

Liberation, Learning, and Love:
The Story of Harlem Preparatory School, 1967-1974

Barry M. Goldenberg

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
under the Executive Committee
of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2019

© 2019
Barry M. Goldenberg
All rights reserved

ABSTRACT

Liberation, Learning, and Love: The Story of Harlem Preparatory School, 1967-1974

Barry M. Goldenberg

“For we’ve done so much, with so little, for so long, that now we can do anything, with nothing at all.” This popular phrase at the independent tuition-free school called Harlem Prep in many ways reflected Central Harlem itself in the late-1960s. On one hand, decades of racial discrimination and unfulfilled promises had defined schooling in the neighborhood. There were no public high schools in the area, and talented youth were being pushed out of formal education. Conversely, there was a resilience and continued, centuries-long desire for educational equity. As a result—and buoyed by the dynamic political environment—a handful of leaders in Harlem decided to create a school, similar to other efforts in U.S. cities. However, unlike other emerging Black alternative schools, it would be different than its peers: it would be a *multicultural* school, and it would be for students who had been pushed out of education and onto the streets.

“Liberation, Learning, and Love” explores the unknown history of this school, Harlem Prep. Although firmly rooted in this era’s civil rights activism, Harlem Prep’s educational philosophy—its radical multiculturalism—was also distinct and innovative compared to other ideologies. The school’s leaders, teachers, and students were able to re-imagine education on a community-wide, institutional, and classroom level. Through its “unity in diversity” approach, Harlem Prep not only graduated and sent to college over 750 students, most of them previously out of school, but galvanized the notable Black community of Harlem. This project introduces multicultural education to the lexicon of Black alternative schools in the 1960s and 1970s, and reshapes how historians conceptualize equity, emancipatory education, and beyond.

Harlem Prep imagined a more loving, pluralistic world for its young people. Perhaps its story can inspire those of us who strive to create a similar future for our youth today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Photos	ii
Acknowledgments	iv
Preface	xix
Introduction: <i>Radical Multiculturalism and the Power of Student Potential</i>	1
PART I: The Origins of Harlem Prep, 1966-1968	
Chapter One <i>Callender, Carpenter, and the Founding of Harlem Prep</i>	53
Chapter Two <i>The Experiment Begins: The Inaugural Year, 1967-1968</i>	115
PART II: The Rise of Harlem Prep, 1968-1972	
Chapter Three <i>Laying the Groundwork: Administrators and the Supermarket Space</i>	162
Chapter Four <i>Harlem Prep in Context: Ed and Ann’s Carpenter’s Multicultural Vision</i>	202
Chapter Five <i>“As I Taught, I Learned”: Teachers, Pedagogy, and the Educational Program</i>	244
Chapter Six <i>“It Saved Me”: Students, Their Stories, and a Commencement to Remember</i>	295
Chapter Seven <i>Building a Community Coalition: Harlem Prep’s Supporters and Friends</i>	341
PART III: The Descent of Harlem Prep, 1972-1974	
Chapter Eight <i>Diverging Realities at Harlem Prep: Fiscal Uncertainty in a Changing Era</i>	406
Chapter Nine <i>The Final Year and Struggle with the New York City Board of Education</i>	454
Conclusion: <i>Harlem Prep’s Multiculturalism in Perspective</i>	516
Epilogue: <i>The Legacy of Harlem Prep</i>	536
Sources and Bibliography	545

LIST OF PHOTOS

Figure 1. NYUL Press Conference with Harlem Prep and Carnegie Corp., 1967	81
Figure 2. Profile of headmaster Edward F. Carpenter, ca. 1966	95
Figure 3. Students at Harlem Prep at the original Harlem Armory location, 1968	123
Figures 4 and 5. Classes at Harlem Prep at the original Harlem Armory location, 1968.	138
Figures 6 and 7. Inaugural Harlem Prep commencement ceremony, 1968.	156
Figure 8. Profile of administrator Ann Carpenter, 1971.	169
Figure 9. The Harlem Prep building on 136 th Street and 8 th Avenue, 1972.	189
Figure 10. Overhead view of the open-space classroom design, ca. 1971.	193
Figure 11. Harlem Prep students in class, 1971.	200
Figure 12. Group of Harlem Prep students in school's common area, ca. 1971.	209
Figure 13. Students and Ann Carpenter working under Moja Logo slogan, ca. 1970	222
Figure 14. Harlem Prep student reading under decorated wall, ca. 1971	235
Figure 15. African Studies teacher George Simmonds lecturing, ca. 1971	249
Figure 16. Teachers and students huddled together in class, ca. 1971	258
Figure 17. Harlem Prep teacher in front of class, with Pan African symbols, ca. 1971	264
Figure 18. Math teacher Erskine Keary working one-on-one with a student, ca. 1971	272
Figures 19 and 20. Harlem Prep students with child, and students conversing, ca. 1971	307
Figures 21 and 22. Profiles of two Harlem Prep students in class, ca. 1971	317
Figures 23 and 24. Profiles of two Harlem Prep students in class, ca. 1971	320
Figures 25 and 26. Profiles of two Harlem Prep students in class, ca. 1971	321
Figure 27. Harlem Prep students sitting at commencement, 1971	330
Figure 28. Harlem Prep students, staff, and guests on stage at commencement, 1971	331

Figure 29. Ann Carpenter speaking at commencement, in front of guests, 1971	339
Figure 30. Harlem Prep Board of Trustee Chairman and supporters, ca. 1971	355
Figure 31. Exxon Board of Trustee Chairman with students and staff, ca. 1972	368
Figure 32. Ed Carpenter with Harlem Prep supporters at commencement, 1971	383
Figure 33. Ed Carpenter and students receiving a check from a Harlem athlete, 1972	389
Figure 34. Harlem Prep teacher counsels incoming students on registration day, 1972	436
Figure 35. Teacher John Czerniejewski leading a class, ca. 1972	438
Figure 36. Pamphlet for a Harlem Prep fundraiser, 1973	456
Figure 37. Student Penny Grinage at final Harlem Prep commencement, 1974	480

Acknowledgments

“But may great kindness come of it in the end.” This is the last line of one of my favorite poems, shared with me by my English teacher more than a decade ago. As I think about my endless gratitude for so many special people who have made this dissertation possible, I also think of this phrase from this poem because, through all the trials and tribulations on this long journey, so many beautiful people have shown me kindness along the way. And, it is this uncommon kindness that has made this dream of a Ph.D. a reality when there were many moments where I thought this dream might fade away. It is truly impossible to give thanks fully to all the people who have contributed to my intellectual and personal development, but in these few pages to follow, I will attempt this colossal task.

To my committee:

First, and foremost, I want to thank my advisor and dissertation sponsor, Professor Ansley Erickson. I first entered Teachers College as a master’s student, and Professor Erickson—also new to Teachers College—kindly became my advisor, and immediately I experienced her brilliance and tried to absorb all that I could. Her classes were both inspiring and engaging, our one-on-one meetings were always insightful, and I had the great fortune of seeing an extraordinary historian and scholar meticulously refining her craft. To say that I have learned so much from her, particularly considering both us were growing in different roles—her as a professor, me as a student seeking to be *like* her as much as I could—would be an understatement. When I decided to stay at Teachers College and become her first doctoral advisee, I was honored—and still feel that way many years later. Over these years, Professor

Erickson has truly taught me how to be a historian and the great responsibilities we historians have, molding me into the scholar that I am today. The ways in which I think about urban policy, create historical arguments, and understand the world around me is because of her brilliance and her sharing that brilliance with me time and time again. She has pushed me intellectually far more than I ever thought was possible, and this dissertation work on Harlem Prep, quite simply, is because of the countless conversations and hundreds of hours that *she* has spent over the last eight years dedicated to making this work the best it could be. Her commitment to my scholarly development—to my writing, to my work with youth, to my intellectual growth, to my logistical concerns about being a doctoral student, and beyond—and to this dissertation specifically has been unwavering, even in times of tension and struggle, and I will forever be grateful for all that she has done to help me craft this Harlem Prep story into one that I can now proudly share with the world. Since the first day I met her and throughout this journey together, for all that she has given me, I have always wanted to make her proud just as *I* was so proud to say that she was my advisor. I hope that this dissertation achieves that goal. Moreover, I know that it is the first of a long, fruitful career of dissertations she will usher and many student dreams she will help fulfill.

Next, I want to thank Professor Ernest Morrell, who forever changed my life trajectory. I remember when I was an unsure and insecure freshman at UCLA, from the Midwest, trying to find my way, when I stumbled into his education class more than a decade ago. In that class, I learned about critical pedagogy, educational inequities, and above all, about myself—and it put me on the path that I continue on to this day. For the next three years at UCLA, Professor Morrell became a mentor—he inspired me, shared his wisdom, and supported me in all my personal and professional endeavors. As I decided to go to Teachers College for graduate school, he also had moved there to become director of the Institute for Urban and Minority Education

(IUME), and my involvement at IUME defined my existence in graduate school. I cannot express enough how grateful I am that he invited me to work in the Institute as I made the nerve-racking move across the country. Although he had his other students to now advise in New York City, he continued to generously guide me and believe in me during the high and lows of graduate school. While his feedback and our discussions about Harlem Prep were of course insightful, above all, it was his support and belief in my abilities that proved invaluable. Over the years, I have witnessed his capacity to inspire, and his beautiful warmth that he shares with the world. Professor Morrell's contagious love has molded my conscience, and his worldview—of optimism, of critical hope, and of love—has guided me throughout my writing of Harlem Prep. This work would not be what it is without his example: of how to produce scholarship steeped in love and justice. And, above all, without him, I would not be the person I am now today.

I also am grateful to my other committee members who have similarly inspired me in countless ways and have made this work possible. First, Professor Sonya Douglass Horsford generously agreed to serve on my dissertation proposal committee and on my defense committee. Although she was new to Teachers College with her own students, responsibilities, and many personal and professional engagements, she was happy to serve and shared key insights at my proposal hearing that helped shaped my dissertation in important, meaningful ways. While I regret that I did not seek her wise counsel more throughout the process, still, I witnessed and absorbed (both in person through her many talks and by reading her work) her scholarship on race, education leadership, and civil rights in ways that deeply influenced my work and writing on Harlem Prep. And, her comments and notes at my defense will be the foundation for future scholarship as I revise my dissertation in the years to come. I am thankful for her help, guidance, and astute feedback, and for her supreme kindness she has always shown to me over the years.

Next, I want to thank Professor Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz. Although she is new to my work on Harlem Prep, she is certainly not new to me. I cannot express enough how much her aura of love and kindness has provided inspiration to me during some of my darkest days of this journey. In my many moments of self-doubt, I would see Professor Sealey-Ruiz on campus—giving one of her uplifting talks or just in the hallway—and then I would immediately feel a rejuvenation to keep on going. Her warmth, love, and affirmation that she has shared with me since my first days at Teachers College to my last are hard to fully describe. Moreover, I learned so much from her scholarship, too. The way in which she articulates love into her acclaimed research on literacy has provided me a blueprint to do the same, and I only hope that my work on Harlem Prep can provide a fraction of the impact that her work—and her as a person—generates each day. Her beautiful spirit, kind words, and insightful comments at the dissertation defense will also guide me in my future research on Harlem Prep for many years to come.

Last, but certainly not least, is Professor Tyrone Howard, who has also influenced my life and growth as a scholar in profound, uncharted ways. I first met Professor Howard as a second-year student at UCLA, and his race and education class—and later his graduate class, which he kindly let me take as an undergraduate—remains the foundation in which my scholarship rests. My bookshelf, which I have curated and slimmed over the years, is still prominently lined with books from those courses many years ago, and the way in which I understand myself as a racial being and my role as a scholar is because of him. Above all, however, over the last decade, Professor Howard has been my steadfast champion, believing in me and building me up in times when I did not always believe in myself. He is the essence of everything I admire in a scholar: brilliant, yes, but generous, affirmative, hopeful, and exceedingly dedicated to student success. As I crafted this Harlem Prep story, everything I learned from his classes, his scholarship, and,

mostly, from his existence is deeply embedded in this story—and me getting to this point would not have happened without him and the support he has offered throughout the past decade. I am overwhelmed with gratitude that I had the great fortune of learning from him at UCLA and to now be able to conclude this Ph.D. journey once again with him by my side.

I also want to thank and acknowledge Professor Samuel Roberts, who kindly served on my dissertation proposal committee. His insightful feedback at my proposal hearing, based on his own historical work on Harlem, was crucial to how I understood the era and to the development of the project more broadly. I am grateful for our correspondences and his role in also shaping this work.

To my colleagues at IUME and other beloved friends:

Beyond my extraordinary committee, this dissertation—and my completing this journey—would not have happened without the Institute for Urban and Minority Education, or IUME, as we call it. First, I am enormously grateful to Professor Morrell and Professor Erica Walker for their generous financial support throughout the years as a Graduate Research Fellow. I want to especially thank Professor Walker, who, as the new IUME Director, continued to provide financial support even though I was no longer living in Los Angeles as she had her own amazing students to support and include at IUME. It is a fact that I would not have completed this dissertation without this support the last two years. I do not take it lightly and it has been humbling to receive these funds in this capacity, and to continue being part of such an inspiring group of scholars. Still, beyond the generous funding support, it hard to put in words what the Institute has meant to me more broadly: my sanctuary and oasis of affirmation and love throughout my graduate experience. The space itself was a place of empowerment—it was a

place of refuge for me and others. I am thankful for it and the role it has played. But, like any space, it is the people that make a space special—and so it is the beautiful people of IUME that I am truly indebted to and have made fulfilling this dream possible.

Thus, I first want to thank and acknowledge IUME Assistant Director Veronica Holly: my teacher, my mentor, my colleague, and my beloved friend. As a young graduate student, moving to New York City (never having traveled to the East Coast) and knowing nobody, Veronica became both a mother-like figure personally, and a scholar and educator for me to learn from professionally. It was a privilege to have the great fortune of learning from her example. In my darkest moments—and in my highest joys—she was there with me every step of the way. She has been my sage and my saving grace, showing me through her actions and through her advice, how to function in academia and how to “be” as a young man and scholar. Our shared journeys together and meaningful conversations, hours at a time, are some of my most cherished memories of my life in NYC. She has helped me navigate my personal and professional identity, and it is her inspiration that has helped me write the Harlem Prep story—it would not exist without her. Teachers College—and the world—is a better place because she is in it, and I am personally a better person and a better scholar because of her. I will forever be grateful for her love, support, and friendship and all that I have learned from her in many facets of life.

I could not have completed this journey without Sandra Overo, either—another colleague and friend who has been a bedrock of support, help, and friendship over these years. Her selflessness, kindness, and generosity that she has shown towards me—and her logistical magic (and patience) in helping me in so many ways—is impossible to recount. She has been there in moments of doubt too, and truly every step of the way from the very beginning to the very end, orchestrating, time and time again, surprises, reservations, advice, and help as I navigated

Teachers College and graduate school more broadly.

I also want to thank my friends and former colleagues at IUME in this journey that always believed in me and I learned from on a daily basis inside and outside the office. First and foremost, there is Phillip Smith, one of the most brilliant and beautiful people on this Earth—and it was (and still is) a privilege to learn from him and to call him a friend. Despite our many surface differences—racially, culturally, career-wise, and geographically—there are few people who have understood me like he has and who has supported me in my pursuit of a doctorate with such sincerity. His generosity and selflessness is unmatched, and I am grateful for all that he has given to me throughout this process. Our conversations about graduate school and about research have been a guide in many of these trying times, and advice on how to “keep being me,” and to believe in myself and my work on Harlem Prep has been vital to completing this dissertation.

Thank you to all of my IUME colleagues over the years, all of whom are doing incredible things inside and outside the academia as professors and educators: Cati de los Ríos, Crystal Belle, Jamila Lyiscott, Limarys Caraballo, Moira Pirsch, Edmund Adjapong, Christina “V” Villarreal, Christina Chaise, Cynthia Carvajal, and Rhonesha Blaché. It is an honor to call all of these amazing people my friends and colleagues, and I have learned from each of them. Our discussions about Harlem Prep, about academia, and about life have deeply influenced my journey and my work in the pages that follow.

There are a few other people who have influenced my work and doctoral journey. One of those important people is my friend and amazing scholar—and also now a professor—Nick Juravich. Nick, then a doctoral student in Columbia University’s history program, has been an extraordinary friend and someone who I have learned so much from. Our work has many similarities, focusing on marginalized peoples, in Harlem, around education; and our intellectual

circles often crossed at conferences, lectures, and through a shared affiliation with the Harlem History Education Project co-directed by Professor Erickson. When I needed an example of what a doctoral student should be doing, I looked to Nick; and when I needed an example of what in-depth, historical research and analysis looked like, I looked to Nick, too. I am grateful for our many, many conversations about Harlem Prep and all the feedback, advice, and insights he has provided to me on this work over the many years.

Another person I want to thank is Bill Rueckert at the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation (and Chairman of the Teachers College Board of Trustees). A few years ago, Bill offered me the incredible opportunity to write the history of his family and their century-old philanthropic organization. I was humbled by the offer, but admittedly nervous if I could undertake this large responsibility. After much thought, I wisely accepted, and the subsequent journey over more than two years of intense work—and guidance from Bill and former executive director Phyllis Criscuoli—was one of the most wonderful, humbling experiences of my life. I learned much from the entire experience of researching, planning, and then writing a book (eventually published by Teachers College Press) that later helped me undertake the dissertation process in much the same fashion. Moreover, Bill was kind, generous, and helpful at all times, and his support and belief in me in my final stages of my Teachers College journey was a further motivator to complete this journey.

Speaking of learning, thank you to Mr. Jobst, my high school English teacher, who I had the great fortune of learning from for two years. It is he who first put me on this path, perhaps even unconsciously, as it is through him that I found my love for education and made me initially realize my love of writing. The way I write and the way I teach is very much of reflection of all that I learned in those formative adolescent years. I will always be grateful.

The wonderful people at El Camino College (where I currently teach), particularly Dr. Cynthia Mosqueda, also deserve thanks. Getting to know Cynthia (who directs the First Year Experience program) and the entire First Year Experience team has been a true joy—and Cynthia has been so supportive in my pursuit of the Ph.D. Considering that I wrote the dissertation in Los Angeles, Cynthia has kindly encouraged me and been a pillar of support on the West Coast. Moreover, working in the First Year Experience program as a tutor—and now being a U.S. history professor at the college—has brought meaning and purpose that has greatly influenced my writing. At the same time that I was writing about the past dreams of Harlem Prep students and the powerful pedagogy by the school’s teachers, I was also teaching young students and humbly trying to help their dreams come true in the present. This juxtaposition brought a beautiful perspective to my dissertation work. Thank you to all my FYE colleagues, my wonderful students at El Camino College, and Dr. Mosqueda for making all of this possible.

All doctoral students know that their research is aided by archivists and those who make this work possible. I am very thankful for the many archivists who have helped me along the way, particularly those at the Rockefeller Archive Center, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas, the Rare Books and Manuscripts Archive at Columbia University, and the New York City Municipal Archives. Each of these institutions and the kind people who run them were vital to this work.

To the Harlem Prep community:

Above all, this dissertation is owed to the Harlem Prep community: teachers, students, and former administrators who have so kindly contributed to my research and to my learning of Harlem Prep. This project is dedicated to each to them, but it is also *because* of them. The years

spent speaking with alumni, hearing their stories, and traveling all throughout the city (and sometimes beyond) was both thrilling and extremely humbling. The Harlem Prep community opened up their homes and workplaces to me, sharing their stories, memories, and cherished recollections—and entrusting me to handle them with care. As I spoke with one alumnus, I was then referred to another; as I received pictures, documents and more from one person, I would receive helpful tips about research threads from another. This project would, frankly, not exist without the generous stories and materials that dozens of alumni have shared with me, both formally and informally. More than anything, however, the Harlem Prep community opened up their hearts to me, and so generously welcomed me into their sacred Harlem Prep family, inviting me to social gatherings and online groups, as if I was one of them. I will never be able to express how humbled and grateful I am for the kindness and love shown to me over the years. This wonderful group of people includes: Hussein Ahdieh, Josie Alvarez, Keywanda Battle, Frank Berger, Aissatou Bey-Grecia, Stephanie Butler, Sandy Campbell, Alberto Cappas, Casey Carpenter, Beverly Grayman-Rich, Penny Grinage, Ajuba Bartley-Grinage, Mwanajua Kahamu, Bari Haskins-Jackson, Peter Hopson, Clifford Jacobs, Sherry Kilgore, Sterling Nile, Martin Nur, Henry Pruitt, Ed Randolph, Francisco Rivera, Jr., Craig Rothman, Harry Smith, Joshua Smith, Kadajah Wilson, and many others that I have spoken with on the phone, via e-mail, or in-person at one point or another. I only hope that I can repay the love that each of these kind people have shared with me through my own sharing of their Harlem Prep story. This work is for them.

Within this group, however, there are a few special people that I want to specifically thank. Cliff Jacobs was the catalyst in this journey. Back in 2013, as I learned about Harlem Prep and was searching to find some way to learn more, he kindly answered an unsolicited e-mail from a graduate student and agreed to speak about his experience at his office. After a wonderful

interview in which he took time out of his busy work schedule, Cliff then gave me a list of names and contact information of others who might be willing to speak with me, and from there, the project bloomed. I am indebted to his graciousness in setting me on this path.

Next, thank you to Aissatou Bey-Grecia, Peter Hopson, Hussein Ahdieh, and Casey Carpenter. Each of these beautiful individuals have welcomed me into their lives and taught me the Harlem Prep way. I am grateful to Aissatou, a lifelong Harlemit, for not only kindly allowing for an interview, but offering key insight about Harlem Prep and the Harlem community more broadly, helping me understand the school and all the racial dynamics of the era. As a racial, cultural, and geographic outsider to Harlem, Aissatou's friendship and help has been invaluable to this project and I will always be grateful. Her example has inspired me to share this story the best that I can. Peter Hopson, too, has become a cherished friend. Peter has answered my e-mails and phone calls on countless occasions. If I had a question about Harlem Prep, Peter would be the first person to answer! He has welcomed me to his home multiple times, helped facilitate oral history interviews (in addition to his own), and has responded time and time again to my inquiries on different aspects of the school. This project and my understanding of Harlem Prep are profoundly better because of the myriad of ways Peter has contributed to this project. Dr. Hussein Ahdieh, a former Harlem Prep administrator, has also been invaluable to this dissertation. His photographs that he has kindly shared, his unique perspective, and his writings (including his book) have enhanced this project in many ways. He has been generous with sharing his research and time, and has been my biggest fan, kindly sharing and promoting my work. I am so thankful! The ways in which he has mapped out the Harlem Prep story has been a blueprint for me, and I stand on his shoulders due to all the work that he has already done is helping share the story of this school. Next is Casey Carpenter, the daughter of Ed and Ann

Carpenter. She is, truly, a testament to their wonderful legacies and is a beautiful soul that I am privileged to know. It has been a pleasure spending time with Casey over the years, and she, too, has been selfless in her help of this project. We have organized talks together, she has welcomed my wife and I into her home in New Jersey on multiple occasions, we have rummaged her attic for documents, and she has also provided insight time and time again on the work of her parents in ways that are essential to this story. My portraits of Ed and Ann would not be what they are if it was not for her generous help and friendship. She is their living legacy.

Finally, there is Sandy Campbell, a former Harlem Prep teacher. How do I thank someone whose contributions to this project—and to my life in New York City—are so consequential and go beyond mere words? The love that he has given to me is unmatched and embedded into my heart. I first met and interviewed Sandy with a group of young people at Teachers College. After that, Sandy generously helped connect me with his former students, facilitating interviews and correspondences, and eventually driving me to and from interviews and gatherings all throughout the city. The list of questions I have asked him and favors I have asked *of* him over the last six years are too plentiful to count; so, too, are his thoughtful and honest answers, comments, and feedback about my in-progress work. Over the years, we shared dinners together, museum visits, and many, many, many laughs—and some tears, too. His generosity to help me on this Harlem Prep journey turned into a friendship, and our friendship then grew into a deep bond that can only be explained through mutual love and admiration. Together, through his many years of selflessness and work in helping me research the Harlem Prep story, Sandy became my closest confidant, and this project would not exist without his contributions, energy, spirit, and love. At the same time, despite his proximity to the story, Sandy also—humbly—gave me the intellectual space to write it as I saw fit. His trust and belief in me

means more to me than I will ever be able to express. There are many people who made this dissertation and the telling of this story possible in these pages, but none are as significant or as meaningful or as special as he is. Thank you, dear friend, for everything and more.

To my family and loved ones:

As a first-generation student, the meaning of this Ph.D. is monumental, and it is my family and loved ones who I wish to share this accomplishment with. This is their degree as much as it is mine, and it is them who have opened the doors to make this opportunity possible. To my beloved grandparents, those living and those passed on, I owe this Ph.D. to them. The sacrifices they have made, the love they have given, and the wisdom they have imparted, have shaped my path in life. I love you all, for always. To my aunt, uncles, and cousins, thank you for always being in my corner. Growing up together in St. Louis has made me who I am today, and I will never forget that. To my brother, sister-in-law, and nephews, thank you for everything and supporting me in this long journey. I look forward to our many great times together now that this dissertation is completed! And, to my parents, and mom especially, there are no words to express all that you have done for me. Mom, everything I am is because of you—your sacrifices, your dedication, and your love. To be your son is perhaps the greatest honor I could ever have.

Last of all, thank you to my wife and partner of over 10 years: to my love, Ashley. There is no one who has understood this struggle and the work I have put in more than you. You have supported me, consoled me, lifted me up, and loved me unconditionally, through the late nights and early mornings, through the thousands of hours you sacrificed as I pursued this degree. You are my light and you are my purpose. I love you—today, tomorrow, and forever. Thank you for loving me in return.

As I reflect on all of these people who have allowed this work to come to fruition, I return to one more line from my favorite poem. “*I know hope, but I do not know its form.*” Such a phrase always seemed fitting to me. I have always known hope, too, but had never been able to truly understand how it manifested—until these years. Thus, it is through this journey that I have found hope’s form: through people, and the stories that they tell. All of these friends, mentors, colleagues, and loved ones have been my form of hope over the years. And, as I share this dissertation with the world, it is my wish that this beautiful story of people at Harlem Prep is the form that can give others hope, too.

With gratitude and love,

Barry M. Goldenberg

April 24, 2019

For the students and staff at Harlem Prep:
may your story of love, hope, and dreams inspire others,
just as it has inspired me.

And, to my students, past, present, and future:
may we strive for a better, more equitable, and kinder world,
together.

Preface

*Days of yesterday
Today tempers the armor
For the strong
We part now
You and I
To sow upon the
Sparrow of time
The harvest reaped
From work
And dreams
And sacrifices
To strengthen the
Spirit of life
To the will we bring*

*We go now
Our hands
Firm upon the mold
Molding in the vacuum
Of tomorrow to shape
The thing we build.*

*We go now
You and He
The Class of '69
Young leaves upon
The forest trees
Moving as undercurrent
Where tide sweeps
The ocean's flow*

*Yes we go now
He to there
And she to here
Parting as raindrops
Part of earth
And rivers to the mouth
Of Hills*

*But shared moments
Live again when
Reminiscing is cherished
And life becomes real
To smile the laughter
Of pain and joy
We shared at
Harlem Prep*

*We part now
You and I
But again
Together, Let us sing
And let our voices
Ring souls
And let our souls
Sing the melody of a
Brook running free*

*Free to the embrace
The soul of the other souls
And I am not ashamed
To feel in the voice
You bring
The tear of Joy
I weep
For we part now
You and I
We leave Harlem Prep
But in my veins
Where I carry
The stuff of life
And
In the chambers of
Forgotten memories too.*

*I shall always
Face the rising
Sun and sing
The songs
That brought us here
And sent us on.*

*-Clemson Brown
Harlem Prep Graduate, 1969*

Introduction:

Radical Multiculturalism and the Power of Student Potential

“I am bringing myself out of the strain of the doing, into the peace of the done, for I have done so much with so little for so long that now I can do anything with nothing at all.”

–John Bell, Harlem Prep student, 1968¹

“[Harlem] is what I love and what I want to change...I think the people inside those buildings are the most beautiful people in the world. I just want to change the buildings, that’s all.”

–Harlem Prep student, ca. 1972²

It was a beautiful sunny, summer day outside in the heart of Harlem. Wayne Powell, dressed in a dark purple tie-dyed dashiki with large West African wooden beads hanging around his neck, proudly rose from his seat and walked toward the microphone in the middle of the stage. Behind him sat hundreds of his classmates, beaming with elation, in front of the historic Hotel Theresa, the magnificent ornamented white building—“the queen of Harlem”—that symbolized

¹ “27 Dropouts Get Diplomas and Will Enter College,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1968.

² “*Step by Step*”: *The Story of Harlem Prep*, dir. Kurt Lassen (1971: Zebra Associates/Standard Oil of New Jersey), DVD. This DVD was given to author by a Harlem Prep alumnus. This documentary, while funded by Standard Oil of New Jersey, was produced and directed by Zebra Associates, the largest Black-owned (and principally-operated) advertising agency in the country, founded by Black entrepreneurs Caroline Jones and Raymond League. See “Step by Step, a Documentary Film,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 21, 1970; “Harlem Prep Story on TV,” *New York Amsterdam News*, August 31, 1974; “Harlem Prep On TV,” *New York Amsterdam News*, April 3, 1971; and “Harlem Prep Film Wins-Award,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, November 18, 1971. For Standard Oil’s comments about providing funding for a film by Black filmmakers, see Standard Oil of New Jersey, “1970 Public Relations Activities,” 1970, p. 15, History of Standard Oil (New Jersey) Research Files 1940s-1980s, Volume IV Research Materials Box 2.207/K99A, Public Affairs General 1946-1980, ExxonMobil Historical Collection, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter referred as ExxonMobil Records).

decades of Black struggle and triumph.³ To his left hung a giant, blue sign attached to the adjacent storefront, promoting a neighborhood council that sought increased community input in local politics. “We are the young, future, and with our struggle, we are blessed to say: [we] continue education as our main idea, as our main source, for constantly building in the society like this today. We the young Black people here are on our way to move on, successfully, everywhere we go.” Powell’s voice reverberated loudly amongst the sea of Black faces that lined the streets and covered the entire block between 124th and 125th Street on 7th Avenue in June of 1972. There was hardly an empty spot in sight. Many hundreds of people—men and women, both young and old, most wearing suits and dresses—sat shoulder to shoulder, applauding Powell’s orations about Black excellence. Numerous young toddlers, dressed in their finest attire, sat on the laps of their loved ones or in strollers, ready to soak in the occasion. In the back stood more rows of community members, gently jostling for a standing-room-only view of the stage. “Out of the students here, out of all of us, some of us will be traveling to new roads, going to new universities, expressing new ideas of the young Harlem ‘Prep’ite’, and then we will be also be re-uniting with ourselves at other universities just to show that the ‘Black Man’ can go anywhere and show his intelligence—just to show that we are the unifying force of the ghetto...” Powell’s booming declaration also echoed loudly not just to the largely Black audience sitting and standing on the streets—and those peering out their apartment windows—but to many of his fellow students who, only a year before, were wandering these same streets, out of school and without the prospect of an education. Now, instead, they jubilantly walked across the makeshift

³ Sandra Kathryn Wilson, *Meet Me at the Theresa: The Story of Harlem’s Most Famous Hotel* (New York: Atria Books, 2004), 2. At first, the Hotel Theresa only allowed white guests and was a symbol of segregation, until it was later bought by a Black businessman in 1940. Thereafter, it became “a center for African-American celebrities during the 1940s and 1950s, hosting many of the most prominent black social, political, entertainment, and sports figures” as well as the home of the offices for the March on Washington and Malcolm X’s Organization of Afro-American Unity in the early 1960s. See Andrew S. Dolkart [preparer], New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, “Hotel Theresa (now Theresa Towers),” LP-1843, July 13, 1993, p. 11.

outdoor stage, shaking the hand of the headmaster of Harlem Preparatory School and pocketing a freshly minted New York State-approved diploma in front of a cheering community. This public, outside commencement was more than a ceremony—it was a symbol of a new day in Harlem and a new beginning for its youth. As students took turns reading poems, performing West African dances, singing and clapping to soul-inspired tunes of the era, and listening to distinguished Black activists and celebrities, waves of contagious optimism flowed throughout the Harlem block. They had conquered these streets that, a short time ago, had been conquering them. Perpendicular to the commencement even stood the half-erected new Harlem State Office Building that, despite being embattled, provided hope for better political representation for the long disenfranchised community.⁴ As Powell declared at the end of his speech to the joyous crowd: “we are the young, and *we are the future!*”⁵

For seven years, hundreds of bright, college-going high school youth—most of whom were previously labeled as high school “dropouts”—repeated similar refrains during their days at Harlem Prep, an independent privately-financed and tuition free community school that existed in New York City from 1967 to 1974.⁶ Holding classes in a repurposed supermarket in Central Harlem that used blackboards as classroom dividers with a diverse cast of primarily non-

⁴ See Charlayne Hunter, “State Building in Harlem Finally Becoming Reality,” *New York Times*, May 11, 1971. In 1969, community activists protested the construction of this building, staging a sit-in due to concerns about the lack of community input and future uses. By June 1972, nearly all internal infrastructure had been completed.

⁵ Wayne Powell, in “New York City, Harlem Prep Graduation,” *Associated Press*, June 7, 1972, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/view/a35d46182c83e08ee020a26a60f6c03f?subClipIn=00:00:00&subClipOut=00:02:26>. This short clip from the *Associated Press* video archives provides no additional information on sourcing.

⁶ Sandy Campbell, interviewed by author, Michael Montero, and Robert Randolph, New York, NY, January 14, 2015; See Robert Mangum and Edward Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter cited as Rockefeller Records); However, the term “dropouts” is problematic and highly deficit-oriented. Carpenter, more accurately, referred to these students as “forceouts,” which is in line with the research of contemporary educational scholars who describe students being inequitably “pushed out” of their high schools.

credentialed teachers, the school would go on to send many hundreds of non-traditional students to a wide range of colleges nationwide.⁷ Furthermore, while Harlem Prep cultivated financial support from an eclectic mix of philanthropies and corporations, the school was also able to simultaneously build a reputation as a community-based, independent institution with widespread local backing. Yet, despite this notable display of Black excellence in the culturally significant Harlem neighborhood, as well as renewed scholarly attention to urban education history and alternative schools, the story of Harlem Prep has yet to be uncovered in historical scholarship.⁸ More broadly, historians' understanding of grassroots educational efforts in Harlem's development in the late 1960s and 1970s remains incomplete. The community's acclaim as a significant place of political and cultural activity notwithstanding, bureaucratic decisions and neglect by New York City Board of Education leadership made Harlem Prep the

⁷ See, among many documents, National Center for Educational Communication, ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, *Harlem Prep (New York, New York)* by Edmund W. Gordon, ED124682 (Washington, D.C., 1972).

⁸ Remarkably, scholars still refer to Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto, 1890-1930* (New York: Ivan R. Dee, 1967) as essential reading on Harlem's development. Additional newer works on Harlem, albeit still early twentieth century, include Kevin McGruder, *Race and Real Estate: Conflict and Cooperation in Harlem, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), for example, and Clare Corbould, *Becoming African Americans: Black Public Life in Harlem, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009). More importantly, there has been little scholarly attention to education in Central Harlem during the 1960s and 1970s (and no attention to Harlem Prep). (There has been, however, substantial scholarly attention to East Harlem due to research on the I.S 201 community control battles.) While there has been a recent increase in scholarship on the history of schools in cities during this era, for example, Ansley T. Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016) and James K. Nelsen, *Educating Milwaukee: How One City's History of Segregation and Struggle Shaped Its Schools* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2015), these new works are not specific case-studies of institutions. One recent, and notable exception, is Erika Kitzmiller's mixed-methods century-long study on a Philadelphia high school. See Erika M. Kitzmiller, "The Roots of Educational Inequality: Germantown High School, 1907--2011" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2012). Still, however, there are currently no broader works that address education in Harlem, until very recently, with the forthcoming publication of Ansley Erickson and Ernest Morrell, eds., *Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling and Resistance in a Black Community* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming), which stems, in part, from a digital project working to rectify this void. See Harlem Education History Project at Teachers College, Columbia University, <http://educatingharlem.cdrs.columbia.edu/omeka/>; For recent books on alternative schools during the 1960s and 1970s, see Russell J. Rickford, *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power and Radical Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 253; 19-22; For Black Panther schools, see Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); For Freedom Schools, see Charles M. Payne and Carol Sills Strickland, eds., *Teach Freedom: Education for Liberation in the African-American Tradition* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2008).

sole tuition-free high school in the area. As a result, the school became a prominent community effort that sought to educate the increasing youth population who desired—and deserved—a second chance at an education.⁹

My dissertation tells this story. It seeks to share the as-yet unwritten history of Harlem Prep, analyzing the people, ideas, and organizations that shaped the institution as well as those affected by it, primarily during September 1967 to February 1974. In these years, Harlem Prep remained an independent school before being absorbed by the Board of Education. The school established an educational philosophy—what I call “radical multiculturalism”—that historians of education have not yet located within the Black freedom struggle and broader Black educational thought patterns of the era. Harlem Prep’s use of multiculturalism differed from its peer institutions and this dissertation seeks to illuminate, contextualize, and historicize this educational philosophy. This multicultural philosophy was “derived from the concept that from such diversity [students] could achieve unity,” promoting a multiculturalism that valued both students’ (Black) culture as well as the differences among Black students’ (and all students’) cultural and political beliefs.¹⁰ Embedded within Harlem Prep’s multicultural philosophy was the school’s potential theory of change: sending students to college explicitly to combat the notion that Black and brown students could not learn was not only a conscious political act, but also the school’s primary institutional goal. As I illustrate throughout the dissertation, this overarching goal was part and parcel of the school’s multicultural vision.

Notably, this dissertation also documents the school's out-sized reputation in New York City and beyond, critically examining how Harlem Prep’s multiculturalism transcended

⁹ Ruth Dowd, “Report About Harlem Prep’s First Year,” pg. 5, September 13, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

¹⁰ Edward Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” p.3, January 5, 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter referred to as Ford Records).

classroom techniques and became widely known to educators, activists, philanthropists, and contemporary scholars beyond the confines of Harlem alone. Thus, this dissertation examines the school's history within the context of city-wide (and nation-wide) educational and political tumult of the era, and the ways in which it influenced both activists' thoughts about educating Black and brown youth as well as the New York City Board of Education.

Above all, however, this dissertation tells a story about a school and its people that made significant change in the lives of many hundreds of youth and inspired a renewed educational hope that permeated throughout the Harlem community and beyond. As one educational historian aptly explains, "historians are storytellers," and I seek to tell this Harlem Prep story because of what it means for the past and the present: it is a story of triumph and struggle, of love and hope, and of educational excellence, that has significant implications for both the history of education field and for all educational stakeholders dedicated to youth today.¹¹

Harlem Prep and Black Education: Introducing Radical Multiculturalism

"You know, he believed in multiculturalism way before people even used that term," explains Sterling Nile, a Harlem Prep alumnus, referring to the school's headmaster, Edward F. Carpenter today. Carpenter's former pupil offers a wise assessment. In 1973, after more than two decades working in Harlem schools and six years as the headmaster at Harlem Prep, Carpenter wrote a doctoral dissertation about his endeavors at the school. In this dissertation, headmaster Carpenter discusses the school's founding and its various educational influences, the school's achievements and accomplishments, and the many challenges that occurred during his tenure.¹²

¹¹ Ansley T. Erickson, "Review of Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*," *History of Education Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2018): 165.

However, interwoven throughout his analytical approach to the school’s story are comments that reflect an in-progress educational philosophy that differed from his peers at the time—a deep belief in multiculturalism, even if Carpenter never uses the phrase. The clues are abundant all throughout his dissertation pages (and in prior grants, letters, and both public and private rhetoric): “It was the purpose of the school to demonstrate to the community, other schools, and to our students, that unity could be achieved in diversity,” Carpenter wrote in his dissertation, the latter phrase “unity in/through diversity” appearing on multiple occasions.¹³ “Because of the racial and cultural differences that exist in the world, our students are exposed to an education that prepares one to live and function in a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-racial society,” he explained further (the only instance that specifically echoes the multicultural education language of today).¹⁴ Still, at less than 130 pages, Carpenter’s dissertation—while a valuable, rare artifact inside his inner thinking and founding of the school—only provides partial hints to the school’s existence as a multicultural institution. Carpenter, his teaching staff, and all the students were in the midst of an educational experiment that offered a distinctive vision for social change than other educational institutions of the era, Black or white: a vision of multiculturalism.

In its broadest conception of the last few decades, multiculturalism can best be understood as “an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process,” according to James A. Banks, one of the pioneers of the field.¹⁵ As an idea, multicultural education seeks to “help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a

¹² See Edward F. Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School: Harlem Prep, 1967-1972” (Ph.D. diss., University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 1973).

¹³ Ibid., 80, 35, 79.

¹⁴ Ibid., 30.

¹⁵ James A. Banks, “Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals,” in *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, 9th ed., eds., James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 3.

pluralistic democracy society, and communicate with people from diverse groups to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good.”¹⁶ In turn, multicultural education is also a larger reform movement, and an idea that is communicated in all aspects of the school—policy, school culture, pedagogy, and beyond—to create a more equitable educational system.¹⁷ Finally, multicultural education is a process of investigating the “interconnectedness” of race, ethnicity, social class, culture, gender, and more.¹⁸ Today, multicultural education continues to have broad meanings and to encompass a “wide variety of programs and practices,” including specific curricular strategies and larger school reform efforts on a systemic level.¹⁹ For example, in terms of curriculum, class content that centers on the experiences of people of color and other marginalized groups—and not from a Eurocentric perspective or through an “additive” approach of including people of color without critical analysis—would be multicultural.²⁰ In addition, multicultural education has served as a foundation for other equity-based approaches in education such as critical pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy, all of which share notable overlaps with these processes and ideas put forth by multicultural education scholars.²¹

¹⁶ James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks, eds., *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), xi.

¹⁷ James A. Banks, “Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, and Practice,” in *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*. Within this idea of a reform movement, Banks lays out five dimensions to creating a rigorous multicultural framework: content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture; See also Carl A. Grant and Christine E. Sleeter, *Doing Multicultural Education for Achievement and Equity* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

¹⁸ See Tyrone C. Howard, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap in America’s Classrooms* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2014), 50.

¹⁹ Banks, “Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals,” 7.

²⁰ Howard, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*, 46-48; Sonia Nieto, “Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique: Moving Beyond Tolerance in Education,” in *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Antiracist Education, Multicultural Education, and Staff Development*, eds. Enid Lee, Deborah Menkart, and Margo Okazawa-Rey (Washington, D.C.: Teaching for Change, 2011), 7; and Angela Valenzuela, *Subtractive Schooling: U.S. - Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999).

Multiculturalism at Harlem Prep was strikingly similar to these descriptions of multiculturalism as it emerged in the 1990s and how it is still understood today. For example, multicultural education's emphasis on academic success mirrors Harlem Prep's goal of sending students to college; so, too, is the way contemporary scholars understand multicultural education to be a "way of life" and a larger systemic vision for schools, not only a limited curricular change.²² As this dissertation illustrates, Harlem Prep's multiculturalism was more than just pedagogy, but also a broad vision for schooling, educational equity, and society writ large. Finally, multiculturalism at Harlem Prep and current characterizations today share common ideas about preparing students to enter into a pluralistic society. Just as influential multiculturalist Sonia Nieto explains that multicultural processes are "radical," Harlem Prep, too, was linked through this same radical tradition of multicultural education.²³ Harlem Prep's multiculturalism was radical because it was creating transformative change in the education of Black and brown youth, in the same way that multicultural education has done so more recently in the past few decades as described by Banks, Nieto, and many others.²⁴ Of course, Harlem Prep's 1960s/1970s version of multiculturalism did have some differences, not only in terminology—headmaster Ed Carpenter's "unity through diversity" was his own unique phrase—but also in substance. One

²¹ See, among many, Jeffrey M.R. Duncan-Andrade and Ernest Morrell, *The Art of Critical Pedagogy: Possibilities for Moving from Theory to Practice in Urban Schools* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); and Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (Teachers College Press, 2015); However, in recent years, multicultural education has also been coopted by some to mean simplistic notions about race and culture, where "manifestations of multicultural education in the classroom are superficial and trivial 'celebrations of diversity'." See Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's it Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?" in *Foundations of Critical Race Theory*, eds. Edward Taylor, David Gillborn, and Gloria Ladson-Billings (New York: Routledge, 2009), 33, for more about how multicultural education is often not been practiced according to its original conceptions.

²² Howard, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*, 44.

²³ See, for example, Sonia Nieto, *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), 136, 168.

²⁴ For example, see Howard, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*, 44-46, who explains the impact of multicultural education and the foundation it has played in critical approaches to schooling.

way that the school's philosophy differed was how Harlem Prep stressed intra-group diversity. Considering that Harlem Prep was primarily Black, an important part of the school's multiculturalism was the way in which it emphasized the breadth of the Black experience in the United States as a central pillar of its belief in diversity, in addition to experiences of other groups of people.

With the benefit of historical hindsight, this dissertation's primary historiographical goal is to understand Harlem Prep's multiculturalism—what it looked like and how it worked. Carpenter's educational philosophy was not just rhetoric on a page or a particular teaching strategy employed in the school's makeshift class spaces, but a full-bore educational philosophy that permeated every facet of the school's existence. From its teaching, to its administrative system, to its hiring practices, to its learning strategies, to its student body, to its embrace of college achievement, to its inter-racial alliances, Harlem Prep reflected a particular multicultural ethos that encompassed the school—and the sectors of the Harlem (and New York City) community that later absorbed it. This dissertation explores Harlem Prep's "radical multiculturalism" that was unlike other Black institutions documented by historians to date in this era. This dissertation tells the story of Harlem Prep through the lens of its own multiculturalism—a multiculturalism that was sometimes radical in how it operated within the nascent Black Power landscape, sometimes moderate in its approach to white actors, all while exhibiting parallels to the multicultural education movement of later decades and today.²⁵

I argue in this dissertation the historical significance of Harlem Prep's multiculturalism. Specifically, I argue that to fully understand the rise of Black alternative education during the

²⁵ See, for example, James A. Banks, "The African-American Roots of Multicultural Education," in *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, James A. Banks, ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1996): 30-45. More about the origins of multicultural education and Harlem Prep's relationships to this movement will be explored in-depth in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

late 1960s and early 1970s, scholars must consider this additional strand of Black educational thought. Harlem Prep's multiculturalism inspired the country's most iconic Black neighborhood, was supported by influential Black civil rights leaders, received widespread acclaim from Black and white media outlets, and most importantly, positively affected the lives of many hundreds of marginalized youth. This dissertation, in part, examines how administrators, teachers, and students embarked on a multicultural educational experiment that both reshapes historical narratives about Black education of the era and introduces radical multiculturalism to historians' discourse of the era. More simply, there is another Black educational ideology and concrete vision practiced during this era that has received little scholarly attention in terms of independent Black schools: radical multiculturalism.

As a consequence of Harlem Prep's existence and the fact that it has not previously been studied, my dissertation also encourages a reexamination of multiculturalism's historical development. First, scholars widely recognize that multicultural education has deep roots in African-American educational thought dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the works of W.E.B. DuBois and Carter G. Woodson. Scholars such as LaGarret J. King and others have described these key contributions, as well as later efforts in creating an "alternative Black curriculum" in social studies classrooms in the 1930s to the 1950s.²⁶ Still, it was not until the early 1970s that scholars such as Banks, Carl Grant, and Gwendolyn Baker and others began formulating these ideas into an educational paradigm based on Black studies curricula.²⁷ (While

²⁶ See, for example, among many, LaGarrett J. King, "When Lions Write History: Black History Textbooks, African-American Educators, & the Alternative Black Curriculum in Social Studies Education, 1890-1940," *Multicultural Education* 22, vol. 1 (2014): 2-11; and LaGarrett J. King, "The Forgotten Legacy of Carter G. Woodson: Contributions to Multicultural Social Studies and African American History," *The Social Studies* 101, no. 5 (2010): 211-215.

²⁷ See, for some of the earliest works, James A. Banks, "A Content Analysis of the Black American in Textbooks," *Social Education* 33, no. 8 (1969): 954-957, 963; and Carl A. Grant, *An Empirical Study of the Effects of Relevant*

Carpenter was living in the era of these early multiculturalists, he was older and of a different generation.) Then, it was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that multicultural education became a widely known practice inside schools and more formally codified into a coherent philosophy.²⁸ The existence of Harlem Prep rethinks this timeline. The school and its administrators' radical multiculturalism was already a robust philosophy by the late 1960s, suggesting an earlier start date for both its prevalence and, more significantly, its practice.

To fully understand Harlem Prep's multiculturalism—and, as argued in this dissertation, how it is a distinct educational philosophy—it is necessary to contextualize the school within the larger realm of alternative Black schools emerging during this time period. Generally, scholars broadly have a dual framing of Black schools during the 1960s and 1970s. As civil rights historian Charles Payne explains, “it is useful to think of two main streams of emancipatory education among Black people”: one, a stream of schools consisting of “Freedom Schools,” which promoted civic engagement and emerged out of the “organizing tradition” of the early 1960s, and two, schools emerging out of the “tradition of cultural nationalist or African-centered education” in the late 1960s and early 1970s.²⁹ Although Payne acknowledges these characterizations to be a “little artificial”—and historian Russell Rickford also recognizes their “commingling”—this current scholarly consensus is helpful to analyzing Harlem Prep in the context of the era.³⁰

Curriculum Materials Upon the Self-concept, Achievement, and Attendance of Black Inner-city Students (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1972).

²⁸ Refer to Chapter 4 for additional discussion about the history of multiculturalism, including key scholarship such as, James A. Banks, “The Construction and Historical Development of Multicultural Education, 1962–2012,” *Theory Into Practice* 52, no. 1 (October 20, 2013): 73–82.

²⁹ Charles Payne, “Introduction,” in *Teach Freedom: Education for Liberation in the African-American Tradition*, ed. Charles M. Payne and Carol Sills Strickland (New York: Teachers College Press, 2008), 10.

Chronologically, historians generally recognize the emergence of freedom schools in the early-to-mid 1960 out of the so-called “organizing tradition” of the African-American community, brought to the forefront during the civil rights movement in the South (but, as newer scholarship attests, in the North, too).³¹ This “organizing tradition” was about creating a grassroots movement in which local people—parents, students, domestic workers—became civically active and democratically mobilized through door-to-door activism.³² Specifically, freedom schools shared the same framework as “some 40 schools” in the South, particularly in Mississippi, that were initiated to re-create Black education in a way that allowed Black citizens a means of “shaping and controlling their own destiny” through “civil rights and social changes.”³³ These schools were based on a belief in an integrated society (or at least that integration was a plausible goal), and a society in which progress could be made through a civil rights legislative framework.³⁴

To be sure, Harlem Prep shared some characteristics of freedom schools. For example, like some (but not all) freedom school leaders who believed in integration and advocated for “civil

³⁰ Ibid; Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 74. Rickford agrees with this framing from Payne, and describes these two streams as being as “arising from integrationist politics and another embodying black nationalist and Pan Africanist outlooks.”

³¹ See Craig Kridel, *Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies* (New York: SAGE, 2010), 24; For Northern examples, see Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); and Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

³² See Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom*; for “organizing tradition,” see also Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* and John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), among many others.

³³ Charles E. Cobb, Jr., “Organizing Freedom Schools,” in *Teach Freedom*, 73; Jon N. Hale, *The Freedom Schools: Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

³⁴ See Daniel Perlstein, “Freedom, Liberation, Accommodation: Politics and Pedagogy in SNCC and the Black Panther,” in *Teach Freedom*, 81; Daniel Perlstein, “Teaching Freedom: SNCC and the Creation of the Mississippi Schools,” *History of Education Quarterly* 30 (1990): 297-324 and Charles Cobb, “Organizing Freedom Schools,” in *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: An Anthology of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement*, ed. S. Erenrich (Montgomery: Black Belt Press, 1999), 134-137; See Deanna M. Gillespie, “‘They Walk, Talk, and Act Like New People’: Citizenship Education Program in Southeastern Georgia, 1960-1975” in *Teach Freedom*; and David P. Levine, “The Birth of Citizenship Schools: Entwining the Struggles of Literacy and Freedom,” *History of Education Quarterly* 44, no. 30 (2004): 388-414.

rights and social changes,” headmaster Edward Carpenter emphasized the importance of diversity and saw integration as benign.³⁵ “I’m proud of [the diversity] because from this diversity we at Harlem Prep have achieved unity. I want to prove that we can all live together and work together,” he once said.³⁶ Other commonalities between freedom schools and Harlem Prep include a theme of teaching students to “give service to [their] community” after graduation and similar integrationist politics of (some) of its leaders.³⁷ Key Harlem Prep leaders were even intimately involved in civil rights and key groups such as SNCC in the South.³⁸

However, these similarities mostly stop there. Even if freedom school ideology influenced Carpenter’s beliefs, in practice, Harlem Prep and various freedom schools operated, at their core, in vastly contrasting ways. Harlem Prep not only looked different in size and scope to some freedom schools, but most importantly, operated differently in terms of goals. As Charles Cobb, Jr. writes, the overarching theme for freedom schools was to train students to be “a force for social change in their own state” via activism and political organizing, and not to primarily to function as a college preparatory school like Harlem Prep (even if these schools cared deeply about academic

³⁵ Cobb, Jr., “Organizing Freedom Schools,” in *Teach Freedom*, 73.

³⁶ “Unsung Hero Placed 164 Dropouts In College,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 1, 1969.

³⁷ Robert Mangum and Edward Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, Rockefeller Foundation Records, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Archive Center; Aissatou Bey-Grecia, interviewed by author, Ibrahim Ali, and Robert Randolph, February 25, 2015, New York, NY; Ajuba Grinage-Bartley and Penny Grinage, interviewed by author, New York, NY, April 17, 2017. How Harlem Prep conceptualized community will be explored in Chapter 4. Harlem Prep cared deeply about the community, but not in the same way as freedom schools; Notably, Cobb, Jr. does explain that there was much discussion and disagreement about what role—if any—white people should play in the Freedom School movement, at least in Mississippi. However, Cobb also recognizes that, no matter the position of leaders, white people were going to be involved regardless. See Cobb, “Organizing Freedom Schools,” in *Teach Freedom*, 70-71.

³⁸ Initial founder such as Eugene Callender of the New York Urban League had frequently marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1960s in the South. See Margalit Fox, “Rev. Eugene Callender, Who Saw Potential of School Dropouts, Dies at 87,” *The New York Times*, November 7, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/08/nyregion/rev-eugene-callender-who-saw-potential-of-disadvantaged-school-dropouts-dies-at-87.html>; Headmaster Ed Carpenter had even volunteered to serve as principal to a freedom school in Farmville, Virginia in the early 1960s. See Joseph Featherstone, “Storefront Schools in Harlem,” *The New Republic*, September 7, 1968, Box 2T32, Harlem Prep - 1968, Field Foundation Records.

achievement, too).³⁹ Instead, Harlem Prep’s leaders envisioned college and education itself as the key to social change—its political ambitions were realized through students going to college and not necessarily through developing their political identities. In retrospect, Harlem Prep had more in common with a historically Black high school such as Caswell County Training School documented by Vanessa Siddle Walker than an autonomous freedom school.⁴⁰ Academic achievement and pursuing higher education *was* the political act of Harlem Prep teachers and staff—and with an education, felt Carpenter, students could then go change the world.⁴¹

Conversely, Black schools that appeared later in the 1960s and into the early 1970s had different ideological underpinnings than freedom schools. These schools shunned integrationist orthodoxy in favor of cultural (and sometimes militaristic) strategies more closely identified with Pan-Africanism or Black Power. As many historians have noted, this nationalist ideology has also been part and parcel of the Black Freedom Struggle for generations.⁴² Still, the increased discourse around this ideology during these years affected “the realm of education” through the emergence of numerous independent Black schools all throughout the country.⁴³ These new schools, which

³⁹ Cobb, Jr., “Prospectus for a Summer Freedom School Program, in *Teach Freedom*, 68.

⁴⁰ See Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their High Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

⁴¹ “Harlem Prep Open: 60 Former Dropouts Pioneer Revolution in Education,” *New York Urban League News*, Fall 1967, Secretary of the Board of Directors Records, Box 10, Folder 16, NYUL Records.

⁴² See Rickford, *We Are an African People*; See Theoharis and Woodard, *Freedom North*, 7; Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004); and Russell Rickford, “Integration, Black Nationalism, and Radical Democratic Transformation in African American Philosophies of Education, 1965–74,” in *The New Black History*, ed. Manning Marable and Elizabeth Kai Hinton (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 287–317; For decades, historians have referred to the late 1960s as a clear move toward nationalism in which Black activists began to lose faith in traditional civil rights orthodoxy. However, scholars like Rickford have pushed back against this “one-dimensional” idea, particularly with regards to educational activism. “The radicalism of the late 1960s and 1970s reformulated rather than ruptured the ‘organizing tradition,’” he explains, in *We Are an African People*, 16. Harlem Prep was surely a part of this transformation.

⁴³ Examples of the wide-ranging geography of these schools include Uhuru Sasa Shule in Brooklyn, the Nairobi School System and Black Panther schools in Northern California, and other schools in Washington, D.C. and North Carolina Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 19-22; Scholars, such as Donna Jean Murch, have also looked at

historian Russell Rickford broadly labels as being Pan African nationalist, “provided dynamic social alternatives and exemplified contemporary efforts to build ‘the new society within the shell of the old.’”⁴⁴ Basically, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, “an array of African-American activists and educators embraced black independent schools as symbols of a new phase of struggle: the quest to concretize the ideals of ‘blackness’ and ‘Africanness’”—key Black Power components—as opposed to the aforementioned “organizing tradition.”⁴⁵ Rickford, whose groundbreaking book *We Are an African People* details many of these schools, including their academic achievements, ultimately concludes that while nationalist schools differed greatly in political ideology and radicalism, they all generally shared some level of “anticapitalism, anti-imperialism, and Third Worldism.”⁴⁶

Harlem Prep, too, felt infusions of this emancipatory stream in its multicultural philosophy. For example, the school’s leaders and teachers commonly employed a Pan African curriculum inside school walls. As this dissertation illustrates, Black pride and African symbolism permeated almost all school-related activities and curricula—Black Power rhetoric dominated both classroom discussions, informal student actions, and personal identities. “Everyone was liberal, most were actually radical, and most of them were leftist,” contends longtime administrator Hussein Ahdieh today.⁴⁷ Yet, Harlem Prep’s rationale for teaching Black culture and African history was very different than Pan African schools. Administrators and faculty often used culturally relevant

Black Panther schools, specifically. They shared similar characteristics to other freedom schools and Pan-African schools. However, these schools are generally less understood. For more, see Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 178-179; See also See Charles E. Jones and Jonathan Gayles, “‘The World Is a Child’s Classroom’: An Analysis of the Black Panther Party’s Oakland Community School” in *Teach Freedom*.

⁴⁴ Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 253.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-22.

⁴⁷ Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016.

strategies chiefly for the purpose of academic engagement (although the range of pedagogies was certainly vast); they also utilized a Pan African ideology to empower students as a way to promote self-love as well as inspire students to want to make a difference within mainstream society. Schools like Harlem Prep “aimed to supplement or improve public education, not circumvent it.”⁴⁸ Alumnus Mwanajua Kahamu, who later in life became involved in Pan African education, agrees: “Harlem Prep was very unique because a lot of these schools were starting around the same time, but Harlem Prep was more an alternative public school.”⁴⁹ Although Harlem Prep and Pan African schools had a similar Afro-centric curricular focus, the rationale for this focus was different. More simply, the leaders of each had disparate end visions of Black freedom, even if they had, at times, similar curricular means. “At Harlem Prep, we try to prepare our students for going on to a world of unity, a world of which the most important thing is justice,” declared administrator Ann Carpenter at commencement—a quote that sums up Harlem Prep’s vision.⁵⁰ Ann Carpenter and her husband Ed, and all the Harlem Prep faculty and staff, believed that social justice was intertwined with a unified society regardless of race, religion, or ideology (including within different elements of the Black community). Pan African schools, on the other hand, were often separatist (although not always and to varying degrees), and did not think such unity was possible—or at least not to the level of Harlem Prep. Even though at Harlem Prep’s commencement ceremony students proudly sang “Young, Gifted, and Black” to the nearly all-

⁴⁸ Rickford, “In the Struggle for the Arena of Ideas,” 248. Technically, Harlem Prep did seem to circumvent the public system by creating a new school that enrolled formerly public school students. However, Rickford’s point is accurate in that Harlem Prep was trying to ultimately improve the public school system and believed in a (better) system (if it was fixed, in their eyes) as a separate, permanent set of institutions.

