kind of matriarch, a fixture, and a leader who was pretty much in control of everything." However, Dr. Bratton added that "at the same time I never felt like I couldn't talk to her about whatever was on my mind. Nor did I feel like I had to agree with her all the time."⁸⁹ According to colleague Mildred Patterson, "She was always the one in charge. You never forgot that, but she always involved everybody that she could . . . she let us operate."⁹⁰ Mrs. Patterson concluded that morale was always high among staff members during Mildred's tenure as superintendent, a characteristic often associated with staffs of women administrators. In a speech to teachers on relationships between faculty members, Miss Doyle described her ideal: "In a school staff loyalty, security, a sense of growth, shared responsibility, cooperative endeavor, and other similar factors lead to a really effective team."⁹¹

⁸⁷ Shakeshaft, "Women in Educational Management in the United States," 47-63; Shakeshaft, Women in Educational Administration.

⁸⁸ Lois Thomas, "Departing Supt. Doyle Feels Funds Pose Biggest School System Obstacle," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 29 Aug. 1976.

⁸⁹ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994.

⁹⁰ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994; Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994, stated that, "there wasn't any doubt in your mind about who was the boss."

⁹¹ Mildred E. Doyle, "Faculty-Faculty Relationships," Personal Files, n.d., 3.

Another common trait shared by women administrators is an emphasis on community building.⁹² Related to the tendency toward participatory, democratic management styles, women tend to involve themselves more directly and maintain more closely knit organizations than do men.⁹³ This trait assuredly applies to Mildred's administration in the Knox County Schools. Colleagues have commented on the strong relationships that developed within her administration. According to former principal James Bellamy of Farragut High School: "We felt like one big family, principals, supervisors, and the superintendent. Miss Doyle was Mama."⁹⁴ Mildred was known for treating her central office staff as part of her family, sharing gifts and fellowship on holidays and other special occasions.⁹⁵

Despite the physical distance between the superintendent and classroom teachers, a feeling of community existed among them. A former Knox County high school teacher recalled that, "I felt if I had a problem, I could go down there [to the central office] and get help from Miss Doyle and Mrs. Patterson."⁹⁶ It is likely that the sense of support and accessibility felt by teachers grew from both Mildred Doyle's personality as well as her visibility in the schools themselves. Using her visibility and

⁹² Ortiz and Marshall, "Women in Educational Administration"; Shakeshaft, Women in Educational Administration.

⁹³ Ortiz and Marshall; Shakeshaft, Women in Educational Administration; Shakeshaft, "Women in Educational Management in the United States."

⁹⁴ Carol E. Baker, 117; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994, also characterized the staff as "a big family."

⁹⁵ Roger Ricker, "Former Schools Chief Doyle Remembered as Dedicated, Unselfish," The Knoxville Journal, 9 May 1989, 4A; Mildred's secretary Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

⁹⁶ Martha Hess, former teacher at Farragut High, telephone interview by author, 8 Feb. 1995.

physical presence to build community among classroom teachers and central office staff represents an interesting combination of male and female-identified leadership traits as research shows that men tend to be much more visible than women in administration.⁹⁷

Miss Doyle's efforts at empowerment and community building among school personnel are illustrated further by welcoming teachers to get involved in curriculum development projects and providing creative and innovative inservice and other personnel development programs throughout the years.⁹⁸ For example, in 1951 employees at all levels were invited to participate in major inservice projects to write a new, more responsive curriculum for the county. Largely due to such broad participation, the project was a great success.⁹⁹ Later in Mildred's administration during the 1974-75 school year, school personnel from around the county became involved in extensive curriculum planning for a pilot program in which curriculum would be organized in 45 day modules to be used in operating the schools in a year-round program. According to Sam Bratton, teachers put "a lot of psychological investment in it. It worked much better than [if it were] top-down."¹⁰⁰

Despite Mildred Doyle's tendencies toward autocracy, it appears that her leadership style more closely resembled that of other female administrators rather than

⁹⁷ Shakeshaft, "Women in Education Management," 52.

⁹⁸ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994; 8 June 1994; Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994; Carol E. Baker, 116-118.

⁹⁹ Carol E. Baker, 129-131; Mildred Patterson, interviews by author, 9 Mar. 1994; 8 June 1994.

¹⁰⁰ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994.

the males in educational leadership studied by researchers. Without necessarily recognizing gender as salient, Mildred used an instinctive style that worked best for her. Mildred Patterson seems to think that Mildred Doyle's unique combination of male and female qualities contributed significantly to her success as a leader.¹⁰¹ Her androgynous predisposition appeared to serve her well.

Gender Constructs and the Personal Life of Mildred Doyle

Mildred Doyle never achieved "the goal of all proper women:"¹⁰² She neither married nor had children of her own, although colleagues definitely considered her to be the matriarch of the Knox County Schools, and family members looked to her rather than to her mother as the matriarch of the Doyle family.¹⁰³

In 1961 Mildred moved from "the Homeplace" where she had lived with her brother and his family into the home of her administrative assistant Mildred Patterson following the death of Patterson's husband earlier that year. Mildred had been close friends with the Pattersons for nearly 20 years, and she and "Patterson"¹⁰⁴ were very close co-workers and best friends. "We made a pretty good pair at that," beamed Mrs. Patterson, recalling life with Mildred Doyle.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

¹⁰² Tyack and Hansot, 191.

¹⁰³ Gordon Sams, interview by author, 3 Mar. 1994; Samuel Bratton, interviews by author, 4 Mar. 1994; 15 Mar. 1994; "A Tribute To Mildred Eloise Doyle, by a Niece, May 9, 1989," Ruth Doyle Hilton's Personal Files. This tribute was read at Mildred's funeral service.

¹⁰⁴ Mildred Doyle always referred to Mildred Patterson as "Patterson."

¹⁰⁵ Mildred Paterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

In contrast with the male-dominated worlds of politics and educational administration, Mildred Doyle lived a woman-centered home life with Patterson for 28 years. The rambling white house located in the Island Home community rests on a shady corner lot only a few blocks away from the Tennessee River that divides Mildred's beloved South Knoxville from the rest of the city. Thick St. Augustine grass covers the expansive lawn, a home to climbing ivy, birch trees, cedars, and tall pines. Neglected beds of iris and crocus, boxes of fiery salvia, and a trellis of neon purple clematis linger as evidence of Mildred's love of gardening. Monkey grass and ferns line the stone walkway and patio out back. Mildred kept their yard herself, mowing grass and tending her flowers and plants until her bout with bone cancer progressed into more severe stages near the end of her life.

Mildred Patterson, a soft-spoken, articulate woman with bright silver hair and twinkling eyes still lives in their house. Mildred Doyle's portrait still hangs on the wall in the den. The large portrait is a photographic reprint of the one located in Doyle High School, Knox County's first comprehensive high school built in 1966. Looking at the portrait, Patterson spoke of Mildred in the present tense, as if she were only in the yard trimming ivy. She clearly misses her companion's presence in her life, eager to conjure up memories of times they shared as best friends and close colleagues. For Patterson, Mildred Doyle is "irreplaceable."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Except where specifically indicated, information in this section was compiled from interviews with Mildred Patterson conducted by the author on 9 Mar. 1994; 8 June 1994; 10 Oct. 1994; and 1 Mar. 1995.

Patterson shared Doyle's dedication when it came to running the school system and doing her best for children. Although neither woman had children of her own, both gave the educational welfare of Knox County's kids top priority. Mildred appointed Patterson to her central office staff as Supervisor of Elementary and Secondary Music in 1947. In later years she was named Director of Personnel and then Administrative Assistant. She retired upon Mildred Doyle's defeat as superintendent in 1976.

They enjoyed their life together as companions. Rarely did they miss a performance of the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra. They usually attended operas and any Broadway productions that came to town. Mildred Doyle loved music, although she was the only sibling in her family not to take music lessons for the violin, piano, or guitar. Patterson said Mildred always wanted to but her "tomboyishness" somehow caused her parents not to push it, and Mildred Doyle was too proud to tell them she really wanted lessons.¹⁰⁷ Because Mildred "loved the Broadway shows," Patterson planned frequent trips to New York where she and Mildred would take in as many theater productions as possible, both matinees and evening performances. They occasionally varied their cultural menu, however, taking time out from Broadway to witness such landmarks as Elvis Presley's controversial performance on the Ed Sullivan Show.¹⁰⁸ "We were there!" said Mrs. Patterson, grinning, "I never shall forget. Elvis was doing all this stuff and Ed Sullivan was trying his best to keep him

¹⁰⁷ Carol E. Baker, 101; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994.

¹⁰⁸ They saw his 1956 performance before they began living together in 1961.

down. Oh, it was so much fun!" They also saw Judy Garland at the Palace when Garland surprised her audience by bringing her nine year old daughter Liza Minnelli on stage to perform.

Another interest they shared was traveling. Both Mildred and Patterson loved to get in the car and go. Together they traveled the contiguous United States, every Province in Canada, and toured Mexico, often accompanied by a friend or two from the central office. They usually planned where they would stay for the first night out and from there they did whatever seemed fun, moving from place to place for weeks at a time. Mildred Doyle once went solo on a Caribbean cruise, remarking on her return that she had now been on two cruises--her first and last. She cared not for life on a cruise ship; for leisure travel, she flatly preferred the automobile and was known for driving fast.

At home Mildred and Patterson shared tasks around the house with Patterson usually doing the cooking while Mildred cared for the yard and washed dishes (in their electric dishwasher no less). Patterson explained that while she loved to experiment with different recipes, Mildred Doyle was "a meat and potatoes person" and preferred it when Patterson avoided adventurous culinary forays.¹⁰⁹ Mildred Doyle did, however, spend ample time in the kitchen with Patterson because every summer they worked together at night and on weekends pickling fresh vegetables from Pinky Doyle's garden at "the Homeplace." Each year their labor would yield about a hundred jars of pickles that they would then give away as gifts, saving only a

¹⁰⁹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994.

few jars for themselves. In 1973, The Knoxville News-Sentinel featured them in the midst of their summer project. Patterson told the reporter, "For staff parties at Christmas we fix up a poke, an old fashioned gift, a sack tied with red ribbon and filled with jars of jellies, preserves, pickles."¹¹⁰ The article featured not only their recipes for such goodies as Iceberg Tomato Pickles, Beet Relish, Lime Pickles, and Red Tomato Preserves, but a full-length photo of the superintendent stirring a huge batch of cucumber pickles.

With regard to other household chores, Patterson did most of the indoor cleaning, but when Mildred got the notion she would move every piece of furniture into the middle of the floor, get down on her hands and knees, and scrub madly. For the superintendent, household chores seemed easier to take if they could be transformed into big projects that would get big results. Patterson maintains that Mildred was "much more domestic" than people would think.¹¹¹

Aside from their house in south Knoxville, the Mildreds kept a small apartment resting beside a mountain stream in Gatlinburg, TN, a resort town on the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. They spent time there on weekends and would use the place frequently to entertain friends and colleagues. Occasionally, Mildred Doyle would organize a principal's retreat or some related school function to be held in Gatlinburg where she could use the apartment as a home base. Mrs. Patterson, now 88, keeps the apartment where she spends as much time

¹¹⁰ "Packing Pickles for Pokes," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 25 July 1973, 24-25.

¹¹¹ Mildred patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994.

as possible, enjoying the company of Mildred Doyle's niece Sue Hicks who lives in a unit upstairs. Sue, who was especially fond of her Aunt Mildred, is equally fond of "Aunt P." The two share a close relationship.¹¹²

Doyle and Patterson parted company, however, with athletic events. Mildred Doyle, the maniacal sports fan, went to ball games as often as possible, attending sporting events at the University of Tennessee and at local high schools. At high school events, she could maintain a high level of community visibility as superintendent while simultaneously watching a ball game. Mildred enjoyed exhibition baseball games as well, and Patterson recalled that when Ted Williams came to town to play, Mildred Doyle had tickets on the front row.

Despite the woman-centeredness that her companionship with Patterson represented, Mildred Doyle never gravitated naturally toward the more 'feminine' styles of appearance often associated with women in this culture. "The fewer the frills, the better," she told a reporter in 1946.¹¹³ The superintendent tended to wear tailored suits that were often very expensive.¹¹⁴ She confessed to owning one hat about 20 years before, but could not recall its fate: "It was a sort of blue felt affair."¹¹⁵ Patterson explained Mildred's motives: "She wanted you to think of her as a very strong person and wore mannish clothes." She wore "flat shoes and bobbed

¹¹² Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994; Mildred Patterson, interviews by author, 10 Oct. 1994 and 1 Mar. 1995.

¹¹³ Morris, B1.

¹¹⁴ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994.

¹¹⁵ Morris, B1.

hair--no permanent, no curl." Patterson claims responsibility for coaxing Mildred into carrying a purse: "She usually carried her money in her shoe so I made her get pocketbooks and carry pocketbooks." She added, "I am the one that made her start using lipstick." Patterson also made the recalcitrant Mildred buy several evening dresses for specific formal events, but only under the condition that Patterson go to a store and select several to take home for her to try. According to Patterson, this pattern persisted so that she would not shop for herself. Mildred's secretary Faye Cox bought all her girdles for her at Miller's Department Store. Faye carried a label in her billfold so she would be sure to get the correct style.¹¹⁶ Despite her penchant for "mannish clothes," Mrs. Patterson confided that Mildred Doyle "wore the sissiest petticoats I've ever seen in my life!" She appropriately described Mildred Doyle as a paradox.¹¹⁷

Doyle and Patterson are remembered by family, friends and colleagues as a team. Those who knew them well admit that neither would have functioned as effectively independently of each other. The gentle Patterson provided an emotional balance to Mildred's aggressiveness and hot temper. In fact, colleagues considered Patterson to be the only one to even attempt to calm Miss Doyle down when "she was about to go off."¹¹⁸ Patterson's competence, innovative spirit, and thorough

¹¹⁶ Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

¹¹⁷ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

¹¹⁸ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994; Others supporting the team-like nature of their relationship were Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994; Howard Bozeman, interview by author, 30 Jan. 1995; Ruth Hilton, interview by author, 25 Feb. 1994; Richard Yoakley, 10 Oct. 1994.

educational insight lifted a great deal of pressure from the shoulders of the superintendent who could concentrate on negotiating the best possible deals for Knox County's kids with school board members and the County Court.

Concluding Remarks

Mildred Doyle operated on instinct with regard to the negotiation of gender constructs. She lived in the only way that made sense to her, ignoring gender convention for the most part--not because she generally disagreed with socially expected gender roles for women, but because she had difficulty ascribing to them at the personal level.

However, by her very existence she did much to further the possibilities of alternatives for women, although she did not publicly consider herself a feminist. According to colleague Sam Bratton, "If you would ask her if she was a women's libber or a feminist, she would have probably hooted at you, but she did the stuff."¹¹⁹ Indeed, Mildred Doyle served as a role model for women who do not fit traditional social patterns with respect to gender role expectations. She demonstrated that it is indeed possible to be a successful, respected, and unmarried female school administrator. She also served as a role model for women choosing the male-dominated path of politics. With her power as superintendent, she created opportunities for women to move up in the educational hierarchy, also a male domain.

Probably more than anything else, Mildred Doyle's experiences with gender

¹¹⁹ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994.

constructs serve to highlight the importance of tapping into one's complete potential, regardless of whether gender norms are violated. She had an agenda as a child advocate, and if she had to join the good old boys to fulfill it, then she considered it part of her mission. Luckily for Mildred, it came naturally. She clearly crossed gender lines without apology, and apparently without self-consciousness. Perhaps such a personal position even enhanced her public success. Her life seems to illuminate contradictions inherent in the social construction of gender, suggesting the importance of recognizing life-models built upon pure instinct which surpass gender as a social construct.

CHAPTER 3

"WHAT'S BEST FOR THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF KNOX COUNTY"

Mildred Doyle's educational philosophy, policies, and actions supported her underlying mission as school superintendent: to "do what's best for the boys and girls of Knox County." This student-centered purpose represented the educator's bottom line, motivating her range of achievements both administratively and politically. This chapter examines the underpinnings of Miss Doyle's educational philosophy, her relationship with the school board, significant events, and reforms during her 30 year tenure as school chief, and the circumstances leading to her political defeat in 1976.

Mildred Doyle's Philosophy of Education

The overarching importance of child advocacy represented the most salient, and certainly the most constant element of Miss Doyle's educational platform. It is important to keep this idea in mind as a framework when considering her accomplishments as superintendent. She measured all school business in light of how it "filters down to what happens to the child."¹ While she thoroughly understood and enjoyed the politics involved in her responsibility to negotiate priorities with school board members and squires on the County Court, her preoccupation remained with

¹ Mildred Doyle, Untitled Speech, Personal Files, n.d., 2, emphasis hers.

the actual experience of children in school. Central office colleague Sam Bratton recalled of Mildred: "I think she really cared about kids. I think that came through to parents, community members, and County Court people." He characterized her educational philosophy as one of "putting kids first."²

Mildred Doyle felt that public schools should, in large part, be used for the improvement of human life, a general belief shared by many educators who were influenced by the multifaceted progressive education movement. According to Lawrence Cremin's landmark study of progressive education, school reform meant a variety of things to progressive educators. For example, reform efforts included broadening the programs and social function of the school to include health, vocational education, and concern for the quality of family and community life; using the new teaching methods and principles emerging from scientific research in child psychology and the social sciences; matching curriculum and instruction with different interests and abilities of students; and using schools to democratize culture so that all might benefit from knowledge of the fine arts and advances in science.³

Superintendent Doyle likely became familiar with progressive philosophies and reform efforts as she continued her higher education at the University of Tennessee while working as a teacher and principal during the 1920s, 30s and 40s. While she, as a student, considered certain aspects of the progressivist child-centered methods

² Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994.

³ Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957 (New York: Random House, 1961), vii-xi.

classes to be "a bit silly,"⁴ she demonstrated thinking congruent with various strains of progressive ideology. Throughout her lengthy tenure, she implemented numerous progressive reforms consistent with those described in Cremin's Transformation of the School. Mildred Doyle, however, never allied herself completely with the philosophies and practices of any "wing" of educational progressivism.⁵

Rather, she wove threads of the administrative progressives' social efficiency rhetoric together with the child-centered concerns of pedagogical progressives to form her unique platform which acknowledged the importance of an efficiently controlled school system, but only insofar as it ensured her vision of individual child welfare and development. For example, while she consolidated smaller schools and expanded the administrative bureaucracy, she never shied away from testing innovative curricular reforms designed to meet the needs of different students and enhance the everyday experience of children in school. Further, the colorful superintendent never became so removed from the daily functioning of individual schools that she lost sight of how policy changes affected children.

⁴ Clinton B. Allison, A Conversation With Mildred Doyle at Eighty (Knoxville, TN: UTK College of Education Instructional Services Center, 1986), videocassette; The superintendent referred to an instance where a methods professor suggested that classroom teachers get down on all-fours to imitate a dog to facilitate young children's understanding. Miss Doyle seemed to think that particular activity carried the aim of engaging learners into the realm of the absurd.

⁵ David Tyack, The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 126-198. Tyack's "wings" explanation of the different factions within educational progressivism is well-known. He refers to them as "administrative progressives," "pedagogical progressives," "social reconstructionists," and "libertarians."

She demonstrated sensitivity to "individual differences and personality needs"⁶ in students and supported both an expanded, "well-rounded" curriculum reaching beyond "the old ideas of the three R's"⁷ to include art and music programs, literature, health education, commercial and vocational programs, boys' and girls' physical education, and special education programs.⁸ She believed this type of enriched curriculum would enable students "to get the fullest enjoyment from living."⁹ Further, the superintendent recognized the pedagogical importance of making learning more meaningful by emphasizing a connection between curriculum and the life experiences of students.¹⁰ In this respect, Mildred's philosophy intersected with the belief of John Dewey that knowledge is not only socially constructed, but socially purposeful. In concert with progressive developmentalist¹¹ philosophies of child-centered pedagogy, Mildred worked closely with teachers and administrators to write a curriculum with a strong activity-based component in which integrated "units or centers of interest [were] based on ability level rather than grade level."¹² Because they were aware of varying developmental levels in children, Miss

⁶ Mildred Doyle, "Curriculum Development," Personal Files, 1949, 1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court," 9 Oct. 1949 and 4 Oct. 1948.

⁹ Ibid., 4

¹⁰ For example, the superintendent praised the work of Mrs. Stansberry's fourth grade class at Bearden Elementary for their work on an integrated unit on the Bearden Community.

¹¹ Herbert M. Kliebard, The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958 (New York: Routledge, 1987), 17, 41-58.

¹² Knox County Department of Public Instruction, Tentative Program of Work, Grades 1-12, 1951-1952, 63.

Doyle and Knox County curriculum planners felt such a flexible structure would enable the teacher to determine which activities were appropriate for a particular child's level of readiness. Under this model each child's experience in school could be maximized.

While Mildred's theoretical framework converged with that of developmentalists, she nonetheless experimented with curricular reforms based on social efficiency and principles of scientific management during the late 1950s. She and her staff implemented practices of ability grouping in early grades and offered differentiated curricula to high schoolers. In theory, these practices were intended to better meet the needs of individual students with regard to interest and ability. Standardized testing was used regularly as a diagnostic tool with regard to student placement "in groups where they will do their best work."¹³

Citizenship education comprised another aspect of Mildred Doyle's educational philosophy. This slant is hardly surprising given the direction of national sentiment following U.S. involvement in World War II.¹⁴ After the war many American citizens, energized with vigorous national loyalty, enjoyed unprecedented opportunities precipitated largely by rapid economic growth. However, the existence of the atomic bomb and threats posed by the Cold War created a confusing sense of paranoia amid feelings of contentment and prosperity. Having experienced within her

¹³ Homer Clonts, "Separation of Good and Poor Pupils Asked," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 14 Feb. 1958, 1-2; Quoted Material taken from Margaret Ford, "Knox School Head Ends First Year in Office," The Knoxville Journal, 6 Sept. 1947, B1.

¹⁴ For a thorough discussion see Eric Goldman, The Crucial Decade--And After: America, 1945-1960 (New York: Vintage Books, 1960).

lifetime the Great Depression and two World Wars, Mildred Doyle not only understood change and uncertainty, but how a nation can survive shocking social extremes. It is likely that the superintendent's views on the importance of citizenship education as a curricular component in American public schools stems directly from a personal understanding of the possibilities of national upheaval and subsequent survival.

Apparently less moved by philosophies of the social reconstructionist wing of progressive education¹⁵ with its sharp critiques of American capitalism as a dehumanizing force, Mildred's devout patriotic tendencies led her to push the importance of the school's role in "training good citizens" who would show "respect for others, respect for authority, development of good habits, learning of certain rules and regulations and how these ideas are not to be violated . . ."¹⁶ According to the superintendent, students should do their part to support their country and its institutions by leaving school as good citizens, "equipped to get a job and start earning a living."¹⁷ While Miss Doyle ascribed to developmentalist philosophies which generally espoused schooling for the present rather than as preparation for adult

¹⁵ These thinkers of the 1930s, also called social meliorists, advocated some form of socialism to replace the cruel and dehumanizing effects of private capitalism. They felt that schools could help spread that ethos, replacing competition with cooperation, thus making the world a better place. For a more thorough discussion see Cremin, 258-270 and Kliebard, 183-208.

