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Thomas J. Farrell, administrator: his views on the schools of his time

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THOMAS J. FARRELL, ADMINISTRATOR;
HIS VIEWS ON THE SCHOOLS OF HIS TIME

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

JOAN C. BOSCIA

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Farrell home at 7442 South Lafayette	7
2. Harvard Elementary School	7
3. Thomas J. Farrell--"Torchy" CIC, '21, '22, '23, '24; Football, '22, '23, '24	17
4. Tilden Technical High School	18
5. LADO in Auditorium	118
6. Panel Members	119
7. The Crowd Filled the Auditorium	120
8. Farrell at the Podium	121
9. Memorial Service Program Cover	161

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Elementary School Curriculum--1915	8
2.	Elementary School Curriculum--1917	9

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vii
Chapter	
I. THE BEGINNING	1
Family Background	
Elementary Education	
Secondary Education	
Normal School	
II. BEGINNING A CAREER	23
New Teacher	
Economic Depression	
Teacher Unionism	
Subscribers	
The MTU Opposes the Subscribers	
Johnson Years	
III. BROADENING HORIZON	51
Administrator	
Navy	
Builder	
Transfer to Lindblom	
Vandalism	
A New Superintendent	
IV. STRIVING TO EXCEL	71
Willis's Schools	
Delinquency	
Farrell and Delinquency	
Arnold School	

TABLE OF CONTENTS.--Continued

Chapter	Page
V. THE TURBULENT SIXTIES	97
Violence in the Chicago Schools	
Annual Promotions	
Petition to Remove Farrell	
Overcrowding and Teacher Shortages	
Commission on Sex Offenders	
Farrell the Administrator	
VI. THE FINAL YEARS	135
School Segregation	
Bilingual Education	
End of an Era	
Picking a Successor	
A New Regime	
Final Days	
In Memoriam	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	162
VITA	173
APPROVAL SHEET	174

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNING

The end of the Civil War (1861-1865) had given rise to a new nation. While the conquered South labored under reconstruction the Northern economy boomed as wartime economic expansion and inflation gave entrepreneurs new wealth to invest. In addition to the increased wealth the absence of Southern opposition in Congress made it easy for Northern congressmen to initiate legislation favorable to expansion. They adopted a protective tariff, created a national banking system, put through a homestead act, and started funding a transcontinental railroad.¹

Immigration from Europe was encouraged to provide a labor force for this growing industrial nation. In each decade between 1850 and 1880 about 2.5 million immigrants arrived in America. This rate fell off slightly during the war years, but picked up again in the seventies, and more than doubled in the eighties. These immigrants came mostly from Britain, Ireland, Germany or the Scandinavian countries and were usually Protestant.²

So many immigrants came to Chicago between 1850 and 1870 that

¹John M. Blum et al., The National Experience: A History of the United States Since 1865, 5th ed. (Chicago: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 401.

²Ibid., 477-78.

Chicago grew to become the transportation, manufacturing, and commercial mecca of the midwest. The Irish immigrated to Chicago by the thousands seeking jobs and a better life than they had back home. By 1870 there were forty thousand Irish natives living in the city and between 1870 and 1900 that number rose to seventy-four thousand.³

Family Background

Thomas John Farrell, Jr. was the product of two of these immigrants. His father and mother were both Irish and Protestant and both arrived in America during the second half of the nineteenth century. Tom's mother, Lucy Ellen McDowell, arrived in Chicago from County Mayo, Ireland in 1882 when she was sixteen. She settled in an area to the south of the city called Morgan Park. Here, she met another southsider, and American of Dutch heritage, Garrett VanDer Starr. Lucy and Garrett were married in the Bethany Church on 4 March 1885. Garrett was from Washington Heights, a neighboring community to the south of Morgan Park, and this is where the newlyweds resided.⁴

Washington Heights encompassed an area which would now be between 89th and 107th Streets. This land was inhabited by a transient population of Irish and German railroad workers who came to live near "The Crossing." This appellation was given to this area because of the intersection of the Rock Island Railroad and the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and St. Louis Railroad, called the Panhandle line. Newlywed, Garrett

³Melvin G. Halli and Peter d'A. Jones, Ethnic Chicago (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, Publishing Co., 1984), 15.

⁴1910 Census Information and Marriage Certificate, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Cook County Building, Chicago, IL.

VanDer Starr was employed in the freight house of the Rock Island Railroad.⁵

The VanDer Starrs were married almost two years before their first child, a son, William Martin was born in 13 November 1886. William Martin was born at home with the assistance of a doctor and in the presence of his paternal grandmother, Mrs. Martin VanDer Starr. Then two years later, Lucy had a second son, John, born October 1888. Between the births of their second and third child, Garrett changed jobs to become a carpenter with the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company.⁶

As the VanDer Starr family grew, the Village of Washington Heights was undergoing some changes. The north end of the village was annexed to Chicago by ordinance and the southern section in which the VanDer Starrs lived was annexed by election. By the time Lucy's third son Harry was born, 16 February 1891, the entire Village of Washington Heights was part of Chicago.⁷

As a resident of the city, Garrett changed jobs again and became a Chicago policeman. The new policeman soon became the father of yet a fourth son, Cornelius McDowell VanDer Starr, born 20 November 1892. Then in 1894, when Garrett had only been on the force for about two years, he died leaving Lucy a widow with their four small sons to

⁵Local Community Fact Book, Chicago Metropolitan Area, based on the 1970 and 1980 Censuses (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1980), 185.

⁶Bureau of Vital Statistics, Chicago, Cook County Building, birth certificates of William and Harry VanDer Starr; Graham Harper, interview by author, C.B.I. Industries, Oak Brook, IL, 9 August 1989.

⁷Local Community Fact Book, 185.

support.⁸ Being widowed at such a young age and needing to support her children, Lucy took boarders into her home.

One of her boarders was Thomas John Farrell, Sr. an employee of the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company which was located in the vicinity. Thomas John Farrell, Sr. was born in London, England on 21 April 1866 of Protestant Irish parents. Shortly after his birth the Farrell family immigrated to the United States. The young widow and her boarder formed an attachment and were married on May 1896. Almost on their first anniversary, the Farrells purchased a home at 1248 West 103rd Place. In addition, they also bought the lot immediately adjacent to their home. Over the next three years the Farrells bought an sold real estate until they finally owned four consecutive pieces of property including the one on which their home sat.⁹ The family prospered, the children grew, and William and John were graduated from Alice Barnard Elementary School in 1902.¹⁰

After being married almost ten years, Lucy gave birth to her fifth son, Thomas John Farrell, Jr., born 30 May 1906. Tom was the youngest of five boys, though his next older brother was fourteen years his senior. This made his early childhood more akin to that of an only child than to that of the youngest sibling. While no one factor can be said to contribute totally to the personality of an adult, Tom's adult behavior seemed to coincide with the expected characteristics of a

⁸Birth Certificates, William, Harry, James, death certificate, Garrett VanDer Starr, Bureau of Vital Statistics, City of Chicago.

⁹Recorder of Deeds, Cook County Building, Chicago, IL.

¹⁰Proceedings of the Board of Education (City of Chicago, July 1901), 619.

single child. Hurlock and Leman have said that single children use their parents as models, and since they associate primarily with adults they tend to be more mature than children with siblings. This maturity of behavior then contributes to good social adjustments and to leadership status within the group.¹¹ For example, Tom not only became the educational leader of an elementary school, but also the leader of a union movement, and the leader in the formation of a construction company. He was comfortable with and maintained friendships with people from all walks of life; politicians, educators, and ministers.¹²

Elementary Education

Tom probably enrolled in the Barnard Elementary School in 1912 which is the school from which his brothers William and John had graduated. At that time, a typical course of study for primary students consisted of reading, spelling, numbers, and formwork (paper-folding, paper cutting, clay modelling). Intermediate and upper grade students added geography, grammar, U.S. history, physiology, and animal and plant studies to their curriculum.

The revision of this curriculum was one of the priorities of Dr. Ella Flagg Young, Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools (1909-1915). Dr. Young maintained that children should be happy in school and

¹¹Elizabeth Hurlock, Child Development (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 668; Kevin Leman, The Birth Order Book (New York: Dell Publishing, 1985), 35-36.

¹²Interviews by author, Joseph Rosen, District Superintendent Chicago Public Schools, August 1984; Dave Moore, Minister Church of Christ, September 1988; Peter Miller, Representative, State of Illinois, July 1987.

in order to be happy they needed to have a chance to select work for which they had "ability, talent, or genius." She added music, art, physical education, and manual arts to the course of study for elementary school students, and introduced, for the first time, the study of Chicago which then became part of the geography curriculum. Many called her addition of art, music, and teacher-selected subjects, "fads and frills," but Dr. Young felt that these were important and necessary for young children.¹³ Her innovations became the elementary school curriculum of 1914 just as Tom entered third grade (see Table 1).

In 1917, Tom and his family moved to a new home at 7442 South Lafayette Avenue. This small brick bungalow stood in a row of similar brick bungalows which now look down on one of Chicago's major expressways, the Dan Ryan. This was to remain the family home until both parents were deceased (see Figure 1).

With the move, Tom transferred from the Barnard to the Harvard Elementary School which was just two blocks from this new home. His new school was one of the smaller elementary schools in the city. Harvard's enrollment was 895 students as compared to the larger schools such as Von Humboldt and Lawson which had 2,666 and 2,785 students respectively. Even though Harvard's enrollment was small each class averaged about forty-two students (see Figure 2).¹⁴

¹³The Board of Education of the City of Chicago, An Outline of the Course of Study for Elementary Schools (Chicago: City of Chicago, August 1917); The Board of Education of the City of Chicago, Subjects to Teach, Half Years (Chicago: Chicago Board of Education, 1914); Joan K. Smith, Ella Flagg Young, Portrait of a Leader (Ames, IO: Education Studies Press, 1979), 154, 183; Annual Report of the Superintendent (Chicago: Chicago Board of Education, 1915).

¹⁴Chicago Board of Education, Proceedings of Board of Education (Chicago: City of Chicago, 2 July, 1920), 2172.



Fig. 1.--Farrell home at 7442 South Lafayette.



Fig. 2.--Harvard Elementary School

TABLE 1.--Elementary School Curriculum--1915

Grade	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		
	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	
English	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Spelling	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Song Singing	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+									
Art																	
Construction	+	+	+	+	+		+				+			+			
Physical Ed.	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+		+			+	
Numbers					+												
Teacher																	
Selection				+		+	+			+	+		+			+	
Mathematics					+	+	+	+			+	+		+		+	
Geography							+			+		+	+			+	
Music									+	+		+	+			+	
Industrial																	
Arts									+		+			+		+	
Penmanship													+	+			
History-Civics																+	+

+ Indicate areas to be taught at the various grade levels.

Source: Chicago Board of Education, Microfilm, Curriculum 1914.

Tom entered his new school in the sixth grade just as the curriculum changed again. This new curriculum expanded on all the areas of the 1914 curriculum and added some new subjects. New to the curriculum were hygiene, physiology, and science. Hygiene and physiology had previously been part of the physical education program and were now presented as a separate subject. Science, previously taught at the discretion of the principal, was now mandated. The major change in the new curriculum was the inclusion of handwork which was to encompass either one-fifth or one-tenth of the total day. Handwork included mechanical drawing, printing and woodworking for boys and

cooking and sewing for girls. The inclusion of handwork in the elementary school curriculum followed on the heels of the passage into law of the Smith-Hughes Bill. This bill which provided federal aid for vocational education had just been signed into law on 23 February 1917 as the Vocational Education Act.¹⁵

TABLE 2.--Elementary School Curriculum--1917

Grade	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	
	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A
Arithmetic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Art	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Combined Course	+	+	+	+	+	+										
English	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Geography							+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
History-Civics							+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Hygiene- Physiology	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+						
Music	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Penmanship	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Physical Ed.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Science											+	+	+	+	+	+
Handwork	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Recess	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

+ Indicate areas to be taught at each grade level.

These new subjects must have been of great interest to Tom as years later he became both a shop teacher and a builder. Samples of Tom's writing also showed the influence of his printing and mechanical drawing classes. His cursive letters were individually drawn and often

¹⁵Layton S. Hawkins, Charles A. Prosser, and John C. Wright, Development of Vocational Education (Chicago: American Technical Society, 1951), 118.

separated to form words as opposed to the even flow and joined letters practiced in penmanship classes. The Harvard Elementary School from which he was graduated in June 1920 thus provided Tom with his first experiences in woodworking, printing and mechanical drawing.¹⁶

Secondary Education

Tom was fortunate to have matriculated in high school for several reasons. First, secondary education in 1920 Chicago was for a small percentage of the school-age population. Enrollment figures of 1920 showed almost 300,000 children in the elementary school. Yet the figure for high school enrollment showed only a little over 36,000 students. While one number represented the total population of eight grades and the other number just four grades, simple arithmetic showed that there were approximately 37,000 children per grade in elementary school and only about 9,000 per grade in high school. Thus, only about 11 percent of the school-age population went on to high school.¹⁷

Second, children of native parentage attended the public high school in proportionately much larger numbers than did children of immigrant parentage. The fortunate contradiction was that Russian Jews, Irish, Germans and people from the British Empire sent their children to high school in the same proportion as second and third generation Americans. However, the Irish tended to send more of their girls to

¹⁶The Board of Education of the City of Chicago, An Outline of the Course of Study for Elementary Schools (Chicago: Chicago Board of Education, August 1917); Chicago Board of Education, Proceedings of Board of Education (Chicago: City of Chicago, July 2, 1920), 2171.

¹⁷H. Warren Button and Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr., History of Education & Culture in America (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1983), 116.

high school than their boys. So that while Irish immigrants sent their children to high school in the same proportion as native Americans this percentage included more girls than boys.

Finally, there was also a close relationship between parental occupation and the privileges of secondary education. Children whose parents were professionals, proprietors, or who held clerical or managerial positions were proportionately overrepresented in the high school population. However, children, like Tom, whose parents were in manufacturing and mechanical industries were underrepresented.¹⁸

While some factors worked against Tom's enrollment in high school, urbanization, industrialization, and academic pressures worked in his favor. Though urbanization had begun in the last decades of the nineteenth century its impact continued to be felt into the 1930s. New city electric lights, telephones, and trolley cars moved farmers to cities. New immigrants from southern and eastern Europe congregated in large cities and huddled together, clannishly producing ethnic ghettos. Chicago's population tripled between 1880 and 1900 making it one of three cities in the United States with over one million people. The city continued to grow so that by 1920 the population numbered almost three million.¹⁹ While cities grew, industrialization resulted in such giants as U.S. Steel, Standard Oil, and American Telephone and

¹⁸Sol Cohen, Education in the United States: A Documentary History, Vol. 4 (New York: Random House, 1974), 2505-9.

¹⁹Blum, 474; Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade, Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 290.

Telegraph. These new industrial giants required a better trained citizenry.²⁰

This picture of the urban-industrial city with its myriads of new immigrants, its ghettos, and poverty became the topic of many articles. Industrialists and politicians called for changes in education which would keep students in school through high school and provide a citizenry more indoctrinated with the democratic work ethic. This too worked in Tom's favor as a child of immigrants. According to historian Ellwood P. Cubberley, the task of the public school was:

to break up these groups or settlements [ghettos], to assimilate and amalgamate these people as a part of our American race, and to implant in their children, so far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and popular government, and to awaken in them a reverence for our democratic institutions and for those things which we as a people hold to be of abiding worth.²¹

Efforts to assimilate continued in 1918 when the National Education Association established a commission to reexamine the function of the high school. This commission saw the high school as not only academic but also as an agency of social integration. They proposed as the "Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education": health, command of fundamental processes, worthy home membership, vocational preparation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure, and ethical character. Their hope was that the high schools would produce a healthy, Americanized individual able to function within the new highly mechanized, specialized, and complex industrial community. This along with the

²⁰Blum, 472-79.

²¹Ellwood P. Cubberley, Changing Conceptions of Education (New York: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1909), 151-16.

Smith-Hughes Act of 1917²² gave rise to not only an expanded curriculum but also the inclusion of vocational education courses in many of our nations high schools.²³ Thus, Tom and all elementary school graduates of 1920 benefited from urbanization and industrialization. High school enrollments which previously counted for only approximately 5 percent of the student population jumped to 11 percent by 1920 and 24 percent by 1930.²⁴

Tom entered Tilden Technical High School in September 1920. Tilden, located at 4747 South Union Avenue, was one of Chicago's three technical high schools whose central feature was the manual arts. Tilden provided two different diplomas; one at the end of a two year technical course, and another upon completion of a regular four year program. Tilden's technical courses were aimed at giving students training in various shop processes. While these courses were an extension of the handwork classes of the elementary schools, they were not aimed at turning out skilled workers. This would have been in competition with the apprenticeship system controlled by the various trade unions. Instead, they were aimed at holding boys between the ages

²²The Smith-Hughes Act was an act to provide for the promotion of vocational education in the trades, agriculture and industry. It also provided for the preparation of teachers of vocational subjects through appropriation of money.

²³Cohen, 2281.

²⁴H. Warren Button and Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr., History of Education and Culture in America (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983), 116.

of fourteen and sixteen in school and giving them an opportunity to work with the tools of various trades.²⁵

Nine technical courses were offered at Tilden including woodworking and mechanical drawing. Yet, the program Tom selected was heavily academic with three and one-half years of English, three years in history, two and one-half years in math, three years of science, and one year of foreign language.²⁶ Only three of his sixteen high school credits were in the technical area.

As politicians called for imbuing students with a democratic work ethic and educators looked to schools as agencies for social integration, Tilden, along with many other high schools hosted Civil Industrial Clubs (CICs). These clubs promoted civic responsibility by giving credits, points, and/or awards for rendering community services, maintaining good grades, continuing high attendance, participating in athletics, and providing school guard service. CICs were sponsored by the schools and were further promoted by the Association of Commerce. The association presented an annual trophy to the Chicago High School which provided the most varied community activities and produced the best results.²⁷ According to Craftsman, Tilden's monthly newspaper, the CIC was the largest and most important club in the school and the one to which any student could belong. The club charged an annual

²⁵Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools (Chicago: City of Chicago, June 30, 1924), 29.

²⁶Transcript of Credits (Chicago: De Paul University).

²⁷Annual Report of Superintendent of Schools, 5.

membership fee of twenty-five cents, and provided each member with an identifying pin.²⁸

The civic service provided by these clubs was also recognized by the superintendent in his annual report dated 30 June 1924. Here, he not only listed the number of alleys cleaned, houses painted, vegetable gardens planted, and rats killed, but also included pictures of students providing community service. One such picture showed a platoon of Tilden High School students with shovels, captioned, "an army of civic servants who cleaned up Chicago." Another pictured a primary grade student from May School with a broom, captioned, "none too young to practice good citizenship."²⁹ Tom joined this club as a freshman and continued in its membership through all four years of high school.

In addition to his studies and his participation in civic activities, Tom also joined the school's lightweight football team in his sophomore year. That year Tilden won four, lost one, and tied one of the six games they played. The Craftsman reported the class of 1924 as "up and coming strong!" and the athletic honor roll listed four members of the football team, one of whom was Thomas J. Farrell.³⁰

When Tom entered his junior year, Tilden decided to sponsor the first heavyweight football team in the history of the school. School spirit remained high that first year despite the fact that the new team lost every one of its games. However, at the annual "end-of-the-season"

²⁸Craftsman (Chicago: Tilden Technical High School, October-November, 1922), 28.

²⁹Annual Report of Superintendent of Schools, 5.

³⁰Annual Report of Superintendent of Schools, 22 June 1922, 27.

banquet the school honored several of the team members with a major "T."³¹ Among those honored was Tom, now called "Torchy" probably because of his bright red hair.

The fall of Tom's senior year was a standout for everyone. As junior's the heavyweight football team lost every game they played. Now, these same players were entering their senior year and playing as a team for one last season. The results of their senior playing season were published in the Craftsman of June 1924:

The football team of 1923 proved itself to be the best team that ever represented Tilden on the gridiron. Coached by "Louis" Berger the team narrowly missed winning the championship after battling through the toughest schedule of any team in the city, that of playing nine consecutive games. The strain showed on the team and it was probably due to this fact that the team lost to Lane in the final game, a 6-3.³²

This was quite a comeback for a team that lost every game the previous season. Again, among the men honored for the all-city mythical elevens was Tom.

Normal School

Graduation from high school on 17 June 1924 posed new choices for Tom. He was now faced with the prospect of continuing his education or of going to work. His family encouraged him to continue his education and offered to provide all the money necessary for Tom to attend any school of his choosing.³³ His choices may have been limited by the fact that he had only one year of foreign language in

³¹Annual Report of Superintendent of Schools, June 1923, 23.

³²Ibid., June, 1924, 55.

³³Mary Kay Farrell, interview by author, 19 March 1989.



Fig. 3.--Thomas J. Farrell--"Torchy" CIC, '21, '22, '23, '24;
Football, '22, '23, '24.

high school and this would not have been sufficient for him to matriculate in many colleges. Chicago Normal, on the other hand, had only one prerequisite, an entrance examination. Chicago Normal was also located very close to home, within a few blocks, and secured a job



sixteen years after he left, the school was again a regional meeting point for visitors. Fig. 4.--Tilden Technical High School. Its reputation had caused the school population to grow so rapidly that its 532 students in 1897 grew to approximately 1,600 students by 1924.³⁴ In addition to its fine reputation, Normal also set the academic

³⁴Edmund W. Kearney, *A History of Chicago State University 1867-1919* (Chicago: Chicago State University Foundation, 1979), 39.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 21.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 39.

high school and this would not have been sufficient for him to matriculate in many colleges. Chicago Normal, on the other hand, had only one prerequisite, an entrance examination. Chicago Normal was also located very close to home, boasted a fine reputation, and insured a job after graduation. In addition, many of the local high school teachers were strongly encouraging their first generation immigrant students to enroll in the Normal Course.³⁴

Tom matriculated in Normal in September 1924. He enrolled in a school whose second president, Francis Wayland Parker (1883-1899) had brought with him the winds of change. Even though Parker had inherited a physical plant that was deteriorating, a library that had not grown and science laboratories which were still primitively equipped, he brought international prestige to the school. He brought with him a whole new range of ideas about children and pedagogy, and sharp criticism for the mechanical or unscientific teaching methods characteristic of the normal schools of the day. The school became a laboratory for the testing of social and educational concepts. Even sixteen years after he left, the school was still a required stopping point for visiting foreign educational experts.³⁵ This outstanding reputation had caused the school population to grow so rapidly that its 532 students in 1897 grew to approximately 1,600 students by 1924.³⁶

In addition to its fine reputation, Normal also met the academic

³⁴Edmund W. Kearney, A History: Chicago State University 1867-1979 (Chicago: Chicago State University Foundation, 1979), 39.

³⁵Ibid., 21.

³⁶Ibid., 39.

requirements set down by the North Central Association. They now required at least fifteen semester hours of credit in education or professional study to successfully complete any teacher training course. They recommended: educational psychology, principles of secondary education, theory of teaching, special methods in subjects to be taught, observation and practice teaching, history of education, educational sociology and school administration and supervision.³⁷ Tom's transcripts showed that he met all the requirements with five hours of psychology, thirty-nine semester hours in graphic and industrial arts which is what he was trained to teach, along with fifteen hours in practice teaching, three hours in the history of education, and eighteen hours in methods, measurements, and principles of education for a total of eighty semester hours.³⁸

In February 1926, while Tom was in attendance, the normal school inaugurated a three year program which increased the academic preparation for teaching. This three-year plan had first been proposed twenty years earlier by Ella Flagg Young when she was principal of this school. Her idea had been rejected by the board of education because of the additional expense involved. This hindered the institution from developing like other normal schools that became teachers colleges in the period from 1915 to 1930.

The three year program offered in 1926 included a solid academic core in addition to the education courses previously required. They

³⁷Calvin O. Davis, "The Training of Teachers in North Central Association Accredited High Schools," School and Society 19 (5 April 1924): 389-94.

³⁸Transcript, DePaul University.

required students to take courses in English, geography, sociology, chemistry and either botany or zoology. In addition to the increased emphasis on academic subjects they also required students to register for music, art, oral expression, and physical education. While this new program did not affect those about to receive their certificates, it did make them aware that the next graduates would be better prepared academically.³⁹

The pedagogic character of the normal curriculum lent itself to attracting a teaching staff who were previously teachers in the Chicago public schools. These teachers used this position on the normal faculty as a stepping stone to a principalship in the city schools. One such teacher, new to the faculty at Chicago Normal in 1924, was William Henry Johnson, who was later to become superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools. Johnson taught courses in both American educational history and the teaching of arithmetic in grades 7 and 8. Since Tom had both of these courses it is conceivable that he was taught by Dr. Johnson. Johnson must have made a favorable impression on his student because years later, Farrell, listed his name first under the heading of character references on his naval application.