⁴⁹ Mwanajua Kahamu, interviewed by author, New York, NY, February 24, 2017; Moreover, a prominent Pan-African educator during the era also wrote at the time that Harlem Prep was not a Pan-African school. See James Jefferson Doughty, “A Historical Analysis of Black Education: Focusing on the Contemporary Independent Black School Movement,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1973), 80-81, 112-113.

⁵⁰ See Ann Carpenter, in “*Step by Step*”: *The Story of Harlem Prep*, dir. Lassen, 1971.

Black Harlem audience, any person in attendance was welcome to join in the joyous chanting.

Thus, I argue through this dissertation that Harlem Prep's approach to emancipatory education was distinct for the era: a school based on multiculturalism with a vision for a world where diversity was celebrated beyond but particularly within the Black community, and the cultural traditions, linguistic patterns, and funds of knowledge of Black (and brown and other marginalized) youth would be front and center. This was both Ann and Ed Carpenter's vision for the world. And, the means to realizing this vision was through a school in which young people with an education could help advance through individual academic achievement and a collective belief in unity through diversity. "I see before me the future school principals of Harlem," said New York Urban League Executive Director Eugene Callender (and a key Harlem Prep founder) on the second day of classes. "I see the future directors of the Urban League, the future Harlem bankers, businessmen."⁵¹ However, this quote is also telling of Harlem Prep's philosophy. Callender envisioned, above all, the Harlem Prep graduate as integrating into society within existing power and economic structures—and despite his sharp critiques of white America and tireless activism on behalf of Black progress—still believed in the possibility of a more equitable and humane world for Black men and women. (Such a belief would carry on through the Carpenters and Harlem Prep's existence.) This is in contrast to how Russell Rickford frames Pan African schools in his book; it is also differs in how scholars such as Jon Hale and Charles Cobb, Jr. explain the purpose of freedom schools.⁵² Moreover, while Harlem Prep had similar aims—an emphasis on college—with some traditionally Black public schools, it certainly did not operate

⁵¹ Carroll, "Harlem Dropouts Head For College," *New York Times*, October 3, 1967, Field Records.

⁵² Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 9. One critique, however, of this exclusion would be that Harlem Prep leaders did not think of their students as different from the general population of Black and brown youth in the way that Rickford does here. As this dissertation explains in Chapter 1, Harlem Prep was founded to serve, in part, as a public school for a neighborhood did not have any—not "only" to serve "dropout" students. Thus, demarcating these students as different than the students at Pan-African schools does not do justice to their abilities and potential.

as one. After all, Harlem Prep's student population had largely been pushed *out* of public schools. Part of the reason why Harlem Prep was a unique institution and deserves close analysis is that no comparable institution has been discovered or studied—or perhaps had such a far-reaching impact. The school's non-conformity to past iterations of the Black freedom struggle allowed for a new, undiscovered path for many hundreds and hundreds of talented but out-of-school youth to pursue a high-quality education, most of who went on to receive a college degree. Many of the other Black alternative institutions scholars have studied that sprouted during this era, including freedom schools and Pan African schools, cannot claim that notable feat due to short tenures and/or smaller school populations.⁵³

Ultimately, Harlem Prep's complex multicultural philosophy does not fit into scholars' current characterizations of Black emancipatory education during the 1960s and 1970s, and the school's existence suggests that scholars should look beyond this paradigm of freedom schools and Pan African schools. Although Harlem Prep was certainly influenced by the contours of these streams of thought and the civil rights movement more broadly, its multicultural vision for the world and the way in which that vision could be reached has been left out of the lexicon of independent Black education of this important time period. Thus, to better fully understand this historical moment, the history of multicultural education, and Black educational thought, Harlem Prep's radical multiculturalism must be put in. While historians such as Rickford have helped us understand the wide diversity of Black institutions emerging during this era, perhaps this movement was more diverse still.

⁵³ For example, in the two most recent and prominent works on Black schools during this era, Jon Hale's *Freedom Schools* and Russell Rickford's *We Are an African People*, neither suggests that the schools they profile educated the number of students as Harlem Prep did due to the short-lived nature of them.

Weaving Harlem Prep into the Larger History of Education Landscape

Although I have found multiculturalism to be the core theme in my exploration of Harlem Prep and its meaning, the story of this school also offers fresh insights about educational activism, community organizing, and grassroots education in the field. In this way, there is also a secondary theme of this project that ties into other important work in the field: the interplay between schools and the communities in which they interact and reside. From a historiographical perspective, Harlem Prep may alter the way scholars conceptualize the relationship between schools and their communities during the 1960s and 1970s, as well as scholars' understandings of how schools envisioned their roles as so-called community institutions. First, most new history of education literature aptly documents the antagonistic relationship between communities of color—parents, local activists, students—and white parents and professionals, both liberal and conservative. Furthermore, in recent years, New York City specifically has been utilized as a prime site from which to provide different educational perspectives on these intra-city relationships: Martha Biondi describes the struggle between universities and Black communities over higher education; Heather Lewis documents communities' fight to control their own schools against largely white liberal and conservative and bureaucratic resistance; and Sonia Song-Ha Lee provides novel insight into the fragile alliance between Blacks and Latinos/as as they struggled for racial equity, particularly around schools.⁵⁴ Each of these books, and many others, reveal how the late 1960s and the early 1970s were contentious times in urban areas, particularly New York City, with a rising consciousness in the shadow of Black Power and national politics that created tension between many different groups. Ultimately, this recent

⁵⁴ Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*; Heather Lewis, *New York City Public Schools From Brownsville to Bloomberg*; and Sonia Song-Ha Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement: Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Justice in New York City* (Raleigh: UNC Press, 2016).

scholarship explains that cities like New York were busy battlegrounds of disagreement and, in the words of Daniel Perlstein, in the midst of an “eclipse of liberalism.”⁵⁵

However, Harlem Prep provides an alternative interpretation of school-community relationships in New York City in a way that underlines its multicultural ethos. During Harlem Prep’s existence, administrators, faculty, and students were able to largely transcend—if for a moment—the racial and ideological divisions of the era (and the city) by cultivating a diverse coalition of financial supporters and on-the-ground advocates. A sample of supporters ranged from left-leaning Black activists such as Preston Wilcox, Ossie Davis, and Shirley Chisholm (as well as local Harlem community groups), to white (and Black) liberals in major philanthropies such as the Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation, to white businesspeople in corporations including Exxon, MetLife, and Chase Manhattan Bank.⁵⁶ It became common for Black Harlemites on the political Left (who were Harlem Prep supporters) specifically to seek out white business support, while white philanthropists befriended students steeped in Black Power ideology wearing dashikis at Harlem Prep—relationships that have not yet been explained by existing historiography and are in contrast to the general politics of the time. While these relationships are part and parcel of the school’s multicultural philosophy, they also implicitly speak to the aforementioned scholarship in the field by shining light on unexplored possible alliances. Understanding the mechanisms that allowed these eclectic, perhaps even oppositional, identities to come together to support this one school that, in the words of one alumnus, “was based in the [Harlem] community,” is a key question in light of recent historical work that recognizes divergences within communities more

⁵⁵ See Daniel Perlstein, *Justice, Justice: The Eclipse of Liberalism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004)

⁵⁶ Memo from Donald Harris to Mario Fantini, February 4, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Ford Records; “1968 Harlem Prep Commencement Exercises Program,” June 17, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; “Harlem Prep Donors for 1971-1972,” Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

than partnerships.⁵⁷ How does the existence of this community coalition expand scholars' understanding of the way schools cooperated with surrounding communities? Exploring Harlem Prep's diverse network of advocates can provide fresh historical views on school-community partnerships in a key New York City school district and most iconic Black neighborhood. Furthermore, part of the reason why exploring these questions is relevant is because Harlem Prep's conception of a multicultural school community cannot be separated from larger questions about the meaning—and mechanisms—of this real or imagined community in the first place.

In connection, then, why did Harlem Prep self-identify as a “community school” and what were the characteristics that made it one? Scholars recognize that the phrase community school has “a variety of connotations” and, as Jerald Podair explains, “the word ‘community’ is a chameleon on the American ideological landscape.”⁵⁸ This same concept applies to community schools specifically, which, according to Michael C. Johanek and John L. Puckett, were “diffuse, ill-defined, often conservative” from 1942 up until the 1990s.⁵⁹ Historians have written about community schools in a variety of ways and in different eras. For example, Johanek and Puckett in the 1930s and 1940s describe the East Harlem's Benjamin Franklin High School to be a “community-centered school” renowned for its focus on civic engagement where students worked

⁵⁷ Clifford Jacobs, interviewed by author, November 18, 2013, Queens, NY. For recent scholarship see, among many, described in this section, Perlstein, *Justice, Justice*; Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*; Song-Ha Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement*, and others.

⁵⁸ Andrew R. Highsmith and Ansley T. Erickson, “Segregation as Splitting, Segregation as Joining: Schools, Housing, and the Many Modes of Jim Crow,” *American Journal of Education* 121, no. 4 (2015): 586; Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York*, 21; See also Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, *A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York after 1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), for his discussion of a school in Washington Heights that exemplified these community schools aspects during the same era; For a broader examination, see Mary Jean Seubert, “The Origin, Development, and Issues of the Community Education Movement in the United States, 1935–1995,” (PhD diss., Florida Atlantic University, 1995).

⁵⁹ Michael C. Johanek and John L. Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School: Education As If Citizenship Mattered* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

with community members to solve local problems.⁶⁰ Yet, conversely, other urban historians have recently illustrated how so-called community education actually promoted segregation along racial and classist lines—community schools were not just about civic engagement (if at all), but about maintaining the status quo.⁶¹

Specifically in Central Harlem in the 1950s and 1960s, other scholars have explored the important roles of community institutions that had educational benefits, such as the Northside Center that provided a number of social services as well as Harlem’s first mental health institution, the LaFargue clinic.⁶² Johaneck and Puckett, in their discussion of the evolution of community schools, would consider these examples as a “client-centered,” or service-centered, community model (as opposed to a “citizen-centered” community model).⁶³ For disenfranchised communities such as Harlem without quality schooling options (or none at all), this idea of education as a desirable good fits within the larger notion of how local activists envisioned, in part, community education during these years and the contested nature of what a community institution should be.

Ultimately, Harlem Prep seemed to designate itself a community school because it saw itself as serving the Harlem community, broadly defined. The school sought to involve residents who lived there to participate in students’ education—either through educational initiatives like student-adult learning programs and guest teaching opportunities, or, in more tangential ways, by inviting them to be part of the school’s community.⁶⁴ However, the Harlem Prep community

⁶⁰ Ibid; Notably, they did not see Benjamin Franklin as part of the post-WWII trend that they describe.

⁶¹ See Highsmith and Erickson, “Segregation as Splitting,” who describe segregation in Flint, Michigan.

⁶² Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, *Children, Race, and Power: Kenneth and Mamie Clark’s Northside Center* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Gabriel N. Mendes, *Under the Strain of Color: Harlem’s Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of an Antiracist Psychiatry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

⁶³ Johaneck and Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School*, 227.

⁶⁴ For example, the fact that commencement ceremonies were held publicly, outside in Harlem on the street, was something that both alumni and primary documents explain was essential to making the Harlem community be

extended beyond just Harlem; not only did students eventually come from other boroughs, but its supporters included white elites and institutions with little Harlem connection. Notably, Harlem Prep’s community coalition emerged at a fraught time in New York City educational history, where questions and concerns of authority and decision-making were flowing through marginalized communities, including Harlem. Harlem Prep’s leaders, familiar with the educational landscape, worked to navigate these tensions as best they could. At a time when schools were seen as places of contestation and fracture, Harlem Prep envisioned—and acted on in practice—schools as being meaningful and inclusive places of consensus.

Contextualizing This Story: Harlem in the 1960s

As Ralph Ellison once wrote, “to live in Harlem is to dwell in the very bowels of the city” and while it could be “overcrowded and exploited politically and economically,” still, Harlem was “also the setting of [the Black person’s] transcendence” where it was “possible for talented youths to leap through the development of decades in a brief twenty years...”⁶⁵ Ellison’s thoughtful prose epitomizes the multiple perspectives on Harlem throughout the twentieth century as a place of struggle *and* of hope; the complexity and weight of its history has remained elusive to scholars, across disciplines. To be sure, Harlem has long held a place of symbolic importance to the Black community with a sort of “mythic” quality—or, as Manning Marable once put it, a “fabled Black mecca”—dating back to the 1920s Harlem Renaissance.⁶⁶ Written

proud of the its youth and be part of their success. Also, according to primary documents from Carpenter, the Harlem “community” seemed to be broadly defined, and he never gives a more precise geographical descriptor beyond “Central Harlem.”

⁶⁵ Ralph Ellison, “Harlem Is Nowhere,” *Harper’s Magazine*, August 1964.

⁶⁶ For example, see Robert M. Dowling, *Slumming in New York: From the Waterfront to Mythic Harlem* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), who refers to Harlem as a “mythic place”; Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (New York: Viking Books, 2011), 48.

about for decades by literary icons ranging from Alain Locke to James Baldwin, understanding Harlem not just as a tangible place but as a complex idea is critical in understanding the story of Harlem Prep.⁶⁷ “For close to a century, the name ‘Harlem’ has been loaded with symbolic meaning that have made this narrow stretch of upper Manhattan perhaps second only to ‘Africa’ as a spatial signifier of blackness,” write Andrew M. Fearnley and Daniel Matlin in *Race Capital?: Harlem as Setting and Symbol*—a new volume dedicated to exploring Harlem’s long-standing resonance in Black America.⁶⁸

Although Harlem Prep’s origins are fleshed out in detail in the first chapters of this dissertation, it is useful to first provide a general overview of the educational context in which Harlem Prep developed. As Ellison and others have long recognized, it important to understand this dual narrative about Harlem as a neighborhood: in part a place of struggle and neglect, in part a place of activism and hope. These two narratives have always been intertwined, and are represented clearly in an analysis of its schools and broader educational outlook. With the former, the story of Harlem’s schools in the 1960s often begins with an all-too-familiar (and incomplete) deficit description: a community in a dire educational state. In 1962 and 1963, acclaimed psychologist Dr. Kenneth Clark and his team of researchers created an organization called Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU) to research Harlem’s social life, including its educational achievement. The HARYOU report, as it was known, described a community in a “historic crisis” due to conditions including “school drop-outs, delinquency, and general

⁶⁷ Among many, James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*, (New York: Vintage, 1962) and Alain Locke, *The New Negro* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1925), as well as newer works by literary scholars, such as Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts, *Harlem Is Nowhere: A Journey to the Mecca of Black America* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2013).

⁶⁸ Andrew M. Fearnley and Daniel Matlin, ed., *Race Capital?: Harlem as Setting and Symbol* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 1.

hopelessness and despair.”⁶⁹ Specifically, with regards to education, Clark and his team argued that: “The basic story of [K-8] academic achievement in Central Harlem is one of inefficiency, inferiority, and massive deterioration. . . . the further students progress in school, the larger the proportion of them who are performing below grade level.”⁷⁰ This notable report, which offers a range of statistics about enrollment, dropout rates, graduation rates, and many other demographic and school achievement variables such as grade level proficiency in mathematics, provides empirical evidence on the institutional failures of junior high schools in Harlem. Memoirs and anecdotes regarding education from this era have also shaped historians understanding of this Harlem caricature. For instance, Jim Haskins describes the lack of educational resources and troubled Harlem families; James Baldwin’s iconic essays on race and “the Negro problem” are explained through a backdrop of poverty.⁷¹

More recently, historians of education have described how other aspects such as teachers and administrators contributed to these educational conditions, even amidst narratives of activism. For example, Jonna Perrillo, in her book about teacher activism, juxtaposes the energy of teachers and parent activists with descriptions about how there were “deep inequities in teaching assignments due to the Board of Education’s neglect and white teachers’ historic resistance to teaching in black schools.”⁷² Perrillo, relying on the HARYOU Report and other data from the time, paints a bleak picture where Harlem K-8 schools were hyper-segregated and being largely

⁶⁹ Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., *Youth in the Ghetto: A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change* (New York: HARYOU, 1964), 1, 9. This report includes statistics about enrollment, dropout and graduation rates, and information about grade level proficiency in various subjects.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁷¹ See Jim Haskins, *Diary of a Harlem Schoolteacher* (New York: Grove Press, 1969), and many of James Baldwin’s works. Yet, Baldwin is also hopeful and talks strikingly about love, despite various hardships.

⁷² Jonna Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights: Teachers, Unions, and Race in the Battle for School Equity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 4

taught by highly inexperienced, mostly white, teachers who viewed Black children as problems instead of people.⁷³ Similarly, Heather Lewis likewise documents administrators' long-standing reluctance to invest equally in Black communities, including Harlem, in her narrative of administrators' and activists' battles for more equitable schooling opportunities.⁷⁴ These issues of teacher and administrator quality were rampant, and the disgruntlement of Harlem parents and activists and in scholarship such as Perrillo and Lewis were the results of many decades of educational neglect in every aspect of their children's elementary and junior high schools.

Perrillo and Lewis along with numerous other historians such as Daniel Perlstein, Jerald Podair, Diane Ravitch and others have also explained how Harlem was the start of the infamous community control battles in New York City in the late 1960s.⁷⁵ Following this longstanding frustration over educational inequality and segregated schools, the “community erupted” when a new segregated middle school in East Harlem opened in 1966 under a white principal, against the wishes of community activists and parents.⁷⁶ More than a year of protests and discord between the Harlem community and the New York City Board of Education (as well as primarily white teachers unions) occurred as a result, eventually leading to the launch of the first community control experiment.⁷⁷ This experiment allowed for the creation of a “demonstration district”—essentially a local neighborhood governing board—that provided the East Harlem community with

⁷³ Ibid, 122-125; For data regarding white and Black teachers in New York City, including Harlem, see Christina Collins, *“Ethnically Qualified”: Race, Merit, and the Selection of Urban Teachers, 1920-1980* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011).

⁷⁴ See Lewis, *New York City Public Schools From Brownsville to Bloomberg*.

⁷⁵ In addition to Perrillo and Lewis, see Daniel Perlstein, *Justice, Justice*; Jerald E. Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); and Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars: A History of New York City Public Schools* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976). However, the I.S. 201 eruption has had less scholarly attention in these works.

⁷⁶ See Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*, Chapter 2.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 26.

some levels of self-governance and autonomy on their schools.⁷⁸ Although primarily taking place in East Harlem, this incident provides an apt snapshot of the broader Harlem community's level of anger, exhaustion, and, above all, (continued) desire for better schools for their children.

Furthermore, decades of employment discrimination, housing segregation, public housing neglect, political isolation, white flight, and countless other acts of institutionalized racism of the state (and personal acts of racism from its key figures) from the turn of the 20th century to the 1960s contributed to the deficit description of Harlem put forth by HARYOU and historians.⁷⁹ And, of course, interwoven into this structural racism is the aforementioned educational neglect which generations of Harlemites had been subjected to without improvement or proper attention. Ultimately, what is most important to understand is that scholars have in part framed the late 1960s as a time of turmoil in Harlem education. Schools serving Black and brown students continued to be poor quality—in pedagogy, in curriculum, in physical conditions, in teacher quality, and so on—and the city's failure to properly integrate its schools in the decade prior following *Brown v. Board of Education* further exacerbated parents and community activists' desire to take action in new ways. It is within this combined context of lack of quality schooling options in Harlem (as demonstrated, among many factors, by high dropout rates) and deeply entrenched poverty and racism created by overarching state-sanctioned discrimination, in which

⁷⁸ The connections between community control discourse and Harlem Prep will be examined in chapter 9.

⁷⁹ The list of relevant literature is large. For generations of employment discrimination, see Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Or Does It Explode?: Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). For greater discussion of how federal programs helped white Americans in the New Deal that maintained and exacerbated the Black-white wealth gap, see Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001). For many examples of housing segregation and isolation in and of Harlem, see Nicolas Dagen Bloom, *Public Housing That Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), and Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Most recently, see McGruder, *Race and Real Estate*, in describing Harlem's initial housing boom and segregation at the turn of the century; Although now a classic text, Kenneth Clark's, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*, 2nd ed., (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1989), also describes, in part, the institutionalized racism in all sectors of society.

Harlem Prep emerged.

Finally, most relevant to Harlem Prep’s emergence, however, and certainly just as pressing to Harlem parents who wanted to see their children succeed academically, was the fact that no public high schools existed in Central Harlem in the first place. When Harlem Prep opened its doors in 1967, it was the only tuition-free high school in the immediate Central Harlem neighborhood and remained so throughout its independent existence.⁸⁰ Therefore, while the HARYOU Report’s statistics describe elementary and more prominently, junior high schools, it similarly painted a broad, bleak portrait of secondary school achievement for Harlem’s kids. “Less than half of Central Harlem’s youth seem destined to complete high school [elsewhere in New York City],” Clark and his team wrote, “and of those that do, most will join the ranks of those with no vocational skills, no developed talents, and, consequently, little or no future.”⁸¹

Despite these school conditions and neglect from the largely white New York City Board of Education, Harlem Prep’s early school leaders knew that these characterizations and prognostications about Harlem’s young people were far from being preordained. Eventual headmaster Edward Carpenter, a longtime educator in Harlem who had witnessed students’ untapped potential, knew that students were regularly pushed out of school by a system that failed them—not the other way around. In fact, it was this narrative about Harlem as a place of despair that Carpenter and his colleagues deliberately—and rightly—worked to push against. New York City and beyond would witness Black and brown excellence. “A high percentage of drop-outs have high intelligence and in many cases high reading abilities,” Carpenter explained, adding that

⁸⁰ It is important to recognize that various Catholic schools existed in the area, although they were not free.

⁸¹ HARYOU, *Youth in the Ghetto*, 188; Many scholars have similarly relied on HARYOU for this context.

“many have extraordinary leadership capabilities” which are rarely engaged.⁸² Harlem was not just—or even primarily—a place of despair, but a place of hope. Instead, Harlem was a neighborhood with a long, rich history of activism, and it was ripe for the emergence of a school like Harlem Prep that would join the community’s multi-generation activist tradition.⁸³

This robust activist tradition had always been present in the realm of education, particularly in the decades leading up to and during the time of Harlem Prep. For example, whether it was Ella Baker organizing the “Young People’s Forum” for Harlem teens and building adult education advocacy groups in the 1930s, parents and activists protesting school segregation (plus fighting *for* multicultural curricula, the hiring of Black teachers, and the removal of racist textbooks) in the 1940s, or the “Harlem Nine” mothers refusing to send their children to school to boycott school segregation in the 1950s, Harlem’s legacy of activism had always been filled with educational efforts.⁸⁴ Harlem was also the home of the labor movement led by A. Phillip Randolph

⁸² “Harlem Prep Report,” p. 4, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

⁸³ Although beyond the scope of this introduction, it is important to recognize Harlem’s long history of rich cultural activity and lively activism—of which Harlem Prep can certainly be seen as a part of. For example, dating back to the 1920s activism on Marcus Garvey, see Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) to more recent icons operating in Harlem such as Stokely Carmichael in the 1970s, see Peniel E. Joseph, *Stokely: A Life* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2014). Similarly, see Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), who describes the life of activist Ella Baker, including her time in Harlem leading the NAACP branch for better schools. In the 1960s and 1970s, books such as Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005) and Marable, *Malcolm X*, situate themselves in Harlem, too, with the latter providing rich descriptions of Harlem’s dynamism through the perspective of Malcolm X.

⁸⁴ For Ella Baker’s work around school equity in Harlem, see Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, 69-71, who describes the life of activist Ella Baker, including her time in Harlem leading the NAACP branch for better schools; For 1940s activism around segregation and for better schools, see Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 241-249. See also Lauri Johnson, “A Generation of Women Activists: African American Female Educators in Harlem, 1930-1950,” *Journal of African American History* 89, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 223–40; For scholarship on the “Harlem Nine” mothers and 1958 school boycott, see Adina Back, “Exposing the Whole Segregation Myth”: *The Harlem Nine and New York City’s School Desegregation Battles*,” in *Freedom North*, 65-91; and Jennifer Forest, “The 1958 Harlem School Boycott: Parental Activism and the Struggle for Educational Equity in New York City,” *Urban Review* 40, no. 1 (March 2008): 21–41.

during the 1940s and 1950s, which was closely tied to the teachers pushing for better schools.⁸⁵ “The postwar legal agenda around racial equality in education was not simply or primarily a top-down imposition but instead grew from local agitation,” urban historian Thomas Sugrue explains, adding that, “Harlem seemed a natural place to challenge segregation” in the post-war period.⁸⁶ As the Civil Rights Movement coalesced in the 1960s, this line of activism continued—and, it was students and young people who often took the lead in this continued push for educational equity. “This was an era of youth revolt,” asserts Martha Biondi in *Black Revolution on Campus*, where she describes, in part, the two-week student protest at City College in Central Harlem that forced the university to accept more students of color.⁸⁷ Only a year prior, historian Stefan Bradley describes the now-infamous Columbia University protests where Black (and white) students successfully prevented the university from building a gym on Morningside Park, a cherished community space.⁸⁸ In East Harlem, too, the Young Lords Party, made up primarily of Puerto Rican young adult activists, “initiated campaigns for improved schooling facilities and bilingual education programs” in their community.⁸⁹ Of course, this agency of young people centered on education coincided with a more general eruption of radical energy occurring on the streets of Harlem. From the well-known stories of Black Panther-inspired activism and the Nation of Islam in Harlem or, as Nicholas Juravich and others explain, the stories of less-known Black and Latino/a professionals who tirelessly pushed for everything from better schools to better jobs to

⁸⁵ Marable, *Malcolm X*, 54-55.

⁸⁶ Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2009), 199, 181.

⁸⁷ Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*, 27.

⁸⁸ See, most prominently, Stefan M. Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

⁸⁹ Johanna L. del C Fernandez, “Radicals in the Late 1960s| A History of the Young Lords Party in New York City, 1969--1974” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2005), 49. For more about the Young Lords, see Darrel Wanzer-Serrano, *The New York Young Lords and the Struggle for Liberation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015).

better local representation, activism was everywhere.⁹⁰ As Manning Marable concluded, Harlem was “the cosmopolitan center for black political activity, not only in America but worldwide.”⁹¹ Thus, when Eugene Callender—himself a well-known local activist who created educational programs, job assistance, and other relief programs through his church—decided to start a prep school in Harlem, such an endeavor was part and parcel of the activist, and particularly *educational* activist, bloodlines of the community. And, even more, Black Harlemites were part of a proud legacy of self-education dating back generations from the antebellum era to Reconstruction to the early 20th century.⁹²

If economic indicators and scholarly descriptions of Harlem’s educational strife paint a deficit-oriented portrait, the community’s generative role in fighting for better schools and a better future presents a much fuller, more nuanced, and balanced portrait of Harlem. This fuller understanding of Harlem, in turn, has helped historians of education better understand this iconic Black community. In fact, bringing to the forefront Harlem’s rich history and the agency of its residents helps better explain how a school built on hope, such as Harlem Prep, could rise and flourish. It was this hope that young people often felt in Harlem, despite the rhetoric of outsiders and others. “Harlem was a very stimulating community—[there] was a lot of innovative stuff going on. It was a very progressive community—it was a lot of ideas,” describes Sterling Nile

⁹⁰ See, for example, among many on Black Power-inspired activism in Harlem, Peniel E. Joseph, ed., *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 256-258; and for grassroots activism in Harlem, see Nicholas Juravich, “The Work of Education Community-Based Educators in Schools, Freedom Struggles, and the Labor Movement, 1953-1983” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2017).

⁹¹ Marable, *Malcolm X*, 54; See also, among others, Ogbar, *Black Power*.

⁹² Black Americans have long fought for education. See, for example, Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); and Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

today, a Harlem Prep alumnus. Nile, who grew up and spent his adolescence in Harlem, recalls the neighborhood as a unique cultural and political achievement. He explains that Harlem had:

The most advanced stuff musically, the most advanced basketball players, advanced art, advanced everything... it was [all] happening in Harlem. You just couldn't help but be influenced or in some way touched by it. It was part of your timeline and part of your development. And even though there were pockets [of] poverty, we didn't really know we were poor... I had a colorful childhood—a beautiful childhood.⁹³

While every young person who grew up in Harlem had his or her own individual experiences that may or may not match Nile's, it is this Harlem description in which Harlem Prep also grew and prospered. Although the individual struggles and the broader Black freedom struggle all shaped Harlem Prep and the lives of its students, so, too, did feelings of hope. Coming full circle to Ralph Ellison's astute prose, this dualistic understanding of struggle and hope at Harlem Prep perhaps reflects the story of Harlem as a neighborhood more broadly—and it is the latter perspective that should not be forgotten.

Perhaps Harlem Prep student Robert Connor, writing in *40 Acres and a Mule*, a student-written and student-organized newspaper during the 1960s, best describes how struggle, but above all, *hope*, defined Harlem in the eyes of a young person. In a column about the rise of drug addictions in Harlem, Connor recognizes the “frustration and change in the world and the community.”⁹⁴ Yet, his long column does not emphasize struggles in Harlem, but instead, shines a well-deserved spotlight on the collaborative work of various community members who had voluntarily opened a center to help students with narcotics. Connor's article depicts a community

⁹³ Sterling Nile, interviewed by author, Ibrahim Ali, and Christopher Brooks, March 4, 2015, New York, NY.

⁹⁴ Robert Connor, “Community and Narcotic Action Center,” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, Vol. 1, No. 7, July, August 1968, p. 7, Box 10, Folder 6-9, NYUL Papers.

steeped in kindness, generosity, and promise. Connor, who would go on to attend SUNY-New Paltz and be part of the university's founding class of students in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), also penned another column about Harlem that spoke to the community's vibrancy in the same July 1968 edition.⁹⁵ The column's title read: "Harlem is a summer festival."⁹⁶ Following Connor's lead (and without neglecting the ways in which adversity influenced the Harlem Prep story), it is in the context of this "festival"—one of ideas, activism, community, and, most of all, hope—that my dissertation unfolds.

Methodological Limitations and Shortcomings in Telling This Story

This dissertation relies on over 600 primary source documents, collected, examined, and organized over six-plus years, from more than a half dozen archives in New York and Texas. These documents range from memos, letters, grant proposals, budgets, curricula, promotional pamphlets, reports, essays, graduation programs, and more.⁹⁷ These primary sources, a majority from the perspective of Harlem Prep administrators and board of trustee members, were often private correspondence, which provide particular insights about these key individuals' thinking in comparison to materials intended for public viewing. The different documents' intended

⁹⁵ "SUNY New Paltz - Black Studies: Building on a Proud Tradition,"

<https://www.newpaltz.edu/blackstudiesproudtradition/first-world-graduation/>. Connor, along with his fellow 1968 alumnus from Harlem Prep, Gerald Loftin, were two of the first students to be part of the university's "Project A" program which sought to enroll students of color as part of a summer institute prior to the fall term. This became the precursor to the college's EOP program, which was officially recognized as a SUNY New Paltz program in 1969.

⁹⁶ Robert Connor, "Harlem is a Summer Festival," *Forty Acres and a Mule*, Vol. 1, No. 7, July, August 1968, p. 3, Box 10, Folder 6-9, NYUL Papers.

⁹⁷ These archives are: Rockefeller Archive Center in Tarrytown, New York (materials from both the Rockefeller Foundation and Ford Foundation); Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscripts Archive (Carnegie Corporation records); Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin (ExxonMobil Historical Collection); Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (New York Urban League records); Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Archives at New York University (miscellaneous documents); and the New York City Board of Education Collection at the Municipal Archives (as Harlem Prep was in frequent discussion with board officials).

audience and Harlem Prep administrators' various reasons for writing affected how I examined them; for example, a private unsolicited letter from headmaster Ed Carpenter to a philanthropic funder had different goals (and might use different language) than an informal memo to his fellow administrators that might read more candidly about a particular issue that they were facing. I also examined nearly 250 newspaper articles and clippings, primarily (but not exclusively) from *The New York Times* and *The New York Amsterdam News*—which offer diverging views in their commentary on the school's triumphs, financial struggles, and community relations. Supplemental primary source materials include a report funded by the U.S. Office of Education by education scholar Edmund W. Gordon, doctoral dissertations by headmaster Carpenter and administrator Hussein Ahdieh, and promotional pamphlets produced by corporate supporters. This rich archival material provides the basis for this dissertation.

Still, despite this exhaustive archival research, the many voices and perspectives that are missing from the archives—"the historical record" that American historian Jill Lepore describes as being "maddeningly uneven, asymmetrical, and unfair"—present two significant methodological issues in this dissertation.⁹⁸

Perhaps the most glaring issue is that the story told by the archives is missing the most important voices: students. Ultimately, at its core, Harlem Prep is a story about young people, and these stories—the triumphs, feelings, thoughts, struggles—of these students were largely absent (or, when included, selectively inserted by journalists or maybe chosen by Harlem Prep advocates.) Thus, I turned to oral history, with all the methodology's challenges and opportunities. One of these challenges is my emotional proximity to my more than two-dozen interviewees. Over the course of this project, what turned into a research endeavor became a labor of love—a quest to share a robust story that had been told only in pictures and anecdotes

⁹⁸ Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the United States* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2018), 4.

from those who were involved more than fifty years ago and the many thousands of Harlem community members who remember the school only in their recollections. As this journey unfolded, former Harlem Prep students became confidants, many of whom then referred me to their former classmates to interview. Oral historians such as Valerie Yow have written about the potential obstacles of “liking” interviewees too much, and the (unfounded) perception that becoming invested in their stories can shirk historical objectivity and rigor.⁹⁹ Like Yow and others who criticize this perspective, I agree that becoming attached to the Harlem Prep story actually enabled me to understand Harlem Prep in ways that would be impossible to do so if I remained “outside” the subject.¹⁰⁰ Still, it *is* true that I was continuously presented with interviewees’ overwhelming positive remembrances of Harlem Prep. While my perceived attachment was not an issue in my mind, being able to critically analyze these favorable views on Harlem Prep was.

In addition, another challenge that I confronted is central to age-old debates in oral history: understanding the conditions in which memories are created, or, in other words, how stories that alumni remembered (and did not remember) shaped what I learned about Harlem Prep more broadly. As Alessandro Portelli explains, “memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active creation of meaning.”¹⁰¹ And, as Kathleen Blee adds, “Meanings are created in social and political contexts; memory is not a solitary act.”¹⁰² Here, the memories that former

⁹⁹ See, for example, Valerie Yow, “Do I Like Them Too Much: Effects of the oral history interview on the interviewer and vice-versa,” in *The Oral History Reader*, Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, eds., 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006); Similar to historians such as Alan Peshkin, I disagree with the notion of objectivity or the idea that recognizing subjectivity leads to inaccurate history. For a classic analysis of the lack of subjectivity in historical work, see Alan Peshkin, “In Search of Subjectivity – One’s Own,” *Educational Researcher* 17, no. 7 (1988): 17–21.

¹⁰⁰ See Alice Kessler Harris, quoted in Yow, “Do I Like Them Too Much,” 56.

¹⁰¹ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: From and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 52.

alumni recalled, many decades later, were not new memories; they had been constructed over time, in ways that reflected their experiences at Harlem Prep but also reflected what was important to them and had stayed in their conscience. Thus, while each oral history was reliable in that it reflected the truth of the storyteller, each oral history was also not the full Harlem Prep story—it could not be as information is naturally lost or forgotten over time. Moreover, the political moment that we spoke in and the “interview dynamics” of a (young) white man interviewing an elder Black (or Latino/a or bi-racial) man or woman, too, influenced the stories that were told to me.¹⁰³ All of these factors affect the ways in which I understood Harlem Prep through alumni’s eyes.

How did I best discern these largely favorable narratives and take this awareness about incomplete memories into account? First, I worked to record the narratives and speak with as broad of range of students as possible. For example, I sought out students from each graduating class, starting in 1967 until the school’s closure (as an independent school) in 1974, to gain perspectives on the school across its existence. I also sought out students with different ethnic and educational backgrounds—Black students, Latino/a students, even the few white students who attended, as well as students who received general diplomas and those who left or were pushed out of school for varying reasons.¹⁰⁴ Finally, I interviewed both men and women, and

¹⁰² Kathlee Blee, “Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics: Lessons From Oral Histories of the Klan,” in *The Oral History Reader*, Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, eds., 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 324.

¹⁰³ For more about these latter “interview dynamics” regarding cultural and racial exchanges, see Valerie R. Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers), 2008. Plus, there is also my affiliation with Columbia University, which has a long, fraught history with the Harlem community, to consider. These dynamics perhaps played a role in the stories the interviewees told, in positive, negative, and unknown ways; For a more nuanced analysis of the process of interviewing Harlem Prep alumni, see Barry M. Goldenberg, “Rethinking Historical Practice and Community Engagement: Researching Together with ‘Youth Historians,’” *Rethinking History* 23, no. 1 (2019): 52-77.

¹⁰⁴ Until the early 2000s, the New York City Board of Education granted “general diplomas” for students who graduated high school but did not meet the requirements to attend college. A minority of Harlem Prep students, even

students who were part of different social groups during their attendance and still today. (Of course, issues of accessibility and availability affected my interview selection of students, and despite my best efforts, it is not possible to know if my small sample size accurately reflected the 750-plus students over the school's tenure. Plus, I recognize that who is willing to talk to me also *shapes* this sample—after all, these were alumni who volunteered their stories.) Still, to address the issue of constant positive recollections, through the many hundreds of pages of transcripts, I looked for patterns: which of these stories, from different students across different years at Harlem Prep, aligned and/or were consistent? Which narratives, if any, contradicted or contrasted each other? (Over the course of these six-plus years, I also have had countless in-person conversations, off the record, with at least a dozen or more former alumni. These additional conversations have further helped me validate and contextualize the on-record oral history interviews.) Then, I juxtaposed these stories with the archival and periodical material: which student narratives support conclusions made by Carpenter, other administrators, and newspaper journalists? Were there various themes of students' stories that could be verified by matching the records of the era in my archival database? I also have worked to relate students' stories with secondary source material, too. Furthermore, I have made my work-in-progress visible to my interviewees as much as I possibly could. Not only have I shared my conclusions with alumni in numerous social gatherings, but I maintain an online web presence where I share periodic updates—as well as my scholarship—with these former students for their candid comments or criticisms.¹⁰⁵ Ultimately, I have carefully considered and analyzed all of my oral

though headmaster Edward Carpenter considered them in the same light since college was not an option, received general diplomas. See Chapter 2 and Chapter 6 for more information about the student body.

¹⁰⁵ Part of this process can be seen at uncoverharlemprep.com/updates, while other parts of this process has been done through personal communication via e-mail, phone, and social media over the course of this project. Of course, these methods are certainly imperfect as I have not been able to always reach alumni nor do they always have the extra availability to offer comments or criticism.

histories sources inserted in this dissertation with scrutiny, verifying themes and common threads throughout my different sources as rigorously—and as honestly—as possible.

The other methodological issue created by the archives—and perhaps exacerbated by my own positionality and particular lens as a man—is the role that gender played at Harlem Prep and in my analysis *of* Harlem Prep. Although women’s voices are present in my dissertation through oral histories and newspaper coverage (albeit, unfortunately, less so than men), they are almost entirely absent in the archives. For example, while the work of arguably the most important administrator, Ann Carpenter, is present in the archive, her voice is not, despite being the “engine” of the school according to her daughter today.¹⁰⁶ Neither are the voices of vice principal Mother Ruth Dowd or of the many female board of trustee members.¹⁰⁷ These silences are not surprising. Since much of the correspondence that I draw on in the archives is between male-led philanthropic foundations or corporations and either headmaster Ed Carpenter or board of trustee chairman Robert Mangum, the absence of women’s voices are constructed in a way that makes women only *appear* less salient in the Harlem Prep story even though other evidence suggests their power and presence.¹⁰⁸ Thus, I strive to not only recognize women’s archival silence, but to understand how that silence is constructed in hopes of interpreting it in pursuit of the full story.

In addition to echoing Jill Lepore’s wise contention about inherent unfair gaps in the archive, the role that women played in the Black freedom struggle more broadly has too often been left out or diminished. More recently, scholars such as Keisha Blain and Ashley Farmer, among others, have tried to correct this long overdue scholarly void and insert Black women,

¹⁰⁶ Casey Carpenter, interviewed by author, June 6, 2017, Montclair, NJ.

¹⁰⁷ Minus some exceptions, in which Ann Carpenter, Mother Ruth Dowd, and one female board member have a handful of correspondences in the nearly 600 primary source archive database.

¹⁰⁸ For example, in the next chapter, I explain how vice principal Mother Ruth Dowd conducted the interview of Ed Carpenter, who was joined by Ann.

specifically, into the broader narrative discourse.¹⁰⁹ For example, as Farmer writes in her recent book *Remaking Black Power*, already by the mid-1960s, “black women’s various strands of activism became part of the fabric of the Black Power movement,” and that Black women activists still are often seen as “marginal figures within organizations or collectives.”¹¹⁰ In a similar vein, the archival record wrongly suggests that women also had a marginal role in Harlem Prep’s story—a false narrative that becomes clear after years of deep analysis on the school. Still, the absence of archival material presents an issue that I wholly recognize but, unlike these aforementioned important works, do not fully resolve.

Not only are women under recognized in the Black freedom struggle and in surviving documents on Harlem Prep, but the topic of sexism more broadly is also too often ignored or minimized. Whereas discussions about racism were commonly part of the discourse at Harlem Prep, discussions about sexism seemed to be less so—and, as a result, discussions of gender equality are also far too scarce in this dissertation. As scholars have begun to note in recent revisions of the Civil Rights Movement, for all its many achievements, this movement was also tainted by rampant sexism.¹¹¹ So, too, was the rise of Black Power movement that overlapped with Harlem Prep’s tenure. “The Black Power movement elevated male leadership,” writes historian Martha Biondi, “reflecting the patriarchy of the larger society as well as the tactics and

¹⁰⁹ For example, see Keisha N. Blain, *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), and Ashley D. Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2017). One scholarly turn in this direction almost two decades prior is Back, “Exposing the ‘Whole Segregation Myth’,” in *Freedom North*. For earlier works, see also Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin, eds., *Sisters in the Struggle: African-American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: NYU Press, 2001); and Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith, eds., *Gender and the Civil Rights Movement* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

¹¹⁰ Farmer, *Remaking Black Power*, 9-10.

¹¹¹ See Collier-Thomas and Franklin, *Sisters in the Struggle*; and Ling and Monteith, *Gender and the Civil Rights Movement*.

ideology of the late 1960s Black liberation movement.”¹¹² Harlem Prep, both consciously or unconsciously, reflected this patriarchy in practice, too (beyond issues with the archives today). Furthermore, due to this legacy of scholarship that still minimizes women in the Black freedom struggle and downplays this sexism, much of the literature that I contextualize Harlem Prep with also has these gender imbalances. In turn, these scholarly transgressions have filtered into my own dissertation, in which I explore and juxtapose Harlem Prep with works where women are notably absent. Harlem Prep, despite its principles of equality, operated within an era and within groups where sexism was common—opinions of inequality that Harlem Prep was not immune from and that many students exhibited, both publicly and privately, through their various group affiliations.¹¹³

I am cognizant of these methodological barriers and try to remedy these shortcomings as much as possible. One way that I do this is through including women’s voices as best I can, through more than a half-dozen interviews and other primary source materials. Throughout this dissertation, I also try to pay attention to absences in the record where gender analysis seems to be missing—there are often subtle clues from alumni that suggest that the lack of gender equality was an ongoing tension at Harlem Prep and in larger activist circles. Ultimately, what is left out of the official narrative often speaks as much volumes about what is included, and I attempt to point out these gaps as frequently as I can. Still, despite these attempts, to my great chagrin, the voices of women in this dissertation are underrepresented and the role that that gender and/or sexism played at Harlem Prep (in the context of the era) not fully understood. Thus, it is important to make note of the methodological (and personal) barriers that generate this

¹¹² Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 26.

¹¹³ For example, as discussed in later chapters, some student activist groups at Harlem Prep, such as the “Five Percenters,” believed women were inferior. For more discussion on student groups, see Chapter 6.

deficiency, including a lack of focus of gender in some of my oral history interviews. I take responsibility for them and hope that future works on Harlem Prep, such as journal articles and book publication, can rectify my shortcomings in this dissertation.

There is one more methodological clarification to note about Harlem Prep: my characterization of Harlem Prep throughout the dissertation. First, historians' natural disposition is to be uncertain until evidence is provided—and I too began this project with a blank canvas, ready to query and interrogate Harlem Prep with rigor. Over time, what my research suggested to me was that this institution was overwhelmingly successful in reaching its *own* goals of educating young people, sending them to college, and, ultimately, changing lives according to administrators, teachers, and students who attended. Still, I do not intend to ascribe success (or even define what it means), nor did I seek out a narrative of “success.” However, it is my commitment as a researcher to recognize these successes as they occurred, even more so in the context of the racist ways in which Black youth and Black institutions have far too long been portrayed.

To be clear, I do not intend to suggest that Harlem Prep was a perfect institution—documenting the school's shortcomings, and recognizing all elements of the story, is also my responsibility as a researcher. The school, its leaders, and its students all made mistakes, some big, some small; moreover, the school, like any school, had flaws, some noticeable at the time, others only noticeable now in hindsight. (Perhaps gender issues were one of them.) Nor do I intend to suggest an absence of conflict between primary actors or the lack of hardship among students—both undoubtedly existed in large measures. Instead, I seek only to recognize that research strongly suggests that Harlem Prep was an institution that was significant to both the people who went there and the community it served. To deny this fact would be to deny what I believe is an accurate, and complete, representation of Harlem Prep's story. It is the job of my writing and this

dissertation to convince the reader of these truths based all that I have seen, read, researched, and examined myself the last six-plus years.

Finally, in the history of education field specifically, I strive to consider the fact that I believe historical research on education has lagged behind other educational disciplines with regards to in-depth scholarship about what was right inside schools.¹¹⁴ While deficit narratives of students and communities like Harlem have largely been pushed aside by important new scholarship of the last few decades, there is still too little research on a *granular* level that shows how schools—teachers, students, administrators—cultivated powerful learning by overcoming these structural barriers that historians have so aptly explained.¹¹⁵ By virtue of focusing on these essential structural issues, inadvertently, less is known in detail about the sagacity of students and teachers themselves in the ways that Carpenter and others have described above (and, to be sure, that many historians of education today certainly know to be true as well).¹¹⁶ Ultimately, through

¹¹⁴ See for example, in other disciplines, Ernest Morrell, Rudy Duenas, Veronica Garcia, and Jorge Lopez, *Critical Media Pedagogy: Teaching for Achievement in City Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2013) and Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, *The Art of Critical Pedagogy*, both of which provide concrete examples of effective teaching and learning, student achievement, and larger ideas of what education can be beyond school problems.

¹¹⁵ For example, urban historians like Ansley T. Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis* and Matt Delmont, *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016) have recently illustrated how, in the case of Erickson's work, specific policy choices by bureaucrats and neighborhood segregation prevented meaningful school integration, and in the case of Delmont's work, how the media, courts, and national politicians also prevented integration from happening due to caring more about the desires of whites than Blacks. Other scholars have described how the legal system has prevented more equitable school funding, such as James E. Ryan, *Five Miles Away, A World Apart: One City, Two Schools, and the Story of Educational Opportunity in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), or how the breaking of political alliances by the 1960s and 1970s erased the opportunity for later meaningful urban school reform, such as Jeffrey Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907-1981* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

¹¹⁶ There are certainly some historians who have focused on what administrators, teachers, and students have done well. For example, Johanek and Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School*, describe the work of students during the 1930s and 1940s, and how they were able to overcome adversity through an engaged curriculum and community involvement. Even the work of John P. Spencer, *In the Crossfire: Marcus Foster and the Troubled History of American School Reform* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), illustrates (in part), through the biography of Black superintendent Marcus Foster, one administrator's steadfast commitment to high quality urban education and his ideas—in theory and what they looked like in practice—for making that goal possible. Books like Tom Roderick, *A School of Our Own: Parents, Power, and Community at the*

my investigation of multiculturalism at Harlem Prep, I hope to provide new layers of information about students and other school actors of this time period that have been obscured from recent history of education scholarship.¹¹⁷

How This Story Is Told: A Brief Overview of Scope and Sequence

It seems only right to share how my accidental “discovery” of Harlem Prep shapes the form of this dissertation. Almost seven years ago, I was at the renowned Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, conducting research on a topic not related to schools in the 1960s or 1970s, when I asked the librarian for assistance in locating materials. The librarian provided a few suggestions, and then, handed me a DVD that she thought I might find “interesting”—it only had (an incorrect) date and a title, with no other bibliographic information. After a long day of researching, on a whim, I decided to—quickly—skim the film. To my surprise, footage of an independent school called Harlem Prep flashed before my eyes. I was instantly curious. I went home that night, assuming that there were articles, books, and copious research—maybe even websites or documentaries—about this institution and its impact on Harlem. I was sorely mistaken. After weeks of scouring the literature on the history of education in Harlem, Black schools, and civil rights era activism, the story of Harlem Prep was nowhere to be found.

Since the history of Harlem Prep is largely nonexistent in current scholarship (or in

East Harlem Block Schools (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001), also explore what teachers and communities were able to tangibly do to build a powerful learning environment for students.

¹¹⁷ Steven Gregory, *Black Corona: Race and Politics of Place in an Urban Community* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) has a similar goal. In his study on Queens, New York, he sought to reframe how scholars conceptualize Black urban life through the stories of its citizens. He explicitly challenges the idea that the Black “ghetto” was only about drugs, crime, or family disintegration that has been the subject of past research, and instead, seeks to shine a light on other aspects of Black life ranging from political activity, work and leisure, and “other everyday dimensions.” Albeit different in scope, I also intend for my dissertation to provide new perspectives on school life, learning, and school-community building in ways that are less common in history of education scholarship of the era now that scholars have reframed the debate away from a culture of poverty explanation.

popular knowledge), this dissertation also seeks to answer general questions about the school itself beyond historiographical concerns: who helped establish and sustain the school, and why did they do so?; who attended and what were students' stories?; what were teachers' pedagogical practices and the school's curriculum?; what were its shortcomings, mistakes, and/or institutional struggles?; and what were the primary factors for being able to effectively educate and graduate a majority of students and for its renown in Harlem and beyond? These questions are intended to inform my overarching curiosity about this institution: why was Harlem Prep an "emotional experience," in the words of a Ford Foundation program officer, that was "unlike any other educational institution [he had] visited" before?¹¹⁸ Just as I did in my long journey excavating this school's history in this dissertation, I explore the many facets and details of Harlem Prep as an educational institution. My curiosity to write as fully as possible this school's story cradles this dissertation from start to finish. Thus, I hope to explain Harlem Prep's existence—an important endeavor on its own considering the centuries-long disenfranchisement of people of color and their historical agency.

The Harlem Prep story also broadens scholars'—and my own—goals of recognizing youth potential and, most of all, hearing their voices. As one of my mentors recently wrote, "we are the product of other people's expectations," and Harlem Prep became a prime example of adhering to that important creed.¹¹⁹ The school's administrators and teachers believed deeply in the young people that they served (who the public school system and society at large had previously deemed as "failure[s]").¹²⁰ Considering that students are at the core—or at least should be—of any

¹¹⁸ Memo from Joshua Smith to Edward Meade, October 13, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹¹⁹ Tyrone C. Howard, et al, "The Counter Narrative: Reframing Success of High Achieving Black and Latino Males in Los Angeles County," in *UCLA Black Male Institute Report* (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, 2017), 4.

educational institution, this dissertation intends to always keep student voice at the forefront throughout my broader institutional inquiries and focus on the school's multicultural philosophy. What were the stories of these students who had been marginalized in their previous schools and why did they seek to attend Harlem Prep? How did Harlem Prep affect them (and how did students, in turn, influence the school's direction, including teacher and administrator action)? In contemporary education research, scholars have increasingly sought to prioritize the voices of young people. As education scholar Tyrone Howard writes in a report highlighting the voices of Black and brown youth, it is important to "take the time to center their voices, hear their stories, and listen to their takeaways about how they have accomplished what they are doing."¹²¹ In more recent historical works too, historians have sought to recover the narratives of young people that have been largely suppressed or lost in time.¹²² I hope my dissertation follows these paths.

Narratively, this dissertation is broken up into three sections, constituting a beginning, a middle, and a conclusion to the Harlem Prep story. Part I, *The Origins of Harlem Prep, 1966-1968*, documents the school's beginnings. Chapter 1 explains how the New York Urban League founded Harlem Prep, and the mechanisms through which this organization—led by Executive Director Eugene Callender—created the school. Specifically, this chapter provides details about

¹²⁰ John Hopkins, "Draft of MARC Assessment of Harlem Prep," March 19, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center.

¹²¹ Howard, "The Counter Narrative," 5. See also, Chapter 6: "Black Male Success" in Tyrone C. Howard, *Black Male(d): Peril and Promise in the Education of African American Males* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2014); For scholarship on the voices of young Black women, see, among many, Venus Evans-Winters, *Teaching Black Girls: Resiliency in Urban Classrooms* (New York: Peter Lang); and Valerie Kinloch, *Harlem on Our Minds: Place, Race, and the Literacies of Urban Youth* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010).

¹²² Historically, the ongoing Harlem Education History Project led by Ansley Erickson is one such notable effort, and her work and the project at large have strongly influenced my scholarship. See, for example, Erickson's upcoming chapter, HARYOU: An Apprenticeship for Young Leaders," in *Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling in a Black Community* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming). Furthermore, visit the Harlem History Education Project that she co-directs at <https://educatingharlem.cdrs.columbia.edu/omeka/>. This digital history project features digital exhibits, many of which center youth and/or emphasize youth voices; Other scholars who have consciously worked to include youth voice include Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*; Delmont, *Why Busing Failed*; Countryman, *Up South*, and many others.

Callender's first ideas for the school that emerged from his Street Academy Program, its first financial supporters and partnerships, and a timeline of its lead-up months. Most importantly, this chapter offers an initial peak into the school's original ideological makeup and purpose. A biographical sketch of Edward F. Carpenter, Harlem Prep's influential headmaster, is also included in this chapter. Chapter 2 outlines the inaugural year of the school in the Harlem Armory from fall 1967 to spring 1968, illustrating the key elements that would allow the school to grow in subsequent years. This chapter analyzes the initial employment of Carpenter's multicultural philosophy as well as explores Harlem Prep's first graduates through their poetry and writings.

Part II, *The Rise of Harlem Prep, 1968-1972*, makes up the heart of this dissertation, explaining in specific detail the school's various educational components during its most robust years of operation and the people who made the school possible. Toward this aim, Chapter 3 explores how Harlem Prep's open-space supermarket building operated and its significance to the school's multiculturalism. This chapter also analyzes the school's administrative structure and the roles of key administrators, paying particular attention to Ann Carpenter. Chapter 4 examines in-depth Harlem Prep's "radical multiculturalism," deciphering the multiple facets of both Ann and headmaster Edward Carpenter's multicultural vision primarily through archival documents and supplemental oral histories. This chapter compares the Carpenters' multiculturalism—and Harlem Prep more broadly—to other Black institutions emerging in the era, such as freedom schools and Pan African schools. This chapter also situates the school's multiculturalism within the history of multicultural education. Chapter 5 details Harlem Prep's diverse teaching force and educational program. It provides a granular look at the "teaching and learning" that occurred at Harlem Prep, exploring teachers' emancipatory pedagogy through anecdotes and experiences of former staff via oral history interviews and coinciding primary sources (including student records). This chapter

also examines the school's day-to-day workings, such as its Afro-centric curriculum, scheduling and programming, and the humanistic school culture. Chapter 6 focuses largely on Harlem Prep students: how did they get into the school and what were their experiences once they were there? Considering that Harlem Prep students were nontraditional students, this chapter shares case studies of young people who attended while also looking at diversity of the student body more broadly. This chapter also describes the outside commencement ceremony and its importance in greater detail. Chapter 7 examines the creation and sustenance of the school's diverse community coalition of supporters, ranging from Black activists and celebrities to white-owned businesses and philanthropies across racial and ideological lines. As an outside educational researcher asked at the time: "What is the philosophy which holds together the unlikely mix of students, staff, alumni, sponsors, fund raisers and other friends that constitute 'the Harlem Prep community'?"¹²³ This chapter seeks to answer this question. In turn, this chapter analyzes Harlem Prep within the larger landscape of educational philanthropy and the legacy of community control in New York City.

Part III, *The Descent of Harlem Prep, 1972-1974 and Beyond*, documents the school's financial decline and eventual merging with the New York City Board of Education. Chapter 8 focuses on Harlem Prep's financial duress, changing student population, and how shifts in the national environment (i.e., the turn toward conservatism) and political landscape affected the school's ability to raise money. This chapter also discusses Harlem Prep in relationship to the broader alternative school movement, small school movement, and free school ideology of the mid-1970s. Chapter 9 explores the final year at Harlem Prep as an independent school—including student stories, and a timeline of teacher and administrators' fight to keep the school afloat—as well as a description of the school's contentious merging with the Board of Education.

¹²³ John Hopkins, "Draft of MARC Assessment of Harlem Prep," March 19, 1970, Ford Foundation Records, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Rockefeller Archive Center.

This includes an analysis of the local educational politics of the city, with an emphasis on the racial politics of the time that may have influenced the school's closure and tension with public officials. This chapter also examines Harlem Prep in the context of broader changes happening in New York City and assesses the school's broader institutional aims. The dissertation ends with a conclusion and an epilogue. The conclusion recaps Harlem Prep's primary contributions to the history of education field. The conclusion also looks to the present: what can students, educators, parents, community members, and administrators learn from Harlem Prep today? Making connections to contemporary scholarship, how does Harlem Prep relate to current movements in the field of education and, most of all, toward how educational practitioners envision multicultural education? While the goal of this dissertation is historical, critically examining Harlem Prep also has very timely implications for improving urban education today across a variety of disciplines including, but not limited to sociology, curriculum and teaching, Afro-American studies, education policy, critical pedagogy, and urban education more broadly. Unfortunately, youth of color continue to be marginalized and research on how a school was able to engage "dropout" students, promote rigorous instruction, *and* cultivate an affirming school atmosphere remains relevant to educational scholars who similarly conduct research with a social justice purpose today. I believe this project offers "a usable past" filled with important commentary for contemporary educational research—if not broader public discourse on youth.¹²⁴ Finally, an epilogue provides a brief summary of the school's existence under the Board of Education from 1974 to 1982, and the legacy it left behind through its students. I believe that history can play powerful role in changing the way people think about not just the past, but the present and future. Thus, I hope that this dissertation on Harlem Prep not only provides rich historical contributions to the history of education field, but can also affect the way

¹²⁴ Eric Foner, "Forgotten Step Toward Freedom," *The New York Times*, December 30, 2007.

contemporary educational scholars examine young people and education in the present.