¹⁶ Mildred Doyle, "A Good Classroom for Every Child," 1953, Personal Files, 2, emphasis hers. Speech given to students for American Education Week.

¹⁷ Mildred Doyle, untitled speech made to student group, Personal Files, 1953, 2.

life, she paradoxically acknowledged a component of schooling as one of preparing children for their eventual roles in the nation's workforce.¹⁸

This aspect of the superintendent's curricular philosophy would likely evoke criticism from radical revisionist historians and reproduction theorists as a brand of schooling for social control, training good citizens to take their 'proper' places in the American labor force through the use of such practices as curricular tracking and ability grouping. Obviously, to some degree Mildred Doyle accepted the economic function of schooling in the production of human capital and "good" citizens. Yet her sense of the purposes of education was much more complicated than simply sorting students and training them to be servants of capitalism. Mildred Doyle believed in the essence of democracy as empowering and participatory while she supported the schools' role in emphasizing respect for ethics and the rights of others.

The values she espoused to students in the early 1950s such as respect for authority and the necessity of following rules and regulations represented a kind of functionalist rhetoric laced with doctrines of social efficiency, spoken in response to the question of how future citizens could avoid chaos and effectively get along with each other in the social world. Nearly 20 years later, she spoke with a group of teachers about "a need for a rebirth of idealism and respect for ethics and morality," but not so much in an authoritarian sense as in recognition of the need for individuals to be socially responsible for each other. She claimed that such values as "honesty, cleanliness, kindness, trust, respect for the rights of others, and the dignity of man

¹⁸ Mildred Doyle, "Curriculum Development," Personal Files, 1949, 3-4.

[sic] are basic ingredients for a full and happy life"¹⁹ as American citizens. The superintendent assured teachers:

I am not suggesting that we impose certain traditional standards. Agreement regarding values will be found not by submission but by honest discussion of our beliefs. We must learn to discuss issues, to meet our opponents face to face, to examine competing ideas, and to restudy our own beliefs. Out of such discussion, a gradual body of common opinion will emerge. I am urging that we undertake the necessary dialogue which will result in more common opinions and agreement which will give guidance and direction to our lives and our relationships.²⁰

So while her functionalist thinking about schooling and the possibility of social consensus suggests elements that advocate social control, she viewed the school's role in citizenship education as more complex than simply value transmission for its own sake. She envisioned democracy as a way to include a range of voices and to encourage dialogue with the goal of reaching some kind of consensus for ethical decision-making. Mildred Doyle painted a picture of citizenship education as schooling for social responsibility for other individuals, the local community, and the nation. The stocky superintendent vigorously approached many a podium imparting to teachers the urgent message to "practice democratic procedures in our classrooms" and "to urge our pupils to participate in community activities."²¹ She called for Knox County teachers to engage in political activity by voting, staying informed, and contacting politicians at all levels of government with their individual concerns.

¹⁹ Mildred Doyle, "Educational Horizons," Personal Files, 1976, 2.

²⁰ Ibid., 2-3.

²¹ Mildred Doyle, untitled speech made at a Knox County teachers' meeting, Personal Files, Sept. 1959.

Moreover, she challenged them to model such behavior for their students, and at least on one occasion, publicly admonished the poor voting record of Knox County teachers, an indicator of their failure to act responsibly.²²

Mildred Doyle fought private battles with her inner tendencies toward administrative autocracy. Growing up aside her rather autocratic father, a respected member of the old guard political elite, she likely learned no alternative leadership models. Yet, she settled into her own style, striving to be different by advocating democratic consensus-building and empowering both teachers and principals by eliciting input and acting on their concerns. She truly trusted in the power of education to produce citizens who would be committed to social action to ensure perpetuation of the democratic ideals upon which the country was founded. A sense of real idealism permeated her philosophy. Miss Doyle believed that the responsibility of schools in promoting ethical values, civic action, and an ethos of national loyalty was not only "best for the boys and girls of Knox County," but for the country as a whole in order "to build the type of citizenry that will keep America a nation of the people."²³ The superintendent not only wanted the educational experience of Knox County graduates to help them succeed in the job market, but also to assist them in developing lives enriched with personal meaning, a sense of ethics and dedication to social responsibility. According to Mildred Patterson, one of Miss

²² Mildred Doyle, "Knox County School System Plans its Work," speech to teachers, Personal Files, 1953, 2. It is not known exactly how the superintendent obtained her information on the poor voting record of Knox County teachers.

²³ Mildred Doyle, "Curriculum Development," Personal Files, 1949.

Doyle's "foremost beliefs" was that human beings should be responsible for each other.²⁴

The Superintendency—Significant Events and Reforms²⁵

As explained previously, Mildred Doyle was driven to seek the Knox County superintendency out of fierce ambition and dismay over school conditions in 1946. Upon arrival in the superintendent's office, she promised to work toward "making the Knox County School system the best in the state."²⁶ Miss Doyle never shied away from a solid challenge or a tough chore, and the job of school chief proved to be both. When she took office, 50 of Knox County's 80 schools had no indoor plumbing. Wood stoves heated 33 schools and one school used kerosene lamps for lighting. Twenty-five schools were one- or two-teacher facilities. The entire administrative staff in the central office consisted of two supervisors of instruction, a secretary, and a bookkeeper. Three workers with one truck handled school maintenance. Knox County employed a total of 562 building level administrators and classroom teachers in 1946, and only 37 percent had college degrees. Total student enrollment numbered 17,204.²⁷

²⁴ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 1 Mar. 1995.

²⁵ At this point, I want to acknowledge my gratitude to Carol E. Baker for her work completed in 1977. Her dissertation, "Superintendent Mildred E. Doyle: Educational Leader, Politician, Woman," has proved an invaluable source of information for this chapter, particularly with regard to the selection of significant events which spanned the 30 year period of Miss Doyle's superintendency.

²⁶ Betsy Morris, "First Woman County School Superintendent Has 21-Year Background of Teaching Here," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 10 July 1946, B1

²⁷ "A Thirty Year Comparative Study," Knox County Schools, 23 Aug. 1976.

In the face of escalating postwar population growth, schools experienced tremendous overcrowding. Over 85,000 babies were born in Tennessee in 1947--all scheduled to reach school age by 1953.²⁸ Families connected with such local institutions as The University of Tennessee, The Tennessee Valley Authority, and Oak Ridge National Laboratories poured into Knox County seeking a choice of rural or suburban lifestyles. The explosive influence of these institutions precipitated a surge in commercialism, in economic growth, and in county school enrollment figures beginning in the 1950s.²⁹

Superintendent Doyle, realizing the urgency brought about by the inadequacy of the system in general coupled with the population boom, expressed her concerns to members of the Knox County Court by stressing the need to upgrade the teaching and administrative staff, to formulate a building plan, and to expand hot lunch programs to all county schools.³⁰ Her first meeting with the County Court launched a living plan of action that would continue to evolve and change as concerns were met, as problems were solved, and as innovations were implemented and modified over the 30 year period from 1946 to 1976.

²⁸ Mildred Doyle, speech to the Middle Tennessee Education Association, Personal Files, 1952. Mildred was president of the Tennessee Education Association at the time of the speech.

²⁹ Lucille Deaderick, ed., Heart of the Valley: A History of Knoxville, Tennessee (Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1976), 61-65. These institutions along with an increase in local industry continue to represent a vital force in the life of Knox County today.

³⁰ "Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court," 7 Oct. 1946.

Relationships With the School Board

As the highly political Mildred Doyle worked amazingly well with the Knox County Court despite occasional battles for funding, she worked equally well with the Knox County Board of Education. In fact, she likely used her political connections to influence the election of many board members she considered particularly capable and interested in the welfare of children.³¹ Leadership on the board remained fairly constant during Mildred Doyle's tenure as "Hop" Bailey held the position of chair for over 20 years. Board members trusted Miss Doyle and depended on her expertise as an educator to keep them informed, thus giving her a tremendous amount of power and influence when dealing with them.³² Being a shrewd politician, Mildred Doyle always made sure she was never blind-sided by a board member in a meeting, hence she labored to understand each member's stance on an issue prior to board meetings which were often attended by the public. Because she worked well with the board and often got her way in school matters, some citizens considered the school board to be "a rubber stamp for whatever she said."³³ She had a good deal of freedom to make decisions compared with a typical superintendency today.

In an effort to build community among board members, she and Patterson cooked meals for them from time to time in the small kitchen facility in the central office. Miss Doyle would charge into the office early in the morning and tell her

³¹ Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

³² Ibid.

³³ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994.

secretary Faye Cox, "All right, tonight we're going to feed the board."³⁴ Mrs. Patterson recalled that they would prepare full-course meals with an entree, vegetables, and dessert in that tiny kitchen.³⁵ Not only would they talk school business, but there was time for informal conversation and socializing. Thus, Mildred Doyle maintained a "good social relationship with them as well as a good professional relationship."³⁶ Often, she "fed" the entire board, but occasionally she used such time to "court" certain members' support on specific issues because she felt the informal setting to be more appropriate to talk frankly with members about possibly controversial points.³⁷ A controversial issue might be that a community wanted more classroom space built in their neighborhood school and some board members found that unnecessary. Sometimes issues would concern the hiring of systemwide personnel and others might concern building maintenance or bus routes.³⁸

While the board usually voted with Mildred Doyle, this was not always the case. For example, in 1969 the Knox County Board of Education voted to remove J.D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye from the reading list at the secondary level.³⁹

³⁴ Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

³⁵ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 1 Mar. 1995.

³⁶ Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 1 Mar. 1995.

³⁹ Homer Clonts, "Dennis Martin Disappeared 25 Years Ago," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 June 1994.

Mildred Doyle fervently sided with teachers, citing the value of their professional judgment about what students should be reading. Mildred Patterson recalled that the board, elected by the public, was getting pressure from local religious groups in their constituency to ban the book. Thus, they voted for its removal. Mildred Doyle opposed their vote as well as the pressure from religious groups regarding censorship issues. According to Mildred Patterson, the superintendent "just felt that it was terrible to have one segment of the public saying what another group could or could not read."⁴⁰

Personnel Development Programs in the Knox County Schools

The fact that only 37 percent of Knox County teachers and administrators had college degrees when she took office disturbed Mildred Doyle. While she understood the history behind such a figure, she nevertheless gave priority to raising the qualifications of Knox County teachers to meet increasing enrollments, parental demands for a quality education for their children, as well as her personal goal that Knox County stand out as an exemplary school system.

The school board established a policy at the superintendent's suggestion that all principals and teachers lacking a degree would be required to take nine quarter-hours during a school year that would lead to eventual completion of a college degree.⁴¹ In 1960, the board declared that a Knox County teacher could not become tenured

⁴⁰ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

⁴¹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994; Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court, 4 Apr. 1949.

unless he or she had obtained a degree. Further, those teachers and administrators working in the system who still had not completed a degree would become eligible for a leave of absence for that purpose.⁴²

Additional professional development programs for teachers included summer workshops and yearly inservice programs centered around curriculum planning and development, improved instruction, and solving problems unique to teachers. Such workshops provided room for teachers' voices to be heard by the administration. Superintendent Doyle shared with a teacher group in 1949 that a recent workshop experience had "given [her] a clearer insight into teacher problems and a better understanding of their need for help in solving these problems."⁴³ Further, she expressed "hope that Knox County Teachers [were] aware of the interest on the part of the administration to see them grow professionally."⁴⁴ Knox County teachers had never before been invited to participate at the "system-wide level" in school planning and development activities.⁴⁵ Miss Doyle broke new ground by offering this fresh approach in which teachers began to realize some control over their work and to recognize not only the importance of professional growth and development, but that they had the support of the administration. Perhaps recognition of her own need for

⁴² Policies for Operation of Knox County Schools 1960, Knox County, Tennessee, Number 17, 3.

⁴³ Mildred Doyle, untitled speech to teacher group, Personal Files, 1949, 3.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Carol E. Baker, 118.

autonomy and control led her to realize potential benefits in such a course of action for teachers.

The Knox County Principal's Conference probably represented the most effective and long-lasting professional development program for administrators during Mildred Doyle's superintendency. Mildred considered quality leadership at the building level to be vital in carrying out the goals of schooling. Thus, she displayed a particular sensitivity to the responsibilities of Knox County's principals. The Principal's Conference was held every year from 1955 to 1976 and program content was based on principals' input gathered from surveys administered during the school year. Themes ranged from "The Principal--Pacemaker for Progress," "Dissent--Decision--Direction," and "Educational Leader or Administrative Robot." The conference normally took place over a weekend and was remembered as one of the most positive activities to build community and a sense of family among principals and the central office staff. Further, it contributed significantly to the professional growth of administrators as they were able to seriously focus on issues they deemed important as a group.⁴⁶ Again, Mildred stepped to the frontline in implementing innovative forms of personnel development that gave more control to the principals. Throughout her tenure, Mildred continued to focus on ways of enabling the principal to "function as a change agent and an instructional leader."⁴⁷ As effective as the

⁴⁶ Ibid., 116-117.

⁴⁷ Mildred E. Doyle, "Educational Horizons," Personal Files, 1976, 2.

principal's conferences ostensibly were, upon her defeat as superintendent in 1976, they were abandoned by the new administration.

Building an Empire

Gross inadequacy of physical facilities in the school system captured Mildred Doyle's attention and concern from the beginning of her tenure. Teachers held classes in hallways, school kitchens, on auditorium stages, and in "tater holes" or root cellars. Classrooms that were already too small were divided to make more room in schools all over the county. The superintendent urgently explained to the Knox County Court that quality instruction under these conditions was impossible.⁴⁸ For Mildred, the children of Knox County deserved much better than that.

According to former County Judge Howard Bozeman, the school system had not built new facilities or added to existing buildings since the 1930s.⁴⁹ Predictably, the resolute Mildred Doyle developed an extensive plan to add facilities to 24 schools. Among items in her proposal were the addition of cafeterias to 17 schools, indoor restrooms for 17 schools, heating systems to 14 schools, libraries for 2 schools, 2 gymnasiums, 7 auditoriums, and 101 classrooms.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ "Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court," 7 Oct. 1946; Allison, A Conversation, 1986. In the videotaped interview with Clint Allison, the superintendent herself used the term "tater holes" when describing school conditions in 1946.

⁴⁹ Howard Bozeman, interview by author, 30 Jan. 1995.

⁵⁰ "Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court," 6 July 1948.

Judge Bozeman recalled that raising funds for Miss Doyle's building plan was one of the greatest challenges of his life due to the county's pitiful financial condition at the time he took office in 1948. Mildred Doyle and the brilliant young judge "worked like Trojans," digging up funds wherever they could find them, mainly by issuing rural school bonds and pledging sales tax revenue for capital outlay.⁵¹ Further, they determined that closing some of the shabbier one- and two-room schools would be inevitable. Mildred Doyle pushed her gift for diplomacy to maximum capacity, traveling to highly traditional rural communities, holding meetings to explain to citizens why their schools must be closed. For these mountain people, a community without a school signified no less than a direct pathway to hell. Hence, even the savvy Mildred Doyle had her hands full attempting to clearly articulate the benefits their children would receive by attending a school with more adequate facilities. Ultimately, her persuasive powers proved successful, but not entirely without resistance and emotional bloodshed.⁵²

Given the schools' still shaky financial situation in the early 1950s, Miss Doyle sat down with her central office staff along with members of the Knox County Court and the Board of Education to devise a plan of action to determine how funding for a building program could be most justly appropriated based on need. Before then, the larger schools, particularly Central High School in Fountain City and Young High in south Knoxville, had received a lion's share of resources and support. Community

⁵¹ Howard Bozeman, interview by author, 30 Jan. 1995.

⁵² Ibid.

schools such as those not only had bigger buildings in better condition, but expanded curricular offerings due to the efforts of very organized and vocal Parent-Teacher Associations combined with substantial support from members of the Knox County Court. Superintendent Doyle astutely realized that she must obtain thoroughly credible documentation of the present and future needs of all county schools in order to get the financial support she needed from the County Court to improve many of the smaller schools heretofore neglected by the politically motivated squires. Neither the Board of Education nor the County Court, according to Mildred Patterson, could "see spending a million dollars at Gibbs which is almost to Union County and not spending more than that at Central High in Fountain City. After all there were voters in Fountain City . . . Her goal was to make smaller schools equally important."⁵³

Wisely, Mildred Doyle proposed to the Court and the Board that the school system conduct a county-wide needs assessment of every school community that would not only determine the present school conditions, enrollment figures, and curricular needs, but would project population growth patterns and enrollment trends for Knox County over the forthcoming decade.⁵⁴ The superintendent could use the results from such an extensive survey to support her suggestions for improvements made to schools in certain communities and the construction of new schools in

⁵³ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

⁵⁴ In the tradition of the administrative progressives, school superintendents commonly used such needs assessments to support their agendas for reform.

others.⁵⁵ By having "hard data" at her fingertips, Mildred could justify funding requests to County Court members who could, in turn, explain to their constituencies why certain community schools were or were not slated to receive funds. Not only could such data provide leverage with the County Court, but they enabled the shrewd superintendent to clarify funding priorities in the minds of her own concerned political constituency.

Upon approval of the Board of Education, Mildred Doyle contacted the College of Education at The University of Tennessee to enlist the help of faculty in constructing, administering, and analyzing the survey. Dr. Bascomb Story coordinated University efforts utilizing teams of graduate students, members of the County Court and the Board of Education, Knox County School employees, and leaders of various communities. According to Mrs. Patterson: "They went into every community school. They surveyed every building. They counted houses. They counted noses. They projected enrollment for ten years." Those assisting with the extensive project literally distributed surveys door-to-door to thousands of Knox County residents.⁵⁶

Upon completion of data analysis, Miss Doyle confidently took survey results to the Knox County Court. On July 16, 1951, Court members approved its use "as the basis for all subsequent planning for improving the school program through

⁵⁵ Mildred Patterson, interviews by author, 9 Mar. 1994 and 8 June 1994; Carol E. Baker, 124-128.

⁵⁶ Mildred Patterson, interviews by author, 9 Mar. 1994 and 8 June 1994; Carol E. Baker, 125.

1960,"⁵⁷ with regard to building plans and future curriculum development.⁵⁸

Following the Court's approval, Mildred and her staff held a series of community meetings at high schools around the county to explain survey results to residents and what they meant for their particular community school. Mildred's gift for effective communication with myriad people served her well during those weeks as she "broadened out"⁵⁹ Knox County citizens. The superintendent talked with Carol Baker about the positive outcomes of those meetings:

For the first time parents realized that some communities had problems more pressing than their own . . . a spirit of generosity and caring developed in which people on one side of the county worked with folks miles away to help them get the kind of school they needed . . . It was one of the best things that happened to us in education.⁶⁰

Despite the fact that the County Court demonstrated sensitivity to the school system's needs by appropriating additional funds, the Baby Boom exploded with furor, driving primary school enrollment to all-time highs in 1953.⁶¹ Again faced with tremendously overcrowded classrooms, Mildred Doyle garnered popular support for a budget increase for the 1954 fiscal year by holding community meetings in which citizens could go on record in favor of more funding for a building program. With an overwhelming public response of approval for Miss Doyle's proposed 1954

⁵⁷ Carol E. Baker, 125.

⁵⁸ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

⁵⁹ It was in one of those meetings in the Carter community described in Chapter One when the woman in the back of the room who was confused about a particular issue involving her grandson's schooling stood up and said, "Now Miss Doyle . . . I want you to broaden me out."

⁶⁰ Carol E. Baker, 126; Mildred Patterson, interviews by author, 9 Mar. 1994 and 8 June 1994.

⁶¹ "Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court," 20 July 1953 and 19 Oct. 1953.

budget, she pressured County Court to give the people what they wanted for their children. If after that kind of pressure the superintendent still felt she needed assistance persuading the squires to see it her way, she encouraged the citizens present at community meetings to descend upon subsequent sessions of the County Court. According to Judge Bozeman who was later somewhat amused by her effective tactics, the angry Court members had major difficulty withholding funds for the school budget with hundreds of voters present in the meeting room.⁶²

Improvements came, but gradually. Judge Bozeman and the County Court allocated as much money as possible to reduce overcrowding throughout the years from 1954 to 1962, yet classes still met in hallways, offices, cloak rooms, and even shower rooms for several years. Miss Doyle reported in 1956 that "toilet facilities were installed in the last school last year."⁶³ However, by the end of the 10-year building plan, considerable progress had been made toward the construction of a modern empire. Knox County boasted 16 new schools and approximately 600 classrooms were added to existing facilities, many of which had been significantly renovated. Only a handful of classes county-wide reported enrollments with over 40 students.⁶⁴ By 1962 Superintendent Doyle's successful efforts had transformed a largely dilapidated rural school system into one in which the modernized physical

⁶² Howard Bozeman, interview by author, 30 Jan. 1995; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994; Carol E. Baker 126-127.

⁶³ "Miss Doyle Credits Success to 'People'," The Knoxville Journal, 26 July 1956, Personal Files.

⁶⁴ Carol E. Baker, 128.

facilities provided an environment much more conducive to learning--an outcome she declared the children of Knox County rightly deserved.

Early Curricular Reform

While Mildred Doyle insisted on modernizing physical facilities in order to create comfortable space in which students could learn, she maintained "that the instructional program is the heart of our job."⁶⁵ In fact, an improved instructional program occupied significant space on her initial campaign platform and became a central and ongoing goal under Miss Doyle's leadership. The progressive superintendent "did not have a closed mind to any innovative things she thought would help education. She was very, very open to [innovation]."⁶⁶

As previously mentioned, Mildred Doyle advocated teacher involvement at the county-wide level with respect to curricular planning and development. She recognized the potential for tremendous teacher contribution through their collective experience and professional competence. From such thinking the Curriculum Planning Committee materialized in 1949 to focus on developing a program of improved instruction for Knox County schools. Volunteer teachers representing various grade levels and subject areas, principals and teachers from both large and small schools, along with the central office staff comprised this group which

⁶⁵ Mildred Doyle, untitled speech to teachers, Personal Files, 1949, 1. Her files contain several untitled speeches delivered to teachers during the early 1950s concerning the work of the Planning Committee and the many teacher workshops that occurred as a result.

⁶⁶ Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

continued its work under the guidance of a steering committee into the early 1950s. The group agreed that one-half of the planning committee be replaced each year in order to ensure a maximum range of faculty representation and input. The Committee organized an in-service workshop on curriculum development held at Young High School in January of 1950. A series of teacher meetings and workshops at community schools followed in which curriculum planning was discussed at length with representatives reporting back to the Planning Committee.⁶⁷

While the Curriculum Planning Committee had begun such initial discussions of what an improved program of instruction might look like, its major work was based on results from the county-wide needs assessment conducted with assistance from The University of Tennessee in 1951. As previously stated, elements of the survey pertained to curricular needs and what parents in various communities wanted for their children.