When Tom was at Normal the school had taken on the characteristics of its conservative president, Dr. William Bishop Owen (1909-1928). Scandalous dances such as the tango and the charleston were forbidden, and students were reprimanded for talking in the lunchroom. The school did, however, offer a wide variety of extracurricular activities which included field hockey, indoor baseball,

³⁹Kearney, 36.

volleyball, captain basketball, swimming, golf hockey, horseback riding ice skating, roller skating, rifle shooting, and hiking. Since the great preponderance of these students were girls most of these athletic activities were aimed at them. The boys could participate in most of the activities and were even encouraged to play on the baseball and basketball teams.⁴⁰

Tom's graduating class consisted of 110 students, 96 percent female. While the school offered six different kinds of elementary teaching certificates, all four of the male students received manual training certificates. This was not unique to his graduating class as a look at the classes of January and June 1927 showed the same pattern: the manual training certificates were given to only male students and male students received no other kind of certificate.⁴¹ The other certificates given at that time included certificates in elementary, household arts, kindergarten, elementary-county, and kindergarten-county. Tom now armed with a certificate to teach elementary school children set out to begin his career.

⁴⁰Theresa White, "Johnson" (Ph.D. diss., Loyola University, 1988), 38-41.

⁴¹Chicago Board of Education, Proceedings of Board of Education (Chicago: City of Chicago, 12 January 1927-27 June 1927), 641.

CHAPTER II

BEGINNING A CAREER

"The twenty years between wars (1919-1938) were years of violent ups and downs; in the business cycle, in the public mood, and in politics."¹ The war effort had diverted the nation's energy from residential building and normal commercial manufacturing to supplying troops and producing military hardware, thereby postponing industrial expansion. As the war ended, the War Industries Board, which regulated industry, closed its doors, positive that private industry could make the transition back to peacetime manufacturing. However, the consumers having postponed their purchases for the war effort, now began to make up for lost time. Demand outstripped production capabilities and inflation struck. The 1919 cost of living rose 77 percent above prewar levels and escalated another 28 percent in 1920.²

In addition to business ills, Americans also began to suffer social unrest. African-Americans, educated by the experience of military service, and now living in northern cities expected equal wages, equal protection under the law, and a chance to vote and hold

¹Richard Hofstadter and Beatrice K. Hofstadter, Great Issues in American History, Vol. 3 (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 299.

²Blum, 614; Ralph K. Andrist, The American Heritage History: History of the 20s and 30s (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1970), 41-45.

political office. Their white neighbors looked upon them as competitors for their jobs and determined to "keep them in their place." Race riots broke out in many major American cities so that, by years' end, a total of twenty-five race riots had resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries and millions of dollars of property damage.³

In addition to domestic problems, Americans feared that the spread of the communist in Europe would infect America. Although in the United States communism was feeble, consisting of less than .5 percent of the population, scare headlines, and legislative investigations of alleged Red activity kept the public edgy. Business propaganda branded all labor as radical, and labor strikes and radical bombings accelerated public hysteria. "Witch hunts," conducted by Attorney General A. Mitchell Pamer, led to the arrest of some six thousand people, many of whom were noncommunists. The Red scare drained away the vestiges of progressive zeal and left ugly scars as the constitutional rights of thousands of citizens were violated. American's, weary of public matters great and small withdrew to a private world of pleasure, entertainment, and sensationalism.⁴

The election of 1920 reflected the nation's fatigue and wish for a more peaceful society. They elected as president, conservative Republican, Warren G. Harding. Harding had campaigned on a platform of "return to normalcy," and was what everyone called a "nice man."⁵

³Blum, 616.

⁴Ibid., 619.

⁵Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of the American People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 918.

However, by early 1924, congressional investigations brought to light incidents of graft and corruption in Harding's camp. The former chief of the Veterans' Bureau was indicted for fraud, conspiracy and bribery, the custodian of the Office of Alien Property was sent to prison on charges of conspiracy to defraud the government, and Attorney General Harry M. Daugherty was accused of receiving payments from violators of the prohibition statutes.⁶ Graft and corruption were not limited to the federal government; Chicago was also the breeding ground for illegal activities. Mayor William Hale Thompson's school board members became the subject of a grand jury investigation. They were accused of: (1) tipping off their friends to proposed school sites which enabled them to purchase the land at a lower cost and later sell it to the board at a much higher price; (2) granting huge contracts to nonexistent companies; (3) taking school property to furnish their summer homes and then replacing school furnishing at quadrupled prices, i.e., one kitchen table at \$107; and (4) directing principals to order unwanted/unneeded equipment. In 1921 alone, the board had charged over eight million dollars to non-itemized incidentals. As a result of the investigation, a former board president, a former vice president, the attorney, and forty political favorites were indicted for their involvement in illegal deals.⁷

In addition to causing serious damage to the credibility of the

⁶Richard B. Morris, Encyclopedia of American History (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 333.

⁷George S. Counts, School and Society in Chicago (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1928), 71-72; Mary Herrick, The Chicago Schools: A Social and Political History (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1971), 141.

board, the sentencing of these board members, also caused serious damage to the status of Mayor Thompson. The city, like the country, weary of strife and corruption, elected William E. Dever as mayor. In Dever, they had a judge of impeccable reputation, and he was the city's hope for freedom from scandal. As Dever entered office, one of his first tasks was the appointment of seven new members to the school board. This new board was then the one responsible for the selection of William A. McAndrew as superintendent of schools. One of the reasons the board gave for choosing McAndrew was that he had demonstrated his independence from political pressure as a former Chicago high school principal. The board also felt that they were now providing the city with a superintendent who could supply the much needed leadership for the Chicago schools and keep them free from fraud and corruption. Thus, McAndrew began his superintendency amid a wave of enthusiasm in February 1924.⁸

McAndrew entered upon his new responsibility with an extraordinary amount of energy and began to launch a program of educational reform.

He announced his administrative plans quickly, and they allowed for no input from the teachers. There would be a line-staff delegation of authority, close teacher supervision, better pupil achievement, a sign in system to get teachers to school on time, an elimination of dead wood from the teaching staff, a good 3 year (7-9) junior high school system and more efficient use of elementary schools through the platoon system which allowed for double shifts.⁹

Teachers, parents, and organized labor opposed some or all of these

⁸Herrick, 144.

⁹Joan K. Smith, "Educational Policy and Conflict in the Chicago Schools: The McAndrew Years, 1924-27," Journal of the Midwest History of Education Society, DeKalb, Northern Illinois University, 45.

reforms. The Chicago Tribune, the Association of Commerce, and some business groups supported the junior high school concept. The result was a city torn by strife and controversy. This was the system in which Farrell began teaching.¹⁰

New Teacher

Of all McAndrew's reforms, the one that most effected Farrell was the reintroduction of the junior high system. In 1918 the junior high system had been tried experimentally in three Chicago schools. By 1920 it had been discontinued in two of the schools by Superintendent Peter Mortenson.¹¹ By the time Farrell graduated from Chicago Normal College in November 1926, McAndrew's junior high school program was in full swing. In the 1924-1925 school year, McAndrew opened five junior highs and the following year, he added three more. In the 1926-1927 school year an additional six junior highs were opened and seven more were proposed to be added in the next three years.¹²

Teachers, like Farrell, with regular elementary certificates feared that they would now be limited to only six elementary grades. In answer to their fears, the board assured them that they could still teach all grades from first to eighth in regular elementary schools. However, to teach in the new junior high schools they would be required

¹⁰Herrick, 144; Counts, 73-83.

¹¹Hibbard, Sexton, and Parker were opened as junior highs in 1918. Sexton was closed in 1919 and Hibbard in 1920. Parker was the only junior high left open possibly because of its close ties with Chicago Normal College which used it to conduct educational experiments.

¹²Lucille Inez Redmond, "The Beginning and Growth of the Chicago Junior High School" (M.A. thesis, Loyola University of Chicago, 1932), 29.

to pass a special examination and possess a minimum of fifty-four hours of college credit in the subject they wished to teach. As compensation for these additional requirements, teachers in the junior high were on a higher salary scale than regular elementary teachers.¹³

While Farrell's Elementary Manual Arts Certificate was given for eighty credit hours of work, only thirty-nine hours were in the graphic and industrial arts. This would mean that in addition to passing the junior high examination he would need an additional fifteen credit hours in manual arts in order to teach in the junior high schools. The remainder of the courses required for his certificate included educational methods and measurement, the history of public education in America and fifteen hours in practice teaching.¹⁴

From his graduation in November through the following June, Farrell taught in two regular elementary schools, first at the O'Keeffe Elementary School, and then at the Parkside Elementary School, both on the southeast side of Chicago. That first summer, Farrell enrolled in the summer session at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He then stayed on through the following two regular sessions (1927-1928) and the next summer session, completing an additional forty hours of credit. Of these forty hours, he added thirteen more in industrial education, for a total of fifty-two credit hours in his major. The remaining twenty-seven credit hours included courses in English, history, and mathematics.¹⁵ After spending a year in Wisconsin, Farrell returned

¹³Ibid., 49-50.

¹⁴Thomas J. Farrell, transcript, DePaul University, Chicago.

¹⁵Ibid.

to Chicago for the beginning of the 1928-1929 school year and was again assigned at the elementary school level.

This assignment to the Edwards Elementary School, on Chicago's near southwest side lasted only one year and then in September 1929, he received his first assignment to a junior high school. It was while Farrell was a teacher at Manley Junior High School, that he met two people who would become lifelong friends. One of these friends was Peter Miller who had known Farrell as a football player at Tilden Technical High School. They met again when Miller was coaching various athletic teams at the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). Farrell, interested in athletics, volunteered his time to assist Miller at the CYO. Miller was then a high school dropout, and he credited Farrell with the assistance and encouragement he needed to return to night school to receive his high school diploma, and also to continue on to junior college. Miller said, "Farrell always brought out the best in people."¹⁶

The other of these friends was Mel Mackin, who was a student of Farrell's. Mackin, recalled that Farrell's wood shop was well organized. Tool handles and bench legs were painted to match so that each work station had an identifying color. He further built customized cabinets to hold all the tools belonging to each station so that tools could be easily stored and quickly inventoried. Farrell also appointed student helpers, which he called foremen, to provide simple assistance to other students. Mackin had been a foreman.

¹⁶Peter Miller, Representative, State of Illinois, interview by author, tape recording, Chicago, July 1989.

Mackin said, "Tom was nice to everybody." If teachers were having trouble with a student they sent for Farrell. If there were strangers in the building, the hall guards would seek out Farrell. Even the principal looked to Farrell to assist him in handling all the serious discipline problems. Farrell's shop office became the haven for the truant officer, teachers, and the policeman assigned to Manley. Here they collected, to seek guidance or air their grievances. Mackin further credited Farrell with encouraging him to go on to college and said, "Farrell was able to spot talent in people and was able to bring it out."¹⁷

Economic Depression

As Farrell accepted his first assignment in the junior high schools, the nation began experiencing severe financial troubles. On "Black Thursday," 24 October 1929, the stock market crashed which marked the beginning of America's Great Depression. In Chicago, the jolt from the crash was severe. Land values began to drop, new construction declined, industry began to reduce their work force, and people were evicted from their homes. A reporter who came to the city in the winter of 1930-1931 wrote about the contrasts he saw.

You can ride across the lovely Michigan Avenue bridge at midnight, with the two billion candle-power Lindbergh beacon flaming above you and the lights all about making a dream city of incomparable beauty, while twenty feet below you, on the lower level of the same bridge, are two thousand homeless, decrepit shivering and starving men wrapping themselves in old newspapers to keep from freezing, and lying down in the manure dust to sleep.¹⁸

¹⁷Mel Mackin, former assistant principal, Chicago Public Schools, interview by author, tape recording, Chicago, 17 May 1989.

¹⁸Mayer and Wade, 358.

For Chicago's teachers four major elements converged to produce their difficult financial situation. First, the financial basis of the schools was such that the board of education conducted its business for a large part of each year on borrowed money. Each year the board of education issued tax anticipation warrants. Banks provided the board with 75 percent of the face value of each warrant and held them until taxes were collected when they were redeemed for face value.

The second element was the delay in tax collections brought about by the request for tax reassessment. One-quarter of all real estate holdings in Cook County were reassessed every four years for tax purposes. Contending that there were gross inequities in these assessed property values which resulted in reduced income to the schools, Margaret A. Haley, representing the Chicago Teachers' Federation, and the Joint Committee on Real Estate Valuation requested a hearing with the Illinois Tax Commission. The hearings brought out the fact that: (1) there had been no publication of Cook County real estate assessments since 1899; and (2) that there were gross inequalities in the real estate assessments in Cook County.

As a result, the commission, on 5 January 1928, ordered the publication of all real estate assessments in Cook County for the year 1927. After the issuance of the order of publication, complaints filed with the tax commission alleging inequalities in assessments caused the commission on 7 May 1928 to order a reassessment of all real property in Cook County for the year 1928. This meant that tax payments for 1927 and 1928 were deferred until the completion of the reassessment which did not occur until 20 November 1929. Thus Cook County was forced to

exist on loans based on the property values of 1899 for three years. Taxes were brought to a halt in December 1931 when the courts declared the reassessments furnished in 1929 were illegal. Though the courts overturned their December decision, taxes did not become immediately available.¹⁹

The third element was the depression. With the crash of the market and the reduction in the cash flow of the country small business and property owners who could easily have paid their taxes earlier now were unable to meet their tax bills. Consequently, this reduced tax collection was not sufficient to pay off loans and meet current expenses. Finally, the banks, whose deposits dwindled as more and more debtors withdrew savings, refused to extend more credit to meet the current expenses. Thus, "the teachers of Chicago became the unwilling financiers whose 'forced loans' of unpaid salary took the place of the bankers credits to keep the schools open."²⁰

Chicago teachers began to feel the first unrest when their December 1929 paychecks were late, and January's checks did not arrive until March. Then in the first four months of 1930 no paycheck arrived on time. In May, President Hoover announced that the nation had passed through the worst and would now recover. True to his optimism, teachers' May checks arrived on time. But the honeymoon was short-lived

¹⁹Joan K. Smith, "Social Reconstruction and Teacher Unionism: Chicago's Response to the Great Depression," Illinois Schools Journal 65 (1985): 24; Levitt, 4.

²⁰Smith, "Social Reconstruction," 22-32; Emma Levitt, "The Activities of Local Teachers Organizations in Chicago from 1929" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1936), 3-6.

as an additional 1,352 banks closed in 1930 and Chicago's teachers June checks were late again.²¹

Teacher Unionism

Their devastating financial crisis required that now, more than ever, teachers stand united. Unity proved difficult as Chicago teachers were then represented by numerous organizations, six of which were chartered by the American Federation of Labor. The Chicago Teachers Federation which was the forerunner of teachers organizations, had dropped their affiliation with labor in 1917. Those six were: The Men Teachers' Union, the Federation of Women High School Teachers, The Elementary Teachers' Union, The Playground Teachers' Union, The Educational Secretaries' Union, and the Truant Officers' Union.²² Each of these was individually chartered by the American Federation of Teachers which was in turn chartered by the American Federation of Labor. The elementary teachers were distinguished from the secondary teachers in training, compensation, and even in the social class from which they came. Most elementary teachers did not have a bachelor's degree while the majority of high school teachers did, the salary scale for high school teachers was higher than that of the elementary school, and as previously mentioned, high school teachers were more likely to be

²¹Stewart Weinstein, "Collective Bargaining: The Quest for Power in the Chicago Public Schools" (Ph.D. diss., Loyola University of Chicago, 1988), 22-23.

²²"Chicago Teachers Union," Chicago Teachers Union collection, Chicago Historical Society Library, Chicago. Some Chicago teachers were still members of the Chicago Federation of Teachers but this organization had relinquished their affiliation with organized labor in 1917.

the sons and daughters of professional or merchant parents.²³ The school secretaries and playground teachers were civil service employees. While civil service examinations were given, many of these positions were granted through alderman and other politicians. J. Lewis "Iron-Handed Jack" Coath, board president, had fired the school playground director because he refused to load his payroll with precinct captains.²⁴ Not only was there great disparity between these unions, but there was also dissension within some of them. "So great was the feeling of the menace of rivalry and disorganization that many teachers joined no organization, stating they would join only if, and when one inclusive Chicago organization was formed."²⁵

In an attempt to achieve some unity, five of these unions (except the Truant Officers' Union) decided to join together in a loose affiliation called The Central Council of Teachers' Unions of Chicago. The central council met for the first time on 22 February 1931 and defined its membership as the president and one member from each of the represented unions. Still these unions retained their individuality, while the central council promoted their common interests and conducted those activities requested by any majority.²⁶

Farrell joined the Men Teachers' Union (MTU) in March 1931 and

²³Counts, 30.

²⁴Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, Big Bill of Chicago (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1953), 284.

²⁵Emma Levitt, "The Activities of Local Teachers Organizations in Chicago from 1929" (M.S. thesis, University of Chicago, 1936), 43.

²⁶"Central Council of the Teacher Unions of Chicago," Box 1, Folder 1-1, Chicago Teachers Union Collection, Chicago Historical Society Library, Chicago.

soon found much dissension within it. He aligned with a faction that opposed the current union leadership. This faction felt that the MTU was not working hard enough to promote a united teachers' organization. They claimed that instead of promoting unity, the leaders of the MTU had put their union at odds with other unions. Also, MTU President Meade created problems with the American Federation of Teachers when he denounced the members of the New York Teachers Union at several public meetings, calling them a "bunch of Reds."²⁷

The MTU also ran afoul of the Federation of Women High School Teachers when they so actively supported a candidate for the president of the women's union that the women found it necessary to send letters to the MTU executive board asking that they please refrain from interfering in their elections. The MTU leadership also offended the Chicago Federation of Labor when they selected Senator Essington as their union attorney. Essington's labor record was so unfavorable that the president of the Chicago Federation of Labor found it necessary to warn other unions of his record so they might not make the same mistake.

As the May 1932 MTU elections approached, Farrell and other union members began looking for a change in union leadership. In addition to their displeasure with the activities of the leaders as previously stated they also felt that the union was being led by only four or five members who had been in the organization for many years and were leading the union in the wrong direction. In an effort to make changes in the May elections, they organized a slate of candidates,

²⁷Call for Change of Administration of the Men Teachers' Union of Chicago, Chicago Historical Society, 7.

called the Progressives. At the 8 April 1932 meeting of the MTU, Mr. Ashton presented this opposition slate from the floor. The ballot for the 1932 election of MTU officers gave the following options.

Candidates for the Union Party were: Vestral, for President; Scott, for Vice-President; Turley, for Secretary; and Stecker, for Treasurer.

Candidates for the Progressive Party were: Blout, for President; Hawkins, for Vice-President; Russell, for Secretary; and Farrell, for Treasurer. Election results showed the Union Teacher Party won each office by a 60 to 40 percent plurality.²⁸

The discontent which flourished in the MTU increased in the other unions and with all teachers as salary checks became more sporadic. As 1932 droned to a close, teachers had been paid for only 4.5 months, with the first half of May's salary being paid 21 December 1932. Various union groups had made individual and combined efforts to force money into the system. They held public meetings to discuss finance; they used the radio to broadcast their plight; they wrote their congressmen urging them to support legislation favorable to teachers; and they staged plays to exploit their problems. But for some of the payless teachers this was not enough--they wanted to do something.²⁹

The "something" came in the way of the Volunteer Emergency Committee (VEC). This committee was formed by John Fewkes and three other teachers from Senn High School, as a response to the teachers who wanted more action in their time of need. The VEC agreed that they

²⁸Chicago Teachers Union Collection, Box 2, "Minutes of the General Meeting," 8 April 1932, "Summary of Votes," Chicago Historical Society Library, Chicago.

²⁹Smith, "Social Reconstruction," 24-25; Levitt, 27.

would promote activities such as parades and demonstrations which would call attention to the plight of the payless teachers but that they would disband when the teachers had received all their back pay. While the Volunteer Emergency Committee had no definite organization, no definite membership, or no definite dues, they did have a wonderful "grapevine." This "grapevine" worked like a pyramid where one person called ten and each of those ten called ten more. This made it possible to get news to all the teachers in the system on short notice. John Fewkes had been a member of the Progressive Party and one of their candidates in the MTU May 1932 election.³⁰

In one of these parades, Farrell and a group of Manley Junior High School teachers rented a fancy horse-drawn wagon. They painted a sign and stretched it the length of the two big old horses. The sign read, "Haven't Had a Payday Since Nellie Was a Colt." Farrell drove it at the head of the parade. In another of the parades, teachers were urged to rent caps and gowns to show they were professionals. Farrell was also part of this action.³¹ The VEC was organized in the spring of 1933 and disbanded 11 June 1934.³² Another organization formed in the spring of 1933, the Subscribers, lasted until March 1936.

Subscribers

The Subscribers were an outgrowth of the Progressive Party and their stated goal was to promote unity among the various teachers

³⁰"Summary of Votes," Chicago Teachers Union Collection, Box 2, Chicago Historical Society Library, Chicago, 185.

³¹Mary H. Farrell, letter to author, 12 October 1991.

³²Levitt, 27.

unions. They considered the leadership of the MTU responsible for the lack of cooperation among the various unions with the ultimate result of the inability of these unions to unite. They had made an attempt to change the MTU leadership in the 1932 election and had lost. They, therefore, decided to form a new men's organization, the Subscribers, and chose as their emblem the Blue Star.³³ Farrell, one of the organizers of the Progressive Party, was one of the founders and organizers of this new men's group.³⁴

Some members of the MTU felt that the Subscribers intended to break their union. The Subscribers however, stated in the preamble of their constitution what their aims were:

to effect a spirit of unity, to insure the operation of the Chicago Public School System upon the highest possible plane of efficiency, and to promote and maintain our own professional welfare, stand ready to subscribe to any measure designed to further our ideals.³⁵

They also had a definite policy statement that they would disband as soon as all the Chicago Teachers' Unions relinquished their charters and became one all-inclusive union. Other members of the MTU felt that the Subscribers intended to create an independent and rival union, but this was not possible. The American Federation of Teachers had ruled that no charter would be given to a new local without the consent of all other unions in that trade field, and The Men Teachers Union opposed the chartering of this new organization.

The president of the MTU also opposed the Subscribers.

³³Ibid., 8.

³⁴Letter Mary K. Farrell, 12 October 1991; interview by author with Peter Miller.

³⁵Levitt, 25.

President Vestral said the movement was uncalled for and unwise. It was his opinion that the Subscribers intended to use their dues to buy an influential political agent who would work to get the Board of Education to meet the Subscribers' demands.³⁶ From the spring of 1933 to the summer of 1934, Farrell was their temporary business agent. After that they retained the Honorable Peter C. Granata as their business representative and Farrell became their lobbyist. As a member of the State House of Representatives, Granata was able to work with the lobbyists for other teachers' organizations.³⁷

Meanwhile, the economy continued to plunge necessitating that the schools make additional changes. On 12 July 1933, with one political stroke, the "Economy" program of the board of education, also known as "The School Wrecking Program," changed the Chicago school system almost beyond recognition.³⁸ The junior high school was completely abolished and elementary school principals were required to supervise two schools, which in many cases, were far apart. Half of the kindergarten teachers, the elementary school manual arts program, and the elementary school physical education program were cut. Band, orchestra and swimming courses were abolished. The school year was

³⁶"Men Teachers Union," Chicago Teachers Union collection, Box 3, Folders 3-4, Chicago Historical Society Library, Chicago, 4.

³⁷"A Message from the Subscribers to the Men Teachers of Chicago," Chicago Teachers Union collection, Box 3, Chicago Historical Society Library, Chicago.

³⁸"Chicago's Schools," Vol. 1, No. 1, July 1934, Citizens Schools Committee collection, Box 32, Chicago Historical Society Library, Chicago.

shortened and class size and teachers' hours were increased.³⁹ Thirteen hundred teachers lost their jobs, many with as much as twenty years seniority. This action was taken by the school board without consulting the superintendent. In protest to this action, The Parent-Teacher Association called together a gigantic meeting at which twenty-five thousand people convened to object to the board's decision. In the following nine days they collected three hundred-fifty thousand signatures on petitions demanding the board rescind its devastating action.

The Subscribers sponsored a play whose profits went directly to unemployed teachers. They also encouraged the coaches of high school athletic programs to hire the "out of work" elementary physical education teachers as high school game officiators. The Subscribers had also offered assistance to all candidates for the state legislature who would support school legislation.⁴⁰

The MTU Opposes the Subscribers

The MTU continued to oppose the Subscribers. While other teacher unions allowed dual membership, the MTU, in November 1933, changed its policy making it impossible for members of the MTU to belong to any welfare organization, as the Subscribers were called. They even protested against Subscribers who attended general meetings of the MTU. At their general meeting of 12 January 1934, Meade raised a point of

³⁹Smith, 28.