The Harlem Prep Story in Perspective

“We bring a piece of [Harlem Prep] with us in the world—through college and [now] our professional lives. *That’s* the legacy they left us,” explains Harlem Prep alumnus Aissatou Bey-Grecia today, referring to the teachers and administrators who undertook this novel educational experiment.¹²⁵ “It left an imprint,” adds alumnus Alberto Cappas. “Every day I think of Harlem Prep—it doesn’t leave my mind.”¹²⁶ Beyond my dissertation’s historiographical contributions and implications for educational stakeholders today, the story of Harlem Prep transcends these scholarly boundaries—its existence, and the legacy it left behind through its former students such as Bey-Grecia and Cappas, remind us about the eternality of powerful teaching and empowered learning. The quest for the opportunity to learn and for an equitable education has always been deeply engrained in the lineage of marginalized communities, for schools have often been the place where dreams of a better future began. From 1967 to 1974, Harlem Prep was that place for many hundreds of young people. (Schools, perhaps unfairly expected to do even more than in the past to provide economic, social, and political equality, still hold this elevated place in the hearts and mind of Americans, both real and imagined.¹²⁷) Above all, the story of Harlem Prep is a narrative about hopes, dreams, and a multicultural vision—people of all ethnicities, races, religions, and ideological beliefs working together to provide a high-quality, rigorous, and liberating education for young people so that those who wanted to learn could do so.¹²⁸ It is also

¹²⁵ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

¹²⁶ Alberto Cappas, interviewed by author, November 19, 2016, New York, NY.

¹²⁷ See, for example, Jennifer Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick, *The American Dream and the Public Schools* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

a timeless story about student potential and the brilliance of youth. More than fifty years later, this is a story that we as scholars and educators can learn from today. As the iconic Harlem writer James Baldwin once famously wrote: “History is literally present in all that we do.”¹²⁹

Even if the significance of the Harlem Prep experiment would not be understood for decades later, headmaster Edward Carpenter did seemingly know at the time that something special—in his eyes, at least—was happening. In 1969 in the early years of Harlem Prep, he alluded to an in-progress book about his educational philosophy of multiculturalism.¹³⁰ Then, later in life in the 1980s, he suggested that he—along with a student—write a book sharing the full story of Harlem Prep.¹³¹ Neither, unfortunately, ever came to fruition. Furthermore, in the midst of financial struggles in late 1972 where he thought the school might close, Carpenter wrote these poignant words: “How a school has been able to graduate 467 students [later over 750], all of whom were dropouts, and place them into college with skills sufficient to enable most of them to survive is a story that should be told.”¹³² Carpenter is, and has always been, right to want to share this story with the world, beyond its continued presence in the lives of alumni today. This story should indeed be told.

¹²⁸ And, as both qualitative and quantitative studies have proven time and time again, Black parents and communities have been more invested in education than any other group. See, for example, Angel L. Harris, *Kids Don't Want to Fail: Oppositional Culture and the Black-White Achievement Gap* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹²⁹ See James Baldwin, “Unnamable Objects, Unspeakable Crimes,” in *The White Problem in America*, ed. *Ebony* editors (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1966).

¹³⁰ “Unsung Hero Placed 164 Dropouts In College,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 1, 1969.

¹³¹ Martin Nur, interviewed by author, via phone, July 7, 2017, Los Angeles, CA. Nur recalls one of his last conversations with Carpenter in the 1980s about a plan to write a book together about Harlem Prep. However, the book never came to be because of scheduling, and Carpenter would pass away unexpectedly a few years later.

¹³² Harold Howe, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action, to McGeorge Bundy,” December 12, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Ford Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center.

PART I

The Origins of Harlem Prep, 1966-1968

Chapter One

Callender, Carpenter, and the Founding of Harlem Prep

“The school would represent more than quality education. It would become a symbol of educational hope.... The impact of such a plan would be revolutionary and decisive.”

–Dr. Eugene S. Callender, 1967¹

To understand Harlem Prep’s evolution into a multicultural institution and its eventual growth, it is necessary to first understand the school’s roots—the philosophies and stated purpose of the school’s early leaders and particularly its founding organization, the New York Urban League (NYUL). “The problem of youth in the ghetto is as large as life,” wrote the NYUL in a proposal for a new prep school in 1967. “All educational forces, public and private, must bring their resources to bear on the solution of the problem common to the whole of American society.”² To borrow the NYUL’s vernacular, if this “problem” was that the “educational system” had “rejected” young Black people and put them out of the streets, what was the NYUL’s solution? To the leaders of the National Urban League in 1967, that solution was an experimental “prep school” that would provide a “quality education” to Black teens.³ How did this school—which came to be known as Harlem Prep—come to fruition? Why did the NYUL focus so intently on education in

¹ “Harlem Prep and Street Academies NYUL Proposal,” p. 15, p. 5, October 11, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, 1900-2004, Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscripts (hereafter referred to as Carnegie Records). Technically, this proposal was written by the New York Urban League according to the title of this proposal. However, based on the tone and word choices of the document, in the context of who was director of the NYUL at the time, it seems almost certain that Dr. Eugene Callender wrote this proposal. Furthermore, since he brought the Street Academy Program (SAP) to the NYUL—it did not exist under their auspices before he arrived as director—the detail that he includes on the program also adds additional clues that this is his voice, speaking for the NYUL.

² Ibid, 3.

³ Ibid., 3, 1.

the first place? This chapter explores the New York Urban League and its idea for Harlem Prep, paying close attention to the League's ideology and educational goals under Executive Director Eugene S. Callender. Furthermore, this chapter also examines Callender's brainchild: an educational initiative called the Street Academy Program that Harlem Prep emanated from. Why did the NYUL establish the Street Academy Program and Harlem Prep, specifically? What were its leaders trying to accomplish? This chapter attempts to answer these questions and more, hoping to better understand the origins of Harlem Prep that have remained somewhat elusive even to alumni today.⁴ Fleshing out this starting point will, then, generate a proper record in which to assess whether Harlem Prep ultimately met its original goals explored throughout this dissertation.

The New York Urban League in Context

The story of the New York Urban League begins with its parent organization, the National Urban League. Founded in 1910 in New York City “based on the concept that an interracial, non-profit organization could successfully apply a social work approach to the health, housing and employment problems of the city's black community,” the Committee on Urban Conditions Among Negroes, as it was then known, sought to address the challenges that the growing number of Black migrants in New York City (and in Northern cities more broadly) were confronting.⁵ One year later, this committee merged with two other local committees, the Committee for the Improvement of Industrial Conditions Among Negroes in New York and the National League for the Protection of Colored Women, founded in 1906 and 1905, respectively. Together, these groups

⁴ Over the course of more than two dozen interviews, including those who attended Harlem Prep in its inaugural year, students unanimously were unclear on both the New York Urban League's specific role in founding the school or the extent of its role in its early development.

⁵ Catherine Hemenway, “The Story of the New York Urban League: 1919-1979 Sixty Years Of Service,” ed. Rita Robinson (New York: New York Urban League, 1979), 1, in the Seymour B. Durst Old York Library Collection, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University [CLIO]; National Urban League, “Mission and History,” 2016, <http://nul.iamempowered.com/who-we-are/mission-and-history>.

officially formed the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes in 1911, later shortening their name to just the National Urban League (NUL) in 1920.⁶ Touré Reed explains that in these founding years, the “League and its predecessors attempted to redress issues such as crime, delinquency, unemployment, overcrowded housing, and even race riots by facilitating black migrants' adjustment to the city.” Furthermore, in practice, “these activities consisted largely of projects intended to provide migrants both moral guidance and assistance in acquiring decent homes and jobs”—in line with an ideological belief in Black assimilation, and, as Reed argues, separate from a Booker T. Washington school of thought that advocated against Black migration.⁷ Early founders of the National Urban League disagreed with Washington’s view that the South was the natural home for Black Americans, and instead, believed that they should work to rectify issues in the burgeoning northern metropolises to make them more amenable.⁸ Still, the debate around the founding of the National Urban League and its philosophical roots—and its impact on Black politics and progress—has continued to be a source of scholarly inquiry and debate.⁹

Considering that the National Urban League was founded in New York City, the birth of

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Touré F. Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 13.

⁸ Ibid., 12-14.

⁹ See Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity*, which discusses, at length in his footnotes, about the primary Black voices around the NUL’s founding, such as Booker T. Washington and Robert Park, and their influence on each other. For example, Reed engages historian Alice O’Conner’s argument about assimilationism in Black thought in the early twentieth century. See Alice O’Conner, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001). There are a variety of other histories of the National Urban League that explore its founding and growth throughout the twentieth century. These include: Guichard Parris and Lester Brooks, *Blacks in the City: A History of the National Urban League* (New York: Littlefield & Brown, 1971), the first synthesis of the organization’s accomplishments; Nancy Weiss, *The National Urban League, 1910-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), chronicling the League’s founding specifically; and Jesse Thomas Moore, *A Search for Equality: The National Urban League, 1910-1961* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981), arguing that the NUL evolved from a more locally-focused reform organization to a national organization interested in racial issues. Most recently, Felix L. Armfield, *Eugene Kinckle Jones: The National Urban League and Black Social Work, 1910-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), describes the professionalization of Black social workers in the first half of the twentieth century in the NUL.

its separate New York chapter, however, is a bit foggier. The NUL, during these early years, sought to expand their “national outlook” and as a result, formed the New York Committee in the mid-1910s to allow League directors to focus on its national issues and this committee to (continue) to focus on neighborhood concerns. Yet, these efforts were seemingly to no avail; the National Urban League still “found itself operating increasingly as a local New York League” despite this separation. Thus, on October 29, 1919, the NYUL decided to incorporate the New York Committee as the New York Urban League, becoming one of the earliest affiliates along with the Brooklyn League on Urban Conditions that had become the first branch in 1917.¹⁰ (By 1944, the Brooklyn branch and the New York branch merged to officially become the Urban League of Greater New York.¹¹) Robust and well-staffed, the NYUL took on the ideological and philosophical beliefs of its parent organization. However, because of its previously established foundation in the city, New York Urban League leaders already had the wherewithal and resources to set their own specific priorities (even if most still lined up with its national counterpart).

In the following decades, the NYUL continued to advance various social programs, particularly housing and relief initiatives, well into the 1940s.¹² By the 1950s, however, the NYUL’s priorities began to shift away from the social reforms of the past not necessarily in ideology, but in execution and approach. “The prime strategy for the League in the ‘50s,” noted a 1979 history of the organization, “was to generate pressure on business, industry and government,” with a new focus on economic reforms and toward fighting discrimination more

¹⁰ Hemenway, “The Story of the New York Urban League,” 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 7-10. For example, the NYUL struggled during the Great Depression, like most non-profit organizations.

broadly in various sectors of society.¹³ One of those several sectors, of course, was education — and Harlem Prep and the NYUL’s Street Academy Program later emerged out of these goals. The New York Urban League saw its education work as a significant way not only to address the economic hardships of Black New Yorkers, particularly in Harlem, but to address the failure of the Board of Education to properly educate its youth.¹⁴ Yet, the League’s decision to engage in corporate partnerships is particularly noteworthy. The Street Academy Program (and Harlem Prep)—its signature education initiative for a brief moment—revolved around the League’s ability to partner with the business sector.

By the mid-1960s, then, the NYUL was at an interesting crossroads as the modern civil rights movement came into focus. Similar to other Black organizations across the ideological spectrum, the NYUL was trying to figure out how to best navigate the changing national landscape. Unlike during the prior decades where the League’s ideological orientation and priorities were rigid and straightforward, this was a period of malleability within the NYUL. On the one hand, the League’s national counterpart, as Touré Reed argues, was often charged, for good reason, by Black political activists as locating itself with more conservative voices of the Black freedom struggle and being “far removed from the concerns and dispositions of most blacks.”¹⁵ Reed’s description of the NUL as having “ties to white business and philanthropic organizations” that bothered many Black activists, seemingly characterized the New York Urban

¹³ Ibid, 11. For example, initiatives included integrating the baking industry and aviation industry, which the NYUL aggressively fought to do.

¹⁴ Ibid., 13. The NYUL was also involved in the community control battles of the time, too, and advocated on behalf of Harlem parents and community activists in their standoff against the Board of Education with regards to Intermediate School 201.

¹⁵ Reed, *No Alms but Opportunity*, 191; See also Nancy Weiss, *Whitney M. Young, Jr., and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 57–63, 99–104, where Weiss describes the NUL’s involvement in the March on Washington, but focuses on their measured behavior even within this mobilization.

League, too.¹⁶ (Reed does, however, acknowledge that this common narrative of the National Urban League is “far more complex” and not entirely accurate.¹⁷) Alexander J. Allen, the newly appointed executive director of the NYUL in 1964, pushed for these more moderate priorities of gradual neighborhood improvement through a handful of bi-racial partnerships, even if these efforts and partnerships were often exaggerated by local critics as being larger in scope than in reality. At a “time when the civil rights movement was inspiring rising hopes among blacks, Mr. Allen was a moderate voice,” wrote the *New York Times*, “calling for increased educational, housing and economic opportunities for minority groups in the city.”¹⁸ Not only was Allen well-connected in the business sphere and held graduate degrees from Yale and Columbia University, he previously served as associate executive director of the National Urban League and was in tune with the national organization’s ideology and goals.¹⁹ He was an individual with national connections and an elite background.

Still, during Allen’s three years at the helm of the NYUL, the League’s activities did reflect both of its previously-stated community-based goals into the early 1960s: they created economic programs that helped hundreds of Black and Puerto Ricans teens find work, as well as spoke out against discrimination. On the latter, for example, the NYUL formed a local council in Harlem to improve police-community relations and Allen himself spoke out strongly against police violence during the New York City uprising of 1964.²⁰ On balance, the impact—and

¹⁶ Ibid., 191.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ “Alexander J. Allen, 68, Headed Urban League,” *The New York Times*, October 1, 1984, <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/10/01/obituaries/alexanderjallen68-headed-urban-league.html>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Hemenway, “The Story of the New York Urban League,” 13; In the new book by Michael W. Flamm on the 1964 New York City uprising of Harlemites in response to another deadly encounter with police brutality in 1964, Flamm describes in rich detail how Executive Director Allen joined with leaders of the NAACP and CORE to strongly

politics—of Allen and the NYUL were probably somewhere being dictated by white liberal concerns and responsive to the local Black community: the NYUL was certainly led and influenced by Black and white elite (including those from the white-dominated world of business) and acted on their priorities accordingly, but was also engaged with issues in the local community and certainly made a difference in the lives of everyday Black New Yorkers. It is out of this 1960s context where the League’s preferred ideological orientation was, perhaps for the first time in its history, pliable and less exact, that the NYUL eventually established the Street Academy Program.

While the NYUL was trying to find its footing in the civil rights era, Dr. Eugene Callender, a different type of leader than the NYUL had ever previously known, was appointed executive director of the NYUL for eighteen critical months from 1967-1968. Under Callender’s leadership, the League began to focus most of its energies on education. While education had always been a core NYUL priority since its founding, and particularly since the 1950s, education had been one of many—and, like the League’s other initiatives, was only another tool for incremental Black advancement. Callender’s appointment elevated education as the organization’s main concern: he would spearhead a new educational initiative called the Street Academy Program and refocus the League to believe that wide-scale changes in the educational system was the best, if not only, avenue for tangible Black progress. With Callender now at the helm, what were the NYUL’s goals? Moreover, how did the organization see education—and the Street Academy Program and ultimately, Harlem Prep—as helping them solve the “problems” of the “ghetto,” as they referred to them?

A New York City civil rights activist who also held roles in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the March on Washington, Callender believed that education

condemn, in provocative language, the racist actions of white police officers in the city. See Michael W. Flamm, *In the Heat of the City: The New York City Riots of 1964 and the War on Crime* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 170, 180.

must be the vehicle for social justice—his public statements, private notes, and memoir echo as such. Furthermore, as will be discussed below, Callender’s primary reason for accepting the executive director position was born out of his desire to grow his personal street academies initiatives from his work prior to coming to the NYUL. The New York Urban League wrote in early 1967 that: “Too much emphasis has been placed on the poverty of our nation’s deprived areas and not enough on its potential. On the streets of our nation’s slums are enough untapped adolescent human resources which, if challenged and trained, would bring about meaningful change.”²¹ Notably, this framing and the Street Academy Program that Callender was putting into place pushed back against the League’s previous programs under past executive directors that sought a Band-Aid approach to poverty instead of addressing the root issues. As opposed to providing incremental relief through various programming initiatives, Callender thought the NYUL needed to fight discrimination by engaging Black communities’ agency and promise. “Most of the poverty projects today approach the present teenage generation with an air of condescension,” the NYUL under Callender argued, “pointing them to job retraining programs with the assumption that they are not college material.” Ultimately, this report concluded, the reason that teenagers in suburbia attend college and young people in places like Harlem do not is not because of intelligence, but because of opportunity.²² To Callender, above all, education was the key to addressing poverty, not job training programs or social welfare reform—the latter a sort of “black respectability politics” that progressive Black activists had been accusing the NYUL of engaging in for decades.²³ Callender felt the NYUL need to be more aggressive in their approach

²¹ “A Report on the Street Academy Project,” ca. 1967, p. 3, NYUL Papers.

²² Ibid.

²³ To be sure, this term is more commonly used in present-day debates regarding Black politics and how Black leaders address issues of race today. See, most prominently, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), and

to helping young people, regardless of what elites might think about his idea for a college prep school that emphasized youth potential. Earlier iterations of the NYUL's education work focused on providing aid or additional resources to students who were struggling in schools or had been pushed out of them; Callender, instead, wanted to create a brand new college-oriented educational program to promote higher education and re-imagine schooling.

Dr. Eugene Callender and His Vision for the NYUL

“There was a sea of black faces,” Dr. Eugene Callender once recalled during his first visit to Harlem as a young man, “‘Boy’, I thought, ‘this must be our land.’ I made up my mind right there that I was going to live in Harlem.”²⁴ Callender, “one of Harlem’s most active leaders” wrote the *New York Times* in 1967, had a long history of deep community involvement and fervent activism by the time he became executive director of the NYUL.²⁵ Unlike previous executive directors, Callender did not rise through the ranks of the organization nor was he initially associated with the Black or white elite in New York City. Born in Massachusetts to working-class immigrants from Barbados, he moved to Harlem as a young adult, and quickly sought to immerse himself in the Black freedom struggle, both locally and nationally. In the early 1950s, Callender established the first community-based clinic to help heroin addicts in Harlem, and

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African-American Women's History and the Netalanguage of Race,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (1992): 251-274, who coins the terms “politics of respectability.” More recently, see Fredrick C. Harris, “The Rise of Respectability Politics,” *Dissent* 61, no. 1 (December 20, 2013): 33–37. However, the idea behind “black respectability politics” or other similar connotations, is centuries old. For instance, Booker T. Washington at the turn of the 19th century argued for Blacks to not progress too rapidly or upset the status quo, perhaps most famously in ideological debates with W.E.B. DuBois.

²⁴ Margalit Fox, “Rev. Eugene Callender, Who Saw Potential of School Dropouts, Dies at 87,” *The New York Times*, November 7, 2013, sec. N.Y. / Region, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/08/nyregion/rev-eugene-callender-who-saw-potential-of-disadvantaged-school-dropouts-dies-at-87.html>.

²⁵ Seth S. King, “Harlem Leader Is Named To High City Housing Post: Harlem Leader Given Post in Housing Sixth Negro in a Top Job Active in Harlem Aid Held High Church Post,” *New York Times*, 1967.

fought to decriminalize drugs in New York City.²⁶ A minister who “took his worship services out onto the asphalt of 121st and 122nd Streets,” Callender used his ministry to help other at-risk populations such as ex-convicts, and abused women and children. In addition, at his ministry, Callender organized rent strikes in Harlem and even claimed to organize “the first Harlem Freedom School in the basement of another of his buildings.”²⁷ By the mid-1960s, Callender had continued to establish himself in Harlem and worked tirelessly on behalf of the community; he became co-chairman of the Harlem Neighborhood Association (HANA) as well as co-founded (with Dr. Kenneth Clark) HARYOU, becoming the first chairman of the board and fighting intensely to make sure money being funneled into HARYOU was being spent properly on helping young people.²⁸

More broadly, outside of his work in the ministry and with local organizations, Callender also was very active in the broader Civil Rights Movement in all regions, both on the ground and in shaping its ideological form. He was a close confidant of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—Callender was the catalyst for bringing King to Harlem in 1957—and corresponded with King in the early 1960s about his personal “internal struggles and growing anger with each hateful transgression perpetrated against our race.”²⁹ Furthermore, Callender marched by his side in

²⁶ See “Dr. Eugene Callender, Bio,” St. James Church, New York, NY, March 5, 2006, 1, from personal collection of Karen Carpenter; See also Fox, “Rev. Eugene Callender,” *The New York Times*, November 7, 2013.

²⁷ “Callender, Bio,” 2006, 2. However, this claim about being the first rent strike and first Harlem school is unverified.

²⁸ Speaking to Callender’s place on the ideological spectrum, when he was co-chairman of HANA, Callender spoke out about how one prominent organization—the New York City Youth Board—gave a \$50,000 grant to the Jewish Board of Guardians instead of HANA, which was made up of a half-dozen of the biggest social welfare agencies in Central Harlem. Callender wrote that he was “furious” about not being consulted, and spoke out how this was “social welfare colonialism” which generated backlash from Mayor Robert Wagner and widespread coverage in outlets like the *New York Times*. See Eugene S. Callender, *Nobody is a Nobody: The Story of a Harlem Ministry at Work to Change America* (New York: Eugene S. Callender, 2012), 225-226, 229-232 [personal memoir].

²⁹ Callender, *Nobody is a Nobody*, 171; See also “Dr. Callender, Bio,” 2006, 2; See also Fox, “Rev. Eugene Callender,” *New York Times*, 2013.

Albany, Georgia as well as Birmingham and Selma, Alabama, and recalls these experiences, and others involved with the Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in his memoir, *Nobody is a Nobody*.³⁰ Perhaps most provocatively, Callender also recalls in his memoir his relationship with Malcolm X and how they both were prominent local Harlem voices; although he and Malcolm X disagreed strongly about the role of white America and Black clergy, they developed a deep respect for each other, particularly their shared passion for “the youth of Harlem.”³¹ (Interestingly, Callender was partly responsible for the writing and eventual publication of Malcolm X’s iconic autobiography.³²) By the late 1960s, Callender’s outlook on the broader Black freedom struggle reflected that of many activists who had been active in fighting for civil rights legislation but still remained frustrated with the lack of Black progress—he went from believing firmly in working within the democratic system (and advocating for white Democratic politicians) to embracing Black Power. “Black Power is the next logical step from the Civil Rights Movement,” Callender declared in an August 1967 speech. “Black Power continues to convince American Negroes that the time of liberation has finally and truly come—not from the hands of charitable white men, but a liberation which comes from within and by a people themselves—and is therefore authentic and complete.”³³

³⁰ Callender, *Nobody is a Nobody*, 171-181. There is a great picture he includes of himself marching directly behind Coretta Scott King and Martin Luther King, Jr.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 210; For more information about their run-ins in Harlem, including their debate at Callender’s church and how brilliant Malcolm X was in debating and his vast knowledge, see pgs. 191-198.

³² Callender also fascinatingly wrote about Alex Haley. Callender explained how he organized Malcolm X’s famous interview with *Playboy* magazine—Callender called Malcolm X to accept and held the interview at his Harlem apartment—and also pushed Malcolm X to write the autobiography with Haley. Despite Callender and Malcolm X’s differences, Callender loaned Haley and Malcolm X money to have the book published, and Haley wrote the majority of the book at Callender’s apartment. In terms of corroborating Callender’s stories, in the Appendix of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Haley does credit Callender as one of the few Black ministers (besides Martin Luther King, Jr.,) that Malcolm X respected.

³³ Eugene S. Callender, “Speech on the Black Power Revolution,” Man & Science Institute, Rennselaerville, New York, NY, August 1, 1967, Box 7, Folder 30, Speeches & Statements, New York Urban League, Secretary of the

This brief portrait of Dr. Eugene Callender serves a purpose: to illustrate that when Callender becomes only the third-ever executive director of the New York Urban League in 1967, more than forty-five years since its incubation, he was not the prototypical NYUL leader. Callender, as someone deeply entrenched in the lives of poor and working-class Harlemites—unlike previous NYUL executive directors—and also ideologically invested in shaping the form of the Civil Rights Movement, was the first executive director that had been hired “outside the Urban League.” Most people in the organization “worked their way up the Urban League ladder” or had “come up the ranks” in some fashion, of which Callender did neither.³⁴ In his memoir, Callender explains:

I observed and assessed the mission, structure and accountability of the organization and I didn't like what I saw.... The League was staffed by some professionals who were comfortable in their positions and weren't worried about being fired.... [Over time] I was planning my own agenda for necessary change. After six or seven months had passed, I started to clean house.... Once we streamlined the team, I started raising money on my own to fully establish new community goals, such as employment training and engaging the Street Academies in a public service partnership with the private sector.³⁵

The NYUL's burgeoning focus on education and specifically, the development (and not only job placement) of young people, combined with Callender's own speeches and the League's program proposals under his leadership, corroborate this claim.

Thus, 1967 seemed to be the ripe moment for Callender to start his NYUL directorship and funnel his interest in education, with his intersecting experiences laying the foundation for the

Board of Directors Records, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division (hereafter referred to as the NYUL Papers).

³⁴ Callender, *Nobody is a Nobody*, 247.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 248.

Street Academy Program (and soon after, Harlem Prep). After almost a decade of on-the-ground activism in Harlem and broad-based involvement in the southern Civil Rights Movement and Democratic politics, Callender carried with him the respect of the Black and white elite—there was no shortage of accumulated social capital ranging from previous corporate partnerships, to national political figures, to elder Black statesman. Yet, ideologically, he also seemed to be moving Left, aggressively fighting the deficit framework placed upon Harlem youth and speaking in strong support of Blackness and even Black militancy in ways that were potentially oppositional to the League’s long-held belief in integration and more moderate approach of previous directors.³⁶ In an extensive internal report, the NYUL—and presumably Callender—recognized that in early 1967, “a cultural revolution is in progress with deep feelings of nationalism and racial pride” and thus, “it is imperative that constructive use be made in the existing social mood.”³⁷ It is under these auspices that Callender initially created the Street Academy Program (SAP) (and later, Harlem Prep), with a more radical, if perhaps not fully realized, ideological embrace of rising Black Power sentiments.³⁸

Still, when he established the Street Academy Program, it was built on the back of this

³⁶ See, for example, his argument about how “the white man in America has not yet accepted either the depth of his own racial bias or the regressive character of the society he controls.” Thus, in result, Callender recognized “the immense potential for social change implicit in Negro militancy.” See Callender, “Speech on the Black Power Revolution,” 1967, NYUL Papers.

³⁷ “A Report on the Street Academy Project,” ca. 1967, p. 3, NYUL Papers.

³⁸ Perhaps this a partial reason for why there was so much turmoil in terms of philosophical direction once Callender left. No documents explicitly explain this, but contextual clues around the margins are suggestive that when Callender left, there was a vacuum in terms of who the League should be ideologically aligned with. For example, see Emily Harvey, “N.Y. Urban League Serves ‘New Thrust’ Here,” *Newsline*, March 22, 1971, Secretary of the Board of Directors Records, Box 10, Folder 16, NYUL News, NYUL Records, which explains how the NYUL sought to receive advice from more radical groups such as the Five Percenters and the Young Lords. Alternatively, other documents suggest that as the NYUL began to have funding issues, more white corporate influence began to seep into the NYUL and perhaps pull away from this embrace (although there are no explicit statements of this). See “Resolution Approved by the NUL Board of Trustees,” February 24, 1971, Secretary of the Board of Directors Records, Box 7, Folder 34-38, Street Academy, NYUL Records; Also note that Street Academy Program and Harlem Prep would develop in decidedly different ways than other Black nationalist-inspired schools in the early 1970s. This will be discussed in-depth later in this dissertation.

seemingly contrasting framework of progressive racial ideology as well as connections with elite, often white, financial support. Above all, Callender's life—his combination of beliefs and actions—was perhaps the most accurate reflection of the broader civil rights movement and struggle for equality during the '60s and '70s, full of contradictions and complexities that are often glossed over in the public discourse of the era in favor of simple explanations.³⁹ As Russell Rickford argues in regards to Black organizing around education, trying to demarcate a strict line between integrationism and nationalism is fruitless. Instead, Rickford notably writes that scholars must recognize “the powerful currents of consciousness that flow from creative tension between the two”—and here, in the case of trying to distill the ideology of Eugene Callender when he led the NYUL and later created Harlem Prep, it is wise to recognize that ideological beliefs of activists like Callender were often “more dualistic than dichotomous.”⁴⁰ Ultimately, in seeking to understand Callender, he certainly had feet in different coalitions of the freedom struggle, which is consistent with scholars' more recent nuancing of the civil rights narrative writ large. Callender and more importantly, Harlem Prep, is a notable extension of Rickford's argument: perhaps this complex and hard-to-categorize Black educational organizing cannot neatly fit into the traditional civil rights story of integrationists and Pan Africanist being separate and existing in different eras. Callender's background when starting Harlem Prep firmly fits into—and certainly helps explain—the Harlem Prep narrative. In turn, this adds to recent literature like Rickford's that advocates for a more sophisticated understanding of Black education during this era.

³⁹ After all, Callender claimed that Stokely Carmichael was his mentor and at the same time, worked for a Republican Mayor (albeit a liberal one who later left the party). Carmichael, later Kwame Ture, is often considered a more “radical” activist as a leader of the Black Panther Party (BPP) later in his career.

⁴⁰ Rickford, “Integration, Black Nationalism, and Radical Democratic Transformation in African American Philosophies of Education, 1965–74,” in *The New Black History*. Although in a much different scope, Jack Dougherty also illustrates how educational activists of different eras held varying ideologies—sometimes hard to pin down clearly—that did not correspond with the general narrative of integrationism to nationalism. See Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle*.

Creating the Street Academy Program (SAP)

“The new Street Academy Program, recently launched by the New York Urban League, is one dynamic proof of the agency’s broad, new perspective,” wrote the NYUL in its quarterly newsletter in Fall of 1966.⁴¹ Adjacent to the bolded headline about the program’s start was a giant headshot of the League’s brand new leader, Eugene S. Callender. The newsletter continued: “One of the major influences affecting Dr. Callender’s decision to accept the executive directorship of the NYUL was to give this youth project—developed under him for seven years at the Church of the Master—its broadest possible base. The dream is becoming a growing reality.”⁴² This reality was to become a group of so-called “street academies,” essentially storefront locations where out-of-school teenage youth in Harlem gathered in remedial classes and educational activities. Eventually, the program grew and drew citywide renown, eventually becoming the landmark program of the NYUL and most importantly, leading to the establishment of Harlem Prep.

First, however, its origins: as the NYUL newsletter alludes, the Street Academy Program can be traced back to Callender’s “Academies in Transition” from his local Harlem ministry, which he brought to the NYUL when he became executive director. As Callender explains in his memoir, when he joined the Church of the Master in Harlem, he started a program for high school dropouts due to the “dramatic rise in substance abuse in Harlem” that “coincided with the accelerated rate of truancy and dropouts in borough schools.” Callender, who wrote about how he “knew these kids because I used to spend a lot of time on the streets,” ran this small program at his church for a number of years with the help of a few nuns, including Mother Ruth Dowd, a

⁴¹ “League’s Street Academies Win Over Harlem Youth,” Fall 1966, p. 1, Box 10, Folder 16, NYUL Papers; See also “A Report on the Street Academy Project: A Program of the New York Urban League,” ca. 1967, p. 2, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers, where there are similar sentiments about the Street Academy Program, referring to it as Callender’s “well-developed idea” that he brought over after seven years of existence at his church.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1-2; See also Fox, “Rev. Eugene Callender,” *New York Times*, 2013.

professor of philosophy at Manhattanville College who later became a key, founding faculty member during the early years of Harlem Prep.⁴³

Now at the New York Urban League, Callender was able to use the League's considerable resources—and his own connections with the white power structure inside and outside the city—to expand the program to reach more youth. Callender was able to secure funding from companies such as First National City Bank, Chase Manhattan Bank, Pfizer, Time Inc., and Union Carbide, each giving \$50,000 to pay for a company-sponsored street academy.⁴⁴ Within a year, SAP had gained additional funding from the Ford Foundation and had “salvaged over 250 ex-high school dropouts,” wrote *Ebony Magazine* in August 1967 (although the use of this deficit language by the magazine's authors distorted the NYUL's stance on young people).⁴⁵ The NYUL, quick to capitalize on the success of the program, soon began to look to grow the program even more.⁴⁶

How did the Street Academy Program actually work in practice? The program had three levels of education: one, the “Street Academies”; two, the “Academies of Transition”; and three, “Prep Schools.” Young people started in the Street Academies, before advancing to the Academies of Transition, and finally, to a Prep School. The Street Academies, which operated initially as five storefronts in Harlem and one on the Lower East Side, concentrated on “motivation toward education, which includes some individuals beginning remedial work in an effort to build up self

⁴³ Callender, *Nobody is a Nobody*, 188, 249.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁴⁵ Ponchitta Pierce, “Street Academies: New Way to Reach the Ghetto Dropout,” *Ebony*, August 1967, Box 7, Folder 32, NYUL Papers. See also, New York Urban League, “Key Aspects of the Street Academies,” February 1971, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers.

⁴⁶ For example, NYUL booklets and promotional materials emphasized the Street Academy Program. See, among many, “‘Your New York Urban League in Action’ Booklet,” ca. 1966, Box 5, Folder 29, NYUL Papers; “Urban League of Greater New York Street Academy Booklet,” ca. 1969, Box 7, Folder 33, NYUL Papers.

confidence in the youth's ability to learn."⁴⁷ Specifically, these Street Academies—as entry points for youth to re-engage in education—sought to expose these students to “basic subjects including math, English, science, history and reading” geared toward the ninth grade reading level. From there, students progressed to the Academies of Transition where the “learning effort is more formally organized and serious” and also introduced additional subjects—chemistry, biology, and sociology, for example—with the goal of students’ reading levels to be at the tenth grade level.⁴⁸ More specifically, during the inaugural years, there were two Academies of Transition: one at Callender’s old church on 122nd Street and Morningside Avenue, Church of the Master, and another at the NYUL’s brownstone location at 130th Street.⁴⁹ “The basic thrust of the academies is remedial in nature,” the NYUL wrote in an early proposal for SAP, and originators felt “very deeply that interpersonal communication is an essential part of the education process” in both these academies and the storefront academies.⁵⁰

Key to the first two phases, and the entire Street Academy Program, was the so-called “street worker.” According to Callender and the NYUL:

The very heart of the Urban League program is the street worker. A street worker attempts to thoroughly penetrate adolescent street culture. They live in resident apartments right on the streets. They are literally always available. They constantly express their concern and discipline to neglected youth.... A street worker is an interested adult who will take the

⁴⁷ Memo from Barbara Finberg, June 19, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; See also, “A Report on the Street Academy Project,” p. 6, NYUL Papers; By the 1968, there were 14 different Street Academies all throughout Harlem, each with a specific corporate sponsorship. See “Street Academy Locations,” June 1968, Box 7, NYUL Papers.

⁴⁸ Memo from Barbara Finberg, June 19, 1967, Carnegie Records; “NYUL Street Academy ‘Fact Sheet’,” January 1, 1970, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers.

⁴⁹ Although Callender did formally leave his professional position at this church for his NYUL position, it seems that he maintained an informal relationship with the church, although, it is unclear to what extent.

⁵⁰ “A Report on the Street Academy Project,” p. 6, NYUL Papers.

time and trouble to be a friend of youth.⁵¹

Ultimately, street workers sought to build strong, authentic relationships with out-of-school youth and even their families, based on shared experiences and backgrounds. These street workers were an eclectic group—“he may be a college graduate or a high school drop-out, an ex-con or an ex-junkie, but he knows the streets, its life styles and its people,” wrote the League’s administrators—and the NYUL was most interested in recruiting “indigenous personnel.”⁵² Street workers were asked to possess a number of qualities and fill a number of roles including, but not limited to: being able to relate to students’ parents and engage in “informal family counseling”; draft clear goals and follow students closely; be able to act as a “broker” with knowledge about gaining medical aid, legal aid, or economic aid; and able to engage recreationally in sports and other activities with students.⁵³

The final step of the three-part program was the NYUL’s “prep school” referred to as Newark Prep. Newark Prep, in actuality, was not an NYUL institution, but rather, a 58-year-old private school that had strict rules and a population of white students. Starting in 1961, the NYUL partnered with Newark Prep to allow “dropout” students from Harlem to attend the school, being transported by bus to and from Harlem each day.⁵⁴ There, the “educationally reclaimed youth

⁵¹ Ibid., 4-5.

⁵² “Streetworkers, Incorporated,” n.d., Box 7, Folder 18-22, NYUL Papers; In later founding documents, the NYUL would also write that the “reconstruction of the inner cores of our cities must be done primarily with indigenous leaders.” See “A Report on the Street Academy Project,” ca. 1967, p. 5, NYUL Papers.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ “How ‘Tender Loving Care’ Changes Harlem Dropouts,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 29, 1968, sec. Suburbia. The details surrounding Newark Prep are extremely fascinating yet equally mystifying. Unlike Harlem Prep, Newark Prep received very minimal periodical coverage and little archival material in the NYUL archival records. It seems as if the NYUL started this partnership on a small scale in the early 1960s, and once the Street Academy Program had been formally established, the League more formally used Newark Prep as its third stage of SAP. The fact that it had not originally been developed for that purpose only understated another reason why Callender and the NYUL desired their own prep school that could better align with SAP.

received a quality secondary education in college prep courses,” made possible by the aforementioned grants from the Ford Foundation and more fully fleshed out program pipeline.⁵⁵ In the first year and half of SAP, 53 students had graduated from Newark Prep and many had graduated college, according to various NYUL records.⁵⁶ From the outset, the NYUL also hoped to establish a second prep school in Harlem—“our own school,” Callender frequently wrote—as he explained that he and his colleagues “hit a wall once [the young people in Harlem] were ready for higher learning.”⁵⁷ Not only was it costly and logistically challenging to send students to New Jersey, but the Street Academies and Academies of Transition were growing, and there was a need for a larger secondary school. More saliently, Newark Prep, an already-established school outside of Harlem, was much too limiting in scope; Harlem leaders would never be able to design their own culturally relevant school program that they felt would truly create an educational revolution if they were working through an existing institution that they did not control. Thus, through the passionate efforts of NYUL Executive Director Eugene Callender, plans for a second prep school in Harlem were quickly drawn up: Harlem Prep would soon be born. (However, Harlem Prep quickly vacated its official affiliation with the Street Academy Program and with the NYUL only months after its establishment, due to the school’s rapid growth and its lack of need for a parent organization, among other reasons.⁵⁸)

⁵⁵ “A Report on the Street Academy Project,” ca. 1967, p. 7, NYUL Papers.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, among many of the other previous quoted sources.

⁵⁷ Callender, *Nobody is a Nobody*, 251; See also “A Report on the Street Academy Project,” ca. 1967, p. 7, NYUL Papers.

⁵⁸ The specific reasons and process by which Harlem Prep and NYUL separated will be discussed in the next chapter; Moreover, the specific details of the Street Academy Program after 1967 are beyond the scope of this dissertation. The program changed throughout its existence, particularly once Callender left the NYUL in December of 1967, as SAP struggled both in terms of managing various internal crises, including philosophical disputes about the proper role of whites in the organization. See, for example, some of these dilemmas: “Key Aspects of the Street Academies,” February 1971, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers. For example, one issue was that by the early 1970s, there was concern that there were too many white leaders running the Street Academy Program as well as

The Founding of Harlem Prep

"It must be in Harlem, Rev. Callender believes," emphasized a Carnegie Corporation program officer in her meeting transcript with Callender and his colleagues in mid-June of 1967, "where its students can be a new model for the younger children in Harlem."⁵⁹ While on the surface Harlem Prep served the straightforward purpose of being the primary "prep school" for adolescents in the Street Academy Program, the goals for the newly planned institution in Harlem ran much deeper and wider. Most prominently, Callender and the NYUL wanted Harlem Prep and its students to serve as role models for other youth in Harlem. Considering more than 50% of all youth in Harlem had left school, Callender envisioned Harlem Prep as an institution that not only would change the lives of those who attended, but would represent something larger in a community decimated by decades of discriminatory economic policies and educational neglect. It would be "a symbol of educational hope," Callender wrote—"a symbol of significant change in Harlem" he similarly declared to all the major news outlets in New York City.⁶⁰ Furthermore, future board member Harvey Spears explained on July 19, 1967, that Harlem Prep is "being established to provide a good local school for students. By remaining in the area, they will be visible for models for younger boys."⁶¹ (Notably, this gendered framing is significant and yet, it is

fear that the powerful corporations were starting to have too much influence in the direction of the program. Notably, this question of white influence also applies to Harlem Prep, which had widespread support from white donors. It is interesting to recognize that although both Harlem Prep and the Street Academy Program have some similarities in terms of white involvement, they take different paths: the Street Academy Program becoming laden to (white) corporate interests and Harlem Prep retaining its independence by all available accounts. Harlem Prep's cross-racial alliances will be discussed in Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

⁵⁹ Memo from Barbara Finberg, June 19, 1967, Carnegie Records.

⁶⁰ "Harlem Prep and Street Academies NYUL Proposal," October 11, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; See also similar sentiments in the *New York Times*, such as Earl Caldwell, "Urban League Plans Harlem Prep School," *New York Times*, May 17, 1967, Box 2T32, Harlem Prep - 1968, Field Foundation Archives, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin (hereafter referred to as Field Records); See also, "A Positive Approach (Excerpt)," *Daily News*, May 18, 1967, Box 2T32, Field Records; and see, "League To Open Prep School In Fall," *New York Amsterdam News*, May 27, 1967.

⁶¹ Memo from K.W. [unknown Carnegie assistant], July 19, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

unclear why Spears, only a peripheral figure in the founding of the school, would allude to Harlem Prep as only being a school for boys when Callender and others spoke neutrally in terms of gender in both written and oral proclamations.⁶² However, it is telling that at least this one participant in the school's founding, marginal as he was, saw the gender of delinquency as being male and the student body being framed on male behavior.⁶³ Ultimately, Callender, who "had long advocated a prep school and a public school for Harlem," believed passionately in the community's potential and wanted Harlem Prep to be a guiding light in its rejuvenation.⁶⁴

To be sure, Callender, with his executive director position at the NYUL and wide apparatus of connections in New York City, was the driving force in establishing Harlem Prep. His colleagues in these early planning meetings and brainstorming sessions were generally all League staff in the education department. However, adhering to his goal of creating novel partnerships with "other groups," Callender was also usually flanked by a few unexpected individuals: nuns from the all-women, Jesuit-affiliated, Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York.⁶⁵ In fact, an essential part of Harlem Prep's founding—if not an unorthodox aspect of it

⁶² There is a striking absence of gender nouns in the vast array of archival material—Spears' comment is one of the few pieces of evidence to suggest that Harlem Prep could have been planned initially for boys. A close analysis of founding documents such as NYUL proposals and speeches from Dr. Eugene Callender consistently uses words such as "young people" and "youth" to describe the potential school population. Still, this potentially oft-handed comment should not be dismissed; clues from the era, such as Newark Prep primarily serving boys, plus the fact that only six of the first thirty-five Harlem Prep graduates were girls, suggest that gender did play a significant role in the school's early planning. For example, a newspaper article about Newark Prep, although not mentioning gender, describes students as not being able to have long hair or beards and must having jackets, which suggests a large male population. See "How 'Tender Loving Care' Changes Harlem Dropouts." *New York Amsterdam News*, June 29, 1968.

⁶³ It is also significant that Spears is a white man, adding an intersectional element of race and gender. Spears' whiteness and possible implicit biases perhaps made him see Black men as being delinquents, a long-running stereotype that remain prevalent today. (The other key founders of Harlem Prep, like Callender and later Carpenter, were Black.) However, Spears was, at best, a marginal figure in Harlem Prep's founding and it seems he held little actual decision-making presence or influence in the school's founding. See, among many works about stereotyping, Claude M. Steele, *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011).

⁶⁴ "Harlem Prep' Opens in Fall," *New York Urban League News*, Summer 1967, Box 10, Folder 16, NYUL Papers.

compared to other Black alternative schools—is the Prep’s larger partnership with Manhattanville College. Callender had a previous professional relationship with Manhattanville College’s president, Elizabeth McCormack, while also previously working with a group of nuns in his Academies of Transition (now stage two of the Street Academy Program) who became beloved educators at one of the transition schools.⁶⁶ When Callender began conceptualizing a prep school in Harlem based on the aforementioned ideas, Callender approached McCormack and, as future Harlem Prep administrator Hussein Ahdieh described it back in 1972, a “very happy ‘academic marriage’ resulted.” On June 7, 1967, Callender and McCormack co-issued a lengthy “memorandum of intent” detailing the developing collaboration between the New York Urban League and Manhattanville College with regards to starting Harlem Prep. It read, in part, that both the college and the NYUL would work toward the creation of a “modest, neighborhood preparatory school” and that both parties agreed to a number of provisions such as to apply for a provisional charter to the New York State Board of Education and that they would both endorse the future course of study of the educational program.⁶⁷ Most consequentially, however, was their agreement about staffing. The memorandum stated that, “Manhattanville College will provide three persons, one of whom shall be the Administrator” in accordance with proper salaries and approval from both the eventual Board of Trustees and Manhattanville College.⁶⁸ Ahdieh best summed up this relationship when he wrote: “The Urban League supplied the funds and

⁶⁵ For example, in the earliest meeting with Carnegie Corporation program officers, the group of people consisted of Callender, three NYUL colleagues, and Sister Ruth Ann Dowd of Manhattanville College.

⁶⁶ See Callender, *Nobody is a Nobody*, 249.

⁶⁷ “Memo between NYUL and Manhattanville College,” June 7, 1967, New York, New York State Education Archives, as printed in Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School” (PhD diss.), 154-156 [Appendix]. This document reads as something relatively informal, in that it was not a contractual agreement but a friendly agreement between two parties who wanted to put on paper their agreed upon work together.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Manhattanville College supplied the professional leadership... the educational ‘know-how’.”⁶⁹

There is undoubtedly much truth to Ahdieh’s assessment of the NYUL/Harlem Prep-Manhattanville College alliance. The “nuns,” as they are frequently remembered today, had an important presence in the school. Former students recall with ease their fond memories of being taught by these nuns, and their qualities as both caring and effective educators.⁷⁰ Furthermore, both Callender and later Carpenter acknowledged the key role they played throughout the school’s tenure. However, there seems to be slightly more to the story—a nascent institution with Black leaders, in Harlem, working with white Jesuit nuns, in the midst of rising nationalism was a less-than-common occurrence. Today, former Harlem Prep staff hint at the additional benefits of working with Manhattanville College. George “Sandy” Campbell, an English teacher who taught at Harlem Prep for most of its independent existence, believes that working with a white institution like Manhattanville College helped legitimize Harlem Prep—to make it appear “less radical”—in the eyes of the white power structure who may have been unnerved at the idea of an alternative Black institution in Harlem.⁷¹ Furthermore, these white nuns had a specific kind of institutional knowledge that Harlem Prep’s leaders lacked: their college had a prior relationship with the New York State Education Department, and perhaps the nuns were able to help Harlem Prep receive a state charter through by leveraging this relationship or knowledge. Ultimately, the sisters from Manhattanville College “played a vital role in helping to make the school a reality,” including “work[ing] with the Board of Regents... in getting the school accredited.”⁷² This

⁶⁹ Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School” (PhD diss.), 40.

⁷⁰ See various oral histories, such as Sterling Nile interviewed by author, Christopher Brooks, and Ibrahim Ali, New York, NY, March 4, 2015; Capps interview, November 19, 2016; Campbell interview, January 14, 2015; and Hussein Ahdieh, interviewed by author, New York, NY, November 11, 2016.

⁷¹ Sandy Campbell e-mail conversation, February 6, 2017 and other informal conversations.

partnership, in addition to the nuns having prominent pedagogical and leadership roles during the early years of the school, also perhaps aided administrators' tasks of securing funding and support from white businesses and philanthropies.⁷³ For example, in July of 1967, the Carnegie Corporation noted that Manhattanville College was "advising on the academic program and other matters," lending support to this premise. While securing a partnership with Manhattanville College was undoubtedly a savvy move on the behalf of the NYUL to validate this new educational endeavor, the tangible role that the nuns played in providing real leadership to the school should not be discounted either. The future Harlem Prep vice principal, Mother Ruth Dowd, who helped interview and choose eventual headmaster Edward Carpenter, became a key administrator in school's early goings, and two other nuns also became well-liked teachers.

Ultimately, all the planning and collaborating reached an apex on July 28, 1967, when the New York State Department of Education's Board of Regents granted Harlem Prep a three-year provisional charter. The charter read:

To establish, conduct, operate and maintain a non-sectarian, private, college preparatory school for boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 21 who have dropped out of school, or who are about to drop out of school, and who, in the opinion of the administration of the school, can be motivated to complete a secondary education, to provide such education for such boys and girls, and to develop liaison with a number of colleges willing and eager to accept such graduates; and to provide, when feasible, tutorial and remedial instruction on the premises for younger children who need not be enrolled in the formal program.⁷⁴

The basis for this charter by Callender stemmed from his decades-long work with Harlem's young

⁷² Hussein Ahdieh and Hillary Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way: Harlem Prep: Transforming Dropouts Into Scholars, 1967-1977* (printed by author, CreateSpace, 2016 [memoir of Harlem Prep]), 65.

⁷³ Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016; This will also be further discussed later in Chapter 4.

⁷⁴ Carpenter, "The Development of an Alternative School," 23.

people. As the introduction established, there was an urgent need to fill the educational void in Harlem more broadly; there were countless adolescents who could have bright futures if only they had equitable opportunities to succeed like their white, suburban counterparts. “No Harlem youth is expendable,” boasted Dr. Callender on July 1, 1967 to *The Amsterdam News*, and “we will show them we can do [education]” proclaimed Ed Randolph, a former dropout and soon-to-be Harlem Prep student, to the *New York Times* on the second day of classes.⁷⁵ Hussein Ahdieh, longtime assistant to Carpenter, later wrote in 1972 that one of the Prep’s main purposes was to “stand as an educational beacon within the community demonstrating to the community and to the nation that minority youth did, in fact, possess the intellectual capacity and strong motivation to enter and complete a college education.”⁷⁶ Thus, Harlem Prep was founded with the goal of realizing local students’ potential—a theme that its headmaster, Edward Carpenter and all of the Harlem Prep staff, would quickly place at the core of the Prep’s educational philosophy. Callender and his associates of course believed in this truth, but so did outside activists and leaders. For example, Bayard Rustin, key organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, recognized this important opportunity for a school in Harlem; Rustin expressed his strong support for Harlem Prep, arguing that the Street Academies “demonstrate that the dropout—and the black youth—have the same capacity as the white youth...”⁷⁷ Callender and the NYUL were apt to use strong anti-deficit language, as sociologists have termed it today, in both private documents and public statements.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ “Mosler Again Heads Urban League,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 1, 1967; Maurice Carroll, “Harlem Dropouts Head to College: Prep School in an Armory Begins ‘Revolution,’” *New York Times*, October 3, 1967.

⁷⁶ Hussein Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School: An Alternative” (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1974), 35.

⁷⁷ Memo from Barbara Finberg, September 18, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁷⁸ For example, among many, see Tyrone C. Howard, *Black Male(d)* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2015). Among a prominent report in higher education, see Shaun R. Harper, *Black Male Student Success in Higher education: A Report from the National Black Male College Achievement Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education, 2012).

By mid-summer of 1967, Callender and his colleagues had begun to secure many of the necessary components to incubate Harlem Prep—a state charter, a clear purpose for a prep school, energy and optimism, community support, an inter-racial partnership, and a potential recruiting line of students through the established Street Academy Program. However, there was one important element that Callender, Mother Dowd, and NYUL supporters still lacked: money. In between these planning discussions and securing a partnership with the Manhattanville College, Callender and the NYUL began numerous overtures to philanthropic organizations about potential funds. At first, it was the Carnegie Corporation whom the NYUL and Callender were hoping would provide remaining necessary funds to effectuate their established budget.⁷⁹ As far back as June 19, 1967, Callender and his colleagues were in constant discussion with Carnegie Corporation officials, probing their interest in funding a new alternative school for dropouts in Harlem and asking for at least \$150,000 at the time to balance the first year’s operating expenses.⁸⁰ At first, Harlem Prep set a year-one budget at around \$300,000, according to the *New York Times*, with a \$5,000-per-pupil cost that would far exceed the per-pupil amount in public schools.⁸¹ Yet, a few weeks later by early July 1968 (and a few months before the school was supposed to open), Harlem Prep had only secured a sum of \$105,000 that had been promised by the NYUL, much of which was most likely siphoned from a prior gift from the Ford Foundation to

⁷⁹ For example, in November 1967, weeks after Harlem Prep had already been opened, the NYUL wrote a report showing the budget for the year would be \$300,644—exactly on par with press reports from the summertime. See “Harlem Prep and Street Academies NYUL Proposal,” October 11, 1967, Carnegie Records.

⁸⁰ See again, Memo from Barbara Finberg, June 19, 1967, Carnegie Records; In fact, a later memorandum from Finberg on October 18, 1967 recaps how the NYUL asked for \$210,000 from Carnegie toward the first year’s expenses, and an additional \$150,000 for the next two years. See Barbara Finberg, “Memo about Harlem Prep’s Opening,” October 18, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁸¹ Carroll, “Harlem Dropouts Head to College,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1967; It is notable that Harlem Prep started with more than enough funds for its small student population. However, as Part II explains, Harlem Prep grew very quickly and only slightly larger budgets would be stretched out to accommodate almost ten times the amount of students compared to the Prep’s opening year. Furthermore, the exact amounts given by particular donors for this opening budget is unclear, in part because surviving documents strongly suggest that this initial set budget had not been fully secured at the school’s opening—donations were constantly flowing in a disorganized manner.

the Street Academy Program. Still, as one newspaper declared, this money had at least “assured Harlem Prep’s opening” during these summer months—the school had a green light to move forward.⁸² (Later, the *New York Times* would report that Harlem Prep also received unspecified contributions sometime in the late summer from the Astor Foundation, Hayden Foundation, and Arwood Foundation, other New York City-based organizations focused on education and services to young people.⁸³)

From the beginning of Harlem Prep’s conceptual phase—and perhaps foreshadowing its Achilles Heel—the school had financial problems, as their budget remained in flux and was only partly fulfilled by the time doors first opened in early October. Although the dream of Harlem Prep was underway, the school’s immediate future remained on shaky financial ground; these discussions with Carnegie Corporation that started in the summer would not lead to secured funds until later in the fall and early winter. By October 11, 1967, ten days *after* the school first opened, Callender admitted that the school still needed \$210,644 to “assure the first year’s operation” and to “cover personnel, program and administrative costs.”⁸⁴ Fortunately, after many months of discussion, in mid-November, Callender and the NYUL finally received good news: the Carnegie Corporation would approve a \$300,000 grant that “would be appropriated to the New York Urban

⁸² “Budget Assures Opening of Harlem Prep in Oct.,” *Afro-American*, July 8, 1967; See also, Memo from Barbara Finberg, June 19, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; Callender, in his memoir, claims that the NYUL received \$535,000 from the Ford Foundation to start Harlem Prep. However, it is most likely that Callender misremembered where that money went toward. Other primary source documents show that the Ford Foundation gave similar amounts that Callender recalls to the NYUL, but for the first stages of the Street Academy Program and not specifically toward Harlem Prep. On balance, it seems likely that some of the pledged \$105,000 from the NYUL was part of a larger Ford Foundation gift that Callender describes. Also note that Chapter 7 will spend significant time on the rationale of Ford Foundation’s later sustaining investment into Harlem Prep.

⁸³ Carroll, “Harlem Dropouts Head to College,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1967; However, these were most likely small contributions in comparison to the six figure grants from Carnegie and Ford. Although there are no documents that show the exact amounts, budgetary documents can provide clues: the large grants from Carnegie and Ford make up most the budget, leaving these other grants, suggesting that these other grants made up the difference.

⁸⁴ Letter from Eugene Callender to Barbara Finberg, October 11, 1967, Carnegie Records. In this letter, Callender writes that Harlem Prep had actually secured \$235,000, but much of it had been earmarked for other expenses, notably the renovation of the supermarket that would become the permanent location of Harlem Prep.

League for support of Harlem Preparatory School” to be paid out over two years.⁸⁵

This money was in high need. At the personal request of Callender, \$150,000 of that grant would be appropriated “now” in November of 1967 and the other half almost a year later on October of 1968.⁸⁶ While the \$300,000 was less than the \$500,000 that Callender requested (over a three-year period), it was enough to meet the school’s initial budget. Callender and the NYUL were relieved—and for Callender particularly, his heartfelt (as well as strategic) letters to various members of the Carnegie Corporation and his ear-to-ear smile at the December 12, 1967 press conference only confirmed these feelings.⁸⁷ At this press conference in the middle of Harlem Prep, a crowd of cameras was on hand to witness the exchange of money between Carnegie Corporation President Alan Pifer and New York Urban League President John Mosler, flanked by Dr. Callender, Harlem Prep Vice Principal Mother Ruth Dowd, and headmaster Edward Carpenter.⁸⁸ Media notices were sent out to the Associated Press and United Press International, more than a dozen newspaper and magazines including the *New York Times*, *New York Post*, *New York Daily News*, *Amsterdam News*, *JET Magazine*, and *Wall Street Journal*, all the major local networks such as CBS and NBC, and more than a half dozen radio stations. How many of these media organizations actually attended the press conference is unknown—and thus, perhaps it is fitting that only the *Amsterdam News* covered this event in print, one of two Black-run organizations invited and the only focused on the concerns of Harlemites. As Pifer said via the *Amsterdam News*, the purpose of the press conference “was to help the school... and to tell the people outside

⁸⁵ Letter from Florence Anderson to Eugene Callender,” November 15, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁸⁶ Memo from Barbara Finberg, November 11, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁸⁷ See, among various letters, Letter from Eugene Callender to Alan Pifer, December 13, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; and Letter from Eugene Callender to Florence Anderson, December 20, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; With regards to the press conference, see Cecil Lane, “Photograph of Harlem Prep/NYUL Press Conference,” December 12, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁸⁸ Lane, “Photograph of Press Conference,” 1967, Carnegie Records.

of Harlem that something as encouraging as this is taking place.”⁸⁹ The small and humble beginning aside, Pifer’s early proclamation would certainly become true.



Figure 1. December 12, 1967 press conference between the NYUL, Harlem Prep, and Carnegie Corporation. From left to right: Carpenter, Mosler, Pifer, Mother Dowd, and Callender.

Source: Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscripts, Columbia University

Why did Carnegie Corporation agree to fund Harlem Prep with a \$300,000 grant at its founding stage? What was Barbara Finberg, Carnegie’s educational lead program officer, with her colleagues, seeking to accomplish by working with the NYUL in this capacity? There were a number of interesting factors at play with Carnegie’s involvement, particularly related to Harlem Prep’s broader potential to affect change in the Board of Education. Like their “Big 3”

⁸⁹ “NY Urban League Gets \$300,000 For Harlem Prep School,” *New York Amsterdam News*, December 16, 1967.

counterparts (Ford and Rockefeller being the other two), Carnegie was invested in public institutions and particularly public education.⁹⁰ In the context of the Great Society and the expansion of the social safety net, as well as the Civil Rights Movement, Carnegie was becoming less interested in private affairs. Carnegie sought to outwardly embrace community uplift through the *public* realm—perhaps one reason why, upon granting the NYUL \$300,000, the foundation initially suggested not to make any general announcements to the press.⁹¹ “Supporting a private secondary school is not something I would normally think [Carnegie Corporation] should consider,” expressed Finberg to Alan Pifer, Carnegie’s president, but “Harlem Prep, however, is demonstrating what can be done with dropouts; and furthermore, it is trying to change the model for the next generation.”⁹² Two days after articulating to the Carnegie Corporation president why supporting Harlem Prep would be a worthy exception, Finberg called Mario Fantini, Ford Foundation’s education program officer, to gauge his thoughts on Harlem Prep. After contextualizing that “he was more familiar with the NYUL efforts leading up to Harlem Prep than with the Prep School itself,” Fantini told Finberg that:

As one interested primarily in changing the public education system to an institution that does contribute to the education of all children, [he would] prefer not to have to establish such institutions as Harlem Prep. On the other hand, the students attending Harlem Prep would never go back to the public school, in his opinion, and it appears that Harlem Prep

⁹⁰ See Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), who describes Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller as the “Big 3” due to their importance in twentieth century American history.