Fortunately that same year, the Tennessee General Assembly granted the State Board of Education the power to write its own curricula. Prior to that policy shift, the General Assembly itself determined courses of study for Tennessee's public schools. Given its new responsibility, the State Board mandated that every school district focus on curriculum development, and to facilitate work of local districts, the State Board sponsored numerous conferences and curriculum planning workshops. As Mildred Doyle had already articulated a commitment to curriculum development and

⁶⁷ Mildred E. Doyle, "Knox County School System Plans Its Work," speech to Tennessee Educational Association, Personal Files, 1953, 1-6.

begun an organized program to precipitate change, Knox County was "credited with taking the lead in curriculum planning" for the state of Tennessee in the 1950s.⁶⁸

In 1950 the State Board sponsored a summer-long curriculum planning workshop held at The University of Tennessee in which 125 to 150 Knox County teachers participated. Mildred Patterson remembers being impressed at the dedication of teachers and their willingness to give much time and energy to improving the quality of instruction for the total school program.⁶⁹ Building on the ideas generated in previous workshops and in-service meetings, this intensive workshop resulted in the creation of a comprehensive document entitled Knox County Department of Public Instruction Tentative Program of Work, Grades 1-12, 1951-1952. The bulletin contained progressive curricular suggestions developed entirely by Knox County teachers to be used as a guide for classroom practice. In the Forward, Superintendent Doyle stressed the flexible nature of the bulletin stating that it "is merely [a collection of] initial suggestions for a tentative program of work."⁷⁰

An examination of the bulletin reveals progressive influences of John Dewey⁷¹ on Knox County curriculum writers. While the curriculum guide featured subject matter and learning activities divided into traditional content areas, the document stressed the need to integrate disciplinary study by providing suggestions

⁶⁸ Ibid., 1.

⁶⁹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

⁷⁰ Knox County Department of Public Instruction Tentative Program of Work, Grades 1-12, 1951-1952, emphasis hers. Mrs. Patterson provided me with a copy of the "Red Book," stressing that it is probably one of the only surviving copies.

⁷¹ John Dewey, Democracy in Education (New York: Macmillan Co., 1916).

for blending, art, music, numbers, science, and health with the study of social studies.⁷² Further, the bulletin emphasized that learning activities should relate subject content to the everyday life of students. For example, an integrated unit on mathematics required that elementary schoolers create and operate a store. Teachers could introduce mathematical concepts involved in storekeeping such as addition, subtraction, weights, and measurements--all in a social context with which students were somewhat familiar. Further, students would be given such responsibilities as opening the store on time, handling money, and making telephone calls to place orders. Teachers could integrate reading and writing exercises through such activities as making signs for the store and labeling products.⁷³ Having designed a "program in social arithmetic" for her Master's Thesis at the University of Tennessee, Mildred Doyle had long been a proponent of "making arithmetic a practical study . . . relating [math] problems to pupils' lives."⁷⁴

Popularly called the "Red Book," teachers used this resource for several years following its distribution, but soon began to develop additional materials and plans for various grade levels and subject areas. Eventually, these expanded subject area guides were followed by guides for further interdisciplinary activities which more

⁷² Ibid., 20.

⁷³ Ibid., 24-26.

⁷⁴ Mildred Doyle, "A Program in Social Arithmetic," (Master's thesis, The University of Tennessee, 1944), 1, Personal Files.

explicitly coordinated, for example, the teaching of music with social studies and language arts in elementary grades.⁷⁵

The "Red Book" represented the first major curricular reform thrust in Knox County's instructional program under Mildred Doyle. The document provided a starting point from which curricula were revised as teachers deemed necessary throughout much of the 1950s. However, the 1958-1959 school year saw significant program changes implemented in response to the developing perception of parents and teachers that existing program designs were not meeting the individual needs of all learners. Reflecting the philosophies of efficiency-minded progressive reformers, Miss Doyle and her staff proposed "revolutionary" curricular and instructional reforms based on ability grouping for primary grades, departmentalization for seventh and eighth grades, and three curricular tracks for high school students.⁷⁶ With the proposed instructional program, the administration hoped to be able to "better meet the needs of Knox County's youngsters."⁷⁷

The plan called for lengthening the time spent in primary grades if developmental levels of students so warranted. A learner could take as much as four or five years to complete grades one through three. During the first grade, teachers observed and tested learners to determine their individual competencies. At the end

⁷⁵ Baker, 130-131. Baker cites a statement by Beecher Clapp, former Director of Instruction, 23 June 1977.

⁷⁶ Clonts, "Separation," 1-2; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994; Progressive educators concerned primarily with efficiency advocated similar practices as adopted by Knox County. According to their thinking, schools would run more efficiently if curriculum and instruction matched abilities and interests of students.

⁷⁷ Clonts, "Separation," 1.

of the first grade year, teachers should know whether a learner was ready to move into a regular second grade class or if he or she needed further instruction. Miss Doyle and her staff purposefully kept enrollments low in the primary grades. A student labeled a "slow" learner was placed in a "2B" group for as long as "necessary for him [sic] to catch up with the faster-learning pupils."⁷⁸ This "in-between" step applied to third graders as well. Teachers were to confer with parents of "slow" learners so that the final decision to place students in "2B" or "3B" ability groups would be made collaboratively, contingent only upon approval of parents.⁷⁹ For Knox County administrators, this method of grouping according to a child's perceived ability would work to the advantage of all concerned. A student not ready developmentally or cognitively for more advanced instruction would be allowed to progress at a "more appropriate" rate without actually being retained in the first or second grades. While no designated ability groups were endorsed for "the brighter child,"⁸⁰ Miss Doyle and her staff felt that students in regular second and third grade classes would benefit from greater teacher accessibility made possible by the separation of students into "2B" and "3B" classes.

The intentions of the central office staff were, of course, benevolent in terms of expected outcomes of the program revisions. However, the administration's assumptions did not take into account the eventual stigmatization of students in the

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1-2.

⁷⁹ "Tentative Suggestions for a Revised Primary Program," Knox County Schools, 21 Apr. 1958.

⁸⁰ Clonts, "Separation," 2.

"slower" groups. Because these groups became associated with failure, and teachers had difficulty creating an instructional program that differed recognizably from the regular second and third grade curricula, the "2B" and "3B" grades were abandoned by the early 1960s.⁸¹

In addition to ability grouping in primary grades, Miss Doyle and her staff endorsed departmentalization of the seventh and eighth grades in schools that employed eight or more teachers. The administration believed that instructional quality for seventh and eighth graders would improve significantly if they were taught by subject matter specialists rather than by one teacher responsible for instruction in all content areas. Further, class times would be structured so that curricular enrichments such as dramatics, languages, crafts, homemaking, and industrial arts could be added to a student's basic program. For Mildred Doyle, an enriched curriculum functioned to enable students to get "the fullest enjoyment from living."⁸²

Finally, the administration proposed a three-track curriculum for grades 9-12 so that students would have greater flexibility in choosing a program to fit their individual interests and future plans. Superintendent Doyle and her staff hoped that such a strategy would strengthen the schools' holding power on high school students and prevent dropouts. Although not explicitly acknowledged by the administration,

⁸¹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994.

⁸² "Suggested Plan of Organization for Grades Seven and Eight," Knox County Schools, 21 Apr. 1958; Clonts, "Separation," 2; Quoted material taken from Mildred Doyle, "The Knox County Curriculum," Personal Files, 1949, 1.

the three-track curriculum could effectively sort students into courses of study that would prepare for labor market stratification.

An academic track for college-bound students required 18 credits for graduation which included American History, English, physical education, and biology as basics. Further, students were required to select two majors and two minors which must include higher mathematics and electives from social sciences, fine arts, and languages. An applied arts curriculum required 17 credits for graduation. Students in this track were required to take the same basic courses as the academic track, but with one major and two minors including electives from commercial and vocational areas. Finally, a general education curriculum which required 16 credits to graduate was designed largely for students who did not plan to attend college. Students in this track took basic courses in math, English, biology, American History, and physical education, but were not required to select a major or minor. Students in the general education track were grouped according to perceived ability.

In February of 1958, all eighth graders in the county system were tested for achievement and competency levels in order to aid in placement decisions for the following school year. Upon assessing test results and prior school records, teachers and guidance counselors held conferences with parents. The school administration hoped that as a result of the conferences, parents could better help their children select a curricular track that fit their individual interests.

While the community credited the county schools with taking an innovative stance toward curricular reforms that were responsive to the concerns of both educators and parents, the three-track curriculum in the secondary schools was eventually abandoned as were the "2B" and "3B" levels in the primary grades. Educators found the plan too rigid, missing the objective of meeting individual interests of students. In 1967-68, the schools conducted a pilot program at Halls High School as an alternative to curricular tracking. Within the program, curriculum was revised to include five levels at which students could be placed. While they were not tracked, *per se*, students were placed based on ability as determined by test scores and teacher assessments. A required 17 credits for graduation remained constant for students at all levels, and all students received identical diplomas upon graduation. The following year, the three-track curriculum was eliminated altogether, yet secondary students continued to be grouped by perceived ability.⁸³

Since Mildred Doyle's day, schools have been sharply criticized by educational researchers for their use of the common practices of curricular tracking and ability grouping. Such research on tracking and ability grouping indicates that "perceived" ability levels and student placement are often biased as they are based on social class status or race, gender, and ethnicity rather than actual student ability. Working class or minority students tend to be placed in lower ability groups or in vocational or commercial rather than college preparatory curricular tracks. Further, research indicates that once placed in a particular ability group or track, students tend to

⁸³ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 1 Mar. 1995; "Pilot Program for Curriculum Revision, Halls High School," Knox County Schools, 1967-68.

remain "stuck" there for their entire school careers despite possible efforts made toward upward mobility. Through such practices, social class inequities mirrored in the broader society are effectively reproduced to serve the interests of the dominant classes.⁸⁴ However, such knowledge of the detrimental reproductive effects of tracking and ability grouping was not widespread in the educational community at the time the practices were implemented in Knox County. In fact, tracking and ability grouping were considered innovative and beneficial to children by the educational community. Mildred Doyle never consciously intended to facilitate the denial of opportunity to any student, yet she did accept biased conventional wisdom that some children are "slower" than others, and that some are simply not college-bound. She appears to have been sincerely idealistic with regard to the opportunities afforded by public schooling, apparently failing to see a need to question the system with regard to unequal treatment and outcomes that may actually limit rather than enhance a student's life chances. She and her staff simply wanted to provide the widest possible variety of curricular and instructional offerings while matching students with perceived ability level and individual interests.

Only in the 1980s did significant research emerge indicating that teacher expectations of ability rather than actual academic ability played a major role in the

⁸⁴ For examples, see Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life (New York: Basic Books, 1976); Aaron Cicourel and John Kitsuse, The Educational Decision Makers (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963); Jeannie Oakes, Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

success or failure of students.⁸⁵ Given her strong stance as a child advocate and her characteristic willingness to embrace new knowledge of educational theory and practice, it appears likely that if Mildred Doyle were school superintendent today, she would deliberately place herself in the midst of current debates over the outcomes of ability grouping and push for its demise in practice.⁸⁶

Annexation and a New Building Program

In 1963 the Doyle administration faced an enormous setback when the City Council of Knoxville voted to annex approximately 50 square miles around the perimeter of the city. Knox County lost nearly 70,000 residents in the heavily populated suburban areas encompassed by annexation. Having dedicated a great portion of the previous decade to transforming a neglected rural school system into a modern educational empire, Mildred Doyle experienced shock at the sudden loss of 18,000 students and 28 schools. Of the 28 annexed schools, 16 were newly built, and the remaining 12 had been extensively renovated over the previous ten years to handle the large numbers of students living among the first suburbs in the county. To further compound the blow, Superintendent Doyle recalled the years of hard labor involved in obtaining adequate funding to develop such a system in a financially deprived area. In the summer of 1963, Mildred reported to the Knox County Court that in addition

⁸⁵ For example, see Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson, Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectation and Pupils' Intellectual Development (New York: Irvington, 1988).

⁸⁶ See, for example, Peter Schmidt, "Debate Over Ability Grouping Gains High Profile," Education Week, 13 Jan. 1992, 23; Peter Schmidt, "Mass. Leads Mounting Charge Against Ability Grouping," Education Week, 13 Jan. 1992, 22.

to the loss of school buildings and students, over 600 teachers and principals, 80 custodians, and 25 members of the clerical staff were transferred to the Knoxville City Schools.⁸⁷

According to Mildred Patterson, annexation basically ravaged the county school system. She recalled that "It left us with the very rural schools and half the enrollment. The comeback that we made, I think, is one of the most remarkable things."⁸⁸ A former supervisor recalled the initial response of the central office staff:

We had to show them we weren't dead, and we did many things to keep before the public . . . science fairs, music festivals, all-county bands and orchestras, anything we could do to provide a P.R. and morale thrust for teachers, parents, and students. It was a new beginning, somewhat akin to the first beginning [in 1946]; but with a large staff, we could move fast.⁸⁹

According to Mildred Patterson, "Believe it or not, everybody sort of pitched in and thought, 'They are not going to do this to us,' and everybody worked and started another building program."⁹⁰ Annexation shook morale only temporarily, and Knox County's iron-willed, workaholic superintendent, planning her next move, busied herself studying projected enrollment figures based on predictions of county growth. Despite the fact that annexation weakened the tax base, Knox County almost

⁸⁷ Cynthia Moxley, "Benevolent Dictator: For 30 Years Mildred Doyle Got Things Done as School Chief," The Knoxville Journal, 4 July, 1985, A8; "A Twenty-Year Comparative Study, 1946-1966," Knox County Schools, 17 Oct. 1966; Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 15 Mar. 1994; Mildred Patterson, 9 Mar. 1994; "Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court," 15 July 1963.

⁸⁸ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

⁸⁹ Carol E. Baker, 138. Quote from former music supervisor J.B. Lyle.

⁹⁰ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

immediately entered another phase of rapid population growth. Hence, "things weren't quite as black as some people thought they were," recalled Sam Bratton. As the suburbs affected by annexation became crowded, families began moving farther into the county and enrollment in the school system again exploded. According to Dr. Bratton, "She [Miss Doyle] really had her hands full in keeping up with the growth--getting new buildings built."⁹¹

Again, Mildred Doyle elicited the input of a variety of school and community participants. Intensive meetings of teachers, principals, PTA's, members of the State Department of Education and The University of Tennessee, business leaders, and community organizations were held to brainstorm possible recommendations for improving the overall program of instruction for Knox County Schools. Their efforts resulted in the creation of an extensive document outlining suggestions for a comprehensive plan for systemic regeneration.⁹² The plan called for the immediate construction of a new elementary school at Cedar Bluff and the total renovation of a dozen elementary schools as well as the Dante Special Education Center. Four high schools and two elementary schools required additional space to relieve overcrowding. These building projects were slated for completion in less than a year's time--by the beginning of the 1964-65 school year. To meet projected building needs by 1968, the

⁹¹ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 15 Mar. 1994.

⁹² "Recommendations for Improving the Educational Opportunities in the Knox County Schools," Oct. 1963, 1-3.

document suggested that six elementary schools and two high schools be constructed along with additions to 13 existing schools.⁹³

In 1966, Mildred Doyle began construction of the county's first comprehensive high school. Located in south Knox County where the Doyles pioneered in 1800, the school was aptly named Doyle High School in honor of the superintendent and her influential family. Like an anxious parent, the superintendent frequently monitored the building's progress as it advanced toward completion in 1967. Also known affectionately in the community as "Doyleland" and "The House That Doyle Built," the high school was formally dedicated to the Doyle family by the Knox County Board of Education on April 12, 1968.⁹⁴ Approximately 1200 Knox County residents attended the dedication ceremony and dinner at the new high school to show their appreciation for Miss Doyle's work as school chief. Dr. Andy Holt, the colorful president of The University of Tennessee and longtime friend of Mildred Doyle, characterized the superintendent as possessing "horse sense, a great sense of humor, good judgement in selecting her family, ability to get along with folks, and a genuine love of children."⁹⁵ As Chair of the Knox County Board of Education, Hop Bailey made the formal presentation of the school to Miss Doyle, "our, efficient,

⁹³ Ibid., 4-7.

⁹⁴ "Tribute Paid Whole Doyle Family As New High School Dedicated," The Knoxville Journal, 13 Apr. 1968, Photocopy, McClung Collection; "Doyle Dedication," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 13 Apr. 1968; "Dedication Portrait," The Knoxville Journal, 11 Apr. 1968, Photocopy, McClung Collection.

⁹⁵ "Tribute Paid."

progressive and aggressive superintendent."⁹⁶ In a response to the dedication, the superintendent, obviously moved by the ceremony, presented the school back to the community and warmly thanked "all the people who make things possible."⁹⁷

By 1967, Mildred Doyle again found herself in the midst of a crisis situation with regard to physical facilities and exploding enrollment. The Board of Education was anxious that she press County Court for additional funding. Because the county was forced to utilize excessive numbers of temporary classrooms, Superintendent Doyle gathered members of the school board together who accompanied her to a meeting with the Knox County Court's Finance Committee where they argued for funds for a new high school at Halls, a middle school in south Knox County, and over a hundred additional classrooms at various area schools.⁹⁸ By 1971, Halls and Carter High Schools had been completed along with Doyle Middle School located in south Knox County. By 1973, the communities of Powell and Karns had new middle schools and a new elementary school was built in Farragut. Meanwhile, total school enrollment accelerated at an average of 1000 students per year in the 1970s. Mildred Doyle's extensive building program, however, culminated with the construction of

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ "Dr. Doyle To Ask For Building Funds," The Knoxville Journal, 6 Apr. 1967, A1; "Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court," 16 Jan. 1967. Because Miss Doyle received an honorary doctorate from Maryville College in 1965, she was occasionally referred to as "Dr. Doyle."

Farragut High School completed in 1976, her last year in the superintendent's office.⁹⁹

While the annexation of suburban neighborhoods surrounding the city of Knoxville dealt a blow to the Knox County schools, in no way did it slow Mildred Doyle's progress toward her goal of providing sufficient space and hospitable learning environments for the children of Knox County. Knox County's massive population growth surprised everyone concerned with schooling. Mildred Patterson to this day is amazed that the once minuscule rural community of Farragut, now connected to the city of Knoxville with mile after mile of upscale suburban commercialism, boasts two primary schools, two middle schools, and the high school.¹⁰⁰ During Mildred Doyle's 30 years as superintendent, she battled for funding and supervised the construction of 24 elementary schools, four middle schools, eight high schools, and two vocational facilities worth a total of \$38.8 million.¹⁰¹

Desegregation

While East Tennessee, as part of the upper south took a less aggressive stance in some respects toward denying civil rights to blacks than did its neighbors in the deep south, the predominantly white regional population nonetheless harbored racist

⁹⁹ "A Thirty Year Comparative Study," Knox County Schools, 23 Aug. 1976; Anne Klebenow, "Mildred Doyle Defends Knox County Schools," The Knoxville Journal, 19 Feb. 1976, A9.

¹⁰⁰ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

¹⁰¹ Moxley, A8; "A Thirty Year Comparative Study."

attitudes through violence and institutional practices of racial segregation.¹⁰²

Operating under the 1896 Supreme Court ruling which established the "separate but equal doctrine" in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Knox County provided segregated school facilities for black and white students until it began the process of desegregation in 1960.

Approximately 300 black families lived in Knox County at the time of desegregation. There existed nine "Negro schools" for the elementary grades, all of which were one or two room buildings staffed by black teachers. Because of the relatively small number of black children in the Knox County schools compared with enrollments in the Knoxville City system, the county never established a separate high school for blacks. Rather, the county paid tuition for secondary students to attend Austin High School, a facility operated by the city system and highly acclaimed as a site of educational excellence. Further, Knox County provided transportation for these youngsters to and from Austin.¹⁰³

Following the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the "separate but equal doctrine" established in *Plessy* was overturned. The Supreme Court ruled that "separate educational facilities [were] inherently unequal," citing evidence from social science research studies conducted by Kenneth

¹⁰² This is not to say that overtly racist incidents never took place in East Tennessee. For example, in 1958 Governor Frank Clement was forced to call the National Guard to protect students in neighboring Anderson County from racist attacks when a bomb explosion virtually destroyed Clinton High School after integration. Also that year several bombings occurred in black residential sections of Clinton. Further, the Ku Klux Klan which originated in Giles County in Middle Tennessee is still active, particularly in very rural areas.

¹⁰³ Mildred Patterson, interviews by author, 10 Oct. 1994 and 1 Mar. 1995.

Clark and Gunnar Myrdal indicating that separate can never be equal. The following year, the Court issued its Enforcement Decree calling for the desegregation of schools.¹⁰⁴

Meanwhile in Knox County, Mildred Doyle was trying to decide what steps to take toward compliance with the Court's decision. In 1955 she met with a group of white administrators, teachers, citizens, school board members, and Knox County Judge Howard Bozeman to elicit their opinions regarding school desegregation. Judge Bozeman suggested that Knox County settle the matter by taking immediate positive action by complying with the Court's decision to desegregate public schools. He proposed that black high school students in Knox County be given the choice of enrolling in the white high school closest to their residence or continuing to attend Austin High School in the city system. For elementary children, he suggested that they be given the choice of attending the white elementary school closest to their home or to attend one of the black elementary schools which the county would continue to operate. Under Bozeman's proposal Knox County would provide transportation for all black children regardless of their choice of schools. Bozeman told the group that he would "love to see the headlines in the morning" proclaiming that Knox County, Tennessee, had complied with the High Court's decision. It was not that easy, however. The young judge met with resistance as most people present at the meeting were "totally opposed to doing anything" and others in opposition were "just violent on the subject." As the meeting concluded, the position of the Knox

¹⁰⁴ Joel Spring, The American School, 1642-1990 (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1990), 336-339.

County Schools on desegregation was to "sort of play it by ear and see how things are going to develop." Bozeman recalled that those present saw "no big reason to rush into anything" and decided the best course of action was to "take it easy." Mildred Doyle, having herself adopted a "wait and see" attitude, did not appear overly concerned with the possibility that members of the black community might feel more of a sense of urgency to speed up the desegregation process than did the white people invited to voice their opinions at a meeting with the superintendent.¹⁰⁵

However, the majority opinion reflected at that meeting mirrored racist attitudes pervading the country in 1955. The Supreme Court left procedures to enforce integration up to federal district courts. According to Joel Spring, "Federal Judges were often part of the social fabric of their communities and resisted attempts at speedy desegregation." Hence, integration proceeded very slowly until the 1960s saw the passage of further civil rights legislation.¹⁰⁶ So Knox County continued "business as usual" for the next five years.

Judge Bozeman, an early advocate of desegregation, described his understanding of the positions on the issue held by black residents of Knox County. In talking with leaders of the black community, he found that they favored integration because they were aware of the benefits of attending an educational institution in which whites had a stake. Not only were they likely to receive a more equal education, but they felt their social stature would increase. Further, they projected

¹⁰⁵ Judge Howard Bozeman, interview by author, 30 Jan. 1995.

¹⁰⁶ Spring, 339.

that future generations would have greater opportunities for participation in white-dominated society. On the other hand, there existed a group of Knox County blacks who indicated that they saw no probable benefits from attending school with whites because they felt they would never be accepted in white society regardless of where they went to school. Further, they expressed content with their neighborhood culture and saw integration as a potential creator of trouble.¹⁰⁷

Finally, with increased national civil rights activism and suggestions from the State Department of Education, Mildred Doyle abandoned her "wait and see" attitude and began to take specific steps with the Board of Education to desegregate the county schools. Despite her initial attitude toward integration, Mildred Doyle had always enjoyed a measure of respect from leaders of the black community--at least publicly. In an interview with Dr. Clinton Allison of The University of Tennessee in 1986, Miss Doyle recalled, "I knew practically every black family in Knox County."¹⁰⁸ She regularly attended community functions and, according to Mildred Patterson, "They just liked her. There again it was that business of being able to communicate. She would slap them on the back, hug them, carry on with them, you know, just like they were her long lost family."¹⁰⁹ Through a series of meetings in black community schools, Miss Doyle, along with central office staff and school board members explained to parents how the process of desegregation was to work, which

¹⁰⁷ Judge Howard Bozeman, interview by author, 30 Jan. 1995.

