

FAMILIAL FACTORS IN RELATION TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In recent months public sources of information have presented material regarding an apparent need for persons with high achievement records to fill important technical and planning positions, both for national security and advancement of our high level technology, and for skilled personnel in education, science, medicine, and research areas. The state of Kansas has been concerned with unification of school districts to provide its citizens the best facilities possible for high achievement in education. It has been assumed that intelligence is a significant determiner of school achievement; but many other personal, emotional, social, and psychological factors affect the nature and extent of school achievement. What are these factors other than ability that contribute to performance differences? What environmental influences in the everyday experiences of students facilitate or impede the development of intellectual and academic competence? A student who fails to achieve to capacity may be a student who is not motivated to do so, and among important variables influencing the motivation of children are parental attitudes. Duvall (1962) believed that achievement drive in an adolescent appeared to be closely related to his family relationships. Holland (1961) reported that students whose parents held somewhat

authoritarian attitudes and values were more frequently academic achievers. Morrow and Wilson (1961) established that a positive association existed between student achievement and emotionally supportive home situations. Miller (1962) stated that the family was manifestly the strongest agent in transmitting social values and cultural heritages to children.

This study was designed to describe the academic performance of high achievers in a small high school in Kansas, to examine family background factors that might have influenced these students, and to explore the perceptions of parents of high achievers in relation to their children.

The specific objectives were (1) to determine from permanent school records the performance as to grade point average, class size, Carnegie units, intelligence quotient, attendance, special honors and awards, and participation in out-of-class activities of selected high achievers who had graduated as high school valedictorians; (2) to describe certain family background factors as marital status, residence, age, family size and ordinal position, education, occupation, income, church affiliation, and participation in community activities; (3) to examine perceptions of parents in areas of social acceptance accorded the child by school, community, and peers; parental encouragement given the child; family sharing of activities; supervision and discipline; and parent-child interpersonal relationships; and (4) to explore the relationship between high school valedictory status and continued education, occupational choice, and marital status.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Morrow and Wilson (1961) in a review of numerous studies of school achievement found few that had obtained data regarding the relationship between attitudes of parents and high achievement of children. They stated that these studies indicated a positive association in that parents of high achievers had been found to give their children more praise and approval, to show more interest and understanding, to be closer to their children, and to make their children feel more family togetherness and identification with parents.

Katkovsky, Preston, and Crandall (1964) indicated that it was generally assumed that the evaluations, aspirations, and attitudes of parents concerning their children were based, to some extent, on their feelings and attitudes about themselves; but that the exact nature of this relation was likely to be quite complex if not obscure.

Gaulocher (1953) in a report from the annual conference of the Child Study Association in America reported the opinions that achievement in any sphere required more effort than one was quite ready to give and that parents should expect more from their children than adjustment to daily life and should accept the responsibility to inspire children with a desire to achieve.

In a study to determine whether there was a significant relationship between parental acceptance, as perceived by both parents and children, and the academic achievement of the latter, Barwick and Arbuckle (1962) found that the perception of the child was a stronger factor in achievement than the actual stimulus or the parental report of it. Their study of thirty adolescent students of both sexes from each of three levels of achievement revealed that high-achieving boys perceived their mother and father as equally accepting and that both mother and father acceptance as perceived by the girls increased as the level of achievement became higher. Mother acceptance was perceived by the girls at all levels as greater than father acceptance. Boys achieving at a higher level reported accepting fathers.

Morrow and Wilson (1961) made a comparative study of family relations of forty-eight high school boys of superior intelligence making high grades and a similar group equated for grade in school, socioeconomic status, and intelligence making mediocre or low grades. The results supported the hypothesis that parents of bright high achievers reportedly engaged in more home sharing of activities, ideas, and confidences; were more approving, trusting, affectionate, and encouraging (but not pressuring) with respect to achievement; were less restrictive and severe; and enjoyed more acceptance of parental standards by their children. These authors concluded that family morale fostered academic achievement by fostering favorable attitudes toward teachers, school, and intellectual activities.

Tibbets (1955) interviewed two comparison groups of

bright high- and low-achieving boys and their parents. He found that high-achieving boys and parents were more nearly alike in expressing greater satisfaction with family relations than were the low-achieving boys and parents in their generally-less-satisfactory characterizations of family behavior patterns. The comparative lack of agreement between parents on the standards of behavior expected of the boys was a characteristic of the low-achieving group. The high achievers identified themselves more closely with their families than did the low achievers, and were more likely to be motivated by a desire to please their parents. Concomitantly, the high-achieving boys more often described their parents as thoughtful, understanding, and interested. Relations between fathers and sons depended on mutual interests and shared activities; while bonds between mothers and sons were based on mutual affection and trust.

In a study of 434 California high school students in four intelligence levels to determine the possible relationship between parent evaluation and academic performance, Cooper and Lewis (1962) found that high-achieving students in all four intelligence level groups accorded their parents significantly higher evaluations than did the low achievers.

Shaw and Dutton (1962) employed the Parent Attitude Research Inventory (PARI) with parents of tenth and eleventh grade students with determined intelligence quotients of 110 or above. The study revealed that parents of underachieving children hinted of dissatisfaction with their parental role and had more strongly negative attitudes toward those particular children than did the

parents of achieving youngsters. Cooperation was generally better from the parents of achievers than from the parents of under-achievers and from mothers than from fathers. Similarly, Duvall (1962) pointed out that low drives for achievement tended to come from families where a lackadaisical attitude existed.

Holland (1961) stated that students who were persevering, sociable, and responsible and whose parents held somewhat authoritarian attitudes and values were more frequently academic achievers. He found that creative performance at high school level occurred more frequently among students who were independent, intellectual, expressive, asocial, consciously original, and who had high aspirations for future achievements.

A study of two groups of twenty-nine students by Januar (1963) showed that academic achievement was positively related to the occupation of the father, hobbies of the students, future educational and vocational plans of students, age, and interest and participation in outside activities.

In a study of Iowa farm boys, as compared to city boys with similar high school grades and social participation, Burchinal (1960) found that farm boys got less encouragement from their parents for education beyond high school than did city boys, that they less often had plans for going on to college or for any education beyond high school, and that they more often planned to enter lower income and lower prestige occupations than did city boys.

Wade (1962) explored the difference in achievement levels between students who had one working parent and students who had

both mother and father employed. The findings showed that the two groups achieved at approximately the same level, but that additional research was needed to clarify the relationship between employment practices of parents and student achievement.

Schachter (1963) reported in a study on birth order and eminence in higher education that, although a surplus of first-borns occurred among eminent scholars, there appeared to be no direct relationship between birth order and eminence, only a reflection of the fact that scholars, eminent or not, were derived from a college population in which first-borns were in marked surplus.

Northby (1958) believed that the academic performance of girls was superior to that of boys throughout all grade levels. In his study of graduating classes of eighty-three high schools in Connecticut in 1956 with 12,326 students, he found when rank in graduation class was used as a criterion of high school academic success, the girls in high school were distinctly superior to the boys. The percentage of girls in the top ten per cent was more than twice that for boys. On the other hand, the percentage of boys found in the bottom ten per cent of the classes was nearly twice as large as that for girls.