⁴⁰"A Message from the Subscribers to the Men Teachers of Chicago," September 1934 and "Chicago's Schools," Chicago Teachers Union, Box 3, Chicago Historical Society Library, Chicago.

order concerning the presence of Thomas Farrell in the room. The point of order was sustained. The ruling then was appealed by Attebury. The chair was sustained by a rising vote. Meade moved that a committee be appointed to escort Farrell from the room. That motion was tabled. At that point calmer heads prevailed and Hipple moved that Farrell be allowed five minutes to make a few remarks. Hipple's motion carried. Farrell made his statement and gave seventeen reasons for the creation of the Subscribers. His reasons were not recorded.⁴¹

The Subscribers, along with The High School Teachers Association, and the Chicago Teachers Federation joined a cooperative body called The Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was composed of delegates from both union and non-union organizations which represented teachers in Chicago. The Subscribers not only promoted membership in the Steering Committee but also contributed 20 percent of their dues to this organization. An additional 20 percent of their ten dollar dues went to the Illinois State Teachers Association. When the Subscribers joined the Steering Committee, the MTU pulled out, citing as their reason, "the Committee's rule that it could take no action without the unanimous consent of all delegates--which usually prevented action because of organizational jealousies."⁴²

The Subscribers continued to work toward unity. Early in the summer of 1934, William G. Gilson, President of the Subscribers, visited John H. Walker, Business Representative, of the MTU requesting that the

⁴¹"General Meeting," 12 January 1943, Chicago Teachers Union collection, Box 2, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

⁴²"Letter to Gilson," 9 October 1934, Chicago Teachers Union Collection, Box 3, Folder 3-3, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

MTU dictate terms upon which it might be possible for the MTU and the Subscribers to share membership. The president of MTU responded to this request in October of that year saying, "he cannot be a member of this Union and a member of a non-union protective organization at the same time." While many teachers' unions allowed such dual membership the MTU had discontinued this policy in the fall of 1933 and would hold to it.⁴³

In September 1934 The Subscribers issued a message to all male teachers urging them to join one of the three major organizations which belonged to the Steering Committee. This message also reiterated their desire for one "all inclusive union." While exact membership figures for the Subscribers were not available they had over 250 members in September 1934. Increasing membership and keeping with their policy to work toward unification of all teachers' organizations, the Subscribers began taking in women members in the early months of 1935. Meanwhile, membership in the MTU never exceeded two hundred during the years from 1932 to 1937 according to President Vestral.⁴⁴

At the December 1935 meeting of the MTU representatives from the Illinois State Federation of Labor, the Chicago Federation of Labor and the American Federation of Teachers were invited to speak to the MTU membership. All three speakers stressed how necessary it was for the MTU to take seriously the existence of welfare organizations and also

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴"Men Teachers Union," Chicago Teachers' Union, Box 3, Folder 3-4, Chicago Historical Society Archives, 6; "A Message from the Subscribers to the Men Teachers of Chicago," Chicago Teachers' Union, Box 3, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

how necessary it was to have all teachers' associations affiliated with organized labor. In the wake of these speeches, MTU President Vestral issued a message to all men teachers which he conveyed through the January 1936 MTU bulletin. Each MTU representative was given quantities of these bulletins and was directed to see that a copy was given to every male teacher and administrator.

More than half of this bulletin was devoted to President Vestral's message to the Subscribers. Though he never mentioned the Subscribers by name, the content of the message, along with the subsequent letter to the Subscribers left little doubt that they were the subject of discussion. In his message he referred only to "the idea" or "the movement." His message began by reiterating the concerns of the recent MTU speakers. Concerns which required understanding so that all teachers could join together in conjunction with organized labor. To that end he claimed that he wished to clear up any misunderstandings and start a "new" year. He continued by expressing his sympathy and understanding for the men who were severed from the payroll by the action of the board on 12 July 1933. He stated that he understood the mental state of men who were suddenly and arbitrarily deprived of their jobs and did not know where their next month's food would come from. He said, it must have seemed to these men "callous contempt" on the part of the board to deny them employment, especially since many of them had one or more dependents. Vestral then went on to say that this condition produced among these men a "dangerously hair-

trigger psychology." They would grasp at any remedy. "Desperate ills breed desperate remedies."⁴⁵

Sympathy and understanding out of the way, Vestral went on to express his feelings toward the founders of "the movement." While he did not doubt their sincerity, he said they held the "destructive philosophy" that the end justified the means. He accused them of promising to purchase the services of "hard-boiled politicians" who would supposedly bring quick relief to the injured teachers. He also said the officers of the MTU resented these men and saw them as a threat to unionism. They termed their ideas "folly," as well as "poisonous" and "will-o-the-wisp." They called the politicians who joined them "politico-racketeers." They termed the organizers "exploiting forces" which could only lead to "individual slavery and group corruption."⁴⁶

However, said President Vestral, the MTU was not entirely blameless in this situation. While he did not feel that anyone or anything would have alleviated the situation, he claimed that the MTU could have been more appreciative and sympathetic with the plight of these men. After an apology for any mistakes that he may have made, Vestral urged all men to come into the union. He closed with the following remarks:

Therefore I hope and believe that we shall now have their applications, man by man, so that we may all go forward together henceforth, knowing that if the Union is not being conducted to suit the majority that majority can rectify the error from within the organization far more effectively and constructively than can be

⁴⁵"The Men Teachers' Union of Chicago: Bulletin for January 1936," Chicago Teachers' Union collection, Box 3, Folder 3-4, Chicago Historical Society Library, Chicago.

⁴⁶Ibid.

done from without by a movement which, though not so intended, is calculated to destroy the Union as such.⁴⁷

One month after the dissemination of this bulletin, the MTU issued a letter to the Subscribers expressing their desire to have every regularly assigned male teacher in the Chicago Public Schools become a member of their union. In order to achieve this they promised: to waive reinstatement fees; to furnish application cards directly to the Subscribers office; and to take no legal action against members owing back dues. This February promise to take no legal action reversed their January statement in which they had advised their members that such legal action was vital because the MTU had already used these unpaid notes as assets and borrowed against them at a considerable percentage of their face value.⁴⁸

The Subscribers were quick to vote, by an overwhelming majority, to join the MTU. Their only stipulation was that together they move toward a united teachers organization.⁴⁹ They immediately completed a number of union application cards and requested 200 more. Within a week they requested an additional 100 application cards. At the MTU meeting of 13 March 1936, John Walker, Business Representative for the MTU, reported that 123 applications had been received for membership. By the 16 of March over 300 men joined the union. Vestral recalled that membership in the MTU from 1932 up until the acceptance of the Subscribers had never exceeded 200, but immediately after the acceptance

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., February 1936.

⁴⁹Ibid.

of the Subscribers membership increased to approximately 900.⁵⁰

The results of the election of 1936 showed that most of the MTU offices were again filled with men from the Union Party group. At the last three meetings in 1936 Farrell spoke fifteen times--eleven to make various motions concerning such things as amending the union dues, systematizing procedures for further floor discussions, and establishing classes in trade analysis. In the October meeting, they considered Farrell's announcement so important that even though the meeting was adjourned the members by common consent stayed to hear and discuss what he proposed--namely the study of the revision of the curriculum proposed by Superintendent Johnson.⁵¹

On 22 May 1936, the MTU issued a bulletin stipulating that there was now only one male teachers' organization in Chicago--MTU. In January 1937 the joint board held a series of public meetings to discuss the amalgamation of the several unions. In the 14 May 1937 election, John M. Fewkes became president of the MTU and by the end of May four of the Chicago teachers' unions surrendered their charter and became the Chicago Teachers Union with a single charter under the American Federation of Teachers. One year after the Subscribers rejoined the Men Teachers Union, Chicago's teachers were unified.⁵²

⁵⁰The Men Teachers' Union, 7.

⁵¹"The Men Teachers' Union of Chicago, Bulletin for June, 1936."

⁵²Weinstein, 27; "Men Teachers Union-Official Ballot for the election of 14 May 1937," Chicago Teachers Union Box 3, Folder 3-4, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

Johnson Years

Chicago's teachers also faced another change in administration. William H. Johnson, former assistant superintendent under Superintendent Bogan, became superintendent. Farrell quite possibly had met Johnson when both were at Chicago Normal; he as a student, and Johnson as a teacher. Farrell's transcripts showed that he was enrolled in two of the courses which Johnson taught. Now as superintendent, Johnson might institute changes which would directly affect Farrell.

As the new superintendent assumed his duties, he proposed changes to improve both elementary and high school programs. For the elementary school he issued a three-point program consisting of: (1) an increased emphasis on reading and standardized testing of reading achievement; (2) a focus on student socialization through the development of student councils and service clubs; and (3) the initiation of individual student cumulative records to provide information on test scores and personality characteristics.⁵³ The service clubs proposed by Johnson were akin to the CIC club to which Farrell belonged in high school. These now were being moved down to the elementary level.

Johnson's proposed high school changes were clouded in controversy. Organized labor, educators, parents, and taxpayers protested what they understood as Johnson's "Five Year" plan. These protesters feared that Johnson intended to convert the high schools into factories with a new curriculum that would be 80 percent vocational.

⁵³Julia Wrigley, Class Politics and Public Schools, Chicago 1900-1950 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982), 249-50.

Not only would the curriculum change but they also understood that half of the teaching staff would be replaced by vocational instructors who would be appointed on "temporary or political" certificates. Further, school buildings would have factories erected adjacent to them. Farrell had made an announcement at the 30 October 1936 meeting of the MTU that there be a discussion of the revision of the curriculum under way. At that meeting a technical committee of five were appointed to study the problem and an invitation was issued to the men whom Superintendent Johnson had made responsible for these changes to speak at the next MTU meeting. Subsequent meeting notes indicated that the committee studied the revision but no decision was reached. However, Farrell moved that the technical committee determine the number of teachers interested in taking additional classes in Smith-Hughes trade analysis.⁵⁴ MTU meeting notes plus the fact that Johnson had stipulated in his 1936-1937 school report that an estimated 90 percent of Chicago's students were faced with economic conditions which demanded that they be taught skills which would fit them for some definite occupation, made this reported new proposal seem in keeping with his thinking.⁵⁵

Professor Harry Gideonse, economist at the University of Chicago said of this program:

the last vestiges of the merit system would have been destroyed and the public-school system would have been at the mercy of such educators as Patrick Nash and E. J. Kelly. . . . The issue is not one of vocational versus academic education. It should be stated bluntly that it is the crude and simple question: Do we want our

⁵⁴"General Meeting, 13 November 1936 and 11 December 1936," Chicago Teachers Union collection Box 2, Chicago Historical Society Library, 50-53.

⁵⁵"What Do You Think?" The Chicago Daily News, 11 December 1937.

schools staffed with political rather than professional appointees? Do we want the spoils system in the schools?⁵⁶

Johnson denied all these allegations.

This conjecture came to a head when it began to affect Mayor Kelly's office. When the mayor began being flooded with opposition by all these groups, he called a conference at which he invited Johnson to speak. At this conference Dr. Johnson said that his plan called for only a few minor changes in the regular curriculum; that no child would be forced to take vocational training; and that there would be no sacrifice in the academic standards. The Mayor then ended the conference by telling the news reporters that labor had agreed to cooperate with Johnson and had even named a committee to work with him. George Axtelle, assistant professor of education at Northwestern University, said that Johnson's plan seemed to be either a trial balloon or a red herring to distract people's attention from the crucial issues affecting the public schools of Chicago, such as espionage, political favoritism, etc. He continued further that he thought that it was Dr. Johnson's loquacity and love of publicity which brought about this misunderstanding. Farrell must certainly have watched this unfold with interest. The newspaper clipping cited was found in Farrell's personal collection.⁵⁷

Through all the payless paydays and the formation of the Subscribers, Farrell had been attending De Paul University as a part-time student. His transcript from the De Paul University, College of

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

Liberal Arts and Sciences showed he had continued as a part-time student from September 1931 through the summer session of 1934. Finally on 3 August 1934, he was awarded his first degree--Bachelor of Science in Education. Without a break, he continued at De Paul, registering in their graduate school masters program. Farrell focused on courses in administration and supervision which he completed in the next two years with the needed time to write his thesis. He was awarded a Master of Arts degree on 30 July 1938. The title of his Masters thesis "Civic Information Possessed by Sixth Grade Pupils in Several Localities in Chicago Based on the Burton Civics Test." Farrell completed his degree as the nation moved from depression to the beginning of the war in Europe.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Transcripts, Thomas J. Farrell, De Paul University, Chicago.

CHAPTER III

BROADENING HORIZON

As Chicago's teachers traded their separate union cards for membership in the CTU, the nation too attempted to coalesce under one domestic policy. In an effort to get the nation to recover from the great depression President Franklin Delano Roosevelt instituted a domestic reform program, "The New Deal," designed to return financial stability to the United States. From 1933 through 1938 legislative activity established programs and government agencies designed to: provide work for the unemployed; pay farmers to cut production and thereby raise farm prices; protect trade unions; establish a Social Security program; institute minimum wage and unemployment insurance; and provide for the conservation of natural resources. However, by January 1939, Roosevelt, concerned over the threat of world war, called a halt to this reform program and directed the country into a war mobilization effort.¹

Chicago played a major role in this great effort. It became the center of transportation and one of the primary producers of war materials. Northwest of the city Douglas Aircraft manufactured the frames for transport planes and Pratt Whitney manufactured aircraft

¹Allen F. Davis and Harold D. Woodman, Conflict and Consensus in Modern American History (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath & Co., 1988), 317-33.

engines. The Stevens Hotel became a military training facility while the Chicago Beach Hotel became a hospital. Even Chicago schools joined the war effort as many school buildings became training centers.²

Administrator

In September 1939, Farrell was assigned as disciplinarian to the Bancroft Branch of Tuley High School. At the time, Tuley had two branches, Sabin and Bancroft. James Tortorelli, gym teacher and colleague at Tuley said that Farrell was a good disciplinarian and the teachers liked him because he took care of their problems. The students expressed their sentiments in the school newspaper. In the newspaper column reserved for Bancroft the students wrote, "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf--Mr. Farrell."³

The Tuley Review also told of other events occurring at Bancroft that school year. In February the Review wrote that Bancroft was getting to look like a new school. The rooms had been painted in different colors which made the school look cheerful as well as clean and the blackboards and desks were cleaned and varnished. In all, the school was getting to look pretty nice. In March, the paper commented on how well the hall guards were doing. Farrell had complemented Mrs. O'Gara for her organization of the hall guards and the students claimed they were doing the best job ever done. Again in May, the students commented on how well Farrell and Mrs. Maas had utilized the student

²Mayer and Wade, 369-70; White, 173.

³James Tortorelli, telephone interview by author, 17 February 1992; Tuley Yearbook, The Log, January 1940, 9; The Tuley Review 19, No. 5 (18 January 1940): 4.

fire marshals so that the fields and the inside of the building were kept clean.⁴

The following September, almost fourteen years from graduation, Farrell officially became the Assistant Principal of the Bancroft Branch of Tuley. His initiation into the administrative side of education came just as the Citizens Schools Committee was protesting the reappointment of Superintendent Johnson. They had protested the appointment of Superintendent Johnson in 1936 and again protested his reappointment in 1940. In the midst of their protest Farrell joined the Citizens School Committee. In addition to Johnson's proposed curriculum changes they also held him responsible for the irregularities of the 1936 principal's examination. Of the 155 who were awarded certificates, 126 had failed the written portion of the exam and were passed on the oral. Also, of the 54 applicants who had passed the written examination, 25 failed the oral. Further, of those 155 who were awarded certificates, 120 had taken Johnson's principals' preparatory classes at Loyola.⁵

Just two years later, the school board and Superintendent William H. Johnson were again criticized, this time by the education committee of the City Club of Chicago. They charged that the school system was under political control and that this affected the quality of the teaching. The City Club proposed a ten-point plan for

⁴The Tuley Review 20, Nos. 1, 3, 6 (20 February 1940; 21 March 1940; 16 May 1940): 4-5.

⁵"Chicago Schools," April 1940, Citizens Schools Committee Collection, Box 32, Chicago Historical Society Library; Herrick, 247.

improvement.⁶ While there is no statement to show Farrell's position on Johnson as Superintendent, he did join the Citizens School Committee as they opposed his reappointment.

Navy

As the threat of war continued to loom on the horizon, Congress passed the Selective Service Act of 1940. All male citizens of the United States who had passed their twenty-first birthday and had not reached their thirty-sixth birthdays were requested to register for the draft on 16 October 1940. Each registrant received a number which would be placed in a lottery and called as men were needed. This law was to continue until 15 May 1945 unless amended or repealed by future sessions of Congress.⁷ This made Farrell, at age thirty-six, eligible for conscription.

Meanwhile, he continued to attend summer sessions at Northwestern University so that, by 1942, he had seventy-three credit hours of graduate work beyond his Masters degree. He applied to the Division for Advanced Study in the School of Education of Northwestern University for consideration for a Ph.D. As his thirty-sixth birthday approached, Farrell had received no word on his application for admission to the doctoral program at Northwestern nor had he received an induction notice for the army. Farrell was thirty-six on Sunday, 30 May 1942, making him ineligible for conscription, and the following

⁶"Politics Rules Schools, Says City Club Group," The Chicago Sun, 25 April 1942.

⁷Conscription: How Will It Affect You: Or Will It? (New York: ACO, n.d.), 5-9.

Saturday, 5 June 1942, he filed his application for a commission in the U.S. Naval Reserve. On 8 July 1942, the navy issued him the rank of lieutenant (junior grade) and called him into active service. He entered active service at the Armed Guard Center in Boston, Massachusetts on 28 July 1942. That very same day Frank M. McKibben, Secretary of the Faculty of Northwestern University dictated a letter to Farrell which read:

Your application for admittance to the Division for Advanced Study in the School of Education was acted upon by the faculty of the School of Education at its regular meeting on May 27th, 1942. I am pleased to inform you that the faculty voted formally to admit you to this Division.

You are now in position to select your adviser and in consultation with him name your advisory committee.⁸

As Farrell went off to war, two changes occurred at Tuley. First, the students who attended the Bancroft Branch were moved to the Sabin Branch because the U.S. Army took over the building. Secondly, Tuley began a massive war program. In September the school was organized as a Junior Army. The principal was given the rank of major and each student division had two officers, one holding the rank of second lieutenant and his assistant as sergeant. To insure the success of the Junior Army, nine committees were formed to aid in the organization of the program. These committees then sponsored activities such as the scrap metal drives, the sale of war stamps and bonds, the collection of information about their students in the armed forces, the showing of movies pertaining to the war effort, assemblies promoting the

⁸Letter from Northwestern University to Thomas J. Farrell, 28 July 1942, Private Collection of Mary Kay Farrell, Northbrook, IL.

war effort, and the care of the plaque listing all the names of the students in service.

The work of the Junior Army has truly been outstanding, for there is not a phase of the school's activities that has not been touched by the members in their drive to promote the students' active interest in aiding the war effort. And so 1942-43 saw Tuley, like the nation, established on a military basis.⁹

Farrell, meanwhile, spent a total of forty-nine weeks in armed guard school, some of the time in Boston and some of the time in Chicago. Subsequent to that he was an instructor at three Naval Training Schools in Louisiana, Virginia and Maryland. He also served as a gunnery officer aboard the S. S. Comol Cuba and the S. S. George A. Custer. As gunnery officer aboard these ships he was on the run from our eastern seaboard to Europe. These ships, delivering much needed food and supplies to our allies, were under constant attack by German submarines. As a result Farrell was awarded the American Area Campaign Ribbon, and the European African Area Campaign Ribbon.¹⁰

Mel Mackin told of being stationed in New Guinea during World War II. The United States used the jungles of New Guinea to hide repair shops for their ships. There had been serious damage to the U.S. fleet and navy men were working around the clock on repairs. Mackin walked into one of the shops and overheard two seamen talking about their stateside instructor. As they recounted their experiences and talked about how tough he had been, Mackin could not help but think how much

⁹The Log (1943), 50.

¹⁰Mel Mackin, interview by author, taped 17 May 1989, Chicago; "Notice of Separation from the U.S. Naval Service," 26 November 1945, Private Collection of Mary Kay Farrell, Northbrook, IL; Navy and Marine Corps Awards Manual, Department of the Navy (rev. 1953).

like his friend Tom Farrell their description sounded. Even though Mackin did not know what Farrell was doing or where he was at the time Mackin thought the similarities ironic. So descriptive was the seamen's conversation that he interrupted them to ask the name of the officer they were discussing and, sure enough, it was Tom Farrell.¹¹

On 7 May 1945, the Germans surrendered to the allies ending the European fighting and in August two atomic bombs, dropped only four days apart, destroyed the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Then, on 15 August, the United States celebrated V-J Day, victory over Japan, and the end to World War II.¹² On 26 November 1945, Farrell received his Honorable Discharge from the navy with the rank of lieutenant.

Builder

Farrell returned from the navy to resume his position as one of the two assistant principals at Tuley's main building. Tuley continued to respond to the war effort by awarding high school diplomas to returning veterans based on the credits earned while in the armed forces and in special veterans classes which the schools initiated. In June 1946, Tuley graduated fifty-six veterans.

Demobilization also resulted in eight and one-half million men and women being returned to civilian life between September 1945 and June of 1946. These millions of returning veterans, combined with a normally increasing population, needed housing--housing which had not been built because of the war effort. The demand for housing, the

¹¹Mackin, interview by author, taped 17 May 1989, Chicago.

¹²Clifton Daniel, ed., Chronicle of the 20th Century (Mount Kisco, NY: Chronicle Publications Inc., 1987), 592, 597.

liberal financing available through Federal Housing Authority, and the assistance to veterans through the G.I. Bill of Rights, made housing a good venture at this time.

Farrell and his friends discussed the possibility of a mutual investment in the building trade. In May 1946, the FHA had limited the ceiling cost of housing which they would finance to ten thousand dollars. Farrell talked about building homes which would cost as little as five thousand dollars.¹³ Some of his friends said it could not be done but Farrell maintained that he could keep costs down by using one blueprint for several homes. The use of one blueprint meant that you would build the same house over and over. Money could thereby be saved by having subcontractors move from building to building, saving their time and the cost of materials which they could purchase in quantity.¹⁴ Others had the same idea. Levitt and Sons began to build homes for sale only to veterans in southeastern New York. Their planned community with no industry, one of the first in the United States, used the assembly-line method in construction. Assembly crews were specialists, some installing doors, and others window frames, heating plants, or roofing, and although they tried for variety with different facades, most of them looked alike.

On 22 April 1946, Enterprise Homes, Incorporated was born. This corporation of Farrell's friends was registered with the Secretary of State of Illinois and issued a certificate of incorporation. As with the Subscribers, Farrell's name was not among the officers of Enterprise

¹³Encyclopedia Britannica, 1957 ed., s.v. "Housing."

¹⁴Mackin interview, 17 May 1989.

Homes. However, he was there overseeing the work and enlisting his friends to come and help when they had time. Enterprise Homes build approximately sixty middle-income homes before dissolving on 15 December 1952.¹⁵

Transfer to Lindblom

As Enterprise Homes left the drawing board and became a reality, Chicago schools were also undergoing a change. In June 1947, Illinois created the office of General Superintendent of Schools of Chicago, giving the new superintendent control over contracts, budgets, and personnel. As soon as the governor signed the bill, Herold C. Hunt took the place of William H. Johnson as superintendent.

The Hunt administration relaxed tensions and replaced the grim school atmosphere with cheerful sanity. He replaced an atmosphere in which both teachers and principals had taken spying for granted and expected reprisals whenever opinions clashed with expectations of openness and honesty. His open examinations, honestly administered, reduced the inbred character of the schools and his classified appointments, made without favoring those with the "right" friends, became the order of the day. No unnecessary temporary appointments were made, either civil service or educational. Some of the improvements made by Hunt were: improvements in the organization of the central office, an improved public image of the administrative staff and other office personnel, a paving of the way for rehabilitation or replacement of old school buildings, and streamlining the selection and ordering of

¹⁵Articles of Incorporation, Certificate Number 6015, 22 April 1946, Secretary of State, Springfield, IL; Mackin interview 17 May 1989.

textbooks and teaching materials. Hunt could well have been compared to Ella Flagg Young in the expanse of their vision for public education and its place in a democratic society. In short, the Hunt administration heralded as revolutionary and gracious gave the city new hope, new courage and a new vision for the public schools.¹⁶

There was also a change for Farrell as he transferred to the Hubbard Branch of Lindblom Technical High School. The school paper, Lindblom Weekly, carried a short story about Farrell on their front page. The story headlined, "Hubbard Welcomes New Principal, Thomas J. Farrell," when in fact, he was still an assistant principal. Ironically, that same issue of the paper carried on its banner the imperative, "Go Lindblom--Beat Tilden."¹⁷ Farrell was again in charge of his own branch building housing freshmen.