¹⁰⁸ Allison, A Conversation.

¹⁰⁹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

schools were to be closed, where their teachers were to be reassigned, and which specific white schools their children would attend.

In an effort not to alarm the white community, these meetings were purposefully held with little publicity or fanfare. In August of 1960, the Knox County Board of Education made its first formal steps toward desegregation by adopting a "grade-a-year" policy similar to the one federally approved for Knoxville City Schools. The initial policy held that black children beginning first grade in August of 1960 could attend the elementary school nearest their home if they so wished. If, however, the black school was closer to a student's home than the white one, they were to attend the black school as long as it remained open. No public announcement of the new policy was made to the white community until the first day of school. The black community learned of the board's policy through community meetings called by Miss Doyle.¹¹⁰ Chair of the school board Hop Bailey stated, "We decided to integrate after the city's plan was approved. Board members agreed it would be better to follow the plan of integration rather than to get involved in a series of law suits."¹¹¹ While first graders were officially "welcome" in white schools in Knox County beginning August 31, 1960, oddly no first graders enrolled. However, Miss Doyle reported that 12 black students attempted to enroll in higher

¹¹⁰ "Integration in Knox Due Today," The Knoxville Journal, 30 Aug. 1960, A2; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994; Minutes of the Knox County Board of Education, 26 Aug. 1960.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

grades at Bearden Elementary and Bearden High School, but "left quietly" when told by principals of the "one grade at a time" policy.¹¹²

Desegregation in Knox County occurred incrementally. By June 1963, school board policy on integration included grades one through six, and by April of 1964, it extended through grade twelve. By 1964-65, only four black schools with a total enrollment of 76 remained open at parents' request. At the end of the school year these facilities were closed, thus completing the process of integrating Knox County elementary schools. Also that year, the county halted transportation services and the payment of tuition for 100 remaining students to attend Austin High School. These students attended formerly all-white high schools in Knox County in the 1966-67 school year. According to a report filed in the central office, the process of desegregation proceeded smoothly.¹¹³ Further, Mildred Patterson indicated that in the schools themselves there were "no problems" with regard to race relations between students, and suggesting reasons for this added, "Well, there were so few [blacks] in each school--there might not have been more than two or three in a school."¹¹⁴

Perhaps the relatively small black population contributed to the feeling among central office staff that desegregation in Knox County went off without a hitch. Possibly, the absence of "major incidents" of overt violence or hostility satisfied Knox

¹¹² "First Graders in Knox Pass Up Integration," The Knoxville Journal, 31 Aug. 1960, A1.

¹¹³ "Progress of Desegregation in Knox County Schools," 1964-65; Miss Doyle also confirmed this interpretation in her interview with Allison in 1986, reporting only "very minor incidents."

¹¹⁴ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

County administrators that all went well. Knoxville City Schools, with a much larger enrollment of black students than Knox County, reported more unrest in the schools due to race relations between newly integrated blacks and whites.¹¹⁵ But the voices of African Americans in Knox County are not heard in official records. It is impossible to know exactly what thoughts passed through the minds of black students catapulted into the overwhelmingly white environment of Knox County schools. Perhaps racist white students would have felt seriously threatened had there been greater numbers of blacks "invading" their schools. It is difficult to say with certainty.

While Mildred Doyle herself did not immediately embrace the Court's decision in *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* by insisting on integrating Knox County Schools, she did not actively oppose desegregation or minority civil rights. It is likely that her failure to comply initially was a political decision designed to keep peace with opposition on the school board and in the citizenry at large. Mildred Doyle was no more racist than other Tennesseans of her generation--in fact, her innate sympathy for "the underdog"¹¹⁶ likely made her less so. Yet, laissez-faire attitudes such as hers and members of the Knox County Board of Education unfortunately hindered progress of the civil rights movement in America.

¹¹⁵ "Integration Case Appeal Undecided," The Knoxville Journal, 31 Aug. 1960, A2.

¹¹⁶ Numerous colleagues in education and politics spoke of this characteristic in Mildred Doyle. For example: Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994; Dr. Richard Yoakley, interview by author, 14 Oct. 1994; Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994; Dr. Samuel Bratton, 15 March 1994; Hal Clements, Jr., letter to Mildred Doyle, 8 July 1982, Personal Files.

The "one grade at a time" policy sent subtle messages to blacks about the extent of their welcome. Further, the policy stipulation allowing black children to attend white schools only if the white school was closer to their homes contained racist overtones because "most of the Negroes live in little pockets in the county where the school they attended last year is closer to their homes than the previously all-white schools."¹¹⁷

Introduction of the Middle School Concept

Throughout the 1960s American public education witnessed a move toward the reorganization of elementary schools and junior highs into middle schools. This innovative organizational trend reflected an awareness of and sensitivity to the developmental range unique to students in the liminal state between childhood and adolescence. Middle schools usually included grades six, seven, and eight, or grades five through eight with a student age range of 10 or 11 to 14. In 1969 over 1000 middle schools operated in school districts across the country.¹¹⁸ Under Mildred Doyle, Knox County pioneered the middle school concept in East Tennessee in 1969. Aside from addressing an awareness of the unique developmental stages of middle school aged children, this organizational plan was seen as a vehicle by which tremendous overcrowding in the elementary schools could be relieved. The vast numbers of elementary-aged children entering Knox County schools throughout the

¹¹⁷ "Integration in Knox Due Today," The Knoxville Journal, 30 Aug. 1960, A2.

¹¹⁸ Theodore Moss, Middle School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 1-41.

1960s surprised administrators, causing them to radically rethink their projected building plans. Classroom teachers and principals expressed concern to Miss Doyle and the central office staff that the inadequacy of building facilities was negatively affecting instruction. Further, junior high schools operating in the Knoxville City system were considered by county educators to be run like "little high schools," not developmentally suitable for youngsters in the upper elementary grades.¹¹⁹

In her usual style, the superintendent scheduled inservice meetings in which principals, teachers, and supervisors of instruction could brainstorm possible solutions. After an exhaustive search for alternatives, they reached the conclusion that the county should abandon the decades old 8-4 organizational pattern in which grades one through eight comprised elementary school and high schools included the ninth through twelfth grades. Under the proposed plan, elementary schools would house grades one through five; new middle schools would include grades six, seven and eight; and grades nine through twelve would continue in high schools.¹²⁰

Mildred Patterson and Director of Instruction Beecher Clapp traveled to schools in Indiana and Colorado where the innovative middle school concept had been successfully implemented. They observed the dynamics of classroom instruction, examined curricular materials, and talked extensively to teachers and principals. Impressed with what they learned, the two administrators returned to Miss Doyle with

¹¹⁹ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

¹²⁰ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994; "The Middle School—A Rationale," Knox County Schools, Jan. 1968, 1-12.

their new knowledge and recommended that Knox County begin a middle school program.¹²¹

Among the aims of Knox County educators for the middle school program were the selection of quality teachers and the development of individualized programs of instruction. Mildred Doyle, Mildred Patterson, and Beecher Clapp realized the need to select teachers who were committed not only to the understanding of child and adolescent development but to curricular innovation and the middle school philosophy. Hence, all teachers chosen to work in Knox County middle schools demonstrated such commitments. The central office organized inservice training programs to enhance teacher preparation.

In addition to the assembly of a quality teaching staff, Doyle, Patterson, and Clapp felt that this transitional phase in students' lives required personalized instructional programs for each child. Teachers wrote and gathered curricular materials organized around the instructional topics of learning skills, art in contemporary living, and personal development.¹²² The program proved highly successful. By the time Superintendent Doyle was defeated in 1976, Knox County had created seven middle schools.

¹²¹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

¹²² "The Middle School," 6-12.

Extended School Year Plan and System-wide Curriculum Project

The extended school year pilot program instituted at Farragut High School in 1974-75 represented the last major educational innovation of Miss Doyle's career as Knox County superintendent. Accompanying this plan was a large-scale, longterm curriculum development project involving several hundred teachers and administrators that had begun work in the 1973-74 school year. The purpose of the project was to create a standardized curriculum to be used at all grade levels county-wide focusing on the mastery of certain basic skills. This idea to rewrite the curriculum was really "spearheaded" by Beecher Clapp rather than Miss Doyle or Mildred Patterson.¹²³

The logic beneath the year-round school plan stemmed directly from social efficiency rhetoric and the purpose was to eliminate wasted time and space by using school buildings for instruction throughout the entire calendar year. Mildred Doyle was bothered by school buildings that lay empty for several months each summer. She and her staff divided the school year into 45-day blocks called quinesters. Students and their parents could select any four of the five blocks for actual instruction time and use the fifth for "summer" vacation.¹²⁴

In order for the project to work, curricula had to be developed so that students could successfully enter and exit the program according to the quinester plan, and so their progress could be formally evaluated at the end of each quinester. Since participation in the quinester model was voluntary at Farragut, there were students

¹²³ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

¹²⁴ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

enrolled in school who chose to remain on the traditional two-semester plan. Hence, curricular organization had to be flexible enough to work for those students. Further, Knox County's longterm goal was to develop a curriculum guide that would serve system-wide needs. Sam Bratton of the central office helped organize an unusually large committee to tackle this task:

We got a lot of people together that didn't normally get together--teachers, administrators, and consultants working together on that kind of a scale. I mean we had probably 300 people participating in writing curriculum. It was interesting.¹²⁵

Many stimulating debates over the curricular and instructional philosophies of Knox County punctuated group meetings, and participants engaged in spirited conversation with regard to the pros and cons of breaking with tradition. The large group was divided into smaller groups designated by subject matter specialties and led by supervisors. The groups began work by defining curricular goals for kindergarten through twelfth grade. Following the development of program goals, groups began to focus on writing specific objectives for subject area content. Also included in the groups' work was the task of organizing the curriculum into 45-day modules to fit the extended school year model. The final tasks in the ongoing project were to design and write "curriculum packages or guides for instruction."¹²⁶ Implementation of the new system-wide curriculum began in the 1974-75 school year along with the pilot program for the year-round school at Farragut High.

¹²⁵ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interviews by author, 4 Mar. 1994 and 15 Mar. 1994.

¹²⁶ Carol E. Baker, 145.

While the new curriculum appeared to be successful in practice from the perspective of administrators and teachers, Miss Doyle discontinued the extended school year program following its second year. According to Sam Bratton, the year-round program collapsed due to economic reasons:

We didn't have enough people choose to be different to make it economically feasible The people that participated in it thought it was great--students, parents, teachers, and principals. Miss Doyle felt it was costing too much.¹²⁷

Participation in the program was voluntary, and because its format broke radically with tradition, many parents chose not to volunteer. Most wanted to continue taking family vacations in summer months. Thus, there were not enough students attending school during the summer quinesters to justify spending the money required to operate the building. Sam Bratton characterized the experiment as one in which "the operation was successful, but the patient died."¹²⁸

At the time of Mildred Doyle's defeat, the implementation process for all content areas in the system-wide curriculum was incomplete. Completion was slated for the 1978-79 school year. However, the model had already become recognized by the State Department of Education as a valuable innovation and a desirable move toward greater accountability. In fact, the State Department, in large part adopted this basic skills curriculum for use as the official Tennessee State Curriculum in Lamar Alexander's Better Schools Program. Beecher Clapp, Director of Instruction and the mastermind behind the plan, eventually moved to Nashville to supervise

¹²⁷ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 15 Mar. 1994.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

operation of the program at the state level as a Deputy Commissioner of Education.¹²⁹

It appears that pervasive national trends motivated Mildred Doyle's administration to rewrite the curriculum of Knox County schools to emphasize instruction in basic skills. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the educational arena experienced a move toward greater accountability due to published research reports and a widespread public perception that schools churned out great numbers of high school graduates "who could not spell or write a sentence, and who did not know some basic information in science and history."¹³⁰ These concerns called for a move toward teaching curricula that focused on the acquisition of basic skills and the increased use of large-scale standardized assessments for competency. Many states have now instituted such curricula and testing programs. Not only are students targeted for competency testing by advocates of accountability, but teachers must also meet standards of competency, often determined by state departments of education.

Critics of the accountability movement hold that:

Accountability may turn the schools from humane, spontaneous, creative places that encourage positive self-concepts and success, to cold formal places with measurement procedures and clearly delineated objectives allowing for little spontaneity and creativity.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Mildred Patterson, interviews by author, 9 Mar. 1994 and 8 June 1994; Terri Weintraub, "'Basic Skills First' Author Workaholic for School Reform," The Knoxville Journal, 13 Jan. 1984, A1.

¹³⁰ Jeanne H. Ballantine, The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1993), 383-85.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 385.

Of Mildred Doyle's 30 years of educational innovation with a commitment to democracy, creativity, and curricular enrichments for students, her efforts to shift to a standardized, basic skills curriculum seem somewhat out of character--regardless of how much control she transferred into the hands of Beecher Clapp. For the Mildred Doyle of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, school was an exciting place with room in the curriculum and the classroom for creativity and spontaneity. While she certainly felt basic skills were important, she never seemed to place this aspect of schooling over attending to the social and emotional needs of children while involving them in a variety of enrichment activities such as music and art. According to Mildred Patterson, "She believed in enrichment. In fact, she went way beyond state requirements always in Knox County."¹³² As Miss Doyle was getting older, did she let go of the reins for Beecher Clapp to step in in order to boost his career? Perhaps Miss Doyle was grooming Clapp for the superintendency by giving him more responsibility for determining the future direction of the school program. Or perhaps Knox County was simply reflecting national trends in the educational arena.

The End of an Era

Apparently, authorizing a complete curricular rewrite which gave more weight to basic skills was not the only thing Mildred Doyle did that was out of character for her during the early 1970s. Carol Baker identified several unusual moves made by

¹³² Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

the superintendent that, according to people who knew her well, likely influenced her political defeat in 1976.¹³³

Several years prior to the final election, Superintendent Doyle involved herself in state and city political contests totally out of character for her. In 1974, she campaigned vigorously for Dr. Nat Winston in the Republican gubernatorial primary. Winston lost the primary bid to Lamar Alexander. The following year, she accepted one of six chairships of the Knoxville mayoral campaign for incumbent Mayor Kyle Testerman. Testerman was defeated by Democratic candidate Randy Tyree.

According to Judge Howard Bozeman, interviewed by Baker in 1976:

There are unwritten [political] rules in East Tennessee and Knox County: Don't get mixed up in party primaries and a county official does not participate in a race for mayor in the City of Knoxville.¹³⁴

While Mildred Doyle was most certainly aware of such unwritten political rules, she dared to ignore them. Such activity likely influenced her defeat because it resulted in a loss of Republican party support in her last election bid.

While this uncharacteristically flagrant political activity could certainly have influenced the election's outcome, close friends, relatives, and colleagues generally cite another likely reason for Mildred's defeat.¹³⁵ In the late summer of 1975 Mildred Doyle announced publicly that she planned to retire following the 1975-76

¹³³ Carol E. Baker, 148-49.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 149.

¹³⁵ Events described in the following paragraphs were discussed in interviews with Howard Bozeman, Samuel Bratton, Faye Cox, Ruth Doyle Hilton, Earl Hoffmeister, Mildred Patterson, Gordon Sams, and Richard Yoakley.

school year when her term expired. Miss Doyle was 71 years old. She told the Knoxville Journal that she planned to use her political background to run for a position on the Knox County Quarterly Court as did her brother, father, and grandfather before her.¹³⁶

Several months later on December 1, 1975, the Knox County Education Association paid tribute to the legendary educator at a gathering at Doyle High School. Colleagues celebrated the superintendent's successes in office by warmly recalling her numerous accomplishments over the past 30 years. They told stories of memorable encounters with Mildred Doyle and the more creative members of the crew wrote poems in her honor.¹³⁷ The highlight of the celebration, however, was the gift of a new shiny, gold Cadillac, purchased by teacher contributions to the Mildred Doyle Appreciation Fund. While many thought this gathering in honor of Mildred Doyle was a kind of retirement party, what most Knox Countians did not know was that over the past months, the superintendent had been contemplating running for reelection.¹³⁸

To quell rumors that the Cadillac was intended as a retirement gift, the Chair of the Knox County Education Association published a letter to the editor of The Knoxville News-Sentinel stating that the celebration at Doyle High School had been planned as a birthday party for Miss Doyle and the car was a birthday present--not a

¹³⁶ "Doyle Won't Seek Reelection," The Knoxville Journal, 7 Aug. 1975, A1.

¹³⁷ I tried in vain to locate these poems. No one seems to be able to recall their fate.

¹³⁸ Al Rogers, "Are Doyle 'Retirement' and Rankin Remap Plan Tied to Power Move?" The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 4 Jan., 1976, A1.

retirement gift.¹³⁹ Approximately one month later Mildred Doyle announced her plans to run again for superintendent in the Republican Primary in May.¹⁴⁰ Friends and colleagues cite her wavering stance on whether to retire or run once more as having contributed to the public perception of a loss of confidence in her decision-making capacities.

According to Sam Bratton, Miss Doyle really wanted to see Beecher Clapp succeed her in the superintendent's office, but knew that he probably could not get elected in Knox County because, "He wasn't a political animal. He was a tremendous educator, very bright, but he was not a politician. He was not a back slapper."¹⁴¹ Although the highly qualified Beecher Clapp was a graduate of Teachers College, Columbia and a committed veteran educator, Mildred Doyle was apparently convinced that he was not an effective politician. After she announced her forthcoming retirement, she began to escort Beecher to political gatherings to introduce him to Republican leaders. Party leaders confessed that they would support him in the Primary Election if that was Mildred's wish, but that they could not guarantee his success in the General Election for reasons much like those described by Sam Bratton. According to Miss Doyle, party members repeatedly told her: "He's too . . . well, he's not the kind of folks that can get down on the level of the common people and

¹³⁹ "They Charge Inaccuracies in Article About Supt. Doyle," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 11 Jan. 1976, B3.

¹⁴⁰ "Dr. Doyle Announces Election Bid," The Knoxville Journal, 20 Feb. 1976, A1.

¹⁴¹ Dr. Samuel Bratton, interview by author, 4 Mar. 1994.

talk to 'em."¹⁴² Further, Knox County principals expressed to Mildred that they had no confidence that Beecher could win, asking that she reconsider her decision to retire. Miss Doyle explained that the combination of principals' underconfidence in Beecher, "plus the fact that some of the leaders in the Party said, 'Now we've got to have a strong ticket, and there's nobody as yet that's emerged and we want you to run.' This is when I made the decision to run again."¹⁴³ Mildred Patterson believes that while pressure from her staff contributed to Miss Doyle's decision to run, it ultimately came down to Party loyalty and the fact that, "Mildred Doyle just couldn't stand the thought of a Democrat being elected superintendent."¹⁴⁴

Patterson had uneasy feelings from the beginning that Mildred Doyle could not be reelected and tried to persuade her not to run again. She believed that Mildred's change of heart could be held against her in the public eye. Further, rumors circulated that once elected, Mildred planned to step down after several months in office, thus using her power to name her successor to fill the remaining years of her term. According to Patterson, "There were three of us--the music supervisor, a librarian, and I who did our best to keep her from running. If she had retired, it would have been so much better."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Carol E. Baker, 151.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 1 Mar. 1995.

¹⁴⁵ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

Her opponent was Democrat Earl Hoffmeister, a native Knoxvilleian and an assistant principal at Central High School in the Knoxville City Schools. Mildred Doyle gave Hoffmeister his start in education as she hired him into his first teaching position at Powell High School in 1955 when he was in his 20s. In addition to teaching for Knox County, Hoffmeister repaired typewriters for the system for one dollar per machine to make extra money. He eventually worked his way up from the classroom into his position with the city schools, and sought the county superintendency because he said he felt it was time for a change. Hoffmeister's campaign centered largely around an attack on the open space classroom idea implemented in several county schools in the early 1970s. He gathered information on his own concerning public perception of the concept by talking to community members and asking questions. He stated that students provided him with a large portion of information about the open classrooms.¹⁴⁶ According to The Knoxville Journal, Hoffmeister maintained that the open space concept contributed to a decline in academics and proposed a return to individual classrooms in the open space schools.¹⁴⁷ However, a study conducted by evaluators from The University of Tennessee did not support his claims that academic performance had suffered as a result of open space classes.¹⁴⁸ Further, Miss Doyle indicated that no student was forced to attend open space classes and that parents were given a choice about where

¹⁴⁶ Earl Hoffmeister, interview by author, 1 Feb. 1995.

¹⁴⁷ "Open Space Classrooms, Discipline Spark County School Race Debate," The Knoxville Journal, 26 July, 1976, A1.

¹⁴⁸ "Open Space Classroom Evaluation Presented," The Knoxville Journal, 7 Aug. 1975, A1.

their children would be placed. Aside from the issue of open space classrooms, Hoffmeister expressed concern over disciplinary procedures and drug use in school.¹⁴⁹

During the campaign months, anonymous letters circulated about Mildred Doyle, blatantly attacking her personal character. The letters had been duplicated on a ditto machine and were poorly written, containing numerous grammatical errors. The charges, completely irrelevant to her competence as school chief, insinuated that Miss Doyle was homosexual.¹⁵⁰ Earl Hoffmeister claims no connection with the letters and maintains that he ran a clean campaign. He suggested that perhaps Miss Doyle's own party may have been responsible for the smear letters. Upon learning of the existence of the letters early in the race, he telephoned Mildred Doyle to assure her that he knew nothing of their origin and that he vehemently disapproved of such underhanded tactics. According to Hoffmeister, Miss Doyle expressed her certainty that he was not responsible for circulating the letters. Hoffmeister admitted, "It was a big relief off my mind that she didn't believe I had anything to do with those letters."¹⁵¹ He described his great respect for Mildred Doyle and her masterful accomplishments as Knox County Superintendent, claiming to have run against her only because he felt it was time for a change in administration--not because he had

¹⁴⁹ "Open Space Classrooms, Discipline Spark County School Race Debate," The Knoxville Journal, 26 July 1976, 20.

¹⁵⁰ Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994; Dr. Richard Yoakley, 14 Oct. 1994; Faye Cox, 5 Dec. 1994. Faye Cox could not bring herself to actually read the letter because she was heartbroken that someone would do that to Miss Doyle.

¹⁵¹ Earl Hoffmeister, interview by author, 1 Feb. 1995.

personal problems with Mildred Doyle's character. In fact, he explained that he "could [not] care less" about Mildred Doyle's private life.¹⁵²

Did those responsible for circulating the letters have some kind of vendetta against the popular and respected superintendent or did they sense that smear tactics were necessary in order to drastically alter public perception? In either case, this unusual political manipulation suggests that someone definitely wanted to see the superintendency change hands in 1976. Prior to this election, neither Mildred Doyle's few political challengers nor Knox County citizens ever openly attempted to attack her private life. However, while the letters' contents were intended to provoke damaging perceptions, those affiliated with the campaign decided not to address the letters publicly, letting the situation evaporate on its own.¹⁵³

In her campaign Mildred Doyle expressed concern with regard to the priority Hoffmeister could give to the superintendent's office since he operated a construction company in addition to his duties as an educator. Hoffmeister claimed that his knowledge of construction actually gave him an edge because he can "recognize poor construction and remedies."¹⁵⁴ Further, Miss Doyle attacked Hoffmeister's poor voting record. Apparently he had voted in neither primary nor general elections for the preceding ten years. She also criticized his failure to join state and national educational organizations as well as his poor attendance at school board meetings and

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Dr. Richard Yoakley, interview by author, 14 Oct. 1994.