Grandall, Dewey, Katkovsky, and Preston (1964) interviewed mothers and fathers of forty early-grade-school-age children with a mean IQ of 124. The most striking findings were that attitudes and behaviors of parents were associated with academic performance of their daughters much more frequently than with academic performance of their sons, and that those girls whose mothers were

less affectionate and less nurturant toward them were more academically competent. The more proficient girls had fathers who more often praised, and less often criticized, their achievement attempts than did the less academically competent girls.

Katkovsky et al. (1964) in a continuation of this study found that the greater the value parents placed on intellectual achievements for themselves, the more they valued intellectual achievement for their children, particularly their daughters. The importance they placed on intellectual competence for their sons was more independent of their values for themselves.

Miller (1962) stated that parents of underachievers were to be blamed for failure to encourage intellectual development in their children and that low social and economic status could undermine a student's self regard and stifle his ambition.

Bishton (1957) made a basic assumption that intelligence was a significant determiner of school achievement; but many other personal, social, psychological, and emotional factors affected the nature and extent of school achievement. His findings from a study of ninety-nine boys and girls from junior high schools in or near Columbus, Ohio, compared favorably with the research of Hollingworth (1926), the study of one-hundred gifted children by Witty (1930), the study of Lewis (1940) of superior children in the elementary school, and the genetic study of genius by Terman (1947). Students who were high achievers were equal or superior to the general population in degree of emotional maturity, absence of behavior problems, and ability to adapt to conditions that they could not change. Terman (1947) in a follow-up

study found that these same children excelled as adults in intellectual ability, scholastic accomplishment, vocational achievement, and physical health.

In a study based on teacher evaluation of students on a personality rating scale of thirteen specific traits, Ames (1943) found that sociability, attractiveness, and popularity showed no significant correlation with scholastic achievement; but that persistence, common sense, dependability, punctuality, cooperation, honesty, and sincerity had significant correlations with achievement. She concluded that the ability to conform to school situations was related to scholastic achievement, but that the ability to succeed socially was not related to scholastic achievement.

A decade later Gough (1953) suggested the following groupings of tendencies as characteristics of more successful students: (1) optimistic self-confidence, self-control, capacity for sustained and diligent application; (2) acceptance of conventions, rejection of the frivolous and diversionary; orderliness, planfulness, and basic seriousness of purpose; (3) personal efficiency, vitality and integration; (4) acceptance of others, denial of ill will and animosity, absence of interpersonal friction, emphasis on equanimity and rationality; and (5) sense of academic effectiveness, good study habits, sense of accomplishment.

Wilson and Morrow (1962) found in a study of forty-eight high school boys certain characteristics relating to high achievers. They were high in objectively measured achievement, did their homework regularly, had positive attitudes toward teachers and school, recognized their intelligence and capacity to make

top grades, had a high grade point aspiration level, and expected their future income to be high.

The reviewer sought to further contribute to this body of literature with a descriptive study unique in choice of high-achieving subjects from a small high school in a relatively stable, rural community over a period of sixteen years and in use of a questionnaire designed to obtain interpersonal relationships and attitudes of parents concerning these high achievers.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### Subjects

From the permanent school records of the St. John Public Schools, St. John, Kansas, those students who were designated as valedictorians from the years 1949 to 1964, inclusive, were chosen as subjects.

Valedictory status in St. John High School was accorded the student in each graduating class who had the highest grade point average on academic subjects. An "A" grade was equivalent to one point; a "B" grade, two points; and a "C" grade, three points. If two or more students had equally high averages, co-valedictorians were named. Twenty-one valedictorians were cited in the sixteen years included in this study. Five girls with equal grade point averages of 1.000 were valedictorians in 1960. Descriptive factors other than grade point averages compared were sex, attendance, class size, intelligence quotient, Carnegie units, special awards and honors, and participation in out-of-class activities.

The parents of these subjects were contacted by telephone for a specific time for interviews. Of the twenty sets of parents indicated, eighteen were interviewed. One set of parents was deceased, and one set had moved from the state. One set of parents

had two children cited as valedictorians.

### Instruments

Interviews were chosen as the most effective means of collecting information from parents of their perceptions of their child as a high achiever. Three separate instruments were prepared: an information sheet, a checklist, and an interview schedule. Items on the checklist were designed to obtain factual data on family background factors as marital status, residence, age, family size and ordinal position, education, occupation, income, church affiliation, participation in community activities, and ages and occupations of other children in the family. The interview schedules were designed to yield information on opinions and attitudes of parents in their interpersonal relationships with their children. Such questions were asked as "What encouragement did you give your child regarding school achievement?"; "What activities did the family, as a whole, enjoy?"; "What things, if any, did your child do that you disliked or worried about?"; "What was your method of discipline?"; and "How close did you feel to your child?" This procedure was in accordance with the statement by Hyman et al. (1954) that interviews were more appropriate for items requiring complexity of definition; while for specific items such as age or education, interviews yielded more "rounded off" figures than did self-administered checklists.

Both the checklist and interview schedule were pretested with two St. John couples to assist the interviewer in developing techniques and to simplify or clarify wording of questions.

## Collection of Data

Since most of the couples interviewed were personally acquainted with the interviewer, rapport was readily established, and the interviews were conducted informally. Many of the mothers had newspaper clippings and yearbooks available for the interviewer to peruse. One mother placed a long distance telephone call to her daughter in college to insure correct information of college honors. Coffee was shared in many homes following the interview. Two fathers telephoned the interviewer the day following the interview to provide additional information. Many couples expressed pleasure in being a participant in the study. One woman said as the call ended, "I couldn't imagine what you could do with any information I could provide, but it does sound interesting."

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Description of Valedictorians

##### Sex

Of the twenty-one valedictorians included in this study, fourteen were girls and seven were boys.

##### Grade point average

Grade point average was based on the average grade earned in all academic subjects pursued in the ninth through twelfth grades. Valedictory status in St. John High School was accorded to the student in each graduating class who had the highest grade point average. An "A" grade was equivalent to one point; a "B" grade, two points; and a "C" grade, three points. If two or more students had equally high averages, co-valedictorians were named.

The highest grade point average achieved was 1.000. This was shared by seven girl valedictorians. The lowest grade point average was 1.495. The median grade point average for all valedictorians was 1.102. The median for girl valedictorians fell between 1.000 and 1.029. The median for boys was 1.242.

##### Class size

The highest number in any one graduating class was forty-six in 1961. The girl valedictorian of this class had a grade

point average of 1.000. The lowest number of graduates in a class was twenty-six in 1963. The boy valedictorian of this class had a 1.300 grade point average. The graduating class of 1960 had forty members, and five girls with equal grade point averages of 1.000 shared valedictory status. The class of 1953 had forty-three members, and two girl valedictorians with 1.030 grade point averages were named. The average number of graduates in all classes from 1949 through 1964 was 34.25.