⁹¹ See, among other primary sources, Eugene Callender, “Urban League – Manhattanville College: A Proposal for a Prep School in Harlem,” 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; Regarding the suggestion to not hold a press conference, see Letter from Florence Anderson to Eugene Callender, November 15, 1967, Carnegie Records.

⁹² Memo from Barbara Finberg, October 18, 1967, Carnegie Records.

has a chance of influencing change in public education.⁹³

Finberg, Pifer, and the Carnegie Corporation ultimately agreed: Harlem Prep had the potential to affect the public school system, and in some sense, was seeking to educate youth who should have still been in the public school system after all, if the system had not failed them in the first place. It is also notable, of course, that Carnegie's funds were essential to the school's existence and set the Harlem Prep experiment in motion.⁹⁴

This imagining of Harlem Prep as serving the public good was not an idea invented by Carnegie leaders but instead, a specific goal also laid out by Harlem Prep's founders and reiterated in the school's early goings. In addition to resistance-driven and anti-deficit reasons for establishing Harlem Prep, the school was created to explicitly, and forcefully, demonstrate to the New York City Board of Education how to educate Black and brown youth. If the Street Academy Program was an implicit critique of the Board of Education—for it sought to help adolescents in need who had not been served well by the Board—Harlem Prep's founders made no qualms about what they were trying to accomplish with this new prep school right in Central Harlem. “The long-range objective of this project,” Callender wrote in a funding proposal, “is to demonstrate the kind of techniques that enable disadvantaged youth in urban ghetto areas to succeed, and so serve as an example for institutional change in our educational system.”⁹⁵ Callender also said that, as he reached out for funding, that it would require “at least a three-year period of operation” to

⁹³ Memo from Barbara Finberg, October 20, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁹⁴ However, Carnegie was also the only “Big 3” foundation that did not provide funds for Harlem Prep later during its tenure due to their policy of not funding repeat grantees but perhaps also because of their stringent adherence to supporting public education at the time. See Letter from Charles Rangel to Carnegie Corporation, August 13, 1973, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁹⁵ “Harlem Prep and Street Academies NYUL Proposal,” October 11, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

demonstrate this to city officials.⁹⁶ Again, Callender made similar statements to the press as well. When asked why the street academies succeed when public schools fail, he responded:

Because we have faith in students... The [public] schools can't argue with our success. If we can get them to change the established educational procedure by demonstrating that Harlem kids are not deficient, then we'll be getting somewhere. In some instances, we are advising school officials.⁹⁷

Others agreed with these sentiments. "A concomitant goal was for Harlem Prep to develop into a model of creative educational activities for other schools," recalled Hussein Ahdieh, asserting that school founders hoped that a "major impact" would be made on the Board of Education in the future.⁹⁸ These are only a sampling of statements that directly address that one major purpose of Harlem Prep was to be an example that the Board of Education could emulate.

Historian Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, who has documented the history of the Carnegie Corporation, explains how the newly appointed Carnegie Corporation President Alan Pifer was concerned with issues of poverty and large-scale programs for the "disadvantaged" that align with these ideas. Central to the Corporation's mission in the late 1960s was a belief in traditional liberalism—federal government involvement—to solve society's largest challenges.⁹⁹ Thus, in

⁹⁶ Letter from Eugene Callender to Barbara Finberg, October 11, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁹⁷ David Holmstrom, "How Harlem Dropouts Are Lifted to College," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, Mass., October 7, 1967.

⁹⁸ Ahdieh, "Harlem Preparatory School," 34-35; Carpenter, too, in his public statements later in the year echoed these comments in strong terms. The *New York Amsterdam News* quoted him as saying in March of 1968: "When this is done, there should be no longer need for Harlem Prep because hopefully public education will incorporate our successes into their program." See Clayton Willis, "Harlem Prep School Gives Many a Chance," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 16, 1968.

⁹⁹ Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 220-222. These larger societal context and changing city and national politics that affected why organizations like Carnegie Corporation and others invested in Harlem—and what this meant for educational philanthropy more broadly—will be explored much more in-depth in Chapter 7.

relation to a newfound influx of private money into public education by large foundations, initiatives from the philanthropic sector were seemingly less interested in small-scale educational undertakings, and instead, much more invested in educational equity in a broader sense and large-scale experiments—supporting desegregation, advocating for community control, fighting discrimination in the classroom. Harlem Prep was certainly a small educational experiment, but it was in the context of—in theory, at least—influencing public education on a wider scale (and educating the public school system’s children). Callender and Harlem Prep’s founders explicitly wanted Harlem Prep to serve the function of a public school in Central Harlem, for there was no school in the neighborhood and it was the city’s other schools—not its students—that were continually failing.¹⁰⁰

Although the Ford Foundation was not yet the primary funder for Harlem Prep, their money was responsible for the expansion of the NYUL’s Street Academy Program, which made it possible for Harlem Prep to exist. In brief, the new president of Ford Foundation, McGeorge Bundy, felt similar sentiments to his Carnegie counterpart about Harlem Prep’s potential to provide a quality education in ways the Board of Education was not.¹⁰¹ Bundy, recently appointed head of the world’s largest private philanthropic organization, looked to “mainstream” Black-led organizations to solve racial inequalities, and the New York Urban League fit that billing—at least up to this point in time. Even more critically, the Ford Foundation and Bundy himself played a key role in mediating the I.S. 201 crisis in East Harlem a year prior, in which mostly Black parents and

¹⁰⁰ Callender, and later, headmaster Edward Carpenter, consistently suggest that they saw Harlem Prep as serving as a public institution—particularly, at this beginning juncture, serving young people in Harlem who were not being properly served by other public schools. In addition, Callender seeks out public funds and public school partnerships. See Letter from Eugene Callender to Alfred A. Giardino, November 15, 1967, New York Urban League, Secretary of the Board of Directors Records, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers.

¹⁰¹ With regards to Bundy, in Eugene Callender’s memoir, Callender describes calling President Bundy, showing him around the Street Academies, and explaining to him what Harlem Prep could be. Within “two weeks’ time,” the Ford Foundation gave \$535,000 to the NYUL to start Harlem Prep, according to Callender. See Callender, *Nobody is a Nobody*, 251-252.

activists protested the opening of a new middle school because the Board of Education broke their promise of opening an integrated school and appointed a white principal against the community's wishes.¹⁰² Bundy sought to insert Ford in these citywide educational issues.¹⁰³ (This pattern of Ford involvement continued, such as how they created demonstration districts which, due to teachers unions' reaction to them, then caused the later educational crises like the Ocean Hill-Brownsville strike.) Why did Ford invest in this yet-to-be created prep school in Harlem? In his memoir, Callender credits his professional relationship with Bundy as being the most salient factor; Callender, when he was leading HARYOU, previously met Bundy when the latter was an advisor in the Kennedy administration and remained in touch. Still, the Ford Foundation's new priorities of being interested in Black-led organizations—and perhaps Bundy's personal interests—certainly played a role in the organization's initial interest in Callender's Street Academy Program, too. (Ford's philosophy for philanthropy and community immersion will be discussed later in this dissertation.¹⁰⁴) Overall, when planning for Harlem Prep's opening, Callender was eager to announce the wide range of support. "We are building a consolidation between businesses, foundations, and other groups," he explained in October of 1967—a statement that would become a poignant foreshadowing of one of Harlem Prep's most fascinating later characteristics, its diverse community coalition and broader multicultural vision.¹⁰⁵

Finally, Harlem Prep's initial benefactors, the Carnegie Corporation (and peripherally at

¹⁰² See Lewis, *New York City Public Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 24-27.

¹⁰³ See, for example, Karen Ferguson, *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism* (Philadelphia: University of Penn Press, 2013), 90-97.

¹⁰⁴ Bundy, and the Ford Foundation's, critical role in Harlem Prep's existence will be discussed in-depth later in this dissertation in Chapter 7. At this juncture, Harlem Prep did not exist and Bundy was going mainly on word-of-mouth of Callender and his NYUL contacts for this initial one-time grant. It will be more appropriate to explore why Ford continued to support Harlem Prep once the school was established and developed a philosophy.

¹⁰⁵ "'Harlem Prep Open: 60 Former Dropouts Pioneer Revolution in Education,'" *New York Urban League News*, Fall 1967, Box 10, Folder 16, NYUL Papers; This community coalition, as I term it in this dissertation, will be explored in-depth in much detail in Chapter 4.

this stage, the Ford Foundation), also envisioned the school to have a significant stamp in the Harlem community—and like Callender and others, saw Harlem Prep as a tangible method to pressure the Board of Education to change their approach to educating Harlem’s youth. “The New York Board of Education may be brought to the point of trying some of the League’s techniques in a school serving Harlem,” wrote Barbara Finberg of the Carnegie Corporation. “If the League can continue its dramatic demonstration of Harlem youths’ abilities [through Harlem Prep],” she asserted, then “the public schools will not be allowed, by the force of parental and other public pressures, to continue without change.... The League is creating a new model for public school education.”¹⁰⁶ Carnegie, which previously did not fund private schools but seemingly made an exception for Harlem Prep, ultimately argued (or so Carnegie hoped) that Harlem Prep would become an “institutionalization of an alternative in Harlem to the Board of Education.”¹⁰⁷

At Harlem Prep’s founding stage led by Eugene Callender and the NYUL, there were also some clear, initial signs, that the NYUL wanted to work with the Board of Education through the Street Academy Program (which included Harlem Prep at the time). For example, the NYUL had partnered with the Board of Education by placing “streetworkers” into Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem, to help motivate students. In addition, at the school’s outset, Callender hoped for a “fruitful year of cooperative effort” with the Board of Education, including using Title I ESEA funds.¹⁰⁸ However, it seems most of these hopes for collaboration went unfulfilled. (However, within the first year of Harlem Prep’s existence, headmaster Edward Carpenter would aggressively criticize the Board of Education for neglecting the bright young people in Harlem in

¹⁰⁶ Barbara Finberg, “Agenda Sheet about Harlem Prep and Carnegie,” October 27, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

¹⁰⁷ Memo from Field Foundation, October 13, 1967, Box 2T32, Field Records.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Eugene Callender to Alfred A. Giardino, November 15, 1967, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers.

grants, in public statements, and eventually in his own scholarship.¹⁰⁹) Nonetheless, with the financial support in-progress (and eventually secured with the first few months), Callender and his NYUL and Manhattanville College colleagues could officially move forward with filling in the rest of the many pieces of the shifting Harlem Prep puzzle.

Prepping for the Prep: The Selection of Edward F. Carpenter, Faculty, and the Armory

From the beginning, the *idea* of Harlem Prep was meticulously planned. If securing funding seemed a bit ad hoc, the philosophy, goals, and urgent desire to start a prep school that would shatter conventional myths about Harlem youth was anything but disorganized. Callender and his Manhattanville College collaborators were clear in what they wanted Harlem Prep to accomplish and represent. Just as importantly, they were also very precise about its scope: a prep school, yes, but also a “small school” with a close teacher-to-student ratio of around 9-to-1, with visions for particular staff, curriculum, and classroom space.¹¹⁰ Although Harlem Prep would quickly evolve into a cultural landmark in Harlem by the early 1970s and would—ironically—become a site of constant improvisation to reconcile its rapid growth, at the school’s inception, Harlem Prep was carefully designed.

Perhaps the most important decision was the selection of its headmaster. The NYUL hoped to find a “well-thought-of Negro teacher with experience in NYC schools”—a decision that must be understood within the context of nascent ideas of community control and community self-determination that had led to racial turmoil in Harlem just a year prior.¹¹¹ In fall of 1966, the

¹⁰⁹ Perhaps Harlem Prep’s criticism of the Board of Education was a barrier to them wanting to help Harlem Prep in the future. See Chapter 9 for more information about this relationship.

¹¹⁰ See, among many newspaper and internal documents, Carroll, “Harlem Dropouts Head For College,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1967, Field Records.

¹¹¹ Memo from KW [unnamed], July 19, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

Board of Education had planned to open a new integrated middle school in Harlem, Intermediate School 201, as part of a statewide integration plan.¹¹² Historian Heather Lewis, who recounts this school's fraught beginning, describes how "Harlem parents and community residents were therefore stunned when their local superintendent announced that the new intermediate school would open as a segregated school."¹¹³ Not only did the school inexcusably have no windows, but even after the Board of Education agreed to let parents and others form a "Community Education Council" to influence school decisions, Harlem community members understandably "erupted" when the Board of Education chose a white principal against the community's will.¹¹⁴ By June 1967, a few months before Harlem Prep would open, the Board of Education officially authorized I.S. 201 (as well as two others areas in New York City) to become a "demonstration district," where parents and community leaders would have the ability to make decisions around appointments of principals, school locations, teaching standards, curriculum, and other important choices about the education of their children. As Heather Lewis notes, "national ideological currents in the civil rights and Black Power movements, as well as the federal War on Poverty, shaped the intellectual contours of the community control movement"—and the contours of the New York Urban League's prized new prep school just down the street.¹¹⁵

This citywide backdrop where the Black community wanted representation and decision-making authority in their schools added another layer of why it made sense for NYUL leaders to search for a Black headmaster. Christina Collins, in her book *Ethnically Qualified*, reveals how the

¹¹² Lewis, *New York City Public Schools From Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 24-25; See also, Robert A. Dentler, "The Controversy over I.S. 201." *Urban Review* (July 1996): 12-17; See other scholars' larger discussion of community control, such as Daniel Perlstein, *Justice, Justice*; Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York*.

¹¹³ Lewis, *New York City Public Schools From Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 24.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

New York City teaching force was overwhelming white. “By the late 1960s and into the 1970s, the disparity between the proportion of Black teachers in the district and the proportion of non-White students had grown increasingly dramatic,” she writes, with the teaching force being over 91% white.¹¹⁶ There were even fewer Black principals in predominantly Black schools, which most likely fed into the NYUL’s conscience. Combined with Callender’s own personal beliefs and ideologies about Black culture, it was also preferred to find an educator who similarly understood and appreciated the Harlem community. The League’s preference seemingly came from Callender himself; on one of the earliest noted references to Harlem Prep, Callender unequivocally said that while there would be no restrictions on who could attend, “we want a Negro administrator.”¹¹⁷

Considering Harlem Prep’s unique goals and student population, finding the right leader in terms of persona and ability was just as pivotal to the school’s success—and to its future students. Callender was cognizant that in addition to being Black, from Harlem, and having a record of deep community engagement, the future headmaster needed to have the educational outlook that was in line with his own: he must have a passionate belief in, and deep-seated love for, young people in the community. “This project of Harlem Prep needed someone to lead who could inspire teachers and students with a sense of mission and purpose and enthusiasm for serving young people,” agreed Dr. Hussein Ahdieh, a long-time administrative assistant to Carpenter, in his own recent retelling of Harlem Prep.¹¹⁸ And, Ahdieh leaves no suspense about who would best fit this particular description in his eyes: “Such a person was found in Edward F. Carpenter.”¹¹⁹

Dr. Edward F. Carpenter, more informally known as “Carp” to family and friends, was

¹¹⁶ Christina Collins, *“Ethnically Qualified”*: Race, Merit, and the Selection of Urban Teachers, 1920-1980 (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011), 122.

¹¹⁷ Caldwell, “Urban League Plans Harlem Prep School,” *New York Times*, May 17, 1967, Field Records.

¹¹⁸ Hussein and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 34.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

born in 1921 in the heart of Harlem. Raised in a brownstone on 131st Street, Carpenter attended Frederick Douglass Junior High School and then Commerce High School (later renamed Louis D. Brandeis High School), where he was a well-rounded athlete playing for the school's varsity basketball team, running track for the YMCA and the Boys Club, and boxing for the YMCA.¹²⁰ Growing up in Harlem where Blacks were “faced with the challenges of the Depression, discrimination, and unemployment rates of close to 50 percent,” “he wasn’t afraid to fight,” recalls his daughter Casey Carpenter—he was “scrappy,” the type of guy who “could take 50 cents and do a whole lot with it.”¹²¹ Carpenter, along with his wife Ann (who would later become integral to the school), were “Harlemites through and through,” and his underdog mentality of him against the world was a reflection of his upbringing in the neighborhood during intense economic and racial oppression.¹²² (Perhaps it was also a foreshadowing of the persona that he, as Harlem Prep’s leader, would project with his students who had been counted out by society.) Soon after high school, Carpenter was drafted into the United States military, and served honorably during World War II. He rose to become a second lieutenant in the Army, serving in the 369th Regiment—the same regiment of the famous all-Black “Harlem Hellfighters” of World War I. (Furthermore, in a twist of fate, the 369th Regiment Harlem Armory, which housed the Harlem Hellfighters, would eventually become the temporary home of Harlem Prep twenty-five years later.¹²³) Carpenter served for forty-two months in the Army of the Pacific, receiving a variety of medals for his

¹²⁰ “U.S. World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946,” database, *Ancestry.com*, <http://www.ancestry.com>; Karen Carpenter interviewed by author, Montclair, NJ, June 4, 2017; Bruce Lambert, “Edward F. Carpenter, 71, Is Dead; First Headmaster of Harlem Prep,” *New York Times*, January 9, 1992, sec. Obituaries; Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 35; “Resumes of Harlem Prep Staff,” October 19, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

¹²¹ Greenberg, “*Or Does It Explode?*,” 10; Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017.

¹²² Greenberg, “*Or Does It Explode?*,” 10.

¹²³ Jeffrey T. Sammons and John H. Morrow, Jr., *Harlem’s Rattlers and the Great War: The Undaunted 369th Regiment and the African American Quest for Equality* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014).

service, including a Purple Heart.¹²⁴ Although his war service did not seem to have a lasting impact professionally—like many other young men returning home, he rarely seemed to talk about his many years overseas—countless former students and colleagues describe him as being “in perpetual motion,” and, in the context of civilian life, often displayed a “nervous, fidgety energy” that might have been a consequence of his time overseas, according to his daughter.¹²⁵ Carpenter’s boundless energy, however, seemingly served him well; as Harlem Prep’s “spokesman” and unquestioned leader, he channeled that energy into his relationship with students, often bouncing from one converted classroom to the next, and then to a fundraiser with Harlem community member or business group in the same afternoon.¹²⁶ In addition—and again perhaps a remnant of his Harlem upbringing and years of war service—Carpenter also had a stern side of him. “He was a lot of fun, he was nurturing, *and* he’d call you out on your stuff,” recalled a former Harlem Prep student.¹²⁷ A *Time Magazine* feature article on Harlem Prep in 1973 put it a bit more bluntly: Carpenter “alternatively cajoled, encouraged and threatened his pupils.”¹²⁸ He was “a force” of a person in terms of his presence, abilities, and dynamic personality, asserted another alumnus.¹²⁹

In tandem with that energy and his disciplinarian roots was his “broad smile” and “warm gaze”; he was the type of person who was “full of charisma” and possessed an undeniably alluring persona that filled every room he entered.¹³⁰ Short in stature with wide shoulders and a chubby

¹²⁴ Lambert, “Edward F. Carpenter, 71, Is Dead,” *New York Times*, January 9, 1992; “Unsung Hero Placed 164 Dropouts In College,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 1, 1969.

¹²⁵ Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017.

¹²⁶ Peter Hopson interviewed by author, Michael Montero, and Ibrahim Ali, New York, NY, February 11, 2015.

¹²⁷ Bartley-Grinage and P. Grinage interview, April 15, 2017.

¹²⁸ “Education: Vale, Harlem Prep,” *Time*, October 1, 1973.

¹²⁹ Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

build by the time he started at Harlem Prep, Carpenter sported short black hair with a rounded flat-top, often wearing a jacket and tie tightened close to his neck. His physical presence may not have seemed imposing, but he sure knew how to capture a person's spirit. As another former student explains: "Ed Carpenter was a remarkable, extremely strong individual—smart as a whip, in my view, but he [also] had this way of connecting" with students on a very personal and intimate level.¹³¹ Ultimately, Carpenter could be both necessarily strict and unquestionably kind, all in a moments passing, and seemed to have a knack for when to be each when the time was appropriate.

Of course, prior to becoming headmaster in 1967, Carpenter had a long career of education and community engagement in the two decades leading up to the Prep. His vast, and varied, experiences before becoming headmaster certainly allowed him to develop his aforementioned leadership style and, as students unanimously attest, refine his profound communication skills that made him so successful. Combined with this past, only a few years into leading Harlem Prep, the *New York Amsterdam News* would enthusiastically write that Carpenter was "one the most dynamic educators in the United States."¹³²

Immediately after the war, Carpenter enrolled at Long Island University, where he earned both a Bachelor of Science degree in clinical psychology and a Master of Science in clinical psychology.¹³³ Multiple degrees in hand, Carpenter's first foray into education was as a ninth grade mathematics teacher at Junior High School 139—the original Frederick Douglass J.H.S. on

¹³⁰ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 35; See, among many oral history interviews, Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

¹³¹ Craig Rothman interviewed by author, via phone, New York, NY, October 19, 2016.

¹³² "Prep School Head Seriously Hurt," *New York Amsterdam News*, May 16, 1970. The *Amsterdam News* often issued enthusiastic praise on Carpenter and, as discussed later, the *Amsterdam News* became one of the staunchest Harlem Prep supporters throughout its independent tenure.

¹³³ "Resumes of Harlem Prep Staff," October 19, 1967, Carnegie Records. However, an *Amsterdam News* article states that Carpenter earned a B.S. in psychology and math, and a M.S. in political psychology, and it's unclear what his degrees actually were. However, since Carpenter seems to have written the NYUL document—he uses the first person during the description of his resume—it seems this document is more likely to be correct.

140th Street between Lenox and 7th Avenue—from 1952 to 1957, teaching mostly algebra and “general mathematics.” His next step was serving as a guidance counselor for two years at a non-traditional high school, where he was primarily “responsible for assisting in the rehabilitation of high school students discharged from high school of the five boroughs” and “for getting them readmitted into other academic or vocational schools.”¹³⁴ Then, in 1959, Carpenter returned to Junior High School 139 as the primary guidance counselor for its students, balancing all the various responsibilities that his position entailed. For the next six years until 1965, Carpenter served as a guidance counselor for one of the four middle schools in Harlem where, on average, 80% of students were considered “underachievers.”¹³⁵ There is little doubt that his many years at J.H.S. 139, both as a teacher and guidance counselor, shaped his understanding of Harlem’s young people and the challenges they faced economically, socially, and emotionally. As one Harlem Prep student agreed in 1967: “He has devoted most of his life to Black youth.”¹³⁶ Thus, it would seem that Carpenter’s fervent belief in young people—a core leadership principle at Harlem Prep as desired by Eugene Callender—derives from his decades in the field; if working with so-called “failing students” made many teachers and school decry Harlem students’ abilities and motivations, that was certainly not the case with Carpenter.¹³⁷ Furthermore, although he would become the public face of Harlem Prep and spend the majority of his time fundraising for the school and cultivating relationships with philanthropists, business members, and activists, Ed Carpenter was no stranger to education—and to the needs and desires of Harlem’s Black young

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid; See Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., *Youth in the Ghetto: A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change* (New York: HARYOU, 1964), 170-172

¹³⁶ Jimmie Beechum, “A Salute to Mr. Carpenter,” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, Vol. 1, No. 2., December 1967, p. 1, in Box 10, Folder 6-9, NYUL Papers.

¹³⁷ For example, see Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights*, 1, 9, which, in part, details Black and white teachers’ different responses to Black students and teaching in Black communities.

men and women.¹³⁸



Figure 2. Undated photograph of Harlem Prep headmaster Edward F. Carpenter, ca. 1966.
Source: New York Amsterdam News Photograph Archive, Cornell University

¹³⁸ Carpenter also might have not been a complete stranger to Eugene Callender, either. Carpenter served as an advisor for the Education and Vocation Youth Committee of HARYOU ACT. Callender, who helped found HARYOU (prior to its merging with ACT in 1964), became chairman of the HARYOU ACT board for a short time before relinquishing that role by the mid-1960s. It is possible that their paths may have crossed. However, there is no other evidence that they had a relationship: one, Carpenter's involvement in HARYOU ACT was largely after Callender's primary involvement in HARYOU; two, Carpenter was just an advisor for an education committee and not serving on the board where Callender sat temporarily; and three, archival documents and the oral history of Ann Carpenter do not suggest a prior relationship.

In 1965, Carpenter left J.H.S. 139 and moved to his final position before engraving himself in Harlem Prep: he became Director of Community Services for the Queens College Children and Parents Center. In this role, Carpenter undertook a number of responsibilities, ranging from supervising social workers, receptionists, clerks, parent coordinators, student workers and others as part of a community-based preschool program through Queens College's Office of Economic Opportunity.¹³⁹ To be sure, according to Carpenter, this position entailed a variety of administrative duties that perhaps prepared him for a headmaster position soon after. However, this position also required Carpenter to develop tangible relationships with the community. Although in Queens and not in Harlem, Carpenter trained and supervised parent paraprofessionals to serve as aides, workshop leaders, and clerks at Queens College. Furthermore, he was "responsible for developing and implementing over one hundred Parent Workshops" during his two years as director.¹⁴⁰ Again, Carpenter's move toward community-driven work and administrative responsibilities foreshadowed his role at Harlem Prep. As the school's future headmaster, he was less involved in developing the school's curriculum and was "more concerned with the operation" over the course of his tenure there, suggests one student today.¹⁴¹

According to his own accounts, Carpenter also served numerous related, non-profit organizations in various capacities. The list is plentiful, and a sampling of relevant roles include: Advisor for the Education and Vocation Youth Committee of HARYOU ACT, Inc.; Secretary of the Youth Committee of the Harlem Branch YMCA; Chairman of the Educational Committee of the Northeast Community Organization in Teaneck, NY; Chairman of the first after-school tutorial program in the Harlem Branch YMCA; Secretary of the New York Personnel and Guidance

¹³⁹ "Resumes of Harlem Prep Staff," October 19, 1967, Carnegie Records; Lambert, "Edward F. Carpenter, 71, Is Dead," *New York Times*, January 9, 1992.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Frank Berger, interviewed by author, New York, NY, November 28, 2016.

Association; Member of the National Vocational Guidance Association; Panelist for the Urban Education Seminar at Hunter College; Member of the Englewood (NJ) Urban League and NAACP. Furthermore, in the mid-1960s, he held a few ancillary positions too, such as serving as the Director of Guidance Services Associated for Community Teens, where he supervised Harlem adolescents who served as counselors in the Central Harlem community.¹⁴² He was invested in the Harlem community, and spoke frequently in defense of its residents in later newspaper interviews.

By the time Carpenter was tapped to lead Harlem Prep, he had a wealth of experiences—and with such experiences came philosophies and ways of thinking about education that Carpenter would ultimately impress upon his pupils and staff. At the center of his educational philosophy was a deep belief in the need for adults to connect with young people, and his years of commitment—both professionally and through his volunteer roles—to the well-being of youth’s emotional state provides ample evidence. His professional degrees in psychology only added to this belief. “A parental figure to many,” numerous Harlem Prep alumni recount how Carpenter sought to understand them as people, and not just as students.¹⁴³ Craig Rothman, one of the few white students who attended Harlem Prep, poignantly recalls his first interview with Ed Carpenter in fall of 1968:

So the interview was really about, “who are you? What are the things you care about? What are you comfortable in?” He didn’t care about any of the academics—we probably talked about music and art, or street life, all this kind of stuff, that had nothing to do with anything to do with education that I had any orientation about in the past. He says, “I think you’d do well here.” Nobody had told me I’d do well any place. You see what I’m saying?

¹⁴² “Resumes of Harlem Prep Staff,” October 19, 1967, Carnegie Records; To be sure, these positions were self-listed on his resume, and the amount of time he spent in these various roles is unknown.

¹⁴³ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 35; See also Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

That part of it was powerful for a kid that was completely lost in life.¹⁴⁴

Carpenter's interest in young people as organic individuals, and not just as pupils, is of course not only central to understanding his beliefs as headmaster, but the overall multicultural educational philosophy of the school.¹⁴⁵ (It was not a coincidence, then, that he was a perfect fit for Callender's Street Academy Program, where the success of students in this program was dependent on how well its teachers and adults connected with their potential students.) Still, at this point in Carpenter's life upon starting at Harlem Prep, his prior experiences in counseling and working with marginalized youth in Harlem had clearly framed his educational philosophy. (Although he would not finish, Carpenter was also enrolled at Teachers College, Columbia University for multiple years during his time at Harlem Prep, earning dozens of credits in a masters program in personnel psychology. By 1970, Carpenter did earn a certificate in advanced guidance from City College.¹⁴⁶)

Carpenter's worldview was also strongly influenced by his Bahá'í faith, a monotheistic religion founded in Iran in the mid-nineteenth century, with an estimated 5 to 7 million followers worldwide and over a half-million in the United States.¹⁴⁷ Perhaps the most salient and unique aspect of the Bahá'í faith for Carpenter's work is its emphasis on diversity, both in theory and practice. According to the Bahá'í International Community, the "pivotal principle of the Bahá'í

¹⁴⁴ Rothman interview, New York, NY, October 16, 2016.

¹⁴⁵ For example, Carpenter had close relationships with students outside of school, including frequent sleepovers and house visits by students. See Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017. This central idea about connecting with students will be discussed more in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6.

¹⁴⁶ "Resumes of Harlem Prep Staff," October 19, 1967, Carnegie Records.

¹⁴⁷ Robert H. Stockman, *The Encyclopedia of Cults, Sects, and New Religions*, ed. James R. Lewis (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2001), 96-103; Association of Religion Data Archives, "Most Bahá'í Nations," Pennsylvania State University, 2010, http://www.thearda.com/QL2010/QuickList_40.asp; In Ahdieh's retelling of Harlem Prep and in personal conversations, he suggests that Carpenter's Bahá'í faith was an important part of his life. In fact, it was at a Bahá'í event that Ahdieh met both Ann and Ed Carpenter, and where the latter invited him to learn more about Harlem Prep. See Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016.

Faith” is “the oneness of the entire human race,” or, as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) explains, that humanity is “a single race which should now be united in one global society.”¹⁴⁸ This oneness of people is the foundation of Bahá’í’ism, and ideals of equality and peace are not just preached as interpretations of scripture, but as part of what it means to be—and worship—as a Bahá’í.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, in practice, American Bahá’í congregations are unusually diverse, having reached a “level of diversity unique among all religious groups in the United States,” according to sociologist Mike McMullen in his recent book on the history Bahá’í’s in America.¹⁵⁰ Over 50% of all Bahá’í congregations in the United States are multicultural, a number assuredly higher for New York congregations, specifically.¹⁵¹ Ultimately, Carpenter, once described as “deeply religious” by the *New York Amsterdam News*, understood his fervent Bahá’í faith to be a very important part of his life and key to his personal set of values of universality.¹⁵²

Carpenter’s worldview, then, was a complex mixture of a rough-and-tumble Harlem upbringing and war service interwoven with a deep-seated humanism and love for people of all creeds. His overarching educational philosophy of “unity in diversity” that he would later preach at Harlem Prep (and write about in his 1973 doctoral dissertation) seemed to stem from his Bahá’í

¹⁴⁸ Bahá’í International Community, “The Bahá’í Faith,” 2017, <http://www.bahai.org>; BBC, “Religions: Unity and equality,” August 4, 2008, http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/bahai/beliefs/unity_1.shtml.

¹⁴⁹ I attended a Bahá’í service in New York City in 2017, celebrating the ninth day of the Festival of Ridván, one of the three holiest days of the year. Although I can only offer a single anecdote and cannot generalize about the entire faith, compared to my prior personal religious experiences, these principles were at the center of the festival and emphasized throughout the evening in Bahá’í scripture and sermons.

¹⁵⁰ Mike McMullen, *The Bahá’ís of America: The Growth of a Religious Movement* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 1.

¹⁵¹ Ibid; During my attendance at the New York Bahá’í’s celebration of the Festival of Ridván, participants were incredibly diverse racially, ethnically, and linguistically. It was one of the most organically diverse large gatherings I had experienced during my six years living in New York City.

¹⁵² Clayton Willis, “Harlem Prep Gives Dropouts a Chance (Fifth in a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 16, 1968; Although Carpenter himself does not directly explain that his Bahá’í faith influenced Harlem Prep, he does cite a text published by a Bahá’í publishing company that influenced his philosophy at Harlem Prep. See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 52-54; Furthermore, he recruited other Bahá’í’s to Harlem Prep and his closest colleagues all share these sentiments that Carpenter was deeply influenced by his faith.

faith.¹⁵³ His personal belief in the value of diversity was integral to his conceptualization of what a school should be—and Harlem Prep’s later embodiment of multiculturalism, building on the school’s multicultural founding. Furthermore, Carpenter believed in integration, and in 1965, moved out of Harlem with his family and into Teaneck, NJ. Carpenter explains that he moved to the area “because of the publicity of its excellent schools [and] its very serious attempt at integrating the community and making it holistic.”¹⁵⁴ (After living and working in Harlem almost his entire life, Carpenter left the neighborhood only two years before he would lead one of its iconic educational institutions of the era.¹⁵⁵) Yet, at the same time, Carpenter was staunchly proud of his Blackness and constantly expressed love for Harlem; he was fond of his collection of Kufi caps that he wore with frequency and his other West African regalia, was critical of Booker T. Washington’s philosophy regarding too-slow Black progress, and, of course, later oversaw the hiring of Africanists and required the teaching of African history classes at Harlem Prep.¹⁵⁶ He clearly understood racial dynamics and the institutional barriers that faced Black men and women in society, but still believed that these racial barriers could be overcome. And, for good or for ill, he saw education as *the* way to overcome them. Ultimately, at the time of Harlem Prep, Carpenter’s life experiences and personal beliefs produced a nuanced worldview that spanned various philosophies—and perhaps was a seminal reason for Harlem Prep’s own uniqueness as an

¹⁵³ In his dissertation, Carpenter refers to sayings of Baha’u’llah and that these ideas influenced his curriculum for Harlem Prep and his “model for working with students.” See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 52-54; see also, 35, 41, et al. for additional hints about these similar worldviews.

¹⁵⁴ Dr. Edward F. Carpenter interviewed by Audrey Henson, Teaneck, NJ, September 9, 1985, <http://www.teaneck.org/virtualvillage/oralhistory2/carpenter2.html>.

¹⁵⁵ At the time, this was very typical of middle-class Black families. For example, see Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹⁵⁶ Carpenter loved to wear his West African regalia particularly at commencement. See personal photographs from Casey Carpenter that were shared with author; For comments about Carpenter’s criticism of Washington, see Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 1973, 9-11.

educational institution. This institution was as fluid as Carpenter himself.

Finally, Carpenter was the eternal optimist. “A ‘can-do’ guy,” wrote close friend Hussein Ahdieh, “[Carpenter’s] retort was always, ‘How do we figure this out, how do we do this?’”¹⁵⁷ This optimism—tied with his vibrancy and energetic spirit—would be the driving force at Harlem Prep. Almost all of his later maxims that he would constantly proclaim as headmaster at graduation or in the “hallways” (sayings that students still remember fifty years later) touch on aspects of hope and belief.¹⁵⁸ Despite understanding the struggles that young Black men and women faced in Harlem through his own experience as a Harlemit and after nearly two decades of work in Harlem schools, Carpenter thrived on a personal set of positive beliefs about people, and, as discussed earlier, particularly about students. He valued discipline, focus, and work ethic—his daughter recalls how he was always working when she was a child—but relied upon an unbending sense of optimism that carried him in his educational work.

When Eugene Callender and the partially filled Board of Trustees led by Dr. Stephen Wright decided to invite Edward F. Carpenter to become the new headmaster of the soon-to-be-created prep school of the Street Academy Program, hindsight seems to suggest that he was an excellent choice for the moment. (Wright, after Carpenter’s recent hiring, once called Carpenter an “unusual person.”¹⁵⁹) Still, however, his selection was not preordained—Carpenter actually turned down the position at first. His wife, Ann Carpenter, recalls this interview with Mother Ruth Ann Dowd (who was representing Manhattanville College in the Harlem Prep partnership) because Ann was there being interviewed *with* him even though there was only one job being offered:

So [Mother Dowd] interviewed him and [said], “Well, what are you thinking?” and I’d tell

¹⁵⁷ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 35; See also Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017.

¹⁵⁸ Among many, see Clifford Jacobs interviewed by author, New York, NY, November 18, 2013.

¹⁵⁹ “‘Harlem Prep Open,’” *New York Urban League News*, Fall 1967, in Box 10, Folder 16, NYUL Papers.

her what I thought, and we went on, and at the end of the interview, he said, “I think this is a really wonderful project, but I’m not really interested.” Without missing a beat at all, she looked at me and she said, “Well what about you, would you take it?” And I thought, “Oh my God, this woman is desperate,” but I was embarrassed to be put in the position first of all, taking something that he had just so definitely rejected.¹⁶⁰

It turns out Mother Dowd may not have been desperate considering that other individuals were interviewed, but she did want *a* Carpenter to become headmaster no matter what. Ann remembers further that about a week or so after the interview, Ed received another phone call offering the job to him again, saying that he has “what it takes” and that they—presumably the NYUL and Manhattanville College—“would really like to see [him] in this job.” Still, Ed was unsure. Ann explains how it was her who persuaded him to reconsider. “I really think you ought to take it,” she shared years later, “because you would be in a position of helping so many young people.” Eventually, after she “went to work on him to get him to take it,” he eventually did—“so, Mother Carpenter, you were the cause of [Harlem Prep] in many ways,” laughs English teacher Sandy Campbell today.¹⁶¹ Still, Ann Carpenter’s retelling is more than just an anecdote, but key insight into how important she was to the school—even before she formally started working there a year after it open. While Ed would soon become known as the headmaster of Harlem Prep, Ann also makes it known here that she should be acknowledged for the crucial role that she played in Harlem Prep’s origins, too.

Moreover, this episode illustrates how Ann and Ed Carpenter were a team—confidantes, partners, and co-educators, even if the latter received much, if not all, of the credit for the school

¹⁶⁰ Ann Carpenter, in Clifford Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group video interview, New York, NY, ca. 2010. This was a group interview with George “Sandy” Campbell, Ann Carpenter, Florence Carpenter, and Raymond Crawford, interviewed by Karen “Casey” Carpenter, recorded and created by Clifford Jacobs in 2010. A copy of the raw footage of the interview was given to author for use.

¹⁶¹ Sandy Campbell, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

later on. This complex gender dynamic was a microcosm of Harlem Prep's existence: the under-the-radar contributions of Ann Carpenter that were often overshadowed by her husband's public persona and, perhaps, in a broader sense, the marginalization of women activists in the Civil Rights era.¹⁶² Ed Carpenter taking the job as headmaster would "certainly be a good experience for him because it would give him a lot of success, and not knowing, again, a lot of that would fall back on me, which it did," Ann recalled decades later, half-jokingly, with history proving much truth to this statement.¹⁶³ Today, it is hard to parse exactly why Mother Dowd asked Ann Carpenter about the headmaster job; perhaps Dowd simply recognized Ann's talents as an educator based on her more than decade of teaching experience and wanted her to lead Harlem Prep.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, as a woman with a prominent role in two educational institutions—college professor and now vice principal of a high school—Dowd recognized that Ann recently rising to head of the English department at her high school was a difficult position to attain as a woman, particularly a Black woman. Or, by virtue of Ed Carpenter voluntarily (and unexpectedly) bringing his wife to a personal interview, Mother Dowd sensed they were a team and any decision Ed would make would have to be approved by Ann. Conjecture aside, the story of Harlem Prep—and Ed Carpenter's accomplishments at the school—are as much due to Ann's influence and tireless work at the school as they are to anything, or anybody, else. (Since Ann did not join Ed at Harlem Prep until the second academic year, Ann's personal and professional biography will come into focus in Chapter 3 and Part II of this dissertation, during the discussion of the school's

¹⁶² For example, books such as Collier-Thomas and Franklin, eds., *Sisters in the Struggle*; and Ling and Monteith, eds., *Gender and the Civil Rights Movement*, document the immense contributions of Black women in the Civil Rights Movement, while at the same time explore, to varying degrees, the ways in which Black women were marginalized and pushed aside by Black male leaders.

¹⁶³ Ann Carpenter, in Jacobs, "Harlem Prep Revisited," group interview, ca. 2010.

¹⁶⁴ A less favorable gender interpretation would be that Dowd might have assumed that, as a woman, Ann Carpenter would be more inclined to take the job because fewer women held those positions. Regardless, not only would she not accept the job in front of her husband, but she "wasn't really interested" anyway at the time. See Ann Carpenter, in Jacobs, "Harlem Prep Revisited," group interview, ca. 2010.

administrators and substantial growth in the second year of operation.¹⁶⁵)

Beyond these gender dynamics that will be explored in subsequent chapters and Ann's important role at the school, this episode also suggests an important takeaway about Ed Carpenter's hiring specifically. Even though Carpenter was officially selected on August 2, 1967 from a list of nine candidates, he was at least one of their preferred candidates from the start—he certainly fit the description of a “well-respected Negro educator with experience.”¹⁶⁶ Carpenter not only had the requisite experience in education, but possessed the rare mix of personal qualities and professional skillsets necessary to do what was certainly a challenging job. As a Harlem Prep student declared, “He was a gentleman of the highest caliber.”¹⁶⁷ Once Harlem Prep separated itself from the New York Urban League—and thus, from Callender's guiding hand—the responsibility landed on Carpenter to shape Harlem Prep's future. While certainly not perfect nor without personal and professional shortcomings (the latter included lackluster bookkeeping skills that caused extra financial strain), as demonstrated by Harlem Prep's effectiveness in sending young people to college and the effusive words of praise from both from contemporary materials and from students today, Carpenter proved that he was up to the task.

Of course, Ed Carpenter was not the only important hire. In a small school environment, each faculty and administrative member was carefully selected by Callender and the NYUL. Of those people, none were more essential to Harlem Prep's early development than Sister Ruth Ann Dowd, who had already been chosen to be assistant principal prior to Carpenter's interview in

¹⁶⁵ I have chosen to explore her life in Part II of the dissertation, because while not discussing her biography here can seem to reinforce the problem of diminished attention, narratively, it works better in terms of chronologically telling the story and helping understand her key role in the day-to-day operations of the school and the educational program discussed in Part II. Moreover, the primary sources that I rely on are dated from the years largely explored in Part II and not here in Part I.

¹⁶⁶ Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School,” 42-43.

¹⁶⁷ Beechum, “A Salute to Mr. Carpenter,” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, December 1967, in Box 10, Folder 6-9 NYUL Papers.

early August of 1967. A philosophy professor at Manhattanville College, Dowd was also a nun at the Society of the Sacred Heart who had a long history in Harlem and most notably, with Eugene Callender. Dowd had worked with Callender back at his church since the early 1960s, volunteering at his street academy school (prior to NYUL affiliation) in partnership with others at Manhattanville College.¹⁶⁸ When Callender started the Street Academy Program through the League in 1966, Sister Dowd continued to volunteer and work with the young people in the program. Her hiring at Harlem Prep continued this long friendship.

Born in 1919 in upstate New York, Dowd graduated from Manhattanville College and went on to earn an M.A. and Ph.D. from Fordham University in New York. She taught at various Jesuit secondary schools before joining the Manhattanville faculty in 1949.¹⁶⁹ Dowd held a progressive worldview; her whiteness did not prevent her from acting on her conscience and working with Black youth. At Manhattanville, she frequently showed an interest in Harlem's young people, creating programs at the college to benefit high-risk students and pushing her department to be more invested in social change.¹⁷⁰ Her poignant challenge to her college in the school's alumni newsletter in 1968 illustrated this point:

Is every alumna... asking Manhattanville some hard questions about its student body and its curriculum, its relevance to the era of great cities? Are you aware of how many black students are on campus? Of the attitude of white students toward them? Has Manhattanville any black men on its faculty? Does African civilization takes its place in

¹⁶⁸ See Callender, *Nobody is a Nobody*, 249.

¹⁶⁹ Laurie Johnston, "Women of Conscience, Ruth Dowd," *New York Times*, April 19, 1972, p. 35. See also, Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 29; "Resumes of Harlem Prep Staff," October 19, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid; See also, Penny Singer, "Entrepreneurial Spirit and Social Goals," *The New York Times*, May 7, 1989. For example, one program she created was called PROJECT SHARE where she paired teens from Harlem with incoming freshman at Manhattanville. See "Resumes of Harlem Prep Staff," October 19, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

the curriculum alongside East Asian Studies? What is Manhattanville doing to prevent our nation from “rapidly moving towards two increasingly separate Americas?”¹⁷¹

Wanting to “broaden the educational opportunities for women and members of minority groups,” Dowd left Manhattanville College to start Harlem Prep with Dr. Callender in early summer of 1967.¹⁷² She also, years later, explained that she returned to Harlem to “reconnect with public education.” She, like others, saw Harlem Prep as serving the role of a public school in Central Harlem.¹⁷³ “We couldn’t have started Harlem Prep without her,” pronounced Callender in 1972. “She was a cornerstone—and an outgoing, exciting human being with a delightful sense of humor.”¹⁷⁴ “Sister Dowd’s efforts were crucial to the school’s establishment,” added Hussein Ahdieh.¹⁷⁵ Dowd, a “tough and able administrator,” and Carpenter made up the inaugural interracial administrative team at Harlem Prep.

Working under a “tight schedule,” the remaining nine members of the inaugural Harlem Prep faculty were selected by the last week of September (only days before the school was to open). Carpenter, in his dissertation, reflects deeply on the diversity of his opening staff—a foreshadowing of the school’s multicultural spirit. Acknowledging the entire experimental nature of the school, Carpenter wrote that it was “opportune to test the concept of employing a faculty

¹⁷¹ Ruth Dowd, “From Harlem to Here,” *Manhattanville Alumnae Review*, Spring 1968, p. 5, as cited in Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 29-30.

¹⁷² Penny Singer, “Entrepreneurial Spirit and Social Goals,” *The New York Times*, May 7, 1989; Initially, the board agreed that Harlem Prep would reimburse Manhattanville College \$15,000 annually for the use of Sister Ruth Dowd’s services as the school’s assistant headmaster. However, it seemed that shortly after, Dowd decided to leave the college completely and work at Harlem Prep full-time, no longer teaching at Manhattanville. She would return years later after Harlem Prep in the early 1980s; See Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School,” 43.

¹⁷³ Zach Oliva, “After 7 Decades, Manhattanville Says Goodbye Sister Dowd,” *Harrison Patch*, August 18, 2011, <https://patch.com/new-york/harrison/after-7-decades-manhattanville-says-goodbye-to-sister-dowd>; Sister Dowd also made various comments in other outlets about the need for Harlem Prep due to no area high schools.

¹⁷⁴ Johnston, “Women of Conscience, Ruth Dowd,” *New York Times*, April 12, 1972.

¹⁷⁵ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 65.

with diverse racial, religious, and political backgrounds”—to “prove to students and communities that unity in diversity was workable at Harlem Prep.”¹⁷⁶ (For students like Alberto Capps, an original student in 1967, this diversity was notable and memorable; Capps recalls how, for example, being exposed to one of the gay instructors gave him and his friends “an appreciation and understanding [of] what it meant to be gay, so we started developing that respect.”¹⁷⁷) The nine-person staff, including Carpenter and Mother Dowd, had the racial make-up of six Blacks, three whites, one Puerto Rican, and one Pakistani. Carpenter also “proceeded with a deliberate plan” for religious diversity, too; within this staff, there were a mix of Catholics, Jews, Bahá’i’s (like Carpenter), Muslims, protestants, and agnostics.¹⁷⁸ Of course, the three white faculty members included Mother Dowd and two additional nuns as per the previous agreement between Callender and Manhattanville College. This included Sister Jane Early and Sister Oonah Ryan, both white, who were in their mid-thirties and had teaching experience at the private school level.¹⁷⁹

The rest of the staff included: Duane L. Jones, a Black math teacher (and sometimes actor) who had taught both in the public school system and in other capacities such as high school equivalency courses at Queens College and adult programs through the Board of Education; Anthony M. Lewis, Jr., a Black social studies teacher with eleven years of teaching experience in the Board of Education; Gaywood S. McGuire, Jr., a young 24-year old Black mathematics teacher from Maryland who had started an M.A. degree at NYU; Dr. Josef ben Jochannon, or “Dr.

¹⁷⁶ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 40

¹⁷⁷ Capps interview, November 19, 2016.

¹⁷⁸ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 40-41; See also a description of these goals written by a former student, James Rogers, and Carpenter’s wife, Ann, in Ann Carpenter and James Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High School*, ed. Ronald Gross and Paul Osterman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), 273-274.

¹⁷⁹ “Resumes of Harlem Prep Staff,” October 19, 1967, Carnegie Records.

Ben” as he was singularly known, a flamboyant Black African history teacher born in Ethiopia who would later become a controversial figure among Black historians; Shirley Jones, a Black school secretary; Ruth Kyler, a “young Black woman who served as a student counselor” and an ex-drug addict who “had known the streets”; and Dee A. Rodriguez, a Puerto Rican executive secretary “to include someone from the Spanish-speaking group.”¹⁸⁰ To be sure, it is unclear how much control Carpenter exercised in choosing this initial collection of educators; Callender was still deeply invested in Harlem Prep and so was the hands-on Board of Trustees. What *is* clear, however, is that Carpenter was extremely proud of his faculty, and that these teachers—and dozens of others as the school grew—were the heart and soul of Harlem Prep and the primary reason for its ability to empower students and send them to college.¹⁸¹

Harlem Prep’s Board of Trustees was an equally fascinating group, made up of personnel that were hands-on in their role in the burgeoning new school. At the outset, the Board of Trustees was to be led by Dr. Stephen Wright, former president of Fisk University and president of the United Negro College Fund. Wright, who spent “his life broadening educational opportunities for black America,” was described by the *New York Times* as being “in the forefront of efforts to improve the quality of black education and to remove the road blocks that had barred black students from going to college.”¹⁸² His chairmanship, then, was particularly fitting considering his aspirations for Black higher education and Harlem Prep’s college-first theme.¹⁸³ After Wright, the

¹⁸⁰ Ibid; “1968 Harlem Prep Commencement Program,” part of “Harlem Prep” report, July 2, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015; Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 41.

¹⁸¹ Former students today still have vivid recollections of many of these teachers. Further discussion about these teachers, and others, and their pedagogy and teaching style, will be explored later in this dissertation.

¹⁸² Robert McG. Thomas, Jr., “Stephen Wright, 85; Led in Education for Blacks,” *New York Times*, April 19, 1996, sec. U.S.; The United Negro College Fund was a widely known umbrella organization that sought to raise money for HBCU’s throughout the country.

initial board consisted of a small, eclectic (and racially mixed) group: Cyril D. Tyson, a local Black civil rights activist who worked with Dr. Kenneth Clark at HARYOU and managed various antipoverty programs in the city; Harvey M. Spear, a white lawyer active in the city's Democratic politics who was also involved with the NYUL; Percy C. Ifill, the founder of one of the leading Black architectural firms in the city and designer of Harlem State Office building on 125th Street (as well as the second board chairman); Charles E. Silberman, white author of best-selling books on racial oppression and fellow at the Carnegie Study of the Education of Educators; Dr. Samuel Proctor, close confidant of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights activist in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and later pastor of Harlem's influential Abyssinian Baptist Church; Dr. Henry H. Callard, a Princeton education professor; Kenneth Barton, head of the history department of Riverdale High School; and Sheila Mosler, then-wife of New York Urban League President John Mosler and well-known Republican political activist in New York.¹⁸⁴ Eugene Callender and Elizabeth McCormack completed this inaugural board, serving as treasurer and secretary, respectively, with Mosler assuming the vice-chairman position.¹⁸⁵

Less than six months later, the board would more than double to twenty-three members, and change dramatically in make-up. Furthermore, Carpenter and Prep administrators recognized

¹⁸³ In his public statements about the school opening, he always stressed how Harlem Prep would provide opportunities for Black students to attend college—the latter point always being key.

¹⁸⁴ "Harlem Prep Trustee List," ca. 1968, Records, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers; Joseph P. Fried, "Cyril D. Tyson Dies at 89; Fought Poverty in a Turbulent Era," *New York Times*, December 30, 2016, sec. N.Y. / Region. Tyson is the father of current well-known astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, who is friend of some Harlem Prep alumni; Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 32-33; "Percy C. Ifill, 59, Architect," *New York Times*, May 20, 1973; Margalit Fox, "Charles E. Silberman, Who Wrote About Racism in the U.S., Dies at 86," *New York Times*, February 13, 2011, sec. U.S.; Memo from Barbara Finberg, October 4, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; and "Mosler New President, Other Officers, Board Members Named," *Urban League News*, July 15, 1965, Box 10, Folder 16, NYUL Papers. Sheila Mosler's background, who was once described by renowned journalist Ken Auletta as a "Republican socialite," as well as her deep involvement in Harlem Prep fundraising, will be discussed later in this dissertation. See Ken Auletta, *Hard Feelings: Reporting on the Poles, the Press, the People and the City* (New York: Random House, 2011).

¹⁸⁵ "Harlem Prep Trustee List," ca. 1968, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers.

“the need for more community representation” and soon after sought to solicit potential parents that could join.¹⁸⁶ (They would later make up the majority of the board.) However, at the onset of Harlem Prep, this initial board reveals a lot about Harlem Prep’s founding: it was a school overseen at the start by prominent Black and white members of New York City. Most of these early members had either participated in Democratic politics (excluding Mosler and Barton) or believed in traditional liberal civil rights orthodoxy—people like Tyson, Spears, Silberman, and Proctor, as well as Callender, saw integration, non-violent resistance, and government intervention as keys to solving urban blight and inequality (at least based on their previous professional positions).¹⁸⁷ As Thomas Sugrue and many others have illustrated, education—the struggle for better schools—was very much part and parcel of the northern Civil Rights Movement.¹⁸⁸ The civil rights activists who would make up this initial Harlem Prep Board of Trustees similarly saw Harlem Prep as a piece of that northern fight for civil rights; there were no public high schools in Central Harlem, and New York City education officials continued to neglect and discriminate against Harlem’s children, and thus, Harlem Prep was a logical step. Furthermore, it is notable that many of them were not educators by profession.

When situating Harlem Prep in the context of recent historical scholarship, the school’s early personnel and institutional affiliations would suggest that Harlem Prep’s was created within the mainstream of civil rights ideology. Jon Hale, in his recent account of freedom schools in Mississippi, argues for the “overlooked yet generative role of grassroots education during the civil

¹⁸⁶ Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School,” 43.

¹⁸⁷ To be fair, Callender seemed to have evolved by the time he started Harlem Prep to a more nationalistic worldview, as suggested by his speeches and other private documents. He also writes in his memoir how he began to doubt the merits of non-violent resistance.

¹⁸⁸ See, for example, Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; and Theoharris and Woodard, eds., *Freedom North*. In addition to Sugrue’s work on protests in New Rochelle, NY, Theoharris squarely connects Boston’s desegregation battles—parents and activists were fighting for racial equity in public schools—to large-scale civil rights organizing in the North.

rights movement”—and, although Harlem Prep at its onset was founded for different purposes than these freedom schools, its early proponents would most likely agree with education’s role in this struggle.¹⁸⁹ Still, it is important to note that Harlem Prep would move away from this integrationist civil rights paradigm, as both the school’s board and its supporters rapidly evolved in the years to come.¹⁹⁰

From the outset, Harlem Prep’s Board of Trustees also sought to have a hands-on role with the school. “Mrs. Mosler stated that the Board of Trustees is not the typical type of board,” read the *Minutes* of one of the first executive committee in mid-October, “and thus must concern itself with the human element. She felt the board must assure the responsibility for seeing that major needs of the students are met in a way that as to allow them to achieve Academically.”¹⁹¹ This desire was particularly true in the early goings of the school, as board members predictably worked with Carpenter and Mother Dowd to figure out many of the still-fluid logistics of the school from a funding and administrative standpoint. Yet, Mosler’s early proclamation would also remain true through the school’s independent existence; Mosler herself, and other board members, would often visit the school and develop relationships with students in later years.¹⁹²

In the wake of the school’s quickly approaching fall opening deadline, one of the newly-formed board of trustees’ first decision was to decide on the physical location for this school. Personnel was chosen, funding was (temporarily) secured, and an inaugural board formed, but the

¹⁸⁹ Hale, *The Freedom Schools*, 4.

¹⁹⁰ Of course, headmaster Edward Carpenter and staff had not yet asserted their influence on the school. This dissertation will certainly track how Harlem Prep changed in the context of the Black freedom struggle, broadly defined, and how, as I argue, during most of its tenure, was a relatively novel experiment unlike any other. However, at its founding stages, Harlem Prep did seem to be aligned with a more moderate strain of civil rights activism.

¹⁹¹ “Executive Committee Meeting [Draft of Minutes], Board of Trustees, Harlem Prep” October 18, 1967, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers.

¹⁹² For example, one student vividly remembers Mosler frequently visiting Harlem Prep, chatting with students and sitting in Carpenter’s office to talk with him. See Sterling Nile interview, March 5, 2015.

plans for where Harlem Prep would be in both the short and long term were still being negotiated. In the immediate, Harlem Prep would open in “temporary quarters” at the 369th Harlem Regiment Armory on 142nd Street and the Harlem River.¹⁹³ Contracted to house Harlem Prep through the last day of February 1968, the board, via constant discussions in late September and throughout October, worked to then make final decisions on Harlem Prep’s permanent location. Callender, Wright, and rest of the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees had eyed a recently closed Finast supermarket on 136th Street and Eighth Avenue as a potential location for Harlem Prep. With money and time being the relative unknowns, by early October, the board had secured funding to move forward with acquiring the \$250,000 supermarket thanks to \$100,000 from the Sheila Mosler Foundation—Mosler’s non-profit charitable organization—and a \$150,000 bank mortgage from Franklin National Bank.¹⁹⁴ The supermarket was to officially close on November 17, 1967, and it was the board’s hope that full renovations could be completed in a timely fashion to move the school. While much discussion continued regarding the cost of renovations and what the design of the school should be, with a permanent location at least secured and the Armory contracted for the fall, Callender and the board were ready to open Harlem Prep.¹⁹⁵

Coming full circle, in the fall of 1967, Harlem Prep was at an interesting ideological place—and it is important to take inventory of Harlem Prep’s ideological beginning in relationship to historians’ understanding of the era and other upstart Black schools. Notably, Harlem Prep at its outset was already a blurred conglomerate of thoughts and ideologies. A microcosm of the Black freedom struggle more broadly, the school’s originators held views that were both in line with more moderate voices who favored a continued pursuit of civil rights legislation as well as with

¹⁹³ “Executive Committee Meeting,” October 18, 1967, NYUL Papers.

¹⁹⁴ Memo from Barbara Finberg, October 4, 1967, Carnegie Records; and “Executive Committee Meeting,” October 18, 1967, NYUL Papers.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

the nascent voices of Black nationalists, at least from a cultural perspective in terms of rhetoric. (However, the former, moderate beliefs were more prominent at this founding stage.¹⁹⁶) As previously mentioned, many of the early board members had been associated with Democratic politics and civil rights activism, yet, not all these voices were equal. Despite the added individuals to the board, Eugene Callender was the primary person (with the organizational heft of the New York Urban League at his back) who drove Harlem Prep's establishment, with his ideology that was quickly moving toward a more nationalistic outlook.

Callender's political orientation was a beautiful example of the ideological complexity of Harlem Prep on the eve of its opening in October of 1967. Callender, of course, was a product of integrated civil rights activism in the North and the South, and a believer in non-violence who had partnered for decades with white Jesuit nuns. Yet, at the same time that he served in the NYUL, he openly lambasted America's "belief in white supremacy" and how "white society [was] not going to yield anything of its privileged position," further stressing how Black is beautiful and the vestiges of slavery "can be overcome by a recovery of the African heritage."¹⁹⁷ He built up a cadre of social capital with white institutions and connected white elite, but was aggressive in his deep belief in the potential of Black youth and the Black Harlem community. These same contradictions—and perhaps they should not be seen that way but instead seen as a more truthful analysis of complex individuals—applied to Harlem Prep. Furthermore, examining Callender's ideology adds to scholars' recent revisions of simple explanations of the integration-to-nationalism narrative.¹⁹⁸ And, Harlem Prep's origin complicates educational historians' current

¹⁹⁶ I do not use the word moderate in a pejorative sense, as the efforts and accomplishments of "moderates" were far-reaching. I use this term only to (broadly) characterize the many views, on a spectrum, of Black activists.