¹⁵⁴ "Open Space Classrooms, Discipline Spark County School Race Debate," The Knoxville Journal, 26 July 1976, 20.

principals' meetings.¹⁵⁵ In an earlier article in The Knoxville Journal, Miss Doyle claimed the Knox County school system to be one of the nation's best, and cited the range of individuals "from preschoolers to adults" who were served in various school programs. Further, she described the tremendous growth in student population and achievements in the building program since annexation in 1963.¹⁵⁶

In the August General Election Mildred Doyle was defeated by Earl Hoffmeister.¹⁵⁷ She lost the contest by 1,130 votes, a defeat "Miss Tough Guy"¹⁵⁸ would always find difficult to accept. The superintendent later disclosed that she felt her Party turned on her because she "wouldn't turn the school into a political machine,"¹⁵⁹ and that Republican leaders had grown jealous of the power she had accumulated over her tenure. She described the experience of her defeat as having been "stabbed in the back."¹⁶⁰

For 30 years, supporters of Mildred Doyle gathered in the central office for the inevitable victory party following election returns. Even family members from out of town frequently joined the celebrations. On the night of August 5 no celebration occurred. The long tables of party food were left untouched as shock sank in that an era had ended. Tears were shed. Relatives quietly returned to

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Klebenow, A9.

¹⁵⁷ "Doyle Defeated, Jenkins Wins" The Knoxville Journal, 6 Aug. 1976, A1.

¹⁵⁸ Description of Mildred Doyle used by Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

¹⁵⁹ Miss Doyle quoted in Moxley, A8.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Atlanta. Friends and colleagues somberly expressed their sorrow to the superintendent who thought this night would never come. Miss Doyle's secretary Faye Cox remembered August 5, 1976 as "one of the saddest nights of my life."¹⁶¹ Mildred Patterson summed up Miss Doyle's reaction as such:

She never did get over it. She really didn't. She had thought, 'They can't get along without me. You know, I have all these people that I am responsible for and have to do for them.' Then they rejected her. She just never did get over that.¹⁶²

Finally, the time had come when Knox Countians expressed that they wanted a change in the leadership of their schools. Some residents believe that Miss Doyle could have defeated Hoffmeister had she never made the initial decision to retire and then changed her mind. Others, however, felt that it was simply time for a change of the guard. Perhaps it was time for someone else to take over as school chief because Mildred Doyle was destined for accomplishments of a different nature in the years ahead.

¹⁶¹ Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

¹⁶² Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 9 Mar. 1994.

CHAPTER 4

OLD HABITS DIE HARD: LIFE AFTER THE SUPERINTENDENCY

The fact that Mildred Doyle devoted 52 of her 84 years to the fields of education and public service significantly influenced the ways in which she chose to spend the remaining years of her life following her tenure as superintendent of Knox County Schools. That 13 year time span could hardly be termed "retirement," as the gray-haired former superintendent remained in the public eye, preserving the Doyle tradition of civic and political involvement. Miss Doyle continued to influence education by serving on committees and service boards throughout Knox County and the state of Tennessee. Further, she received in her later years numerous additional honors and awards for her collective contributions to the community, both before and after the superintendency. Moreover, her well-known sense of humor and tendency to play the entertainer while standing behind a podium caused her to remain a popular choice for local speaking engagements. This chapter examines aspects of the legendary educator's life from 1976 until her death in 1989. It traces her departure from the central office, her involvement in alternative education programs, the building of a public park to honor her family, various merit citations and awards she received, and finally, her death from cancer at age 84.

Saying Goodbye to the Central Office

For secretary Faye Cox, the only experience more personally painful than the thwarted victory party was the next morning's return to the central office, knowing that her days of closely interacting with the superintendent who "put her very best into anything that she did"¹ were now numbered. Faye Cox wishes retrospectively Miss Doyle had decided never to run in that final election, so she "could have gone out in her glory"² rather than contending with the pain of political defeat and feelings of rejection. As Mildred Doyle entered the building that day, she stoically hid her shock and sorrow by "keeping a stiff upper lip."³ The renowned superintendent, considered subconsciously by many to be a permanent fixture in the Knox County Schools, had been given three weeks to vacate her office.

Two weeks following the general election in which Earl Hoffmeister narrowly defeated Mildred Doyle, a Knoxville News-Sentinel photograph depicted the elderly superintendent clearing out her office. Cardboard boxes covered the floor behind her desk as she sorted and culled 30 years worth of school-related memorabilia, documents, and papers.⁴ One of Superintendent Doyle's quirky trademarks was the use of green ink for general notetaking about the office and writing rough drafts of

¹ Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Lois Thomas, "Departing Supt. Doyle Feels Funds Pose Biggest School System Obstacle," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 29 Aug. 1976, A1.

speeches. She used green ink to write everything except her official signature.⁵

Among the first requests Miss Doyle made of her clerical staff following her defeat was to remove every pen that contained green ink from the central office. With green pens gathered and boxes packed, Mildred officially departed the superintendent's post on September 1, 1976. Never again was she comfortable returning to the central office despite the fact that Earl Hoffmeister retained all of her staff. He expressed a great deal of outward respect for the venerable educator, and suggested that as a novice superintendent, he could have benefitted greatly from frequent consultation with her on school matters.⁶ The embittered Miss Doyle, however, never made her wealth of educational and political expertise accessible to Hoffmeister.

Mildred Doyle told reporters in 1976 that she had leisure plans to travel "west, to Alaska, maybe to Europe," and to attend sporting events. Still the lover of baseball, she indicated that she would like to attend a World Series competition. Further, she added, "I've got my greenhouse and my flowers and maybe now I'll have time for my garden."⁷ Because Mildred Patterson retired from the Knox County Schools upon the defeat of her companion, she shared in Mildred Doyle's

⁵ Not only was the superintendent known for her use of green ink, but her signature itself became somewhat of a classic image in itself through the years, compared by Knoxville News-Sentinel writer Sam Venable with the signature of John Hancock on the Declaration of Independence. He wrote upon her death that thousands of former Knox County students "will remember the flowing 'Mildred E. Doyle'—with the 'E.' and the 'Doyle' connected" as they recall their report cards or other school correspondence. See Sam Venable, "Mildred Doyle's Caring Left Touch on the Lives of 'Her' Many Children," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 9 May 1989, A6.

⁶ Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994; Earl Hoffmeister, interview by author, 1 Feb. 1995.

⁷ "Departing Supt. Doyle," A5.

leisure life after the superintendency. They traveled the United States together. Miss Doyle did tour the western states as she had planned and was taken with not only the landscape, but with romantic notions of cowboy culture. She delighted in visiting the grave sites of notorious outlaws and gunfighters and watching the amusing antics of furry prairie dogs. Doyle and Patterson also spent time at their apartment in Gatlinburg watching the clear mountain river flow just below their balcony.⁸ Back at home on Maplewood Drive, Miss Doyle planted zucchini and tomatoes in her vegetable garden and worked in her greenhouse growing prized orchids. She also continued to keep abreast of sociopolitical happenings which she and Patterson regularly discussed at length. Patterson's eyes twinkle as she recalls never being bored with the "opinionated" Mildred Doyle around: "We talked about everything. She settled all problems--locally, statewide, nationally. She knew everything that was going on!"⁹

When she was not discussing current events or politics, the former athlete watched many professional baseball games on television during those years. She was particularly interested in the Atlanta Braves but, would "watch the Chicago Cubs just to hear Harry Caray sing 'Take Me Out to the Ballgame' in the 7th inning."¹⁰

⁸ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994; Patterson enjoyed staying at the apartment more than Doyle because the lack of a yard forced the former superintendent to be more sedentary than she preferred.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Cynthia Cummins, "Mildred Doyle--Public Service is Her Life," The South Knoxville Packet, 22 June 1987, 2; Aside from watching ballgames on television, Miss Doyle enjoyed programs like "The Andy Griffith Show" and "Bonanza." The educator's taste in movies leaned toward westerns--or as Mildred Patterson put it, "blood and thunder."

Mildred Doyle even talked Patterson into traveling with her to Florida on several occasions to watch the Atlanta Braves and other pro teams in spring training. On these trips Patterson preferred to stay in the motel, yet she chuckled like a dutiful companion, saying "I sat through more baseball than I ever wanted to."¹¹ The soft-spoken Mildred Patterson preferred music to baseball, and in the meantime, she remained involved in the Knoxville music scene and eventually started a choral group for senior citizens called the Singing Seniors. The only requirements for membership were to be a senior citizen and to want to sing.¹² Actually, prior to retirement Mildred Patterson had served as longtime director of the Knox County Teachers Chorus, a group Mildred Doyle, as music lover and school chief, supported enthusiastically by attending every performance, and by making funds available for them to perform across the state as often as possible. While Mildred Doyle neither sang nor played an instrument, Mrs. Patterson described her companion as "an avid consumer of music," loving classical, jazz, and folk compositions--anything but country and western.¹³

Aside from involvement with baseball, gardening, and music, the two Mildreds also relaxed at home with their pet cat, Tom, who they readily pampered with affection and lavish treats. According to Mildred Doyle's sister Ruth, "They fed

¹¹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994; Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995.

¹² Bill Maples, "Choral Society Award: Patterson to Be Honored for Public Service and Creation of Singing Seniors," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 23 Nov. 1986, B3.

¹³ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994. The Knox County Teachers Chorus was well-known across the state and won numerous awards for superior performances in choral competitions. Mildred Doyle was highly proud of the group's achievements.

it bacon. They fed it watermelon. They fed it everything good." She added, "I used to look at that fat thing and say, 'Kids are starving to death and you are feeding this damn cat.'"¹⁴ Indeed Tom's feline charm and odd eating habits afforded them a great deal of pleasure and amusement in the years following their retirement. Both were heartbroken at having to put him to sleep when he contracted cancer.¹⁵ Despite Mildred Doyle's enjoyment of leisure activities with Patterson and Tom, within several years she began to yearn for the public arena she understood so well. Because old habits die hard, she soon took on a very innovative educational project and engaged in additional community service activities.

The Alternative Center for Learning

In the late 1970s Mildred Doyle became increasingly concerned over the fate of secondary students who had been suspended or expelled from school. Discipline problems such as drug use, smoking, and vandalism in schools were on the rise.¹⁶ Hence, the rate of suspensions and expulsions in both Knox County and Knoxville City Schools had climbed and Miss Doyle felt the schools had basically "given up"¹⁷ on these repeat offenders. The veteran educator felt that something should be done to enable these students to continue their education in an environment that could help

¹⁴ Ruth Doyle Hilton, interview by author, 25 Feb. 1994.

¹⁵ Ruth Doyle Hilton, interview by author, 25 Feb. 1994; Cynthia Moxley, "Benevolent Dictator: For 30 Years, Mildred Doyle Got Things Done As School Chief," The Knoxville Journal, 4 July 1985, A1.

¹⁶ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June 1994.

¹⁷ Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995.

them succeed. She told a reporter in 1981, "You can't just kick them out on the streets. Much concern should be given to these youngsters who will someday be members of our society and made into productive citizens."¹⁸ She understood that students often come to school with a variety of problems which make success in school nearly impossible. She realized that different students cope in different ways, and that behavior problems do not signify an absence of ability to make it in school. She felt that given a more appropriate learning environment, an alternative to the regular classroom, these students could work out their problems and complete their education.¹⁹ According to colleague Dick Yoakley, "She was an avid gardener, incidentally, so she understood the meaning of preparing an environment where something could grow."²⁰

Not a believer in passive visions, Miss Doyle immediately took her concerns to Dean William Coffield of the College of Education at The University of Tennessee to see if she could develop pathways for collaboration on her idea to start a school for these youngsters.²¹ Dean Coffield expressed interest in Miss Doyle's plan and suggested she talk with Dr. Robert DeLozier who worked within the Dean's office as

¹⁸ "Mildred Doyle to Speak," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 22 Feb. 1981, Photocopy, Doyle Family File, McClung Collection. This article relayed that Miss Doyle was to speak on the idea for the Alternative Center for Learning in an address entitled "An Alternate Opportunity for Young People" at St. John's Episcopal Church.

¹⁹ Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995; Dr. Richard Yoakley, interview by author, 14 Oct. 1994.

²⁰ Dr. Richard Yoakley, interview by author, 14 Oct. 1994.

²¹ Not only did Miss Doyle approach local educators with her idea, but she took opportunities to meet with local PTAs to share her vision and to report the progress of the school after its inception. For example, see Tricia Landen, letter to Mildred Doyle, 16 Feb. 1983, Personal files.

a field services consultant for the College of Education. Doyle and DeLozier began instantly to brainstorm about possible reasons students became discipline problems in the eyes of the schools, and considered plausible avenues for helping them "turn around."²² They wanted to prevent students from being repeatedly kicked out of school, or worse, dropping out altogether. By offering alternative intervention strategies such as individualized attention and counseling, they wanted to challenge the "prevailing attitude that suspending and expelling students from school [would] automatically cause the student to obey rules and regulations and behave better."²³

With a cadre of central office administrators and principals in both Knox County and Knoxville City school systems supporting the efforts of Doyle and DeLozier, they began to develop a structure for an Alternative Center for Learning. Miss Doyle stressed that the Alternative School could not be affiliated with the public schools in terms of governance because regular school board policies were much too rigid to serve the needs of the kind of alternative educational structure they envisioned. They decided that the school was to be a non-profit organization, funded through both public and private sources. Bob DeLozier wrote grants to obtain funding through government agencies and private organizations while Mildred Doyle used her political clout to sway the Knox County Court for financial support. DeLozier

²² Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995. DeLozier indicated that many faculty members of the College of Education at The University of Tennessee refused to work with Mildred Doyle because of her strong personality and definite ideas. He explained that these professors preferred not to share the control over projects in which they were involved.

²³ Marti Levary, "Troubled Teens Put To The Test at Special School," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 10 Feb. 1985, B1.

remembered Mildred's early appeals to the County Court: "Of course the County Court [members] all knew her because she was a politician. I don't know if the program meant so much to the County Court than [did] the fact that Miss Doyle was asking for the money."²⁴ The Court agreed to contribute approximately \$15,000 per year to the program. Miss Doyle also obtained funding from the Knoxville City Commission. Further, she went directly to Governor Lamar Alexander for support, and he eventually adapted the original idea for use in his Better Schools Program several years later. In fact, it became Tennessee law under Alexander's administration in the early 1980s that school districts must provide some form of an alternative program for students who had been suspended or expelled.²⁵ In addition to the Governor's support, the public schools agreed to contribute funds equivalent to those a student would receive per year in a regular classroom. DeLozier's initial grant-writing efforts netted over \$200,000 for the operation of the school. Through such collaborative efforts and cooperation, the Alternative Center for Learning was opened in 1980 with Bob DeLozier serving as director. Attendance at the Center was voluntary and students were enrolled on a first-come-first-served basis. They remained enrolled for the length of their suspension or, if expelled from a public school system, they stayed until they graduated. Not only were students from Knox County welcome at the Center, but it handled students from surrounding East

²⁴ Quote from Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995; Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 8 June, 1994.

²⁵ Jane Gibbs DuBose, "Knox School Providing Model for Educating Problem Student," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 13 Feb. 1983, B9; Dr. Richard Yoakley, interview by author, 14 Oct. 1994.

Tennessee counties.²⁶ In 1985 DeLozier reported that the school had a lengthy waiting-list of students who sought to enroll and that any available openings always filled up rapidly. During that time the school averaged "about one new student a day."²⁷

According to the plan devised by Doyle and DeLozier, the central function of the Alternative Center was to get secondary students back into the regular classroom as soon as possible and eventually graduated with a high school diploma. The Center had four classrooms, one for each grade, 9-12. Their policy stated that maximum class size was not to exceed 12 students because they felt that closer student-teacher contact would provide a more effective learning environment for these troubled youngsters. Further, Miss Doyle insisted that the Alternative Center provide comprehensive psychological services for its students by assigning counselors to work within each classroom. She wanted to ensure that students had the opportunity to work out personal and family problems which might be the root of behaviors deemed unacceptable by the public schools. Psychological services at the Center provided for students to receive one-on-one counseling twice a week and to attend group sessions once a week. Counselors at the Alternative Center, in concert with social workers, mental health workers, and juvenile court officials, worked not only with students, but

²⁶ Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995.

²⁷ Levary, B1.

with their families in order to facilitate understanding and cooperation between all individuals involved.²⁸

According to Bob DeLozier, the Center provided the same basic curricular and academic resources that students received in the regular classroom. The Alternative Center employed a Curriculum Coordinator who met with public school personnel to determine exactly what subjects students were taking in school, what books were used, what content was to be covered, and what additional materials could benefit students. From that point the Curriculum Coordinator set up an individualized curriculum for students which enabled them to remain at a place at which they could re-enter the regular classroom without problems when their suspension or expulsion ended. The Center offered instruction in as many subject areas as possible given its resources.²⁹

Mildred Doyle was in many respects "a kid at heart" and she truly loved young people. In addition to her work with children in the public schools, she served on the Tennessee Children's Services Commission and continued her work with this agency until a few years before her death. Through her efforts as both a member and Chair of the governor-appointed Commission, she worked to create policy and influence a wide range of Tennessee legislation focusing on the rights of children and youth. It is likely that her close affiliation with this group fed her thinking and fueled her desire to create the Alternative Center. Mildred Doyle was genuinely dedicated

²⁸ Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995; Levary, B1.

²⁹ Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995.

toward working to ensure that young people were given a chance to enjoy the best life could offer. Hence, the Center became a part of her master plan. Within her role as superintendent she frequently visited schools, interacting regularly with students in the halls and on the playgrounds. Her affiliation with the Alternative Center enabled her to continue this pattern of contact with the youngsters she loved so much. For the first few years of its existence, Miss Doyle visited the students at the Center "every couple of days."³⁰ She would talk with them and get to know their personalities and life histories. About once a month she would bring them boxes of doughnuts. She became "really attached"³¹ to several students through the years, particularly ones who were having an especially difficult time. Her encouragement and confidence that these kids would "turn around" often provided the extra push they needed to envision different life goals for themselves. For example, she saw these students overcome drug and alcohol problems which had previously thwarted their success in school, and she watched them graduate and go on to find meaningful work or, in some cases, pursue a college degree. According to Bob DeLozier, many of these youth were headed for juvenile court, and the combination of services offered by the school, local social service agencies, and the special attention of Mildred Doyle prevented such a fate. As Miss Doyle's health began to deteriorate, she spent less and less time at the school and particularly with individual students, yet she visited until she was physically unable to continue. Mildred Doyle was extremely

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

proud of the work of the Center staff and of the individual students who used the opportunities provided by the school to turn their lives around.³²

While Mildred Doyle advocated the expansion of the social role of public schools to include, for example, health and psychological services for young people, she also realized that the public schools could not cure all social problems. She understood that a high level of "inter-agency cooperation" within the community was needed to balance the responsibility for the fate of children. Through the concept of the Alternative Center, she managed to obtain such cooperation and, according to colleague Dick Yoakley, the community, through various agencies, began to take responsibility for young people and problems they might have with school and family.³³

Of course DeLozier and Doyle encountered naysayers along the way who expressed skepticism that the efforts of the Center could make any significant difference in reducing dropout rates and the probability of juvenile delinquency, or of reducing behavior problems in children after their return to the regular classroom. High school principals cited a tendency for students to "go backwards"³⁴ when they returned to their original classroom setting. However, Bob DeLozier let percentages speak for themselves, reporting that while he was school director, 70 to 80 percent of students at the Center returned successfully to their regular schools and eventually

³² Ibid.

³³ Dr. Richard Yoakley, interview by author, 14 Oct. 1994.

³⁴ DuBose, B9.

graduated. He also included among his "success cases" the example of students who actually might drop out of school, but who found steady jobs and stayed out of trouble with the police. However, he explained that, unfortunately, the school does "have alumni at Brushy Mountain"³⁵ who did not respond positively to the offerings of the Center, got in trouble with the police, wound up in juvenile court and eventually in prison. Many of the students, however, enjoyed their experience at the Alternative Center and cited the level of caring and the one-on-one attention with faculty as contributing to their heightened self-concept and their success in school. DeLozier remembers students who returned to their regular classrooms only to deliberately breach school board policy and get suspended so they could return to the nurturing environment of the Alternative Center. He believes that approximately 90 percent of students preferred the Alternative Center over the regular classroom.³⁶

During his time as director, he described the difficulty of selecting staff members who shared in the original philosophy put forth by Miss Doyle. He sought people who rejected the use of punitive measures for dealing with "problem" students and who were "patient, understanding, have strong discipline but are not afraid of young people. In other words, they [must] have many of the characteristics of Jesus Christ."³⁷ Besides finding ideal staff members, another major difficulty DeLozier encountered was finding locations for the school from year to year: "Nobody wanted

³⁵ DeLozier quoted in Levary, B1. Brushy Mountain is a Tennessee state penitentiary.

³⁶ Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995; Levary, B1.

³⁷ DuBose, B9.

these children in their area. Knox County and the City had a lot of vacant space, but they didn't want us there."³⁸ Hence, the Center moved every year for three or four years and has had at least five homes over the past 15 years.

Its newest location is in the former Alice Bell Elementary School in a section of northeast Knoxville. Although the leadership of the Center has changed hands and the school has since become part of the Knox County system,³⁹ the original aim of "provid[ing] an environment to help students who need closer attention," set forth largely by Mildred Doyle, remains true.⁴⁰ Having added vocational courses, art, home economics, Latin and Spanish, school leaders wish the Alternative Center to be perceived as "a total learning process" much like regular schools.⁴¹ According to ACL students Stevie Irwin and Lucas Owen, the school still provides counseling services to help students cope with problems and it offers smaller classes in which students receive individual attention to facilitate learning.⁴² The voices of current students at the Alternative Center for Learning featured recently in the Knoxville News-Sentinel attest to the fact that the school, originally envisioned by Mildred

³⁸ Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995.

³⁹ Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994; According to Hicks who is Miss Doyle's niece and a teacher at the Alternative Center, "When she died, the funding died with her." At this point the facility was taken over by the Knox County Schools.

⁴⁰ "Fostering Change: ACL Has a New Home, Some New Ways," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 June 1994, B2.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Stevie Irwin, "School Addresses Individual Needs," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 June 1994, B2; Lucas Owen, "Smaller Classes One Advantage to Alternative Classroom Style," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 June 1994, B2.

Doyle, continues to project positive influences on those youth who have been failed by the "regular" system. The Alternative Center for Learning provided Mildred Doyle another vehicle through which she could "do what's best for the boys and girls of Knox County" even after she no longer served as superintendent. She once confided in Bob DeLozier that she felt that through her work with the Alternative Center, she in some respects helped youngsters more directly than she did as superintendent of the Knox County Schools. Retrospectively, she realized that as superintendent, she had so many administrative duties that they took away somewhat from her capacity to have direct contact with students.⁴³ Her caring influence lives on through the continuing efforts of the Alternative Center in helping troubled young people have a second chance at obtaining an education.