The Lindblom Weekly headline proved to be prophetic as Hunt offered the principals' examination--the first such examination in Chicago since 1936. The 22 and 23 December 1947 were the dates scheduled for the written part of the new principals' exam. This exam which was opened to all qualified citizens of the United States who had six years of experience in teaching, attracted approximately 600 candidates. This exam had both a written and an oral component. The written portion was composed of subtests in administration, supervision, mathematics, English, science, and history/geography. The oral portion consisted of a thirty minute interview by a five member panel. Under

¹⁶Chicago's Schools, Citizens School Committee Collection, April 1953, Box 32, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

¹⁷Lindblom Weekly 53, No. 1 (September 1947): 1.

the cloud of the notorious 1936-1937 principal's exam, Hunt made every effort to insure impartiality by hiring an outside agency to administer and score the exam. The American Council on Education conducted the entire test. Of the 600 candidates who took the examination, only 153 were successful in both the written and then the oral parts and were presented to the board on 14 April for certification. Farrell was among these 153. That same day the board assigned the top seventy-three of these newly certificated principals to schools that had been without principals, but Farrell had to wait two years for his certificate to be activated.¹⁸

While he waited, Farrell continued as assistant principal at Lindblom. The Lindblom yearbook made annual statements about the administrators. The 1949 yearbook commented that Farrell's staff prepared the students to be better future citizens of Lindblom. The 1950 yearbook stated that Farrell served in the capacity of both teacher and assistant principal. In addition to both these tasks he was also preparing a handbook of instructions for teachers and cooperating with the superintendent in handling the alterations and rehabilitation of Lindblom. The 1950 yearbook was the last Lindblom yearbook for Farrell. In their August meeting the board appointed Thomas J. Farrell as the principal of the Morse Elementary School, effective 4 September 1950.¹⁹

¹⁸"Chicago's Schools, Citizens Schools Committee, Box 32, Chicago Historical Society Archives, May 1948; Chicago Schools Journal, September 1948.

¹⁹Lindblom Yearbooks, 1948-1950, Lindblom High School Library, Chicago, IL.

In keeping with his improved images of administrators, Hunt outlined the qualities he felt were needed to be a good elementary school principal. These were the qualities which would now be expected of Farrell as he assumed his first leadership role.

1. The principal is first and foremost, chief.
2. The principal must be able to encourage cooperation and furnish the spark of initiative.
3. The principal must recognize that change is better made when administration, parent, and community organizations are informed and share a common goal.
4. The principal should believe in orderly organized processes.
5. The principal will provide help and leadership to teachers.
6. The principal will need a well-rounded personality, a good cultural background, and a great interest in people.

Farrell entered the Morse as the eighth principal of a school built in 1904. Morse, located 600 North and 3230 west, was in a blue collar area. The residents were 98 percent white, with a median education level of almost ninth grade, and a median annual income level of \$3,500. This mid-sized school had twenty-eight teachers and Farrell's salary was \$633 per month.²⁰

One of Farrell's first tasks was to institute an organization report. This was a complete listing of all staff members, their positions, their class membership, and background data on each teacher. This enabled him to see at a glance if and where the school was

²⁰Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago (9 August 1950), Chicago Board of Education Library, 128.

overcrowded, the educational and creative strengths and weaknesses of his staff, and the organizational needs of the school. A Chicago newspaper photo of Farrell and his clerk going over this report was among Farrell's papers but it had no date or newspaper identification.²¹

Vandalism

When Farrell became "chief" of the Morse Elementary School, the Chicago Public Schools had long been beset with the expensive and severe problem of vandalism. Five hundred burglaries and the tens of thousands of windows were broken annually in the four hundred public school buildings. In 1946, when the number of broken window panes reached a high of 60,881, at a cost of \$273,000 (about \$4.50 per pane), the board took action in the form of a committee for the Conservation of School and Public Property. In January 1947 this committee mounted an all out, vigorous, and many-faceted campaign to reduce vandalism. For the next four years, they enlisted the cooperation of the entire community. Newspapers, radio stations, police, courts, parks, labor unions, parent-teacher associations, school employees, and the 360,000 public school students were all asked to help. Signs were posted offering rewards for the arrest and conviction of vandals, and reports of window breakage were announced monthly in the General Superintendent's bulletins. Each year awards were given to the schools having the lowest number of broken window panes. Every school was asked to make glass-saving a major project. By the fall of 1951, the reports of broken windows dropped to

²¹Newspaper clipping, photo Farrell and Clerk at Morse, Private Collection, Mary Kay Farrell, Northbrook, IL.

37,700 panes, a 62 percent reduction over a four year period.²²

In 1951, the Byrne Elementary School instituted their own activity to reduce window breakage. They devised a game to be used in the physical education classes in which teams picked up loose objects on the playground and placed them in buckets. The team with the heaviest bucket won. Byrne's approach was to provide a healthy, outdoor activity while they removed objects which might cause injuries to the students. They circumvented any mention of reduction of glass breakage even though that was their intent. Byrne had the lowest glass breakage in the city that year.²³

Farrell's formula for reducing window breakage was "Praise the Lord and steal the ammunition." His theory was that children did not break windows in a premeditated organized way but rather they saw a rock, picked it up and hurled it, sometimes at windows. Based on this theory, if there were no rocks in the immediate area of the school, windows would be safe. Moving from theory to implementation, he organized clean-up squads of boys in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, equipped them with identification belts and buckets, and instructed them to scour the area around the school for missile-type debris.²⁴ He then enlisted the aid of Harry Bauler, from the ward, to provide trucks to haul away the debris on the same day it was collected. He further

²²"Combatting Vandalism," Chicago Schools Journal 33, Nos. 1-2 (September-October 1951): 22-23.

²³George R. Balling, "Anti-Vandalism Campaign Suggestions," The Chicago Principals' Club Reporter 42, No. 2 (December 1952): 25.

²⁴Oriano Nomellini, interview by author, taped, 29 July 1989, Chicago.

provided a teacher sponsor, Oriano Nomellini, for this activity.

The Chicago Sun-Times ran an article with a photo which outlined Farrell's plan. The photo showed children at work removing missiles from their playground under the supervision of Nomellini. The article quoted Farrell as saying,

We have noted a phenomenon we call creeping stones. These stones, abetted by the feet of small boys, creep into the area of the school after we have cleaned up, as though to fill a vacuum. We try to be vigilant about this. But on occasion the creeping stones get ahead of us.

Farrell's method resulted in a 31 percent reduction in window breakage in one year. The number of broken windows dropped from 235 panes in 1952-1953 school year to 74 in 1953-1954, and for the first eight months of the 1954-1955 school year only 32 broken panes were counted. Farrell designated these ammunition removal periods as "Practical Civics," saying that this helped to develop an understanding and appreciation of public property.²⁵ While the Byrne and the Morse Schools had similar and proven methods of removing missiles and saving the schools hundreds of dollars in broken windows, neither activity became the recommended model for all the Chicago schools.

A New Superintendent

The changes wrought by the Hunt administration were to be short lived. On 11 March 1953, William B. Traynor, President of the Board of Education, made public the request of Herold C. Hunt to be released from his contract as General Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools in

²⁵Chicago Sun-Times, 8 May 1955, 4.

order to accept the newly endowed Charles W. Eliot Professorship in the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

As soon as the news was out, The Citizens School Committee sent a telegram to President Traynor requesting that he not fill the position from within. It was their conviction that no local man could be impersonal to the friendships, resentments, and factions which existed before Hunt's administration. Although Hunt had made many wholesome changes they were not in place long enough to become ingrained. Their telegram read:

If Board of Education decides to grant Herold Hunt's request for release, citizens schools committee urges that unless James Redmond can be released from his other commitment and persuaded to accept superintendency no other local man be appointed until time has been taken to make a careful and deliberate canvass for best available person, not merely in Chicago but in entire country.

To this telegram Traynor responded that the board had not been able to induce Hunt to remain and that Redmond had decided to carry out his commitment to the New Orleans Board of Education. They would however, proceed to survey the candidates both inside and outside the Chicago Public School system.²⁶

The Church Federation of Greater Chicago also urged specific considerations on the board. They were not so interested in the previous position of the candidates as in their personal qualifications. They opined that qualities such as unquestioned personal integrity, deep religious faith, professional competence, loyalty to public education, ability to resist political pressure, and determination to improve schools were the most important qualities for the new superintendent.

²⁶"Chicago's Schools," April 1953, Citizen School Committee collection, Box 32, Chicago Historical Society Library.

They further requested that candidates be considered regardless of sex, nationality or racial background.²⁷

The Kiwanis Clubs went one step further, they endorsed a specific candidate for superintendent. Matthew L. Fitzgerald, endorsed by the Kiwanis, was one of Chicago's high school district superintendents. In a letter directed to all the Kiwanis Clubs of Chicagoland, Frank LoCascio, President of the West Belmont chapter urged all members to support Fitzgerald. "We attach hereto a copy of the formal application for this position . . . which clearly shows his feelings and attitudes are definitely in line with the thinking of all good Kiwanians."²⁸

Some of the feelings and attitudes that Fitzgerald cited in his application letter were his belief in the republican form of government; against Communism and Socialism; against socialized medicine; for curriculum basics; for art and music; for free enterprise; for vocational education; and for fundamental Americanism. Fitzgerald's beliefs and attitudes surely had something for everybody. Missing in his application letter were any specific qualifications or strengths that he might have brought to the superintendency. A copy of LoCascio's letter along with Fitzgerald's application letter were sent to Farrell by a Frank P. Mullen. At the top of the letter was written: "Tom, Your comments, please. Frank P. Mullen." Mrs. Frances Mullen was also an

²⁷"Advice from Churchmen: List Qualifications for School Chief," Chicago Daily News, 1 June 1953, 9.

²⁸Letter to Board of Education from Matthew L. Fitzgerald, Letter to Kiwanis Clubs of Chicagoland from Frank LoCascio, Private Collection Mary Kay Farrell, Northbrook, IL.

applicant for the position of superintendent. There is no record of Farrell's preference for superintendent nor his response to Mullen. However, Mrs. Mullen and not Fitzgerald was to be one of the six finalists.²⁹ The other five finalists included Benjamin C. Willis of Buffalo, Herman L. Shibley of Indianapolis, J. Chester Swanson of Oklahoma City, Forrest E. Conner of St. Paul, and Thaddeus J. Lubera, head of Chicago's public high schools. Of the six prospects, only two were from Chicago, only one was a woman, and all were under the fifty-five year old age limit imposed by the board.³⁰

On 27 May 1953 the Chicago Sun-Times polled ten of the eleven board members on their choice for the chief post. All ten indicated that they had made no final choice, but most of them agreed that the chances of Mrs. Frances Mullen were extremely slim. Mrs. Mullen was the top-ranking woman in the Chicago school system as assistant superintendent in charge of special schools. The eleven, nine men and two women, also said they were withholding making a decision until they met on 1 June to further discuss the qualifications of all six finalists. One of the board members, Robert S. Berghoff, had urged that the age limit be raised above the fifty-five year limit so that two other Chicago candidates might be considered: Don Rogers, assistant superintendent, and John W. Bell, district superintendent. Another board member, John Doherty, said he would favor a Chicago candidate.³¹

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰"Race for Schools Chief Post Still Wide Open," Chicago Sun Times, 27 January 1953, 11.

³¹Ibid.

After the board meeting of 1 June, the superintendency was offered to Dr. Willis. It was, however, made by the slimmest majority-- only six of the eleven board voted in his favor. Berghoff, Doherty, and Ben Majewski were still holding out for a local man, Thomas Haggerty refused endorsement until he had more information on Willis' relationship with labor and Frank M. Whiston passed. Whiston explained that he passed because he wanted the 2,300 school employees to know that opportunity for promotion to the highest post existed for them. He further said that he would change his pass vote to a vote for Willis if Willis accepted their offer.

Willis had distinguished himself as Superintendent of the Buffalo Public Schools through his new school building program, his modernization of accounting procedures, and through his public relations program. He had a very active professional life and had shown interest in civic, social, and cultural affairs. He held membership in service clubs, was director of various cultural institutions, and had established Washington's first junior college. He now faced a school system which was predicting an average yearly increase in enrollment of more than ten thousand students which would require new school buildings.³²

This was a school system rife with problems; vandalism, shortage of classroom teachers, a shortage of qualified teachers, and an increasing drop-out rate to name a few. Added to these was the changing composition of the population. Many of the city's new people were from

³²"Dr. Benjamin C. Willis, A Biography," Chicago Schools Journal (November-December 1953), 49; "We Build," Annual Report of the General Superintendent, Chicago Public Schools 1953-1954, Chicago 1954, 2-6.

rural areas and there was beginning to be an increase in the number of non-English-speaking people moving into the city. Along with population problems came the school's problems of providing adequate space and appropriate programming for this new population. Willis is quoted as saying, "Magnificent things in a magnificent way for all children--this is the goal of our educational program in our Chicago Public Schools." He was determined to provide an educational program, a faculty, and school buildings designed to teach the "whole" child and to meet the needs of individual differences. Willis believed strongly that a successful educational program must meet the needs of both children and American democracy.³³

Farrell looked upon the new administration with interest. He too was aware of the myriad problems confronting the schools. Problems brought about by a changing and rapidly growing urban population with conflicting value systems. He commented that only time would tell whether or not the new administration could measure up to the challenge.

³³Cynthia A. Wnek, "Big Ben the Builder: School Construction--1953-66" (Ph.D. diss., Loyola University of Chicago, 1988), 15, 16, 40.

CHAPTER IV

STRIVING TO EXCEL

The decade and a half following World War II was a period marked by dynamic contrasts. Overtly the nation seemed to be calm and America seemed to be composed of the "silent generation" of American youth and the "organization men" in their grey flannel suits. However, in the consciousness of this seemingly placid cauldron existed the threat of another world war. This threat was fueled by the collapse of the alliance between the United States and Russia and Russia's push to spread communism into eastern Europe and China. Another disquieting bubble in this seemingly quiet pot was the ever-present danger of atomic destruction. The United States continued to expand its atomic arsenal but had lost its monopoly on atomic power when the Soviet Union exploded a nuclear device in 1949. The Korean War of 1950 gave a short-lived boost to the economy which began to sag again by the end of the decade, and Americans began to question their supremacy when Russia launched a space vehicle before we had the capability to do so.¹

Chicago, too, experienced dramatic changes following World War II. Businesses moved from the city to the surrounding suburbs as lower land costs, a growing labor pool, a greatly expanded expressway system, lower unionization rates, and a shifting consumer market made the

¹Davis and Woodman, 365-68.

suburbs more attractive. The suburban labor pool grew as the earlier marriages and larger families of the "man in the gray flannel suit" moved to the suburbs. The population growth of the city was only 6.6 percent between 1940 and 1950 compared with a suburban population increase of 32.7 percent. The cities not only lost citizens but the racial and ethnic make-up of the new citizenship was changing. When President Roosevelt issued his Executive Order in 1941 ending discrimination in hiring practices by government agencies and manufacturers holding defense contracts, African-Americans entered into industrial life in Chicago at an unprecedented rate. The African-American population of the city increased from 8 percent to 14 percent as war production made jobs available.²

While African-Americans were successful at finding employment they were unable to find places to live. As a result, many African-American families doubled up making apartments very crowded. Public housing offered little surcease since housing projects built by the Public Works Administration in the 1930s adhered to the federal policy not to alter the racial make-up of the neighborhood in which they were built. It was not until the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) assumed control of public housing that it became integrated. African-Americans also pursued housing in the private sector, mostly in the southern part of the city. This resulted in restrictive racial covenants being added to property deeds, and it was not until 1948 that a Supreme Court

²Chicago Fact Book Consortium, Local Community Fact Book: Chicago Metropolitan Area 1984 (Chicago: The Consortium, 1984), xvi; Richard Pollenberg, One Nation Divisible: Class, Race and Ethnicity in the United States Since 1938 (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), 34.

decision (Shelley v. Kraemer) made these racially restrictive covenants unenforceable. As a result of Shelley v. Kraemer when a white family moved to the suburbs, this house also became available to African-American families who were financially able to make the purchase.³

An increasing birth rate, coupled with an immigration surge into the city as the economy expanded resulted in a burgeoning enrollment in the city's schools. The enrollment increased by almost ten thousand students from September 1952 to September 1953, and statisticians extrapolated a continued increase of at least ten thousand students annually up to September 1959. These new students were the "poor whites" from rural areas, some were Puerto Rican, but the rural African-Americans were the largest group.⁴

The schools were expected to maintain, extend, and improve the American way of life for these diverse groups, along with providing a strong academic program as a preparation for successful college work which was as necessary as ever. The urban school now had to provide many health and welfare services formerly provided by the home, in addition to a program of urban culture and a strong program of vocational education.⁵

³Gregory D. Squires et al., Chicago: Race, Class, and the Response to Urban Decline (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 101.

⁴We Build, Annual Report of the General Superintendent (Chicago Board of Education), Chicago Public Schools, 1953-1954, Chicago Historical Society Library, 4; Wnek, 50.

⁵Wnek, 5.

Willis's Schools

This was the city which welcomed Dr. Benjamin Willis as its new General Superintendent of Schools in September 1953. Soon after he assumed his new position, Willis made public his focus for the schools. He reflected on the many changes in the world outside the school which necessitated a changing pattern and concept of education. His major concerns were twofold; enough of the right kind of buildings, and enough of the right kind of teachers. The most immediate concern was to build more buildings to accommodate the ballooning enrollments of Chicago's schools. This focus on construction was reflected in his annual reports which he titled "We Build." His other concern, to insure the attraction of the right kind of teachers, was to be accomplished by a continued effort toward making teaching a more attractive occupation. His promise was to produce the best climate for teaching, in order to attract young men and women with competence in scholarship and high potential. He said:

We want them to select teaching as a career and Chicago as their school system. We want the children in the classrooms to have the benefit of great personalities for the teacher provides much of the growth and development of children and youth. There is a future in Chicago for teachers where interest and ability will count. There is no place for pressure, favoritism, and the like.

Willis also dictated that his personnel policies, including such items as salary schedules, and leaves of absence, would be based on insuring that teachers were able to maintain a reasonable standard of living. He would make provisions for the recognition of educational preparation, years of service, and continued professional improvement. Willis maintained that, whether he was planning and designing buildings, or

selecting the necessary staff, his first consideration would be the educational needs of the students.⁶

One of the first challenges to Willis's personnel policy came in September 1953, when John Fewkes, president of the Chicago Teachers' Union (CTU), forwarded a proposal to the superintendent and the board. This proposal asked for a single salary schedule for both elementary and high school teachers with a starting salary of \$4400 and a maximum salary of \$8000 which was achieved through annual increases over a ten year period. The CTU also requested that there be a \$300 base increase for education beyond the bachelor's degree and a \$600 increase for a Ph.D. Willis agreed with the single salary plan, and also the plan to provide monetary recognition for additional educational preparation and years of service. However, he differed with the dollar amount.

Willis's plan, which became effective September 1954, provided all teachers with a starting salary of \$3400 and a maximum of \$5650, achieved in twelve annual increments. Under his plan, teachers with a master's degree would have a starting salary of \$3660 with a maximum of \$6150 achieved in the same twelve years and for those teachers who received an additional thirty-six credit hours beyond the master's, another salary lane which began at \$3900 with a maximum of \$6650. Willis's plan did not provide any salary increment for a Ph.D.

Besides his differences in salary provisions, Willis also differed in his implementation of the single salary schedule for elementary and high school teachers. Willis's plan was effected by

⁶Benjamin C. Willis, "School Community Relationships," Citizens School Collection, Box 32, 20, No. 2 (December 1953): 6 (Chicago Historical Society Archives); Wnek, 16.

extending the working day of the elementary school teacher from five to six hours. The CTU opposed this and argued that this would actually be a \$200 pay cut for elementary teachers. The plan was implemented despite Fewkes's report that: "the temper of the teachers is at a white heat concerning their salaries."⁷

As Fewkes challenged Willis on personnel policies, Farrell also expressed contrary views to Willis's building program. He agreed with Willis that there was indeed a building and equipment shortage as a result of the continually increasing enrollment and that these increases were due to the influx of families from the rural areas, and the increased birth rate within the city. However, he disagreed with the way in which Willis had begun to remedy these shortages. All but one of Willis's first thirteen new buildings or additions were located on the periphery of the city. The exception was Anderson, located 1800 west and 1200 north. None of the others came closer to the center of the city. If one were to draw a circle using State and Madison as the midpoint and a radius of six miles, there would be no new construction in this circle, with the previously mentioned exception. Farrell maintained that by building in these outlying areas of the city, Willis strained the budget and did little to alleviate the existing shortages.⁸

⁷Stewart Weinstein, "Collective Bargaining: The Quest for Power in the Chicago Public Schools" (Ph.D. diss., Loyola University of Chicago 1988), 58-59.

⁸"Let's Peek Inside," copy of speech to Kiwanis Club of Northwest Chicago, December 1954, Private Collection, Mary Kay Farrell, Northbrook, IL, 1-5; Wnek, 90-91. Willis's first thirteen additions or new schools were: Anderson (1800W-1200N); Goudy (5100N-1100W); Deneen (7300S-45E); Green (9600S-1200W); Carver (13300S-900E); Dever (7600W-3400N); Parkman (5100S-1100W); Rogers (7400N-2700W); Steward (4500N-1100W); Jamieson (5700N-2800W); Bret Hart 5600S-1600E); Sherwood (5700S-300W); and

On the issue of teacher shortage, Farrell disagreed with both Fewkes and Willis and contended that while an adequate salary was necessary to attract and maintain good teachers, more important was the climate in which they worked. By climate, he did not mean nice, well-ventilated surroundings but more importantly those things which build self-esteem. "Probably, the most important single step necessary to secure a good educational product for our city, is to give the teacher, the fellow on the firing line, the proper credit for the good work he does." Farrell wanted a program that would: (1) encourage good people to enter the teaching profession; (2) provide incentives for those who wished to move up; and (3) value those who remained in the classroom. To effect this, he challenged the administration, parents, and children to work together to not only formulate such a program but also to carry it forth and show their appreciation for their teachers. This program would also include various kinds of incentives for teachers who wished to try new ideas or who wished to increase their efficiency. Farrell also maintained that teaching could also be improved if central office staff, who were specialists in many areas, would spend their time working with the teachers and children rather than preparing exhibits, sitting on committees, or attending conferences.⁹

Besides the location of buildings and the need to attract and keep good teachers, there were other areas of disagreement between Farrell and Willis, and Farrell did not hesitate to make them public.

Wadsworth (6400S-1100E).

⁹"Let's Peek Inside," 1-5.

The superintendent had proudly compiled a series of curriculum guides upon which Farrell commented:

Our curriculum program, for which we claim so much, is viewed with derision by far too many teachers and principals. It is considered visionary and impractical. After several years and many conferences, committees and consultations, there is little evidence to show that the work produced has crossed the thresholds of many classrooms or improved learning significantly.

He further asserted that objectives and methods of teaching needed to be tailored to fit each school and should be the purview of that school rather than that of the central office. Willis's pride on his comprehensive testing program brought no comment from Farrell. However, when Willis claimed he had improved library materials which included audio-visual aids Farrell simply said that this was a myth. Willis also quoted the evaluators from the Illinois State Department of Education, who lauded Willis for making great strides in all the areas mentioned. Farrell disputed the validity of the state visitation as certifying process contending that not all state evaluators were educationally qualified. Farrell claimed that administrators had "lost sight of the difference between what we would like to do and what we really accomplish."¹⁰

Willis and the school board also claimed that they provided equality of educational opportunity by insuring that children were instructed according to their own abilities, that a decent program was provided for the atypical child, and that real and productive experiences were provided for learners. Reality posed another picture according to Farrell, who suggested that a look at the schools would

¹⁰Ibid., 4.

show that they were organized into grades in which enrollments were large, cumbersome and rigid, and instruction was geared to the level of the ability of the average student for each class. Instruction was provided through subjects which were rigorously graded, and promotion based on whether or not these subjects were considered mastered.¹¹

According to Farrell, other myths that were fostered by the schools were: that they were democratic and fostered democracy; that children were being taught to think, to get along with each other, and to be patriotic; and that schools trained youth to meet the problems of life. "Schools," said Farrell, "taught the student that his goal was to graduate, not to learn, and as an adult his goal was to acquire material things, not to render service." He continued: "A look at our graduates would show that most have little knowledge, less skill, uncritical judgment, debilitated curiosity and undeveloped powers of observation and attention."¹²

Farrell's final criticism of the school system was the relationship between the board of education and the rest of the system. The principal maintained that it was necessary for the board to provide some system whereby information would come to them from the field. Too much information came to board members either from personal friends or from central office staff who could either slant it or not provide the

¹¹Ibid., 6.