¹⁹⁷ Callender, "Speech on the Black Power Revolution," August 1, 1967, Box 7, Folder 30, NYUL Papers.

¹⁹⁸ Rickford, "Integration, Black Nationalism, and Radical Democratic Transformation," 287–317. For example, Donna Jean Murch explains how Black Panther schools and thoughts started to developed as early as 1966 and

characterizations of the rise of alternative Black schools of the era because scholarship has left out a key philosophy also present during this time: radical multiculturalism. Callender, with his influx of positions, aligned with the type of multiculturalism that would later define Harlem Prep and expanded upon by Ed and Ann Carpenter over the next seven years.

Ultimately, the school's ideological—and multicultural—context at its founding combined with free-flowing range of ideas, stated purposes, and staff choices, all came to a head once students started walking through the school's doors for the first time. It was time for this educational experiment to begin.

1967, right around the time of Harlem Prep—and not just in the early 1970s in more popular discourse. See Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

Chapter Two

The Experiment Begins: The Inaugural Year, 1967-1968

“The road that has the bumps and the rocks and the trees with the thorns must have the ripest fruit and that’s the road I must take.”

—John Collins, Harlem Prep graduate, Inaugural Graduating Class of 1968¹

“I finished with high grades and went to high school, I attended George Washington, where I seemed to become a different person. It seemed no one really cared any more and after a while I stopped caring myself.”

—Cecil Chatman, Harlem Prep graduate, Inaugural Graduating Class of 1968²

Although Harlem Prep would later possess a grandness and independent ethos, when the school was first established, it resembled nothing of the sort. The school-wide buzz of countless Harlem celebrity visits, the neighborhood acclaim of sending more than a hundred Black youth to college at each commencement, the constant media attention and fundraisers from local Black businesses on the street was nowhere to found in the school’s early plans. As school administrators first opened the giant double doors in October 1967 of the Art Deco-inspired Harlem National Guard Armory on the edge of the Harlem River, jockeyed by only a few dozen students and a handful of teachers, Harlem Prep was then the product of the New York Urban League (NYUL)—just one small part of the NYUL’s Street Academy Program.

This chapter documents Harlem Prep’s important first year at its inaugural Armory

¹ Photograph of 1968 Harlem Prep yearbook, shared with author by Alberto Cappas, Harlem Prep alumnus.

² Ibid.

location, describing and hearing from the school's students, exploring the school's pedagogy, and other essential characteristics necessary to understand the institution's auspicious beginning. What did this first year look like in practice—and how did it set the foundation for the school's rapid growth and acceleration? How did the school's founding multicultural elements contribute to its broader educational theory of change that its school leaders would later codify? Furthermore, this chapter also briefly narrates some of the school's significant early changes, particularly the separation from the New York Urban League, that had a substantive impact on the school's future path. The chapter then concludes with the school's first commencement ceremony and subsequent inaugural graduates.

“Prep School in an Armory Begins ‘Revolution’”: The Opening of Harlem Prep³

“With much ado and a lot of hope for a new day in education for Negro youth in the ghettos of America, Harlem Prep opened its doors for the first time to some sixty students on Monday, October 2,” declared the *New York Urban League News*.⁴ “A new birth was created for the students who were blessed with the opportunity to attend such a school,” similarly confirmed a student at the time.⁵ The inaugural morning program included Callender, Stephen Wright, and Harvey Spear, who addressed the student body on this momentous day—and then Carpenter and the esteemed faculty were off to educate the new faces, some still teenagers and others in their early or mid-twenties, for the first time. “The human waste is appalling,” wrote Callender in a

³ Taken from the subtitle in a *New York Times* column about Harlem Prep's opening. See Carroll, “Harlem Dropouts Head For College,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1967, Field Records.

⁴ “Harlem Prep Open,” *New York Urban League News*, Fall 1967, Box 10, Folder 16, NYUL Papers. There were actually only 49 students on the first day of school.

⁵ Leonard Jackson, “Harlem Prep Opens,” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, Vol. 1, No. 1., November 1967, p. 1, in Box 10, Folder 6-9, NYUL Papers.

grant proposal barely a week after the Prep first opened.⁶ “These kids are going to destroy a lot of old myths about education,” added Carpenter on the eve of his first day as Headmaster. “Their potential has been grossly underestimated. They have the ability to change the world.”⁷

Despite the justified excitement and sheer energy coming from Harlem Prep’s key individuals, Harlem Prep opened without much fanfare—students from that inaugural class remember the “no-nonsense” vibe right from the start.⁸ In terms of press coverage, the *New York Amsterdam News*, the Black-led newspaper in Harlem that had a pulse on the community, covered Harlem Prep’s opening with one short column.⁹ The larger, and more mainstream, *New York Times* did the same with a slightly longer article.¹⁰

While it is reasonable that the Harlem community—the “Black Mecca” as influential historian Manning Marable once described it—would offer some pushback on the creation in the heart of the community of a new prep school that had prominent connections to the white power structure, there is little evidence that suggests that any substantial community resistance occurred. If anything, perhaps local Harlemites, the *New York Amsterdam News* included, were indeed a bit hesitant at the outset. Compared to just six months later, the tone of the *New York Amsterdam News* went from neutral to enthusiastic (which, from then on, would continually be the consistent perspective of the newspaper). Furthermore, Carpenter recognized that parents might have had “negative attitudes toward the school” based on their previous experiences of being ignored and

⁶ “Harlem Prep and Street Academies NYUL Proposal,” October 11, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁷ “Harlem Prep Open, *New York Urban League News*, Fall 1967, Box 10, Folder 16, NYUL Papers.

⁸ See, for example, Capps interview, November 19, 2016.

⁹ “Urban League Opens Harlem Prep School,” *New York Amsterdam News*, October 7, 1967. However, by early spring, the *Amsterdam News* would start to cover Harlem Prep closely, becoming a staunch supporter, issuing countless columns, updates, and constant pleas of support for the school throughout its independent tenure.

¹⁰ Carroll, “Harlem Dropouts Head For College,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1967, Field Records.

neglected at other schools—“indeed, this was a sensitive problem that required skillful handling,” Carpenter later wrote.¹¹ Carpenter further explained that barely six weeks after school started, Carpenter began holding assemblies with parents, answering their questions, taking their suggestions, creating a parents committee, and implementing their ideas (such as to start an evening school).¹² Carpenter, with his vast experience working in the Harlem community, sought to generate grassroots support—starting with the parents of his new pupils—right from the outset.

To be sure, Harlem Prep at the beginning was a small and focused endeavor, even if it was underscored with big ideas about education and the untapped potential of young people. And, the 369th Regiment Harlem Armory epitomized this beginning dynamic: a small group of students, only 49 of them, walked into the enormous “brick building [that] gave a foreboding, almost Medieval-like appearance.”¹³ Occupying a large half block on the edge of the Harlem River Drive, it held “an especially conspicuous presence in the community,” with reddish brown brick and detail that were “in the contemporary Art Deco mode accented with appropriate military touches.”¹⁴ The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, which wrote in 1985 that the “armory is considered a community symbol of unity, service, and pride” due to its history of the all-Black “Harlem Hellfighters” regiment, still had military remnants when Harlem Prep students entered. For example, when Callender gave his opening address, the *New York Times* vividly commented that he stood in a “borrowed room” where “a faint chalk diagram on the

¹¹ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 61-63.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 37.

¹⁴ Cheryl Chodnicki and Marjorie Pearson, “369th Regiment Armory [Report],” Landmarks Preservation Commission, May 14, 1985, Designation List 180 LP1390, p. 6-7, http://www.neighborhoodpreservationcenter.org/db/bb_files/85-369th-REG.pdf

blackboard was labeled ‘hand grenade’.”¹⁵

However, the Amory had a poor reputation for those who actually visited it, particularly in the context of education, since schools were supposed to be uplifting, not dreary spaces. For example, the *New York Amsterdam News* once wrote that it was “as massive and bleak as a penitentiary.”¹⁶ Vice-Principal Mother Ruth Dowd further described the Amory as “cold, barrack-like corridors” in personal correspondence and headmaster Carpenter explained that it was the only structure in Central Harlem that could house a school and meet various regulations.¹⁷ Carpenter best sums up his feelings—and assuredly that of other faculty—regarding the Amory location:

The Headmaster feared that the sterile, echoing, cavernous, fort-like building would have a depressing effect on faculty and students. This did not happen. The armory was only able to provide one classroom with a capacity to seat forty students, one small auditorium, with a capacity to hold sixty people, and three small offices for the administration. The physical arrangement was to govern the thinking for renovating the supermarket that students now call home.¹⁸

From the beginning, the Amory was only a temporary stopgap, but despite its dreary appearance and cramped quarters, it served as a functional place for Harlem Prep’s quiet beginning.

Most importantly, who were the inaugural students who entered Harlem Prep in fall of 1967? According to Carpenter, there were seventy-five applicants for the first term, with forty-nine ultimately being selected. Unlike later iterations of Harlem Prep, the criteria set by the

¹⁵ Carroll, “Harlem Dropouts Head For College,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1967, Field Records.

¹⁶ Lesley Jones, “Harlem Prep Is Proving Successful Program,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 28, 1970.

¹⁷ Letter from Ruth Dowd to Alan Pifer, September 10, 1968, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 36.

¹⁸ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 36.

school's admissions committee were initially rigid: sufficient basal reading score levels, completion of eleven years of public or private schooling, and recommendations from the directors of the Street Academy Program. Predictably, a majority of this first class had worked their way through the Street Academy Program—first graduating from a storefront school, then to a remedial Academy of Transition, and finally to Harlem Prep.¹⁹ Students participated in a formal interview, although, as Carpenter recalled, these interviews “yielded little further information” other than about how students were, justifiably, disenchanted with their public schools and how they were treated in their prior classrooms.²⁰ Finally, although Carpenter and the faculty viewed student transcripts from their former high schools, these documents were also “of little help” because “they did not tell of the hopes, aspirations, and true potential of the students.”²¹ As dozens of alumni attest today, Carpenter cared only about students' desire to learn—not his or her past—recognizing the ineffective and oppressive teaching that occurred in the city's public schools.

The application into Harlem Prep in 1967 was relatively straightforward: basic information such as name, address, telephone, date of birth, and social security number, as well as marital status, brief medical history, and emergency contact. The second page included previous educational information (i.e., last high school attended and graduation status), military

¹⁹ Ibid., 47-49; “Harlem Prep Open,” *New York Urban League News*, Fall 1967, Box 10, Folder 16, NYUL Papers; There is also some evidence that many of these first students actually attended Newark Prep—the NYUL's other “prep school”—before then coming to Harlem Prep. See Barnard L. Collier, “A Dropout Picks Up Some Logic on His Way to College,” *New York Times*, March 14, 1968. Conversely, some students do not remember attending all aspects of the Street Academy, such as one student who remembers going from a storefront school then to Harlem Prep. Furthermore, these requirements only applied at the start, if at all—the population of students quickly grew from 49 students to 71 within a few months, and some students had not completed eleven years of schooling or had the type of reading scores initially proposed. In terms of the exact amount of students who attended the Street Academy Program, of the 71 students, Ann Carpenter wrote in 1969 that about two-thirds were part of the NYUL system and the other one-third from “churches and individual or public-school recommendation.” See Ann Carpenter, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative System,” in *High School*, 276.

²⁰ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 47.

²¹ Ibid, 49; Carpenter also wrote, in terms of these transcripts, that: “If the school had based acceptance criteria on these transcripts, few applicants would have even been admitted to Harlem Prep.”

affiliations—the Harlem Prep student body would later be made up of approximately 10% Vietnam War veterans—and, most interestingly, two open questions with free writing space. First, the application asked: “In order to give us a more complete picture of yourself, please write a short autobiography. Include such things as future educational plans, extra-curricular activities, membership in any organizations, sports activities, etc.” On the top of the next page, the application then asked the student why he or she wishes to attend Harlem Prep, following by spaces to list two references. The final page of the first semester Harlem Prep application includes a page for “interviewers’ comments” that would be stapled on to the end of the application.²² A notable omission in many students’ records were detailed transcripts from their public high school, matching Carpenter’s rhetoric about emphasizing students’ desire to learn and devaluing their past academic record. Many of these transcripts were partial records from students’ previous schooling experiences, filled with grade marks that Carpenter most likely felt were not indicative of students’ potential.²³ Carpenter’s educational philosophy was grounded by his general view that young people had enormous potential that their previous schools failed to tap into and properly stimulate, and thus, did not place much weight into students’ past academic performances.

This inaugural class of students was very diverse in age, political orientation, and religious affiliation. Students ranged from 16 to 31 years of age, with a median age of 19.5. Students were primarily Black with a sprinkling of Puerto Rican students—there were no white attendees at first—although at least one student suggests that these arbitrary racial boundaries were blurred and

²² 1967 Harlem Prep Application of Alberto O. Cappas, August 14, 1967. This completed (and accepted) application was inside a 1967 Harlem Prep graduate’s student record folder, on file at Park East High School, copy in author’s possession, used with permission.

²³ During my research, I was granted permission by former students to seek out and view their personal student records. The degree that students’ past high school records existed in their Harlem Prep records varied. Of the eleven student record files that I reviewed fully, seven of them had one page transfer sheets with some grades, most of which seemed incomplete. Four of the other files did not have any transcripts or records. (However, two of those four had letters from students’ previous schools stating that they would not be able to receive their prior transcripts until they paid outstanding fines.)

non-Black students were accepted in what was generally a culturally Black school.²⁴ This characterization is significant; the fact that the school felt like a culturally Black institution while also eagerly promoting the inclusion of students from different racial groups speaks to the school's early multicultural identity. In addition, students' political identities ranged widely. For example, there were the so-called Five-Percenter, an off-shoot group of the Nation of Islam that held radical beliefs about the origins of Earth and elevated the status of Black men, specifically.²⁵ There were followers of the Black Panther Party and self-acclaimed Garveyites, the latter students those who followed the policies of Marcus Garvey and argued that all Black people should be united in pursuing economic justice.²⁶ There were also supporters of various Marxist leaders, such as Che Guevera, Fidel Castro, and Chairman Mao.²⁷ Students were also diverse in terms of religion, composing different sects of Islam, as well as Protestants, Jews, Bahá'í's, and non-affiliated students.²⁸ To Carpenter, this diverse study body was a wonderful characteristic—"Harlem Prep was designed to bring diverse people together," he wrote—and while some aspects of the student body would change including the admissions and selection process, the diversity of this first class set an important precedent for future years.²⁹ In addition, while there were students

²⁴ See Capps interview, November 19, 2016.

²⁵ The so-called "Five Percenter" believed in the notion that only five percent of the world actually knew the "truth" about the world's existence and sought to enlighten the rest of the population. They believed that Black men were considered "Gods" of the Earth, not in an immortal sense, but in terms of being the ancient inhabitants of the planet. For a fuller and perhaps more fair representation, see Michael Muhammad Knight, *The Five Percenter: Islam, Hip-Hop and Gods of New York* (London: One World Books, 2007).

²⁶ For more information about these students, see Carpenter, "The Development of an Alternative School," 75. See also Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁷ Ibid, 75-76.

²⁸ Ibid., 72-78; See specific data on pg. 73.

²⁹ Ibid, 80.

from all five boroughs, a majority came from Central Harlem and the Lower East Side.³⁰

Ultimately, Carpenter knew that during a time of deep divisions both between Blacks and whites, as well as within the Black community about how to progress in the centuries-long struggle for civil rights, he purposely sought to create a school where such divisions would not prove to be a barrier in reaching its purported goals.



Figure 3. Harlem Prep students in the inaugural year at the Harlem Armory, 1968.

Source: Ford Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center.

The gender composition, however, was not as diverse at this founding stage.³¹ Of the forty-nine inaugural students, forty-three were male and only six were female. Despite this gender imbalance, there is no evidence that Harlem Prep was created to be an all-male (or mostly-male)

³⁰ “Memo about NYUL Involvement in Harlem Prep,” November 27, 1967, Box 2T32, Field Records. Notably, there was one Street Academy of Transition in the Lower East Side, too.

³¹ As the school grew in size, the gender discrepancy significantly lessened and became closer to a 50/50 split, although there seemed to always be slightly more men than women.

school. In addition to the school's chartered which referenced both sexes equally, other evidence and context clues suggest that it was highly likely that Harlem Prep was not planned to be an all-male institution. The fact that there were women from the start and that language about a single-sex school was virtually non-existent in any rhetoric or planning documents, bolsters this conclusion. It seems that the school's small women population was more of a consequence of unconscious bias and sexism regarding the plight of young women in Harlem too often ignored. Harlem Prep's male population seemed to be a reflection of these larger societal factors than anything else, particularly since women such as Mother Ruth Dowd and others were present and leading the school.

One commonality across all the inaugural Harlem Prep students, of course, was their educational status. Ann Carpenter, the wife of Headmaster Ed Carpenter who joined the school as a teacher and administrator in fall of 1968, described interviews that she and others had with the youth regarding why they left the traditional school systems. She explained:

they were lost among great numbers of students in classes in which teachers did not even know their names; the courses they studied were not related to problems of their daily lives; they had no power in making decisions that affected them, such as what was taught, how it was taught, or who taught it; they were continually forced to conform to a system of values which they had no part in forming and which they did not honor.³²

However, these superficial descriptors—age, ethnicity, religion, educational status—do not truly get at the heart of who these students were. These men and women, who “despised the use of the word [dropout],” preferred to be called—if some categorization was necessary—“early-school-leavers.”³³ As Harlem Prep staff often reiterated, these were students with massive potential who

³² Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High Schools*, 275.

left education “not because they lacked brains but because they were disgusted with the public school system,” said Anthony Hart, a 19-year old Harlem Prep student at the time.³⁴ When students had left school, many toiled in various odd jobs on the street, before being recruited to join the Street Academy Program. Others were technically not “early-school leavers” and had graduated with a general diploma, a “second-tier” diploma (a practice first established in 1938) awarded to students who did not have the credits or appropriate courses to attend college.³⁵ At the time, general diplomas were being handed out at an alarmingly rate. Of Central Harlem students who did graduate from an academic high school elsewhere in the city, over three-fourths of them received these general diplomas, which stood in sharp contrast to students from other parts of the city that had a far lower general diploma rate.³⁶ (Furthermore, since colleges would not recognize them, Carpenter considered these diplomas “worthless,” and saw these students in the same light as those who had left school.³⁷)

One of those students with a general diploma stonewalled from an equitable future was Alberto O. Cappas. Growing up on 108th Street and Columbus Avenue (sometimes known as Manhattan Valley), Cappas “graduated” from Louis D. Brandeis High School—today he considers it “social promotion”—at the age of twenty and admitted to having “no concept or idea about college, at all.” To make ends meet, Cappas, with his short combed-over black hair and a boyish demeanor, went to work for nine months at a psychiatric hospital in the city.³⁸ A Puerto Rican in a

³³ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 83.

³⁴ Homer Bigart, “Harlem Prep Gives Dropouts a Door to College,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1968.

³⁵ See New York City, City University of New York, “The History of Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York,” ca. 199, p. 14, www.nyc.gov/html/records/rwg/cuny/pdf/history.pdf.

³⁶ Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., *Youth in the Ghetto*, 180.

³⁷ Bigart, “Harlem Prep Gives Dropouts a Door to College,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1968.

diverse neighborhood, Cappas heard about Harlem Prep from some of his Black friends in the neighborhood who recruited him to attend a new prep school starting up in Harlem. “If it wasn’t for them, I’d still be in the streets for looking for work,” Cappas contends today.³⁹ After attending a Street Academy school for three or four months, he applied to Harlem Prep, was accepted, and became one of only a few Puerto Rican students in the fall of 1967. Cappas wanted to attend Harlem Prep out of a desire for an education—he loved to write, was interested in poetry and drama, as well as psychology from his past employment, but previously had no avenue to explore any of these various interests nor did he ever feel encouraged or supported.⁴⁰ Prominently involved as Harlem Prep’s representative on the editorial board of the New York Urban League’s entirely student-run and student-written newspaper *Forty Acres and a Mule*, Cappas wrote numerous poems, such as the aptly titled “A Poet Cries Out,” “A Dying Life,” and “A Belligerent Neighbor,” that, through a range of poetic metaphors, illustrates a young man’s plea to be heard.⁴¹ Although Cappas was not a Black student by his own admission, his profile was representative of many students who attended Harlem Prep: students who had grown up under rough circumstances and not been given a fair shake in public schools or encouraged to pursue higher education, but who had enormous potential and desire to learn if only given a second chance.

Students like Edward Randolph also fit this bill. Randolph, the grandson of a sharecropper who grew up in former slave quarters in the post-Emancipation Proclamation South, sought refuge

³⁸ Cappas interview, November 19, 2016; Personal photos of Cappas, copies in author’s possession, used with permission.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid; Alberto Cappas 1967 Harlem Prep application, which included his autobiography.

⁴¹ For example, these poems are in various issues of *Forty Acres and Mule*, including the November 1967 and February 1968 editions, Box 10, Folder 6-9, NYUL Papers. Cappas wrote numerous poems in other issues, too. For more information about *Forty Acres and a Mule*, see “Black Students Publish ‘40 Acres And A Mule,’” *The Chicago Defender*, December 16, 1967; and Sara Slack, “Reading Writing & Arithmetic: Harlem Hero,” *New York Amsterdam News*, December 9, 1967.

at Harlem Prep in hopes of a second chance. Randolph was slender and short in stature, but he elicited a wisdom that belied his youth.⁴² Before coming to the Prep, Randolph bounced around in each level of K-12 education at various public schools (and one private). “High school didn’t work for me,” he recalls, leaving George Washington High School at 16 and finding a full-time job instead.⁴³ After some time working, Randolph returned to school at Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem. Eventually, Randolph found out about Harlem Prep through Headmaster Carpenter, who was a close family friend, and enrolled in the fall of 1967, hoping that it was not like “normal school[s]” which he had struggled in for so long.⁴⁴ A poem that Randolph wrote a few weeks into his first (and only) semester at Harlem Prep exemplifies his bitterness towards education:

*And tomorrow I shall graduate
And mother will be so proud
As I accept my diploma respectfully
And shadows darkly cloud
My dropout soul, my dropout self.
Sold for sheepskin paper
Sold to make mother happy
A truly comic caper*

*Five years I spent in high school
Learning much more than they could teach
And tomorrow my dropout
Soul must rise above the crowd and preach*

*Loudly of the futile wars crying to the armies
Preach loudly to the old time folks oh how they’ll feel so sorry*

*And their minds ye theirs alone
Will be so restlessly yearning
To find out why on graduation day*

⁴² See pictures of Randolph in Willis, “Harlem Prep Gives Many a Chance,” *New York Amsterdam News*, February 17, 1968 and in “Harlem Prep” report, July 2, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

⁴³ Ed Randolph interviewed by author and Robert Randolph, New York, NY, February 2, 2017.

⁴⁴ See Carroll, “Harlem Dropouts Head For College,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1967, Field Records; See also Randolph interview, February 2, 2017.

*I set my diploma burning.*⁴⁵

Unlike his previous experiences in school that generated years of cynicism toward public education, Harlem Prep, as Randolph remembers it, was “freeing”—the casualness of the classes combined with the affirmation of teachers were highly conducive to Randolph’s state of mind at the time. It was just what he needed to move forward in life.

17-year Harlem teenager Gretchen Knight felt the same way, one of the few female students at the school during these opening months (despite the fact that the school’s initial charter claimed to be for both men and women).⁴⁶ Knight had dropped out of high school in the tenth grade, where she found her previous classes and teachers to be “boring, patronizing, and insulting”—“everything was phony,” she explained, and her school “was like a prison.” Like Cappas and Randolph, Gretchen Knight, with her gold hoop earrings and a sizable rounded Afro cut, needed a second chance; she felt pushed out of her previous school, and would tell *Newsweek Magazine* in an interview that she “really wanted to go to college” and saw Harlem Prep as the way to get there.⁴⁷

On the other hand, there were students like 20-year old Melvin Owens, who went by the name “Black-Power” during his time at the Prep. Owens, who felt his birth name was “unpalatable or distasteful” (according to Carpenter), found the much-needed freedom to express his Black cultural pride and feelings at Harlem Prep. As a Prep student, he was able to identify with the strong political currents of the era; Owens could engage freely with the writings of Eldridge

⁴⁵ “Ballad of Edmondo Hattemanne [poem],” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, Vol. 1, No. 1., November 1967, p. 7, in Box 10, Folder 6-9, NYUL Papers.

⁴⁶ “‘I Can Do Anything,’” *Newsweek*, July 8, 1968, 16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Cleaver, Malcolm X, and James Baldwin without fear of retribution from teachers.⁴⁸ He could be himself by exploring his African roots and personal interests in ways that most parts of the public school system would not allow. Whereas Cappas saw Harlem Prep as a second chance—and surely Owens did too—Harlem Prep enticed Owens more so because it filled the void of learning about his ancestral history which had been neglected in his previous Eurocentric classrooms. As the *New York Amsterdam News* wrote as part of a six-part series of Harlem Prep in early spring of 1968, there were students like Owens who thought it was “about time they learn[ed] something about the 42-nation continent from which their people were brought to America-AFRICA.”⁴⁹ Notably, young adults like Owens were part of a consistent trend of Harlem Prep students both at the school’s outset and through its independent tenure: they were older, intellectually mature, and had less trouble academically, but felt disregarded culturally and their socio-emotional needs ignored in previous educational experiences.

For students like Hart, Knight, Randolph, Cappas, and Owens, and assuredly countless others, this idea of an openness to self-expression—academically, culturally, linguistically, socially—and a non-ideological paradigm for doing so, was an essential element of the school as envisioned by Headmaster Carpenter. Students were free, and certainly encouraged, to make their own choices regarding their politics, yet, “they didn’t push any philosophy... They were very objective,” remembers Alberto Cappas. “They were basically promoting [education]—they want[ed] students to develop a strong educational foundation, and that was their goal.... ‘We’re not here to indoctrinate you, we’re here to educate you.’”⁵⁰ (This notable philosophy, particularly

⁴⁸ Clayton Willis, “Harlem Prep School Gives Many A Chance (Second of a Series)” *New York Amsterdam News*, February 24 1968; See also Collier, “A Dropout Picks Up Some Logic on His Way to College,” *New York Times*, March 14, 1968.

⁴⁹ Clayton Willis, “Harlem Prep School Gives Many A Chance (Last of a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 23, 1968.

in comparison to other Black and white alternative schools, will be analyzed more closely in the following chapter.) Carpenter, Dowd, and staff kept a laser-like focus on college: sending students onto higher education was the purpose of this school at this juncture, and this small school was organized to carry out this primary goal. “Harlem Prep was created to meet a specific need to assist unsuccessful students to enter college.”⁵¹ Students were selected, and then taught with the goal of moving these students forward in education, and preparing them for life after.

Administrators and teachers believed that social mobility started with a college education—it was the pathway to a better future. As has been alluded to in this chapter, Carpenter, Mother Dowd, and all the staff emphasized in countless newspaper articles and public statements that Harlem Prep believed that students who had left school had untapped potential to finish and achieve their dreams via a college education. Perhaps most critically, students internalized this notion too—students like Cappas and Randolph gained a new appreciation for education and how a college education could change their lives. Myron Priester, also a student in Harlem Prep’s first graduating class, wrote in *Forty Acres and a Mule* during his time at the school how important it was for college graduates to return to Harlem after they receive their degrees. “If a college graduate, whom the youth knows had to struggle as they are struggling now, comes back and shows that it will not be in vain, then they will try it too,” asserted Priester. “If the youths of Harlem are to prosper in education, they will need someone to inspire them. That someone is the Harlemite who has become a college graduate.”⁵²

Harlem Prep’s focus on college and execution in sending students to college was notable in

⁵⁰ Cappas interview, November 19, 2016.

⁵¹ Edward Carpenter quoted in Clayton Willis, “Harlem Prep School Gives Many a Chance (Fifth in a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 16, 1968.

⁵² Myron Priester, “College Graduates,” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, Vol. 1, No. 2, December 1967, p. 4, Box 10, Folder 6-9, NYUL Papers.

the context of the era, particularly in the way that Carpenter and students today frame this approach. Harlem Prep identified college—and individual mobility through it—as a non-ideological goal, which often differed in the way that others educational leaders envisioned social change at the time such as through political advocacy or racial separatism. To be sure, no action can truly be absent of an ideology; Carpenter’s system of beliefs and ideas about the nature of Black progress, based on his own life experiences and values, were part and parcel of Harlem Prep’s goals. Yet, in an era when other alternative schools were emerging with specific ideological associations, Harlem Prep chose to forego such institution-wide characterizations. Harlem Prep itself, as Carpenter knew and often publicly stated, was a political act against the status quo, but the school also purposely sought to avoid advocating for any particularly stream of the Black freedom struggle from a political standpoint. It is not that Harlem Prep wanted to divorce issues of politics from education, but that politics were only tangential, in the school’s view, to creating social change. Instead, the school’s theory of social change centered on higher education: to empower Black and brown youth to get an education and go to college, which would then allow these young people to go out and change the world however he or she saw fit. Such a belief has similarities with David Labaree’s argument that education is often considered to be a private good, in that its primarily goal is to help individuals attain status or social mobility.⁵³ However, such an outlook sells Carpenter’s vision short: Carpenter did not advocate college merely so students could benefit individually, but also because he believed large-scale social change could also be the result when so many talented young people could live up to their potential. In this way, Harlem Prep’s paradigm did not share a DuBoisian “Talented Tenth” outlook, either.⁵⁴ A few people should not

⁵³ See, most prominently, David F. Labaree, *How to Succeed in School Without Really Learning: The Credentials Race in American Education*, Edition Unstated edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); and David F. Labaree, “Public Goods, Private Goods: The American Struggle over Educational Goals,” *American Educational Research Journal* 34, no. 1 (1997): 39–81.

receive an education and lead, but all young people should get an education and work together. Harlem Prep envisioned education as a private good that should be publicly available and would serve the public—or, more simply, that young people, with an education, would change the world. This pluralist perspective that Harlem Prep undertook was in contrast with the explicitly political and often doctrinaire approaches of many Black nationalist schools of the era. For example, at the School of Afroamerican Culture in Los Angeles, school leaders sought to promote a “normative value system” around ideas of African indigenous traditions.⁵⁵ These schools believed that social change would occur by having their pupils adopt these ideas, such as the Kwanzaa religion; the pursuit of higher education was often secondary as a vehicle for Black progress. Conversely, the focus on education by Eugene Callender, and for a limited time, through the NYUL, transferred to Harlem Prep and the school’s headmaster at the school’s beginning.

Harlem Prep’s focus on college readiness did not occur through advertisement campaigns, public displays, or with the help of partners.⁵⁶ The cult of celebrity that followed Harlem Prep later in its tenure was absent during these early days. “We didn’t have that many speakers come from the outside,” asserts Alberto Cappas today. “This was an enclosed close-knit group.”⁵⁷ The New York Urban League, despite its pivotal role in founding the Prep, was rarely seen inside the Harlem Armory once school got underway. Ed Carpenter, Mother Dowd, the select staff, and most importantly, the students, were a cohesive group with shared goals and a shared vision—it was just them in the “meager, but rich-to-the-students” rooms and hallways of the Harlem Armory.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ See W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903).

⁵⁵ Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 123-125.

⁵⁶ I mean partners in terms of any organizations working inside the school, only (and not funding partnerships).

⁵⁷ Cappas interview, November 19, 2017.

⁵⁸ Clayton Willis, “Harlem Prep School Gives Many A Chance,” *New York Amsterdam News*, February 17, 1968.

“There Were No Egos Floating Around the Place”:⁵⁹ First Year Pedagogy and Practice

“The overwhelming impression one gets from such a visit is how soundly the whole program has been planned and how dedicated and intelligent the entire staff is,” wrote Barbara Finberg of the Carnegie Corporation, in a private memo, after visiting Harlem Prep on its third day.⁶⁰ The organized nature of the school, professionalism of its staff, and clear vision of its headmaster should not belie the fact, however, that Harlem Prep had no blueprint. Carpenter emphasized this point:

There were no authorities to orient the staff on preparing the dropout for entering college. There was little positive literature devoted to the topic of the dropout and his characteristics. Although there was a plethora of writing about the delinquent and on gang behavior, this information was of little value to the staff. . . . The Headmaster could find no information in the literature concerning developing a school for dropouts who were predominantly Black. This made Harlem Prep an experimental school. This made the staff pioneers in an educational venture.⁶¹

In his 1973 doctoral dissertation, *The Development of an Alternative School*, Carpenter described in-depth the general developments and planning processes that occurred in the first few months of the school’s existence—particularly pertaining to his faculty. These “educational servants,” as Carpenter referred to them, whose ages ranged from twenty to fifty with varying levels of experience, needed to possess a few characteristics, which would then be embedded in their pedagogy: a sense of humor; a flexibility to experiment “with varied methods of teaching” and could teach multiple subjects; knowledge of the community of Harlem; general understanding of

⁵⁹ Capps interview, November 19, 2017.

⁶⁰ Memo from Barbara Finberg to Carnegie Staff, October 4, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁶¹ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 43.

why students dropped out of school; “internal security”; a “sincere belief that every youngster could learn”; and “the ability to love and accept love.”⁶² Anecdotes today from students confirm that Harlem Prep teachers indeed met these noble requirements.

What did this teaching look like during these inaugural months at this Armory location? What were the key themes that contributed to student achievement? As part of this nascent experiment—to make this whole novel effort “work”—three elements were consistently apparent in the Armory’s makeshift classrooms: one, a focus on Black culture; two, close attention and care from teachers; and three, an overarching sense of hope. Most tangible is the Harlem Prep staff’s focus on Black culture and Pan-Africanism in the curriculum. While the first year curriculum centered on English, Mathematics, and Social Studies, all students at Harlem Prep were required to take a course in “African History and Culture.”⁶³ Furthermore, in addition to the standard, popular African history course, Harlem Prep also offered two other related (and again popular) courses out of the Social Studies department: “The Black Man in Literature” and “The Black Man in the Arts.”⁶⁴ Notably, however, these courses had masculine titles (although it seemed likely that these might have been an attempt at a generic use of the “man” to signal everyone).⁶⁵ While the

⁶² See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 35-46; Carpenter also stressed that age and experience were not important aspects in the hiring process.

⁶³ “Harlem Prep [Report],” July 2, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records. In terms of other specifics, students were assigned to an English section according to the scores on the Gates Reading Test. Math courses extended from Elementary Algebra to Calculus. In addition, students could take science classes (either Physical Science or Chemistry), depending on interest and need in terms for college. Other courses added during the year included Choral Speaking, Dramatics, and Expressive Dancing, as well as classes in World History, American History, Political Science and Economics, Logic I and II, and Introduction to The Psychology of Organizations.

⁶⁴ Ibid; See also Bigart, “Harlem Prep Gives Dropouts a Door to College,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1968, which confirms these courses and mentions their popularity.

⁶⁵ Teachers who taught in later years spoke frequently about their inclusion of Black women in their courses in terms of curriculum. For example, English teacher Sandy Campbell explains how Black women writers and activists were often drawn upon and teachers such as Bari Haskins-Jackson and Naledi Raspberry focused on women in their classes. However, at this early juncture, there were no women teachers besides Mother Ruth Dowd and perhaps this focus was not there at the start. See Sandy Campbell, e-mail message to author, February 12, 2019.

particular reasons behind these masculine course titles and their specific curricula are unknown, they do reflect Harlem Prep's primarily male student body during its first year. "We did not notice or were not aware of the lack of female students," remembers Alberto Cappas, adding that almost all of the staff was male. "We did not make anything of it, I know I did not, and I don't think others did," adds Cappas—"a sign of the times."⁶⁶ This latter point speaks to the underlying sexism within the Black freedom struggle more broadly that perhaps permeated into Harlem Prep's faculty and students. If the plight of young Black women not in school went (more) unnoticed in terms enrollments, this oversight perhaps also carried over—at least at this early juncture—in the curriculum, too. More simply, the primarily male Harlem Prep staff in 1968 consciously proposed these courses (and perhaps an administrator approved it), and at some juncture, Harlem Prep made decisions to shape the curriculum with these masculine titles.

At the center of Harlem Prep's Pan African core was social studies teacher Dr. Josef ben Jochannan—or more affably known as "Dr. Ben." Carrying himself with an heir of self-confidence and speaking in a thick Caribbean accent often with his Marcus Garvey UNIA button clipped to his shirt, Dr. Ben gained popularity inside Harlem Prep for his knowledge on ancient African history, if not his outspokenness about the fact that Africa—not Europe—was the birthplace of civilization.⁶⁷ "I try to stimulate in these youngsters a sense of pride based on their ancestral heritage," he said to the *New York Times* in spring of 1968. "The black child needs something more than George Washington, Betsy Ross and all those whites as persons to emulate."⁶⁸ Among many things, Dr. Ben's classes discussed the countless contributions of

⁶⁶ Alberto Cappas, e-mail message to author, February 16, 2019.

⁶⁷ See more recently Sam Kestenbaum, "Contested Legacy of Dr. Ben, a Father of African Studies," *New York Times*, March 27, 2015. For a historical article covering Harlem Prep and focusing on Ben-Jochannan, see Willis, "Harlem Prep School Gives Many A Chance (Last in a Series)," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 23, 1968.

⁶⁸ Bigart, "Harlem Prep Gives Dropouts a Door to College," *New York Times*, May 8, 1968.

Africans from antiquity to the present. “What did Europe have over Africa? Gunpowder, not superior intellect!” continued the *New York Times*, describing how he was passionate in his delivery and would slap his right hand on the table for emphasis.⁶⁹ In his early fifties when he started teaching at Harlem Prep, Ethiopian-born ben-Jochannon had already “emerged as prominent figure in Harlem, pushing his anticolonial message to its limit,” again recounted the *New York Times*, filling local auditoriums and gathering a following as a self-trained Afro-centric scholar. At Harlem Prep, students were not even sure if he held an official doctorate, but as one alumnus says today, “we didn’t care”—his one-on-one attention, infusion of African culture into all subjects, his passion for knowledge, and flamboyant personality inspired students all the same.⁷⁰ Dr. Ben’s presence at Harlem Prep was a significant part of the school’s identity and he was one of the school’s most cherished teachers during his tenure there.

Still, Dr. Ben’s presence was only one aspect of the school’s curricular emphasis on Black culture and Black pride. Students talked about how relevant the curriculum was, and how much they related—often for the first time—to what they were learning.⁷¹ In English classes, the works of Eldridge Cleaver (the “Minister of Education” of the Black Panther Party), James Baldwin, and Malcolm X were commonly taught.⁷² In American history classes, students became aware of less known Black American figures such as Crispus Attucks and others.⁷³ Inside these classrooms,

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

⁷¹ See, among periodicals, Randolph interview, February 21, 2017; Cappas interview, November 19, 2016.

⁷² “‘I Can Do Anything,’” *Newsweek*, July 8, 1968, 16; Willis, “Harlem Prep... (Fourth in a Series)”, *New York Amsterdam News*; See also Whitney Young, “To Be Equal,” *New Journal and Guide*, March 2, 1968; With less archival material from this inaugural year, it is unclear whether women writers and activists were included in the curriculum, as they certainly were in later years. Future English teacher Sandy Campbell recalls the works of Nikki Giovanni, June Jordan, Angela Davis, Maya Angelou, Sonia Sanchez, Dorothy West and Zora Neale Hurston, “to name a few,” that he remembers were common in class curricula and discussions in later years of the school. See Campbell, e-mail message to author, February 12, 2019.

students were told to question their surroundings—to probe their status as Black men and women in America.⁷⁴ One student, Robert Connor, wrote as such in *Forty Acres and a Mule* at the same time he was attending Harlem Prep. In a poem titled “The Black People,” Conner wrote in December of 1967:

*The black people of this country are as miserable as can be;
They are fighting for freedom from Harlem to the Mississippi.
They've been taken from their Homeland and brought here as slaves;
And put to work in the cotton fields, until their dying days.
But things began to happen, things began to change;
A man named Lincoln said they were free, and took off their chains.
They began shouting, “We are free at last; let's think about the future, and forget the past.”
So they began to believe they were free, just like the man had said,
But there's always two parts to the story once the man was dead.
He freed them physically; that they can see! But if he had freed them mentally then they
couldn't disagree.
That is why they're behind him, never by his side;
For he'll never let them catch him cause it will hurt his pride.⁷⁵*

Connor's words pierced through any perceived ideas about equality, offering potent analysis about how whites would never relinquish their various forms of power in society to Blacks. This student and others engaged with Black history, Black writers, and even learned about Black mathematicians in their math classes. Ed Carpenter said in early 1968: “This is a unique approach to building self-image, developing critical reading skills and relating all of this to a historical setting.”⁷⁶ Thinking about this comment in light of the majority male staff (although there were three white nuns) and student population provides additional unknown questions—what did it mean for the six Black women students to build self-image in a male-dominated space and curriculum? When Ann Carpenter joins the school the following year and the school grows,

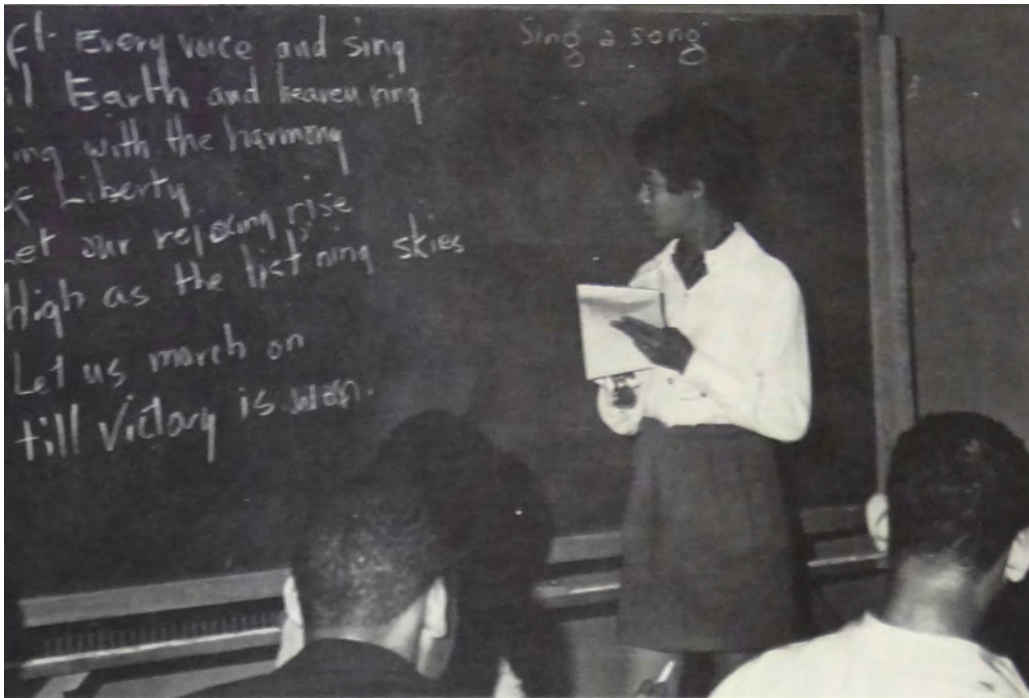
⁷³ Willis, “Harlem Prep... (Fourth in a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*.

⁷⁴ “‘I Can Do Anything’,” *Newsweek*, July 8, 1968, 16.

⁷⁵ Robert Connor, “The Black People [poem],” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, Vol. 1, No. 3, February 1968, p. 6, Box 10, Folder 6-9, NYUL Papers.

⁷⁶ Willis, “Harlem Prep... (Fourth in a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*.

women faculty are increasingly hired who drew upon “contemporary female writers and activists” in their teaching and discussion of “social issues.”⁷⁷ At this early point in the school’s history, however, it seems equal gender representation—in staff, in students, and in the curriculum—was still highly imbalanced.



Figures 4 and 5. Harlem Prep classes in session at the Harlem Armory, 1967-1968.
Source: Rockefeller Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center

⁷⁷ Campbell, e-mail message to author, February 12, 2019. Women students also begin to attend Harlem Prep in large numbers in future years.

This focus on Black culture resonated beyond just the curriculum. More broadly, of course, students were given the freedom to express themselves within the volatile political environment of the era; as previously mentioned, Carpenter recognized how there were students with a diverse range of Black identities, ranging from Garveyism to Black Panther Party members to political moderates. Yet, notably, these different students' presence affected the school: how students interacted with each other, who they sat with, how they identified, how they dressed, and what they discussed in classes often reflected their beliefs.⁷⁸ Harlem Prep's slogan, "Moja Logo," was part Swahili for "unity and brotherhood," and was first learned and implemented in 1967 at the school's founding—a slogan that still resonates powerfully with Harlem Prep alumni today.⁷⁹ (Notably, the word "brotherhood" was seemingly chosen as a translation for the word "logo" to signify men and women.) The Harlem Prep emblem, with this slogan embroidered in gold stitching on large navy patches, made up an African shield with two crossing spears.⁸⁰ Furthermore, the first Harlem Prep commencement ceremony featured a bevy of student awards named after famous Black activists, such as the Nat Turner Award, Langston Hughes Award, and Lorraine Hansberry Award.⁸¹ Finally, five Harlem Prep students along with twenty other Black students from the New York area would travel to Africa later in the summer as part of a program

⁷⁸ For example, Carpenter writes about this in his dissertation. See pgs. 74-76.

⁷⁹ Photograph of Harlem Prep emblem, shared with author by Alberto Cappas; Carpenter and Rogers, "Harlem Prep," 276; Carpenter, "The Development of an Alternative School," 127; Interestingly, the proper Swahili term for "unity" is actually *Umoja* (with a "u" at the beginning of Moja). Carpenter learned that they misspelled this Swahili term, but since students had already identified with this slogan and it had been printed in material and painted on school walls, they decided to keep it. See Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015. The word "logo," however, does not seem to translate to "brotherhood" in the general Swahili translations, as the word for "brotherhood" is actually "undugu." In the reference above, a Harlem Prep student writing about Harlem Prep refers to these words as being "African words," and regardless of their exact translation or spelling errors, students identified them as being African and the school promoted these words in that fashion.

⁸⁰ Alberto Cappas photograph, personal collection; See also "I Can Do Anything," *Newsweek*.

⁸¹ "I Can Do Anything," *Newsweek*; As Harlem Prep grew, this precedent of awards based on prominent Black leaders grew as well.

to “seek to discover the source of [their] heritage,” sponsored by the New York Urban League.⁸² Ultimately, notions of Africa and Black culture encircled students every day—in the Armory’s barren classrooms and in their conversations with peers, teachers, and administrators.

The school’s strong Pan-African emphasis was in no way antagonistic to Carpenter’s equally-strong emphasis on the importance of diversity and preparing students for a multi-racial society.⁸³ Carpenter wrote on Black Power and the necessity for students to have the freedom to express themselves as they saw fit. “Black Power is not a bad word to Mr. Carpenter,” wrote a student in December of 1967 in the context of recognizing Carpenter’s open-mindedness. Furthermore, Carpenter understood that the phrase meant different things to different people. To him, Black Power meant (according to Carpenter’s pupil) “the ability of the Black community to be responsible for the development of the Black community,” including “to be involved in the education of Black children....”⁸⁴ In the context of Harlem Prep, then, Black pride was emphasized pedagogically, philosophically, *and* politically for the purpose of educating young Black men and women. Notably, however, Blackness was *not* politicized on any institutional level nor channeled toward any particular political vision—a subtle, but wholly significant, difference. Even Dr. Ben, who embodied Pan-Africanism in pedagogy and persona, claimed that he “kept religion and politics out of the classroom.”⁸⁵ As Carpenter and his faculty engaged in this educational experiment, Carpenter wanted to keep ideologically neutral from a political standpoint

⁸² Ibid; See also Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 3; Sadly, Victor Gomez, a Harlem Prep student, passed away on this trip unexpectedly. In remembrance, Harlem Prep would hand out an award in his honor and planted tree in front of the school to honor him.

⁸³ Even though the Black Power Movement was still in its infancy, Carpenter and his staff pushed back against any notion of creating a school that had separatist intentions that later public discourse would ascribe to Black Power groups.

⁸⁴ Beechum, “A Salute to Mr. Carpenter,” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, February 1968, p. 5.

⁸⁵ Bigart, “Harlem Prep Gives Dropouts a Door to College,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1968. Of course, students who remember his class might challenge this claim.

and allow students to individually engage in Black party politics, intersecting religious strands, or nationalist activist efforts—or not—their own, without his or his staff’s promotion or opinions.⁸⁶ (This topic of Harlem Prep’s overarching philosophy will be discussed in-depth in the following chapter as it strikes at the heart of what made Harlem Prep different than its alternative counterparts, Black and white.⁸⁷) All of these school components were a product of Carpenter’s multicultural design: a school that cherished students’ ideological diversity and encouraged their involvement in the Black freedom struggle, while being staying institutional neutral from a political perspective.

The second component that contributed to students’ early engagement during the founding months of Harlem Prep was the close care and attention of Harlem Prep teachers, combined with the informal nature of classrooms. With the former, of course, the staff at Harlem Prep emphasized students’ skills and talents, purposely flipping the deficit-minded script of Black and brown students long-held by educators. Teachers like 24-year Gaywood McGuire, a “creative mathematics teachers who firmly believes that youth in the ghetto” can become top-flight mathematicians, were the norm. Students knew that teachers like McGuire believed in their abilities, and it was affirming to have that support in the classroom.⁸⁸ Here at Harlem Prep, “we consciously upgrade the student and downgrade his faults,” Carpenter explained.⁸⁹ Whitney Young, Executive Director of the National Urban League, wrote in an op-ed in Fall of 1967 that,

⁸⁶ See Capps interview, November 19, 2016.

⁸⁷ Remember, in reality, Harlem Prep was still young—it had less than 50 students and a small staff. Thus, to so strongly ascribe a set philosophy would seem premature at this stage. In the following years, however, Harlem Prep would grow exponentially and so too would a confirmation of the school’s philosophy in rhetoric and in action. While it is important to note the seeds of this divergence compared to other schools, it makes the most sense to table this essential discussion to chapter 4 and that chapter’s focus on the school’s overarching philosophy.

⁸⁸ Willis, “Harlem Prep... (Fourth),” *New York Amsterdam News*; Capps interview, November 19, 2016; Randolph interview, February 21, 2016.

⁸⁹ Willis, “Harlem Prep... (Third),” *New York Amsterdam News*.

above all, the reason why Harlem Prep was succeeding was because “the teachers care; they lavish time and attention on these young men and women which they couldn’t get in the public schools. They start with the assumption that their students can succeed.”⁹⁰ While Young certainly had every incentive to issue subjective praise, his assessment about the Prep’s teachers was not wrong.

What did this look like inside the classrooms? Or, to be more exact, what was happening inside these learning spaces? “They were casual,” remembers Alberto Cappas, in reference to how classes were run.⁹¹ Cappas, and others stress that teachers worked closely with students on a one-on-one basis in these relaxed settings. Classes were almost always held—or at least as much as possible—in “seminar-like informality,” with a focus on individual projects and independent thinking.⁹² In these “classrooms,” which often times included dragging chairs into the bare hallways of the Armory or wherever students and teachers could find empty space, teachers taught concepts and ideas on moveable blackboards. Besides the big auditorium, in the hallways and two small rooms, chairs were staggered in crooked rows. (For part of the year, Harlem Prep teachers even moved some classrooms to the basement because the Armory had to take in refugees from the Harlem streets whose tenements had been unheated.⁹³) Yet, to advance discussion and interaction, teachers also provided time for students to work individually—and thus, for students who needed it, space for teachers to approach their pupils one-on-one. Since the Armory quarters were quite small, teachers and students were in close physical proximity; the white walls and low ceilings and plain white metal chairs (many without attached desks), plus only a few windows to

⁹⁰ Young, “To Be Equal,” *New Journal and Guide*, March 2, 1968.

⁹¹ Cappas interview, November 19, 2016.

⁹² “‘I Can Do Anything,’” *Newsweek*.

⁹³ Willis, “Harlem Prep... (First),” *New York Amsterdam News*.

boot, made it all the more clear that what mattered were the people involved in this learning.⁹⁴ Despite the “echoing, drafty” space of the Armory, students did not seem to mind: Capps remembers it being “comfortable [enough]” to fit the educational mission and learn the material that he needed to graduate.⁹⁵ Although classes would be going on at once all throughout the Armory, the audible buzz was still constrained; Carpenter, in his “pea-green,” “tiny, makeshift, bare office” that he always kept open, would make the most noise walking to and from the learning spaces checking on students and teachers (when he was not teaching his own class) and when students likewise stopped by to chat.⁹⁶ Ultimately, Harlem Prep to the stranger looked more like groups of Black men—with purposeful inclusions of the white nuns, Latino students, and a sprinkling of Black women—huddled throughout the Armory, learning and discussing together than a full-scale educational institution. Teachers like Duane Jones, “one of the most brilliant men I know” asserted Carpenter at the time, cared deeply about inspiring students to believe in themselves and in their abilities to learn English, math, social studies, or any subject at hand.⁹⁷

Finally, the third component that was so essential to the teaching and learning at Harlem Prep was something a bit more ethereal but no less real: a contagious sense of hope that reverberated throughout the makeshift hallway classrooms of the Armory. All the rhetoric combined with the tangible efforts of Eugene Callender, Ed Carpenter, Mother Dowd, and each teacher led everyone involved to believe in this educational effort. The hope flowed through the Armory like wind currents in the air; it was like a seed that, as each additional month passed,

⁹⁴ See assorted photographs from “Harlem Prep [Report],” July 2, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

⁹⁵ Capps interview, November 19, 2016.

⁹⁶ Willis, “Harlem Prep... (First),” *New York Amsterdam News*; Collier, “A Dropout Picks Up Some Logic on His Way to College,” *New York Times*.

⁹⁷ Willis, “Harlem Prep... (Fourth),” *New York Amsterdam News*;

branched out into uncharted directions. Carpenter was perhaps the person who exemplified this hope more than anyone else—the men and women at Harlem Prep latched on to his energy and his “peppery” spirit.⁹⁸ “Carpenter churns out ideas as fast as an astronaut on a space walk,” playfully wrote the *New York Amsterdam News*, as students saw Carpenter and believed in the unfinished potential of this school, and more importantly, of themselves.⁹⁹ This feeling of hope was a core feature of the school’s existence. Even as a small institution, with the opening of Harlem Prep, there was a newfound educational hope in a community where little existed in terms of formal institutions of learning. Of course, who had access to this hope—or, as education scholars describe in part today, the opportunity to tap into his or her “aspirational capital”—is an open question.¹⁰⁰ Did young Black women in Harlem have access to this hope in the same way that young Black men did at the school? What about Latino/a students in East Harlem and Black students in other parts of New York City? While at first Harlem Prep seemed generally confined to (mostly) Black males living in Harlem, over time, Harlem Prep would quickly extend—and perhaps share—access to this hope to more women and others beyond the confines of the Harlem neighborhood.

Students like Alberto Cappas and Ed Randolph who were fortunate to attend internalized this hope at Harlem Prep, noting that, after their previous schooling struggles, the hope that they felt at the school was a beautiful, if not unfamiliar, feeling again.¹⁰¹ Cappas’s recent memories about the newfound hope he felt at the Prep could also be seen in his writing decades ago. In his

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Willis, “Harlem Prep... (Second),” *New York Amsterdam News*; Admittedly, this sense of hope is hard to describe and properly put into written words. But, after two lengthy oral histories with two students, and reading countless reports and periodicals, I have sensed so much hope about what was happening here in Central Harlem—no matter how the school would turn out in future years. It feels like it would be very remiss to not discuss this hope as an essential component—the proverbial “glue”—that make this whole experiment work.

¹⁰⁰ Tara J. Yosso, “Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth,” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8. no. 1 (2005): 69-91.

¹⁰¹ Cappas interview, November 19, 2016; Randolph interview, February 21, 2016.

poem “Tomorrow,” although Cappas writes about despair, his message of looking to a future time, even if the perception of him is negative, also creates a subtle message of hope, too:

*Tomorrow, Tomorrow, Tomorrow
What have I done that is to bear?
What have I done that life is too
Strong for me to go on living?*

*I went to school.
I learned to read and write.
The foundation of knowledge was given to me.*

Here, Cappas writes poetically about the relationship between education and his life trajectory—that they are intertwined in determining his future and his sense of self. Cappas continued, writing how this knowledge changed him as he struggles to overcome self-doubt:

*I became known. To me life is
Insignificant. Will tomorrow be the same?
The world is a sad place to live in.
I have millions, I have wondered, I'm
Known to people, to the world.*

*Look at that peasant! ... enjoying life
Smiling at the sun, at the raindrops...kissing
His sweetheart good-night. He has no money.
He has no fame, but satisfaction shows on
His Face... Tomorrow, Tomorrow, Tomorrow.¹⁰²*

Harlem Prep allowed Cappas to feel alive—to feel valued—and his poem about tomorrow exemplifies these past feelings of hopelessness with emergent feelings of hope and satisfaction.

Robert Connor, too, felt this hope in his poem “I Am Rich,” where, despite describing in close detail his severe challenges of living in Harlem—a “filthy neighborhood,” no hot water in his apartment, few clothes to wear—he wrote about how he now had “understanding” of his conditions. “And with understanding I have the richness of the world,” he wrote, “And since I

¹⁰² Albert Cappas, “Tomorrow [poem],” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, December 1967, p. 7, NYUL Papers.

know, I shall not worry.”¹⁰³ In a home-made-looking yearbook with pieces of paper glued on the pages, a picture of Alberto Cappas can be seen, standing on a desk, smiling, with his arms swung around two of his Black classmates at his side. Below this picture of about 21 students, this particular page of Cappas’s yearbook contained a half-dozen typed-up reflections of students that spoke of past struggle but future light. “I was wounded in Viet-Nam and spent a lot of time in the hospital,” wrote student Joseph Rhames. “I have suffered a lot of pain and felt that I owe myself something after surviving and that is to go to college and make something of myself.”¹⁰⁴ Students like Rhames, and the dozens of others who entered the massive Harlem Armory, immediately sensed that Harlem Prep was a place where those dreams of a better life would awaken and rise.

These starting months where hope was built into the fabric of the school and staff buzzed with a quiet confidence about the endeavor they were undertaking was, in some ways, designed to be the antithesis to local and national events around them. As nationwide riots—in the language of mostly white news reporters—erupted over police violence in cities such as Detroit and New York, young people were aware. “The riots during the summer of 1967 were numerous and costly to the United States,” wrote a young Black student in New York City at the time.¹⁰⁵ Nationwide student protests over Vietnam raged, too, also swept the nation.¹⁰⁶ Yet, in contrast, a community-based institution where young Black men and women in Central Harlem could solely focus on education and receive a high quality education was notable; photographs and descriptions of the school atmosphere earlier in this chapter depict a place of grounded learning that, during school

¹⁰³ Robert Conner, “I Am Rich [poem],” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, December 1967, p. 7, NYUL Papers.

¹⁰⁴ Photograph of personal yearbook, shared with author by Alberto Cappas.

¹⁰⁵ Sharon Lawrence, *Forty Acres and a Mule*, December 1967, p. 7, NYUL Papers.

¹⁰⁶ For example, among many, see Chapter 6, “The Student Rebellion,” in Christopher B. Strain, *The Long Sixties: America, 1955 – 1973* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).

hours at least, seem shielded from outside turmoil.¹⁰⁷ (Perhaps the barrack-like physical confinement of the Harlem Armory contributed to this feeling.) As much as the Civil Rights Movement and Black Freedom Struggle influenced the general idea for Harlem Prep—and countless other displays of activism all across the country—the initial demeanor and tenor of the school’s starting months were also purposely curated to act in contrast to broader events occurring outside school walls.