### Carnegie units

A Carnegie unit was the credit received for thirty-six weeks of work for a class meeting five periods per week. The number of Carnegie units necessary for graduation from a Kansas high school was sixteen for the earlier years of this study and seventeen for later years. The highest number of Carnegie units completed by one student was twenty and one-half; the lowest number, sixteen and one-half. The average number of Carnegie units completed was eighteen.

Lafferty (1958) in a comparative study of the gifted and average high school graduates from an eastern Kansas community found that the gifted completed more Carnegie units than did the average in English, mathematics, and science. St. John High School offered four units in English, mathematics, and science. Thirteen of the valedictorians completed four units of English, four completed four units of mathematics, and three completed four units of science. Eight subjects completed three units of English, twelve completed three units of mathematics, and four

completed three units of science. Two valedictorians, both boys, completed four units in all of the above named academic fields. No attempt was made to compare these findings with other members of the graduating classes.

### Intelligence quotient

The intelligence quotients recorded on permanent school records were based on written scores from the California Test of Mental Maturity; the Henmon Nelson Test, Form A; both A and B Forms of the Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Test; and the Science Research Associates (SRA) Test of Educational Ability. Every subject was not tested by all tests. Subjects who were tested by two or more tests showed little variance in intelligence quotient. Subjects were tested as early as the fourth grade. The highest intelligence was above 150 recorded from a score on the SRA Test of Educational Ability. The lowest intelligence quotient recorded was 102 scored on the California Test of Mental Maturity administered in the fourth grade to the subject. The median intelligence quotient for all subjects was 119.

Using Engle's (1957) descriptive classification of intelligence quotients as a basis for classification, four of the subjects were in the average or normal classification of 90-109; eight ranged in the superior classification of 110-119; eight were in the very superior classification of 120-139; and one was classified as genius or gifted, 140 and above.

### Attendance

Attendance records were available for twenty of the sub-

jects. A school year consisted of 180 days taught. Perfect daily attendance for four years of high school was 720 days. All twenty-one subjects attended four years. No subject had perfect daily attendance. One subject missed one-half day. The most days missed by a subject in four years were thirty-three. The average number of days missed by girls was seventeen and one-half. The average number of days missed by boys was twenty. The twenty subjects for whom records were available were in daily attendance a total of 14,032 of the 14,400 days taught.

#### Participation in out-of-class activities

St. John High School promoted many out-of-class activities in which a student might participate, develop leadership qualities, earn school letters, or obtain academic credit. These activities included music, both instrumental and vocal in large groups and in small selected ensembles; athletics, including football, basketball, and track; speech and debate; yearbook and school paper; dramatics; pep club and cheerleading; Kays and Kayettes; class organizations; student council; scholarship contests; and Honor "J" Society.

The combined number of times subjects participated in out-of-class activities was 436. The seven boys had 120 participations; the fourteen girls had 316 participations. The mean number of participations for boys was 17.1. The mean number for girls was 22.6. The range of activities for boys was from nine to thirty-four with one exception. One boy had only three participations in four years of high school. He had entered the three sports his freshmen year. The range of activities for girls

was from eleven to thirty-four. Table 1 shows the number of subjects who participated in out-of-class activities in ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades.

TABLE 1  
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN OUT-OF-CLASS ACTIVITIES  
ACCORDING TO CLASS YEAR

| Class    | Sports        | Band | Vocal | Speech<br>Debate | Drama | Paper<br>Annual | Kayette<br>Kay | Office<br>Held |
|----------|---------------|------|-------|------------------|-------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
|          | Girls<br>N=14 |      |       |                  |       |                 |                |                |
| Ninth    | 7             | 7    | 12    | 1                | 3     | -               | 14             | 4              |
| Tenth    | 9             | 6    | 11    | 5                | 3     | -               | 14             | 4              |
| Eleventh | 8             | 8    | 10    | 5                | 12    | 1               | 14             | 5              |
| Twelfth  | 9             | 7    | 9     | 4                | 5     | 4               | 13             | 3              |
|          | Boys<br>N=7   |      |       |                  |       |                 |                |                |
| Ninth    | 6             | 2    | 2     | 1                | 1     | 1               | 4              | 2              |
| Tenth    | 4             | 2    | 5     | 1                | 3     | -               | 2              | 1              |
| Eleventh | 4             | 2    | 5     | 1                | 4     | -               | 1              | -              |
| Twelfth  | 3             | 2    | 6     | 1                | 3     | 2               | 1              | -              |

#### Special honors and awards

Nine subjects participated in band activities and earned letters some time during their high school years; twenty participated in vocal music and earned letters. Six of the seven boys earned letters in athletics, and one was a four-year letterman

in three sports. Three served as editor of the yearbook; two served as editor of the school paper; two girls were cheerleaders, one of whom held the honor for four years; one girl was chosen as basketball queen; and three girls were chosen as queen attendants. One girl was honored by the state as Kansas Teen-Age Safety Queen. One girl was selected to attend the secondary school summer training program in mathematics sponsored by the National Science Foundation. Four subjects participated in state contests in speech and dramatics, three of whom received first ratings, and one received a second rating. All twenty-one subjects received "J" pins for membership in the Honor "J" Society, a local scholastic achievement organization, for each of their four high school years.

St. John High School has participated annually in the Kansas State Scholarship Contest sponsored by the Kansas State Teachers' College of Emporia since 1959. The rules of this contest permitted a contestant to enter in as many as three subject areas each year he was in high school. Eleven of the twenty-one subjects in this study had graduated from high school before 1959, but each of the remaining ten subjects had been chosen at least once to represent the school. They had a composite of forty-one entries, and forty-one honors were compiled. These included: first place honors, six; second place honors, three; third place honors, two; fourth place honors, six; fifth place honors, two; and honorable mentions, twenty-two. The most outstanding individual had received three first place honors, one second place honor, one fourth place, and one honorable mention for her six entries.

### Family Background Factors

Information concerning family background factors was obtained from personal home and telephone interviews with parents, from checklists completed by parents, and from records in the office of county clerk of Stafford County, Kansas. Eighteen of the twenty sets of parents were contacted. In a few categories where information for all subjects was not completed, the information was either not available or the parents preferred not to reveal those facts.

#### Marital status

Nineteen of the sets of parents of the subjects were married to the spouse who was the child's natural parent. Two of the subjects had mothers who had remarried. One subject was the child of the second marriage of her father. One subject was the offspring of the second marriage of both his mother and father.

#### Residence

All twenty-one subjects lived with their parents and attended St. John High School four years. Eleven subjects resided with their parents and attended St. John Public Schools from grades one through twelve. Five subjects resided with their parents and attended rural grade schools in the surrounding communities. The parents of five subjects were not local. Three of these came as teachers to St. John. Fourteen sets of parents were residing in or near St. John at the time of this study. One set of deceased parents was residing in St. John at the time of death.

Age of parents at time of birth of subject

The youngest mother was eighteen at the time of birth of subject; the oldest mother was thirty-five. The youngest father was nineteen; the oldest father was forty-four. The average age of the nineteen mothers included was twenty-seven. The average age of the nineteen fathers was twenty-nine. The median age of both mothers and fathers was twenty-seven. The mother was older than the father in five sets of parents.