¹²Ibid., 3, 7. The remaining three myths dealt with providing adequate guidance for all children, the booklets circulated which were supposedly representative of most schools and the final myth which flew in the face of both Fewkes and Willis: "And, most important, that our failure to do a better job is due to the failure of the schools to get more money appropriated for education."

total picture. Farrell's concerns were not sins of commission, but sins of omission. Based on these comments, it would seem that Farrell would have been most enthusiastic if Ella Flagg Young's teachers' councils had been reinstated. He would probably have been greatly enthusiastic if this concept had been carried one step farther to include administrators or at least to provide a separate forum for them. From Farrell's perspective, a look at Willis's schools would show:

Poor management, weak leadership on all levels, unrealistic programs of studies, visionary curriculum activity, philosophical confusion, incongruous personnel practices, lack of substantial public support for finance, blind faith by citizens who are friendly to the schools and an unwarranted reverence for the leaders in higher education.¹³

While Farrell illuminated his perspective of some of the basic problems faced by Chicago's schools, another problem was beginning to loom even greater on the horizon. The problem of juvenile delinquency. This not only impacted society as a whole but was also severely reflected in all schools. A Montana judge, Lester H. Lobel said, "The tidal wave of horror is now moving in on us, its contagion spilling upon every town and every community in the nation. If we don't turn it, we'll drown in it."¹⁴ That tidal wave was juvenile delinquency.

Delinquency

Delinquency was a global problem that increasingly occupied the attention of European as well as national, state, and local officials and citizens. Britain, East and West Germany, Austria, Finland, and

¹³Ibid., 5.

¹⁴Lester H. Lobel and Max Wylie, Delinquency Can Be Stopped (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967), 16.

Sweden reported increases in delinquency. The reports ran from a low of 21 percent increase to a high of 96 percent. These statistics were for both boys and girls, all under the age of eighteen, and spanned the time period from the end of World War II to 1957.¹⁵ In America, juvenile appearances in the courts doubled between 1948 and 1956. A report from the National Education Association stated, "In recent years the number of cases in court referrals of youngsters has exceeded by three and four times the increase in population in the seven to seventeen age bracket."¹⁶ J. Edgar Hoover stated that 47 percent of all crimes were committed by juveniles. Half of those arrested for burglary and two-thirds of those arrested for auto theft were less than eighteen years old.¹⁷ The only dissenting voice was heard in Chicago by Lloyd E. Ohlin, Assistant Sheriff, who said delinquency complaints in Chicago had dropped by two thousand from 1953 to 1954. He said this indicated, "a break in the steadily rising curve of delinquency for the post-war years."¹⁸ However, in Chicago's schools the severity of the problem of social maladjustment continued to rise as reflected in the steady increase in the demand for services from the Bureau of Socially Maladjusted Children.¹⁹ The problem of delinquency was also of long-

¹⁵Robert M. MacIver, The Prevention and Control of Delinquency (New York: Atherton Press, 1966), 4.

¹⁶William C. Kvaraceus et al., Delinquent Behavior (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1959), 16.

¹⁷Lobel, 28.

¹⁸"Chicago Curbing Juvenile Delinquency, Kefauver Asserts," Chicago Daily Tribune, 15 July 1955, Pt. 1, 5.

¹⁹Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1 July 1959 to 30 June 1960, Chicago Board of Education, 208.

standing interest to Farrell who had taken several courses in this area at Northwestern University.²⁰

Several hundred postwar studies of delinquency were sponsored by various agencies in an attempt to find a cause and cure. The National Institute of Mental Health sponsored a grant to study the problem of delinquency, where it occurs, the groups most affected, and the strategies most effective in dealing with it. In New York, The Law Enforcement Institute held a series of meetings whose purpose was to determine how to prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency.²¹ In Chicago, Sheriff Joseph D. Lohman conducted a three-day conference on juvenile delinquency. The United States Senate authorized a subcommittee to study the problem and appointed Senator Estes Kefauver (D., TN) as the chairman (The Kefauver Committee). In July 1955, this committee came to Chicago to determine how delinquency manifested itself here and how various city leaders were dealing with it. The committee heard the testimony of seventeen witnesses comprised of church leaders from various denominations; members of the legal system, from policemen to judges; social workers; a radio commentator; the mayor; and one educator, Thomas J. Farrell.²² The diversity was to provide the

²⁰Letter from Patrick Quinn, Archivist Northwestern University, 24 June 1989.

²¹F. Ivan Nye, Family Relationships and Delinquent Behavior (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958), 1; MacIver, v-vi; Frank J. Cohen, Youth and Crime--Proceedings of the Law Enforcement Institute (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1957), xi.

²²"Chicago Curbing Juvenile Delinquency, Kefauver Asserts," Chicago Daily Tribune, 15 July 1955, Pt. 1, 5. Witnesses were: Joseph Lohman, Sheriff; Dr. Robert K. Bell, President of the Church Federation of Greater Chicago; Mayor Richard J. Daley; Charles Dougherty, Judge; Bishop Ezekiel, Greek Orthodox Church; Milton Matz, Rabbi, F.A.M. temple; William

committee with a broad spectrum of ideas and points of view, as witnesses gave the committee their opinions of the various causes and the possible remediations for delinquency.

The first witness to testify was Mayor Richard J. Daley who commented that he was adding one thousand policemen this year and another one thousand next year. "Most of these men will be assigned to patrolling the neighborhoods of Chicago and will serve as a positive force to deter delinquency and build a respect for law and order," Daley said. The second witness was Sheriff Joseph D. Lohman who reported, "there was a 45 percent increase in juvenile delinquency across the nation in the last five years, and that positive steps and positive thinking will be required to combat the problem." He said the city and county had begun a five-step program to counteract the problem which included: establishing community councils, expanding little league, having marines train teenagers, organizing juvenile squadrons against delinquency, and providing a high school program to combat delinquency. The president of the Church Federation of Greater Chicago, Dr. Robert K. Bell, declared that juvenile delinquency was not the fault of youth but of the adults. Rabbi Milton Matz focused on religion as a cure and said the most important element was to get the religious message across to

Robinson, Director of Youth Services for Church Federation of Greater Chicago; Bernard Sheil, Auxiliary Bishop Roman Catholic Church; Michael Wolke, Police Captain, Milwaukee; Bernard Shulman, State Welfare Department; Sigmund Stefanowicz, Judge; Margaret O'Malley, Assistant State's Attorney; Archibald Carey, A.M.E. Church; Benjamin El Novoselski, Assistant State's Attorney; Mrs. Phillip Sachs, Honorary President of the Jewish Big Sisters of Chicago; Paul Harvey, Radio Commentator; Thomas J. Farrell, Principal, Arnold Elementary School, Chicago. On baby adoption the committee heard Senator Thye (R. MN), a New York detective, and a member of the ring which smuggled children into the U.S. from Canada.

adolescents. Judge Charles S. Dougherty commented on causes and said, "in dealing with juvenile cases, he had found a good many defendants were avid readers of comic books and salacious literature." By the time the committee had reached its final witness, they had had a variety of reasons and remedies for delinquency. The final witness for the panel was the principal of the Arnold Elementary School.²³

Farrell's opening statement surprised the senators when he declared that they were wasting their time conducting hearings on juvenile delinquency. He said,

We need no more committees, study groups, seminars, panel discussions, conferences or mass meetings. They produce much conversation and little action. Let us look away from panaceas and fads, from simple surefire solutions and make a critical appraisal.²⁴

The next day a Chicago Sun-Times article on the hearings carried the headline, "Principal Denounces Teen Probe Here." The Chicago American article headlined, "Schools Fail Youth, Says Principal." Ray Brennan, author of the Sun-Times article, further quoted Farrell as saying, "Highly-publicized, top-level meetings by public officials in an atmosphere of popping flash bulbs rank high among our most futile efforts. Publicity is good for the man on top, but it does little for Junior." The Chicago American article by Gladys Erickson and Mervin Block, quoted Farrell as stressing "The school contributes to a youth's delinquency through neglect and mishandling. He could be saved at far less cost than to apprehend and incarcerate him after he commits the

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ray Brennan, "Principal Denounces Teen Probe Here," Chicago Sun-Times 15 July 1955, 4.

crime." Erickson and Block also made mention of the reduced glass breakage Farrell had achieved through his program of picking up possible missiles. The Tribune article headlined, "Chicago Curbing Juvenile Delinquency, Kefauver Asserts," mentioned Farrell's recommendation that law enforcement and juvenile agencies be streamlined into between four to six youth centers.²⁵

While Bishop Fulton J. Sheen was not called to testify, he gave his opinions to David Goodman, a Sun-Times reporter. The Chicago Sun-Times ran his article, two days later, on 17 June 1955 it stated that noted authorities did not agree as to the causes or cures for delinquency. However, the one thing that was common to all delinquents was that they came from homes where there was a lack of family harmony. Bishop Sheen gave "doting parents" first place in the race to produce delinquent children. "The children, sated with normal pleasures, commit crime just for the thrill of it."²⁶

G. Lewis Penner, Executive Director, Juvenile Protective Association of Chicago, wrote an article published in both the 19 July edition of the Daily News and the 26 July edition of the Sun-Times which began, "It was refreshing to read the account of Principal Tom Farrell's testimony before the Senate subcommittee on juvenile delinquency." He focused on getting rid of war, which brutalized youth, providing effective police service, which removed the temptation for wrongdoing, and supplying skilled probation services, which were a better answer

²⁵Chicago's American, 14 July 1955; Chicago Sun-Times 15 July 1955; Chicago Daily Tribune 15 July 1955.

²⁶David Goodman, "Who's to Blame for Delinquency, Chicago Sun-Times, 17 June 1955.

than institutionalization. He went on to congratulate the police department and the mayor for the job they were doing to stem the tide of delinquency.²⁷

About a month after the hearings, Farrell wrote a letter to the Sun-Times which it published in its "Opinion of the People" column. He praised the recent editorial on delinquency and the series of articles by Jack Olsen in which delinquents were said to share poor school adjustment. However, he went on to say that nobody had shown just how the schools had failed these youngsters.

These lads are typical of thousands of others who might each be described as "junior," the boy in the last row toward the rear, who started badly and finished badly with little or no specific program of help from the school. They are products of neglect.

Farrell went on to detail the school as the one agency which could hold the pivotal role in attacking delinquency because it reached into every community and had continuing contact with youngsters. The only other institution which was viable was the home. However, if the home could not or would not do the job of remediating antisocial behavior then that job was left to the school. The following month, September 1955, Farrell's entire plan for combating delinquency was spelled out in an article appearing in a magazine entitled The Nation's Schools.²⁸

Farrell and Delinquency

Farrell had a systematic approach to combating delinquency. First, he said, the schools must recognize that they, along with the

²⁷"Letters to the Editor," Chicago Daily News, 19 July 1955; "Opinion of the People," Chicago Sun-Times, 26 July 1955.

²⁸"Opinion of the People," Chicago Sun-Times, 7 August 1955.

home, are in the most advantageous position to combat delinquency. Both have continued contact with the youngster and can spot the first signs of delinquent behavior. After recognition must come responsibility. The schools must provide a program which would identify predelinquents, provide specific programs for assisting moderate deviates, maintain continuing supervision of all deviates, and take appropriate action on behalf of or against deficient homes.

Identifying Predelinquents

The first step of Farrell's program was a systematic approach to the identification of predelinquents, and this step began with the classroom teachers. Teachers were to be provided a simple checklist on which they were required to list the names of all their students. Following the column for students' names were five columns headed: social, emotional, physical, scholastic, and economic. This checklist carried a due date and the principal was required to provide the time to review these lists with each teacher in a conference.

At this conference the principal and teacher were to discuss students who were considered predelinquent. These students were then divided into two categories which Farrell termed typical delinquents or abnormal offenders. Typical delinquents were those who committed offenses such as truancy, larceny, robbery, burglary, assault, and vandalism. Abnormal offenders were those whose bizarre crimes made startling headlines in newspapers and magazines. Crimes such as sadism, sexual perversion, and narcotics addiction. It was Farrell's contention that the typical delinquents could be helped through the cooperation of the school, the home, and other social agencies. The abnormal

offenders, however, should be left to the sociologist, the psychologist and the psychiatrist. After the delinquent had been identified, the school must provide assistance and support to the classroom teachers with typical delinquents, and relieve the teachers of the responsibility for the abnormal offenders.

Providing a Program

Once a determination was made concerning the greatest need for any student, a program was implemented to assist him. For those children who were found to be in need of social or emotional assistance, Farrell required an anecdotal record be kept. This anecdotal record was a running account of each incident of misbehavior along with a notation as to what action was taken by the teacher. When appropriate, this record was discussed with the student's parents and a remediation plan was designed which included both school and home. Where the continued efforts of the school and home failed to produce the sought for change, students would be referred to the appropriate social agencies. Anecdotal records of atypical behavior followed the pupil throughout his school career so that a social history of each pupil was maintained.

Students with physical disabilities were referred to the school nurse or to the school counselor. Should medical attention be advised the parents were given lists of appropriate agencies, and Farrell himself kept close contact with various clinics. If appropriate medical assistance could not be obtained because of a family's financial position, both counselor and nurse were directed to work with the parents until a solution was achieved.

Should the child show a scholastic deficiency, Farrell insisted

that the parent be asked to come to school to discuss and enter into a work improvement agreement. The teacher outlined the areas of deficiency and the activities needed to remediate these deficiencies. Then teacher, parent, and student, signed this agreement outlining the work to be done and the date by which completion was expected.²⁹

Children showing economic deficiencies were referred to the school counselor who was directed to maintain a list of appropriate agencies. Farrell was an avid supporter and advocate of the Children's Aid Society which provided new clothing for needy children. He conducted an annual school collection and personally donated to the support of this society. In addition the principal appointed a staff member to maintain a supply of donated clothing, and personally kept the larders filled through letters, phone calls, and personal pleas to more affluent schools. His teachers were also requested to donate their families used clothing to the school. All donated clothes were examined, categorized, and distributed by teacher aides under the direction of a teacher sponsor.

Each Christmas, teachers, students, and local merchants were asked to join in the holiday spirit by giving to the school. A school-wide collection of grocery items was supplemented by a cash collection from the teachers. The money was used to purchase last minute perishables that became part of a number of baskets organized and donated to the neediest families in the school. This again was done

²⁹Norman Glubok, "Dealing with Delinquency," The Nation's Schools 56 (September 1955): 33-36.

with the assistance of teacher aides under the direction of a Farrell-appointed teacher sponsor.

Maintaining Supervision of Deviates

The school was to provide a system whereby information would flow from home to school and back. A parent advocate, who was a native language speaker, was appointed where necessary to insure that parents were comfortable coming into the school for assistance. The school was also to work closely with personnel from all other social agencies and institutions concerned with youth and demand that deleterious influences be stamped out. Farrell commented, "Only when police, juvenile officers, social workers, teachers, probation officers and Family Court people work together--instead of independently and sometimes at cross purposes--will solutions to these problems begin to take shape."³⁰ Farrell recommended the streamlining of law enforcement and juvenile agencies into between four and six youth centers. He thought these centers could then select police officers, youth advocates, and social workers who could work with the youth in a given area. The schools and these centers were to work cooperatively to remediate deviant behavior.³¹

Assisting Deficient Homes

The final step in Farrell's plan was to in some way assist the parents of the students who were delinquent. He claimed that the homes which produced these delinquents all fell down in one way or another.

³⁰Chicago Sun-Times, 15 July 1955.

³¹Ibid.; Chicago Daily Tribune, 15 July 1955.

The parents of these deficient homes could be classified in three groups: incompetent, overburdened, or selfish. Farrell defined the incompetent parents as those who were mentally disturbed, emotionally immature, mentally retarded, unassimilated foreign, or un-urbanized rural. The overburdened were those who were economically distressed and those single parents who carried the burden of two. The selfish parents were those who were indifferent, shortsighted, greedy, or ignorant.

For the incompetent and overburdened parent the school was to provide assistance. They were to work with the parent and any other social agency necessary to insure the best education possible for their child. For the selfish parents, Farrell continued to insist that they come to school to discuss their child. He provided a system of three form letters to be sent to the home requesting a parent conference. If the parent did not respond to any of the letters, he demanded that the truant officer visit the home. If the parent continued to prove indifferent, he asked the truant officer to petition the courts to become involved in the home. The Minor in Need of Supervision (MINS) Petition was to be taken to juvenile court by the truant officer and the parent was then to appear before a hearing officer and defend their actions. Farrell, himself, most often went to these hearings.³²

While Farrell's procedures were a part of his school program, neither the school system nor any other agency picked up any portion of it. However, the problem did not disappear. More than a year later, November 1956, the Chicago Schools Journal carried an article discussing

³²"The Anecdotal Record," Farrell's In-Service Bulletin Number 3, Private Collection.

ways to combat vandalism and its broader problem delinquency. Ruth Dunbar of the Chicago Sun-Times also did a two page spread in the Sunday Midwest section concerning indifferent parents. The two-page article also contained five photographs, three taken at the Arnold School and two taken in a child's home. Ruth Dunbar also quoted Farrell who complained:

Some parents won't respond when asked to come to school for a conference. Or, if they come, they assume the school is wrong before they've found out what it's all about. About 15 to 20 percent of parents are inadequate in some way or other and some are hopelessly incompetent, and in those cases the school must step in firmly to fill the gap.

In the same article Dunbar quoted Mary Herrick, a social science teacher at DuSable High School:

When one child is late, the whole class gets cheated out of lesson time. Parents have a responsibility to see that children develop right attitudes about being on time. Thoughtless parents create another headache for teachers when they don't return report cards on time.³³

The problem of delinquency continued in the Chicago schools. Four years after the Kefauver committee (February 1959), a social worker in the Bureau of Child Study of the Chicago Public Schools wrote an article for the Chicago Schools Journal entitled: "Meeting Delinquency Problems--A Unified Approach; Specialists Must Work Together to Solve Problems Effectively." In December of the same year The Chicago Schools Journal carried pointers entitled, "Suggestions for Maintaining

³³"Enlisting Community Support to Prevent School Vandalism," Chicago Schools Journal 38, Nos. 3-4 (November-December 1956): 83; Ruth Dunbar, "Teachers Voice Pet Grips About Parent," Chicago Sun-Times, Midwest Section, 18 November 1956, 4-5.

Discipline." It did seem that this refrain had been previously sung.³⁴ Farrell meanwhile shifted his focus to a newer dilemma which faced his school.

Arnold School

The Puerto Ricans began migrating to Chicago in significant numbers during the 1950s. Several Puerto Rican "port-of-entry" communities began to appear, mostly on Chicago's northeast side. The Chicago offices for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico reported the number of Puerto Rican residences for the period from 1955-1960 as: Lakeview 36; Near North Side 170; Lincoln Park 54; Uptown 6; and Woodlawn 37. The March 1956 issue of the Chicago Schools Journal carried an article entitled, "Non-English Speaking Children Enter Our Classrooms." The Arnold Elementary School was in the Near North Side section of the city. Farrell now busied himself organizing a remedial reading program to accommodate these new students. To insure equality of educational opportunity he also created an accelerated program for the more able students. Both of his programs were praised by parents who wrote:

the programs have been lauded by persons who know as being of the highest quality. These innovations and highlights have been established, we regret to say, with little encouragement, appreciation and virtually no assistance from the central administration of the schools.³⁵

³⁴"Marie Emorette Irwin, "Meeting Delinquency Problems--A Unified Approach," Chicago Schools Journal 35, No. 5 (February 1959): 220; "Suggestions for Maintaining Discipline," Chicago Schools Journal 41, No. 3 (December 1959): 142.

³⁵"Non-English Speaking Children Enter Our Classrooms," Chicago Schools Journal 37, No. 4 (March 1956): 210; Felix M. Padilla, Puerto Rican Chicago (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 78-81; Ron Nornellini, Principal of Armour Elementary School, taped interview by author, 29 July 1989.

Then, in January 1959, the Arnold School burned, some said as the result of vandalism. Students and faculty from the school were temporarily housed in any available space in the area while the board decided what was to be done. By the end of that school year the board determined that the seventh and eighth grade students from Arnold would be transferred to an upper grade center and the old school boundaries would be changed to effectively accommodate the lower grade students in adjacent schools. Mildred Minerly, President of the Arnold School P.T.A., submitted a letter to Mayor Richard Daley petitioning him to preserve the Arnold School body, faculty, and administration. Among the reasons she listed for the preservation of the school were: educational continuity, tradition, preservation of the character of the neighborhood, the well-developed faculty, and a devoted principal.

We do not understand why the downtown administration of the schools is so determined to force this so-called 7th and 8th grade center on the people of our community in the face of our determined opposition. Are the wishes of the overwhelming majority of our people involved to be taken so lightly and overridden with such callous indifference?³⁶

The Arnold community not only wanted to see their school rebuilt, but they also wanted the mayor to establish a special committee to conduct a series of investigations as to the real cause of the fire and the reasons for not rebuilding.

One of the first questions they wanted answered was, who were the construction specialists who determined, before the fire, that the Arnold building could no longer serve as a school when school buildings were at a premium and Willis was concentrating so much of his effort to

³⁶Letter to Mayor Richard J. Daley, Private Collection, Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, Illinois.

provide a seat for every child. Another question for the mayor's committee was: who were the construction specialists who determined that the Arnold, after the fire, could not be rehabilitated? The final and telling request was to have an investigation of the educational administrators who failed to act on a report, submitted in early December, from the principal, detailing necessary fire prevention measures. "If item one, page three of this report had been acted upon promptly the school would not have been lost." The principal's report cannot be found.³⁷ However, in a subsequent letter, Farrell mentioned that on 12 December 1958, he had sent a letter to the Associate Superintendent in Charge of Operation Services listing the hazardous conditions at the Arnold and requesting that exterior wire guards over ground floor and first floor windows be securely locked. He further stated: "Needless to say, nothing was done by you or your staff. On the evening of 18 January 1959, five weeks later, vandals entered through the aforementioned openings, started a fire, and the top floor of the school was gutted."³⁸

All the requests of the Arnold community fell on deaf ears, and in September both the faculty and students were transferred. Teachers were sent to the various schools which now accommodated the former Arnold students and Farrell was sent to the Peabody Elementary School.

His stay at Peabody was short-lived due to the way principal's salaries were structured in Chicago. Principals were placed on

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Letter to Dr. Benjamin C. Willis, 20 June 1961, Private Collection of Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

ascending salary schedules based on the size of the faculty. Since the Peabody faculty was about half that of the Arnold, Farrell was receiving a higher salary than that position commanded. It was, therefore, incumbent upon the board to find Farrell a school where his salary would be maintained by the end of the next school year. Farrell was transferred to the Alexander Von Humboldt Elementary School.

CHAPTER V

THE TURBULENT SIXTIES

The first half of the 1960s were a time of worldwide unrest. Internationally, Americans faced the "Cold War," the space race, and a diminished pride in our military supremacy. The "Cold War" which had begun in the 1940s intensified by 1957-1958, with Nikita Khrushchev leading the Soviet Union. Where Stalin's posture had been mostly defensive, Khrushchev's movements were more aggressive as he increased Community activity in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa. By 1953, the Soviets could manufacture the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb, and four years later they showed their scientific superiority by launching the first earth satellite, Sputnik. Americans became increasingly more alarmed with each new achievement of the Soviet Union.

American anxiety reached new heights when on 5 May 1960, Khrushchev announced that the Russians had shot down an American U-2 plane over the Soviet territory.¹ The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) stated that they had been sending U-2 planes over the Soviet Union for the last four years, on photographic missions and that they were morally entitled to conduct such flights. Khrushchev however, demanded

¹Blum, 818. U-2 was an aircraft capable of flying at exceptional heights.

an apology from President Eisenhower and requested that he punish those responsible. Eisenhower accepted full responsibility but refused to punish anyone else.

The U-2 fiasco, the anti-American riots in Tokyo, and the rise of unemployment at home gave Americans pause for concern. These were the problems confronting John Fitzgerald Kennedy when he took office on 20 January 1961. He had barely taken office when in April 1961, the Soviets moved farther ahead in the space race by putting the first man, Yuri Gargarin, into space orbit. Americans accelerated their space program and within the month, we had put a man in space, Alan B. Shepherd. President Kennedy declared that the United States should commit itself to landing a man on the moon and returning him safely by the end of the decade.²

Days after Gargarin's space orbit and before American's had a chance to launch a space ship, Kennedy had to face an inherited force of anti-Castro Cubans who had been trained and equipped by our CIA for the express purpose of invading their homeland. On the recommendations of his national security advisors, Kennedy allowed the group to try their invasion but refused to provide any additional military power. When the invasion collapsed, Kennedy took full responsibility, remarking that victory had a hundred fathers but defeat was an orphan.³

To add to Kennedy's concern, domestically, the civil rights movement picked up momentum. African-Americans rose in rebellion all across the South and newspapers reported their activities. There was a

²Ibid., 800-19.