Springtime Changes: Splitting with the NYUL and Growing Press Coverage

By springtime, Harlem Prep had undergone some important internal changes: the student body had grown from the original 49 students to 71, the board of trustees almost doubled in size by adding parents and community members as well as a student representative, and an official parents association was created.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the board had resolved the location issues of where Harlem Prep would be housed in the short- and long-term. Originally, Harlem Prep was only supposed to be in the Armory until February, but they extended their contract and remained throughout the spring. At the same time, they had also secured the supermarket location and were working on renovations for a fall opening. In addition, a few of the initial older students who had started, or had entered with a general diploma, had graduated and left Harlem Prep in the winter of 1967 (but would come back for commencement and officially be listed as part of the Class of 1968). Harlem Prep’s small beginnings were quickly consolidating, resembling the various components of a growing educational institution. Yet, there were two notable changes that would have important ramifications on Harlem Prep for many years to come: one, Harlem Prep’s total

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, photographs in “Harlem Prep Graduation,” *Forty Acres and a Mule*, Summer Issue, 1969, pgs. 26-34, NYUL Papers. These photographs show students and teachers working together, and a commencement ceremony with smiles and diversity both in sight.

¹⁰⁸ The student representative added to the board of trustees had the full rights and privileges of any other voting member of the board.

separation from the New York Urban League; and two, the rapid development of the support from the Harlem community.

To Harlem Prep alumni today, the idea that the New York Urban League played a big role in the school's history seems foreign. As described in Chapter One, Harlem Prep was designed and founded by the NYUL, but once Carpenter and his colleagues began the hands-on work of educating young adults, the League had little role in its development.¹⁰⁹ (Furthermore, after the inaugural group of students that came through the Street Academy Program, many of the future incoming students did not come from SAP.) While this pattern of scarce NYUL involvement in the school once it opened culminated with a full split by the springtime, there were a number of prior significant events that abetted this separation. First, and perhaps most critically, was Eugene Callender's departure from the NYUL in December of 1967 after only 18 months at the helm. In addition to bringing a more grassroots approach to the League and "placing a greater emphasis on our youth," as the previous chapter explained, Harlem Prep was largely the invention of Callender, and he undoubtedly cared deeply about its existence.¹¹⁰ Thus, his sudden departure left a void in the Harlem-NYUL relationship—a grant receipt from the Carnegie Corporation made out to the NYUL for half of the promised \$300,000 had Callender's name scratched out in pencil, illustrating the unexpected nature of this change.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Internal documents from the NYUL suggest as such, in that they discuss how leaders felt they still had financial responsibilities but little other official attachment. See, for example, Letter from Harv Oostdyk to John Mosler, March 1, 1968, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers.

¹¹⁰ Letter from Eugene Callender to Florence Anderson, December 20, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

¹¹¹ See Callender, *Nobody is a Nobody*, 255-259. Callender wrote about how he received a call from Mayor John Lindsay, asking him to leave the NYUL and become the deputy commissioner of housing for the City of New York. Interestingly, Callender explains how he was unsure about taking this job and did not want to leave the League, but, the job offer was leaked to the press and the *New York Times* erroneously reported that he had accepted the position. At that point, he felt pressure to take the job although he also wrote that he thought he could do more for the Black community in that position; See, Memo from Carnegie Corporation [receipt], December 1, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

Under new leadership and increasing financial duress, the NYUL's educational division was already in a state of flux. With Harlem Prep essentially operating independently—and Callender no longer there to direct otherwise—leaders seemed interested in pursuing new opportunities with the Board of Education and corporations previously associated with the rest of the Street Academy Program.¹¹² Yet, the League and Harlem Prep were still officially connected, and a resolution was needed. “There are still deep financial commitments which the New York Urban League has to Harlem Preparatory School,” wrote Harv Oostdyk of the NYUL, a director of the League's educational division and someone who had also helped Callender in the early planning stages of Harlem Prep. “I feel some sense of responsibility to give leadership in this area. The Urban League is in danger of reducing new program development until it clears up this large obligation [of Harlem Prep].”¹¹³ Eventually, in what seemed to be a mutual decision, the NYUL “transferred the responsibility for the administration of the school to Harlem Prep,” as the school became “separately incorporated” on March 31, 1968.¹¹⁴ Harlem Prep's Board of Trustees would now take the reigns of all financial and administrative decisions and while the school would continue to have a casual relationship with the League—the NYUL still sent some students, retained board representation, and would still expediently refer to Harlem Prep in their own promotional booklets—the proverbial rope was officially cut between the two.¹¹⁵

In hindsight, without Callender in the fold, the split from the NYUL was perhaps inevitable. Harlem Prep had outgrown the contained prep school concept initially created by the

¹¹² Letter from Oostdyk to Mosler, March 1, 1968, NYUL Papers.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Letter from Alan Pifer to David McCall, November 8, 1968, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

¹¹⁵ It seems the NYUL was eager to still mention Harlem Prep in booklets and other materials about the Street Academy Program or their education initiatives, even though there was no more formal relationship. See, for example, “Urban League of Greater New York Street Academy Booklet,” 1969, Box 7, Folder 33, NYUL Papers.

NYUL as just one part of their three-step Street Academy Program. Harlem Prep, even by spring of 1968, was quickly on its way to becoming an important institution in Harlem beyond the League's expectations, particularly in comparison to the first-established Newark Prep partnership. The neighborhood context of the school played a part in this natural evolution; Central Harlem, with its symbolism in the Black community and dire need for a public-acting school, was a neighborhood ripe for an educational rejuvenation. On the other hand, Carpenter, Mother Dowd, and the staff also proved to be the ideal set of educators that Eugene Callender hoped, as their talents boosted the school's immediate success faster than anyone could have expected. With all of these factors considered, it made logical sense for Harlem Prep and the NYUL to end their formal relationship.

In retrospect, it also was seemingly beneficial for Harlem Prep. While there is no evidence that Carpenter or any of the Harlem Prep staff had any serious quarrels with the NYUL, memos between philanthropic intermediaries have noted the various "source[s] of friction" that developed between the two groups.¹¹⁶ There were issues in terms of the NYUL's role in administrative overhead and grant payments despite its hands-off role, issues about proper use of the supermarket space, and even issues between who would publish *Forty Acres and a Mule* in the future.¹¹⁷ Moreover, however, Carpenter and Harlem Pre had little incentive to maintain this relationship. First, the Prep established its own robust board of trustees—and wanted control of that board to make sure it included community members and parents—and no longer needed the type of

¹¹⁶ Memo from Barbara Finberg, January 7, 1969, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. In this long 3-page memo, the Carnegie Corporation describes at length how their initial \$300,000 grant, which had been made to the NYUL, had not all gone to Harlem Prep due the organization taking 10% overhead fee. Although this was a relatively standard practice, the NYUL had not been providing any services to the Harlem Prep and Carpenter was not aware that the NYUL had withheld 10%. After meetings between the two groups, there was an amicable agreement and work to create a "sound relationship" between them. Sources suggest that this first became an issue in spring of 1968 around the time that the two groups formally separated.

oversight that a parent organization could provide.¹¹⁸ Second, and relatedly, the Urban League, while quick to hype Harlem Prep in promotional materials and annual reports, was not providing any additional funding or staffing to the school after its initial commitment—Harlem Prep was already being (and would thereafter need to be) funded entirely by private entities.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, now that the school had name recognition and an early track record of educational achievement, Carpenter and the board did not need the New York Urban League brand to fundraise. (Perhaps separation even spurred future fundraising from more progressive Black civil rights groups.) Ultimately, Harlem Prep quickly took up, and would always reflect from that point on, the vision of Ed Carpenter, not Callender’s and not the NYUL’s.¹²⁰ At the end of the day, Carpenter had no connection to the Urban League, caring only about his students after two decades of grassroots community work in public education. A partnership with the New York Urban League no longer offered any benefits, and the Prep’s separation would set it on a trajectory much different than its counterparts in the Street Academy Program.¹²¹ Although the separation between these two organizations were completed in a very under-the-radar way—no press conferences or announcements were made and media coverage sometimes would still refer to Harlem Prep as

¹¹⁸ The aforementioned issue of grant overheard of the initial \$300,000 Carnegie Corporation grant would spill into the next year. This issue was a prime example of how Harlem Prep benefited from not having the NYUL attached. See, for example, Letter from Alan Pifer to David McCall, November 8, 1968, Carnegie Records.

¹¹⁹ In one of the rare mentions of the New York Urban League in his dissertation, Carpenter briefly explains how the NYUL was “unable to include Harlem Prep in its budget for more than one year.” See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 65.

¹²⁰ Students who did not know of the NYUL involvement saw the school as being the “brainchild” of Ed Carpenter, even if, in reality, that is not accurate because it was the initially the product of Eugene Callender’s vision. See, for example, Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013. Still, however, it is notable that students like Jacobs did not recognize the NYUL’s founding influence and students often had little knowledge of the NYUL’s role in developing Harlem Prep.

¹²¹ Newark Prep would close in the early 1970s, and the Street Academy Program, under new leadership, would also have severe financial issues that diminished its ability to educate youth from the streets. In addition, there is evidence that the Street Academy Schools became more commercialized and became less supported by the grassroots community. See, for example, NYUL, “Proposal to the New York Foundation for Emergency Funding for the New York Urban League Street Academies,” Late 1970, Box 7, Folder 34-38, NYUL Papers.

being part of the Urban League—this was an important development in the story of Harlem Prep.

Conversely, the other major, if more amorphous, development in the spring of 1968 that reverberates loudly in the history of Harlem Prep’s first year was the sudden groundswell of community support. As previously suggested, when Harlem Prep was established, grassroots Harlem activists seemed to take a wait-and-see approach about this new school: there was no advocacy for or against and little press coverage from the neighborhood’s local outlet (the *Amsterdam News*). To his credit, as a Harlemit and educator, Edward Carpenter understood this dynamic. “When Harlem Prep was opened,” wrote Carpenter, “administration and faculty attempted to avert transfer of negative attitudes toward the school by parents who had previously experienced unsatisfactory relations with other schools.”¹²² Carpenter describes in detail how, in order to understandably earn the trust of parents, he wanted to first prove that his staff could motivate and affirm the talents of their children before seeking parental support. By the spring, after initial success in the classroom, and establishing honest and open communication, Carpenter set up Harlem Prep parent groups and informed them “that they would [now] support the school in every way they could.”¹²³

The rest of the community seemed to follow suit, led the way by word-of-mouth about this small school’s success. “It has the stigma of a dropout school,” explained one student at the time, while then also suggesting that this was a reputation that was quickly changing.¹²⁴ Perhaps the most tangible explanation for the growth of community support was the favorable—and prevalent—coverage from the local press starting in early spring of 1968. After a few brief columns during the week of its opening, the press was mostly silent throughout the fall and winter,

¹²² Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 62.

¹²³ Ibid, 65.

¹²⁴ Bigart, “Harlem Prep Gives Dropouts a Door to College,” *New York Times*.

suggesting a realness to the wait-and-see approach. However, on February 17, 1968, the *New York Amsterdam News*, one of the oldest Black-owned newspapers in the country and a paper that “always had a great deal of persuasive power in Harlem” began a lengthy series about Harlem Prep.¹²⁵ Filled with detailed descriptions of the school and interviews with Carpenter and students, “Harlem Prep Gives Many a Chance: A Lift From the Ghetto,” featured six different articles in the *Amsterdam News* from mid-February to late-March. The first article was placed on page one, highlighted by a half-page picture of Ed Carpenter, Ed Randolph, and Mother Dowd in front of a map of the world.¹²⁶ Each subsequent article praised the school’s efforts and innovative school philosophy, expressing the hope for these young people that emanated from Carpenter each day.

To be sure, the *New York Amsterdam News* was no moderate organization on the spectrum of Black political thought—it identified with Black nationalist sentiments and logically described the New York Urban League as “moderately accented” in the first Harlem Prep article.¹²⁷ While it is impossible to quantify the impact of the *Amsterdam News* in generating grassroots support for Harlem Prep, it most certainly made a difference; the unequivocal positive treatment from this widely-read outlet may have helped legitimate Harlem Prep to Black citizens who might have initially been skeptical of any aspect of Harlem Prep’s white-funded finances, integrated staff, or Urban League association. In a letter to the editor, a lay community member wrote a revealing

¹²⁵ “Weeklies’ Voice is Strong in City: 60 Community Papers Fight Local Battles Vigorously,” *New York Times*, November 26, 1963.

¹²⁶ Willis, “Harlem Prep... (First),” *New York Amsterdam News*.

¹²⁷ Ibid. For example, in Thomas Harbison, “Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution? Harlem Public Schools, 1914-1954 (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2011), Harbison, whose dissertation is largely sourced through periodicals, consistently illustrates how the *New York Amsterdam News* was aggressive in speaking out about racial discrimination and criticizing white officials for neglecting Harlem Schools. By the 1960s and early 1970s, the paper gave consistently favorable coverage to the Black Panthers and other aligned groups. Interestingly, if not contradictorily, in this specific article, it refers to Eugene Callender with the adjective “respected” despite knocking the politics of the organization he was in charge of, the NYUL. It is also noteworthy to mention that after this brief two-sentence reference to Callender and the NYUL towards the end of this first article, the Urban League was never again referenced in either of the subsequent five articles.

note to the *Amsterdam News* that perhaps provides an apt signifier of the feelings of the community. He wrote in late April of 1968 that:

The establishment of the Harlem Prep School is one of the most constructive programs for Negroes to date. I would like to suggest that this program be given the utmost publicity. I think a project such as this should be supported by the Negro community rather than be dependent on grants, federal monies, etc.... [Harlem Prep] could have a coordinated program in churches, Negro organizations, benefit dances, raffles for a car or home.... Your paper can do an awful lot of good by giving wide publicity.¹²⁸

Revealingly, below this printed letter, there was an editor's note providing the address of where to donate to Harlem Prep and plugging its recently completed six-part series. For the remainder of Harlem Prep's independent existence, the *New York Amsterdam News* would be one of the school's staunchest supporters, writing about the Prep on a near weekly basis until the mid-1970s.

Notably, the *New York Times* also wrote about Harlem Prep, first with a smaller feature in mid-March and then a larger centerspread article with large pictures in early May. Eventually, news of Harlem Prep traveled outside its New York bounds, with coverage in *The Sun* (Baltimore), *The Hartford Courant*, and *Newsweek Magazine* by early summer following the first commencement ceremony.¹²⁹ Although the school was still relatively small in stature with an unsecured budget (and an unknown future), its reputation had grown enough to where it was no longer an anonymous school in a dreary Harlem Armory, only known to powerful Black and white elites. Bridled with a mix of timely desire for a school like Harlem Prep and a charismatic

¹²⁸ Paul Robinson, "Harlem Prep," *New York Amsterdam News*, April 27, 1968; Carpenter personally responded with a letter to the editor a few weeks later, thanking the paper for "the kindness that your paper has shown our school" as well as for printing the previously mentioned letter. See Edward F. Carpenter, "Harlem Prep," *New York Amsterdam News*, May 11, 1968.

¹²⁹ See, "27 Get Diplomas at 'Harlem Prep,'" *The Sun*, June 18, 1968; and "School Dropouts Given Diplomas By 'Harlem Prep,'" *The Hartford Courant*, June 18, 1968.

marketing presence by Carpenter, the board, and others, even at this early juncture, Harlem Prep had already planted the fascinating seed of cross-pollination of support between the grassroots Black community, and the white and Black elite in national circles that would define the school in its prime years. The former, however—the growth of local community support—which had been sparse at the school’s opening, had noticeably grown by the end of that first year. While the solicitation of elite support modeled by the NYUL would continue in the years to come, the school’s focus on developing close connections with the grassroots community had quickly become a departure from the NYUL’s initial approach.

A Year in Review: The First Harlem Prep Commencement

It was a day filled with pomp and circumstance—June 17, 1968—where families walked to the Minisink Town House on 142nd Street and Lenox Avenue to celebrate the twenty-seven young people who were about to become the first Harlem Prep graduates. “Proud mothers in their best spring hats gathered eagerly in a hot, muggy Harlem community center gymnasium with friends and relatives to attend the first commencement of Harlem Preparatory School,” specifically recalled the *New York Times*.¹³⁰ Twenty-three young men and four young women, each dressed in their dark-blue blazers—women wearing skirts, men in slacks and ties—bearing the Harlem Prep “Moja Logo” emblem stitched in gold, sat on a small stage in front of the faculty who had gotten them there, all to witness their high school graduation.¹³¹ The inaugural commencement had a complex dose of everything that had defined the school thus far: loads of Pan-African flair, a dash

¹³⁰ “27 Dropouts Get Diplomas and Will Enter College,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1968. Technically, a select number of students had already graduated after the fall/winter semester, and were already enrolled in college. These students, however, returned for their commencement ceremony and actively participated in it. See Ed Randolph e-mail conversation, November 21, 2017.

¹³¹ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 42; “27 Dropouts Get Diplomas and Will Enter College,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1968; Assorted pictures in “Harlem Prep [Report],” July 2, 1968, Rockefeller Records.

of patriotism, soaring rhetoric about hope, a diversity of voices, and most of all, twenty-seven representations of Black and brown educational achievement.



Figure 6 and 7. Harlem Prep students at the inaugural commencement, on June 17, 1968.
Source: Rockefeller Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center

The ceremony opened with a traditional processional, where, notably, a student lifted up the American flag and students rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance—an interesting, if not telling, juxtaposition with the simultaneous raising of the Harlem Prep flag displaying the African “Moja Logo” emblem.¹³² After an invocation, brief welcome address from the student council president, a student musical performance, and two brief poetry readings from two more students, Chairman of Harlem Prep’s Board of Trustees Dr. Stephen J. Wright greeted and turned the attention to the soon-to-be graduates. After another address by Whitney Young, the executive director of the National Urban League (not to be confused with its local New York counterpart), the loudest applause came for keynote speaker Ossie Davis, the noted civil rights activist, writer, and actor who had grown up in Harlem.¹³³ The *New York Times* reported that the commencement’s program theme was about Black heritage, and how Davis praised the school for its African history courses. “We have a history, a proud history, which has been dead and buried in the existing school system,” decried Davis. He continued: “We too are beautiful. We stand for something. Let us go back to Africa and find out what we were—then come back to America—not as slaves, but as kings, queens, and princes.”¹³⁴

After Davis’s speech, three Harlem Prep students gave three separate addresses to their fellow graduates that, according Hussein Ahdieh, discussed the importance of helping others accomplish what they had just done.¹³⁵ Finally, Mother Dowd introduced the graduating class

¹³² Ibid; This flag was the gift of the first graduation class. See Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative System,” 276. These displays of Americanism reaffirm that although Harlem Prep students, teachers, and administrators were harsh critics of the racist currents of American society, they still sought operate within it.

¹³³ 1968 Commencement Program, in “Harlem Prep [Report],” July 2, 1968, Rockefeller Records; See also “27 Dropouts Get Diplomas and Will Enter College,” *New York Times*. For more about Ossie Davis, see his book, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, *Life Lit by Some Large Vision: Selected Speeches and Writings* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2010). Ossie Davis’s best-known activism was his eulogy at Malcolm X’s funeral four years earlier.

¹³⁴ “27 Dropouts Get Diplomas and Will Enter College,” *New York Times*.

¹³⁵ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 42.

before then handing the duties of awarding the diplomas to Headmaster Ed Carpenter.¹³⁶ With family and friends sitting on bleachers under worn down basketball hoops, Carpenter shook the right hand of each student with an ear-to-ear smile, handing each student a diploma with his left—while notably announcing the college or university the new Harlem Prep graduate would soon be attending.¹³⁷ (The commencement program handed out to the audience also included the college or university next to each graduate’s name that he or she was planning to attend, further highlighting this important achievement.) The graduation concluded with a citation by the head of the school’s parents association, a choral reading of the famous poem “For My People” from noted Black poet Margaret Walker about the long struggle for freedom, and a convocation by a local reverend.¹³⁸ Most of the students had all received some sort of award at the end of the ceremony, as well, with almost every award being named in honor of a prominent Black figure from the past or present—and it was only fitting that Alberto Cappas, for his poetry, deservedly received the Langston Hughes Award.¹³⁹ Cappas’s close friend, graduate John Collins, wrote the most telling reflection of where he understood his life to be at this climactic moment. He wrote in Cappas’s yearbook: “The road that has the bumps and the rocks and the trees with the thorns must have the ripest fruit and that’s the road I must take.”¹⁴⁰

Of the higher education institutions that these first twenty-seven graduates were planning to attend (or were attending), almost half were bound for a State University of New York campus,

¹³⁶ 1968 Commencement Program, in “Harlem Prep [Report],” July 2, 1968, Rockefeller Records.

¹³⁷ Assorted pictures in “Harlem Prep [Report],” July 2, 1968, Rockefeller Records. Again, for the few who were in college, where they were actively attending.

¹³⁸ 1968 Commencement Program, in “Harlem Prep [Report],” July 2, 1968, Rockefeller Records.

¹³⁹ The *New York Amsterdam News* listed each award winner in a column, which included awards after famous people such as the W.E.B. DuBois Award and the Minister Malcolm X Memorial Award, or the Dr. Charles Drew Award, to the Mary McLeod Bethune Award. See “Harlem Prep Has First Graduation,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 22, 1968.

¹⁴⁰ Photograph of personal yearbook, shared with author by Alberto Cappas.

with SUNY-Buffalo being the most popular destination. Another half dozen were to attend Fordham University, and other notable institutions included a student planning to attend the University of California-Berkeley and New York University (NYU).¹⁴¹ Two months later in August, eight more Harlem Prep students fulfilled their requirements—most notably getting accepted to a college or university—making the total number of college-bound graduates for the inaugural Harlem Prep class reach thirty-five.¹⁴² Although Harlem Prep was (provisionally) chartered by New York State, Hussein Ahdieh credits the Manhattanville College nuns for soothing over any potential areas of distrust between predominantly white higher educational institutions and the mostly-Black alternative school in Harlem. “I am surprised the colleges, the universities, took our words by admitting them, because there [was] nothing to show that these kids were ready for higher education [other than what we told admissions offices],” recalls Ahdieh. Recommendations from a school administrator, Ahdieh says, were key; Mother Ruth Dowd, who had taught in the higher education sector, often provided these recommendations for students and used her respected status (and perhaps local connections) to convince her former higher education peers of the merits of these Harlem Prep students.¹⁴³ By Headmaster Carpenter’s own admission, “the school’s follow-up program is inadequate,” but, by 1972, at least eleven of the first thirty-five had graduated with a bachelor’s degree.¹⁴⁴ And although there were of course students who would not finish college, many did, and as Ahdieh expresses today, “thank God they

¹⁴¹ Ibid; Alberto Cappas notes today that there was an initial pipeline to SUNY-Buffalo, and him and four of her former Harlem Prep classmates all attended and stuck together during their initial years there. At SUNY-Buffalo, Alberto—who had never assumed any leadership role at Harlem Prep—founded the school’s Puerto Rican Student Association and was “very influential in getting the University to develop a Puerto Rican Studies department,” he recalls. He felt that a lot of his fellow students, at SUNY-Buffalo and elsewhere, “became real student activists in the universities” and credits Harlem Prep for that. See Cappas interview, November 19, 2016.

¹⁴² See, among many, Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 122.

¹⁴³ Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016.

¹⁴⁴ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 123.

did good.”¹⁴⁵

Six years later in 1974, Harlem Prep student James Rogers provides an apt reflection of the school’s beginning: “The spirit of Harlem Prep was born in that armory.”¹⁴⁶ Historical hindsight proves that Rogers’ assessment is correct—while Harlem Prep would later grace the pages of *National Geographic* and *Time Magazine*, the essence of the school certainly was spawned in the bare classrooms and hallways of the 369th Regiment Harlem Armory. To be sure, even if Harlem Prep would barely resemble its first-year incarnation in size, scope, and acclaim just a few short years later, a close look at Harlem Prep’s inaugural year depicts how Carpenter and his colleagues laid the foundation for what would make Harlem Prep so unique: its laser-like focus on college admission; the development of their complex multicultural philosophy of Pan-Africanism interwoven with a strong emphasis on diversity; the beginning of a multi-faceted and multi-racial coalition of supporters; and, most of all, a strong early record of helping young people who had been disregarded by the public education system (and the public at large) a second chance. All of these components and characteristics that come to define Harlem Prep appear in the school’s first year. And, with no parent organization to report to such as the New York Urban League, Harlem Prep was free to grow and advance these ideas and multicultural ideologies in the years to come.

¹⁴⁵ Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016.

¹⁴⁶ Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High School*, 281.

PART II

The Rise of Harlem Prep, 1968-1972

Chapter Three

Laying the Groundwork: Administrators and the Supermarket Space

“At Harlem Prep, we’re all here to learn. I got hung up on the whole public-school system. It was so formal. But here the students and teachers are on a first-name basis; there are no classrooms, no walls. For a class, they just pull chairs around together. It’s just so beautiful.”

–Bruce Dalton, Harlem Prep student, 1970¹

“Harlem Prep had a small beginning although it had (and still has) the distinction of being the only high school in Central Harlem. However, it is growing fast,” wrote Harlem Prep Vice Principal Mother Ruth Dowd in a report days before the school would begin its second academic year. “For the fall semester of 1968, one hundred and sixty students have been enrolled. Classes will begin on September 23 in a renovated supermarket on Eighth Avenue at 136th Street.”² Within just one year of opening, the school had more than doubled its size and its new location in the heart of Central Harlem would soon become an essential part of the school’s operations and identity. Most importantly, Mother Dowd’s description of the school’s growth paved the way for further infusion of a core tenet of the school’s multicultural philosophy: flexibility. Ed Carpenter, and as this chapter explains, in partnership with his wife Ann Carpenter, saw flexibility as a necessity to enacting their multicultural vision. Multiculturalism, in part, meant being adaptable to students’ needs, including their cultural capital, their experiences, and their learning preferences. Creating a learning environment that allowed teachers to be flexible in their pedagogy, for

¹ “Getting It Together: The Young Blacks,” *Time Magazine*, April 6, 1970. Copy of article provided by Karen “Casey” Carpenter from her personal collection.

² Ruth Dowd, “Harlem Preparatory School [Report],” September 13, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

example, or to be flexible in the way that administrators or school supporters could participate in the school, was key. This flexibility played out most prominently once the school relocated to the supermarket space. The new building—an open-space classroom design—quickly came to represent the Prep’s free-flowing exchange of ideas, its open-door policy to the community, and most of all, the ability for administrators, teachers, and students to have agency in how learning would occur in the more granular aspects of the school. Furthermore, the sheer physical space to admit more (and more) young people transformed the school from a boutique effort to a robust educational endeavor in multiculturalism—and with this sudden grandness, a necessity to be flexible to make it all work. Also key to the school’s larger multicultural philosophy was the inclusivity that the open-space building embodied in spirit and in practice.

Peter Hopson, who attended Harlem Prep from 1970 to 1971, and worked as a part-time accountant at the school for about two years after he graduated, argues that from late 1968 to 1972—particularly 1969 to 1971—were the “prime time[s] to be there in terms of what the experience was [at Harlem Prep].”³ Hopson’s intuition seems to be correct; by 1970, Harlem Prep had reached its apex in terms of community involvement, pedagogical consistency, public awareness, student enrollment, and general liveliness of the school. From 1968 to 1969 alone, Harlem Prep’s enrollment jumped from 183 students to 600 and maintained this level of enrollment until 1972 when the school’s finances began to fully unravel.⁴ (Harlem Prep was certainly never flush with money nor even on solid grounds financially; Carpenter and his staff’s optimism as well as the school’s growth belied its continuously shaky financial status.⁵ Still, the

³ Hopson interview, February 11, 2015; Hopson attended City College after graduating, but, still needing income to help pay for tuition, he worked part-time at Harlem Prep.

⁴ See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 115.

⁵ The primary source document trail from extensive records via the Ford Foundation still show Carpenter and other key school leaders worrying about finances—and questioning their ability to offer programs and keep admitting

years of 1968 to 1972 did seem to have a modicum of stability that allowed for a codification of the school's educational agenda.) Moreover, it was during these years that the Carpenters' multicultural philosophies were championed in the school, emphasized by not just flexibility in the space and in the people who made *up* the space, but in the curriculum and other logistical components. Thus, it was during these years that Harlem Prep made its most profound statements about what education could, and perhaps should, look like.

In this spirit, Part II of this dissertation explores Harlem Prep's philosophy and educational program—and most importantly, the people who made the school possible. Each of these chapters illustrate different aspects of the school's multiculturalism: its flexibility in school features, its humanity in terms of relationships, school leaders' philosophical belief in diversity, and dedication to students and equity more broadly. This first chapter of Part II, in particular, lays the groundwork for deeper exploration in subsequent chapters, examining two foundational elements of Harlem Prep: its administrators, especially Ann Carpenter, and the supermarket space. Specifically, this chapter sketches out of the significant role of Ann Carpenter in the growth of the school and the enactment of the school's multicultural vision through her role in structuring the pedagogy and curriculum development. Moreover, the open-space classroom became a defining part of the school's identity and multicultural educational program by increasing flexibility and inclusivity. Thus, how were the administrative structures and the supermarket space (which was purposely selected and designed by administrators) conducive to the school's multicultural vision? And, on a granular level, how did the flexibility in the space and in the non-hierarchical model shape Harlem Prep's multiculturalism in practice? This chapter seeks to answer these questions and provide groundwork for additional analysis in later chapters.

students—throughout these years. For example, see Robert Mangum explaining how without \$100,000 in additional funds, a June 1971 graduation was uncertain, in Letter from Robert Mangum to Alan Pifer, February 23, 1971, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

The Story of Ann Carpenter and the Administration at Harlem Prep

“I would just like to thank Ed Carpenter, and Ann Carpenter, his wife, for having the foresight and the love of their community to establish a school like Harlem Prep,” concluded 1971 alumnus Mwanajua Kahamu at the end of an oral history conversation, “and to bring other like-minded faculty members into the school to further their whole idea of what education is about.”⁶ Harlem Prep, although shaped by Ed Carpenter, grew and was further influenced due to the tireless work of his wife, Ann, shortly after the school’s outset. The husband-and-wife pair were the most visible members of the school in different ways; to the outside, Ed served as the de facto face of the school and its biggest advocate to funders and community groups, while inside the school, Ann was credited with much of the day-to-day planning and work with teachers and students according to those who attended or worked there.⁷ Dr. Henry Pruitt, who served as an assistant headmaster at Harlem Prep from 1970 to 1971 and went on to a long career in public education, remembers working closely with both of them. “They were both very strong with what they thought, and they were just very capable people, and that’s a rarity for both husband and wife to be that gifted.”⁸ Descriptions of both from conversations with alumni and documents that allude to their different institutional roles align with these characterizations. For Ed specifically, Pruitt explains that “he was just the kind of a gifted guy who believed that those kids would succeed, and he convinced everybody else...it makes a difference who the leader is, and he was clearly a leader.”⁹ “In addition to his considerable skills, Mr. Carpenter has devoted

⁶ Kahamu interview, February 24, 2017.

⁷ Bari Haskins-Jackson, interviewed by author, via phone, New York, NY, June 6, 2017. See also Kahamu interview, February 24, 2017 and Henry Pruitt, interviewed by author, Teaneck, NY, May 11, 2017, who agree.

⁸ Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017. Pruitt went on to serve as a principal for multiple public schools after Harlem Prep, as well as serving on the Teaneck Board of Education, where he recently completed his term as board president.

⁹ Ibid.

time, energy, money, love and patience to develop the school, its students and the community,” wrote another colleague at the time.¹⁰ “Although his title is Headmaster, he is the school’s inspiration, educational leader, fund raiser and community organizer.”¹¹ As this dissertation has argued, Carpenter’s educational vision, passion for students, and strong leadership as headmaster was the foundation on which Harlem Prep resided.

Yet, Harlem Prep owes the academic achievements of its students to many other administrators, particularly Ann. “She was no shrinking violet either,” recalls Pruitt.¹² “I think Ann, in many ways of the two, had a keener sense of things—she was brilliant, absolutely brilliant,” adds Sandy Campbell, who remained close friends with Ann until her death at age 76 in 2011.¹³ For administrators at Harlem Prep, titles were always loose and inexact, adhering to the school’s de-emphasis on hierarchy and insistence of shared responsibility (even if the titles still did connote some semblance of hierarchy). In Ann’s case, her title seemed to change without rhyme or reason. On official letterhead and in her personal correspondences, she was officially listed (and listed herself) as an “administrative assistant”—a title that understated her outsized role at the school (although it did signify administrator in the school’s lexicon).¹⁴ In multiple other instances, Ann was listed as an administrator with the title “Curriculum Development and

¹⁰ F. Champion Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” June 22, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017.

¹³ Sandy Campbell, in Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017, who attended the interview; Campbell recites a story of walking past Ann one day and hearing her surprisingly interpreting a message in Russian. He found out, unknowingly, that she was fluent in Russian. “It just blew my mind!” he recalls.

¹⁴ See, for example, official letterheads on Harlem Prep, which lists the roles of administrators and board members. Letter from Edward F. Carpenter to Board of Trustees about School Records, August 23, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; For example of a personal correspondence, see Letter from Ann Carpenter to Vinton Hoey, November 21, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. However, the term “administrative assistant,” which generally means “secretary” today, did not mean as such back then. There were only four administrators most of the time, and some of whom like Ann and Hussein Ahdieh (discussed next) were given this title but were administrators in every sense.

Teacher Training,” which, though vague in terms of administrative rank, came closer to her importance and primary role at the school.¹⁵

Still, both of these titles, and their malleability regarding her role, speak to how the school’s anti-hierarchical model could accidentally contribute to her diminished role—in public perception, at least—in the context of the era’s sexism. Historian Ashley D. Farmer, in her book on Black Power women activists, explains how the “male-centered perspective” of the Black Power movement was problematic. Although Harlem Prep was not a Pan-African school or formally part of the Black Power movement, her work provides an apt juxtaposition to better understand the sexism of the time. “Black women often composed the infrastructure of grassroots and Pan-African organizations and events,” writes Farmer. “However, their participation rarely translated into adequate recognition of their ideas and perspectives about diasporic liberation.”¹⁶ In broader civil rights efforts, women, too, often made up the organizing center of desegregation work, particularly in education. For example, in Jack Dougherty’s *More Than One Struggle* in which he describes the long struggle for educational equity in Milwaukee across the 20th century, he often centers women activists at the heart of school reform movements.¹⁷ Or, in New York City specifically, the case of the “Harlem Nine” mothers who boycotted their children’s segregated junior high schools in the late 1950’s provides another apt

¹⁵ “Harlem Prep 1972 Commencement Program,” June 7, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. On another letterhead, she is similarly listed as “Curriculum Teacher Training” and referred to by a fellow administrator in 1971 as the “Director of Curriculum Development” in an unofficial document. For the former, see Letter from Edward Carpenter to Julius Bergen, October 5, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; and for the latter, see Henry Pruitt, “The Improvement of the Educational Facilities of the Miracle on 136th Street, Harlem Preparatory School,” appendix, unpublished paper at Teachers College, Columbia University, written for Professor Henry J. Rissetto, Advanced School Plant Planning course, Fall 1971. Copy of paper given to author by Pruitt.

¹⁶ Farmer, *Remaking Black Power*, 132-133.

¹⁷ Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle*. See, for example, the efforts of Juanita Adams and Arlene Johnson who led the school integration movement in Milwaukee through spearheading efforts to knock on doors and lead voter registration drives.

example. Adina Back, in her re-telling of these mothers' actions, argues the even though they were on the "front lines of the school integration battles," they also became part of a "maternalist representation" that restricted their recognition. In other words, as Back explains, the Black press often linked the power of these mothers to male power and male leadership.¹⁸ The same could be said about the lack of recognition in the print media (or as recorded in the archives) for Ann Carpenter's critical role in Harlem Prep; likewise for Vice Principal Mother Ruth Dowd in the school's earlier years or female school staff that students say so fondly contributed to their positive experiences there. While Ann and Mother Dowd were talented educators with strong leadership skills, they—particularly Ann—were often linked to Harlem Prep through Ed Carpenter, not through their own accords.

Ann was integral to the growth of Harlem Prep—and Ed was well aware that he needed her expertise and skillsets if the school was to reach his original vision. After the inaugural year at the Harlem Armory, Ed convinced Ann to leave her previous job. "I held out that first year, because I was working as the chairman of the English department in Haaren High School in Manhattan, and I had put in 12 years down there, and I did not just want to walk away from that," Ann described in 2011. While Ann "had a vested interest" in Harlem Prep and saw the opportunity that this new endeavor presented to help so many (more) young people, she also perhaps made a sacrifice, leaving her chair position and a decade of work to join her husband at Harlem Prep.¹⁹ Ann's situation should also be recognized in the context of gender norms of the 1960s, even if, as individuals close to Ann and Ed explain, they operated as a partnership above all else.²⁰ "During that [first] year, there was a lot of publicity about the school, and I remember

¹⁸ Back, "'Exposing the Whole Segregation Myth,'" in *Freedom North*, 80-81.

¹⁹ Ann Carpenter, in Jacobs, "Harlem Prep Revisited," group interview, ca. 2010.

all the while I was working and doing my job, and Eddie saying, ‘We could really use you here. You could really help out,’” Ann continued. “And so although I had used my influence to get him here, he used his influence on me to bring me there, too.”²¹



Figure 8. Harlem Prep administrator Ann Carpenter at a non-Harlem Prep function, 1971.
Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

²⁰ See, for example, Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017; and Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017.

²¹ Ann Carpenter, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

Ann's presence was felt on a day-to-day basis starting in the summer session of 1968 and onward. While Ed was often roaming the halls or, more frequently as the school faced deeper and deeper financial strains, elsewhere in New York City meeting with various funders, Ann was constantly present inside school walls creating curriculum guidelines or meeting with teachers. Ann was responsible for organizing the course catalog and student registration, creating the overall curricular structure, overseeing teachers' pedagogical approaches and curricula (even though teachers had exceptional leeway in their lessons), and acting as the liaison between students, parents, and teachers when there were issues or grading discrepancies.²² "A lot of the curriculum and the scheduling was probably her design," suggests Ann's daughter, Casey, today—an assertion supported by the stories of other students and archival materials.²³ If one of the keys to Harlem Prep's success in educating students was the school's educational program, she was as much the catalyst for it as anybody. She also taught a very popular creative writing seminar, that multiple students remember fondly. "Ann's creative writing class helped me realize that I could write," explains alumnus Peter Hopson today, who recalls frequently visiting her office and seeing the big sign on her office door that read "Come Dig It."²⁴ Still, records suggest she did more than just curriculum and development; on at least one occasion, she partook in

²² Among previously mentioned students who recall Ann's role, see also Nile interview, March 4, 2015; English teacher Bari Haskins-Jackson remembers assigning a book to read for her class that had profanity and other mature topics, which got her in trouble by a parent who objected to that material and led to a discussion with Ann Carpenter. However, instead of being upset, Carpenter listened to Haskins-Jackson's reasoning about how it got students engaged and reading, and there was no type of reprimands other than just asking her to consider the repercussions for the next iteration.

²³ See Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017. Carpenter remembers her mother coming home one night from Harlem Prep and telling her stories about registration, where students gathered in a "whole circle, like a couple of people knee-deep" as she was responsible for helping them decide on classes and sign them up for their schedules. Other alumni and former teachers agree with this characterization, as do archival materials backing up this assertion.

²⁴ Peter Hopson, personal communication with author, December 18, 2018.

outside correspondences with funders such as Exxon Mobil and helped oversee external evaluations on the school.²⁵

Ann Carpenter was born and raised in Harlem, her family migrating from Georgia as part of the Great Migration of the early twentieth century—she would often go back to visit family down South each summer when she was young. She attended George Washington High School in upper Manhattan, and then went to City College (she met Ed there, who also attended) where she earned a bachelor’s and a master’s degree. Eventually, she became a teacher at Haaren High School, working her way up through the system to become the first Black chair of their English department in what was a predominantly white area in the school’s Midtown West location—a position that, as previously mentioned, she spent over a decade working toward.²⁶ “She flourished in her first love of teaching at Haaren High School and also at Harlem Preparatory School, a school which she co-founded,” noted *The Record/Herald News* at the time of her passing, appropriately recognizing her key role in the school.²⁷ Casey Carpenter explains that her mother Ann could be both stern and silly at the same time, traits that served her well as a teacher.

²⁵ See, for example, Letter from Ann Carpenter to Vinton Hoey, November 21, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. It seems, however, that these duties were few and far between. Other than this one letter, she is nearly completely absent from the archival record with regards to funding discussions. Although her official titles (on some correspondences) was “Administrative Assistant,” and these duties seem to fall well beyond that title, the other “Administrative Assistant” by title, Hussein Ahdieh, also had these duties full time. Furthermore, there were only four administrators for most of the school’s tenure, including Ed and Ann, which is not very many in the context of the large student body. While there is good evidence for Ann’s title to be problematic in the context of sexism of the era—the problems of a small, family-run organization where the wife is asked to do more than her title suggests—at least in this instance, it seems that the other administrators were also asked to go beyond their roles. See, for example, Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017.

²⁶ This information comes solely from an on-the-record oral history conversation with Casey Carpenter, Ann’s daughter. I have not been able to verify this information, but considering that Haaren High School was located in mid-Manhattan—not Harlem or another predominantly Black area—plus the fact that this was the early 1960s, makes this “first” seem plausible, particularly because it was New York City. In Christina Collins, *Ethnically Qualified*, she notes how in the early 1960s Black and Latino/a candidates “had a more difficult time moving up in the system’s hierarchy” compared to white candidates. However, Collins also notes that some did, and the 1960s saw some advancement of Black and Latino/a teachers in NYC school systems. See Collins, *Ethnically Qualified*, 148-149.

²⁷ “Ann Carpenter’s Obituary,” *The Record/Herald News*, March 2, 2011, <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/northjersey/obituary.aspx?n=ann-carpenter&pid=149042815&fhid=11208>.

She was also often *the* calming presence in students' busy lives. "Often in the midst of the worst situations, she would always bring something humorous that would stop everybody in their tracks and put a smile on their face—and enable them to move beyond whatever it was," recalls lifelong friend and English teacher Sandy Campbell. "There were times when we didn't have money or didn't have security or whatever [issue in front of us], but Ann would always bring people together and make them feel that alright, that the world wasn't closing in on them."²⁸

When Ann arrived at Harlem Prep, she was already an accomplished educator, with a seasoned demeanor in interacting with students and more than a decade of experience teaching and then running a department. The gender norms of the era where women were often pushed to the margins, combined with the inherent visibility of Ed as headmaster (and primary fundraiser), perhaps hid her seminal role in Harlem Prep's growth. Moreover, Ann's story can only be understood within the larger context of Black women in education—her own story of becoming the first Black chair at a mid-town Manhattan high school, and other stories of women in education, such as paraprofessionals and other Black female educators, receiving lower wages or experiencing workplace discrimination.²⁹ Her varied skillsets in education and organizational talents were fundamental to Harlem Prep, and perhaps have been hidden in the story of the school when considering these larger trends of the era. Her story should also be historicized within the sometimes sexist ways that the Black freedom struggle operated, where organizations were often organized through a patriarchy and Black women were seen as "mothers" of the movement instead of leaders.³⁰ Ann's accomplishments before and at Harlem Prep, as well as her

²⁸ Sandy Campbell, personal communication with author, December 18, 2018.

²⁹ See, among many, Jane Berger, "A Lot Closer To What It Ought To Be: Black Women and Public Sector Employment in Baltimore, 1950-1970," in Robert Zieger, ed., *Life and Labor in the New South* (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 2012); Collins, "Ethnically Qualified"; See also Juravich, "The Work of Education."

³⁰ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (New

ambiguous and sometimes underwhelming administrative titles, should be recognized and further appreciated within these contexts. “My mom was a real doer, in a humble way, like she was not so much a limelight kind of person like my dad,” asserts her daughter Casey today. “She was much more quiet and humble, but don’t sleep on her, because she gets it done too!” Ultimately, in regards to Harlem Prep specifically, Casey adds: “She was the engine, really.”³¹ Despite her husband Ed’s charisma, vision, and multitude of skillsets, he “could not hold a candle to her brilliance.”³² While some students did not have as much contact with Ed as headmaster—some had very little—most always remember their warm and frequent interactions with Ann.³³

There were other key administrative assistants such as Hussein Ahdieh and E. Salmon McFarlane who played an important part of the school’s academic record of success—and became representative of the type of “do-all” administrators who had a myriad of undefined roles. Hussein Ahdieh, also listed as an “Administrative Assistant” in official school memoranda, became a staple of the school’s later celebrity persona and headmaster Carpenter’s right-hand man in funding outreach. Ahdieh, an Iranian immigrant who came to America as a teenager after being prosecuted as a Bahá’i, had a personal story of struggle and adversity that was not unlike the students that he would later help preside over at Harlem Prep. Living in New York City at a young age, Ahdieh worked numerous odd jobs—washing dishes or working in hotels, for example—trying to “fit into this new environment,” eventually graduating from college and starting a family after years of hardship. His interest in civil rights also foreshadowed his involvement at Harlem Prep, attending the 1963 March on Washington with likeminded Persian

York: Routledge, 1991).

³¹ Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017. For Ann Carpenter’s personal take on Harlem Prep, see her writing in Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High School*.

³² Sandy Campbell, personal communication with author, December 18, 2018.

³³ See Beverly Grayman-Rich, interviewed by author, via phone, New York, NY, May 11, 2017.

friends who identified with social justice.³⁴ Ahdieh first met Ed and Ann Carpenter at a Bahá'í summer event in Maine—a fitting start to a deep friendship that began with shared religious beliefs and cultural values. “They were quite dynamic, and the man was very talkative and charming, charismatic, and the wife was so serene and calm,” he remembers. Ahdieh began talking to them about their work in education and eventually about Harlem Prep. “I felt very close to him—with no formal introduction, we felt so casual, and he kept calling me ‘brother’, so I began to like him from that first very moment.” Ahdieh stayed in touch with Carpenter and eventually became a math teacher and then administrator there.³⁵ As an administrator, Ahdieh primarily assisted Carpenter with funding duties, including “organizing visits of guests who wished to see Harlem Prep first hand” and meeting or corresponding with potential benefactors.³⁶ Preferring to “work in the background,” Ahdieh explains today that he had “forged an excellent working relationship” with both Ann and Ed Carpenter.³⁷ In his position at Harlem Prep, Ahdieh used his own charisma and sociability to network with potential funders throughout New York City and beyond, and played an important role in those fundraising efforts.

Assistant Headmaster E. Salmon-McFarlane—he also taught a psychology course at Harlem Prep—played a vital role in the day-to-day functioning of the institution during these prime years as well.³⁸ Salmon-McFarlane, or “Mac,” as he signed his name and was popularly referred to, was a Harlemit and former Black officer in World War II. As part of a lineage of family members living in Harlem, fellow administrator Hussein Ahdieh attests that Salmon-

³⁴ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 57-59

³⁵ Ahdieh interview, December 12, 2016; See also Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School.”

³⁶ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 61.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ See Letter from Edward F. Carpenter to Board of Trustees, August 23, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

McFarlane understood the Harlem community in a way that not only helped him relate with students, but also massage any potential issues that arose from the outside.³⁹ At Harlem Prep, Salmon-McFarlane served as the de facto “Director of College Placement & Testing” (in addition to vice principal Ruth Dowd, who continued in her role of college assistance from the school’s founding).⁴⁰ With a growing population of students, he was often the liaison between universities and colleges as well as the administrator who helped students apply to these schools.⁴¹ “We don’t know what the words ‘discipline’ and ‘punishment’ mean,” he once said. “We know the students—the total personality and not just his scholastic test score.”⁴² Like Hussein Ahdieh and Ann Carpenter, Salmon-McFarlane had a particular role—college placement—but also served as a generalist who oversaw facilities, student management, and general administrative duties. Henry Pruitt, although only at Harlem Prep for a year, explained his own role as an assistant headmaster in much the same way: “It [was] kind of a generalist job... you work with the headmaster, you evaluate teachers, you help with the kids....”⁴³ Still, for Ahdieh, Carpenter, and McFarlane—and Pruitt and others who worked there—although they had their primary responsibilities, the small administration at Harlem Prep took on an ethos of collective responsibility for ensuring the school’s success.⁴⁴

³⁹ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 61-62.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Letter from E. Salmon-McFarlane to Joshua Smith, June 11, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 61-62.

⁴¹ See Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

⁴² “How to Turn on the Turned Off,” *Business Week*, February 20, 1971, Series 3, Box 80, Folder 1324, Ford Foundation Records.

⁴³ Pruitt interview, May 4, 2017.

⁴⁴ Ibid; As explained in the next in this chapter, this small administration was problematic from an operating standpoint, as the lack of clear roles of each administrator and small team created some disorganization and an overabundance of work for Ed Carpenter.

As the school grew—remember, Harlem Prep’s student population tripled from spring of 1968 to fall of 1969—the need for more administrators grew accordingly (even if the total number was still relatively small) beyond just Ed, Ann, and Mother Ruth Dowd. However, the amorphous administrative structure with an “extreme informality and flexibility” became one of the school’s biggest challenges. Constantly hampered by a limited amount of resources, Ed Carpenter and the Board of Trustees decided to funnel these resources elsewhere in the school: teachers, student welfare, facilities, and so on.⁴⁵ In 1969, the administration was relatively straightforward—at least in theory: there was the headmaster who provided overall supervision and leadership of the school, as well as worked with the Board of Trustees and, in the case of Carpenter, “handle[d] public and community and the fund-raising program”; an executive assistant to the headmaster (Hussein Ahdieh); the vice principal whose main duties involved working with students and admissions officers and maintaining student records (Mother Ruth Dowd and E. Salmon MacFarlane in different years); an administrative assistant who worked with department chairmen in curriculum planning as well as supervising staff, facilities, and parent association (Ann Carpenter); and two secretaries and a student personnel coordinator.⁴⁶ Additional administrators—like Henry Pruitt—were added and a “College Committee” was also created to share these duties between the vice principal and other administrators by 1970.⁴⁷ One student, who attended Harlem Prep for three years, remembers seeing gradual changes in the administration during these years. There was “a little bit more of an administrative presence

⁴⁵ See Cresap, McCormick, and Paget Inc., et al., “Report: Harlem Preparatory School Study of Organization,” November 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-11.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 10; Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 61-62; See also Pruitt interview, May 4, 2017; To reiterate, sometimes administrators were added and given the title as “Administrative Assistant,” which meant administrator at Harlem Prep and not “secretary,” which it often means today.

there...progressively, things became more and more institutionalized” by 1970 and onward.⁴⁸ Still, as Pruitt recalls, even with some defined roles and recent efforts to institutionalize, administrators were constantly involved in all aspects of the school.⁴⁹ This collective responsibility for the school and its teachers and students also reflected the Carpenters’ multicultural philosophy, at least in theory (and for better or worse); both Ed and Ann envisioned multiculturalism at the administrative level to echo the collaborative spirit (and diversity of responsibilities) in the same way that they did for student learning.

In an attempt to improve administrative functions, including Harlem Prep’s Board of Trustees, the school asked a local consulting firm to evaluate the “organization” of the school to address these burgeoning issues. “This study was accomplished at a propitious time,” wrote the report’s authors in 1969. “Because of the recent rapid growth of the school and the increasing difficulty of locating adequate financial support, the school is confronted with the problem of making the best possible use of its staff and limited financial resources.”⁵⁰ In a fifteen-page report that was “confidential” and “intended solely” for circulation amongst Harlem Prep administrators’ and the Board of Trustees, the report “stress[ed] the need for strengthening the policy-making role of the Board of Trustees, providing better administrative support for the Headmaster, and redeploying management responsibility among the School’s top staff.”⁵¹ Due to the school’s rapid growth, these suggestions were timely. As the report asserts, the administrative structure was purposely constructed to match the overall philosophy—collective responsibility,

⁴⁸ Martin Nur, interviewed by author, via phone, Los Angeles, CA, July 17, 2017.

⁴⁹ See Pruitt interview, May 4, 2017.

⁵⁰ Letter from Denny A. Fuller, Fletcher Hodges III, and Neil G. Soslow to Edward F. Carpenter, November 14, 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁵¹ Ibid.

lack of emphasis on hierarchy—of the school but was less conducive to a larger population and scarce resources.⁵²

This report had two primary recommendations: one, more clearly defining the role of the Board of Trustees; and two, restructuring the administration.⁵³ At the time, Harlem Prep had two governing boards, a “Board of Overseers” and the Board of Trustees. In theory, the Board of Oversees, made up of between three and seven members who would serve for life and had been “among those who signed the original application for the provisional charter of the school,” was supposed to elect members of the Board of Trustees and hold an annual meeting to discuss important school matters.⁵⁴ “The original concept of having two boards seems to ensure that ultimate control over the School’s development remained concentrated in those who had the most active interest in the School—the original founders.” Yet, in practice, this idea was scant in substance. “The operation of two governing bodies is confusing and unnecessary,” stated the report. Although created for an admirable purpose, the report’s authors recommended getting rid of this governing board since it was mostly dormant and most members already served on the Board of Trustees.

More problematic was the actual Board of Trustees which, although operating as a traditional board where members served without compensation and had normal responsibilities of “managing and controlling the operations and property” of the school, also had issues that filtered down to Carpenter and other administrators.⁵⁵ The report stated as such:

⁵² See Cresap, McCormick, and Paget Inc., et al., “Report: Harlem Preparatory School Study of Organization,” p. 14, November 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

There appears to be no clear distinction between areas the Board should deliberate and areas for which the School's administration should be responsible.... It also appears that the Board has not requested from the administration the reports necessary to keep informed of the operations, status and activities of the School. The inconsistencies in Board involvement and the gaps in communication have prevented the Board from devoting sufficient attention to areas such as fund-raising, long-range planning and evaluation of programs. It is also felt that the Headmaster is not receiving the assistance and direction from the Board he needs to perform his duties and responsibilities.⁵⁶

While the report also mentioned other problems such as attendance among non-founding trustee members and issues with committee structure, these issues of unclear responsibilities between the board and Carpenter would become a significant obstacle toward long-term sustainability.⁵⁷ In the school's early years when there was sufficient funding to operate, these issues could be overlooked; by 1972, when Harlem Prep's financial situation became more and more dire, they no longer could. While some of these recommendations were indeed enacted starting in fall of 1971 under the new leadership of Judge Robert Mangum, the disjointed nature of the board and the administration continued to plague the school in its later years.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1. Harlem Prep's Board of Trustees consisted of up to twenty-five members, with trustees serving a one-year term. (As will be discussed more in Chapter 7, this board was an eclectic mix of members.) There were monthly meetings and executive positions such as a chairman, vice chairmen, secretary, and treasurer.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁷ The report suggested a number of predictable changes around more clearly delineating responsibilities. These suggestions included: evaluate the performance of the headmaster, review and approve a yearly budget, review and approve a realistic long-range plan (including of the programs, "manpower," space and finances, and better assistance in fund-raising). Other suggestions include strengthening qualifications and categories of membership. The report also spent two pages suggesting specific responsibilities for each member of the board based on his/her position (i.e., roles of the chairman, secretary, etc.).

⁵⁸ See Part III of this dissertation which more closely tracks the school's financial issues.

The second half of this report detailed the school's administrative organization with aligning suggestions. The primary recommendation was tailored toward the role of the headmaster, Ed Carpenter. "The Headmaster is Overburdened With Routine Operational Activities," exclaimed a headline in the report. The authors wrote that the headmaster "is involved in almost every activity and decision, both internally and externally," and while there are supposed to be clear responsibilities for other administrators, "many problems are taken directly to the Headmaster and resolved."⁵⁹ They continued: "His involvement in operational matters forces the Headmaster to work exceptionally long hours. It also results in his being unable to devote sufficient attention to long-range planning, program evaluation and fund-raising."⁶⁰ (Aforementioned issues of allocation of credit and responsibility can, at least in part, be traced back to a poor, although benign, initial administrative design.) Additional problems that were described included the lack of "clearly defined responsibilities," particularly with regard to record keeping. Due to the "informal approach to academic operations," the report explained that various duties are duplicated or not completed at all, and overall, the administration operates inefficiently.⁶¹ Ultimately, the report concluded with detailed recommendations for a major restructuring of the school administration, asking the headmaster to act more like a chief operation officer, among other recommendations for increasing efficiency. Despite these suggestions—and perhaps ironically, Carpenter and other administrators' savvy relationship with prominent CEO's—it seems that these major restructurings never occurred.

⁵⁹ Cresap, McCormick, and Paget Inc., et al., "Report: Harlem Preparatory School Study of Organization," p. 11, November 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

In his biographical work on Black educator and administrator Marcus Foster who served in the 1960s and early 1970s before his tragic assassination, educational scholar John P. Spencer writes about Foster's career as he rose from teacher, to principal at a Philadelphia school, to a superintendent in Oakland. Spencer explains that although Foster struggled to accommodate different philosophies of education among the Black politics of the era, he "was able to combine an activist's sense of urgency with a practitioner's sense of the complexity of the job."⁶² For Edward Carpenter and Harlem Prep, the same sentiment seemingly applied: Carpenter felt the urgency and significance of affecting young people's lives while also understanding the complexity of his assorted roles as headmaster. He wore a hat as spokesperson of Harlem Prep and its most prolific fundraiser, another as its chief administrator and financial planner, and yet another as the individual ultimately responsible for making sure his multicultural vision was employed by teachers and consumed by students. (Despite persistent rumors that Carpenter was going to leave Harlem Prep for other more lucrative and supportive jobs, he "refused to leave Harlem Prep."⁶³) Yet, unlike Foster and perhaps other Black educational leaders, it was not the politics of the era that befuddled Carpenter or the pedagogical challenges of engaging youth who had been pushed out of school, but the managerial aspects of being headmaster. This role—that of being responsible for the school's finances and budget planning—became the most complex part of Carpenter's job, exacerbated by the confluence of administrative problems described by external reviewers.

⁶² Spencer, *In the Crossfire*, 8; Coincidentally, in an interview with Ford Foundation program officer Joshua Smith, he said that "Marcus Foster was another one like Eddie Carpenter," comparing the two. See Joshua Smith, interviewed by author, New York, NY, March 2, 2017.

⁶³ "Harlem Prep Headmaster Gets Doctorate at Massachusetts U.," *New York Amsterdam News*, January 13, 1973; See also Sara Slack, "SARA SPEAKING: Finally ... U.S. Helps Harlem Prep!," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 15, 1972.

For example, in early fall of 1970, grumblings about Carpenter's use of Harlem Prep funds began to consume some members of the Board of Trustees.⁶⁴ In light of these rumors, Carpenter and a member of the board "became embroiled in a conflict" regarding the headmaster's financial management of the school, with accusations of misuse of Harlem Prep funds.⁶⁵ To resolve this issue, the Board of Trustees ordered an independent audit of all expenses issued by Carpenter, and after a detailed review, "the auditors [were] satisfied that the expenditures were properly made."⁶⁶ Essentially, the formal investigation "revealed sloppy accounting practices but not evidence of wrong doing"—and the whole episode quickly blew over.⁶⁷ However, the larger pattern of poor bookkeeping plagued the school for the remainder of its existence, both a reflection of Carpenter's oversight in that area of administration and, most of all, the lack of resources directed toward the school's administration. Following the incident, the Board of Trustees sought to "become more attentive" and "to provide the Headmaster, Edward Carpenter, with sufficient administrative help so that he will not be spread so thin."⁶⁸ More broadly, when Harlem Prep's funding pipelines began to dry up by the latter months of 1971, the administrative structure that relied on the talents of individuals ultimately did the school no favors during these trying times. If Carpenter sensed the urgency of the moment to educate the

⁶⁴ Harold Howe, "Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action, to McGeorge Bundy," p. 2, November 23, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁶⁵ Ibid. For a brief period of time, some of the philanthropic foundations and businesses, whom had heard about these allegations, even withheld payments to the Board of Trustees out of concern that their grants were being improperly used. See, for example, Letter from Joshua Smith to Percy Ifill, October 30, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; and Memo from Joshua Smith, December 1, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁶⁶ Memo from Joshua Smith, November 25, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁶⁷ Memo from Joshua Smith and Edward Meade Jr., October 18, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁶⁸ Memo from Joshua Smith, November 25, 1970, Ford Records. However, it seems likely that these promises were not kept.

increasing number of talented young people pushed out on the street, his overstuffed burden of responsibilities and lack of sound administrative practices—combined with the complexity of managing an independent institution without guaranteed funding—was destined to become Harlem Prep’s Achilles heel.