Family size and ordinal position

The largest family included in this study had eight children. One family had seven children, five families had four children each, two families had three children each, eight families had two children, and three families had one child each. Five of the families had children of one sex only. The average number of children per family was 3.35.

Seven of the subjects were the oldest child in the family, eight were the youngest family member, three were middle children, and three were only children.

Education of parents

The highest grade completed in school was checked by eighteen sets of parents. Eighteen mothers and seventeen fathers had completed grammar school. Sixteen mothers and fourteen fathers had completed high school. Twelve mothers had some college work; five of these were college graduates, two with nursing degrees and two with other advanced degrees. Eight fathers had some college work; one earned a B. S. degree, four had work beyond

a college degree, and two completed advanced degrees. Table 2 shows the number of mothers and fathers and the levels of their achievement.

TABLE 2  
GRADE LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT OF PARENTS

| Level Attained<br>(Highest) | Mothers<br>N=18 | Fathers<br>N=18 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Some grammar school         | 0               | 1               |
| Grammar school              | 1               | 0               |
| Some high school            | 1               | 3               |
| High school graduate        | 4               | 6               |
| Some college work           | 7               | 1               |
| College graduate            | 3               | 1               |
| Work beyond college         | 2               | 4               |
| Advanced degree             | 0               | 2               |

One mother who had completed grammar school only at the time her child was in school told the interviewer that because education was so important to her she had obtained a high school diploma at the age of sixty, after all her children had graduated from college. The one father who did not have a grammar school education said that he had quit school on his eighteenth birthday after he had taken advantage of all the short terms that were available to him in his rural childhood environment.

#### Occupation of parents

Four mothers were employed as teachers, one mother was a

school secretary, one mother was a part time household worker, and one mother helped her husband operate a cafe. Thirteen mothers were not employed outside the home.

The occupations of fathers were more varied. Five fathers were farmers, two fathers were oil field workers, and two owned small businesses. The remaining ten fathers represented ten different occupations. The group comprised a banker, lawyer, editor, court reporter, teacher, superintendent of schools, barber, road superintendent, custodian, and cattle buyer.

#### Approximate family income

Table 3 shows the number of families who indicated their approximate income level on the checklist. Two sets of parents preferred to withhold this information.

TABLE 3  
APPROXIMATE FAMILY INCOME

| Income Range                 | Family<br>N=16 |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Less than \$2,000 . . . . .  | 1              |
| \$2,000 - \$2,999 . . . . .  | 0              |
| \$3,000 - \$4,999 . . . . .  | 4              |
| \$5,000 - \$6,999 . . . . .  | 5              |
| \$7,000 - \$10,000 . . . . . | 4              |
| Above \$10,000 . . . . .     | 2              |

#### Church affiliation

The community of St. John had churches of the following denominations: Catholic, Assembly of God, Baptist, Brethren,

Christian, Church of Christ, Methodist, and Mormon. Eighteen mothers and seventeen father had church affiliations. All were Protestants. In fifteen sets of parents both mothers and fathers belonged to the same denomination. More parents (twelve mothers and ten fathers) were affiliated with the Methodist denomination than with any other group.

#### Participation in community activities

Information concerning parental participation in community activities was obtained through a checklist completed by the parents. Organizations which had been a part of the St. John community activities during the years included in this study were grouped under the following headings: agricultural, business, church, hobby, lodge, political, professional, school, service, social, study, veteran, and other. Instructions were to indicate with one check the organizations to which the parent had belonged when the child was in high school and to indicate with a double check those organizations in which the parent was still active. A total of twenty-seven organizations was double checked by mothers; a total of thirty-two was double checked by fathers. Mothers single checked twenty-eight organizations; fathers, thirty-one. The fact that their child was no longer in school showed little relationship to parental participation in adult-oriented organizations. Those organizations in which the parents were no longer active were youth-oriented, as school, Scouts, and 4-H.

Ten sets of parents indicated that they were no longer active in school organizations, four sets of parents single checked 4-H, and four fathers no longer worked with Scouts.

Three mothers had dropped study clubs. Three mothers and two fathers were not presently active in their respective political organizations; two fathers were inactive in veteran organizations. One couple, retired from teaching, had dropped membership in professional organizations. One father explained that he had stopped paying lodge dues when he started paying college tuition.

The range of participation in activities for mothers was from one to seven during the time the subject was in high school and from one to four presently. The range for father participation in activities was from one to ten while the child was in high school and from none to six presently.

#### Parental Perceptions

Interviews with parents of the subjects were chosen as the most effective means of collecting information concerning perceptions of their children in relation to high achievement in high school. Eighteen mother-father pairs were interviewed in their homes. One set of parents had two valedictorians, one set was deceased, and one pair had moved from the state. Both parents were asked similar questions and the responses of each were recorded separately. Responses which were in complete agreement were recorded together as a set of parental responses. Questions were designed to obtain perceptions and attitudes of parents in these areas: (1) social acceptance accorded the child by the school, community, and peers; (2) parental encouragement given the child; (3) family sharing of activities; (4) supervision and discipline; and (5) parent-child interpersonal relationships. Agreement between spouses was high in each area.

Social acceptance accorded the child  
by school, community, and peers

The questions "Did your child enjoy high school?" "Do you feel your child was accepted by his peers?" and "Do you feel your child was accepted by the community?" were asked to determine the parents' perceptions of their child in relation to school, community, and peers. Each question was followed by a second question concerning the reason for answers given.

Each mother-father pair answered affirmatively that their child enjoyed high school. Reasons given by parents were divided into six categories based on similarities of wording. The number of father and mother responses in each category is summarized in Table 4. More than one reason was given by many parents.

TABLE 4  
PERCEPTION OF CHILD'S ENJOYMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL

| Response                       | Mother | Father |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Liked to read and study        | 15     | 13     |
| Liked classmates               | 14     | 12     |
| Participated in activities     | 11     | 12     |
| Liked teachers                 | 10     | 8      |
| Liked challenge of competition | 6      | 7      |
| Belonged to a good class       | 5      | 5      |

The largest number of similar responses by both mothers and fathers indicated that the child liked to read and study. One mother said that her child liked books even before learning

to read, and one father related that his daughter read the classics before entering school. The second highest number of responses indicated that the child enjoyed high school because he liked his classmates--a factor of peer acceptance.

Those parents who gave participation in activities as a reason for their child's enjoyment of high school included music, debate, dramatics, cheerleading, and athletics. Fathers of two sons particularly felt that athletic prowess developed by participation in athletics was the outstanding reason for enjoyment of high school. Four years as a cheerleader was mentioned by one mother as the main reason she felt her daughter enjoyed high school.

Ten mothers and eight fathers felt that their child liked the teachers and expressed opinions that the school was well run and that the teachers were to be commended in their work with their child. Only one mother expressed any dislike toward a teacher, but she gave the relationship with the teacher as a reason that her child enjoyed high school.