Helping Pregnant Teens and Unwed Mothers

By coincidence, Mildred Doyle's affiliation with the Alternative Center afforded her an additional opportunity to provide help for another group of students either forgotten or conveniently ignored by the public school system. Through her connection with the Center, she became aware of the efforts of Lyn Overholt who was concerned with high dropout rates among pregnant teenagers and unwed mothers. Overholt had been working to establish a childcare program at Rule High School, an inner city school with a high concentration of unwed mothers and teen pregnancies. Students who had no way to care for their children and simultaneously remain in

⁴³ Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995.

school were dropping out altogether. She wanted to start a program at Rule that provided daycare for the children of teenaged mothers so the mothers could remain in school and graduate.⁴⁴

Lyn Overholt's idea received tremendous flack from conservative school officials and community members who were appalled at the thought of accommodating in any way young mothers who bore children out of wedlock. Bob DeLozier explained that the opposing factions considered such efforts a message "telling teenagers to get pregnant and bring their child to school."⁴⁵ The school and community reaction in Knoxville resembled the current tide of opposition against any discussion of contraception or the distribution of condoms to high school students, reflecting the idea that access to such knowledge will increase incidences of premarital sex and pregnancy among teenagers. Learning of Overholt's efforts, Mildred Doyle was appalled at the lack of community concern for the fact that these teenagers who had every right to an education were effectively being denied that right because of conservative moral reactions to teen pregnancy. City school officials seemed to disregard the possibility that a teenager with a child could actually go on to live a full, productive life and provide adequately for her child if given a chance to complete her education.

Enter Mildred Doyle. While Miss Doyle certainly did not advocate premarital sex, she was able to see the bigger picture of personal and social disaster--young

⁴⁴ Dr. Robert DeLozier, interview by author, 29 Mar. 1995.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

mothers with no education or job skills with which to provide for their children.

Because Knoxville City School officials refused to allow such a program for unwed mothers to exist within Rule High School itself, Mildred Doyle and leaders of the Alternative Center devised a plan to make the program happen while respecting school policy. Hence, they furnished funds and rented a portable classroom building which they had moved to the parking lot at Rule High School. It was here that a childcare program was instituted for the benefit of unwed mothers, their children, and pregnant teens. The program was granted state certification as a childcare center and thus became eligible for state funds. Bob DeLozier described the program:

We set up a child-care program there and the mothers were required to come take care of their children during their free periods. We used it as a lab and high school students would come down there and [learn to] take care of the children. The fathers were even required to come down and take care of their children.⁴⁶

A nurse visited the child-care facility once a week and all children were given regular physical examinations. Young mothers learned such aspects of child care from how to change a diaper to how to spot a childhood illness. Further, the Alternative Center helped finance a van complete with baby seats to transport young mothers and their children to and from school each day. Bob DeLozier explained that during the years he was affiliated with the daycare center the program enabled many young mothers who had dropped out to return to school and graduate. He told of several cases in which the mothers eventually enrolled and graduated from The University of Tennessee--a feat he considers largely impossible without the existence of such a

⁴⁶ Ibid.

program. The childcare program continues to exist at West High School under the administration of the Knox County Schools.

The Charter E. Doyle Memorial Park

Mildred Doyle understood the importance of recreation for the healthy development of children and for the enjoyment of adults alike. Much of her own life was consumed by recreational and competitive athletics as a basketball and softball player before she turned to watching spectator sports on television in her later years. Early in her superintendency in 1950, she approached an aunt who was living in Kansas City about purchasing the 26-acre cow pasture located across the road from the Doyle Homeplace on Martin Mill Pike where the Superintendent currently resided with her brother "Pinky" and his family. Mildred possessed great sentimental attachment to the property which was part of the original land grant given to John Doyle in 1800. As a youngster the athletic Mildred played countless hours of baseball with her siblings in that cow pasture. Mildred's aunt agreed to the sale of the pasture in 1950 so the superintendent purchased and held the land until the early 1980s when she devised yet another community service plan.⁴⁷

Fred Flenniken, a political comrade of Mildred's, had recently been elected to the County Commission⁴⁸ from the 9th District. Flenniken had expressed interest

⁴⁷ Louise Henigman, "Park's New Nature Trail Has a Long History," The Knoxville Journal, 11 June 1986, D1.

⁴⁸ The Knox County Commission replaced the former Knox County Quarterly Court as the chief governing body of the county. The County Executive replaced the County Judge as head of the Commission.

during his campaign in seeing a public park developed in the central portion of South Knox County as there were only two existing parks south of the river--Bower Field near the Sevier County line and I.C. King Park on Alcoa Highway near the Blount County line. Mildred shared Flenniken's belief in the necessity of a centrally-located park, and, in 1983, she approached him about donating the 26 acres across from her Homeplace to the city and county for use by community residents. The land was valued at approximately \$83,000.⁴⁹ Knoxville Mayor Kyle Testerman and County Executive Dwight Kessel gratefully accepted the former superintendent's generous gift and promised to work cooperatively to see that the land was developed according to Miss Doyle's stringent, yet visionary specifications. In the official meeting, Mildred told Testerman and Kessel, "I'm glad both of you will be involved in it. The people of South Knoxville have been good to me and my family, and I wanted to return the favor and to preserve the name of my family in this way."⁵⁰

The Land and Water Conservation Fund, financed by the National Park Service, granted \$77,000 toward the development of Doyle Park. Both Knox County and Knoxville City governments matched those funds for construction of park facilities. Miss Doyle wanted the park to feature a nature trail, a softball field, a paved jogging trail, tennis courts, fitness courts, playground equipment, picnic areas with barbecue grills and tables, several covered pavilions, restrooms, and ample space for parking. Further, she wanted a full-time, live-in caretaker on the premises at all

⁴⁹ Bill Maples, "Mildred Doyle Gives Land to City, County for Park," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 24 Jan. 1984, B1.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

times. Clearly, she felt the park must cater to practically limitless recreational needs within a safe and well-tended environment. By early 1985, Miss Doyle's specific requests required an additional \$38,000 so the county and city governments contributed \$19,000 each to see the completion of facilities for which they were to share responsibility for regular maintenance.⁵¹

The autumn sun sparkled on the crisp October day as groundbreaking ceremonies were held for the Charter E. Doyle Memorial Park, named for Mildred's civic-minded father who cared about his community and always encouraged his 11 children to enjoy outdoor recreation. Many years before, Charter Doyle himself joined his wife and children for Saturday afternoon baseball games on these fields. Accompanying the former superintendent to the groundbreaking ceremony were 250 students from neighboring Moreland Heights Elementary School where Mildred had attended as a student over seventy years earlier.⁵² The youngsters sat crosslegged on the ground, listening attentively as Miss Doyle described the delightful times she shared playing there as a child. She told the children "to utilize it and make the most of it, because it's for you as well as everyone else in this community."⁵³ Wearing a construction worker's hard hat, the 80 year old ex-superintendent vigorously scooped the first shovelful of dirt, signifying that construction on the park was eminent. In

⁵¹ Roger Harris, "Ready or Not, Doyle Park Will Meet Public," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 19 April 1985, B1; Tom Rutledge, "Doyle Nature Trail Opens With Ceremony," The South Knoxville Packet, 16 June 1986, 3.

⁵² When Mildred attended elementary school there, the school was known as Moore's School. The name was later changed to Moreland Heights.

⁵³ Ronda Robinson, "Children File In For Doyle Park Groundbreaking," The South Knoxville Packet, 23 Oct. 1984, 1.

addition to the school children from Moreland Heights, also present at the ceremony were representatives of the extensive Doyle family, enthusiastic community members, and officials from both city, county, and state governments. Miss Doyle assured the audience that construction would begin in November and that the park was slated for use by the late spring of 1985.⁵⁴

Construction on the park facilities was largely completed in May of 1985, with finishing touches on the one-third mile nature trail to follow. The Knox County Parks and Recreation Department had issued a Challenge Grant to the Knox County Council of Garden Clubs to develop the nature trail. The Council of Garden Clubs took their project seriously, enlisting the help of the Tennessee Valley Authority's Office of Natural Resources and Economic Development and the Marine Corps Reserve. TVA assisted in the design and technical aspects of planning the trail while members of the Marine Reserve provided the labor for actually building the pathway. Members of the Council of Garden Clubs donated over 200 varieties of wildflowers, planting them along the length of the trail. By June 10, 1986, the collaborative work on the nature trail was complete and the Council of Garden Clubs officially opened the trail with an afternoon ceremony paying tribute to Mildred Doyle and her donation of the land for the park. Much pomp and circumstance characterized the ceremony as the U.S. Marine Corps Color Guard was presented and onlookers joined in the Pledge of Allegiance. The wildflowers bloomed in profusion. Garden Club member Jane Van Fleet who was highly instrumental in the trail-building efforts spoke of the importance

⁵⁴ Ibid., 3.

of Mildred's gift and told the audience that "It's a statement about how she feels about her community."⁵⁵ Miss Doyle then spoke about her father and mentor for whom the park was respectfully dedicated, telling those present that the thing she remembered most about him was that "he was always available to anyone in the South Knoxville district he represented"⁵⁶ as a member of the Knox County Court. The former superintendent hoped that those who used the park would remember Charter Doyle for the "services he rendered as a public official and a citizen."⁵⁷ Miss Doyle, grinning characteristically, expressed delight at the numbers of community residents who had in previous months taken advantage of the park's recreational facilities. Nostalgically remembering her days as a youngster playing baseball on the land that was once a cow pasture, the jokester quipped that she never knew exactly what she was sliding into when she hit second base.⁵⁸

Mildred Doyle loved not only to watch children at play, but to join in the fun. From her days as a teacher and even as principal at Vestal Grammar School, the boisterous educator could often be found on the playground with the youngsters, joining them in informal recreation during lunch period and recess. Moreover, she served as coach of both girls' basketball and boys' baseball teams in the upper

⁵⁵ Rutledge, 1.

⁵⁶ Henigman, D1.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Henigman, D1; Rutledge, 1.

elementary grades at Vestal.⁵⁹ Although long past her "playground days" in 1986, Mildred was able to use the creation of Doyle Park to ensure that Knox County children would always have a place to play--one that was spacious, well-equipped, and full of good memories. County Commissioner Fred Flenniken who shared her drive to build the park thanked her in a letter for involving him in the park's development. He wrote of their "pioneer spirit" and how they "dared to dream a dream and then rolled up [their] sleeves and set out to make it come true."⁶⁰

The global scene in 1986 was characterized by massive corporate mergers, hostile takeovers, and the deadly explosion of a Soviet nuclear reactor in Chernobyl--events which blanketed many lives in chaos. On the homefront in Knox County, Mildred Doyle and those working with her completed her mission to furnish space for innocent children to play safely against a backdrop of social discord. It would please Miss Doyle to know that community children continue to enjoy Charter E. Doyle Memorial Park. It remains today a haven for recreation and play--a place of release and refuge from life's demands.

⁵⁹ Velma McNelly, telephone interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994; Mrs. McNelly, a former student at Vestal School and player on the girls' basketball team recalls "Coach" Doyle taking them to ballgames in her "beautiful beige Ford roadster." McNelly told of her "hair flying all over" as the girls fought over who would ride in the rumbleseat. Mrs. McNelly was particularly fond of Mildred Doyle because her mother had died when she was 12 years old and explained, "When I needed someone to love me, she was there."

⁶⁰ Fred Flenniken, letter to Mildred Doyle, 6 Nov. 1985, Personal Files.

A Lifetime of Achievement--Awards, Honors, and Service

The respect that Tennesseans held for Mildred Doyle should not be overestimated. Her personal files contain scads of awards, certificates of appreciation, honorary group memberships, and letters of praise and gratitude from not only state and local political figures and educators, but citizens of Knox County. See Appendix for a listing of these documents located in Miss Doyle's personal files.

In 1977, the Tennessee State Senate passed Senate Joint Resolution No. 66 "to honor Miss Mildred Eloise Doyle for her outstanding contribution to the field of education in Tennessee."⁶¹ The document quite adequately encapsulates the educator's contributions as well as state sentiment:

WHEREAS, Mildred Eloise Doyle has shown a remarkable dedication to the furtherance of education, having served for over 50 years in various capacities in the education profession; and

WHEREAS, She demonstrated this dedication by serving as elementary school teacher and principal while continuing her academic career through 20 years of summer school and thereby acquiring a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Science Degree from The University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Miss Doyle was the first woman to be elected superintendent of Knox County Schools, and held this position for 31 illustrious years; and

WHEREAS, Within this capacity, remarkable strides were made in the provision of quality education to the children of Knox County including the creation of three comprehensive high schools which have offered innovative structures, curriculum and teaching techniques; and

WHEREAS, Educators throughout the nation have toured the Knox County educational facilities in order to observe the exemplary programs established under Miss Doyle's leadership; and

⁶¹ Senate Joint Resolution No. 66, 13 April 1977, Personal Files.

WHEREAS, She has participated vigorously and tirelessly in civic and community organizations in an effort to keep the public abreast of developments in education; and

WHEREAS, Miss Doyle has been the recipient of numerous professional awards and honors including an honorary doctorate from Maryville College, life membership in the National Education Association, Tennessee Educational Association, and the Tennessee Congress of Parents and Teachers as well as the title of the "Outstanding Woman Athlete of the Last Fifty Years in Tennessee"; and

WHEREAS, She has had a significant impact on the development of educational programs throughout the State of Tennessee as a president of the Tennessee Education Association, as Chairman [sic] of the Superintendents Study Council from 1948 to 1973 and as a charter member of the State Textbook Commission from 1951 to the present; and

WHEREAS, She received national recognition as a member of the White House Conference on Children and Youth; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her years of service to the Knox County Community, Miss Doyle has continued to demonstrate her concern and interest for the welfare of others and maintained a keen interest in the continuing development of educational innovations; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting and proper that such outstanding service be lauded; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that Miss Mildred Eloise Doyle be honored for her contributions in the field of education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to Miss Doyle.⁶²

The resolution, adopted on April 13, was approved and signed by Tennessee Governor Ray Blanton on April 18, 1977, the year following Mildred Doyle's political defeat. Perhaps the "good old boy" politicians were simply honoring one of their own in a routine kind of way. However, the outline of contributions and achievements contained in the resolution is not only lengthy and impressive, but verifiable. While Mildred Doyle had solid political connections and the respect of

⁶² Ibid.

Tennessee legislators, she also carried the esteem of the citizenry. Not only were the legislators who voted to adopt this resolution expressing their own admiration for Miss Doyle, but they were serving as the voice of their constituents.

Her accomplishments were doubtlessly impressive. For a woman to serve as longtime chair of the Superintendents' Study Council, a group comprised almost solely of men, represents an remarkable feat, attesting to the faith Miss Doyle's peers had in her leadership abilities. Further, being a charter member of the State Textbook Commission is impressive as well, for that position carried more power and influence than is necessarily evident on the surface because it had direct implications for the control of knowledge. In that capacity she belonged to a group of selected educators who met periodically in Nashville with representatives from textbook companies as they presented their texts for possible adoption. The State Textbook Commission would then select certain textbooks from which schools over the state of Tennessee could choose. The Commission, then, had tremendous control over the textual content that local school districts could adopt for use in their individual programs of instruction. Mildred Doyle served on the Commission 25 years, taking her responsibility quite seriously as she literally returned to the office on weekends to read through every sample text.⁶³

As the resolution stated, Mildred was active in her professional organizations, the National Education Association, and the Tennessee Education Association. An

⁶³ Faye Cox, interview by author, 5 Dec. 1994. Mrs. Cox recalled that occasionally Miss Doyle would show up on Sundays at the office in her pajamas to peruse textbooks for possible adoption. Mrs. Cox would meet Miss Doyle at the office to help her keep the texts in order and make sure her name was stamped in green ink on the inside covers of each book.

element omitted in the Senate resolution, that Miss Doyle served as the first woman president of the Tennessee Education Association in 1952, indicates not only another educational leadership position attained, but another gender barrier broken by the legendary public figure.

Further achievements in the areas of educational service and the welfare of children that were not mentioned in the Senate Resolution were demonstrated in her affiliations with the State Advisory Board on Child Abuse, the National Conference on Juvenile Justice, the Board Directors of the Vestal Boys Club, the Tennessee Juvenile Justice Advisory Group, the Board of Directors of Maryville College, Knoxville Child and Family Services, Tennessee Volunteers for Children, the National Education Association's Educational Finance Committee, the Tennessee State Advisory Council on Vocational Education, and finally, a lifetime affiliation with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.⁶⁴ Mildred Doyle clearly dedicated her life to the education and well-being of children of Knox County.

For these accomplishments, she received top honors in her later years on two occasions--one from the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee and the other from Phi Delta Kappa, the honorary scholastic fraternity at The University of Tennessee. On March 7, 1983 at age 79, Mildred Doyle became the third recipient of the Tennessee Distinguished Service Medal, an award considered the state's highest

⁶⁴ "Mildred Doyle Continues Family Tradition of Service," Spectrum, Aug. 1981, 3. "Services Tuesday for Longtime Knox Educator Mildred Doyle," The Knoxville Journal, 8 May 1989, A1; "Former TEA President Mildred Doyle Dies," TEA News, June 1989, 5; "Mildred Doyle Joins MC Board," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 6 July, 1972, Photocopy, Doyle Family File, McClung Collection; Certificates attesting to service located in Mildred Doyle's personal files.

honor. The Tennessee General Assembly created the Distinguished Service Medal in 1979 to honor Tennessee citizens who either died as war heroes or who were "considered by the General Assembly to be especially deserving persons."⁶⁵ Sen. Ben Atchley presented the longtime educator with the Medal at a meeting of the Tennessee School Board Association in Nashville. Mildred Doyle loved the state of Tennessee and its children, thus she was deeply touched by this high honor, recognizing her efforts in education and public service. Apparently, not only the legislature felt her to be most deserving, but Knox Countians did as well. Her personal files contain many letters such as these from well-wishing citizens and friends:

Dear Miss Doyle,

We wanted you to know that we think this award went to the most deserving person in the state. You have done so much for all of us as well as our children, and we thank you. You are really a very special lady.

In love,

Spencer and Becky Hudson⁶⁶

Dear Miss Doyle,

So happy this award was given to the "perfect one"--who is most deserving of many medals and awards.

So sincerely, in appreciation, and love,

Mildred L. Mullins⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Quoted Material taken from "Doyle Wins State's Top Honor for 50 Years' Education Work," The Knoxville Journal, 8 Mar. 1983, Photocopy, Doyle Family File, McClung Collection; "Mildred Doyle Given Medal," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 8 Mar. 1983, Photocopy, Doyle Family File, McClung Collection.

⁶⁶ Spencer and Becky Hudson, letter to Mildred Doyle, 8 Mar. 1983, Personal Files.

⁶⁷ Mildred L. Mullins, letter to Mildred Doyle, n.d., Personal Files.

Dear Miss Doyle,

I notice that you were awarded with the Tennessee Distinguished Service Medal. Your concern and interest for others is indeed great. I really appreciate the interest you have shown me over the years. I also appreciate your encouragement.

Your love and caring sustain many of your "children," me included. Congratulations again! Best wishes.

I love you,
Ray Hill⁶⁸

These notes and letters are simply representative of the sentiment expressed in many others found in her personal files. They attest to Mildred Doyle's popularity and the degree of love and appreciation given her by the thousands of Knox Countians whom she served for many years. The day after the award ceremony, County Commissioner Fred Flenniken wrote to Mildred that, "Very few of us have the opportunity to touch so many lives, and in turn help mold an entire community. Your fifty years of unselfish dedication to education has touched all Knox Countians."⁶⁹

Three years later, on September 30, 1986, Miss Doyle was again applauded for her service to the public schools. Phi Delta Kappa, The University of Tennessee's honorary scholastic fraternity, bestowed upon the legendary character its highest honors at a celebration at Doyle High School--"the House that Doyle built."⁷⁰ A group of several hundred friends, family members, and colleagues gathered for the event at which Mildred, though thinner and weaker, still played the

⁶⁸ Ray Hill, letter to Mildred Doyle, 8 Mar. 1983, Personal Files.

⁶⁹ Fred Flenniken, letter to Mildred Doyle, 9 Mar. 1983, Personal Files.

⁷⁰ Kaye Franklin Veal, "Mildred Doyle Saluted for Service to Schools," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 1 Oct. 1986, A16.

stand-up comedian recalling humorous stories of her days in the public schools, and telling the audience that, ironically, as a young girl she had never envisioned a career in education, always vowing adamantly never to become "an old maid schoolteacher."⁷¹ Clinton Allison of The University of Tennessee had previously conducted a videotaped oral history interview with Miss Doyle recounting aspects of her life as a youngster, an athlete, an educator, a politician, and a servant to her community. The videotaped presentation, condensed from over 100 minutes of conversation with Miss Doyle, was featured as part of the evening's program. At the end of the tape, Mildred faced the audience grinning, and roared in typical form, "Eat your heart out, Liz Taylor!" Along with the service award from Phi Delta Kappa for her myriad accomplishments came a well-deserved standing ovation for Mildred Doyle.⁷²

Diagnosis with Cancer

In 1984 Mildred Doyle became increasingly annoyed by pain in her knees caused by a combination of basketball injuries and arthritis. She had been consulting a rheumatologist, but was subsequently referred to a bone specialist because she complained that the pain had spread to her back. She was admitted to Baptist Hospital and stayed for several days as she underwent a battery of diagnostic tests. Upon completion of the tests, Mildred's doctor telephoned her sister Ruth to advise

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

her that Miss Doyle should probably have someone with her when he revealed the results. Ruth contacted Patterson and they went to Mildred's room to await the news. According to Patterson, when the doctor arrived he told Miss Doyle, "I'm so sorry to have to tell you that you have bone cancer." Patterson recalled that while she and Ruth "expected her to carry on and climb the walls," Miss Doyle simply replied, "Well, okay. Who's playing ball this afternoon?"⁷³ Mildred's initial cavalier response would characterize, at least outwardly, her thinking about her disease until her death. Like she never accepted that she had lost the superintendency, Mildred Patterson believes that Miss Doyle never "accepted the fact that she was going to die."⁷⁴ Furthermore, she added, "I don't think I did either. It came as a real shock."⁷⁵

To inhibit the cancer's growth, Mildred underwent both chemotherapy and radiation treatments. However, the tough and dauntless Mildred Doyle continued "business as usual" in subsequent years, continuing her work with the Alternative Center for Learning and going on to create Doyle Park for Knox County's youngsters. In the fall of 1988 Mildred became involved in another charitable endeavor, this time to help cancer patients who were having transportation difficulties getting to their therapy sessions. She discovered this problem through her own contact with patients at the Baptist Hospital Outpatient Center and became actively

⁷³ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 1 Mar. 1995.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

involved in fund-raising efforts to purchase transportation vans for cancer patients needing the outpatient treatment services at the hospital. Not only did the veteran community servant use her highly sharpened skills at raising money, but she gave sizeable sums herself. The Baptist Hospital Foundation thus dubbed the new fund the Mildred E. Doyle Cancer Van Fund which eventually purchased three vans to transport patients within a 100 mile radius to the Outpatient Center at no charge, thus enabling them to continue their treatment programs.⁷⁶ In Mildred's personal files exist numerous letters from the vice president of the Baptist Hospital Foundation thanking her for her efforts in making the van fund a reality and acknowledging contributions made in her honor by friends and members of the community.⁷⁷

Mildred's Final Weeks

Although the unyielding Miss Doyle had fought her bone cancer into a state of remission for several years, Mrs. Patterson said that near the end, "She got real bad real fast."⁷⁸ Only in the last month of her life would she even talk about her eminent death. For the last six weeks, she spent most of the time in the hospital in and out of a coma, and when she was conscious, she experienced tremendous pain.