Sketching the Supermarket Space

When relocating from the Harlem Armory, one of the first actions that Ann and Ed Carpenter, along with other administrators, pursued was designing the open-space classroom that would form the bedrock of the school’s educational program and influence the format of teachers’ pedagogy. The supermarket location embodied Harlem Prep’s multicultural ethos—flexible and open, both physically and metaphorically—and it became important to students and teachers alike. From Harlem Prep’s conception, the Armory location was always intended to be temporary, with plans to expand to a larger facility that would permanently house the school. A one-time Finast supermarket (short for First National Supermarket), then a popular Northeastern grocery chain, the New York Urban League and Harlem Prep had seized the idea of using this abandoned supermarket as far back as fall of 1967. And, similar to the previous Armory location, this now-abandoned supermarket on the corner of 136th Street and Eighth Avenue was not without symbolic meaning; in late fall of October 1966, this Finast supermarket (and its counterpart on 135th Street and Lenox Avenue) was the site of a multi-state boycott of rising food prices. “Housewives in New York City picketed two stores of the Finast chain in Harlem,” declared the *Boston Globe*.⁶⁹ Up to 200 women marched in front of these two stores, led by a supervisor of one of the neighborhood boards created by the HARYOU-ACT, a Harlem-focused

⁶⁹ “Housewives Boycott Spreads to 21 States,” *Boston Globe*, October 30, 1966; See “Harlem Youth Protesting Store,” October 29, 1966 [unreleased photograph via Getty Images], <https://www.gettyimages.com/license/515542330>.

social welfare organization made up of activists, parent volunteers, and hired community leaders.⁷⁰ This protest continued at other locations the following weekend. Due to financial concerns—perhaps spurred on by continued displeasure from potential Harlem consumers—the Finast on Eighth Avenue would become vacant a year later.⁷¹ In this short span, this space evolved from hosting the most expensive food prices in Harlem (at least according to the *New York Amsterdam News*) to a tuition-free school that served Harlem youth.⁷²

To purchase the \$250,000 space, Harlem Prep secured a \$100,000 grant from the Mosler Foundation—the charitable philanthropy of board member Sheila Mosler and her husband John—and \$150,000 bank mortgage from Franklin National Bank.⁷³ However, the real issue was both the cost and logistics of renovating a supermarket into a school. The cost was estimated at \$192,000 while the school was to be designed by architectural firm Haase and Jackson.⁷⁴ Notably, the firm was owned in part by Barry Jackson, a prominent Black architect in Harlem at the time—and beginning a pattern of employing Black companies in sectors traditionally

⁷⁰ HARYOU, which stands for Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, an organization founded by Dr. Kenneth Clark, merged with another organization, Associated Community Teams (ACT), to form HARYOU-ACT in late 1964. This organization had a range of initiatives, such as anti-poverty programs, education programs such as after-school programs and day-care services, and research centers. HARYOU-ACT also established five local neighborhood boards to assist the community in these services and outreach. See, contemporarily, “Haryou-Act Sets \$118 Million Budget,” *The New York Times*, June 25, 1964; and Noel A. Cazenave, *Impossible Democracy: The Unlikely Success of the War on Poverty Community Action Programs* (New York: SUNY Press, 2007), 105-136.

⁷¹ It is unknown who decided to close this store and the exact reasons for its closure.

⁷² Cathy Aldridge, “Harlem Housewives Join Pickets Over Food Prices,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 5, 1966.

⁷³ Memo from Barbara Finberg, October 4, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; For more details, see Stephen Wright and Evelyn Payne Davis, “Executive Meeting of Harlem Prep Board of Trustees,” October 18, 1967, Box 7, Folder 34-38, Street Academy, New York Urban League, Secretary of the Board of Directors Records, NYUL Papers.

⁷⁴ Wright and Payne Davis, “Executive Meeting of Harlem Prep Board of Trustees,” 1967, NYUL Papers.

dominated by whites.⁷⁵ Jackson, who soon became the chief architect for this project, was locally known in Harlem as the only Black architect whom the city retained when planning the Harlem-East Harlem Model Cities program in the mid-1960s.⁷⁶ “Using a 3/16” scale model and 1/8” scale drawings, the architects discussed in detail structural, spatial, and mechanical renovations needed to transform the building into a school facility accommodating [a] maximum of 120 students.” (This number of proposed maximum was later quickly surpassed, speaking to the popularity of Harlem Prep and the administration’s desire to admit as many students as possible regardless of norms.) Jackson and his colleagues would help design the school with careful detail to inherent “equipment needs” and “acoustical” considerations, with laborers working all spring and summer—including volunteer labor from a local electrical union in Harlem who wanted to help the school.⁷⁷ By the time Harlem Prep opened on September 23, 1968, “the depersonalized supermarket had been changed into an exciting learning space” that would immediately become essential to the school’s educational program.⁷⁸

Unlike the Harlem Armory that served the role of being an adequate, if plain and sometimes dreary, educational space, the new location at 2535 Eighth Avenue was the polar opposite. The refurbished supermarket brought to life Harlem Prep’s—and perhaps, above all, Ed and Ann Carpenter’s—vision for a pluralistic, multicultural school that was both open and cohesive. It was not only freshly remodeled, of course, but the building was part of the fabric of

⁷⁵ See, for example, Jackson being mentioned in an article about Black architects. Ada Louise Huxtable, “The Black Man and His Architecture,” *New York Times*, May 3, 1970; This information was also obtained from personal communication with Susanne Schindler, e-mail message to author, July 25, 2017 and September 5, 2017.

⁷⁶ Susanne Schindler, e-mail message to author, July 25, 2017 and September 5, 2017; For more information about the model cities program, see Joseph P. Fried, “Model Cities Aid Is Allocated Here,” *New York Times*, March 6, 1973. Also see Song-Ha Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement*, 215-217; The fact that Jackson was the only Black architect retained for this project speaks to the city’s discriminatory hiring policies.

⁷⁷ Wright and Payne Davis, “Executive Meeting of Harlem Prep Board of Trustees,” 1967, NYUL Papers.

⁷⁸ Letter from Ruth Dowd to Leslie Dunbar, October 1, 1968, Box 2T32, Harlem Prep - 1968, Field Records; Ahdieh, *A Way Out of No Way*, 54.

the school's identity, and in the opinion of many students, played an outsized role in the school's effectiveness. Ann Carpenter explained in 1973 that at the outset, "the faculty and headmaster consulted at length on the question of the best physical arrangement for establishing new behavioral patterns."⁷⁹ To be sure, these considerations—linking school design with teaching and learning—had always been salient, according to educational scholars.⁸⁰ School spaces "should not be viewed merely as capsules in which education is located and teachers and pupils perform, but also as designed spaces that, in their materiality, project a system of values," write Catherine Burke and Ian Grosvenor today.⁸¹ Other scholars have written about the meaning of school spaces from the exterior aesthetics to the selection of desks, and how each element of design was a reflection of the school.⁸² And, as Ann Carpenter expressed above at the time, Harlem Prep's space was, too, carefully designed with the school's multicultural values of inclusivity and adaptability at the forefront.

It was particularly fitting, however, that the Carpenters would look to an open-space design for Harlem Prep. After all, the idea for an open-space classroom specifically "burst onto

⁷⁹ Carpenter and Rogers, "Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story," in *High Schools*, 277

⁸⁰ See, for example, for an examination of school space across decades and different school design elements on various school components, the recent edited collection: Kate Darian-Smith and Julie Willis, eds., *Designing Schools: Space, Place and Pedagogy* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016); see also Neil Briem Gislason, "School Design: History, Case Studies, and Practice" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2009), who also historicizes the links between teaching and learning and school design; Marta Gutman has also examined the importance school architecture on not just school components, but on larger issues of power and what these spaces mean in the context of their urban location. See, for example, Marta Gutman and Ning De Coninck-Smith, *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Marta Gutman, *A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850-1950* (University of Chicago Press, 2014).

⁸¹ Catherine Burke and Ian Grosvenor, *School* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 8.

⁸² Frederik Herman et al., "The School Desk: From Concept to Object," *History of Education* 40, no. 1 (2011); and Lisa Rosén Rasmussen, "Touching Materiality: Presenting the Past of Everyday School Life," *Memory Studies* 5, no. 2 (April 1, 2012): 114–30.

the American education scene in the late 1960s,” explains historian of education Larry Cuban.⁸³

Cuban explained further:

Open classrooms’ focus on students’ ‘learning by doing’ resonated with those who believed that America’s formal, teacher-led classrooms were crushing students’ creativity. In that sense the open-classroom movement mirrored the social, political, and cultural changes of the 1960s and early 1970s.⁸⁴

This description most certainly fit with Carpenter’s vision for Harlem Prep (in the context of the era) as well as students’ own experiences in their prior public school high schools. Although Cuban and other historians reference elementary level open-space classrooms more than secondary school classrooms—the latter were more rare—it remains important to recognize the ideology (and historical context) behind Carpenter’s decision to utilize the open-space design.⁸⁵

The open-classroom (or sometimes referred to as “open education”) was not “a model” or “a set of techniques,” wrote education journalist (and an original Harlem Prep board member) Charles Silberman at the time, but “rather, an approach to teaching and learning.”⁸⁶ In his lengthy edited volume *The Open Classroom Reader*, Silberman explained that the “move away from the teacher

⁸³ Larry Cuban, “The Open Classroom,” *Education Next*, Vol. 4, No. 2: Spring 2004, <http://educationnext.org/theopenclassroom/>. Notably, Cuban also explains that this movement quickly faded away by the late 1970s due to the “conservative backlash against the cultural and political changes of the 1960s and 1970s.”

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ For example, a wave of books from teachers and scholars about the open-classroom for elementary-aged children emerged during these years, such as, for example, Herbert Kohl, *The Open Classroom: A Practical Guide to a New Way of Teaching* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970); Rose Epstein Sabaroff, *The Open Classroom: A Practical Guide for the Teacher of Elementary Grades* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1974); Barbara Blitz, *The Open Classroom: Making It Work* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1973); and Lee L. Smith, *Jack Out of the Box: A Practical Guide to the Open Classroom* (West Nyack: Parker Publishing Company, 1974).

⁸⁶ Charles E. Silberman, ed., *The Open Classroom Reader* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), xix.

to the source of all knowledge to the teacher as the facilitator of learning... go[es] hand in hand” when “the classroom environment is transformed.”⁸⁷

Headmaster Carpenter and his fellow founding administrators conceptualized their open classroom space as an integral part of the overall teaching philosophy. Alumnus Clifford Jacobs agreed; from his student perspective, the selection of the former supermarket was no accident. “I think that the space that you select to do any type of work in has direct effect on the work to be done,” he contends on reflection on why the Harlem Prep space was so effective.⁸⁸ For Jacobs, the open space was refreshing change that allowed him to share his ideas and move more freely, compared to his previous school where both were devalued or constrained. (The overwhelming consensus of the open space classroom’s efficacy also seems to push back against the notion that open space classrooms during this era were widespread failures. This was in part because of Carpenter and his teachers’ ability to so closely intertwine the space with the school’s overarching multicultural vision and educational program elements, both which are discussed throughout Part II of the dissertation.⁸⁹) Ultimately, the twenty thousand square foot open-space building—ten thousand at the ground level and later another ten thousand in the basement—became closely identified with Harlem Prep for the remainder of its tenure there.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Ibid., xvii.

⁸⁸ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013. This chapter explains further in the following pages how the space operated in practice and contributed to student learning.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Mimi Kirk, “Who Thought ‘Open Classrooms’ Were a Good Idea?,” *CityLab*, April 27, 2017, <https://www.citylab.com/design/2017/04/who-thought-open-classrooms-were-a-good-idea/524421/>.

⁹⁰ See, among many sources, Pruitt, “The Improvement of the Educational Facilities,” 1971, 3; It was approximately ten thousand feet at first, without using the basement, according to Ann Carpenter, who refers to only the classroom level on the ground floor. See Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High Schools*, 277; See also Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School: An Alternative,” 77; A note about this section is warranted. Piecing together the layout of the school based on various memories of alumni, pictures without labels, and other (sometimes) contradictory or non-specific information can be challenging. This section is written using combined various oral history accounts with diagrams and descriptions of alumni, as well as a diagram and a description



Figure 9. Students hanging out in front of Harlem Prep, with the entrance to the school on the left, and the front glass windows to the right, ca. 1971.

Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas-Austin

From the outside, the building was primarily plain brick on the top half, and on the lower half of the front of the building, long glass windows—“you know, glass windows in the front like a grocery store”—encased by a short white cylindrical awning and then double glass doors on the left-hand side to enter.⁹¹ On part of the brick adjacent to the door, as the school continued to grow, torn off pamphlets and corners flyer could often still be seen, such as a partially pasted picture of South African anti-Apartheid activist Steve Biko gazing at students as they walked by the school. At the top, the building read in big, metal letters protruding from the brick: “THE

written and drawn in 1971 by a former administrator *in* 1971. A copy of this diagram is in author’s possession, used with permission from Pruitt.

⁹¹ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

HARLEM PREPARATORY SCHOOL” with “NEW YORK CITY” written underneath in a smaller font, left-aligned. A column protruded vertically from the top of the building with a giant “MOJA LOGO” sign, making Harlem Prep visible from people at a distance.⁹²

At the beginning in the fall of 1969, of course, the new school space was still bare inside. “When we moved into the school on 136th Street, it was an empty shell,” describes alumnus Frank Berger, who remembers the changeover from the Armory location to the new supermarket space. “We moved stuff around, we cleaned it, and we got it going.”⁹³ For the first few weeks in fall of 1968, there were no blackboards, study tables, or bookcases—there was not much of anything at all—with only space and a few bookshelf partitions separating clusters of students.⁹⁴ However, by springtime, the school resembled the more semi-permanent inside interior layout that has been captured in photos and stored in the memories of former students and staff. Walking into the school through the double glass doors presented a couple of options; when entering from the south, on the left, there was a reception desk and small accompanying area with a glass window that could slide open, and also a door to go downstairs into the basement.⁹⁵ Continuing around the left (south) side of the school there were offices: the accountant’s office, assistant headmaster’s office, two separate offices for the chairs of the social studies and English

⁹² The author’s descriptions are taken primarily from hundreds of assorted, unprocessed and contact sheet photographs of Harlem Prep, “Julio Mitchell, Harlem Prep, 1971,” Set 2501; “Harlem Prep, 1971,” Set 2500; and “Harlem Prep Oct. 1971,” Set 2509 in Box 2015-006/83, ExxonMobil Historical Collection, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter referred to Assorted Harlem Prep Photographs, ca. 1971, ExxonMobil Records).

⁹³ Berger interview, November 28, 2016.

⁹⁴ Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High School*, 281; There is a picture most likely taken in early fall of 1968, where one of the Manhattanville College nuns, Sister Elizabeth McLoughlin, was leading class with a group of students, all in a circle together. Behind her, there were more circles of students—looking more like a community center than a school—and a few tall ladders leading up to the ceiling that inferred construction was still taking place. Photograph from personal collection of Hussein Ahdieh. Digital files given to author, with Ahdieh’s permission for reuse.

⁹⁵ Sandy Campbell, personal communication, June 25, 2017. Campbell provided a sketch diagram of Harlem Prep, given to author (hereafter referred to Campbell diagram, June 25, 2017); Carpenter, interview, June 4, 2017; See also Assorted Harlem Prep Photographs, ca. 1971, ExxonMobil Records.

departments, an office for the director of curriculum (Ann Carpenter), and then a small office in the back southeast corner for the plant manager. In the back (eastern end) of the school there was a storage room, a few tables and chairs for students to work at, and the men's and women's restrooms.⁹⁶ However, when walking into the school, past the reception area and looking right (to the north) was the crux of the space: a large open area where "sun light poured in through a huge skylight relieving the monotony of the enormous, flat ceiling..."⁹⁷ The entire space was covered in a "black-flecked green carpet"—Ahdieh claims that the carpet was designed to reduce the transmission of sound—and the formerly cinder-block walls had been painted white and other sections paneled in wood make the school feel warmer, interrupted by the occasional window and accompanying curtain.⁹⁸ From the ceiling hung both "acoustical tiles" as well as various white block signs scattered throughout the building with the words "English" or "African studies" or "communications" to designate a particular subject area.⁹⁹ In the northwest corner of the school was the school's Swahili slogan "MOJA LOGO" imprinted in white on a grey painted section of the wall, adjacent to its English translation "UNITY" and "BROTHERHOOD" painted in matching grey on a white portion of the wall. In this corner there was a grand piano and a stage—both of which saw frequent usage.¹⁰⁰ Next to the painted logo and rows of

⁹⁶ Pruitt, "The Improvement of the Educational Facilities," 1971, unnumbered appendix with school diagram; See also Campbell diagram, June 25, 2017. In Pruitt's description of these offices, he only writes "Dir. Curr." which has been interpreted here to mean an office for the "Director of Curriculum." As discussed earlier, Ann's official title seemed to be different depending on who was referring to her, and here is another example of this. It is also unclear whether Pruitt thought this was her official title or only noting that this was her office with knowledge that curriculum was her largest role.

⁹⁷ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 54.

⁹⁸ Carpenter and Rogers, "Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story," in *High Schools*, 277; Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 54.

⁹⁹ Assorted Harlem Prep Photographs, ca. 1971, ExxonMobil Records; Carpenter and Rogers, "Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story," in *High Schools*, 277.

bookcases were wooden stairs to the mezzanine level, which partially overlooked the floor level and sat above the administrative offices on the south side, and included quiet cubby-hole spaces for students as well as lockers scattered between a couple of hanging paintings.¹⁰¹ Finally, back by the entrance of the school, there were the stairs to the basement, which changed in usage over time. At first, the basement was unused—there were “squatters” as part of a community-run drug rehab program that Harlem Prep did not want to force out—but by fall of 1969, it began to serve as an important space for the growing student population.¹⁰² Downstairs, there was a couch and lounge area for students to relax with a few more lockers (Casey Carpenter, the headmaster’s daughter who was frequent visitor at the school, remembers accidentally locking herself in one time). In addition to more partitioned classroom spaces, walking down the stairs facing east, was the science lab, a dedicated art room—including a photography dark room—in the southeast corner and adjacent school library, and then headmaster Ed Carpenter’s office in the southwest corner. Next to Carpenter’s office due south was a video/media room where a husband and wife, Gary and Minna Hilton, taught film. Finally, on the north side of the basement featured the nurse’s office and, most notably, a small kitchen and cafeteria area where Ed Carpenter’s mother—grandma Carpenter as she was known—was one of the chefs.¹⁰³ “That woman could cook!” remembers her granddaughter Casey.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Peter Hopson, e-mail message to author, December 30, 2017; See also Pruitt, “The Improvement of the Educational Facilities,” 1971.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ann Carpenter in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” ca. 2010. Carpenter explains how there was an existing drug rehab program in the basement and administrators did not want to displace them since they wanted to always support the community. This story will be discussed more in a Chapter 7.

¹⁰³ Campbell diagram, June 25, 2017; Carpenter interview, June 4, 2015; Assorted Harlem Prep Photographs, ca. 1971, ExxonMobil Records; Peter Hopson, e-mail message to author, December 30, 2017. It seemed the basement was also used for more offices and a place for student groups to meet, including a small student lounge.

¹⁰⁴ Carpenter interview, June 4, 2015



Figure 10. An overhead view of the open-space class design, ca. 1971. All the partitions and bookcases were movable and changed constantly.

Source: The Lamp Magazine, ExxonMobil Historical Collection, University of Texas-Austin

The standout feature of school space, of course, was the wide-open main level floor. “There are no walls between classes at Harlem Prep. Instead, there are clusters of learning areas separated by functional bookcases and furniture,” described the *New York Amsterdam News*. “This leads to an open, casual and friendly atmosphere.”¹⁰⁵ It was “just a huge, open space” with only rolling blackboards, low partitions, or bookcases separating each “class.”¹⁰⁶ These classes often consisted of modern looking white chairs, some with attached desks and others without, facing in either scattered positions or in semi-circles around a small white table and rolling blackboard where the instructor facilitated each session—items that were donated to the school

¹⁰⁵ “Harlem Preparatory Unlike Any In U.S.,” *New York Amsterdam News*, February 21, 1970.

¹⁰⁶ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

by national furniture retailers Herman Miller and Steelcase Furniture.¹⁰⁷ (Administrator Henry Pruitt, in a report of the school in 1971, wrote that the “utility of the furniture” was “one of the most positive aspects of the Harlem Prep Program.”¹⁰⁸) Other classes only featured round or square tables with chairs, surrounded by mountable and demountable tack boards or blackboards. As Ann Carpenter also wrote, “At times teachers may be indistinguishable from students because they are not in their traditional places at the front of the group; more often they are just another member of the circle.”¹⁰⁹ These different clusters of classes were placed all throughout the main space; as the school population grew from approximately 180 students in the spring of 1969 to 600 students in the subsequent fall, these clusters became closer in proximity and eventually one large indistinguishable arena of students, staff, and low-rise partitions cobbled together in endless directions.¹¹⁰ (Although the official building capacity once the school added the basement space is unknown, it is most likely that number exceeded the building capacity at the planning stage.) Overhead photographs of this space taken from the mezzanine level depict classes—and thus, groups of students—back-to-back with only a small bookcase, or sometimes nothing at all, separating them.¹¹¹ Students and staff note the energy and buzz that radiated from all these interactions occurring simultaneously in one space. While the constant noise was a common problem amongst open space classrooms—Joshua Smith of the Ford Foundation described the “high decibel level” on his inaugural visit—students and teachers embraced the

¹⁰⁷ Pruitt, “The Improvement of the Educational Facilities,” 1971, 12; Karen “Casey” Carpenter interview, June 15, 2017; Assorted Harlem Prep Photographs, ca. 1971, ExxonMobil Records.

¹⁰⁸ Pruitt, “The Improvement of the Educational Facilities,” 1971, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High Schools*, 277.

¹¹⁰ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 115; Assorted Harlem Prep Photographs, ca. 1971, ExxonMobil Records.

¹¹¹ See, among many, Assorted Harlem Prep Photographs, ca. 1971, ExxonMobil Records.

liveliness of the school.¹¹² Instead of being a detriment to learning, the noise became part and parcel of the school's flexibility, a multicultural space of different ideas and people that flowed freely throughout the school day. Hearing different lessons from teachers across the space or groups of students gathering in the corner became a unique part of the school's learning environment; it promoted flexibility in both the learning and teaching process that the Carpenters believed in.

In practice, the "vast, open area" with its moveable components was malleable to the needs of teachers and desires of students—and to the Carpenters multiculturalism vision that stressed openness and unity. "If you walked into Harlem Prep, [there were] maybe 20-25 cubicles [with movable partitions] throughout the place that may not be the same the next day. So, you know, you just had to put it together once you got there," chuckles English teacher Sandy Campbell in memory.¹¹³ Campbell recalls many instances when, in the midst of a lesson, he would hear other teachers facilitating their classes and "that sometimes [these other class] discussions would get so lively, that individuals would stop what they were doing, and [using] these portable walls, we would pull them apart so it would just be one big group, and that one teacher would teach [everyone]."¹¹⁴ Ann Carpenter concurred at the time when she explained that, "because there are no separations between clusters it is possible for students to see and hear what is happening in classes around them."¹¹⁵ Students could "observe learning activities" in other areas besides just their own classroom, Carpenter explained further, and they were allowed

¹¹² Memo from Joshua Smith, October 13, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Concerns about noise have long been a critique of open space classrooms. See, for example, for a review of research, Bridget Shield, Emma Greenland, and Julie Dockrell, "Noise in Open Plan Classrooms in Primary Schools: A Review," *Noise and Health* 12, no. 49 (October 1, 2010): 225-234.

¹¹³ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Carpenter and Rogers, "Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story," in *High Schools*, 277

to move freely between classes whenever they choose—with an agreement to make up any work they missed.¹¹⁶ Alumnus Sherry Kilgore remembers doing this on frequent occasion, sitting in on the popular African history teach Dr. Ben’s class, even though she never officially had him as a teacher.¹¹⁷ The open structure acted “as a stimulus to teachers—the realization that students are free to sit in on other classes serves as a reminder that they must prepare meaningful material that is adapted to the needs of their students.”¹¹⁸ At first, English teacher Bari Haskins-Jackson remembers this open-space initially being a pedagogical challenge; “you had to learn how to moderate your voice so that you captured your class without disturbing another class going on... it was a competition.”¹¹⁹ Pictures of Harlem Prep taken from the mezzanine level depict the large middle area of the school never being the same, as the various objects used as dividers and the hundreds of chairs were always in different spots depending on where teachers and students left them last.

Furthermore, the open-space also became firmly enmeshed with—if not abetted—Harlem Prep’s policy of welcoming celebrities, activists, or funders into the school to speak with students. While there were certainly planned school assemblies underneath the MOJO LOGO painted wall where jazz musicians Dizzy Gillespie or Billy Taylor would perform, or headmaster Carpenter would introduce a CEO of a corporation to the student body, it was equally as common for unplanned schools assemblies to materialize instantly within the main school space. “We had this tradition if we had an interesting visitor, we would disband the classes and we would quickly form an assembly,” explains Hussein Ahdieh, “the physical arrangement was such

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Sherry Kilgore, interviewed by author, Glendale, MD, May 21, 2017.

¹¹⁸ Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High Schools*, 277-278.

¹¹⁹ Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017.

that it could be done.”¹²⁰ The school operated as a unit in that almost everything was always moveable—few pieces of furniture or the various objects that served as makeshift partitions were permanently fixed. Ultimately, these pieces of furniture served to emphasize the open-space concept—remember, at the beginning, there were no partitions at all—and not to constrain it.¹²¹

The constantly changing décor and open-space classrooms served a number of purposes, contributing both to the academic environment and to Carpenter’s larger educational philosophy. First, Harlem Prep’s learning space “maximized the openness, the flexibility, the porous[ness]” of the learning that occurred between the classrooms—it allowed for the “breathe-ability of the life of ideas.”¹²² Clifford Jacobs explains how these ideas, bouncing from one end of the school to the other, occurred in practice:

I could be in the English class and I could hear [teacher] George Simmons talking African history, and he might be getting into the slave trade meanwhile we’re talking about Franz Kafka’s *The Trial* and George is talking about something related to Egypt. So, you heard all this around you, and everything was everywhere—and that was good. And it gave the place a very lively atmosphere....¹²³

Since students sometimes had knowledge of what was being discussed in other classes, Jacobs explains further how after *his* class, he would go over to these other areas and have “heated discussions about different things” with his fellow students.¹²⁴ Ann Carpenter, as an administrator primarily in charge of professional development and curriculum, wrote that the

¹²⁰ Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016.

¹²¹ Bari Haskins-Jackson also mentioned how there were no dividers at first, and that it was accepted as normal. See Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017.

¹²² Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

¹²³ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

school's organization "is best not only for achieving students' academic progress but also for enhancing their social development and stimulating their intellectual curiosity."¹²⁵ In practice, Ann Carpenter's assessment seems to have been true; multiple alumni today agree that the physical space encouraged their potentiality to learn from each other—and express themselves freely—much more organically compared to learning in traditional, compartmentalized classrooms.¹²⁶ Sterling Nile perhaps explains this phenomena best: "It was great because you're in one section, and you're listening to something, and then another group on another subject—so you see another group of people learning, hanging on the edge of their seat listening and learning, going through *their* educational process. And it was like 'Wow. All of this is going on at the same time' It was just great."¹²⁷

Not only did the open-space setup contribute to learning and students' curiosity *to* learn, but without walls that cordoned off groups of students, this constant interaction encouraged Harlem Prep's larger unity message. "The openness of the space just mirrored the openness of the philosophy of the school," Jacobs explains further, as "the open concept of the school, [its] open-mindedness . . . was reflected in the [diversity of the] student population."¹²⁸ Students had to both see and communicate with their peers all the time, and thus, students had no choice but to work together—plus, the open-space created accountability because everybody could see everybody else at all times. For example, Aissatou Bey-Grecia points out that "you could see the front door from every classroom," and so, if a student was late, teachers and peers would notice

¹²⁵ Carpenter and Rogers, "Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story," in *High Schools*, 277

¹²⁶ See, for example, Smith interview, March 7, 2017; Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013; Kahamu interview, February 24, 2017; Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

¹²⁷ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

¹²⁸ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

which created a sense of community and a sharing of common goals.¹²⁹ Finally, both Ann and Ed Carpenter saw the open-space classroom functioning as a way to help students feel “free and unconfined.”¹³⁰ The structural layout of the school “gives everyone in the school a sense of ‘elbow room,’” wrote Ann Carpenter. “In an area of the city where people are physically crushed together constantly, this expansiveness can provide great psychological relief to all who enter.”¹³¹ Ultimately, the school’s supermarket location played a significant part of both the school’s identity and in its day-to-day functions; Harlem Prep’s open-space classroom “accentuated” and “complimented” the school’s multicultural goals and flexibility in the teaching and learning process.¹³²

However, the space affected more than just the pursuit of a multicultural curriculum, and was a living, breathing embodiment of multiculturalism more broadly. The open-space supermarket reflected administrators’ belief in inclusion—key to the Carpenters’ vision for a multicultural school that valued the diversity of opinions and experiences of those inside the building and of the community. The school would always be open to new ideas or community members who stopped by, both metaphorically and physically. Plus the diversity that the Carpenters championed—in students, in teachers, in curriculum—aligned with the diversity of uses that the open-space classroom could entertain. Moreover, the open-space building also emphasized the Carpenters’ multiculturalism by promoting equity and collaboration. To them, multiculturalism was, in part, about helping each other and aiding each other’s academic success and personal growth, and being in a physical environment where students could hold each other

¹²⁹ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

¹³⁰ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 37.

¹³¹ Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High Schools*, 277.

¹³² Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

accountable was by design. The mixture of adaptability, inclusivity, and collaborative components of the open-space aided the Carpenters' pursuit of a fully multicultural school.



Figure 11. Students in a class at Harlem Prep, being able to hear other teachers, 1971.
Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

Of Ann Carpenter's many duties and often unspoken responsibilities at Harlem Prep, her role in designing the open-space classroom was certainly one of the most prominent. It is telling that Ann wrote more about the open-space classroom design and the learning environment than—or at least on par—with husband Ed, even though her written records pale in comparison to her husband's surviving archival documents. Even if Ed may have originally had the idea to use this type of space for a school, it was Ann who brought this vision to life and, in all practical

purposes, “ran the show.”¹³³ The supermarket space had her handprints all over it: the humaneness that it created between teachers and students, and the flexibility that it allowed were ideas that no doubt reflected her personality and her years of teaching experience. More broadly, the open-space classroom design also reflected her multicultural vision that she shared with husband and headmaster Ed. Together, they would help shape Harlem Prep into a school that look, felt, and acted differently than its peer institutions in New York City and beyond.

¹³³ Kilgore interview, May 21, 2017.

Chapter Four

Harlem Prep in Context: Ed and Ann Carpenter's Multicultural Vision

"We have Five Percenters, Muslims, Garveyites, Nationalists, Jews, and Christians. I'm proud of it because from this diversity we at Harlem Prep have achieved unity. I want to prove that we can all live together and work together. This is a new race of mankind."

—Harlem Prep Headmaster Edward Carpenter, 1972¹

"Everything was all black, all together." —Daniel Lloyd, Harlem Prep student, 1970²

"Black America today is a varied conglomeration of many interests, schools of thought and life styles," declared Thomas A. Johnson in the *New York Times* in late October of 1969, writing as the iconic newspaper's first Black reporter.³ "It is also a community rife with activism and the growing fervor for some 'grass roots' participation in the control of black communities."⁴ Harlem Prep most certainly fit into Johnson's broad characterization of the era and neighborhood: first, it represented just one of many schools of thought about how to improve the lives of Black Americans (i.e., through education). Specifically, Harlem Prep's particular view of improvement through education was focused on a more individualistic philosophy—attaining a college degree—that would in turn lead to collective change through the increase of educated and empowered Black men and women working in every sector of society. Second, Harlem Prep existed within a

¹ "Unsung Hero Placed 164 Dropouts In College," *New York Amsterdam News*, November 1, 1969.

² "Dropouts Offered New Hope: Harlem School Offers Them Chance To Go To College," *The Sun*, June 13, 1970.

³ Douglas Martin, "Thomas A. Johnson, Pioneering Black Journalist, Dies at 79," *New York Times*, June 5, 2008.

⁴ Thomas A. Johnson, "Who Speaks for Blacks?: Inevitable Question Is Said to Ignore Fact All Negroes Are Not of One Voice," *New York Times*, October 22, 1969.

community that had a long history of varied types of activism flowing through its streets. Headmaster Ed Carpenter, in shaping the school's goals and formulating its philosophies, was not divorced from the era in which he lived. Harlem Prep did not emerge in a vacuum. Administrator Ann Carpenter, too, a longtime educator and the daughter of parents who moved north as part of the Great Migration, was also well aware of the politics of Harlem and the civil rights movement that they were amidst.⁵ Scholars have correctly recognized the “long civil rights movement,” particularly the key role that education played within this generative movement, as the late 1960s and early 1970s saw an unprecedented emergence of independent Black educational institutions.⁶ Harlem Prep was one of many schools that were created to address systemic inequality and continued racial discrimination in American cities. As described in Part I of this dissertation, Ed Carpenter and his staff believed that education—specifically, the creation of a new high school in a neighborhood where no public ones existed—had perhaps the most potential to be a catalyst for substantive community uplift. Philosophically, Harlem Prep envisioned its radical multiculturalism as being grounded in the political diversity of Black life in Harlem. Whereas other schools—and perhaps other Black leaders who had different strategies for Black progress—often coalesced around one particular ideology or political strategy, both Ann and Ed Carpenter felt that all these different opinions and ideologies should be leveraged into an inclusive multicultural philosophy. And, to them as educators, this multiculturalism could be the most potent inside a school.

Yet, by the fall of 1969, Harlem Prep had become more than just a budding multicultural idea and a small initiative with a few rooms and a few dozen students: it had become a well-

⁵ Sandy Campbell, personal communication, December 18, 2018.

⁶ See, for example, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall who first advanced this argument. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233–1263.

known community institution in Harlem that educated nearly 600 Black and brown young adults each year, in a renovated twenty-thousand square foot space, with a well-publicized graduation ceremony held outside on the streets of Harlem. In just two years, Harlem Prep had solidified its goals, purposes, and political orientation as an educational institution. Furthermore, Ed Carpenter himself had “a definite program in mind both philosophically and operationally.”⁷ What were the philosophies behind this program? What exactly was Carpenter’s “radical multiculturalism” and how was it different than the numerous other alternative Black schools appearing across the country? This chapter explores these questions, closely examining the school’s philosophy while situating it within the sprawling—albeit understudied—landscape of Black educational thought and innovation during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although Harlem Prep was the only tuition-free high school in Central Harlem, similar independent Black institutions were emerging nationwide, and this chapter argues that Harlem Prep, due to its educational philosophy and principles, sits outside the current scholarly landscape and understanding of alternative schools of the era.

As demonstrated by the two contrasting epigraphs at the beginning of this chapter, on the surface, Harlem Prep’s political orientation was something of an enigma—and this chapter primarily seeks to explain in detail the core principles of Harlem Prep’s multiculturalism according to both Ed and Ann Carpenter, and how these principles were then implemented during the school’s prime operating years. The latter part of this chapter situates Harlem Prep within a broader Black educational framework and a history of multicultural education, arguing that Carpenter and his colleagues sought out to create a school based on multiculturalism that differed from Black alternative schools emerging elsewhere in New York City and beyond.

⁷ Pruitt, “The Improvement of the Educational Facilities of the Miracle on 136th Street,” 11.

Explaining Harlem Prep's Multicultural Beliefs

With a variety of experiences working in education and living in Harlem, as well as a strong value system based on his Bahá'í faith, Ed Carpenter was not working off a blank canvas. When he accepted the leadership of Harlem Prep, he must have already had a vision of his larger educational principles of unity and diversity at the outset. When Ann Carpenter—also an accomplished educator and Harlemiter—joined her husband at the school in the fall of 1968, she, too, shared these ideals of unity and diversity. (Or, perhaps, he shared hers.) Nonetheless, their sense of what education scholars today might term multiculturalism—before the word was widely used in educational discourse—was no accident. The school's identity as a multicultural school was carefully crafted by the Carpenters, Ed as headmaster particularly, and immediately planted as the school's roots. What *was* this multicultural philosophy espoused by administrators? What did this multicultural look like on an institutional level? What did it look like to prepare students for a “multi-racial” world? In general, both Ed and Ann Carpenter and their staff promoted three overarching and reinforcing concepts that drove the school's multicultural philosophy: one, freedom of expression and individuality; two, an appreciation for all cultures, and three, perhaps the most defining characteristic, a belief in oneness and unity. While Harlem Prep was a complex institution with complex individuals—there “was always a lot going on” recalls teacher Sandy Campbell—these three overarching principles best characterize the school and provide some boundaries for understanding its unique multicultural orientation.⁸

First, among both Ann and Ed Carpenter's espoused beliefs, was the promotion of individuality and freedom of expression. “You had a freedom to grow,” contends Mwanajua Kahamu; each student was strongly encouraged to express himself or herself in whatever way he

⁸ Sandy Campbell, personal communication, May 3, 2017.

or she desired.⁹ Other students such as Peter Hopson and Clifford Jacobs similarly explain how Harlem Prep allowed them to learn about new subjects, develop a religious identity, or engage in politics—students were constantly encouraged to freely express themselves.¹⁰ For Clifford Jacobs, going to Harlem Prep “was a life-changing event,” in part because he was able to express himself openly and explore his fiery political consciousness for the first time.

Jacobs, a self-admitted atypical student at Harlem Prep, was born and raised in Harlem, but attended a primarily white Catholic school in the Bronx for most of his previous schooling. There, as one of the few Black students, Jacobs felt harassed by teachers—“they were always coming over and looking at what books I was reading”—and was constantly fighting the school administration. Jacobs’ embrace of Black radicals such as Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver, and activism in forming a Black Student Union, for example, did not go over well with the conservative and hierarchical Catholic school model. Ultimately, Jacobs decided that “I had had enough” and, against his parent’s wishes, left at the end of his junior year to sign up to attend Harlem Prep in hopes of finding a school that would be open to his beliefs. Jacobs’ memory today matches his feelings as a young Black man in the early 1970s. In his Harlem Prep application, he wrote at the time:

At the present moment, I am attending an all white school. I have received problems because of my political and religious ideas. I feel if I stay at my present school, I will not be given a fair chance to enter a worthwhile college. I also sense that I may be thrown out because of my so called “dangerous ideas.”¹¹

Jacobs was ultimately accepted at Harlem Prep. “I was questioning everything,” Jacobs recalls

⁹ Kahamu interview, February 24, 2017.

¹⁰ Hopson interview, February 11, 2015; Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

¹¹ Clifford Jacobs student records, on file at Park East High School, copies in author’s possession and used with permission.

today about his youth. “Catholic high school probably was not the best place for me to be because I am seeing the world differently and not through the Catholic way of viewing the world. So when I got to Harlem Prep, I was able to flower and grow...”¹² At Harlem Prep, Jacobs was able to engage in activism, express his opinions, and explore his political leanings in ways he previously could not. Moreover, Jacobs’ story is an example of how Harlem Prep embraced individuality and how the school encouraged students to find themselves not just academically, but as young adults navigating the world and political tumult of the era.¹³ “I could just be myself,” Jacobs concludes.¹⁴

This freedom of expression manifested through the political and religious diversity that existed at Harlem Prep. Student groups were abundant in every corner of the school; there were Garveyites, Five Percenters, and followers of Malcolm X, to Latino/a and Puerto Rican student cliques, to the poets and chorus groups, and so on.¹⁵ There were “a lot of opinions because [students] really were, for the most part, free speakers,” explains health teacher and nurse Florence Carpenter. “All of them had a lot to say, and all of them had the vehicles and the wherewithal in which to say it. The forum was there—Harlem Prep was their forum, and they took advantage of it.”¹⁶ Students’ burgeoning individual identities were validated at Harlem Prep, and this type of validation was necessary for multiculturalism to work. For Clifford Jacobs, after years of struggling socially and intellectually (although doing fine academically) at his previous Catholic school, Jacobs then attended Harlem Prep for a year. “My time at Harlem Prep

¹² Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ For example, see Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017, for discussion of her experience in the Harlem Prep chorus. Chapter 6 will more closely explore the student population.

¹⁶ Florence Carpenter, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010. Florence Carpenter was related to Ed Carpenter through the marriage of one of Carpenter’s cousins.

was phenomenal” and it was an “absolutely wonderful experience for me,” Jacobs recalls. He went on to become valedictorian of the class of 1972 and then to Brown University.¹⁷

Another element of Ed and Ann Carpenter’s multicultural vision was how they, along with the rest of the staff, emphasized the acceptance—if not appreciation—for all cultures, races, religions, and ideologies. To the Carpenters, this was a necessity. “No longer are peoples of the world isolated by great distances from each other; the modern need in education is to prepare youth to live peacefully in a society that comprises people of different racial, religious, ethnic and political backgrounds,” wrote Ann Carpenter at the time.¹⁸ She continued:

In purposely bringing together a faculty and student body of richly varied backgrounds the headmaster established the setting for great student growth. In such a situation these youths have an opportunity to interact intimately in a favorable milieu and, through their interactions, test their biases, become aware of their false assumptions about each other and begin to eliminate their prejudices.¹⁹

This played out in classrooms and the curriculum, first, in terms of the “varied backgrounds” and diversity amongst the Black experience. And, as partners in crafting this vision, Ed shared Ann’s view. “The salient factor is that students can learn to respect the individual and group differences,” Ed Carpenter wrote in regards to the purpose of an interdisciplinary humanities course in the social studies department.²⁰ These differences particularly included the diverse cultural and political expressions *within* students’ emerging Black identities; administrators and staff welcomed different opinions and emphasized that students’ diverse experiences as Black

¹⁷ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

¹⁸ Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High School*, 276.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Robert Mangum and Edward Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Foundation Records.

men and women in America should be recognized and supported. Raymond Crawford, a math teacher, concurs: “everyone was really sort of expressing themselves as individuals, as Blacks, and the other thing is the diversity of the students also allowed you to get a lot of different opinions so that there was a great intellectual foment there.”²¹ Ed Carpenter wrote in detail about the different factions of the Black freedom struggle and that, ultimately, the only principle that mattered was “justice”—regardless of students’ experiences or expressions of how justice should occur in their eyes.²² The primarily Black student body in this highly politicized era certainly led to a school environment where many different visions for Black uplift flowed through the school.



Figure 12. A group of students discussing together at Harlem Prep, all with different forms of cultural expression through their chosen attire, ca. 1971.

Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

²¹ Raymond Crawford, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

²² See, Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 26-28.

However, despite the Carpenters', teachers', and students' strong emphasis on Black culture, Harlem Prep simultaneously promoted the idea that there was a certain value to learning about others at the same time. "He was for being inclusive, including everybody—he realized all ethnic groups [were important]," explains alumnus Sterling Nile today, in reference to the headmaster. "[Carpenter and staff] realized that everybody has something to contribute."²³ Thus, Harlem Prep's multiculturalism also extended beyond the contours of Black diversity. Nile, who remained close with Carpenter for many years after graduation asserted that while "Ed was really concerned with the Afro American community," he also "was concerned with everybody" considering that Harlem Prep had white students, Latino/a students, students of Middle Eastern descent, and so on.²⁴ These students were not invisible at Harlem Prep, despite the apt characterization of being a Black institution. While the population was indeed overwhelmingly Black, non-Black students—and their own cultural expressions—were valued *because* of this emphasis on diversity.²⁵ Intra-racial and inter-racial diversity were both part of the school's multicultural philosophy.

Particularly within Black diversity but also beyond it, Ed Carpenter frequently professed that "despite strong ideological differences" among fellow students and apparent cultural backgrounds, they would develop "a genuine appreciation for one another through dialogue."²⁶ "Differences are tolerated and explored," described educational psychologist Edmund Gordon

²³ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Student such as Craig Rothman, one of the few white students, and Alberto Cappas, one of the few Puerto Rican students, both felt welcome at the school. However, these students also both expressed that they learned a lot about Black culture and understood it to be a school—based on the population—that emphasized Blackness. See Rothman interview, October 19, 2016; and Cappas interview, November 19, 2016.

²⁶ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 88.

during a visit to the school.²⁷ (This matches some of the earlier integrationist discourse of the day, providing further evidence of Harlem Prep’s fluidity between this discourse and Black Power discourse, and that the school shared symmetries with both while being something altogether different—a multiculturalist institution.) This appreciation that the school promoted between different cultures—including different cultural expressions within the Black experience—led students to develop a deep respect for each other. Aissatou Bey-Grecia, class of 1970, speaks at length about the amount of respect that everyone had for each other at Harlem Prep, from administrators on down to students. “Everybody brings their own thing to the party, and you have to respect what that is, whether it be different or whatever... even if you didn’t agree.”²⁸ As Ed Carpenter wrote in regards to the largely diverse Black student population, students “reflected the political, religious, and ideological spectrum of the cosmopolitan city.”²⁹ More broadly as codified in Harlem Prep’s seven-point philosophy, Carpenter also wrote that “we believe in: equality of the races” and “equality of men and women.”³⁰

However, despite actively working to promote the value of all cultures, races, religions, and political opinions—and in equality between all individuals—Harlem Prep was certainly not immune to the politics of an era that was rife with racial, political, and gender-driven division and tension. Not only did the Harlem community initially push back against Harlem Prep’s (purposely selected) racially integrated staff, but promoting gender equality—and by extension, confronting remnants of sexism in the Black-led civil rights movement and more entrenched

²⁷ Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep,” 8.

²⁸ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

²⁹ Robert Mangum and Edward Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Records.

³⁰ Mangum and Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; See also Edward Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

issues of gender inequality of the 1960s—was a particularly “difficult principle to implement.”³¹ For instance, some students at Harlem Prep who were members of groups such the Five Percenters or certain Islamic sects believed that women were inferior to men; there was a chauvinism that these students possessed which centered on these beliefs that were certainly challenging for Harlem Prep teachers to navigate. How could students respect each other and appreciate one’s beliefs if those beliefs levied blatant sexism and discrimination? Ann Carpenter reflected on this question later in life, recalling those religious and political sects that had sexist views: “I know that the female students did not appreciate their opinions, and they found it hard to embrace them, because in embracing them, they would be required to just demote themselves, and they were not ready to do that.”³² Despite knowing these opinions were misogynistic, Harlem Prep teachers and administrators stayed consistent with their professed school ethos about hearing diverse opinions, however derogatory those were. “But, there was a freedom to express themselves and to argue, and we always emphasized that there was a freedom to have a different opinion, and they could disagree without being disagreeable,” continued Ann Carpenter. Teachers Sandy Campbell and Florence Carpenter recalled that despite these strong differences, students found a way to still connect and appreciate one another. “[The men in these students groups] would embrace you in other ways to let you know that you were as meaningful to them at that moment in their lives,” explains Campbell; “and it was more like they made an exception for female faculty and students in Harlem Prep [saying that] ‘these are our partners

³¹ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 30. A discussion of Harlem’s initial pushback to Carpenter’s racial inclusivity will be discussed in Chapter 7; Sexism and a clear patriarchal structure was deeply embedded in the Civil Rights Movement, including in and through the leadership of figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr. See, for example, Michael Eric Dyson, *I May Not Get There with You: The True Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 199-211, 298. In general the Civil Rights Movement itself sometimes treated women as inferior to men, and found activist women being denigrated to lesser roles than their male counterparts. For a prominent example, see Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

³² Ann Carpenter, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

and whatever their religion, these people are exempt because they've gained our acceptance in other ways," adds Florence Carpenter.³³ These comments clarify how men in those groups and women at Harlem Prep coexisted. Ultimately, although headmaster Carpenter wrote that the school's policy was that men and women were equal to participate in every aspect of the school, he also explained that, "the administration makes no attempt to supplant their values outside of the school setting."³⁴ Harlem Prep walked the fine line between freedom of expression and valuing every student's beliefs.

Last of all, the final broad theme of Carpenter's multicultural philosophy was perhaps the most significant: a belief in oneness. In his 1973 dissertation, Carpenter wrote about how "the diverse cultures of faculty and staff *merge together* at Harlem Prep to create a school culture based upon the enhancement of mankind. . . . Our motto 'Moja Logo' is the school's belief that there is unity in brotherhood."³⁵ In another document two years prior, Carpenter wrote that: "Our students are learning that we are all flowers of one universal garden and that we are all tied to one another on a universal basis by a strong silver thread of love."³⁶ The idea of unity was the centrifugal force that shaped Harlem Prep's overall educational philosophy; difference was not just tolerated or even applauded, but essential to the fabric of the school. Educational psychologist Edmund Gordon agreed with Carpenter in his outside, government-funded assessment of the school: "These heterogeneous groups who espouse different religious and political philosophies as well are molded into a cohesive society through the school's overriding

³³ Sandy Campbell and Florence Carpenter, in Jacobs, "Harlem Prep Revisited," group interview, ca. 2010.

³⁴ Carpenter, "The Development of an Alternative School," 30.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 127; emphasis added by author.

³⁶ Mangum and Carpenter, "Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation," January 1971, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

principle of diversity in unity.”³⁷ Ed Carpenter and staff uniformly preached that the school and its pupils would succeed by emphasizing diversity in its broadest sense—hence Carpenter’s frequent statement that the “school’s philosophy was to achieve unity in diversity” and his subsequent explanation that “the desired unity and stability would only occur from the clash of different opinions.”³⁸ Ann Carpenter, too, for her part, preached a similar refrain: that the “important thesis [from having a diverse faculty and student body] was that from diversity the school could achieve unity.”³⁹ In practice, this principle played out through students’ freedom to express their beliefs, as noted earlier, and the multicultural curriculum promoted in classes through the valuing of all cultures, religions, and politics.

Notably, the Carpenters’ rhetoric about oneness, diversity, unity, and multiculturalism more broadly matched some (but certainly not all) of the integrationist discourse of the early 1960s Harlem, which had generally faded in popularity by the mid-to-late 1960s. Historian Manning Marable describes in his landmark volume on 20th century Black politics how ideas about Black and white liberals working together were largely of a bygone era—the latter told that they were “no longer welcome in the formation.” “We don’t need liberals,” declared Stokely Carmichael at a 1966 Congress of Racial Equality meeting in Harlem, “We have to make integration irrelevant.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, as Marable describes, the “integrationist Old Guard” had been in retreat and the “modern black movement for biracial democracy had been crippled” for the time being in the years following the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm

³⁷ Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep,” 7-8.

³⁸ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 78. Carpenter mentions the phrase “unity in diversity” multiple times in his dissertation, as well as other documents. Such as Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

³⁹ Ann Carpenter, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High Schools*, 276.

⁴⁰ Manning Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 93.

X.⁴¹ On a more granular level with regards to discourse surrounding education in New York City, talk around integration also had fizzled out momentarily. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, educational historians have illustrated how desegregation efforts turned into a push for community control—or, as Sonia Song-Ha Lee explains, how both Puerto Ricans and Blacks “shifted attention away from integration with whites toward a focus on building their own local resources.”⁴² Harlem Prep’s discourse around unity and oneness with all races—and, as this dissertation addresses in Chapter 7, with and including white benefactors—went against these trends. Discourse around multiculturalism, in ways that reflected some of the basic similarities of integrationist rhetoric of the earlier 1960s years, was seemingly unique to Harlem Prep during this time period. (However, Harlem Prep acted much differently in practice; notably, Harlem Prep made little effort to actively create an integrated student population like institutions of the past. Even if there were some similarities in language, Harlem Prep rarely claimed affinity with integrationism: the school claimed multiculturalism as its goal, and that diversity could be reflected within the Black community and also outside the Black community through teachers and administrators, and not just only through an integrated student base.)

This idea of oneness permeated throughout the school in part because of the sheer will of headmaster Ed Carpenter. Student Sterling Nile explains:

⁴¹ Ibid, 111. Note that this is not to buy-in to the archaic notion of the traditional arc of the civil rights movement (of integrationism leading to Black Power) that scholars such as Jack Dougherty, Nikhil Pal Singh, Rickford, Marable, and others have disproven. The complexity and fluidity of the Black freedom struggle more broadly is important to always keep in mind. However, the public discourse—particularly in Harlem—did shift, even if thoughts about integration and Black Power that had always been present in every era remained present in this era and after.

⁴² Song-Ha Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement*, 169; See, among many others, Lewis, *New York City Public Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*; Again, this is not to agree with the simplistic narrative of mid-1960s integrationism leading to late-1960s community control, but only illustrate how the rhetoric around integrationism in public circles—from leading activists, for example—did have notable, if subtle, change. See, for example, Juravich, “The Work of Education,” 271-273, who describes how Black and Latina women community organizers fighting for paraprofessional unionization followed the integrationist and biracial thoughts of earlier leaders such as Bayard Rustin and A. Phillip Randolph. However, even still, Juravich does note that these organizers had shifted to a “more explicit focus on the racial and class positions of community-based educators” more than in the past during the late 1960s.

Ed used to say: ‘the earth is but one country and all men are its citizens’. He used to say that all the time. Like [he would] call a general meeting and all the students stop and they have to listen [as if] he's going to announce something important. And [then he would just repeat] ‘the earth is but one country and all men are its citizens’. That was like kind of heavy back then. It was heavy, stimulating.... That [was a] big thought!⁴³

English teacher George “Sandy” Campbell agreed. “There was a sense of oneness and unity, because we were a family”—with these ideas being constantly repeated by Carpenter and staff until students internalized this notion.⁴⁴

With little doubt, Ed Carpenter almost certainly employed his philosophy of oneness and “strength through diversity” as a political tool to solicit white and/or conservative financial support for the school. As an all-Black institution with so-called radical elements and an explicitly Afro-centric curriculum, a school that simultaneously stressed diversity and inclusion—including having a few white students in attendance—perhaps seemed less racially “threatening” to potentially white donors.⁴⁵ (Carpenter’s key role in creating Harlem Prep’s diverse community coalition will be discussed more in-depth in Chapter 7.) However, the essence of Harlem Prep’s oneness and unity that Carpenter emphasized and teachers preached (and students internalized) was not about political convenience or ideological orientation, but about spirituality. This oneness philosophy was a deeply-held set of principles—a code of how to interact with yourself, other people, and the world—that, at least for Carpenter, was underwritten through a deep spirituality.

⁴³ Nile interview, March 4, 2015

⁴⁴ Sandy Campbell, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

⁴⁵ Today, “stereotype threat,” an influential theory in psychology, speaks to this idea. See, most prominently, Claude M. Steele, *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Do* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2010); Alumnus Frank Berger, one of the school’s few white students, also suggests that his presence might have been helpful to the administration, although he also stresses he did not care at the time and that Harlem Prep saved his life. See Berger interview, November 26, 2016.

“Although Harlem Prep is a non-sectarian school, its character is definitely spiritual,” wrote Ed Carpenter in 1973.⁴⁶ “It is our hope to push the fourth ‘R’ back into education: Readin', Ritin', Rithmetic, AND; non-sectarian Religion,” he described four years earlier.⁴⁷ This religion that Carpenter mentions, however, was not any specific religion nor did he seek any promotion of “*organized* religion,” but instead, some kind of common belief system within schools. For Carpenter and Harlem Prep, their system was built on the belief of shared success (and shared struggle) through a spirit of togetherness and unity as part of an overall multicultural philosophy. As student and later Carpenter confidant Sterling Nile contends today, “He believed in multiculturalism way before people even used that term.”⁴⁸ Of all the principles, characteristics, and goals of Harlem Prep, Carpenter’s multiculturalism—a freedom of expression, an appreciation for all cultures and all people, and a belief in a spiritual oneness and togetherness—lay at the heart of Harlem Prep’s educational philosophy and, to many students today, at the heart of its success in educating them.

Harlem Prep’s Multicultural Education—In Practice

While the three broad principles of freedom of expression, appreciation of all cultures, and belief in oneness were natural extensions of a multiculturalism that would become popularized in later decades, there was more to Harlem Prep’s distinct brand of radical multiculturalism. On a more granular, practical level, what were administrators and teachers trying to do? What academic beliefs were they trying to promote through education—each day in this open-space classroom in the heart of Harlem? There were three additional principles that both Ann and Ed Carpenter held

⁴⁶ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 136.

⁴⁷ Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781; Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁴⁸ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

and acted on that defined all aspects of the school: one, a focus on academic success and educational achievement; two, about giving back to the community and *creating* community; and three, internalizing Black pride and an exploration of Blackness, including a commitment to supporting students' diverse range of political expressions while maintaining politically neutral as an institution.

First, and as established in Part I, Harlem Prep's initial primary goal was to educate the young people who stepped foot inside and send them to a college or university. This did not change, and only became more pronounced in the years to come. "MOJA and LOGO are written on the wall at Harlem Prep. These two words of African origin for unity and brotherhood have as many meanings as our school's students have diverse experiences," wrote student James Rogers in 1969. "But each of our lives is united for one immediate aim—to go on to college."⁴⁹ "Harlem Prep doesn't just offer an education. It educates," asserted a promotional booklet in 1971. "In fact, no one graduates until he qualifies for entrance into college."⁵⁰ In a lengthy report on Harlem Prep, outside observer and renowned educational psychologist Dr. Edmund Gordon who founded Teachers College, Columbia University's Institute for Urban and Minority Education (IUME), clearly identified Harlem Prep's institutional purpose. He wrote at the report's outset that Harlem Prep was: "Designed to provide an alternative college preparatory education for students, who for various reasons, have dropped out of traditional secondary schools; [and] provide opportunity of college attendance to able students who could otherwise not attend."⁵¹ This inelastic belief that Black and brown students could learn—better yet, thrive—in school and successfully go onto

⁴⁹ Carpenter and Rogers, "Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story," in *High School*, 273-274.

⁵⁰ "Why Harlem Prep?" Booklet," ca. 1972, p. 3, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; Notably, this booklet uses the word "he" and not "he or she" in this sentence. It is unclear why this masculine pronoun was used, but considering it was a promotional booklet made by corporate supporters probably speaks to the male-led corporations' blindness to gendered language and/or bias in ignoring the educational plight of women.

⁵¹ Gordon, "Harlem Prep," 6.

higher education was Harlem Prep's paramount mission. In a landscape of multiple political and educational visions for the world, Harlem Prep saw young peoples' greatest strength not to be their organizational abilities or cultural contributions (although teachers and staff valued both), but their intellect and individual talents that had been suppressed by previous schools and institutional racism writ large. "We are trying to encourage our students to attend college, and then return to serve in Harlem," wrote Carpenter in spring of 1968. "Harlem and all of the Harlem's of the world need enlightened young people."⁵² Carpenter conceptualized community uplift through the need to develop human capital—not by pushing legislation or through social movements (or at least, that is how he understood his role as headmaster at an educational institution). Carpenter saw the future achievements of young people, all of whom with potential that was currently untapped, as the greatest force of good. ("*Imagine* the impact of these young people," Carpenter once declared.⁵³) To Ann and Ed Carpenter, the world needed to experience these different talents. And, thus, Harlem Prep needed to be multicultural in the broadest sense in a way that captured all types of contributions—religious, linguistic, ideological, cultural, or otherwise.

Assessments of the relative numerical success of Harlem Prep's students progressing into higher education bear out this reality. Predictably, internal documents such as booklets and grant proposals emphasize the school's ability to send students to college.⁵⁴ Periodicals and articles describing Harlem Prep also do the same; sending students who had previously "lost interest" in high school or had been "kicked out" to colleges nationwide was Harlem Prep's calling card for

⁵² Edward F. Carpenter, "Letter to Editor from Carpenter," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 30, 1968.