The five mothers and five fathers who gave "belonged to a good class" as a reason for the enjoyment of high school by their child were the parents of five girls who graduated as co-valedictorians of the same class. These same parents further indicated the challenge of competition as a compelling reason for high school enjoyment. One father said of these five girls: "They were unusual. They always tried to beat each other, and yet they always wanted each other to win." One father mentioned that he felt there was a "minimum of crudy students" in this particular class. The sixth mother who listed challenge of competition

related that her child had attended a rural grade school as the only member of her class and that she felt her child particularly liked the challenge of competition. Although the question was not asked concerning the enjoyment of grade school by the child, one mother related that her child "hated to go to grade school." Both mother and father of this child indicated that it was a welcome relief when she enjoyed high school. They felt this change in attitude appeared with the greater challenge of competition in high school.

Parents generally perceived an acceptance of their child by his peers. An unqualified "yes" was given to the question "Do you feel your child was accepted by his peers?" by fourteen mothers and by fifteen fathers. Two mothers and two fathers answered "yes" but with reservations. Two mothers and one father felt that their child was not accepted by his peers. Three sets of parents disagreed on their perceptions of their child's acceptance. The mother-father pair of one subject felt that their child was not accepted by his peers because of their positions as superintendent and teacher in the school and that jealousy existed because of his athletic prowess and scholastic achievement. The other mother who felt her child was not accepted remarked, "No one is ever fully accepted by his peers." She did not elaborate on this remark. The mothers who answered affirmatively but with reservations felt that their children had a few close friends but that they did not relate to the peer group as a whole. The two fathers felt that their sons were well enough liked by the boys but that they seemed to have trouble getting dates with girls. Those parents who felt

total acceptance of their child by his peers cited close friendships, dating, election to school offices, parties, conversation, and eagerness to attend school and school activities as ways they perceived acceptance. One father said, "Kids were in and out of this house at all hours. I guess that's peer acceptance."

All parent pairs felt that the community accepted their children. One father stated, "I feel this school and community is unique in its acceptance of and interest in its young people, and my child was not an exception." Six mothers mentioned the leadership positions that the church had entrusted to their children. Five fathers related that their child had been employed part time by local businessmen. Leadership positions in 4-H were cited as community acceptance by three sets of parents, and scouting was mentioned by two sets of parents. The fact that older people remarked how they enjoyed her daughter led one mother to believe her child had community acceptance. A summation of the perception of the parents in relation to community acceptance of their child was given by one mother who said, "Our daughter was enjoyed by the community and called upon to accept responsibilities by older, her age, and younger age groups."

#### Parental encouragement

Answers to the question "What encouragement did you give your child regarding school achievement?" indicated three general levels of encouragement--little or no encouragement, generally understood passive encouragement, and active encouragement. Agreement between spouses on the amount of encouragement given was concordant for sixteen sets of parents.

Little or no encouragement was indicated by five sets of parents who gave answers as "on their own"; "little"; "did not make a point of pushing her"; "didn't encourage or discourage"; and "didn't particularly encourage." That high achievement in school was generally understood and expected by both parents and child was implied by six sets of parents. Those six mother-father pairs who felt that they actively encouraged their children to become high achievers indicated that they helped somewhat with homework, praised their child for high grades, provided transportation so that child could attend school, insisted that the child do his best, stressed the importance of going on to college, and "helped in any way possible." One mother stated that she did all the work about the house so that her daughter could study. One father remarked that his son knew he had better work hard in school or he would have to work even harder on the farm. One father mentioned that he had spent hours in the basement as a critical audience to help his daughter achieve in speech events. The fathers in the two sets of parents who expressed opposition on encouragement felt, in both cases, that the mothers "pushed" too hard. The mothers felt that the fathers should have given more encouragement.

Evidence of tangible encouragement was gained from responses to the question "What books, magazines, newspapers, music, television programs and other materials did you provide within the home for this child?" A composite of items enumerated by either mothers or fathers was recorded. Educational media of some kinds, but in variable amounts, were provided in each home. All parent

pairs said they subscribed to at least one daily newspaper and to the bi-weekly local newspaper. Four sets of parents subscribed to three daily newspapers, and three sets of parents subscribed to two daily newspapers. The fewest number of popular magazine subscriptions provided in a home was three; the largest number provided was nine. Magazines mentioned included Saturday Evening Post, National Geographic, Readers' Digest, Seventeen, McCall's, Good Housekeeping, Popular Mechanics, Calling All Girls, Successful Farming, Hot Rod, Ladies' Home Journal, Sports Illustrated, Life, Newsweek, Look, and Cosmopolitan. The average number of magazine subscriptions provided was five. Every set of parents said they provided books for their child. All subjects had library cards and made use of the local library. Eight parent pairs were members of monthly book clubs. All homes contained a small dictionary, and fifteen homes had a set of reference books. One father said that reading material was provided from "comics to classics" and that their daughter read both avidly. Radios were available in all homes, and television was provided in all homes after 1957 when it became available to the locality. Music lessons were provided for twelve of the subjects and pianos were in fifteen homes. Record players and records were mentioned by ten sets of parents. Five subjects were given dancing lessons.

A question was asked to determine encouragement given by parents to career choice and marriage of their children. Five parent-pairs agreed that they stressed continuation of education in college. Eight sets of parents indicated that they did not actually stress college, but that they hoped and planned for their

child to continue his education. Five sets of parents agreed that the decision for continued education was left to the child.

Ten of the subjects whose parents were interviewed were married. Four of these had not completed four years of college at the time of marriage. One set of parents said they discouraged marriage during college, but they continued to pay for their children's schooling even after marriage, and their children had completed bachelor degrees. The two sets of parents whose children did not complete college said they tried to discourage marriage, but that their daughters chose to get married and did. Six sets of parents said their child had obtained a college degree before marriage, and the marriage of their child had been acceptable to them.

#### Family sharing of activities

The interviewer found that both mothers and fathers of the subjects had a high interest in school activities at the time their child was in school. Without exception, all stated that they always attended as a family any school event in which their child was a participant. Six sets of parents with younger children continued to attend school events; two sets of parents continued to attend school events although their children were no longer connected with school.

Church activities and church attendance as a family were particularly important to six sets of parents. Each member of these respective families had held offices and responsibilities in the church as lay leaders, choir members, pianists, Sunday school teachers, vacation school leaders, or ushers.

Reading was rated high as a shared family activity by four sets of parents. In four families mothers and fathers were active participants in 4-H activities at the same time their children were active. Recreational activities of picnicking, family gatherings, hunting, fishing, camping, card playing, horse-back riding, swimming, and traveling were enumerated by from one to six sets of parents. Three families owned summer cabins in the mountains and spent vacation times together there. Three sets of parents traveled extensively in the United States with their children. Country entertainment of the "old-time variety--barn dances, spell downs, and debates"--was named by the oldest couple as favorite family activities. One mother maintained that her family always did the farmwork together and enjoyed doing so. She stated that family attendance at picture shows was a required reward for doing the farmwork well.

The highest number of activities enjoyed by the whole family reported by one set of parents was seven; the lowest number was one activity--school events in which their child was a participant. Only one set of parents reported that they had definitely realized the value of family participation as a unit in enjoyable activities and that this realization had prompted them to buy a summer mountain cabin where they could temporarily forget job and school pressures and could enjoy their daughters.