⁷⁶ Leon Stafford, "Doyle Helped Others Until the End: Former superintendent active in fund raising for cancer van patients," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 9 May 1989, B1.

⁷⁷ F. Graham Lee, letter to Mildred Doyle, 3 Oct. 1988, Personal Files; F. Graham Lee, letter to Mildred Doyle, 19 Oct. 1988, Personal Files; F. Graham Lee, letter to Mildred Doyle, 28 Oct. 1988, Personal Files; F. Graham Lee, letter to Mildred Doyle, 1 Nov. 1988, Personal Files; F. Graham Lee, letter to Mildred Doyle, 8 Nov. 1988, Personal Files; F. Graham Lee, letter to Mildred Doyle, 14 Nov. 1988, Personal Files; F. Graham Lee, letter to Mildred Doyle, Nov. 30 1988, Personal Files.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Patterson stayed with her during most days and she had sitters at night for Mildred Doyle never liked to be alone.⁷⁹ While she was often in a coma, she had lucid moments in which her humorous self returned. For example, she once called Patterson to her side, asked her to turn around, and then used the patterns on the back of Patterson's sweater to map out her grave plot so she would be sure to be buried next to a "preferred" family member. On another occasion, Patterson was in the hospital room talking to the nurse about the logistics of how to get Mildred home and provide the proper care for her. She was toying with various possibilities, eliciting the nurse's opinion when Mildred Doyle came out of her delirium to joke, "Don't pay any attention to Patterson. She never could make up her mind about anything!" They all laughed and, as suddenly as she awoke, Mildred lapsed back into semiconsciousness. Because her pain grew more intense and her comas more frequent, Mildred's family members regularly joined Patterson at the hospital. Patterson recalled Mildred Doyle's struggle and refusal to die, despite the pain and the overwhelming odds against her. Reverend Robert Temple frequently visited Mildred who was still, at some level, determined to overcome her sickness. Although in obvious pain, she regularly assured him, "I'm hanging in tough."⁸⁰ About a week before she died when all the family had come to say goodbye, Patterson leaned gently over Mildred's bed and whispered to her that everyone loved her and that her loved

⁷⁹ Faye Cox explained to me that she often accompanied Miss Doyle on errands or to schools, and on occasion, she even returned to the office when the superintendent worked on weekends because Miss Doyle did not like to be alone.

⁸⁰ Rev. Robert Temple, "Funeral Service for Mildred E. Doyle," 9 May 1989, Ruth Doyle Hilton's Personal Files, 1.

ones were waiting for her in heaven and that maybe it was time for her to let go.

Patterson remembered, "She looked at me and said, 'Well, I guess that's really what I ought to do. I need to go there and find out what's there and get things ready for you because you won't know what to do when you get there.'"⁸¹

Mildred Doyle, however, had a reason for hanging on because her one wish at the end of her life was that she could leave the hospital and die at home. She adamantly told Patterson that if, for some reason she died in the hospital before she could get home, she wanted her obituary to read that she died at home regardless. Mildred Doyle's endurance enabled her to return to Maplewood Drive on Thursday, May 4, 1989. Patterson had arranged for a hospital bed to be placed in her room located on the back of their house facing the beautiful lawn which Mildred Doyle loved and gingerly tended for 28 years. The month of May was "doing its thing," painting the trees and grass in bright green. As Mildred drifted in and out of consciousness, Patterson whispered to her, "You're home now. Can you see out the window at how pretty everything looks?" Mildred Doyle smiled slowly back at her companion. She was finally home. Two days later she died.⁸²

⁸¹ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994; Rev. Robert Temple, 1.

⁸² Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 1 Mar. 1995

The Funeral Service of Mildred Doyle

As the legendary character lived an unorthodox life, so did she plan for herself "a very unorthodox funeral--just like she lived."⁸³ While the cancer was in remission Mildred Doyle refused to discuss her last will and testament or plan her funeral outright because she refused to actually accept her illness enough to talk about her death. Thus, Patterson had to finesse the stubborn Mildred in order to discover her wishes. Patterson recalled that to do this, she first had to casually mention what she would want to happen if she were to die before Mildred Doyle. Only in that manner could she get Mildred Doyle to talk about her own funeral service. As it turned out, the former superintendent wanted absolutely no part of even remotely morbid dirges played at the service. The "avid consumer of music" wanted those present to hear her favorite songs--ones of happiness, hope, and joy with a little humor thrown in for good measure. Sitting on their sun porch one evening, she told Patterson she wanted two of their musician friends from New York to sing her favorites--"Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from The Wizard of Oz and "Climb Every Mountain" from The Sound of Music. To top it off, the humorist requested that the organist play "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" as the pall bearers took her casket from the chapel. Patterson complied with all musical wishes--except the last one. The organist told Patterson she did not think she would "ever be able to live that one down." Obviously, and unfortunately, the organist lacked Mildred Doyle's free spirit and sense of humor. However, Patterson knew her companion well enough to make

⁸³ Ibid.

an alternate selection. Instead, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," another all-time favorite tune of the patriotic Mildred Doyle, was played in place of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame."⁸⁴

Hundreds of friends and admirers gathered at the Chapel at Berry Funeral Home in South Knoxville for the 11 a.m. service on Tuesday May 9, 1989 to pay their last respects to Mildred Doyle. Knoxville Mayor Victor Ashe declared three official days of mourning as flags over city and county government buildings were flown at half mast to honor the influence Miss Doyle had on the lives of 750,000 students, spanning nearly three generations in the Knox County Schools.⁸⁵ Great admirer and colleague Dick Yoakley was honored to prepare her eulogy which he read at the service:

Miss Doyle's physical presence is no longer with us. Each of us who knew her will have to interpret her meaning in our individual lives, and this is what I believe she would have us do if we choose to honor her memory. Let me attempt to share with you some of her meaning to me:

She was my friend, my colleague, my guide, and my teacher. She fulfilled these roles in word and deed.

She was a visionary. She dared to dream, but her dreams were only the beginnings of many wonderful visions which she committed to action. Her visions were about the betterment of the lives of children. She championed the causes of children all her life. She was at her best and greatest when pleading the cause of a child or children whether the plea was to a parent or to the Governor of this State. She had the ability to look into the heart of any child and immediately win its affection and awaken its potentiality.

⁸⁴ Mildred Patterson, interviews with author, 10 Oct. 1994 and 1 Mar. 1995; Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994.

⁸⁵ Stafford, B1; Kaye Franklin Veal, "Mildred Doyle, a Leader in ET Education Dies," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 May 1989, A1; "Mildred E. Doyle," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 8 May 1989, A6.

She saw the child in all of us. She won our hearts, and she made us become more than we were.

And so she taught me the difference between common power and real power. She taught me that common power and glory are but illusions and temporary at best. She taught me that real power and glory come from a personal commitment to and a resolution of something of value.

She taught me that our most precious resource is our young people and that if we serve them well, our purpose and mission will be fulfilled and our future will remain secure.

She was compassionate and understanding of the young; She was kind and gentle to the aged; She was generous and benevolent to the poor and the less-able; She was tolerant of those who did not understand.

I think she knew that at sometime in our lives all of us were all of these.⁸⁶

Concluding Remarks

Mildred Doyle looked at life as a challenge in which there was always room to improve and to do more. This philosophical dimension enabled her to continue to do more for others and to expect more of herself even beyond her monumental leadership achievements in guiding the Knox County Schools through decades of educational innovation, change, and growth. She never stopped caring and working to help people--especially children. Although she would likely laugh to read these words, in some respects Mildred Doyle was considered a saint to many of the individuals she helped throughout the years. While sanctification may border on hyperbole, she gave her entire life to public service--to helping people. According to friends and colleagues, the school was her life. However, she worked through many other

⁸⁶ Dr. Richard Yoakley, "In Memory of Mildred Doyle," 9 May 1989, Dr. Yoakley's Personal Files.

community agencies and committees to serve the citizens of Knox County and the state of Tennessee--literally until her death. It could be argued that Mildred Doyle is still helping people. She serves as the role model of school people, community servants, and politicians who look to her philosophy and style today to give them guidance. She was largely responsible for modernizing the school system of Knox County--both physically and from an innovational standpoint. Further, she left the Alternative Center for Learning, the Charter E. Doyle Memorial Park, and the Mildred E. Doyle Cancer Van Fund which continue to offer services to Knox Countians. Although Mildred Doyle made her political enemies because she "refused to turn the schools into a political machine,"⁸⁷ and her brusqueness occasionally alienated people, she is largely remembered as giant of a figure--one who was determined, dedicated, and selfless in her devotion to the Knox County and the state of Tennessee that she truly loved.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Miss Doyle quoted in Cynthia Moxley, "Benevolent Dictator: For 30 Years, Mildred Doyle Got Things Done as School Chief," The Knoxville Journal, 4 July 1985, A1.

⁸⁸ See Stafford, B1; Venable, A6; Roger Ricker, "Former Schools Chief Doyle Remembered as Dedicated, Unselfish," The Knoxville Journal, 9 May 1989, A4; "Mildred Doyle, Political Pioneer for GOP Women," The Knoxville Journal, 8 May 1989, 6A.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In writing a person's life, the biographer, like the novelist or the historian, becomes a storyteller¹ or for some writers, "an artist under oath."² The biographer's responsibility lies in interpreting the facts of a life as she or he understands them. In such a way is the biographer influenced by his or her past experiences and subjective autobiographical reality. In digging through the maze of newspaper accounts, letters, speeches, photographs, and the memories of survivors in trying to understand the entirety of a subject's motives and psychological makeup, biographers still find themselves affected and channeled by who they are as individuals, not only by the people and artifacts the subject of their story happens to have left behind. Biographer Doris Kearns suggests:

. . . in the end, if we are honest with ourselves, the best we can offer is a partial rendering, a subjective portrait of the subject from a particular angle of vision shaped as much by our own biography--our attitudes, perceptions, and feelings toward the subject--as by the raw materials themselves.³

¹ Leon Edel, "The Figure Under the Carpet," in Telling Lives: The Biographer's Art, ed. Marc Pachter (Washington, DC: New Republic Books, 1979), 17-34.

² Desmond MacCarthy, quoted in Victoria Glendinning, "Lies and Silences," in The Troubled Face of Biography, eds. Eric Homberger and John Charmley (New York: St. Martin's, 1988), 54.

³ Doris Kearns, "Angles of Vision," in Telling Lives: The Biographer's Art, ed. Marc Pachter (Washington, DC: New Republic Books, 1979), 91.

This story is but a partial rendering, one interpretation of the many that are possible, given the particular facts of Mildred Doyle's life coupled with the biographer's perspective. Perhaps a very different picture of Mildred would have emerged from this story had I believed, for example, that women had no place in positions of educational leadership or in historical narratives for that matter.⁴ Or had I found that Mildred Doyle's actions as an educator contradicted her words as a politician, she would appear an entirely different individual to the reader of this particular account. Her words and actions, however, remained remarkably consistent for her three decades in office, with the exception of events at the end of her tenure as superintendent. Further, a very different rendering could have occurred had Miss Doyle failed to obtain the support of local newspapers and the general public at the voting booth. Moreover, had the superintendent encountered numerous public enemies who were willing to reveal themselves over the years, still another story could be told.

The portrait painted here, however, illuminates and applauds the determination and courage of a woman who achieved leadership positions thought improper, if not impossible, for women of her day. Certainly, Mildred Doyle had her faults. Her hot temper and strong language sometimes intimidated and alienated people, and she

⁴ I became initially interested in Miss Doyle largely because of her unusual achievements in the face of impossible odds based on social perceptions of gender propriety. I admired the courage of such a woman, and thus became emotionally engaged in writing her life. I see this connection as an asset rather than a liability because I share biographer Leon Edel's belief that it is an emotional engagement with a subject that creates the burning desire needed to write that subject's life. See Leon Edel, Biography As An Art: Selected Criticisms, 1560-1960, ed. James L. Clifford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 226-239.

bordered on the paternalistic by sometimes admonishing parents for their child-rearing practices that she considered harmful to children by her own standards. Further, in some cases individuals such as various faculty at the University of Tennessee found her strong-willed personality distasteful in work situations. She clearly enjoyed control and demanded to know about everything that went on, particularly in the central office. Finally, although her thoughts were colored by the social context of her generation, some of her words and actions contained racist and sexist overtones which always have the potential to be harmful.⁵ My aim here, however, is to point to the humanness of Mildred Doyle, while taking nothing away from her contributions to Knox County education and community service, or from the fact that she exhibited courage to live life as she saw fit. Her story illustrates a life lived largely by instinct and one which thrived on challenge and a dash of unconventionality. Most of all I see it as a story of self-actualization in which roles considered appropriate for women were necessarily expanded for Mildred Doyle to live a life that made sense to her.

A Contribution to the History of Women

The life story of Mildred Doyle adds to an expanding knowledge of women's history and serves to fill a gap with an account of the rather atypical existence of an

⁵ Biographer Victoria Glendinning, however, maintains that "a sense of history should stop both writer and reader from condemning a single individual, when a social climate, or history itself, is both the culprit and the victim." See Glendinning, 59.

educator, a politician, and a woman.⁶ It is no secret that women have been largely excluded from academic histories--even after the women's movement gained momentum. The general pattern persists that history texts--educational histories included⁷--usually portray white males as the "movers and shakers" of time. The experience of the white male tends to hold the spotlight because large majorities of historical narratives (usually written by men) center around the public experience of dominant groups--that is, the dynamics of the economic arena of paid work, the leadership of various institutions, the control of governmental affairs, or tales of "heroic" military exploits. Our society has perpetuated such patterns which promote gender inequality because they "ascribe to men alone the right to offer ideas for public discussion and the ability to run societal institutions."⁸ Written histories do not typically shed light on the private sphere--the domestic aspects of life and work where women have been major players, literally sustaining the human race throughout time. Further, the stories of those women like Mildred Doyle who courageously chose to challenge patriarchal hegemony, consciously or subconsciously, by entering male-dominated worlds of business, educational administration, and politics, for example, have been largely omitted in historical scholarship as have the stories of

⁶ I make no apologies for the somewhat celebrationist tone of the work because I appreciate the gains she made for herself as a woman in the very resistant male-dominated worlds of educational leadership and politics.

⁷ Patricia A. Schmuck, "Women School Employees in the United States," in Women Educators: Employees of Schools in Western Countries, ed. Patricia A. Schmuck (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), 90-91.

⁸ Joan Burstyn, "Historical Perspectives on Women in Educational Leadership," in Women in Educational Leadership, ed. Sari Knopp Biklen and Marilyn B. Brannigan (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1980), 66.

those women who have worked and raised families at home. As a way to remedy such silences, feminist researcher Shulamit Reinharz contends:

Biographical work has always been an important part of the women's movement because it draws women out of obscurity, repairs the historical record, and provides an opportunity for the woman reader and writer to identify with the subject.⁹

While Mildred Doyle is hardly unknown to locals, her story must be drawn out of obscurity for those curious about understanding the variety of roles women have actually played through time, the gender barriers they have broken, and the cultural norms they have disregarded in their efforts to lead certain kinds of lives. Individuals interested in gender studies are invited to reflect upon the ways in which Mildred Doyle's life and the lives of other women throughout history have impacted upon the social (re)construction of gender and, further, to witness the possibilities that occur when one acts on instinct.

The Role of Instinct in the Life of Mildred Doyle

The theme of "instinctiveness" which runs through the life of Mildred Doyle has direct bearing on how she conducted her life. She constructed her "self" according to who she wanted to be, relying on her instincts rather than artificial social criteria when charting her course. Ironically, she did not deliberately set out to challenge the hegemony of rigid gender constructs which places males at the forefront of educational leadership and politics. Her agenda resided in child advocacy, not

⁹ Shulamit Reinharz, Feminist Methods in Social Research (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 126.

necessarily the expansion of roles for women. Yet, as previously stated, her very existence did much to open up possibilities for women. According to family members, close friends, and even Mildred herself, she was actually oblivious to the fact that she might encounter opposition based on gender when she decided to enter educational administration.¹⁰ Her instincts told her that through a leadership position she could be of further service to children, so she proceeded with her decision to become principal of Vestal School, despite opposition from the Vestal PTA and the virtual absence of women principals in Knox County. Further, her innate interest in politics coupled with her commitment to the betterment of education for young people instinctively propelled her to run for the superintendency. Through both positions, especially the latter, Mildred Doyle continues to serve as a role model for generations of women to follow in educational leadership and politics.

The dauntless Doyle heard and ignored repeated warnings from naysayers that the Knox County superintendency was a man's responsibility from the moment she announced her intention to seek the post in 1946 until she was finally defeated after 30 successful years. For Mildred, "it was not in her head that it [winning the election] couldn't be done."¹¹ The name Mildred Doyle carries with it an uncanny aura of respect in the Knox County community because she paid no attention to sexist attempts at intimidation, followed her instincts, and transformed the Knox County

¹⁰ Mildred Patterson, interviews by author, 9 Mar. 1994 and 8 June 1994; Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1995; Carmen Carter, "'Elect Woman' Session Includes Mildred Doyle," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 26 April 1985, Photocopy, Personal Files.

¹¹ Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994.

school system from one- and two-room schools with rudimentary curricula to a system of approximately 40 new facilities and varied curricular innovations. While she would admit that she owed her success immeasurably to her staff, Knox Countians remember the salty Miss Doyle as the driving force. For example, a native Knox Countian and former student wrote upon her death, "In an era when female educators remained quietly in the classroom, Miss Doyle commanded the office of superintendent as none before her or ever since."¹² She instinctively interrupted the patriarchal pattern of males in educational administration, and subsequently gained enormous respect as a leader.

Not only did instincts determine her decision to leave the classroom for leadership positions, but they told her that she could succeed in the world of politics. After all, her father and grandfather before her were heavily involved in local politics, and it appears not to have crossed her mind until after she had made the decision to run for the superintendency that perhaps some Knox Countians may have been more prepared for a native son rather than a daughter. However, she overtook resistance motivated by tradition and eventually experienced great success in her quest to develop tight connections in the political arena. She instinctively used her charismatic political power to work for the Knox County Schools rather than to bolster her political career solely for personal gain.¹³ While it could be argued that

¹² Sam Venable, "Mildred Doyle's Caring Left Touch on the Lives of 'Her' Many Children," The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 9 May, 1989, A6.

¹³ Biographer Doris Kearns writes of the particular problems the biographer encounters when writing about political figures and deciphering the potential ambiguity of their words. See Kearns, 97-98.

politics, not education was Mildred Doyle's career, it must be noted that she deliberately chose to remain in education at the local level rather than to pursue the typical career politician's climb from local to state to national levels. I have stated previously that her connections and influence reached such proportions that, despite barriers her gender might have posed, she almost certainly could have attained a seat in the Tennessee General Assembly, and possibly a Tennessee slot in the United States Congress had she elected to leave her post as superintendent. Numerous times she waltzed past open-mouthed secretaries to appear unannounced before various Tennessee governors in order to hold an urgent conversation concerning an educational matter. Clearly Mildred Doyle enjoyed her power and notoriety, yet her power lust had its limits. She wanted to enable children to attain the education she believed they had a right to receive. While Mildred Doyle was indeed both fascinated and successful with politics, she instinctively loved kids--their education was her career.

As a youngster Mildred Doyle's parents encouraged her to be the best she could be at whatever she attempted, never discouraging her from any activity because of her gender. Charter Doyle nurtured Mildred's instinctive self-confidence which served her well in her adult life when she crossed gender lines as superintendent of schools and became an active figure in local politics. Thus, she renegotiated a place for herself as a woman who commanded power and respect within male-dominated spheres of educational leadership and the patriarchal political elite.

Another way in which Mildred followed instincts and ignored gender convention is illustrated in her choice not to marry, but to share a home with Mildred Patterson instead. Whether or not Mildred Doyle was a lesbian, as was suggested by opponents in her last campaign for superintendent, is not necessarily the point. Actually, Mildred's niece Sue Hicks who knew her very well characterized her aunt as "asexual."¹⁴ The point, however, is that the public Mildred Doyle, though perhaps not consciously, risked the insinuations of a homophobic society to live as she pleased, with someone she loved and trusted. Her relationship with Patterson, indeed, shared many of the characteristics ascribed to heterosexual marriage as both essential and noble: love, honesty, trust, security, patience, companionship, and integrity. Their mutual influence brought out the best in each other and that aspect is perhaps the most important feature of their relationship which serves as a model for individuals who seek the same in a husband, wife, companion, or partner. Mildred Doyle never apologized to anyone for the way she conducted herself at work or at home. According to Patterson, Miss Doyle's public persona was for "all to see." She rarely, if ever, discussed any fears and insecurities--that was the private side of Mildred Doyle no one ever really knew.¹⁵ For the most part, however, the robust superintendent lived and worked in ways that made sense to her, enabling her to lead a life she considered meaningful and rewarding.

¹⁴ Sue Hicks, interview by author, 13 Oct. 1994.

¹⁵ Mildred Patterson, interview by author, 1 Mar. 1995.

Mildred Doyle's story suggests that myriad life possibilities may be realized if one is not constrained by social convention, but feels free to follow instincts to become a self-actualized individual through living in meaningful ways. Her life exemplifies what can happen when a woman does not fall prey to the limitations perpetuated by artificial gender constructs and societal expectations for women. Further, in the process of striving to live a meaningful life herself, she did wonders for Knox County education. She touched the lives of a quarter million youngsters who passed through the schools during her superintendency, likely wishing for them all the courage to follow their instincts.

Miss Doyle used the words "hangin' in tough" in response to a query about her health during her last weeks of life.¹⁶ She could have used those words to describe her life at almost any moment during her 84 years. Very much a function of instinct, she 'hung in tough' on the basketball court, on the softball field, and in her negotiation of gender constructs with regard to her move into educational administration and politics. Even after her superintendency she continued to influence the lives of Knox County children and adults alike by giving of herself through various community service projects like the Alternative Center for Learning, Doyle Park, and the Mildred Doyle Cancer Van Fund. Because Mildred Doyle loved the schools and her community in much the same way her Appalachian forebears loved their land, she never grew tired of giving. For Mildred Doyle, "hangin' in tough" was simply a part of life.

¹⁶ Rev. Robert Temple, "Funeral Service of Mildred E. Doyle," 9 May 1989, Ruth Doyle Hilton's Personal Files.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Baker, William J. Sports in the Western World. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1982.
- Ballantine, Jeanne H. The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1993.
- Bateson, Mary Catherine. Composing a Life. New York: Plume/Penguin, 1990.
- Bennett, Kathleen P. "Wrenched from the Earth: Appalachian Women in Conflict." In Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis: The Significance of Place, eds. Joe L. Kincheloe and William F. Pinar. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991.
- Bertaux, Daniel, ed. Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1981.
- Biklen, Sari, and Marilyn Brannigan, eds. Women and Educational Leadership. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1980.
- Bowen, Catherine Drinker. Biography: The Craft and the Calling. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969.
- Bowles, Samuel, and Herbert Gintis. Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life. New York: Basic Books, 1976.
- Burstyn, Joan. "Historical Perspectives on Women in Educational Leadership." In Women in Educational Leadership, ed. Sari Knopp Biklen and Marilyn B. Brannigan, 65-75. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1980.
- Campbell, Jack K. "Inside Lives: The Quality of Biography." In Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods, eds. Robert Sherman and Rodman Webb, 59-75. London: The Almer Press, 1990.
- Cicourel, Aaron, and John Kitsuse. The Educational Decision Makers. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963.