³Ibid., 814.

"sit-in" by four African-American students at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina; a bomb explosion at the home of a black student at Central High, Little Rock, Arkansas; and Biloxi, Mississippi witnessed the worst race riot in the state's history. In Montgomery, Alabama, one thousand African-American students prayed and sang the national anthem on the steps of the old confederate capitol building, while in Houston, Texas, white youths beat an African-American with chains and carved six Ks on his chest.⁴

In Chicago, the most aggressive civil rights protests came from Woodlawn which had a dynamic community organization. The Woodlawn Community Organization was founded in 1958 by three Protestant ministers and a Catholic priest. They invited Saul D. Alinsky of the Industrial Areas Foundation to join them in organizing the community. Alinsky accepted the invitation and began work in 1960.⁵ Other active Chicago community groups included the Lawndale Citizens Schools Committee and the Chicago Committee of Racial Equality. Parents from both these groups picketed the Board of Education and passed out flyers in an effort to get the board to reassign youngsters currently in overcrowded schools on half-day sessions to vacant rooms in under-utilized school buildings. They maintained that there were fifty thousand unused seats in the city's public schools which could be used to alleviate the overcrowding.⁶ The board ignored their protest and instead expended a

⁴Chronicle of the 20th Century, 840-45.

⁵Arvarh E. Strickland, History of the Chicago Urban League (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 239.

⁶Chicago Sun-Times, 1 September, 1960, 3.

seven hour meeting arguing the merits of a continued ban on candy sales in two high school cafeterias, and deciding whether or not to seek another school building bond issue before 1963.⁷

Violence in the Chicago Schools

In the midst of this school unrest, Farrell was transferred to the Alexander Von Humboldt School, effective September 1960. This was a step up on his career ladder as he moved from the Peabody School with seventeen teachers and a salary of \$900 a month to Von Humboldt School with fifty-six teachers and a salary of \$12,00 a month.⁸ As he confronted the biggest school in his career the temper of the times conspired to make his job more difficult.

The world's unease expressed itself in Chicago's schools in the form of increased burglaries, vandalism, fires, assaults, and finally murder. On Thursday, 20 April 1961, Mrs. Josephine Keane, teacher, was stabbed to death in the Lewis-Champlain School. Five days later, Dr. Benjamin Willis read his expression of sympathy for her into the Official Report of the Board of Education and recommended that a newly constructed southside school be named in her memory. Willis then stated that he wished to assure everyone that he would neither ignore nor treat lightly any workable suggestion for increasing the safety of the teachers and children.

Meanwhile, the superintendent proposed to immediately initiate nine new safety measures: (1) to add 250 more teachers by May 1 in the

⁷Ibid.

⁸Proceedings of Board of Education, July 1960, June 1961, 207.

most crowded schools; (2) to add an additional 250 more teachers by May 8; (3) to increase freed assistant principals where desirable; (4) to make periodic checks of the locks on all outside doors; (5) to fill all custodial positions; (6) to initiate safety conferences with master teachers and principals; (7) to maintain periodic inspections of pupils for knives or other weapons; (8) to continue expansion of upper grade centers to separate the older children from the younger children; and (9) to accelerate the building program. More than half of Willis's measures necessitated increasing staff or adding buildings. He further indicated that it was society's responsibility to give the schools the money they needed to employ the appropriate staff.⁹

Farrell took Willis at his word, "to neither treat lightly nor ignore any suggestion," and on 18 May 1961, Farrell sent him a ten page letter giving suggestions for combatting delinquency. Most of the suggestions contained in the letter were the same as those already discussed in Chapter IV. However, he also included some new ones. One new request was that a citywide discipline code be formulated to insure equality of expectations in every Chicago public school and that this code be distributed to all schools. He further suggested that directives be issued compelling schools to comply with the code. Teachers and principals would also need to be retrained in the methods required by the code. These measures, he affirmed, would insure the code's viability. Such additions, commented Farrell, involved no additional staff and minimal expenditures. Farrell stipulated that more

⁹Official Report of the Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, Tuesday, 25 April 1961, 1991-93.

money, more teachers, and more buildings, in and of themselves, would not solve the problem and: "To believe so, is to confuse structure with function," said Farrell.¹⁰

The principal followed this with two additional letters on the topic of safety. These letters dated 5 June 1961 and 20 June 1961 ran ten and five pages respectively. The first letter, dealt with uniform policemen in the schools, and the second with preserving school property. Farrell made an urgent plea that uniformed police be removed from school buildings. He maintained that their very uniform acted as a challenge to the delinquent and piqued their ingenuity. Instead, he suggested that these police be used to blanket the areas around the school; to keep a watchful eye on abandoned buildings, to remove loiterers in the area, and to be alert to automobiles with many youthful occupants. They could thereby perform the most needed function of keeping the school community safe for students. Inside the school and on the school yard, teachers assisted by students would maintain discipline. Student yard patrols would be used to assist teachers in maintaining good control on school grounds. Student greeters, stationed at the school's main entrance, would insure that all visitors reported to the office, and corridor permits, to be used by students, would control traffic in the building when classes were in session.¹¹

In regard to the preservation of school property, Farrell said, that while the cost of lost or damaged property amounted to millions of

¹⁰Letter to Dr. Benjamin C. Willis, 18 May 1961, Private Collection of Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

¹¹Letter to Dr. Benjamin C. Willis, 5 June 1961. Private Collection of Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

dollars, that cost did not begin to match the demoralization and loss of efficiency which follow every incident. He suggested that: securely locked wire guards be placed over all ground floor windows; fire doors be installed at the bottom of each main entrance; adequate locks and keys be made for all classroom doors, desks, cabinets and files; and steel cases be provided for the storage of all audio-visual machinery and all engineer's tools. These measures, Farrell said, would not only save the school board replacement money but would also increase teacher morale by insuring that the best and most modern technology was continuously available to them. Another suggestion Farrell made was that, when committees were convened to study specific problems, these committees be composed of principals whose schools have met that problem successfully.¹² As with all of Farrell's letters, these remained unanswered and the suggestions were not acted upon; but school violence continued.

Almost a year later, in March 1962, Dr. Otho M. Robinson, director of programs for the maladjusted students in Chicago's schools, claimed that the number of pupils who got into trouble either in or out of school had doubled since 1951. He claimed the schools were combatting this problem by providing two parental schools where students could be placed for continued truancy, and four social adjustment centers to address the needs of the socially maladjusted children. He went on to say that, almost without exception, the student's maladjustment could be traced to a problem in the home. In response to this the Chicago Public Schools had issued a leaflet, distributed to all

¹²Letter to Dr. Benjamin C. Willis, 20 June 1961.

youngsters, which outlined the responsibilities of parents, pupils, teachers, and other school officials.¹³

The problem continued and Farrell reported that in 1963 FBI crime statistics showed that more than half of all auto thefts, larcenies, and burglaries were committed by persons under eighteen years of age. Family Court cases involving delinquents had risen by 252 percent since 1910 while the population had grown only 62 percent. However, enrollment in Chicago Public School facilities dealing with delinquents (Parental and Montefiore) had fallen on an average of 40 percent.¹⁴ Chicago public schools ranked second in the nation in the cost of school vandalism. Chicago schools suffered \$883,025 in damage during the 1963-1964 school year, second only to New York. The damage included thefts, broken windows and other malicious destruction of school property.¹⁵

However, when school assaults rose another 50 percent in the school year 1963-1964, the problem assumed big enough proportions to have the Chicago Daily News carry it as a front page item. Their 10 March 1954 headline read: "A Veteran Principal's Formula: How to Stop School Terror." Under this banner headline they ran two articles: (1) "Instructions Are Clear, Willis Says," by Helen Fleming giving Willis's views and (2) "Hush-Hush Policy Assailed," by Betty Flynn giving

¹³Chicago Schools Journal 43, No. 6 (March 1962): 283-86.

¹⁴Letter from Farrell to the members of the Chicago Board of Education, 9 February 1965, Private Collection, Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

¹⁵Chicago Schools Journal 46, No. 8 (May 1965): 373.

Farrell's views. Along with Flynn's article they carried a photo of Farrell.

Fleming asked Willis if the board's policy on reporting delinquency was clear to all staff. He replied that the November 1961 official statement, "Pupil Conduct and Discipline," made clear that all acts of violent behavior against teachers required reporting. However, he said that this involved judgment and that judgment varied with people. Fleming confronted Willis with the fact that the document which he quoted did not directly warn parents and pupils against teacher assault. Willis replied that he might respond to this in a press conference. On the question of whether or not reports of assaults were being swept under the rug, Willis answered that they had been checking on them since last week but offered no further opinion.¹⁶

While the board required that violence be reported, Farrell stated that the principals tend to hush things up because they wanted their schools to appear well-managed: "They don't want to rock the boat." What is really needed, he said, was a positive program to combat vandalism and delinquency. He again promoted his "system" for which he had received acclaim from the Cook County Juvenile Officers Association.¹⁷ Betty Flynn, a Chicago Daily News reporter, said:

Farrell is a rare bird among some of the ostrich-like school principals who duck behind doors and answer "no comment" to avoid

¹⁶Chicago Daily News, 10 March 1964, 1.

¹⁷Ibid.

reporters' questions. Aides describe him as a one-man revolution and a 20th Century Savonarola.¹⁸

In April board member, Warren Bacon urged the board to hear Farrell's program for curbing violence. Finally, in September, Willis wrote to Farrell stating that his letter on window breakage dated September 9 had been referred to a staff committee on School Beautification and Protection. This committee was a direct result of an upturn in glass breakage in 1963 and one of their major objectives was to study the problems of vandalism and theft in the schools to determine ways of dealing with these problems.¹⁹ A Uniform Discipline Code, based on the premise that rules must be consistently enforced, was adopted by the board of education on 14 October 1981.

Annual Promotions

While vandalism and violence took center stage, the board of education was also dealing with other educational concerns. The question of whether or not Chicago should move from a semester plan to annual promotions was under consideration. Willis, a strong proponent of annual promotions, finally convinced the board that this was the appropriate way to go and at their 25 October 1960 meeting, the Chicago Board of Education approved a program to abolish all mid-year admissions and graduations. This program began in September 1961 and was completed in June 1965 and concentrated only on students entering the second half

¹⁸Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498), Italian monk and reformer. Famous as an orator and writer and his strenuous protests against papal corruptions.

¹⁹Proceedings of the Board of Education, City of Chicago 1 (July 1964-13 January 1965): 730.

of third or sixth grade in September. These students would be expected to complete three semesters of work in one school year, meaning that the following September those third graders would enter fifth grade and the sixth graders would enter eighth grade. Following the same format each year would put an entire elementary school on the annual plan in four years.²⁰

While Willis was an advocate of this program, Farrell opposed it. One of the reasons for Willis's endorsement was that the annual plan would provide more time for instruction by eliminating time necessary to reorganize the school at mid-year. Farrell claimed that in the elementary schools mid-year reorganization was not a significant problem. If, said he, the high schools wasted several weeks in pupil programming, this could be remedied by establishing a systematized citywide procedure for high schools.

Another reason Willis gave in favor of annual promotion was that it provided greater continuity in pupil-teacher relationships. Having a student for an entire year would give the teacher a better chance to know his abilities and needs and time to prepare to meet these needs. Farrell argued that in many Chicago schools children did stay with one teacher for an entire year. However, he contended, the semester plan had sufficient flexibility to allow student and teacher reassignment where desirable. This flexibility was particularly desirable at a time when many classrooms did not have regular teachers. In addition, there were also classrooms in which the teachers were relatively

²⁰"News in Education," Chicago Schools Journal 42, No. 4 (January 1961): 186.

inexperienced, or only moderately competent. These are the classrooms, said Farrell, where a mid-year change would be most beneficial to students.

Other advantages according to Willis were improved pupil groupings, fewer classrooms with split grades, no waiting for college-bound youth, simplification of parent-interview day, increased number of scholarships available to June graduates, and the fact that the majority of the large cities were on the annual plan or were considering converting to it. Farrell countered by saying that improved group was more dependent on the size of the school than on annual promotions. For example, if a split grade were necessary in a small school the grade span in that class would be two full grades as opposed to one grade. In answer to Willis's concern for college-bound students, Farrell countered that the new plan would have children wait to enter kindergarten. This, said Farrell, was even less desirable for culturally deprived children who should be enrolled at the earliest possible time. In response to the statement that parent interview days would be simplified, Farrell said that a school which conducted one thousand interviews for September and five hundred for February, would now conduct fifteen hundred interviews annually. Farrell's final rebuttal to Willis was this: "To do something because others were doing it had no validity in the consideration of such a serious problem."²¹

Farrell also addressed some issues which had not been mentioned by Willis. First was the issue of the gifted child: it was infinitely

²¹Letter to Dr. Benjamin Willis, 25 August 1961, Private Collection, Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

easier to bridge a semester's work for double promotion in contrast to attempting to bridge the academic skills of an entire year. Second was the issue of the slow learner: how much better to retain for only a semester rather than keep him/her back a full year. Finally, was the issue of books: "What a bonanza for the book publishers and their salesmen and what a beating for the taxpayers!" In other words, the "A" semester textbooks would stand idle on the shelves while the "B" semester books would be used and vice versa. However additional books would need to be purchased to accommodate the additional "A" semester students.²² This plan however, became effective as stated and continues until today.

Petition to Remove Farrell

In addition to the rise of delinquency the early sixties also saw the rise of strong community organizations and street gang activity. In 1960 the Puerto Ricans in Chicago began to show a pattern of mobility and ethnic concentration along with the formation of their own community organizations. Puerto Ricans from East and West Garfield Park, and Woodlawn moved west to form the largest Puerto Rican ethnic enclave in the city in the West Town/Humboldt Park area which became known as "Division Street."²³ Division Street became the home of such community groups as the Northwest Community Organization (NCO), The Latin American Defense Organization (LADO), and the Spanish American Coalition (SAC). Street gangs called The Latin Angels, The Young

²²Ibid.

²³Felix M. Padilla, Puerto Rican Chicago (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 78-88.

Sinners, The Latin Kings and the Disciples declared parts of "Division Street" their turf. The Von Humboldt Elementary School was a part of the growing and changing community, a community which brought a different climate to the schoolyard.

Farrell's long advocated "system," which he instituted and enforced at Von Humboldt, began to cause him difficulties in this less than docile climate. He took parents to court if there was any evidence of child abuse, either by actual harm or by neglect. He directed his truant officer to complete a "Minor in Need of Supervision" (MINS) petition against parents who were unable to adequately supervise their children and would himself appear in court against them. This was very unpopular with the community and caused some of the community groups to label him as anti-Hispanic. Parents not only complained to the various community groups but also wrote and circulated a petition requesting Farrell's removal. The petition, dated 23 November 1962, simply stated that the parents of the students of Von Humboldt were requesting the principal's removal. They listed five reasons for this request: (1) the lack of supervision on the playgrounds, (2) the insistence that children stand in line outside the building during inclement weather, (3) the granting of too much authority to school monitors, (4) the incompetency in the handling of older children resulting in the formation of "gangs," and (5) the high-handed methods which Farrell used in dealing with parents.²⁴

School procedures, which Farrell had instituted years before,

²⁴Copy of Petition, 23 November 1962, Private Collection Oriano Nomellini, La Grange, IL.

answered most of the complaints. Supervision was provided on the playground beginning at 8:30 A.M. and his Introductory Bulletin, gave specific directions to the teachers to instruct children to leave home so that they would arrive on school grounds no earlier than 8:40 A.M. In the same way Farrell had what he termed, "Special Foul Weather Procedures," to insure that children were not left outdoors in inclement weather. Concerning the charge that students were given too much authority, Farrell said the school monitors were under the supervision of a teacher sponsor. These teacher sponsors were to train and supervise these monitors and mediate any problems resulting from the monitor performing his duty. The final two charges were strictly opinion. Whether or not Farrell was responsible for the formation of "gangs," or whether or not his dealings with parents were high-handed would be in the eyes of the beholder.²⁵

Despite this, some of the members of NCO felt responsible for taking some definitive action in response to community pressure. Father Frank Slovick, a member of NCO and a Catholic priest, along with Don Hedley, the head of Cardinal Cody's committee for Spanish speakers, requested that Farrell address the community's questions in an open forum on the fledgling WTTW. Dave Moore, a youth worker with the YMCA, and a good friend of both Slovick and Farrell protested Slovick's tactics and said that they would do more harm than good to both Farrell and the community. Slovick responded that Farrell did not need Moore's protection and that they felt that Farrell should respond to the

²⁵Von Humboldt Schedule and Introductory Bulletin, Private Collection of Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL, 4, 24.

community. Slovick organized the radiocast and invited community people to attend and present their questions. Farrell also organized and invited his entire faculty. On the evening of the broadcast, Moore asked Slovick how large an audience he was expecting. Slovick responded that he anticipated the total audience would number about thirty. Moore, who was privy to Farrell's plans but had kept them secret, finally told Slovick that perhaps they had better set up more chairs because the entire Von Humboldt faculty would be in attendance.²⁶

As Farrell's more than fifty faculty members arrived, their principal presented each of them with either a corsage or boutonniere. This not only made them more conspicuous but also provided a psychological advantage. The program proceeded with questions from the community and responses by Farrell. After the program ended, Slovick, Moore, and Hedley went to Monsignor Egan's residence to discuss the evening's events. Monsignor Egan was a mover and shaker in the city at the time and an associate of Saul Alinsky. Slovick and Hedley admitted that they were thoroughly trounced and that Farrell had made fools of them. Egan cautioned that they should not have gotten a bunch of "rag-tags" to confront someone like Farrell who was in the big league. He chided them for not doing their homework and then cited some of the things that Alinsky would have said. Moore again reiterated that they did more harm than good to both Farrell and the community and again Slovick disagreed with him. It was twenty-four hours later before all were willing to admit that perhaps the entire incident had been mishandled: that perhaps they had added unnecessary friction to a

²⁶David Moore, Minister, interview by author, 27 September 1988.

community which was also dealing with an overcrowded school and a school in which all classes did not have regularly assigned teachers.²⁷

Overcrowding and Teacher Shortages

Besides being overcrowded, Chicago's classrooms also suffered from a teacher shortage. The Chicago school population which had been estimated to increase by approximately ten thousand students per year had increased by more than twelve thousand students as schools prepared to open in September 1960. Despite the opening of three new schools and three new additions that September, the same number of students (thirty-one thousand) remained on half-day sessions as when schools closed in June. Although eleven hundred new teachers had been certified, an additional three thousand vacancies would have to be filled by noncertificated teachers.²⁸

Adding to the increased student population and the teacher shortage was the population's mobility. Willis attempted to provide a quick solution to this problem by furnishing portable classrooms to overcrowded schools. He also suggested and attempted to implement changing school boundaries to allow some children to attend less crowded schools which were adjacent to theirs. To stem the teacher shortage, the board would allow classroom vacancies to be staffed by adults with a college degree who promised to take the required education courses. While all these suggestions were meant as stop-gap measures, parents and community organizations took great exception to them and picketed the

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸"Schools Ready to Take Over as Vacation Season Ends," Chicago Sun-Times, 5 September 1960, 30.

schools and the board.²⁹ The controversy continued to build and even radio commentator, Len O'Connor made it the topic of one of his broadcasts. O'Connor said that, in changing the boundaries of five westside schools, Willis infuriated uncounted numbers of people. Here, the people took issue not with the overcrowded classrooms, or with the lack of regularly assigned teachers, but with the fact that the boundary change would necessitate small children having to cross busy intersections. The parents promised that they would continue to parade in front of the schools until such time as Willis "re-jiggered" the map.³⁰

Farrell confronted the same problems at Von Humboldt. Besides overcrowded classrooms, some classrooms had no regular teachers and substitutes were not always available. Four of Von Humboldt's classrooms had no regularly assigned teacher and the first grade classes averaged 39.25 students per room. Substitute teachers averaged about one substitute for every two absent teachers. The magnitude of the problem became even more apparent when the numbers increased. For example, in the month of March 1961, forty substitutes were needed and the board provided seventeen. In an effort to help this situation, Farrell sent numerous suggestions to Willis. One was to provide temporary certification for responsible adults without having them take education courses immediately. Monographs in a variety of management and methods skills could then be provided to these adults to temporarily

²⁹Wnek, 156-63.

³⁰Len O'Connor Comments, 4 September 1962, Len O'Connor Collection, Box 33, Chicago Historical Society.

compensate for their lack of education courses. These monographs should include such topics as: student control, teachers' records, lesson planning, teaching techniques in various subject areas, and child development. Another suggestion was to use central office staff to cover teacherless classrooms until a teacher was provided. Still another suggestion was that during the Jewish holidays teachers in schools with primarily Jewish students could be sent to schools where the majority of the student body was not Jewish.³¹ The board did hire provisional teachers for a short period of time but this did not alleviate the continued shortage.

While these suggestions were aimed at providing teachers for every classroom, the problem of overcrowding still persisted. Despite the fact that Willis's plan to provide a seat for every child finally materialized on 28 January 1963, Von Humboldt remained overcrowded but not on a double shift. For the first time in one hundred years, double shifts had ceased to exist in Chicago's schools and all elementary school children began to attend full day classes. It was a great day for Superintendent Willis. At a press conference, Willis announced that class size was now at thirty-two and predicted that Chicago schools would be able to maintain this status for at least the next four years.³² While Willis was predicting the maintenance of this status, the Chicago Schools Journal was reporting that elementary school

³¹Letters to Dr. Benjamin C. Willis, 8 September 1961, 3 November 1961. Private Collection of Mary Kay Farrell.

³²Wnek, 183.

enrollments across the nation had increased by 800,000 in just one year.³³

On 17 December 1964, Len O'Connor began his broadcast reiterating the same old situation: classrooms without teachers. He mentioned yet another letter which Farrell sent to Willis requesting that something be done about the shortage of teachers. In this letter, Farrell had again pointed out that he did not have a teacher available for forty-three and a half classrooms in a nine day period. O'Connor said that this was the fifth time since 1961 that Farrell had asked the question: "When would provisional substitutes be employed in order to have an adult in every classroom?" O'Connor went on to say that he had contacted Farrell and was told that Von Humboldt was the largest all-white elementary school in the city. It was located in a working-class neighborhood, and it was not a school that substitutes would avoid because of the area, or student body. Farrell's point was that if Willis could not provide substitutes for an all-white school, in a safe neighborhood, how could he provide substitutes in the poor income areas where teachers might be fearful for their personal safety. O'Connor then mentioned that from sources other than Farrell, he had learned that the problem of no substitutes for the absentee teachers was very serious and that in schools in low-income, overcrowded neighborhoods, the lack of substitutes was multiplied many, many times.³⁴

Although the issue of substitute teachers was not being totally

³³Chicago Schools Journal 44, No. 3 (December 1962): 139.

³⁴Len O'Connor, December 1964, Box 37, Item 17, Archival Collection, Chicago Historical Society.

resolved, the board decided to reduce overcrowding at Von Humboldt by changing its attendance boundaries. Parents and community groups reacted as parents and community groups had reacted in other areas previously. They refused to have their children transferred to another school. They claimed that the proposed plan would necessitate that students cross into rival gang turf in order to attend school. This time Farrell organized an evening meeting at which parents could present their concerns to school personnel and board members. The night of the meeting, community organizations arrived carrying their banners and parents came in great numbers. The Von Humboldt auditorium was filled to capacity and people stood in the aisles. Board members and central office personnel answered any and all questions. While the crowd was large they never became boisterous. In the end, Von Humboldt students remained at Von Humboldt.³⁵ Farrell was always an advocate for children. Through the intercession of his friend, Peter Miller, Farrell was able to express his views statewide.³⁶

Commission on Sex Offenders

Farrell met Miller when he was working at the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). Miller was coaching the ice skating team and Farrell volunteered to help him. Then when Miller decided to run for the general assembly, he asked Farrell to be his campaign manager and

³⁵Photos courtesy of Joseph Edmonds, now principal of Columbus Elementary School, Chicago Illinois, then Human Relations Coordinator Subdistrict 6, Chicago.

³⁶Peter Miller, former Representative State of Illinois, taped interview; A Report to the 73rd General Assembly and the Governor--The Honorable Otto Kerner, 5 April 1963, Springfield, IL.



Fig. 5.--LADO in Auditorium

Fig. 6.--Panel Members. (Left to right): Dr. Edward Daly (District Superintendent); James Hoffat, Tom Teran, Francis McKeeg (Central Office); Cyrus Adams, Mrs. Louise Hall (Board Members); Juan Cruz (Central Office); Tom Carroll, Mrs. Aracelis Haasen (Ven Humboldt Bilingual Coordinator); Dr. Ira Monell (Principal, Lafayette School); Tom Waldrep (Central Office); and standing Joe Edwards (District Human Relations Coordinator).