#### Supervision and discipline

Several questions concerning supervision and discipline were included in the interview. "What things, if any, did your child do during secondary school years that you disliked or

worried about?" "How much did you supervise your children?" "What was your method of discipline?" "Which of you did the most disciplining?" Fourteen sets of parents said that their child did nothing during secondary school years to cause them worry. They implied that an occasional discussion solved the minor problems which occurred. Two sets of parents worried about the health of their children, but said that this worry did not involve any wrongdoing on the part of the child. One set of parents worried about their daughter going steady and tried to discourage her from doing so. One mother worried because her daughter stayed out too late on dates. "She was slow in getting ready for dates and slow in returning from dates." One mother worried about and tried to discourage the friendship of her daughter with an older single lady teacher. One set of parents felt that their daughter spent too much time studying and reading and that she should have gotten outside more.

Three levels of supervision--much, moderately, or little--were considered in parental supervision of children. One set of parents felt that they supervised much (perhaps too much); one set felt that they supervised little because their daughter lived on her own in an apartment in town while attending high school; and sixteen sets considered their supervision moderate. One mother remarked that she always tried to be home when her child returned from school.

One set of parents agreed that the father did the most disciplining. His method involved working the child "on the wood-pile" when he wasn't busy. Ten sets of parents agreed that the

mother did the most disciplining. In two of these cases the father was away from home much of the time. Seven sets of parents agreed that discipline was about equally divided. A mother reported that the parent on the scene first handled the situation and that the other parent always agreed. Discussion and reasoning with the child were methods of discipline used by all parents. In addition, deprivation of privileges was used by four sets of parents. One mother said that they tried to give guidance and advice along with encouragement and praise. One mother always told her daughter to come home to cry.

The question was asked "What access did your child have to an automobile?" One father answered, "None." Fourteen sets of parents said their child had use of the family automobile while in high school; two of these qualified the use as "very little." Three subjects, boys, owned their own automobiles; and one boy and his brother owned an automobile on a partnership basis. The parents of this boy related that the "partnership didn't always agree" and that the family automobile was used, also. The four subjects who owned their automobiles used them for transportation to school. One father maintained his son's car was a "necessity, not a luxury." One subject was expected to maintain his car on wages received from part time employment. None of the parents related any particular discipline problems with their child and an automobile.

#### Parent-child interpersonal relationships

To gain insight into the interpersonal relationships between high achievers and their parents, two questions were asked.

"When your child was growing up, how close did you feel to him or her?" "Did you feel your child felt free to talk with you?" The degree of closeness was rated on a four-point rating scale-- very close, usually close, somewhat close, and seldom close. Closeness of fathers toward sons, of fathers toward daughters, of mothers toward sons, and of mothers toward daughters was considered. Results are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5  
DEGREE OF CLOSENESS FELT BY PARENTS TOWARD CHILD

| Relationship    | Total all Categories | Very Close | Usually Close | Somewhat Close | Seldom Close |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Father-son      | 5                    | 2          | 0             | 2              | 1            |
| Father-daughter | 14                   | 6          | 5             | 0              | 3            |
| Mother-son      | 5                    | 3          | 2             | 0              | 0            |
| Mother-daughter | 14                   | 10         | 4             | 0              | 0            |
| Total           | 38                   | 21         | 11            | 2              | 4            |

Both mothers and fathers felt "very close" to their respective daughters in six families and "usually close" in three families. In the five families where mother and father did not feel equally close to their daughter, four mothers felt "very close" and one mother felt "usually close." Three of the fathers expressed a lack of rapport and two fathers felt "usually close." The degree of closeness felt by mother-father pairs towards sons was "very close" in two families. In those families where mother and father did not feel equally close to their sons, two mothers

felt "usually close" while the fathers did not feel close enough; one father felt "somewhat close" while the mother felt "very close." One father illustrated his relationship to his child with "daughters are my weakness." One father said of his son, "I felt somewhat like I knew him--at times anyway." A mother made the comment about her daughter: "I felt as close as any parent could feel. Our home has always been a loving home."

Duval (1962) stated that children tapered off in telling parents everything as they entered their teens and that they confided only secondarily with parents. The responses to the question "Did your child feel free to talk with you?" were tabulated for fathers toward sons, fathers toward daughters, mothers toward sons, and mothers toward daughters in Table 6.

TABLE 6  
PARENT PERCEPTION OF CHILD'S EASE IN TALKING TO THEM

| Relationship    | Total all Categories | Yes | Usually | No |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----|---------|----|
| Father-son      | 5                    | 2   | 0       | 3  |
| Father-daughter | 14                   | 6   | 3       | 5  |
| Mother-son      | 5                    | 3   | 1       | 1  |
| Mother-daughter | 14                   | 10  | 3       | 1  |
| Total           | 38                   | 21  | 7       | 10 |

Those mother-father pairs who felt very close to their child perceived a two-way freedom and ease in talking with their child. Those parents who did not feel as close to their child

as they would like to have felt cited lack of discussion and conversation as a factor in determining degree of closeness.

### Present Status of Subjects

#### Continued education

Twenty of the twenty-one subjects included in this study had attended, were attending, or were planning to attend college. Fifteen of the seventeen subjects who had graduated from high school four or more years prior to this study were college graduates: three of these had completed advanced degrees, and four were currently working toward advanced degrees. Two subjects had completed advanced degrees and were working on doctorates--one at Byrn Mawr and one at University of California. The colleges or universities from which subjects had graduated or were attending were as follows: University of Kansas, six graduates, one in attendance; Kansas State University, four graduates, one in attendance, one planning to attend; Emporia State Teachers' College, one graduate, one in attendance; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Arizona State University, University of Ohio, and Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas, one graduate each. Those subjects who had completed advanced degrees or were working toward advanced degrees had received sizable scholarships for their continued study. Only one subject had not enrolled in college, and only one had been a college drop-out. One boy and one girl were married while attending college, but they remained to obtain degrees with parental subsidy.

During college years thirteen subjects were members of

sororities or fraternities, and eight served as officers of their respective social organizations. One subject was chosen as cheerleader and as football queen. Two subjects were chosen to participate in summer language programs in foreign countries. One subject was Color Girl for the midshipmen at University of Kansas, named to Hilltoppers, vice-president of Mortar Board, and a member of the student disciplinary board. Two subjects were elected to Phi Beta Kappa; one graduated magna cum laude; eleven were listed on college honor rolls. One subject was vice-president of the campus Democratic club; two served as counselors for freshmen girls; one was president of Independent Residents Council; one was a member of traveling choral groups.

#### Occupational choice

Of the seven boys included in this study, two were attending college. Four subjects were chemical, technical, or petroleum engineers and were located in Wichita, Chicago, Kansas City, and Washington D. C. One subject was a banker in Phoenix.

Of the fourteen girls included in this study, two were attending college as undergraduates. Four subjects (one married) were employed as high school or college teachers and were working toward advanced degrees on a part time schedule. Six were homemakers, three of whom had been employed as medical technician, foreign correspondence secretary, or teacher prior to becoming a homemaker. Occupations of the remaining two subjects were research technician in bacteriology and physical therapist. Five of the girls were living in Kansas, two were in Colorado, two were in California, and one was residing in each of the states of Texas,

Pennsylvania, Montana, Georgia, and Wisconsin.