Clifford, James L., ed. Biography As An Art: Selected Criticism, 1560-1960. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.

_____. From Puzzles to Portraits! Problems of a Literary Biographer. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970.

Clifford, Geraldine Joncich. "The Life Story: Biographic Study." In Historical Inquiry in Education: A Research Agenda, ed. John Hardin Best, 56-74. Washington, DC: The American Educational Research Association, 1983.

Cremin, Lawrence. The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957. New York: Random House, 1961.

Deaderick, Lucille, ed. Heart of the Valley: A History of Knoxville, Tennessee. Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1976.

Dewey, John. Democracy in Education. New York: Macmillan Co., 1916.

Edel, Leon. "The Figure Under the Carpet." In Telling Lives: The Biographer's Art, ed. Marc Pachter, 17-34. Washington, DC: New Republic Books, 1979.

Glendinning, Victoria. "Lies and Silences." In The Troubled Face of Biography, eds. Eric Homberger and John Charmley, 49-62. New York: St. Martin's, 1988.

Goldman, Eric. The Crucial Decade--and After: America, 1945-1960. New York: Vintage Books, 1960.

Heilbrun, Carolyn G. Writing a Woman's Life. New York: Ballantine Books, 1988.

Kearns, Doris. "Angles of Vision." In Telling Lives: The Biographer's Art, ed. Marc Pachter, 91-103. Washington, DC: New Republic Books, 1979.

Kendall, Paul Murray. The Art of Biography. New York: W.W. Norton, 1965.

Kliebard, Herbert M. The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958. New York: Routledge, 1987.

Mandell, Gail Porter. Life into Art: Conversations with Seven Contemporary Biographers. Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1991.

Moss, Theodore. Middle School. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.

- Nadel, Ira Bruce. Biography: Fiction, Fact, and Form. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1984.
- Oakes, Jeannie. Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985.
- Oates, Stephen B. Biography as High Adventure: Life-Writers Speak on Their Art. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusettes Press, 1986.
- Ortiz, Flora and Catherine Marshall. "Women in Educational Administration." In The Handbook of Research on Educational Administration, ed. N. Boyan. New York: Longman, 1988.
- Reinharz, Shulamit. Feminist Methods in Social Research. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Rosenthal, Robert, and Lenore Jacobson. Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectation and Pupils' Intellectual Development. New York: Irvington, 1988.
- Schmuck, Patricia A. "Women School Employees in the United States." In Women Educators: Employees of Schools in Western Countries, ed. Patricia A. Schmuck, 75-97. Albany: SUNY Press, 1987.
- Seller, Maxine Schwartz, ed. Women Educators in the United States, 1820-1993: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.
- Shakeshaft, Charol. Women in Educational Administration, 2nd ed. Newbury Park, CA: Corwyn Press, 1989.
- _____. "Women in Educational Management in the United States. In Women in Education Management, ed. Janet Ouston. Harlow, UK: Longman, 1993.
- Spring, Joel. The American School, 1642-1990. White Plains, NY: Longman, 1990.
- Tyack, David. The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974.
- Tyack, David, and Elisabeth Hansot. Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools, 266-267. New York: Sage, 1990.

. Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980. New York: Basic Books, 1982.

Journals

Apple, Michael. "Teaching and 'Women's Work': A Comparative Historical and Ideological Analysis." Teachers College Record 86 (1985): 455-473.

Birrell, Susan, and Diana Richter. "Is a Diamond Forever? Feminist Transformations of Sport." Women's Studies International Forum 10 (1987): 395-409.

Perko, Michael. "Biography and the Rebirth of Wonder." Vitae Scholasticae 4 (1985): 2-15.

Reed, Ronald. "Biography, Gossip and Other Forms of Scholarship." Vitae Scholasticae 6 (1987): 205-211.

Shore, Miles F. "Biography in the 1980's." Journal of Interdisciplinary History 12 (1981): 89-113.

Smith, Joan K. "Metabiographics: A Future for Educational Life-Writing." Vitae Scholasticae 6 (1987): 1-14.

Strober, Myra, and David Tyack. "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage: A Report on Research on Schools." Signs 5 (1980): 494-503.

Theberge, Nancy. "Toward a Feminist Alternative to Sport as a Male Preserve." Quest 37 (1986): 193-202.

Young-Breuhl, Elizabeth. "The Writing of Biography." Partisan Review 50 (1983): 413-427.

Interviews

Allison, Clinton B. Mildred Doyle: A Conversation at Eighty. Knoxville, TN: Instructional Services Center, College of Education, The University of Tennessee, 1986. Videocassette.

Bozeman, Judge C. Howard. Interview by author. 30 Jan. 1995.

Brown, Dot. Telephone interview by author. 9 Oct. 1994.

Bratton, Dr. Samuel. Interview by author. 4 Mar. 1994.

_____. Interview by author. 15 Mar. 1995.

Cox, Faye. Interview by author. 5 Dec. 1994.

DeLozier, Dr. Robert. Interview by author, 29 March 1995.

Hess, Martha. Telephone interview by author. 8 Feb. 1995.

Hicks, Sue. Interview by author. 13 Oct. 1994.

Hilton, Ruth Doyle. Interview by author. 25 Feb. 1994.

Hoffmeister, Earl. Interview by author. 1 Feb. 1994.

McNelly, Velma. Telephone interview by author. 10 Oct. 1994.

Patterson, Mildred. Interview by author. 9 Mar. 1994.

_____. Interview by author. 8 Jun. 1994.

_____. Interview by author. 10 Oct. 1994.

_____. Interview by author. 1 Mar. 1995.

Sams, Doris. Telephone interview by author. 16 Nov. 1994.

Sams, Gordon. Interview by author. 3 Mar. 1994.

Yoakley, Dr. Richard. Interview by author, 10 Oct. 1994.

Knox County School Documents

"A Thirty Year Comparative Study." Knox County Schools, 23 August 1976.

"A Twenty-Year Comparative Study, 1946-1966." Knox County Schools, 17 Oct. 1966.

Knox County Department of Public Instruction. Tentative Program of Work, Grades 1-12, 1951-1952.

"Minutes of the Knox County Board of Education." 7 April 1947.

"Minutes of the Knox County Board of Education." 26 Aug. 1960.

"Pilot Program for Curriculum Revision, Halls High School." Knox County Schools, 1967-68.

Policies for Operation of Knox County Schools 1960. Knox County, Tennessee, Number 17.

"Progress of Desegregation in Knox County Schools." 1964-65.

"Recommendations for Improving the Educational Opportunities in the Knox County Schools." October 1963.

"Suggested Plan of Organization for Grades Seven and Eight." Knox County Schools, 21 April 1958.

"Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court." 7 Oct. 1946.

"Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court." 6 July 1948.

"Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court." 9 Oct. 1949.

"Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court." 4 Oct. 1948.

"Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court." 20 July 1953.

"Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court." 19 Oct. 1953.

"Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court." 15 July 1963.

"Superintendent's Report to the Knox County Quarterly Court." 16 January 1967.

"Tentative Suggestions for a Revised Primary Program." Knox County Schools, 21 April 1958.

"The Middle School--A Rationale." Knox County Schools, Jan. 1968.

Mildred Doyle's Personal Files*

Alexander, Lamar. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 24 Feb. 1983. Personal Files.

_____. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 9 Jan. 1987. Personal Files.

_____. Signed Photograph, 1982. Personal Files.

Clements, Hal, Jr. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 8 July 1982. Personal Files.

"Ethical Standards for Teaching." National Education Association. n.d. Personal Files.

Doyle, Mildred. "Address Made by Mildred E. Doyle to Knox County PTA Council." 30 Sept. 1959. Personal Files.

_____. "A Good Classroom for Every Child." Personal Files, 1953.

_____. "A Program in Social Arithmetic." Master's thesis, University of Tennessee, 1944. Personal Files.

_____. "Curriculum Development." Personal Files, 1949.

_____. Curriculum Improvement and Public Relations." Personal Files, 1952.

_____. Curriculum Plans for Knox County." Personal Files, 1952.

_____. "Educational Horizons." Personal Files, 1976.

_____. "Faculty-Faculty Relationships." Personal Files, n.d.

_____. "Knox County School System Plans Its Work." Speech to teachers. Personal Files, 1953.

_____. "Mildred E. Doyle." An autobiographical document, Personal Files, n.d.

* NOTE. By no means does this list encompass the volume of speeches, notes, letters, etc. found in Mildred Doyle's personal files. The folders are located in filing cabinets in the home of Mildred Patterson.

- _____. Notes on Vestal School. n.d. Personal Files.
- _____. "The Future of Education." n.d. Personal Files.
- _____. "The Knox County Curriculum." Personal Files, 1949.
- _____. "The Right to Read." n.d. Personal Files.
- _____. Speech to the Middle Tennessee Education Association. Personal Files, 1952.
- _____. Untitled speech. Personal Files, n.d.
- _____. Untitled speech made at a Knox County teachers' meeting. Personal Files, 1949.
- _____. Untitled speech made at a Knox County teachers' meeting. Personal Files, Sept. 1959.
- _____. Untitled speech made to student group. Personal Files, 1953.
- _____. "We Begin a New Year." Personal Files, 1957.
- Firestone Tire Company Women's Basketball Team. Photograph, Personal Files. n.d.
- Flenniken, Fred. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 9 Mar. 1983. Personal Files.
- _____. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 6 Nov. 1985. Personal Files.
- Hill, Ray. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 8 Mar. 1983. Personal Files.
- _____. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 15 June 1984. Personal Files.
- Hilton, Ruth Doyle. Speech delivered by cousin, James Doyle, to the Knoxville Exchange Club, June 22 1972. Personal Files.
- Hudson, Spencer and Becky Hudson. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 8 Mar. 1983. Personal Files.
- King, Ebb. Affidavit to the Knox County Board of Education, 28 Aug. 1929. Personal Files.

Landen, Tricia. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 16 Feb. 1983. Personal Files.

Lee, F. Graham. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 3 Oct. 1988. Personal Files.

_____. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 19 Oct. 1988. Personal Files.

_____. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 28 Oct. 1988. Personal Files.

_____. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 1 Nov. 1988. Personal Files.

_____. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 8 Nov. 1988. Personal Files.

_____. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 14 Nov. 1988. Personal Files.

_____. Letter to Mildred Doyle, 30 Nov. 1988. Personal Files.

Mullins, Mildred L. Letter to Mildred Doyle. n.d. Personal Files.

Patterson, Mildred. Untitled written introduction of Mildred Doyle for a speaking engagement at the Knoxville Exchange Club, 22 Jun. 1972. Personal Files.

Senate Joint Resolution No. 66, 13 Apr. 1977. Personal Files.

Miscellaneous

"A Tribute to Mildred Eloise Doyle, by a Niece, May 9, 1989." Ruth Doyle Hilton's Personal Files.

Baker, Carol E. "Superintendent Mildred E. Doyle: Educational Leader, Politician, Woman." Ed.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, 1977.

County Superintendent's Professional Certificate. Number 860, State of Tennessee, Department of Education, April 26, 1946.

Doyle Family File. McClung Collection, East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville, TN.

Doyle, Mildred. Academic History. Office of the Registrar, Maryville College, Maryville, TN.

Official Knox County Election Return Sheets, 1952-1976. Knoxville, TN.

Permanent Professional Supervisor's Certificate. Number 89269, State of Tennessee, Department of Education, June 21, 1945.

Rev. Robert Temple. "Funeral Service for Mildred E. Doyle." 9 May 1989. Ruth Doyle Hilton's Personal Files.

Yoakley, Dr. Richard. "In Memory of Mildred Doyle." 9 May 1989. Dr. Yoakley's Personal files.

Newspapers

"Aspirants Eye GOP Primary." The Knoxville Journal, 7 Feb. 1946, A1.

Bailes, Frank. "Elite Eleven Will Be Inducted June 25." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 4 June 1983, B1.

"Board Decides Miss Doyle is Downright Good Teacher." The Knoxville Journal, 1 Oct. 1929, 16.

"Board to Consider Miss Doyle's Case at Meeting Today." The Knoxville Journal, 30 Sept. 1929. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

"Board Wrangles Hour Over Doyle Case; To Meet Again." The Knoxville Journal, 12 Sept. 1929, 3.

Byrd, Ben. "Byrd's Eye View." The Knoxville Journal, 24 June 1983, B1.

Carter, Carmen. "'Elect Woman' Session Includes Mildred Doyle." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 26 April 1985. Photocopy. Mildred Doyle's Personal Files.

"Charter E. Doyles Celebrating Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 16 Feb. 1945. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

Clonts, Homer. "Dennis Martin Disappeared 25 Years Ago." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 June 1994, A8.

_____. "More About 'Lost Day.'" The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 28 Feb. 1960, B8.

_____. "Separation of Good and Poor Pupils Asked." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 14 Feb. 1958, 1.

Cummins, Cynthia. "Mildred Doyle--Public Service is Her Life." The South Knoxville Packet, 22 June 1987, 2.

"Death Ends Long Career of Charter E. Doyle." The Knoxville Journal, 9 April 1949.

"Dedication Portrait." The Knoxville Journal, 11 April 1968. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

"Dinner Honors School Leaders: Tributes Paid Miss Doyle, Hop Bailey." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 12 April 1973. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

"Doyle Dedication." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 13 April 1968. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

"Doyle Defeated, Jenkins Wins." The Knoxville Journal, 6 Aug. 1976, A1.

"Doyle Wins State's Top Honor for 50 Years' Education Work." The Knoxville Journal, 8 Mar. 1983. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

"Doyle Won't Seek Reelection." The Knoxville Journal, 7 Aug. 1975, A1.

"Dr. Doyle Announces Election Bid." The Knoxville Journal, 20 Feb. 1976, A1.

"Dr. Doyle To Ask for Building Funds." The Knoxville Journal, 6 April 1967. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

DuBose, Jane Gibbs. "Knox School Providing Model for Educating Problem Student." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 13 Feb. 1983, B9.

"First Graders in Knox Pass Up Integration." The Knoxville Journal, 31 Aug. 1969, A1.

Ford, Margaret. "Knox School Head Ends First Year in Office." The Knoxville Journal, 6 Sept. 1947, B1.

"Former TEA President Mildred Doyle Dies." TEA News, June 1989, 5.

"Fostering Change: ACL Has a New Home, Some New Ways." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 June 1994, B2.

Harris, Roger. "Ready or Not, Doyle Park Will Meet Public." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 19 April 1985, B1.

Henigman, Louise. "Park's New Nature Trail Has a Long History." The Knoxville Journal, 11 June 1986, D1.

"Integration Case Appeal Undecided." The Knoxville Journal, 31 August 1960, A2.

"Integration in Knox Due Today." The Knoxville Journal, 31 August 1960, A2.

Irwin, Stevie. "School Addresses Individual Needs." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 June 1994, B2.

Klebenow, Anne. "Mildred Doyle Defends Knox County Schools." The Knoxville Journal, 19 Feb. 1976, A9.

"Knox School Board Sighs Relief as 'Flapper' Case is Postponed." The Knoxville Journal, 17 Sept. 1929. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

Levary, Marti. "Troubled Teens Put To The Test at Special School." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 10 Feb. 1985, B1.

Maples, Bill. "Choral Society Award: Patterson to Be Honored for Public Service and Creation of Singing Seniors." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 23 Nov. 1986, B3.

_____. "Mildred Doyle Gives Land to City, County for Park." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 24 Jan. 1984, B3.

"Mildred Doyle Continues Family Tradition of Service." Spectrum, Aug. 1981, 3.

"Mildred Doyle Endorses Move Toward Better Schools in State." Source unknown, circa March 1983. Mildred Doyle's Personal Files.

"Mildred Doyle Given Medal." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 8 Mar. 1983. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

"Mildred Doyle Joins MC Board." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 6 July 1972. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

"Mildred Doyle, Political Pioneer for GOP Women." The Knoxville Journal, 8 May 1989, 6A.

"Mildred Doyle to Speak." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 22 Feb. 1981.

"Mildred E. Doyle." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 8 May 1989, A6.

"Miss Doyle Credits Success to 'People.'" The Knoxville Journal, 26 July 1976.
Photocopy. Mildred Doyle's Personal Files.

"Miss Doyle Heads E-T Superintendents." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 20 June 1947.

"Miss Doyle is Honored by Exchange." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 22 June 1972.

"Miss Doyle is Seeking Reelection." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 2 May 1968.
Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

"Miss Doyle Praised, Presented Award." The Knoxville Journal, 29 April 1977.

Morris, Betsy. "First Woman County Superintendent has Year Background of Teaching Here." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 10 July 1946, B1.

Moxley, Cynthia. "Benevolent Dictator: For 30 Years, Mildred Doyle Got Things Done as School Chief." The Knoxville Journal, 4 July 1985, A1.

"Mrs. Charter Doyle is Dead at 73." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 17 Oct. 1949.
Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

"Open Space Classrooms, Discipline Spark County School Race Debate." The Knoxville Journal, 26 July, 1976, A1.

"Open Space Classroom Evaluation Presented." The Knoxville Journal, 7 Aug. 1975, A1.

O'Toole, Thomas. "Eleven Knoxville Greats Feted at Banquet." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 26 June 1983, D3.

Owen, Lucas. "Smaller Classes One Advantage to Alternative Classroom Style." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 June 1994, B2.

"Packing Pickles for Pokes." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 25 July 1973, D24.

"Quarterly Dedicated to Dr. Doyle." The Knoxville Journal, 11 July 1974.

Ricker, Roger. "Former Schools Chief Doyle Remembered as Dedicated, Unselfish." The Knoxville Journal, 9 May 1989, 4A.

Roberts, George. "People: Mildred Doyle." Weekly Review, 31 Dec. 1985, 6.

- Robinson, Ronda. "Children File in for Doyle Park Groundbreaking." The South Knoxville Packet, 23 Oct. 1984, 1.
- Rogers, Al. "Are Doyle 'Retirement' and Ranking Remap Plan Tied to Power Move?" The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 4 Jan. 1976, A1.
- Rutledge, Tom. "Doyle Nature Trail Opens With Ceremony." The South Knoxville Packet, 16 June 1986, 3.
- Schmidt, Peter. "Debate Over Ability Grouping Gains High Profile." Education Week, 13 Jan. 1992, 23.
- _____. "Mass. Leads Mounting Charge Against Ability Grouping." Education Week, 13 Jan. 1992, 22.
- "School Head's Mother Dies at Age of 73." The Knoxville Journal, 12 Oct. 1949.
- "Services Tuesday for Longtime Knox Educator Mildred Doyle." The Knoxville Journal, 8 May 1989, A1.
- Sharp, Nola J. "A Woman South Knoxville Calls Its Own." The South Knoxville Packet, 10 May 1986, 8.
- Stafford, Leon. "Doyle Helped Others Until the End: Former Superintendent Active in Fund Raising for Cancer Van Patients." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 9 May 1989, B1.
- "Surprise for Miss Doyle." The Knoxville Journal, 2 Dec. 1975.
- "Ten New Members to be Inducted in Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame." The Knoxville Journal, 4 June 1983, 11.
- "They Charge Inaccuracies in Article About Supt. Doyle." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 11 Jan. 1976, B3.
- Thomas, Lois. "Departing Supt. Doyle Feels Funds Pose Biggest School System Obstacle." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 29 Aug. 1976, A1.
- "Tribute Paid Whole Doyle Family As New High School Dedicated." The Knoxville Journal, 13 April 1968. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.
- Veal, Kaye Franklin. "Mildred Doyle Saluted for Service to Schools." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 1 Oct. 1986, A16.

_____. "Mildred Doyle, a Leader in ET Education Dies." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 May 1989, A1.

Venable, Sam. "Mildred Doyle's Caring Left Touch on the Lives of 'Her' Many Children." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 9 May 1989, A1.

Vines, Georgiana. "Women in Public Life: Miss Doyle Reminisces." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 17 June 1973, A6.

Weintraub, Terri. "'Basic Skills First' Author Workaholic for School Reform." The Knoxville Journal, 13 Jan. 1984, A1.

"Written Charge Demanded in School Affair." The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 5 Sept. 1929, 2.

York, Ted. "Third Generation of Doyle Family Attains County Court Membership." The Knoxville Journal, 6 Feb. 1955. Photocopy. Doyle Family File. McClung Collection.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A**A Listing of Various Awards and Certificates of Merit Located in Mildred Doyle's Personal Files***

American Business Women's Association-Cumberland Belle Chapter, Citation of Appreciation, 22 May 1979.

Delta Kappa Gamma Society, Individual Membership Certificate, n.d.

Department of Education, State of Tennessee, Distinguished Service Award, 19 Sept. 1976.

East Tennessee Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Certificate of Appreciation, n.d.

Honorary Citizenship of the County of Madison, State of Tennessee, 9 April 1980.

Knox County Juvenile Court, Meritorious Service Award, 1 June 1982.

Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee, Certificate of Appreciation, 24 Jan. 1980.

Knoxville Roundtable of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, 1977 Brotherhood Award, 28 April 1977.

Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame, 25 June 1983.

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the National District Attorneys Association, Certificate of Achievement, 29 Mar. 1979.

Tennessee Association, Future Homemakers of America, Honorary Membership Certificate, 15 April 1966.

Tennessee Volunteers for Children, Certificate of Appreciation, n.d.

The City of Knoxville, Mayor's Merit Award for Exceptional Achievements, 5 Mar. 1973.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Honorary Life Membership in Recognition of Devoted and Distinguished Services to Children and Youth, Feb. 1967.

The National Education Association of the United States, Certificate of Recognition for Membership in Committee on Educational Finance from 1962-1965.

The Tennessee Education Association, Recognition of Faithful Service, 1976.

The Tennessee State Advisory Council on Vocational Education, Certificate of Commission, 1 Apr. 1972.

Vestal Elementary School, Certificate of Commemoration for Service 1925-1983, 1983.

- * This list is limited solely to certificates located in Miss Doyle's personal files. During her lifetime she received additional awards and recognition for distinguished service for which certificates were not found in her files.

VITA

Kellie Wilkinson McGarrh was born in Shelby, Mississippi on May 12, 1961. She graduated from Cleveland High School in Cleveland, Mississippi in 1979. In 1983 she received a Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Fine Arts with a major in journalism and a minor in sociology from The University of Memphis (formerly Memphis State University). In 1989 she received the Master of Arts in Teaching with a major in Curriculum and Instruction and a concentration in Secondary Education, also from The University of Memphis.

She taught 12th grade English in the Memphis City Schools during the 1988-89 academic year. From 1989 to 1991 she taught 10th and 11th grade English for the Tipton County, Tennessee Department of Public Instruction. She began her doctoral work at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in Social Foundations of Education in the fall of 1991. She received the Doctor of Education in August 1995.