Fig. 6.--Panel Members. (Left to right): Dr. Edmund Daly (District Superintendent); James Moffat, Tom Teran, Francis McKeeg (Central Office); Cyrus Adams, Mrs. Louise Malis (Board Members); Juan Cruz (Central Office), Tom Farrell, Mrs. Aracelis Hasan (Von Humboldt Bilingual Coordinator); Dr. Ira Monell (Principal, Lafayette School); Tom Waldren (Central Office); and standing Joe Edmonds (District Human Relations Coordinator).

Fig. 7.--The Crowd Filled the Auditorium



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Miller gave Farrell credit for the fact that he never lost an election. It was because of Miller's influence that Farrell became the executive secretary of the Commission on Sex Offenders. This commission was the creation of the Illinois Seventy-Second General Assembly. They designed an eleven member commission composed of four members from each branch of the state legislature and three additional members to be appointed by



Fig. 8.--Farrell at the Podium.

Miller gave Farrell credit for the fact that he never lost an election. It was because of Miller's influence that Farrell became the executive secretary of the Commission on Sex Offenders. This commission was the creation of the Illinois Seventy-Second General Assembly. They designed an eleven member commission composed of four members from each branch of the state legislature and three additional members to be appointed by the Governor. The three members appointed by the Governor were to be a psychiatrist, a criminologist and a physician. They were commissioned to travel to various other states to determine current practices and professional recommendations for the identification, classification, diagnosis, treatment, apprehension, supervision and incarceration of sex offenders. Subsequent to their identification of the varied practices the commission was to make recommendations for legislation. Farrell wrote the report on the problems of abnormal behavior in children which was instrumental in the establishment of cottage parents in the St. Charles Detention Center. It was also through Farrell's influence that the Sheridan facility was built to house seriously delinquent boys.³⁷

When Miller introduced any education bills, it was Farrell who drafted them. As a result, Farrell was more than conversant with various educational bills presented to the Illinois Legislature. In an article in the Chicago Tribune, Farrell chastised those good citizens who were discussing the school dropout catastrophe for allowing House Bills 323 and 324 to be defeated. Said Farrell, those bills sponsored by Representatives Peter J. Miller and Walter McAvoy would have

³⁷Representative Peter Miller, interview by author; A Report to the 74th General Assembly and the Honorable Otto Kerner, 1965, Springfield, IL.

permitted youngsters sixteen years of age and over to withdraw from school, provided they maintained regular employment. Unless regularly employed, they would have been required to remain in school until eighteen years of age or until they were graduated from high school. Any child who would neither work nor attend school would have been brought before a family court and subject to transfer to a forestry camp. Without these bills, students were able to simply leave school at age sixteen. Miller however, intended to introduce these bills again and Farrell challenged the citizens who wrote letters and made speeches to lend their support to Miller's bills.³⁸

In addition to working on the Illinois Commission of Sex Offenders, and providing unrequested suggestions to Willis, Farrell was also the principal of the largest white elementary school in the city. While his philosophy of education can be seen in his many adventures or misadventures, it was also evident in the way he ran his school. A look at the various ideas and programs which he deemed important and how these compare with the administrative and supervisory theory of the time, paints a picture of the man.

Farrell the Administrator

According to Elsbree and McNally, professors of education at Columbia University, the role and responsibilities of the elementary school principal changed dramatically from about 1930 to 1960. More authority and responsibility lay in the hands of the principals than ever before and laws and research shaped some of the administrative and

³⁸"Voice of the People," Chicago Tribune, Sec. 1, 4 October 1963, 20.

supervisory procedures which evolved. This newly evolving principal was responsible for: organizing and supervising the instructional program; administering pupil personnel services; administering school-community relations; and administering facilities.³⁹

Organizing and Supervising the
Instructional Program

Elsbree and McNally stated that one of the most important tasks of the elementary school principal was that of providing leadership in curriculum organization and instructional improvement, which included developing programs that were unique to the needs of the community. While the curriculum of the Chicago Public Schools was well dictated through the various courses of study, Farrell expanded the requirements. In the music curricula, he required that specified songs be taught at each grade level. In this way, he said, children would have a repertoire of songs, just as his generation had. To add to the science curricula (and in keeping with the new issue of learning by doing), Farrell required each grade level to grow two specific indoor plants. In this way Von Humboldt students would be able to identify and tell something about at least eighteen different house plants by the time they graduated. Here Farrell thought that by knowing and cultivating these plants, children would be provided with a wholesome, lifetime hobby.⁴⁰

³⁹Williard S. Elsbree and Harold J. McNally, Elementary School Administration and Supervision, 2nd ed. (New York: American Book Co., 1959), v-vi.

⁴⁰Ibid., 87-125; Farrell's In-Service Bulletin No. 44, Plant and Flower Project, Private Collection of Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL.

While Farrell did not totally promote the experience-type curriculum, he did bridge the study-and-recitation type of program by insisting on excursions. A list of excursions was prepared which correlated with the curriculum for each grade level, and teachers were expected to take a minimum of four field-trips annually. Three of these trips were to be taken from the list of required tours and one could be selected from the optional tours list. One of the trips Farrell most promoted was to take students to an adjacent suburban school and have them spend the day working with suburban children. In this way, he hoped that they would widen their horizons and increase their motivation to continue their education.⁴¹ While some of Farrell's curriculum innovations were forward looking, his traditional fixed period school day schedule was not in keeping with the newest thinking in organization. Newer views were to provide flexible scheduling throughout the day to accommodate various subjects.

In terms of teacher supervision, the prevailing thought was that two techniques covered the field. The group technique revolved around staff meetings at which the principal provided the leadership and the staff determined the needs and/or concerns of the educational program. The group would then determine various solutions, try them out, come together to evaluate them, and then either return to step one if the evaluation was unfavorable or proceed to another problem if the evaluation was satisfactory. The other technique was to supervise the individual. This technique involved the principal visiting individual

⁴¹Elsbree and McNally, 135-37; Farrell's In-Service Bulletin, No. 40, Excursions: Organization Guide, Private Collection of Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL.

classrooms and conferencing with the teacher. Under the new curriculum, however, this technique was never imposed but came about either as an outgrowth of the group work or at the request of an individual teacher. The newer teachers were visited to assist them in adjusting to their new positions.⁴²

Farrell's supervisory techniques were far more formal and directive. Under his plan teachers were given advanced notice of the areas he would be observing when he came to visit their class. After the visitation, he would meet with the teacher to present to them a written report of their strengths and weaknesses and remediation measures for each weakness. The latter included references to various literary selections and also provisions for the teachers to observe another teacher present a similar lesson. After a reasonable length of time teachers were required to present, in writing, their own self-evaluation, stating those areas which they felt were improved and those in which they would like further assistance. If necessary, Farrell would also provide a teacher sponsor to assist the teacher for an entire year.⁴³

Self-evaluation was another aspect of the modern program for improvement of curriculum. For Farrell, this took the form of teacher self-evaluation of the areas taught. All new instruction was to be completed at least one month before the close of school. Then during the following week teachers were to administer teacher-made tests in all

⁴²Elsbree and McNally, 160-77.

⁴³Improvement of Instruction, In-Service Bulletin No. 12, Von Humboldt School, Private Collection, Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL.

major subject areas. These tests were to contain approximately twenty-five questions relating to the entire years' work in that given area. Tests were to be graded and evaluated to determine what areas needed reteaching and the remaining three weeks of the school year were to be devoted to reteaching areas which showed the least retention.⁴⁴

Administering Pupil Personnel Services

Elementary principals were also to determine how students would be grouped, how report cards would be marked, how school records would be kept, what the guidance program would include, which discipline measures would be provided, and how the library and audio-visual programs would be utilized in their schools. The current thought was that ability grouping of students on the basis of intelligence or achievement scores was the least effective way of student organization. Instead it was suggested that along with sociometric data and students' cumulative records, teachers, parents, and children should have a voice in pupil placement. Movement was away from strict ability grouping, Farrell, however, continued to organize his school into tracks based on a student's grade and academic performance. Students who had wide discrepancies between various subject matter achievements were organized to move to another ability group for that subject. In this way, he said, the span of achievement would be minimized in each classroom making instruction easier and increasing the amount of learning. He also removed the slowest learners from each grade level by instituting

⁴⁴Learning Survey Practices, In-Service Bulletin No. 47, Von Humboldt School, Private Collection, Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL.

"tutorial classes." In these classes he kept membership to eighteen students, thus enabling the teachers to individualize instruction. Since the board did not recognize these "tutorial classes," they provided no additional teachers for them. Farrell, therefore, had to organize so that his available teachers could accommodate this program. This was accomplished by simply requiring other teachers of the same grade level to carry more students than the board designated pupil-teacher ratio. Children would remain in these tutorial classes for a minimum of one year in which time they were expected to raise their achievements to the expected grade level.⁴⁵

For the recalcitrant student, Farrell instituted the work improvement agreement. Teachers were to identify students who were falling behind in their assignment and call for a parent conference. At this conference the teacher, parent, student, and an administrator would outline the students deficiencies and determine what was needed to remediate them. They would then outline a course of work and a completion date and all would sign the agreement. This formalized agreement was kept in the students folder until it was completed, then it was destroyed.⁴⁶

Over the years, the question of retention moved from acceptable to questionable, and finally to totally nonacceptable. In the early sixties, the question of retention was in the questionable stage. Farrell believed in retention, not as a punitive measure, but as a way

⁴⁵A Recommendation to the Chicago Board of Education, 3-4, Private Collection of Oriano Nomellini, La Grange, IL.

⁴⁶Work Improvement Programs, In-Service Bulletin No. 26, Von Humboldt, Private Collection of Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL.

to assist students who were still not able to achieve at expected levels despite all efforts to assist them. His program for retention took into consideration various factors including the student's attendance, transiency, health, physical stature, academic ability, and maturity. After all factors had been taken into consideration, Farrell then insisted that teachers inform students and their parents early in the year that the student was not keeping up with the class. Teachers were to enlist the cooperation of the parents and provide remediation measures before a student could be considered for retention. Teachers were cautioned that if their retention rate exceeded 15 percent, they needed to discuss this with the adjustment teacher or the principal.⁴⁷

Elsbree claimed that a school guidance program did not develop by itself but required the leadership of the principal to initiate it, organize it, and make sure it functioned appropriately. He claimed that a good guidance program contained four components: (1) obtaining and recording information on students, (2) developing a staff prepared to utilize this information, (3) using special resources to assist teachers, and (4) organizing the school to facilitate guidance. Farrell's guidance program not only included the four components which designated a good guidance program but went beyond those expectations. While the guidance teacher was to obtain and record pertinent information about students, Farrell required his adjustment teacher to also do some individual testing to determine appropriate placement of students. The guidance teacher was also to assist teachers in

⁴⁷Promotion Policy, In-Service Bulletin No. 14, Von Humboldt, Private Collection, Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL.

interpreting information to which Farrell added the responsibility of acting as liaison between other school specialists and the teachers. The guidance program was intended to assist teachers in establishing their function in the program, to which Farrell added the obtaining of individual work materials and techniques for teachers. For the final guidance factor, Farrell prepared an extensive bulletin listing the adjustment teacher's duties and how each teacher could avail themselves of these services. This bulletin was distributed to each teacher.⁴⁸

Farrell also had bulletins which described both library, and audio-visual policies and procedures and again exceeded those described by Elsbree. In one month, Von Humboldt's library had a circulation of 4,396 books and was also opened from 3:30 to 5:30 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Farrell was proud of showing visitors his empty library shelves. His point was that the books were in the hands of the students and not getting dusty on the shelves. Students were also required to read at least one book per week and to write a book report for every third book they read.⁴⁹

Administering School-Community Relations

The trend of the sixties was toward a closer association between the school and the community. This necessitated a redefinition of the

⁴⁸Adjustment Service, In-Service Bulletin No. 24, Von Humboldt, Private Collection, Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL.

⁴⁹Library Policies, In-Service Bulletin No. 10; Film Strip Organization, In-Service Bulletin No. 16; Visual Education Ordering Procedure, In-Service Bulletin No. 20; Phonograph Record Organization, In-Service Bulletin No. 23, Von Humboldt, Private Collection, Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL; Chicago Public Schools Report, 14 September 1964, Vol. 2, Citizens Schools Committee Collection, Box 32, Chicago Historical Society.

role of the administrator who took on the responsibility for improving this relationship. Some of the reasons given for the need to promote this cooperation were: the need for continued public money; the need to improve the quality of community living; and the need to improve the quality of the educational program. Farrell's interactions with the community had its ups and downs. One of the ways he attempted to bring community groups into his corner was well-remembered by Dave Moore. Moore recalled how fond Farrell was of inserting the following sentence into his opening remarks to any community group: "The board of education does not want you to have the phone number of the school; our phone number is Humboldt 6-0170." This remark engendered a conspiratorial atmosphere in which both he and the community were on the same side due to this very unpopular board policy.⁵⁰

Other aspects of Farrell's guidance program that were not previously discussed included his economic assistance program and his outreach program. These extended the duties of the guidance person and also acted to increase community cooperation. Part of the adjustment teacher's duties was to provide free clothing for needy students. This clothing was obtained through the School Children's Aid Society, and through contributions of used clothing from various suburban schools. Farrell not only approached these various institutions for clothing for his students but also suggested that teachers donate their children's outgrown clothing to the school.

Another aspect of Farrell's guidance program was his insistence that there be cooperation between the school and the myriad outside

⁵⁰Elsbree, 415-29.

agencies that worked with both adults and students. Farrell also expected his adjustment teacher to visit the homes of students who were frequently reported absent, or whose teachers suspected economic need. These visitations were to assist the parent in any way possible to get the child back in school. This could encompass working with the social security office, the city offices regulating rental conditions, or any of the many things a parent might need. Joe Rosen said, "Tom had a holistic approach to education." Farrell contended that the school's influence did not end at the schoolyard gate but extended into every corner of the school community.⁵¹

Again, in ringing the school and community together, Farrell expected that all students would be taught to be members of their society and to give back to that society what they could. Each year students were asked to contribute canned goods for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for the needy, and were asked for small monetary donations for the School Children's Aid. Students were also expected to contribute to their school in the form of volunteer organizations. The various volunteer organizations which Farrell instituted included patrol boys, hall guards, office pages, yard patrols, and ushers to name a few. Service points were given to students who volunteered for any of these jobs. At an annual assembly program, the students with the most service points were presented with awards on the auditorium stage in the

⁵¹Adjustment Service, In-Service Bulletin No. 24, Private Collection, Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL; Joseph Rosen, taped interview, former Subdistrict Superintendent, Chicago Public Schools.

presence of the entire school and their parents.⁵²

Administering Facilities

Elsbree discussed the administrator's role in overseeing the functioning of the school office, the purchase of textbooks, the distribution of supplies, and the maintenance of the school plant. Elsbree contended that the office in the elementary school was largely a feature of the twentieth century. Offices prior to 1900 were largely the size of a closet. In the sixties, the function and importance of the school office is a reflection of the school's philosophy and programs. Farrell's introductory bulletin delineated the organization of the school office and the duties of the school secretaries. He designated a second room adjacent to the regular office to accommodate the adjustment teacher, bilingual coordinator, and other personnel who worked closely with the principal, teachers, and students.⁵³

The administrator was expected to include among his duties the prudent consideration of public property and the human consideration of its occupants. This meant maintaining a building that was clean, tidy, safe, and attractive. Farrell made a systematic tour of the school semi-annually to determine what needed repair or replacement. In addition, he instructed teachers to report immediately, anything which did not function properly and instituted a form designed to make this reporting simple and expedient. He expected the teachers and students

⁵²Elsbree, 342-54; Introductory Bulletin, 7-8, 14-15; Adjustment Services, In-Service Bulletin No. 24, Private Collection of Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

⁵³Elsbree, 375; Introductory Bulletin, 2-8.

to treat the building as they would their home and try to keep it as nice.⁵⁴

Farrell's view of the administrator's role was in more ways than not in keeping with the latest in educational thought. He would always fall short of expectation in areas which required that policy be set by committee or where a program deviated dramatically from traditional practices. He was in the forefront in areas in which the school became an extension of the community or where the school would lead the way for community improvement. Len O'Connor said he made an impact on the Chicago Board of Education during an interesting time.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Elsbree, 461; Plant and Material Procedures, In-Service Bulletin No. 22, Private Collection of Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL.

⁵⁵Letter from Len O'Connor, 17 August 1989. O'Connor was a commentator on NBC radio for twenty-five years, Private Collection, Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL.

CHAPTER VI

THE FINAL YEARS

The first half of the 1960s was a time of worldwide unrest, and so too was the second half which had added to it the problems in Vietnam. While Lyndon B. Johnson was campaigning for reelection on a platform advocating moderation and restraint, members of his own cabinet discussed the probability that the United States would have to launch air attacks against North Vietnam. As voters went to the polls on election day 1964, government officials began to outline their detailed plans for the bombing campaign. Within one hundred days after his election, Johnson gave the order for the sustained bombing of North Vietnam, and the Americanization of the Indochina War began.¹

Domestically, American life became a series of demonstrations, sit-ins, marches, burnings, riots, shootings, and bombings. Women, young people, and minorities wanted to bring about changes in the political, social, economic and educational structures of the United States. Though women had the right to vote, they were still mired in social and economic inferiority. Their place was "in the home" and they were resisted in most professions. The only professions equally opened to them were elementary teaching, nursing, and librarians. Shirley

¹John Bartlow Martin, Adlai Stevenson and the World (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1972), 819-20.

Chisholm, the first African-American congresswoman, said she was subjected to more discrimination as a woman than as a African-American. Then in 1966 women formed the National Organization of Women (NOW) to work for equal job opportunities and equal pay for equal work.²

Young people dropped out, became "hippies," or joined a commune. The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) denounced the bureaucracy and asked for a more participatory democracy. In their view, American society was so corrupt that in 1967 they announced that they were building a guerrilla force, "The Weathermen," to destroy it. Frustrated minorities, also feeling the "system" was hopelessly rigged against them, turned to violence when they could see no other way to justice.³

The nonviolence of Martin Luther King, Jr. exemplified in the phrase, "We Shall Overcome," gave way to the militant, "Burn-Baby-Burn," and the most militant African-American power group, "The Black Panthers," was born in 1966. Rioting that had begun earlier in Watts, California (August 1965) and resulted in thirty-five deaths and property damage of thirty-five million dollar, intensified and continued. In July 1966 the streets of Chicago, New York, and Cleveland roared with social unrest as many were killed and injured in firebomb attacks, sniper gunfire and clashes between minority and white gangs and police. African-American and Puerto Rican gangs protested that they needed jobs. Unrest again swept out across the nation in 1967 when riots broke out in

²Blum, 886-87.

³Ibid., 836.

the African-American sections of Tampa, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Detroit, Newark, and New Brunswick, NJ.⁴

In Chicago, the neighborhood school policy, focused racial problems around the segregated schools. In the 1963-1964 school year only 79 percent of Chicago's 430 elementary schools were considered integrated schools. Segregated (those more than 90 percent of one race) African-American schools numbered 149 and white segregated schools numbered 202. These segregated schools continued despite the 1954 and 1955 Supreme Court decisions to end segregation with all deliberate speed. They continued after the Hauser Report of 1964 decreed that Chicago Schools move toward integration.⁵

School Segregation

The Hauser Report was a part of an out of court settlement in the case of Webb v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago. As a result of that action, the board of education agreed (in September 1961) to create a committee to conduct a study of segregation in the public schools. It was not until 1963 that they finally had their committee in place. This committee was composed of five educational experts led by Dr. Philip Hauser, head of the sociology department of the University of Chicago. Their eighty-five page report (The Hauser Report) was presented to the board of education on 31 March 1964. They described the impact of segregation on the quality of education in the Chicago schools and listed the following eleven recommendations: (1) to open

⁴Ibid., 832-33; Chronicle of the 20th Century, 951.

⁵Meyer Weinberg, ed., Integrated Education, Issue 18 (Chicago: Integrated Education Associates, 1966), 11-12.

enrollment policies in contiguous elementary schools and enlarge high school districts; (2) to provide free transportation to undercrowded schools and eliminate mobile units which perpetuate segregation; (3) to locate new schools in areas which foster integration; (4) to integrate faculties; (5) to assign teachers to provide equalization of experience and professional training; (6) to encourage teacher training institutions to develop a more effective program for inner city teachers; (7) to provide in-service education for teachers and administrators of students from different cultural heritages; (8) to increase money to inner city schools; (9) to increase programs in reading and math; (10) to increase services in guidance and counseling; (11) to initiate a saturation project in one or more pilot districts. So few of these recommendations were acted upon by the board that even one year later, April 1965, Hauser declared that only a change in the general superintendent would activate this report.⁶

In an effort to equalize educational opportunity, Willis had provided more money for inner city schools in his twelve years as superintendent. In a two and one-half square mile area (2600 West to 4400 West and 200 North to 2300 South), which had an African-American school population of more than 96 percent, he had not only increased the number of schools but had also provided additional programs. He added 23 school buildings, increased the number of social centers from 2 to 22 and increased the number of special education classes from 16 to 73. He further added 33 after-school libraries, 5 reading clinics, 6 special

⁶Proceedings of the Chicago Board of Education, 1 July 1964 to 31 December 1964, 217; Weinberg, 18; Herrick, 323-26.

summer schools and 20 headstart centers in this area. In the summer of 1965, he placed most of the summer schools in districts and communities which were the most congested and which had the highest concentration of African-American children. While this provided space and programs, it did little to desegregate.⁷

Farrell's response to the Hauser Report and Willis's programs was a thirteen page letter which he shared not only with the board of education but also with the city. This letter, dated November 1965, was sent to members of the board of education, Willis, the district superintendent, and the Sun-Times. The newspaper used it as the basis for an article entitled, "Principal Urges Busing, School Race Quotas." Farrell's plan to begin to desegregate was four-pronged and focused on open enrollment, the placement of special education classes, the transfer of academically able students, and the sites of new schools or classrooms.⁸

He maintained that an open enrollment policy should be established in all public schools of Chicago. This policy would be effected by first determining the capacity of every classroom in the elementary schools. Then, any classroom with an enrollment 10 percent below capacity would be available to receive children by transfer regardless of their residence, until it reached a maximum class size of thirty-one students. Lists detailing the grade and location of these classrooms were to be maintained in each school office and a duplicate

⁷Wnek, 210.

⁸"Principal Urges Busing, School Race Quotas," Chicago Sun-Times, 16 November 1965; A Recommendation to the Chicago Board of Education, Private Collection Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

list (updated monthly) kept at the central office. The conditions for transfer were: that a student had to have been regularly enrolled in a Chicago Public School the previous five months, that during that period regular attendance and good conduct had been maintained, and that no change in placement would be requested for the subsequent five months. Transportation to the new school would be the responsibility of the parent.⁹

A second part of Farrell's plan had to do with the placement of special education classes. He espoused the transfer of all possible special education divisions to outlying schools, and even suggested that these outlying schools be remodeled or enlarged with mobile units to accommodate these students. He further suggested that their membership be racially balanced in advance of the transfer. Farrell said that precedent for clustering special education classes in specific schools had been previously established and he cited Bell, Franklin, Otis, Falconer and Burbank as such schools. Transportation was to be provided to these students at board expense.¹⁰

A third prong to enhance integration was to bus minority students from the inner city to outlying schools if their achievement scores in reading and arithmetic were equal to or higher than the achievement medians of the classes into which they would be assigned. Such transfers were to be made upon the recommendation of the administration and with the approval of the parents. Parents were to be

⁹Recommendation, 1-2.

¹⁰Ibid., 2-3.

encouraged to allow their children to be transported to these outlying schools.¹¹

The fourth and final prong to the integration plan dealt with where new schools would be built. Farrell stated that when school boundaries were changed, the result was often dissatisfaction by the community and in some cases an accelerated resegregation. However, if new schools were built in white areas adjacent to minority areas, the drawing of the new school's attendance area, in keeping with the neighborhood school policy, would promote integration. Additionally, mobile classrooms would be placed on the school grounds of white schools adjacent to a minority overcrowded school. The overcrowded school would then send students to fill the school which had additional classroom space due to the mobiles.¹²

In a "something-for-everyone" stance, Farrell suggested that the transferred special education classes maintain a minority ratio of one to three. When he discussed new construction, he stated that a minority ratio of one to four should be the goal. Farrell thought that by setting these small minority encroachments into the white community the idea of integration would become slowly more palatable. He said that his plan would not satisfy extremists, but it would receive small opposition from reasonable people. In this way he thought the board could have a good start toward reducing tensions and "advancing the cause of social justice." When he was asked if this quota system was legal, he replied that he did not know but to prove that it was illegal

¹¹Ibid., 5-6.