#### Marital status

Marriage had occurred for four of the boys and seven of the girls, and they had a combined total of eleven children. The number of years between graduation from high school and date of marriage ranged from one year to seven years. The median number of intervening years for all married subjects was four. The median number of intervening years for married girl subjects was three; for married boys, five. The range of years since graduation for girls not yet married was from two to eleven.

#### Other family members

Ordinal position of the subjects varied. Seven subjects were the oldest children in their families, eight subjects were the youngest family members, three subjects were middle children, and three were only children.

Information concerning present occupations of siblings of nineteen subjects was available. Twelve of the younger siblings of the nineteen subjects were students in high school or elementary school. Seven of the siblings older than the subjects were homemakers, two were managers of retail stores, one was a high school teacher, one was a college professor, one was vice-president of a fertilizer company, two were electrical engineers, one was a personnel manager, one was a secretary, and one was in the Air Force.

Present ages of siblings ranged from eight to fifty-two years of age. Present ages of subjects ranged from eighteen to

thirty-three. Present ages of mothers ranged from thirty-seven to sixty-four. Present ages of fathers ranged from thirty-seven to seventy-seven.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A descriptive study of twenty-one high achievers who were designated as valedictorians of St. John High School, St. John, Kansas, from 1949 to 1964, inclusive, was made. Permanent school records were reviewed to obtain performance in high school. A checklist and an interview schedule were prepared. Items on the checklist were designed to examine family background factors related to high achievement. The interview schedule explored perceptions of parents of their children as high achievers.

Twice as many girls as boys were valedictorians. The median or average valedictorian had an earned grade point average of 1.102, was one of 34.25 class members, had completed eighteen Carnegie units, possessed an intelligence quotient of 119, had been absent 18.4 days in four years of high school, had participated 20.8 times in various out-of-class activities in four years, was a member of the Honor "J" Society for four years, and would continue education to obtain a bachelor degree.

Typical parents of valedictorians were Protestants; were high school graduates; were married to the original spouse and natural parent of the valedictorian; and had lived in or near St. John, Kansas, for the length of time their child was in school. The average ages were twenty-seven for mothers and twenty-nine

for fathers at the time the child in study was born. The average number of children per family was 3.35. Occupations of fathers varied; mothers were not generally employed outside the home. The median family income was from \$5,000 to \$7,000. Parents participated or had participated in approximately thirty community organizations.

Parents perceived that their children had been accepted by and had enjoyed school, community, and peers. They felt their children liked classmates, teachers, activities, classwork, and competition. Some parental encouragement for high achievement was given, but a cause-effect relationship was not noted. Educational media of a popular variety were in all homes. Family sharing of activities occurred but was not purposely planned. Severe and restrictive parental supervision and discipline was neither given nor needed. The ease of communication between parents and child implied a high degree of closeness. Parents had warm feelings of acceptance, satisfaction, and companionship concerning their child during high school and later years.

The choice of subjects limited this study to a particular locality and school. The performance of these high achievers in high school and their present status indicated that the environmental factors in the everyday experiences of these students in a relatively small, stable, rural community facilitated development of intellectual and academic competence and fostered social acceptance by school, community, and peers.

The fact that twice as many girls as boys were valedictorians supported the research of Northby (1958) and perhaps sub-

stantiated that of Crandall et al. (1964) who found that the attitudes of parents were associated with the academic performance of daughters much more than with sons.

The over-all satisfaction of the parents as they perceived interpersonal relationships with their child and the social acceptance and educational achievement of their child seemed in accordance with the statement of Morrow and Wilson (1961) that parents of high achievers engaged in sharing of activities, ideas, and confidences; were approving and encouraging; were not restrictive and severe; and enjoyed acceptance by their children.

The extent to which parental satisfaction with the achievement and acceptance of their child was based on their feelings and attitudes about themselves was not determined. Because no contact was made with the subjects, the study could not verify the findings of Barwick and Arbuckle (1962) who stated that the child's perception of parental acceptance was a stronger factor in achievement than the actual stimulus or the parental report of it. A follow-up study based on interviews with the subjects would aid in determining the child's perception of his parents' supervision, his achievement, and his acceptance in home, community, and school.

The fact that parents generally felt a close relationship with their child supported Tibbetts' (1955) statement that high achievers identified themselves more closely with their families than did low achievers. The findings of Holland (1961) which indicated that the parents of high achievers held somewhat authoritarian attitudes and values were not substantiated. The

fact that severe and restrictive supervision and discipline was not given nor felt necessary by these parents was more indicative of permissive or developmental parents.

The occupations of the fathers were so varied that it was not possible to observe any trend of relationship between father occupation and child achievement as Januar (1963) reported. The choice of engineering as a career by four boys whose fathers were farmers was not in accordance with Burchinal's (1960) findings that farm boys more often did not consider higher education or prestige occupations for themselves.

The higher degrees of education sought and obtained, the variety of college activities pursued and honors achieved, and the occupational choices made by a high majority of subjects were positive evidences that high-achieving students in high school excelled as adults in intellectual ability, scholastic accomplishment, and vocational achievement as reported by Terman (1947).

The implications of this study point to the importance of a positive association between parent and high achiever and between high achiever and school, community, and peer group. The writer was aware that this positive association did exist; and, yet, there were no definite, concrete examples that the parents were actively practicing, or unusually concerned with practicing, any conceptual behaviors generally associated with optimum family and child development. Was the relaxed atmosphere of the home conducive to the high achievement of the child, or was the parental acceptance of the fact that their child was a high achiever the causative factor resulting in a relaxed home atmosphere? What

was there within the home in this relatively small, stable, rural community that would assure successful achievement in the larger, urban, highly competitive environments and occupational fields which these subjects chose to pursue following high school? Parents tended to indicate that the element for successful achievement lay within the child. Would a follow-up study of the child's perceptions of his home and parents reveal related feelings? Further studies of subjects from other schools would yield more evidence to answer these unanswered questions which vitally concern parents, teachers, educators, and professional workers in family and child development.

APPENDIX

Code Number \_\_\_\_\_

## INFORMATION SHEET

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Graduation \_\_\_\_\_ Number in Class \_\_\_\_\_

|          |                 |                  |
|----------|-----------------|------------------|
| IQ _____ | Test Name _____ | Year Given _____ |
| IQ _____ | Test Name _____ | Year Given _____ |
| IQ _____ | Test Name _____ | Year Given _____ |

Carnegie Units \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Point Average \_\_\_\_\_

Extracurricular Activities:

Special Awards and Honors:

College Attendance:

Special Awards and Honors:

Employment History:

Present Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Where Located \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Marriage \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Children \_\_\_\_\_

## CHECK LIST

Please check each category as it applied to you at the time your child in study was in high school.

Marital status: Married \_\_\_\_\_; Widowed \_\_\_\_\_; Divorced \_\_\_\_\_; Separated \_\_\_\_\_;  
Married to other than child's parent \_\_\_\_\_.