¹²Ibid., 7-8; "Principal Urges Busing."

would require court action. Again, court action required time which would work in favor of integration. In discussing open enrollment, Farrell maintained that few parents would take advantage of this but it would eliminate the existing, rigid residence requirements.¹³

Farrell's ideas were not only designed to desegregate schools but also to provide more space in the overcrowded schools of the inner city--schools in which the students were not showing scholastic achievements at the national norm for a variety of reasons. With this added space, Farrell preached the creation of tutorial classes to assist the scholastically deficient. The label, "tutorial classes" was a designation he had chosen for a particular type of remedial class. He had established these classes at Von Humboldt and declared that they showed success. A tutorial class had a membership of approximately eighteen students of average intelligence, who were achieving more than two years below grade level as measured by standardized tests. Students selected for these classes were given intensive work geared to remediate their particular academic deficiencies. When, in the judgment of the teacher, and supported by test scores, the student had made sufficient progress, he/she was returned to a regular classroom and another student selected. Farrell was able to organize these classes at no additional cost to the board by simply increasing the membership in the regular classes. He maintained that he found no resistance among teachers in accepting the few extra students as they were glad to see the scholastically deficient students given additional help. Also, the

¹³Recommendation, 13; "Principal Urges Busing."

increased homogeneity of the slightly enlarged classes was appreciated by those teachers.¹⁴

These ideas promoted desegregation, but they left untouched the problems of another minority--the Hispanic. As the Hispanic population of the nation increased their distinctive interests were in the promotion of bilingual education, equality of job opportunity, and a voice at the ballot box. One of the by-products of their activism was the replacement of French by Spanish as the language most commonly taught in American high schools. Also, their promotion of bilingual education threatened to make the Hispanics the first among all immigrant groups in the United States to resist linguistic assimilation.¹⁵

Bilingual Education

Farrell's school was in a growing Hispanic area. Puerto Ricans who moved to the mainland found "Division-Street" a welcome haven. This created a major problem at Von Humboldt and neighboring schools as they grappled with how to educate a student who spoke no English and a teacher who spoke no Spanish. By 1966, 1,200 of Von Humboldt's 1,950 students were Puerto Rican and approximately 13 percent of them neither spoke nor understood English. The same was true at the neighboring Anderson School, where approximately 15 percent of their 660 Puerto Rican students were strictly monolingual in Spanish. One of Anderson's teachers said that their percentage represented only the ones who absolutely could not understand the language. Then, she said, there was

¹⁴Recommendation, 3-4.

¹⁵Blum, 891.

another 50 percent or so who had a lot of trouble with English. They spoke Spanish at home and on the playground, making the acquisition of an English vocabulary much more difficult.¹⁶

Teachers tried to pair these children up with other students who were bilingual in the hope that the translation would be of some assistance. In some schools these students were placed in lower grades in the hope that the easier work would enable them to learn English faster. The end result for these pupils, said Farrell, was to drop out of school. He stated that in District 6, where Von Humboldt was located, 60 percent of the students did not graduate from high school as compared with high schools on the fringe of the city with a dropout rate of from 10 to 15 percent.¹⁷

In March 1966 the Chicago schools received money from a new federal school aid program and began their first official programs of teaching English to Spanish-speaking children. They gave ten hours of training to 164 selected public school teachers for the 11,000 Spanish-speaking elementary students. Of the 164 teachers, 128 were English-speaking teachers, who were trained to give direct instruction to the students, and an addition 36 Spanish-speaking teachers, who were trained as resource persons. The teachers were to pull small groups of youngsters from regular classrooms for one-half hour each day and give them intensive instruction in English.¹⁸

¹⁶"The Puerto Rican Doodlers," Chicago Daily News, 18 June 1966, 1.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸"Puerto Rican-English--Teaching Lag Denied," Chicago Daily News, 23 June 1966, 7; "Crash Program in English Urged," *ibid.*

Mrs. Louise Malis, board member, commented that she had seen these children sitting in regular classes all day and becoming frustrated by their inability to understand a word that was being spoken. She called for a program of tutorial centers to teach English in a hurry. Mrs. Evelyn Carlson, associate superintendent in charge of curriculum, said that she preferred the current program of English classes for a half-hour per day, over programs such as the one which Mrs. Malis encouraged because the latter accentuated the differences and slowed down acculturation. Farrell commented that this was nonsense: if a child spoke only a foreign language, was not there an accentuation of differences while he/she sat in a classroom and could not understand a word? Mrs. Malis said that she would rather see children separated for six weeks while they learned English, than isolated for a whole year in a regular classroom where they were not able to communicate. Mrs. Carlson replied that her proposal would be studied.¹⁹

The teachers commented that these classes were too little, too late, but Malis said that board members had not been informed of the magnitude of the problem. However, in his recommendations dated November 1965, Farrell had encouraged the board to provide English language centers for these students. He had suggested that these centers be provided in outlying underutilized schools and that students be bussed to these locations. He had thought that these classes would be filled by clustering neighborhood schools which would provide enough foreign-speaking children to establish a minimum of three special classes: one for the primary children, one for intermediate students,

¹⁹"Puerto Rican English," and "Crash Program in English," 7.

and one for upper grade students. In these centers special programs would be designed to give foreign-speaking children a daily use vocabulary sufficient to engage in regular classroom activities in addition to providing a concentration of English, both oral and written.²⁰

One month after the board designated some Spanish-speaking teachers as resource specialists, Farrell prepared another administrative bulletin outlining this person's duties. Administratively, the Spanish resource specialist was to translate school forms into Spanish, and translate conversations for all school personnel with parents. Professionally, this specialist was to assist the newly appointed English language teachers in developing their program, provide technical assistance in the structure of the Spanish language, and work within the framework of the school's guidance committee to bring about changes and innovations that would benefit the Spanish-speaking child. This specialist was also expected to act as a liaison between Spanish-speaking parents and the school, providing information and counseling for them. Farrell also expected that this specialist would provide Spanish parents with help in dealing with any other agency.²¹ It was not until 1968 that the federal government got into the act by passing the Bilingual Education Act which provided federal funds to local school districts to meet the needs of students of limited English-speaking ability. Although the act encouraged bilingual

²⁰Recommendations, 8; "Puerto Rican English", 7.

²¹Duties of the Spanish Resource Specialist, In-Service Bulletin No. 43, Private Collection of Joan C. Boscia, Westmont, IL.

programs, it did not require districts to establish them.²² Problems of overcrowded schools, segregated schools and bilingual programs continued to plague Willis.

End of an Era

Organizations formed to support Willis as well as oppose him. Opponents of school integration, both African-American and white, spoke out in favor of retaining Willis. Organizations favoring integrated schools were vocal against retaining Willis for a fourth term. So vocal were Willis's detractors that in May 1965, the Chicago American reported that Benjamin C. Willis was on the way out. The only unsettled question was when. The major concern was the lack of implementation of any sort of integration plan. As early as February, Willis was to have a review of his partial and hastily put together open enrollment plan. The review was not made. Then in the spring, his associate Milton J. Cohler announced that the elementary transfer plan would be made public in a few weeks. However, the plan was not made public. In July, Willis testified before the House Education and Labor Committee in Washington and denied that Chicago's schools practiced discrimination. As proof he cited the permissive transfer plan which would not be operational until the fall. On 12 August, Willis named Mrs. Virginia Lewis as assistant superintendent in charge of integration. When asked what her duties would be, Willis replied that he would state her duties later. These

²²Gerald L. Gutek, Education and Schooling in America, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1988), 326.

were some of the issues that caused activist groups to demonstrate against rehiring Willis.²³

Willis made no comments while the board decided his fate, but staff members said it would be unlike him to accept any kind of interim appointment after his current four year contract expired on 31 August 1965. The board, however, was having difficulty deciding whether or not to retain their superintendent. In early May, at an hour-long closed meeting, they decided seven to four not to offer Superintendent Willis a new contract. Further discussion centered around procedures for seeking another man for the job. Some discussion with Willis followed and then at another board meeting on 28 May 1965 they voted to retain Willis for a fourth, four-year term with an oral agreement that he would retire when he became sixty-five. While the board had been advised by their attorney that such a contract would be void, the board nonetheless offered a four-year contract with that oral agreement. Willis's four-year contract was effective from August 1965 to August 1969, but he was only to serve until 23 December 1966, his sixty-fifth birthday.²⁴

The board then appointed a screening committee composed of seven college presidents who were to prepare a list of candidates for the superintendency. When the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) heard about the search committee, they sent a letter, dated 21 June 1965, to Mr. Frank M. Whiston, president of the board, expressing their concern. They wrote that they considered this action untimely,

²³"Overlooked Transfer Plan," Chicago Daily News, 3 September 1965, 6.

²⁴Hope Justus, "Willis on Way Out of Schools Post, But When?" Chicago American, 15 May 1965; Wnek, 206.

unfair to Dr. Willis, detrimental to the ongoing program of the Chicago schools, and a serious breach of ethical procedure. They suggested that the board reconsider their action and advise them immediately following the next board meeting. Failing this, AASA said they would feel compelled to inform all members of their association of these unethical procedures. Mr. Whiston responded to them by Western Union Telegram on 23 June 1965, stating that this committee was only part of a preliminary first step in seeking the person best qualified for the position. In closing, he reminded them that the board of education is, by statutory law, the only body which can ultimately make the appointment of General Superintendent.²⁵

Board members on Whiston's committee included: Warren Bacon, Bernard Friedman, Louise A. Malis, Edward S. Scheffler, and Mrs. W. Lydon Wild, with Frank M. Whiston as Chair. The committee met on 2 September and agreed that Willis's successor should not be older than the middle fifties, so he could serve at least two four-year terms. The committee had also not excluded the possibility of hiring Willis's successor in a post other than superintendent before Willis left. Again the AASA met with the board and informed them that they would object to this. By 17 September, the board had selected a panel of three experts whose job it was to submit from four to ten names to the board as candidates for the next superintendent. These panelists were: John J. Corson, Princeton University professor; Herold C. Hunt, Harvard

²⁵Proceedings of the Board of Education, 24 June 1965, 2789.

University professor; and Roald Campbell, University of Chicago professor.²⁶

Activists continued to make their wishes known through organized protest. About fifty members of The Woodlawn Organization protested outside while Whiston conducted the press conference which named his panel. Earlier they had marched into Whiston's real estate office to protest the building of another high school in Hyde Park. Their concern was that a second high school would drain virtually all the white enrollment from the current school and leave Hyde Park High with a segregated enrollment. They asked that the present high school simply be enlarged thereby keeping its integrated membership. On 31 August and 1 September 1965, Willis's home was picketed. The picketers wanted Willis removed from his post as General Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools. Fortunately, neither Willis nor Frank M. Whiston, board president and resident of the same apartment building, were at home.²⁷

Picking a Successor

The race was on to see who would replace Willis. Farrell was one of the contenders and Mike Royko, of the Chicago Daily News, devoted one of his columns to Farrell. While it was not an endorsement, he compared Farrell favorably to other principals. Royko said that if a newspaperman walked into a Chicago school and asked the principal what he or she thought about Ben Willis and the school system any of several

²⁶Ibid., 10 June 1965, 2669; "3 Selected to Hunt New School Chief," Chicago Daily News, 17 September 1965, 1.

²⁷"Help Sought in School Chief Hunt," Chicago Daily News, 3 September 1965, 26; ibid., 1 September 1965, 6.

things might happen: (1) the principal would turn pale and fall down; (2) the principal would dive under the desk; (3) the principal would hide in the closet; (4) the principal would call a cop; (5) the principal would get up, turn pale, and fall down again. He then went on to say that if you walked in on Farrell, you found a hulking, smiling, talkative Irishman from the South Side who would not hesitate to talk to you. After reiterating some of Farrell's criticisms of the school Royko closed his article with the statement: "On the chance that miracles do happen, one of Farrell's admirers had submitted his name to the group seeking a replacement for Willis."²⁸

On 20 December, the Sun-Times carried an editorial entitled, "Our Schools Are Sick-II." The editorial stated that both the superintendent and the board through neglect and ineptness had not effectively addressed themselves to either the problem of racially changing communities or the problem of population mobility. Further, they had not presented plans to solve the day-to-day problems of school maintenance, curriculum, books, staff, discipline and finances. While various groups and organizations were cited as critics of the board, Farrell was the only individual mentioned.²⁹

On 29 December 1965, the Daily Defender ran the front page headline, "Principal Raps Ben Willis." Their article began by stating that Farrell openly supported programs advocated by civil rights organizations. The article then went on to list Farrell's recommendations to the board in November 1965. Though there was no

²⁸"Mike Royko," *ibid.*, 16 December 1965, 12.

²⁹Editorial Page, Chicago Sun-Times, 12 December 1965.

endorsement for superintendent, they wrote a very favorable article about him.³⁰

Farrell's name again appeared in a letter from board member Bernard S. Friedman to Mrs. Andrew Mrva, President of the Chicago Region, Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers Association. Mrs. Mrva had written the board regarding her organization's opposition to the recent board action which approved the increase in class size. In his response, Friedman blamed the large increase in salaries demanded by the teachers union as a reason for increasing class size. He did, however, refer Mrs. Mrva to Farrell for a description of the use of tutorial classes. Friedman went on to write that if more of these type class arrangements were adopted better instruction would result for students of all levels of ability. He suggested that Mrs. Mrva investigate this matter and if her findings were favorable he suggested that she might want to let the board and the administrative staff know about this so that other schools might experiment with these tutorial classes.³¹

Also in February, the Daily Defender wrote that Chicago's public schools could wind up with a new superintendent, stronger for segregation than Benjamin C. Willis ever seemed to be. Although unofficial, the consensus was that six men were on the finalist list. Civil rights groups rated these six candidates and reported their findings as follows:

³⁰Chicago Daily Defender, 29 December 1965, 1.

³¹Letter, 18 February 1966, Private Collection, Mary Kay Farrell, Northbrook, IL.

James F. Redmond,	50,	Syosset, NY	a segregationist;
Sidney P. Marland,	51,	Pittsburgh, PA	charming, timid, and slow to integrate;
Thomas A. Shaheen,	47,	Rockford, IL	strong for civil rights and integration;
James A. Hazlett,	48,	Kansas City, MO	too timid;
Robert E. Jenkins,	54,	Pasadena, CA	a moderate;
Gregory C. Coffin,	40,	Darien, CT	most integration minded. ³²

On 31 March, the Chicago Sun-Times reported that three Chicagoans were invited to a secret interview with a search committee for the superintendency. The committee was composed of board president Frank M. Whiston and four other board members. However, none of the three would confirm the invitation. The three Chicago candidates were supposed to be: (1) Dr. George W. Connelly, superintendent, district 19; (2) Dr. Philip Lewis, 52, director of the Bureau of Research; and (3) Mr. Thomas J. Farrell, 59, principal.

Farrell, whose name had been submitted to the committee by board member Edward S. Scheffler, was the dark horse candidate. He was the only one over the maximum age limit which had been proposed earlier by Frank Whiston. He was also the only one without a doctorate and the only one who had not moved beyond the position of principal. It seemed Royko was on target when he suggested that it would take a miracle for Farrell to be named General Superintendent.³³

After much consideration, the board voted in May 1966, to offer the position to James F. Redmond. While Redmond was thought to be the candidate most racist by civil rights leaders, his friendliness and

³²Letter, 18 February 1966, Private Collection, Mary Kay Farrell, Northbrook, IL.

³³Chicago Sun-Times, 31 March 1966, 50; "2nd Interview for Pittsburgh School Chief," Chicago American, 4 April 1966, 1.

patience stood in marked contrast to the intransigence and authoritarianism of Willis. Willis announced that he would leave on 31 August 1966, before his sixty-fifth birthday. Since Redmond would not be able to come to Chicago until 3 October 1966, the board appointed associate superintendent, Thaddeus J. Lubera, as acting superintendent.³⁴

A New Regime

Thaddeus J. Lubera had been the associate superintendent in charge of instruction and had shared his responsibilities with Evelyn F. Carlson, associate superintendent in charge of curriculum, Edwin Lederer, associate superintendent in charge of operation services, and Eileen C. Stack, associate superintendent and assistant to the general superintendent. Lubera promised to make a contribution during his thirty-two days as acting superintendent by making some improvement in the teacher shortage and moving toward integration. Together with his helpmates, the other three associate superintendents, they represented 147 years of experience in the Chicago public schools.³⁵

Paramount among the problems confronting the new superintendent would be the problem of race relations. The Daily News quoted an influential leader in the city as saying that while Redmond could delegate all other duties he would have to devote virtually all his time to the integration problems which beset the city. Among the other problems which he would face were: revenue problems, classroom balance,

³⁴"Redmond's Top Challenge," Chicago Daily News, 3 September 1966, 3.

³⁵"Willis Aides," 3.

and principal rapport. Revenue problems would include policing the system to insure that schools were appropriately using the new federal monies, becoming acquainted with the city's power structure so that it could be enlisted in a crisis, and moving in on the 1967 school budget so that it could, to the extent possible, incorporate Redmond's thinking. Underutilized and overcrowded classrooms needed to be quickly assessed and a policy detailed to balance membership needed to be formulated. Also the problem of vacant classrooms needed to be addressed. Finally, all agreed that the five hundred school principals would be the all important key group to Redmond's record. Redmond needed to end the isolation of the superintendent and have district superintendents and principals talk frankly to him in order that he might be able to get a complete picture. Some felt that he needed to see these people personally, both downtown, and in the field.³⁶

Quick to make his opinions known, Farrell sent his first letter to Redmond on 9 November 1966. This two page letter, short by Farrell's standards, touched on two of the three issues declared major by the Daily News. The letter discussed: (1) methods for assessing classroom utilization, and (2) open communication between the superintendent and himself. Though Redmond's response was unavailable, it must have arrived quickly, because on the 23 November, Farrell again wrote that nothing but ill health would prevent him from meeting with Dr. Redmond in his office at 4:00 P.M. on 2 December 1966. Whether the meeting actually took place and what was said is not known. Farrell's letters continued; an additional twelve letters were written during that school

³⁶"Redmond's Top Challenge," 3.

year, some were addressed directly to Redmond and others were copied to him.³⁷

These letters comprised a laundry list of topics covering teacher's preparedness, provisional teachers, carpentry deficiencies at Von Humboldt, high school utilization, district superintendents, lunchroom costs, prejudice, student absenteeism, and communication between Redmond and his principals. A few of the letters hinted about saving money for the school board which was one of the priorities of the Redmond administration. Among the money suggestions were: providing wire guards with mesh no greater than 3/4 inch over ground floor windows to prevent recurring breakage; utilizing the benefits derived from the National School Lunch Act; providing a better accounting system for school lunchrooms along with cash registers; and saving money through prevention of unnecessary student absenteeism.³⁸

Two of Farrell's letters in this time period related directly to classroom balance. In one letter he devised a system for counting the number of available classrooms in the city, and in another he suggested that membership rather than enrollment figures be reported. Farrell suggested that the people used in counting actual classroom availability should have no connection with the schools or any other public or political organization. These people would then determine actual class size and room utilization. On this basis optimum and maximum capacity

³⁷Letters to Dr. James F. Redmond, 9 November 1966; 23 November 1966, Private Collection Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

³⁸Letters to Board of Education dated 9 March 1967, 17 May 1967, 20 June 1967, Private Collection Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

for each room and each school could be obtained.³⁹

In his final letter that school year, Farrell did not mention any system deficiencies; rather he pointed out that in Redmond's first year he had no official face-to-face meetings with the principals and reportedly had met only once with the district superintendents. How, asked Farrell, did Redmond propose to obtain a view of the Chicago schools and their many crucial problems? He cautioned that his predecessor had withdrawn into a shell, surrounded himself with sycophants, and thereby failed.⁴⁰ Then, on 28 June, the board unanimously approved the appointment of two special aides to Dr. Redmond: James G. Moffat, Jr., and Manford Byrd, Jr. These two were the first top staff positions filled by Redmond and were selected after a nine month search from a field of twenty-five candidates. They were to begin their new job on 1 July and would work directly under Redmond. Since principals worked only a ten-month school year, like the teachers, Farrell wrote no letters that summer.⁴¹

Final Days

In the next school year only five letters were sent to the board of education. In his first letter that year, Farrell commented on the similarities between the suggestions of the Booz, Allen, and Hamilton report and the schematic diagram which he had proposed to the board when

³⁹Letters to Dr. Redmond, 9 November 1966, 3 February 1967, Private Collection Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

⁴⁰Letter to Dr. Redmond, 8 June 1967, Private Collection, Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

⁴¹"Compromise Adopted on Austin Schools," Chicago Sun-Times, 29 June 1967, 5.

he was interviewed for the position of general superintendent on 22 April 1966. Both he and the Booz Report had proposed decentralization. Farrell had recommended four divisional offices whereas the Booz Report suggested three. Farrell had suggested a reduction of district superintendents from twenty-seven to twenty and the Booz Report had proposed a reduction to twenty-one. The schools were reorganized into three areas with a reduction of district superintendents which lasted a few years.⁴²

Another program which Farrell protested was the Special Summer Schools. This summer program was designed to promote a wider experience base for students and therefore included a great number of field trips. Farrell called these "Happy Schools," and decried the entire operation. He said, some of the classes in these summer programs had taken as many as ten excursions during the forty-day term. This he complained was taking excursions too lightly and ignoring needed basic instruction. Excursions taken without careful planning, integration with current instruction, and subsequent oral or written summation were a waste of time according to Farrell. Students enrolled in these summer programs at will and no criteria were maintained for their admission. This, said Farrell, results in an enrollment of students who generally like school. The program continued for a few years and then was abandoned for a more academic remedial summer program.⁴³

January, February, March and April found Thomas J. Farrell

⁴²Letter to Board of Education, 23 October 1967, Private Collection, Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

⁴³Letter to Dr. Redmond, 25 March 1968, Private Collection, Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

always a robust, dynamic, energetic individual moving more and more slowly. Continued abdominal pains and drowsiness kept him moving more slowly every day. The man who wrote letters, held conferences, instituted programs, and could be found in all corners of his school now spent more and more of his time alone at his desk. Finally, in May he went into the hospital for observation. The reason given was abdominal problems, suspected gall bladder. The Von Humboldt Chronicle, the school newspaper carried a front page picture of his empty desk with the caption, "We wish Mr. Farrell a speedy and safe return to school in September."⁴⁴

Thomas J. Farrell, principal of the Von Humboldt School, passed away on 30 July 1968 at Columbus Hospital, ending a forty-two year career with the Chicago Public Schools. Farrell died of pancreatic cancer. All major newspapers carried articles about Thomas J. Farrell, educator. Even a local tabloid published by the Latin American Defense Organization (LADO) ran a full-page commemorative to a man they called "Doctor." Then, on 2 August, this same organization gathered approximately two hundred mourners outside Von Humboldt School. They, "the little people," came with their black cotton banner of mourning for Tom Farrell--"the fighting principal." The Daily News described them as "poor and working class people, kids on bicycles, old ladies in shawls, and tough-looking young men in undershirts." They came to drape the "bandera" over the rotting front of the school at 2620 West Hirsch in respect to their principal. Acting principal, Edwin Tyska asked them to

⁴⁴Notice of Illness Leave of Absence Granted, 15 May to 21 June 1968; Von Humboldt Chronicle, June 1968, Private Collection, May Kay Farrell.

wait while he got permission from the central office to hang the cloth. They waited until permission was received and then LADO hung their "bandera." This was a rare tribute in a day when organizations of the poor like LADO were losing faith in the schools.⁴⁵

In Memoriam

On 29 May 1969 students, teachers, and administrators of Von Humboldt school held a memorial service for Thomas J. Farrell in the school auditorium. The program was scheduled the day before his sixty-third birthday and ten months after his death. Invitations were sent and fifty-seven names were listed as honored guests. Among them were some members of the board of education, educators, lawyers, judges, politicians, and members of the press. It included both men and women from all racial and ethnic groups who were his friends. The new principal, faculty, and staff had put together a program of narration and song which began with the posting of the flag and ended with the presentation of a memorial gift to his widow, Mary Kay. Included in the program was a recitation of "O Captain! My Captain!" by a class of sixth grade students, and two eulogies composed by the staff and read by two teachers. A faculty chorus sang the following four selections: "No Man Is an Island," "Let There Be Peace on Earth," "You'll Never Walk Alone," and "America," which they felt exemplified Farrell's character. The program cover, conceived and drawn by faculty members, pictured a school house with the logo VHS encircled at the top and pictures of

⁴⁵"Little People Mourn Ally," Chicago Daily News, 2 August 1968; "Thoughts on Mr. Farrell's Death," LADO 1, no. 5 (August 1968): 9.

children's faces at each window. Across the front of the building were the words which summed up his life work in education: "He Cared."⁴⁶



Fig. 9.--Memorial Service Program Cover

⁴⁶He Cared, Memorial Service Program, Private Collection, Oriano Nomellini, LaGrange, IL.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

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