Age at time of birth of child in study: Mother \_\_\_\_\_; Father \_\_\_\_\_.

Highest grade completed in school:

|                       | Mother | Father |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|
| Some grammar school   | _____  | _____  |
| Grammar school        | _____  | _____  |
| Some high school      | _____  | _____  |
| High school graduate  | _____  | _____  |
| Some college work     | _____  | _____  |
| College graduate      | _____  | _____  |
| Work beyond BS degree | _____  | _____  |
| Advanced degree       | _____  | _____  |
| Technical school      | _____  | _____  |

Church affiliation:

|                  | Mother | Father |
|------------------|--------|--------|
| Catholic         | _____  | _____  |
| Jewish           | _____  | _____  |
| Protestant       | _____  | _____  |
| Assembly of God  | _____  | _____  |
| Baptist          | _____  | _____  |
| Brethren         | _____  | _____  |
| Christian        | _____  | _____  |
| Church of Christ | _____  | _____  |
| Methodist        | _____  | _____  |
| Mormon           | _____  | _____  |
| Other _____      | _____  | _____  |
| (specify)        |        |        |
| None             | _____  | _____  |

Approximate family income:

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Less than \$2,000   | _____ |
| \$2,000 -- \$2,999  | _____ |
| \$3,000 -- \$4,999  | _____ |
| \$5,000 -- \$6,999  | _____ |
| \$7,000 -- \$10,000 | _____ |
| Above \$10,000      | _____ |

Source of income:

|             |       |
|-------------|-------|
| Inheritance | _____ |
| Profession  | _____ |
| Business    | _____ |
| Rents       | _____ |
| Royalties   | _____ |
| Investment  | _____ |
| Wages       | _____ |
| Welfare     | _____ |
| Other _____ | _____ |
| (specify)   |       |

Participation in community organizations: Place one check for those to which you belonged. Place two checks for those in which you are still active. Underline examples which apply to you.

|   | Mother | Father |
|---|--------|--------|
| Agricultural organizations (Farm Bureau; 4H; HDU)       | _____  | _____  |
| Business organizations (BPW; C of C; JC's)              | _____  | _____  |
| Church organizations (Choir; Lay groups; Aid Societies) | _____  | _____  |
| Hobby clubs (card; gun; music; saddle; sewing; etc.)    | _____  | _____  |
| Lodges (BPOE; OES; FOE; IOOF; Mason; Rebekah)           | _____  | _____  |
| Political clubs (Democratic; Republican)                | _____  | _____  |
| Private social clubs (Country Club)                     | _____  | _____  |
| Professional organizations _____                        | _____  | _____  |
| (specify)   |        |        |
| School organizations (PTA; Band Parents; Alumni)        | _____  | _____  |
| Scouts (Boys; Girls)                                    | _____  | _____  |
| Service clubs (Kiwanis; Lions; Rotary)                  | _____  | _____  |
| Study clubs   | _____  | _____  |
| Veteran organizations (Auxiliary; Legion; VFW)          | _____  | _____  |
| Others _____  | _____  | _____  |
| (specify)   |        |        |

## PARENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What is your present place of residence? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your present occupation? Husband, \_\_\_\_\_; Wife, \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What was your occupation at the time your child was in secondary school?  
Husband, \_\_\_\_\_; Wife, \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What are the present ages and occupations of your children?

## BOYS:

| <u>Age</u> | <u>Occupation</u> |
|------------|-------------------|
| ---        | _____             |
| ---        | _____             |
| ---        | _____             |
| ---        | _____             |
| ---        | _____             |

## GIRLS:

| <u>Age</u> | <u>Occupation</u> |
|------------|-------------------|
| ---        | _____             |
| ---        | _____             |
| ---        | _____             |
| ---        | _____             |
| ---        | _____             |

5. For what special honors or achievements has your child been cited since graduating from high school?

Date of marriage \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did your child attend St. John all 12 years? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, where did he attend? In what grades?
7. Did your child enjoy high school? Why?

8. What encouragement did you give your child regarding school achievement?  
career? marriage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What books, magazines, newspapers, music, television programs, etc., did you provide within the home for this child?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What activities did the family, as a whole, enjoy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What extracurricular activities, both school and community, did you encourage your child to pursue?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What things did you try especially hard to get your child to do?
  - a. At grade school age -
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. At high school age -
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. What things, if any, did your child do during secondary school years that you disliked or worried about?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. Do you feel your child was accepted by his peers? \_\_\_\_\_ In what ways?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. Do you feel that your child was accepted by the community? \_\_\_\_\_ In what ways?

16. How much did you supervise your children? much, \_\_\_\_; moderately, \_\_\_\_; little, \_\_\_\_.
17. What access did your child have to an automobile? none, \_\_\_\_; family auto, \_\_\_\_; his own, \_\_\_\_.
18. What was your method of discipline when your child was in secondary school?  
Husband:
- Wife:
19. Which of you did the most disciplining? Husband, \_\_\_\_; Wife, \_\_\_\_.
20. When your child was growing up, how close did you feel to him or her?  
Husband:
- Wife:
21. Did you feel your child felt free to talk with you?

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FAMILIAL FACTORS IN RELATION TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

by

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A. B., Ottawa University, 1949

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
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The need for persons with high achievement records to fill important local, state, and national positions is evident. Teachers, educators, and professional workers in family and child development are particularly concerned with the optimum development of the many facets of each child. This study was designed to describe the academic performance of high achievers in a small, midwestern high school; to examine family background factors that might have influenced these students; and to explore the perceptions of parents of high achievers in relation to their children.

The objectives were (1) to determine from permanent school records the performance as to grade point average, class size, Carnegie units, intelligence quotient, attendance, special honors and awards, and participation in out-of-class activities of selected high achievers who had graduated as high school valedictorians; (2) to describe certain family background factors as marital status, residence, age, family size and ordinal position, education, occupation, income, church affiliation, and participation in community activities; (3) to examine perceptions of parents in areas of social acceptance accorded the child by school, community, and peers; parental encouragement given the child; family sharing of activities; supervision and discipline; and parent-child interpersonal relationships; and (4) to explore the relationship between high school valedictory status and continued education, occupational choice, and marital status.

The performance of twenty-one high achievers who were designated as high school valedictorians from 1949 to 1964 was described. Eighteen parent pairs were interviewed in their homes

by the author, using an original interview schedule and a check list for each parent.

These subjects, average to superior in intelligence, were capable, industrious, active, and accepted by school, community, and peers. They were products of small, stable, Protestant, middle-class families who were active participants in a rural economy. As adults, these subjects excelled in intellectual ability, scholastic accomplishment, and vocational achievement.

Parents perceived these high achievers as being socially accepted by school, community, and peers. They were approving and encouraging; promoted family sharing of activities; felt no need to be restrictive or severe in their supervision and discipline; and had warm, positive feelings of acceptance, satisfaction, and companionship concerning interpersonal relationships with their high-achieving child.

That a highly positive association did exist between parent and high achiever and between high achiever and his social environment was indicated. Parents generally did not reveal an appreciable awareness of the implications of this positive association.