⁵³ See Carpenter, in "*Step by Step*": *The Story of Harlem Prep*, dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

⁵⁴ For example, among many, see Carpenter, "The Development of an Alternative School," 123-125; Harold Howe, "Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action, to McGeorge Bundy, via Howard Dressner," December 12, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Ford Records; and "'Why Harlem Prep?' Booklet," ca. 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

media coverage.⁵⁵ “Its mission was to reclaim such dropouts and high school graduates and prepare them for college,” wrote the *Chicago Tribune* in 1970, continuing that the school had sent all 121 of its graduates to college and all but four of them were still enrolled according to the newspaper’s own research.⁵⁶ The *Chicago Tribune* also interviewed admissions deans at various universities that Harlem Prep students were attending, relaying how these administrators spoke highly of Harlem Prep graduates’ abilities and achievement at their respective institutions.⁵⁷

There was also a profound belief in the transformative power of education—that receiving a quality education was the key to a better life. Students and staff keenly internalized the notion that, as education scholars Jennifer Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick explain, “education is so important to the way the American dream works.”⁵⁸ This type of rhetoric that connects education with social mobility today echoed loudly at Harlem Prep. Unlike other Black independent institutions that of course valued education but did not necessarily believe that societal integration was a meaningful route to Black freedom, Carpenter and his staff did not proscribe to this ultimatum. “We believe in adding to an ever broadening middle class through the medium of education,” wrote Carpenter in a 1969 grant proposal.⁵⁹ Although Harlem Prep educators certainly did not discount the oppressive conditions and rampant discrimination inherent in society—Carpenter, many teachers, and almost all students entered Harlem Prep *because* of what they had faced elsewhere—they also believed that students could eventually overcome these barriers one

⁵⁵ “Dropouts Score at Harlem Prep: All 121 Grads Have Gone to College; Waiting List Is 2000,” *Boston Globe*, June 13, 1970; See also, among many, “Harlem Prep Gives 68 Grads Diplomas,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 14, 1969; M. A. Farber, “Harlem Prep Graduates 83 In a Festive Street Ceremony,” *New York Times*, June 11, 1970.

⁵⁶ “Dropouts Get New Chance In Black School: All Its Graduates Go to College,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 13, 1970.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Jennifer Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick, *The American Dream and the Public Schools* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2.

⁵⁹ Edward Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

degree at a time. “Harlem Prep Graduates Told to Learn, Not Rebel” declared one headline in the more moderate *New York Times*. In the article, a quote from Harlem Prep alumnus Jamil Hassan best sums up Harlem Prep’s emphasis on learning and what could prevent a student from reaching his or her academic goals: “Stay away from campus politics. The current unrest on the nation’s campuses is designed to perpetuate the existing order and to prevent black students from acquiring knowledge to help their people. The black man’s struggle is not to be found on the college campus, but in his own community.”⁶⁰ This student’s outlook reflects two important ideas intertwined at Harlem Prep: one, that external politics should never override a focus on academics; and two, that service is about community uplift, which starts with students’ social mobility through a college education to then *return* to his or her community and give service back. At the 1971 graduation, as a further example, Carpenter and graduation speakers advised students to “shun campus politics” and instead, “advised to concentrate on acquiring skills that could be of service” to their communities, such as literacy skills, cultural competence, and most of all, self-belief.⁶¹ It was not that students would help create a movement, it is that students themselves *were* the movement—with an education, students’ achievements in all sectors of society, and then giving back to their communities in however they saw fit (including but not exclusively through activism), were the most powerful forces for social change. Moreover, even if many Harlem Prep alumni did proudly go onto to become fervent activists at their respective colleges, each graduate had also internalized the notion that reaching their future dreams and improving society relied on them first attaining an education that just months before entering Harlem Prep had seemed out of reach.

⁶⁰ M. S. Handler, “Harlem Prep Graduates Told to Learn, Not Rebel: Negroes Warned On Campus Revolt,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1969.

⁶¹ *Ibid*; See also “From Harlem to Harvard: Business-Backed Prep School Turns Slum Dropouts into College Students,” *Nation’s Business*, December 1969.



Figure 13. A group of students working at Harlem Prep under the “Moja Logo” slogan painted on the wall, with Ann Carpenter at the head of the table, ca. 1970.

Source: Ford Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center

Thus, Harlem Prep differed from other models of Black education at the time, particularly Pan-African institutions which often espoused explicit specific political goals that were more important—or at least on par—with earning a college diploma. In *We Are an African People*, Russell Rickford describes how schools in nearby Brooklyn such as the School of Common Sense and Uhuru Sasa Shule, as well as the newfound African Free School in the heart of Newark, focused on political aims and not educational agendas. Unlike Carpenter whose primary aim was student academic achievement (paired with personal growth), leaders at these other schools “wanted to politicize the neighborhood and promote the Black Power concept.”⁶² At the African

⁶² Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 138-142; Many of these schools in New York City and Newark, specifically, were influenced by noted Black poets, Amina and Amira Baraka. For more about Amiri Baraka, see his

Free School, for example, students uniformly saluted African flags, chanted African slogans, and adhered to strict disciplinary rules, while teachers dressed near-identically and believed in reducing individualism.⁶³ In this way, the tangible employment of Pan Africanism was dissimilar than at Harlem Prep: it was emphasized for largely political aims, not just for educational ones. To be sure, most Harlem Prep students were very politically engaged at the time and were inspired—and encouraged by staff—to tap into their African heritage, but on “an individual basis” where students were “free to express themselves and what they were involved in” toward the goal of promoting academic achievement.⁶⁴

In connection, the second general principle at Harlem Prep was community, both the practicable actions of giving back to the community and the more malleable concept of being part of a community. Although Chapter 7 will discuss Harlem Prep’s community school status in relation to other past scholarship, in regards to overarching principles, headmaster Carpenter and staff emphasized the importance of buying into an idea of community grounded in spiritual inclusivity.⁶⁵ “It was a community more than anything,” explains alumna Aissatou Bey-Grecia. “We were a community: a community of students, a community of teachers, and a community of both students *and* teachers. There was a way that we functioned that made us a cohesive community.”⁶⁶ The larger concept of community had many layers at Harlem Prep, and extended

autobiography, *The Autobiography of Leroi Jones* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1997), and Amiri Baraka, ed., *African Congress: A Documentary of the First Modern Pan-African Congress* (New York: Morrow, 1972).

⁶³ Ibid., 141; Fox Butterfield, “Experimental Class in Newark School Is Indoctrinated in Black Subjects,” *New York Times*, April 10, 1971; See also Ronald Burns, “Newark School Teaches African Culture Class,” *Afro-American*, January 30, 1971.

⁶⁴ See, among many, Kahamu interview, February 24, 2017.

⁶⁵ Of the two-dozen oral history interviews conducted for this study, almost every alumnus asserted that Harlem Prep was a “community school.” Why they believed so, and what exactly Harlem Prep did—or perhaps did not do—to have this status will continued to be explored in this chapter and later chapters in this dissertation.

⁶⁶ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

not just inside school walls or even in Harlem, but throughout New York City in a way that connected students to each other through shared experiences. Frank Berger, class of 1969, spoke about Harlem Prep's broader community ethos:

What they meant by community was that you would bring your concerns of what was going on inside the school.... Your community could have been Harlem, you could be coming in from Brooklyn.... But the issues that were happening in Harlem, they were the same conditions that were happening in other areas [like Bed-Stuy and Queens], especially of the minority community.... That's what they meant by a community school. That even though you're separated by distance, you're still together by 'community'.⁶⁷

Thus, community was, in part, as much a way of being in the existential sense as it was about tangible actions—and Ed Carpenter emphasized that everyone at Harlem Prep was part of the Harlem Prep community *and* a community of Black and brown people who had been unfairly discriminated against in their prior schools or life experiences.

Berger's explanation speaks to this community ideal at Harlem Prep that was an essential aspect of Ed Carpenter's multicultural educational philosophy. To be sure, Harlem Prep staff and students referred to the school as a "community school"; in addition, media outlets consistently referred to Harlem Prep as a "community-based institution" throughout its independent tenure.⁶⁸ However, here, there was an overarching ethos—a philosophical belief—about being part of a community that undergirded more practical actions or initiatives. "There is a covenant that is made between students, school and community," Carpenter poignantly once wrote.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Berger interview, November 28, 2016.

⁶⁸ For example, among many newspaper where Carpenter describes Harlem Prep as a community school or where the newspapers refer to Harlem Prep as such, see "Dropouts Score at Harlem Prep: All 121 Grads Have Gone to College; Waiting List Is 2000," *Boston Globe*, June 13, 1970.

Still, this metaphysical buy-in about being part of a community was closely interwoven with real expectations of giving back to a community—Harlem Prep or students’ own. “This is a moral contract,” adamantly explained Carpenter referring to this above covenant about being part of a community. “Its goal is simple but explicit. Every graduate of the Prep, no matter in what area he finds himself after graduation from college will give service to his community.”⁷⁰ While neither Ann nor Ed Carpenter gave an exact definition of community, they did suggest that the communities Harlem Prep emphasized students give back to were the marginalized communities students were from. “Those who enter the school do not seek to flee the ghetto but to develop themselves fully so that they may return to render service there,” explained Ann Carpenter further. “In this way they will break the pattern of flight from impoverished areas; by returning to serve they will act as positive-role models for children and adolescents and will share their education and accomplishments with the community.”⁷¹

Students then and now frequently echo these statements from both Ann and Ed Carpenter about giving back to the community. Furthermore, part of embodying a Harlem Prep student was about embracing service of some kind, in whatever form and whichever way made sense to each individual. For some, that involved tangible community service and public outreach. “The spirit of the school,” wrote student James Rogers in 1971, “presupposes self-development and service to the community.” Rogers gives further examples of how students “show concern for the community,” such as tutoring children in public schools.⁷² For other students, such as Aissatou Bey-Grecia, lifelong support to Harlem was most important; Bey-Grecia chose to both live, raise

⁶⁹ Edward Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 5, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁷⁰ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 35.

⁷¹ Ann Carpenter, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High Schools*, 278.

⁷² James Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High School*, 283.

her children, and work in Harlem because of her desire to build up her community.⁷³ Others students chose to honor their sense of community inside their profession. “There’s a lot of that [community service] spirit that still influences my life,” contends Clifford Jacobs today, explaining how he seeks out ways to assist newcomers and volunteers in his current profession in TV broadcasting.⁷⁴ Ultimately, community was an idea—a mentality—which was actively promoted and acted upon differently by students; some students volunteered in the broader Harlem and New York City community, others cared most about their small Harlem Prep community, still others waited until they graduated before giving back to colleagues in their chosen profession, but all seemingly embraced this important idea. Moreover, Harlem Prep’s belief in community differed from other Black schools’ approach to community, such as freedom schools in the South. While some overlap existed, freedom school leaders wanted young people to develop a different set of service-minded skills for the purposes of community organizing and large-scale activism.⁷⁵ Conversely, Harlem Prep administrators and faculty strongly emphasized the need to come back to the Harlem community, with a diploma in hand, as the way to give back individually and give service to the community in diverse ways (and for different end goals).

Third, Carpenter and his staff unabashedly promoted Black pride and (most) students’ African heritage throughout the school’s independent tenure, encouraging freedom of thought. Even if Harlem Prep, on an institutional level, did not proscribe to the general politics of Black Power—although, again, many students did individually and in group associations—the school *did*

⁷³ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

⁷⁴ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013. As an anecdote, Jacobs was my first Harlem Prep oral history interview, and he kindly answered an unsolicited e-mail from an unknown person—me—through his personal e-mail account, agreeing to meet with me and conduct an interview. Prior to recording the interview, in our introductions and pleasantries upon meeting, Jacobs explained that it was the “Harlem Prep way” to help someone, even despite his very busy work schedule which he generously took time out of.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Hale, *Freedom Schools*.

encourage students to love themselves and proudly identify with being Black in both rhetoric and action that was in line with the spirit, symbolism, and regalia of the movement.⁷⁶ (The subsequent chapters in Part II of this dissertation explore the latter via the day-to-day aspects of the school, including the curriculum and pedagogy, much of which explains how this third characteristic played out in practice.) Just as Russell Rickford, in his book on Pan-African schools, is able to identify broad key themes and belief systems in the schools he studied, there was a clear ambient theme of Black pride that permeated Harlem Prep. “With a song in my heart and tears in my eyes, I stood and watched eighty-three, Black, beautiful Brothers and Sisters stand tall and proud because they were Black,” wrote Lesly Jones of the *New York Amsterdam News*, describing the 1970 commencement ceremony.⁷⁷ Columnists at the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, and *Chicago Tribune* similarly characterize Harlem Prep as a “Black school” with traits that proudly emphasized the school’s appreciation for African heritage, from African dances and songs practiced and recited, to Swahili insignia posted around the school (such as Harlem Prep’s slogan “Moja Logo”), and, of course, curriculum and teachers who popularly taught about African history, or promoted pioneering Black writers, artists, or musicians.⁷⁸ Students constantly spoke of how they identified with their African heritage, sometimes for the first time, at Harlem Prep.⁷⁹ “As black people, we were becoming more aware of our culture...and I believe that the leadership at

⁷⁶ For a classic work on Black Power politics, see Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967/1992). More recently, among many, see Ogbar, *Black Power*, who explains how Black Power momentarily affected Black peoples’ feelings of identity and self-love. Ogbar also argues, in part, that there was more unison between Black Power activists and integrationists of the earlier era. Similarly, Black Power of course influenced Harlem Prep (i.e., curriculum, student opinion, etc.) without the school, institutionally, ascribing to its overall methods and political orientation.

⁷⁷ Lesly Jones, “83 Dropouts Graduate From Harlem Prep; To College: Harlem Prep Graduates 83,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 13, 1970.

⁷⁸ “Dropouts Get New Chance In Black School: All Its Graduates Go to College,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 13, 1970; See, among many others, M. A. Farber, “Harlem Prep Graduates 83 In a Festive Street Ceremony,” *New York Times*, June 11, 1970; and “Getting It Together: The Young Blacks,” *Time Magazine*, April 6, 1970.

⁷⁹ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013; See also Bey-Grecia, February 25, 2015.

Harlem Prep under Ed Carpenter allowed that so people could freely express themselves so they could really learn and grow.”⁸⁰ Activists like Ossie Davis and Black poets such as Sonia Sanchez often visited the school, as did representatives of the Black Panther Party.⁸¹ For all of Harlem Prep’s seemingly moderate elements and integrative remnants, the school did not shy away from being proudly and unapologetically Black both inside school and in public displays. The most public display each year proved to be commencement. Despite white philanthropists and white businesspeople being honored and asked to attend, Harlem Prep actively promoted constant poetry and song outwardly depicting Black imagery and pride, accompanying by dress and symbols that spoke of African culture.⁸²

Carpenter, too, seemed to encourage exploring Black history or culture beyond the political fray in a way that brought a sense of historicity to the Black experience—that no matter a student’s political leanings, he or she was still, as a Black man or woman, ancestrally part of a lineage dating back to his or her African origins. For example, Carpenter described a prominent class at Harlem Prep called “African Black Nationalism” that was mainly a study of the African reaction to western colonial rule and resulting movements (including of the present-day), while also being a course that would include “the study of symbiotic connection between African and Black Nationalism.”⁸³ Although only one class, it provides another example of how this theme of Black identity—negotiating its meaning, learning about its historical construction, promoting it through self-love and affirmation—was an important component of the school’s educational

⁸⁰ Kahamu interview, February 24, 2017;

⁸¹ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 5; More “moderate” Black political leaders also visited.

⁸² See, for example, among many letters to white philanthropists and businessmen, Letter from Leslie Dunbar to Edward Carpenter, June 12, 1969, Box 2T32, Harlem Prep - 1968, Field Records; and for descriptions of Black pride at commencement, see Handler, “Harlem Prep Chooses a More Hopeful Path,” *New York Times*, June 15, 1969. More discussion of Harlem Prep’s commencement festivities and the many elements of Black pride, particularly, will be discussed in Chapter 6.

⁸³ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 140.

philosophy.

Yet, Harlem Prep's emphasis on Black culture was deeper than just promoting a shared identity or emphasizing African history—there was an engrained focus on what it meant to be a young Black man or woman in America that was in lieu of any sustained political indoctrination coming from the administration. It was not that Ed Carpenter was necessarily afraid of engaging in political ideas that ranged from Black Power to fighting segregation (or a mixture of them both), as he encouraged them on an individual level and so did teachers who actively encouraged intense debate. However, on an institutional level, doing so was counter-intuitive to his overall belief in unity inside and outside the school, relating to both his Bahá'í faith and his savvy in keeping the school funded. "I don't know if there was a direct political expression of things in the school. It was more frankly an analytic experience," asserts student Craig Rothman. "Let's talk about why black history matters, let's talk about why black is beautiful, is important—not just politically, but in terms of self-acknowledgement." Rothman concludes that the overarching sentiment of the school "wasn't a political discussion, as much as it was a human discussion."⁸⁴ Eric K. Williams, a 1971 Harlem Prep graduate, concurs that there was an underlying—and purposely open-ended—theme of exploring the world as a Black individual that was an essential part of the Harlem Prep experience for many students. Williams explains that:

Being in Harlem, and attending a predominantly Black school within it, led to the confrontation of many issues among my classmates as to how we looked at the world. Like what did it actually mean to be a Black person in America these years? Then there was this undefined rule of just what it meant to be a Black person in America at that time, among many of my classmates. The Harlem Prep experience was an education both in and outside

⁸⁴ Rothman interview, October 10, 2016.

of the classroom.⁸⁵

For Williams, this exploration was never completed; the question of “what it meant to be Black” was “interpreted and expressed in different ways that for me became a confusing mix,” he admits, particularly because of the vast viewpoints among students, teachers, and speakers that spoke to different parts of the Black experience.⁸⁶

Headmaster Ed Carpenter recognized that students had these vast viewpoints that stemmed from the fluid nature of the political moment. “The traditional leaders of the past were challenged by the emerging young spokesmen,” he purported, reflecting on recent activist history. “The traditional leaders had worked for racial harmony and a non-segregated society. The new leaders spoke of Black autonomy and racial separateness.”⁸⁷ If overly simplified, Carpenter spoke to the divisions between nationalists and integrationists—a division that Harlem Prep would try not wade into on an institutional level, even if it was hard to avoid. Carpenter sought to make sure Harlem Prep had a strictly non-ideological ethos, without promoting any type of political affiliation or strand of activism. “Mr. Carpenter had told me that he was strictly apolitical, that the school had to stay clear of ‘that New York jungle’ to remain independent, and I was curious what he would say,” wrote a columnist in *The New Republic* during a visit to the school to observe students and staff.⁸⁸ Over the course of chatting with students and Carpenter during lunch hour, the columnist described a scene where a discussion about “the future of the races” occurred:

A student in Muslim dress said that the only answer was a 51st state, a black people’s state where they could control their own lives. This was met with scorn by another, who said that revolution was the only answer. A girl wondered whether you could have a revolution

⁸⁵ Eric K. Williams, “My Harlem Prep Memoirs,” *Harlem Prep Alumni* (blog), October 24, 2011, <http://harlemprepalumni.blogspot.com/2011/10/my-harlem-prep-memoirs-by-eric-k.html>.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 26.

⁸⁸ Featherstone, “Storefront Schools in Harlem,” *The New Republic*, September 7, 1968, Field Records.

in economics and politics without violence, and this was denied by another student, who said that nothing was achieved without at least the threat of violence. This student thought a political alliance of blacks and discontented whites was possible.⁸⁹

Carpenter, listening to these students debate politics, militancy, and revolution, offered a deft response, according to the journalist observing this timely discussion:

Through all of this, Mr. Carpenter played an essentially pedagogical role. He would accept a premise and then urge the speaker to develop a program from it: how would you work the problem of black people who didn't want to move to the 51st state, what institutions would a revolution develop, what alliances were possible with whites, and what if whites took up the challenge of violence and counterchallenged. It impressed me as an honest job of teaching. He did not condescend to the students by automatically accepting their fashionable militance, on the other hand he took what they said seriously, as indeed anyone in these tragic days should.⁹⁰

This exchange illustrates the headmaster's pedagogical commitment to promoting neutrality in practice with students, as Carpenter was "mainly interested in getting them to develop their arguments, which they did with vigor" when it came to Black politics, culture, and expression.⁹¹

While on a personal level Ed Carpenter and his staff were certainly not oblivious to the events of the era and possessed their own political affiliations, they worked to build a school that hoped to operate outside of the ideological currents that entrapped Black independent schools elsewhere. Carpenter believed that this broader educational approach was the only way to sustain a school in Harlem during this time period. "Ethics, morality, and humanity would not be sacrificed for community acceptance of the school, nor for political expediency," he wrote. Carpenter described how during the school's first year, he met with leaders of almost all political stripes, and that ultimately, "Harlem Prep would never fulfill its purpose if it had to serve so many masters."⁹²

Ultimately, he believed that affiliating with any political strand of activism or ideological persona

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Carpenter, "The Development of an Alternative School," 26-27.

would be detrimental to the school's survival—and doing so would distract from the school's ultimate goal of education and college preparation. It would also distract from students' ability to honestly explore the Black experience and participate in the school's multiculturalism. It is not that Harlem Prep, on a school-wide level, necessarily had “moderate politics”—there was nothing moderate about the 1972 salutatorian at commencement, dressed in African regalia, exclaiming on stage about Blackness and Black achievement.⁹³ It was that, instead, Carpenter tried to have *no* school-wide political agenda, other than the politicized act of educating and empowering young Black men and women against the deficit-oriented framework of white leaders in the Board of Education.⁹⁴ If Black Nationalist schools' “primary purpose was sociopolitical and counterhegemonic,” Harlem Prep's core motto of strength through diversity and main goal of educating young people so that they could attend college and become members of society stood in marked contrast.⁹⁵ This society that Carpenter imagined was one of “universal participation” where students of all races, religions, and ancestries would be able to rise and succeed alongside others, and where justice was at the forefront—a *multicultural* society, with an emphasis on Blackness to be sure, that applauded diversity within and beyond the Black community as society's greatest strength.⁹⁶

Overall, Harlem Prep's multiculturalism had many parts, working together like gears—each element moving the other as a whole. While the school did undergo changes over time, its primary goals, philosophies, and principles remained steadfast. “Now these young brothers and

⁹³ Wayne Powell, “New York City, Harlem Prep Graduation,” *Associated Press*, June 7, 1972, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/view/a35d46182c83e08ee020a26a60f6c03f?subClipIn=00:00:00&subClipOut=00:02:26>.

⁹⁴ Rickford, “In the Struggle in the Arena of Ideas,” 248; Note, however, that many of the teachers had very Leftist politics and so did many of the students, which is particularly noteworthy since many were older in the late teens or early twenties and had already developed a political identity prior to attending Harlem Prep.

⁹⁵ Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 8.

⁹⁶ See Edward Carpenter, in “*Step by Step*”: *The Story of Harlem Prep*, dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

sisters have an advantage,” exclaimed Ossie Davis, entertainer and activist, at the 1972 Commencement ceremony. “They already know where it’s at, they know who they are, they know now what needs to be done, and they have already shown by their performance when they have left Harlem Prep and gone on to college, that they are dedicated and determined to take care of black business and black kind.”⁹⁷ Davis’s declaration sums up Harlem Prep’s multicultural educational practices: a mix of educational achievement and college pursuit, community spirit, and Black pride. Combined with Ed Carpenter’s overarching “unity in diversity” ethos that weaved throughout the open-space building, all of these elements made Harlem Prep distinct.

Historicizing Harlem Prep Within the Multicultural Education Movement

Shaped, in part, by his Bahá’i faith and the religion’s principles of unity, Edward Carpenter had a particular vision for what a school should be that would reflect what the *world* should be. To Carpenter, this was a world based on multiculturalism. He explained: “Because of the racial and cultural differences that exist in the world, our students are exposed to an education that prepares one to live and function in a multi-religious, multi-cultural, and multi-racial society.”⁹⁸ Although today, the word multiculturalism is often watered-down to broad rhetoric about tolerance of all cultures represented through simplistic curriculum in classrooms, Carpenter’s multicultural educational philosophy at Harlem Prep aligns closely with what early originators of multicultural education (of the same era) really meant.⁹⁹ (Harlem Prep’s emphasis on diversity within the Black

⁹⁷ Ossie Davis, “New York City, Harlem Prep Graduation,” *Associated Press*, June 7, 1972, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/view/a35d46182c83e08ee020a26a60f6c03f?subClipIn=00:00:00&subClipOut=00:02:26>.

⁹⁸ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 30.

⁹⁹ Today, scholars of multicultural education explain that too often, teachers and/or educators fail to implement all components of multicultural education, such as name-dropping historic individuals of color in a curriculum without teaching critical analysis or failing to address other inequities in the classroom. For a full spectrum of criticisms

experience is also a caution against racial essentialism that is common in some multicultural education today—the notion that the ideas of one Black figure represents the entire Black community.) James Banks, one of the foremost pioneers in the multicultural education movement, explains that, “Multicultural education is an education for functioning effectively in a pluralistic democratic society”—an echo of Carpenter’s goal at Harlem Prep roughly twenty-five years earlier.¹⁰⁰ “Education should provide students with the global experiences to work and function in a multi-racial world,” the Harlem Prep headmaster wrote in 1969. “If today’s student is to be able to communicate with diverse people’s of the world he must be able to interact and test his biases within a non-constrictive milieu.”¹⁰¹ Such language closely mirrors the goals of Banks and other multiculturalists.¹⁰²

Education scholars have also recognized that multicultural education, at its core, is about pursuing educational equality. For example, Banks, in his review of the literature in the early 1990s, explained that “a major goal of multicultural education,” according to the general consensus of scholars in the field, has been “to reform the school and other educational institutions

from the political Left and Right, see Sonia Nieto, “From Brown Heroes and Holidays to Assimilationist Agendas: Reconsidering the Critiques of Multicultural Education,” in *Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and the Politics of Difference*, ed. Christine E. Sleeter and Peter L. McLaren (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1995); For more information about multiculturalism in practice, see, most notably, Sonia Nieto, *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010); Similarly, the word “diversity” has also taken the same route as now having little meaning. See Anna Holmes, “Has ‘Diversity’ Lost Its Meaning?,” *New York Times*, October 27, 2015.

¹⁰⁰ Banks, *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action*, 5; Sandy Campbell, personal communication, February 2, 2018.

¹⁰¹ Edward Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 3, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁰² It is important to note that although Banks and his colleagues’ scholarly careers began in the early 1970s, their scholarship (according to them) was not yet codified into a “multicultural education” philosophy that they would later popularize, but research about “black studies topics,” textbooks, ethnic studies curriculum, and other related subjects. Thus, it is hard to directly compare Carpenter’s larger multicultural philosophy to these scholars’ 1970s-era pre-formations of multiculturalism. In addition, Carpenter had these ideas in the 1960s, prior to this early scholarship and the careers of these multiculturalists. See Banks, in describing these origins, “The African American Roots of Multicultural Education,” in *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action*, 39-41.

so that students of diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality.”¹⁰³ Furthermore, he wrote at the time that: “Another important goal of multicultural education...is to give both male and female students an equal chance to experience educational success and mobility.”¹⁰⁴ Both statements could similarly be applied to the goal of education at Harlem Prep as exploring these later codifications can aid in clarifying Harlem Prep’s multiculturalism decades before.



Figure 14. A Harlem Prep student reading under a decorated wall at Harlem Prep, ca. 1971.
Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

¹⁰³ James A. Banks, “Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, and Practice,” *Review of Research in Education* 19 (1993): 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

This goal of educational equality in multiculturalism literature also refers to gender equality, which is particularly notable in the context of frequent sexism in the civil rights and Black Power movements (and general attitudes of the era). Multiculturalists such as Cherry A. McGee Banks and Christine Sleeter have long written about women who shared multicultural beliefs and written scholarship representing women's views on the topic.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, Gloria Ladson-Billings, who argues for “the legitimacy of a womanist scholarly tradition” in multicultural education, explains that the type of “equity pedagogy” that multiculturalism espouses is tied up in the “nexus of race and gender.”¹⁰⁶ Still, she also acknowledges that “the issue for inclusion of the womanist perspective is not one of fighting for inclusion as much as one fighting for visibility”—also, perhaps, an apt characterization that applied to Harlem Prep.¹⁰⁷ Although women were both included and represented in all aspects of the school—the administration, board of trustees, teaching force, and student body—they were much less visible then (and now). For example, even though Ann Carpenter was just as integral to the school as her husband Ed, it was he who received the most credit for the school. In terms of multiculturalism, specifically, it is Ed Carpenter who has gotten to lay out the school's principles in a dissertation, grants, and other documents—not Ann—even though she was as much responsible for development of this philosophy. The different roles that they each held seem to be at least partly responsible for this: while Ann was largely in-school working with teachers, students, and other

¹⁰⁵ For example, among many, see Cherry A. McGee Banks and James A. Banks, *Improving Multicultural Education: Lessons from the Intergroup Education Movement* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004), in addition to her numerous volumes co-edited with James A. Banks; Christine E. Sleeter and Judith Flores Carmona, *Un-Standardizing Curriculum: Multicultural Teaching in the Standards-Based Classroom*, 2nd ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2016); Other scholars such as Allida Black have even analyzed key women in history such as Eleanor Roosevelt through the lens of multiculturalism. See Allida M. Black, ed., *Courage in a Dangerous World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

¹⁰⁶ Gloria Ladson-Billings, “Lifting As We Climb: The Womanist Tradition,” in *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action*, 180, 196.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 197.

administrators enacting this multicultural vision, Ed was largely outside schools walls speaking about it (and, as mentioned, writing about it) in ways that received media attention (and have left a paper trail today). Furthermore, the buzz of Black male celebrities visiting the school was always louder than when women celebrities visited—if they did at all.

It is also important to historicize multiculturalism during this rapid era of Black activism. Both Ann and Ed Carpenter’s embrace of multicultural education—even if the word did not have a specific connotation like it did by the late 1980s and on—is far from paradoxical to his emphasis on Black culture. Although there is a rich, growing collection of important work on the historical linkage of Black nationalist schools and Freedom Schools to Black activism in the 1960s and 1970s, these types of multicultural ideas expressed by both Carpenters also emerged from this moment from a similar activist lineage that has less often been highlighted. Thus, understanding these historical developments helps explain how Ed Carpenter was also able to simultaneously emphasize Afro-centrism and multiculturalism—they had shared roots—without opposing other modes of Black thought. When considering the history of multicultural education, an embrace of both ideologies did not have to be adversarial. They are all part of the Black freedom struggle, but the history of multicultural education as part of this struggle has too often been gone unrecognized within this context. For example, James Banks explained in 1996 that the multicultural education movement was “linked directly to the early study of African Americans” by scholars such as W.E.B. DuBois, George Washington Williams, Carter G. Woodson, Anna J. Cooper, and others.¹⁰⁸ Cherry McGee Banks, too, argues that the “similarly between early African American scholars and multiculturalists and the liberatory goals of scholars of both groups.”¹⁰⁹ Essentially,

¹⁰⁸ Banks, *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action*, 31.

¹⁰⁹ Cherry A. McGee Banks, “Intellectual Leadership and African-American Challenges to Meta-Narratives,” in *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action: History and Contemporary Analysis*, ed. James A. Banks (New York: Teachers College Press, 1996), 60.

at the time, these scholars brought new insights to their particular topics of African American history and theory in ways that white scholars failed to do. Also, more importantly, they were African American scholars who were heavily invested in “social action” with “the kinds of action related to the uplift of the masses of African Americans.”¹¹⁰

Combined with this renewed focus on influential Black scholars—and in response to the Civil Rights Movement characterized by sit-ins, demonstrations, marches, and other types of grassroots activism—the idea for “ethnic studies” emerged and became “the first phase in the historical development of multicultural education.”¹¹¹ (Black Studies, particularly, was the first of these programs with “deep historical roots.”¹¹²) Furthermore, “Black Pride” slogans and discourse grew during this time, which revitalized—and in some ways, fully mobilized—Black activists to push for the creation of African American studies programs in colleges and universities.¹¹³ As a result, ethnic studies (or also referred to as single-group studies), which focused on African American scholarship at the post-secondary education level, then quickly evolved in the mid-1960s into multiethnic education, which saw Latino/a Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans and other groups also push for ethnic studies programs to study their own histories.¹¹⁴ Patricia Ramsey and Leslie Williams explain that this movement in higher education made its way into secondary education, with help from the Ethnic Heritage Studies

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 35, 36; Banks identifies Woodson as perhaps having the largest influence on the African American ethnic studies movements. It is also should be noted that although Banks mentions the intergroup education movement of the 1940s and 1950s, he sees it as a separate movement not linked to the African American ethnic studies movement and thus, not part of the evolution of multicultural education.

¹¹¹ James A. Banks, “The Construction and Historical Development of Multicultural Education, 1962–2012,” *Theory Into Practice* 52, no. 1 (October 20, 2013): 74.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Patricia G. Ramsey and Leslie R. Williams, *Multicultural Education: A Source Book* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 13.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 13-14.

Act in 1965. They argue that this act “authorized schools to provide all children with the opportunity to study racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States,” and that schools received “monies to develop and implement supplementary educational materials.”¹¹⁵

Of course, this history of Black studies and other ethnic studies programs is far from novel. Scholars have previously traced the emergence of these programs to Black activists such as Kwame Ture and others, with scholars often making direct links to the nascent politics of the Black Power movement.¹¹⁶ For example, as Martha Biondi writes in *The Black Revolution on Campus*, the rise of Black studies was “shaped...by the swirling ideological currents of Black nationalism.”¹¹⁷ However, Black activism (and intellectualism) of the era notably connects not just to Black Power, but also to a smaller multicultural education movement, too—a history that has largely been left out of similar historical narratives. Harlem Prep can be considered one of these forgotten narratives. Also during the late 1960s, in response to a culture of poverty argument/cultural deprivation theory (which remains prominent in educational scholarship), some Black scholars began to also counter with “cultural difference theory.” Cultural difference theory explains that, “school must change in ways that will allow it to respect and reflect the rich cultural strengths of students from diverse groups and use teaching strategies that are consistent

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 13; To be sure, the authors also note that these new curricula were simplistic and superficial. Furthermore, James Banks explains that this multiethnic education movement led to a realization that not only did many cultures need to be represented in curriculum, but many changes in school leadership philosophies, school environment, better resources, and general school policies also were important to improving academic outcomes of marginalized students. However, as Banks notes in *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action*, today, scholars merge these two terms together when in reality, multiethnic education focuses more on racial and ethnic groups, whereas multicultural education is about race, class, and gender and “their exceptionality and interactions” (p. 30).

¹¹⁶ See, for example, Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007), which directly links Black Power to the rise of Black studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s; See also Martha Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*, which describes how largely Black student activists at City College pushed for a Black studies curriculum.

¹¹⁷ Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*, 174.

with their cultural characteristics.”¹¹⁸ Combined with a general frustration of African-Americans and other groups in the lack of progress of full inclusion in American society, by the mid-1970s as part of further refining of multicultural education, there was also a revival of a sort of “cultural pluralism”—the idea that each racial group had distinct characteristics unique to itself.¹¹⁹ In tandem, teacher education groups began to become interested in the idea of multicultural education. Organizations such as the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) adopted multicultural education ideals of accepting the premise of cultural pluralism, leading to the inclusion of multicultural education in the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 1977.¹²⁰ Although these details are beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to note that these advances were spurred on by Black intellectuals and Black teachers who were similarly inspired by the fervent activism of the moment as well as the continued frustration with the educational system.

To be clear, no evidence exists that Ed or Ann Carpenter had any connection to this formal coalescence of the early 1970s movement around multicultural education in secondary

¹¹⁸ Banks, “The Construction and Historical Development,” 76.

¹¹⁹ See Ramsey and Williams, *Multicultural Education*, 16; See additional scholars who wrote about this cultural pluralism’s revival, such as James A. Banks, *Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1988); Seymour W. Itzkoff, *Cultural Pluralism and American Education* (Scranton: International Textbook, 1970); Madelon D. Stent, William R. Hazard, and Harry Rivlin, *Cultural Pluralism in Education: A Mandate for Change* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1973). However, unlike in the early 20th century where cultural pluralism referred to ethnic whites, this type of cultural pluralism was with regards to African Americans, Latino/a Americans, Native Americans, etc.

¹²⁰ See Ramsey and Williams, *Multicultural Education*, 18; Ultimately, by the late 1970s and into the early 1980s, elements of cultural difference theory movement, cultural pluralism, and early 20th century African American scholarship all led to a new wave of many prominent African American scholars who began to write and promote multicultural education as it is generally thought of today, including more recent evolutions into what is popularly referred to as culturally relevant pedagogy (or culturally responsive teaching). See, among many, Gloria Ladson-Billings, “But That’s Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” *Theory into Practice* 34, no. 3 (1995): 159–65; Gloria Ladson-Billings, “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” *American Educational Research Journal* 32, no. 3 (1995): 465–91; Tyrone C. Howard, “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Ingredients for Critical Teacher Reflection,” *Theory into Practice* 42, no. 3 (2003): 195–202; and Shelly Brown-Jeffy and Jewell E. Cooper, “Toward a Conceptual Framework of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: An Overview of the Conceptual and Theoretical Literature,” *Teacher Education Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2011): 65–84.

education or to leading educational scholars such as Banks, Carl Grant, or Gwendolyn Baker who were beginning to spread (and formalize) their ideas.¹²¹ (Moreover, these scholars were still at the very beginning of their careers, and there was no codified 1970s—let alone 1960s—version of multiculturalism, making any direct comparisons difficult.) Still, this history is important to highlight because it explains, first, how Ed and Ann Carpenter’s multiculturalism was not divorced from the cultural and political winds of the era. There were other Black leaders—for example, scholars such as Banks—who saw multiculturalism as an extension of the civil rights movement and Black Power movement as part of the generative Black freedom struggle. The Carpenters, and their staff, students, and fellow administrators, felt that Harlem Prep’s multiculturalism was also a part of this struggle for justice.

Although Ed Carpenter did not position Harlem Prep’s multicultural tendencies to be in conflict with Pan-African institutions, he did define Harlem Prep as something distinctly different. To quote Russell Rickford in his groundbreaking book on Pan-African schools, *We Are an African People*, he explains how the nearly forty schools that he profiles all emerged from an “organic outgrowth of the range of impulses within black educational thought.”¹²² Harlem Prep’s multicultural philosophy operated beyond Rickford’s—or any other scholars’—characterizations of Black educational thought during this time period. Harlem Prep’s multiculturalism, as also described in this chapter and throughout this dissertation, has generally yet to be explored by historians of education and is perhaps located outside any codified descriptions of the era by historians.¹²³ To be sure, historians (and educational scholars) have certainly discussed

¹²¹ See, for some of the earliest works, James A. Banks, “A Content Analysis of the Black American in Textbooks,” *Social Education* 33, no. 8 (1969): 954-957, 963; and Carl A. Grant, *An Empirical Study of the Effects of Relevant Curriculum Materials Upon the Self-concept, Achievement, and Attendance of Black Inner-city Students* (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1972).

¹²² See Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 16.

multiculturalism at length, both its intellectual construction over time and in contemporary examples in schools nationwide. However, scholarship by historians of education on Black schools during this time period, specifically, has generally focused on either Pan African institutions or Freedom Schools, or about other topics such as desegregation, grassroots activism, district organization, and particular leaders.¹²⁴ Few works, if any, have investigated what a multicultural high school looked like on a granular level in this significant era in educational history. Schools that did style themselves as multicultural during this time, such as Manhattan Country School, were not only elementary schools or private tuition-based institutions, but were generally not led by Black leaders—and thus, did not grow out of the intellectual Black educational tradition in the way that Harlem Prep, freedom schools or Pan African schools did.¹²⁵

When Ed Carpenter envisioned his overarching philosophy for Harlem Prep, and Ann Carpenter began to implement that philosophy on a practical level (and add her own ideas to this vision), they saw their efforts at Harlem Prep as being both familiar and distinct. On one hand, Ed and Ann understood their commitment to education as part of the long legacy of educational

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Beyond specific books referenced throughout this dissertation relating to Pan African schools and Freedom Schools, there is not a shortage of excellent scholarship on education that addresses Black students or issues that affect Black education more broadly in the late 1960s and early 1970s (and beyond). For example, Lewis, *New York City Public Schools From Brownsville to Bloomberg*, discusses community control in New York City. For issues of desegregation and busing, see Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis*; and Dionne Danks, *Desegregation Chicago's Public Schools: Policy Implementation, Politics, and Protest, 1965-1985* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). For a biography of Black educational leader during the time navigating the politics of the era, see Spencer, *In the Crossfire*.

¹²⁵ For example, Manhattan Country School, a private K-8 school founded in 1966, was led by white administrators. Although these educators were progressive in the sense that they saw integration and interracial learning as beneficial to all students, and saw multiculturalism a key philosophy, it is hard to place this school in the context of the Black freedom struggle and Black educational thought in the way that historians (including myself) have done and/or doing. MCS and many integrated schools still enrolled a white minority, and were not “radical” in the way that Harlem Prep was in terms of Black cultural pride in all facets of the school. For more about this school from its founder, see Augustus Trowbridge, *Begin With a Dream: How a Private School with a Public Mission Changed the Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in American Education* (New York: Xlibris, 2005).

aspiration in the Black community.¹²⁶ They were proud lifelong educators with deep roots to Black communities in the north and the south. On the other hand, however, they also knew—even if they could not fully term it as we can today—that their radical multiculturalism was something unique. And, while they both were the catalysts of the Harlem Prep story, it was the teachers and students who were the heart and soul of turning the Carpenters’ multicultural vision into reality.

¹²⁶ For example, since the earliest days of slavery in American history, Black men and women fought for an education. See, for example, Williams, *Self-Taught*; and Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831-1865* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981).

Chapter Five

“As I Taught, I Learned”: Teachers, Pedagogy, and the Educational Program

“Without the beautiful people that you see here, the Prep would be nothing. We’re the ones that make the Prep, man, and we’re the ones that make the Prep work. And with the most beautiful teachers—the faculty is too fantastic, man. You can’t believe it, they are really out to help you.

With them, and us working together, we got everything going just right.”

—Louis Ramos, Harlem Prep 1971 alumnus¹

“The rapport that exists between students and faculty is its single most distinguishing factor,” wrote former assistant headmaster Henry Pruitt in 1971.² Pruitt was not alone in his assessment. The “most beautiful teachers” that student Louis Ramos refers to defined the school: they defined the school’s ability to engage young people, they defined the school’s multiculturalism, and they defined the school’s sense of humanity. Harlem Prep would not have been the institution that it became—or changed the lives of those who attended—without the teachers and their pedagogy. “It is difficult to draw any hard conclusions about the school other than to say that the humane atmosphere is very apparent,” wrote Joshua Smith, the Ford Foundation education program officer on his first visit to the school, “and as I should have known, it is possible to have a humane environment while relatively traditional teaching methods are being used.”³ Smith would later become an essential philanthropic advocate and one of the

¹ “*Step by Step*,” dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

² Henry Pruitt, “The Improvement of the Educational Facilities of the Miracle on 136th Street, Harlem Preparatory School,” p. 3, unpublished paper at Teachers College, Columbia University, written for Professor Henry J. Risetto, Advanced School Plant Planning course, Fall 1971. Copy given to author for use.

school's biggest outside supporters, yet, in his first-ever description about Harlem Prep, he already was able to recognize its essential elements. Despite his initial befuddlement on how to accurately describe the school, he noted that he felt the humane atmosphere inside school walls and wrote about the school's interesting mixture of traditional and uncommon educational components. This humaneness—perhaps, in part, stemming from a broader love from teachers that he could not fully capture at the time but would in later reminiscences—was essential to the school's multiculturalism in practice.⁴ So, too, was the educational program that while distinct in some ways such as its emphasis on diversity and the student population it served, also followed rather conventional components: a common letter grading system, an Afro-centric curriculum (normative in comparison to other Black alternative schools at the time), and a traditional goal of promoting higher education.

Who were the Harlem Prep teachers and what were their stories? What were their pedagogical methods and how did they teach? This chapter seeks to answer these questions and understand the most important element inside any school: teaching and learning. This chapter also attempts to flesh out the larger educational program, piecing together the school's curriculum and scheduling, school activities, and other components that characterized the school's flexibility in enacting its multiculturalism.

Harlem Prep Teachers: Pedagogy and Approach to Learning

George “Sandy” Campbell was in his early twenties, sporting a large afro and an infectious spirit, when he first walked through the double doors to go teach at Harlem Prep.

³ Memo from Joshua Smith to Edward Meade, October 13, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁴ See Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

Sandy, as he was known by his students and colleagues due to his blonde hair, had not finished college, had no teaching experience, nor did he even plan on being a teacher—in fact, his foray into education was by semi-random chance. His father, a contractor, was doing renovations on the school, meeting Ann and Ed Carpenter. Campbell, who admittedly was “floundering” professionally, was then introduced to them both and encouraged by his father to interview for a teaching job there. After first resisting this surprising suggestion—“I don’t know anything about teaching,” Campbell told his father—he indeed went for an interview with a few of the administrators. Later that same afternoon, he was hired. Sandy Campbell would go on to teach a variety of English classes at Harlem Prep for most of its existence, such as courses like “Being and Non-Being” that allowed students to question their existence through literature (often for the first time), becoming one of the most popular teachers at the school with an innate ability to connect with the young adults in his class.⁵ Over the years, there were many teachers like Campbell—those who had no teaching experience, and were only slightly older than most of the students they taught, but were able to connect with students in deeply meaningful ways.

Conversely, there were older and more experienced teachers such as Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannon, or “Dr. Ben,” as he was popularly referred to. Carrying himself with an air of self-confidence and speaking in a thick Caribbean accent with his Marcus Garvey UNIA button clipped to his shirt, Dr. Ben developed a sort of cult status inside Harlem Prep and all throughout Harlem for his knowledge on ancient African history, if not his outspokenness about the fact that Africa—not Europe—was the birthplace of civilization.⁶ In his early fifties when he started teaching at Harlem Prep, ben-Jochannon had already “emerged as a prominent figure in Harlem,

⁵ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

⁶ See, among extensive periodical coverage, more recently Sam Kestenbaum, “Contested Legacy of Dr. Ben, a Father of African Studies,” *The New York Times*, March 27, 2015. For a contemporary article covering Harlem Prep and focusing on Ben-Jochannon, see Clayton Willis, “Harlem Prep School Gives Many A Chance (Last of a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 23, 1968.

pushing his anticolonial message to its limit,” wrote the *New York Times*, filling local auditoriums and gathering a following as a self-trained Afro-centric scholar. At the Prep, students were not even sure if he held an actual doctorate, but as one alumnus says today, “we didn’t care”—his one-on-one attention, infusion of African culture into all subjects, his passion for knowledge, and flamboyant personality inspired students all the same.

Campbell and ben-Jochannon were just two of many examples of the eclectic teaching force assembled at Harlem Prep. The construction of the teaching force was diverse, too. While there were approximately 25 full-time teachers, serving between 550 and 600 students during these prime years, close to 40 different teachers were listed as part of the total faculty who taught at least one class.⁷ These additional faculty members included a handful of salaried part-time teachers, “a host of volunteers” from companies such as IBM, local colleges, and Harlem community members, and school staff such as school nurse Florence Carpenter. In addition, many administrators taught classes at times.⁸ (Fittingly, regardless of the status of the teacher, all were listed equally as faculty members on commencement programs.) As laid out in the school’s inaugural year, Carpenter continued to seek out teachers of all ethnicities and religions, including white, Latino/a, Middle Eastern, and of course Black teachers, along with those of all faiths and from outside the United States. Most notably, teaching credentials or traditional avenues of professionalization were of little importance. For example, there were white teachers such as

⁷ “Approved Budget and Teachers’ Salaries for 1971 [memo],” December 3, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Foundation Records. The exact number of faculty members is hard to precisely pin down, depending on the year. See also, Robert Mangum and Edward Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Foundation Records, which mentions that there were 19 full-time faculty members according to Carpenter and Mangum and two part-time teachers. However, this number was most likely a carry-over from the previous year and was not updated. Finally, the 1972 commencement program lists 39 faculty members—with no demarcation about their status. A close look at this listing of faculty members shows that many were also cross-listed as administrators and school staff, and others seemingly were the aforementioned volunteers who were also listed as faculty. See “1972 Commencement Program,” June 7, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Foundation Records.

⁸ Ibid.

John Czerniejewski, a math teacher with a bachelor's degree but no teaching credential, who was so committed to helping students that he would go onto street corners himself and recruit young people into Harlem Prep.⁹ There were many Black teachers like George Simmonds, who most likely did not have a college diploma at all but was a “powerful” educator who did a “marvelous job” inspiring students.¹⁰ Simmonds, “a scrappy guy” remembers student Peter Hopson, describes how in the classroom “he’d get fired up, and his voice and the interactions with the students, he’d get a thrill out of them.”¹¹ Aissatou Bey-Grecia recalls seeing Simmonds on “125th Street talking about Egypt and the empires of Africa [on] any given day,” and thinking to herself ““Hey, wait a minute, that’s my history teacher!”¹² Young Black women, too, such as Carolyn Humphries, an alumna who returned to teach, and Bari Haskins-Jackson and Naledi Raspberry, individuals who sought to make a difference in their communities, found their way to Harlem Prep as dedicated educators. Haskins-Jackson, for example, was a 21-year old fourth-year student at City College, majoring in English, when she heard about Harlem Prep. She had thought about trying to go into teaching, but, by her own admission, expressed that she “wasn’t sure of her direction” post-college. She went to visit Harlem Prep and remembers: “Just walking in the building, there was a whole other experience than walking into any high school I had ever been in.” She arranged to meet with the headmaster, and in September 1970, started as an English instructor.¹³

Some administrators also taught, as did Hussein Ahdieh when he first came to Harlem

⁹ Rothman interview, October 19, 2016.

¹⁰ Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017; Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016.

¹¹ Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017. As noted in a previous footnote, Hopson was present for this interview.

¹² Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

¹³ Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017.

Prep. Ahdieh, an Iranian and follower of the Bahá'í faith who immigrated to the United States in his late teenage years, taught math before becoming an administrator and later earning his Ph.D. As previously discussed, administrator Ann Carpenter, too, taught a popular creative writing class.¹⁴ Finally, of course, the three white Catholic nuns from Manhattanville College, dressed in full habit, also held a large presence in the school educating students on various subjects. Carpenter indeed tried to “reflect the diversity of the world through the teachers,” and encouraged teachers to include their array of prior experiences in their pedagogy.¹⁵ This differed from teachers in other Harlem public (K-8) schools, where teachers were overwhelmingly white with little racial diversity, let alone geographical, religious, or experience-based diversity.¹⁶



Figure 15. George Simmonds teaching one of his popular African History courses.
Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

¹⁴ Hopson interview, February 11, 2017.

¹⁵ “*Step by Step*,” dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

¹⁶ For example, Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights*, 122-124; and Collins, “*Ethnically Qualified*”; However, teachers in Harlem did have notably more diversity than other New York City schools. See Erickson and Morrell, *Educating Harlem*.

Furthermore, as mentioned, teachers had various levels of expertise, with credentials ranging from those with advanced degrees to, more commonly, those with little to no teaching experience, including recent Harlem Prep alumni. For example, of the thirty-three faculty members who taught in 1972, twenty-six were full-time; approximately half had less than two years of teaching experience while the other half of teachers ranged from having three years of experience to more than fifteen years. About a quarter had more than ten years in the classroom. (In comparison, at least one East Harlem high school did not have a teacher with more than two and half years of total teaching experience.¹⁷) Furthermore, approximately two-thirds of faculty possessed at least a bachelor's degree, including at least nine with a master's degree.¹⁸ Very few, however, had any state teaching credential or certification. (According to individuals who assessed the school, it was "perfectly clear that they do not place a high value on teachers' paper qualifications."¹⁹) In context, while Harlem Prep cannot be compared to other tuition-free Central Harlem public high schools—there were none—K-8 Harlem schools were filled with teachers possessing mandated teaching credentials but who were "frequently in the position of teaching subject areas in which they were not trained to teach."²⁰ Harlem Prep's approach was

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Institute for Educational Development, "An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School," June 22, 1973, <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED091472>, 17. (The Institute for Educational Development was an affiliate of the Educational Testing Service, or ETS.) This large study was primarily undertaken to aid in negotiations with the New York City Board of Education and secondarily, to help with fund-raising activities. Headmaster Ed Carpenter felt that having an outside evaluation with accompanying data to present to the Board of Education would be helpful in their negotiations according to letters (or that such data was requested by the Board of Education). Exxon Corporation and Ford Foundation, the school's two largest funders (and by 1972 the two keeping the school afloat), agreed to pay the approximately \$15,000-\$20,000 for an independent agency to evaluate Harlem Prep through a mixed-method study using both qualitative and quantitative data. For additional information about the context of this report, see Letter from Dale E. Bussis to Ed Carpenter, December 12, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; and Memo from Joshua Smith, December 12, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁹ Institute for Educational Development, "An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School," 8.

²⁰ Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights*, 122.

opposite to the New York City Board of Education; Harlem Prep cared little about credentials, and instead, sought out teachers first with a passion for helping young people, and second, with content knowledge—from whatever life experiences he or she could draw from—about the subject he or she would teach.

Still, despite their differences in experience and educational attainment, these teachers all had one trait in common: they were passionate about working with students and possessed a “sincere belief that every youngster could learn.”²¹ Or, as an outside evaluator put it, teachers were “concerned that their students should learn” and that “[Harlem Prep] teachers have dedication.”²² One alumnus explains today that Harlem Prep teachers “were really committed,” and that they “were really fascinated by coming together and developing the whole concept at Harlem Prep, and pioneering and looking at education with a different approach.”²³ Moreover, since Harlem Prep could not compete in terms of public school salaries from the Board of Education, Carpenter sought out teachers who were more concerned with “serving students” than earning high salaries. Carpenter referred to them as “educational servants,” and that “their behavior gave credence to the name.” He wrote further about how they “displayed humility, patience, compassion, and leadership when needed. It was the teachers who broke through the walls of suspicion set up by the students, and demonstrated to them that the beginning of love was but the absence of hate.”²⁴

To fully capture the many specific styles of the teaching force over Harlem Prep’s independent tenure would be near impossible. In the broadest sense, lesson planning could be

²¹ See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 35-46.

²² Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 8.

²³ Capps interview, November 19, 2016.

²⁴ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 44.

described as “imaginative but not systematic,” in that teachers seemed to “reject traditional approaches to lesson planning” and thought that “overly rigid plans can be stifling.”²⁵ Still, at least 55 different educators taught at Harlem Prep, and as noted, the range of teaching experiences—and their specific pedagogical approaches and philosophies—that they brought with them were extremely varied.²⁶ To be sure, some teachers’ pedagogy relied more on mutual inquiry and exploration, particularly younger teachers like Sandy Campbell and Bari Haskins-Jackson, while others relied on deep mastery of a subject or their oratorical skills to inspire students such as Dr. Ben and George Simmonds. Still other stories of teachers who employed not just specific pedagogical tools to educate students, but their contagious earnestness and deep sincerity to help young people learn, such as math teacher John Czerniejewski and English department chair Lita Paniagua.²⁷ There is also the question of the everyday activities of these teachers and classroom assignments—all of which assuredly varied as well. Sandy Campbell describes that teachers were given the freedom to “do your own thing” in terms of crafting individual curricula. For him specifically, he would teach a couple of classes a day and then spend the rest of the time “having little small group discussions with students” and sitting in on other teachers’ classes.²⁸ Differences in approach and pedagogy aside, in general, there were

²⁵ Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 9; Although the site visitors who assessed Harlem Prep spoke favorably about this approach, they also noted that having some systematic planning could be helpful for improving teaching, especially for many of the less experienced teachers.

²⁶ This number is based on the current count of teachers based on the author’s working list of teachers, aggregated via all the archival documents and oral histories. However, the list is certainly incomplete, and most likely, the number is much higher.

²⁷ Rothman interview, October 19, 2016; Sandy Campbell, personal communication, assorted dates in 2016; During an afternoon visiting with Karen “Casey” Carpenter at her house in Montclair, NJ, looking for Harlem Prep files in her attic left by her parents, Carpenter found a stunning personal letter from Lita Paniagua to Ann Carpenter about her personal struggle with cancer and reflecting on her time at Harlem Prep. (The letter remains in possession of Carpenter.)

²⁸ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

three overarching principles that best characterized teaching and learning at Harlem Prep: one, a breakdown of the traditional student-teacher hierarchy; two, an emphasis on culturally relevant topics and teaching; and three, a promotion of love.

“As I taught, I learned,” professed English teacher Sandy Campbell, and “as students learned, they taught *me*.”²⁹ The first essential element that contributed toward student achievement—if not buy-in and trust in their teachers—was a blurring of the hierarchy between student and teacher. “No attempt is made to establish a dogmatic and arbitrary authority-subject relationship between faculty and students,” wrote a *Newsweek* reporter who visited the school in 1970.³⁰ Teachers at Harlem Prep recognized that teachers and students could learn from each other, and worked hard to engage students differently than they had (unsuccessfully) been engaged before in their prior schooling experiences. For instance, one student who had struggled immensely at his previous schools and now attended Harlem Prep explained that learning at this institution was the first time in education that he ever could:

recall teachers actually being more like mentors. I mean, they all controlled their class, but letting you participate as an equal with them. And not trying to run the class so much as open things up for discussion, open your mind up and collaborate more so than teach.³¹

Another alumnus perhaps summarizes this student-teacher relationship best, when in a discussion about Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, explains that:

the student is not some empty vessel and the teacher is just going to fill that empty vessel with information. The teacher is also learning from the student—there is a relationship, there is an exchange there, and I think that was part of the philosophy of Harlem Prep

²⁹ Sandy Campbell, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

³⁰ Joseph V. Cardia, “Harlem Prep,” *Newsday*, November 12, 1970.

³¹ Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

where you could challenge your teacher and your teacher would challenge you, and somehow you both learned.³²

In terms of breaking down traditional hierarchies of knowledge—of whose knowledge had more value—Campbell concurs when he explains that, “I never really taught, I facilitated” and that “there was never a sense of ‘I’m the teacher so I know’, it was more a matter of ‘there’s a lot to know, and we’ll learn it together.’”³³ Another student agrees: “There wasn’t a hierarchy...there were no egos floating around the place.”³⁴

This idea of co-facilitation was key in teachers’ ability to connect with students. Sandy Campbell explains that over his nearly six years teaching at Harlem Prep, his fellow faculty members did not see themselves as merely teachers, but as “facilitators of the learning process.”³⁵ “Dedicated young teachers were directing their lessons in concert with their students, and not at the students,” continued *Newsweek*.³⁶ Bari Haskins-Jackson, who was another one of those dedicated young teachers there, would agree: “There wasn’t so much of a distinction of ‘I’m the teacher and you’re the student.’ There was a very informal way [that] we interacted.... There wasn’t necessarily that heavy divider line.”³⁷ For new teachers like Campbell and Haskins-Jackson, they could not rely on age or stature to demand respect, but instead, had to demonstrate to students their “love for teaching... and a belief that everyone was cable of achieving.”³⁸

What did this look like in practice? Campbell, a young teacher when he first started at

³² Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

³³ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

³⁴ Capps interview, November 19, 2016.

³⁵ Campbell in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

³⁶ Cardia, “Harlem Prep,” *Newsday*, November 12, 1970.

³⁷ Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Harlem Prep who stayed at the school for almost its entire independent tenure—and then remained in secondary education in New York City for the rest of his life—is well positioned to explain this phenomenon. Campbell describes how teachers at Harlem Prep understood that there was no one-size-fits-all approach to working with students, and within each lesson, shared concepts and ideas that every student, regardless of his or her perspective, could “key-in on” and/or interpret in different ways, while still teaching the same content skills.³⁹ Although in the first graduating class, Alberto Cappas described how this happened on a daily basis through close “one-on-one attention” from teachers. “If I had a lot of questions, I would have one of the instructors or professors just sit down and really talk to me,” Cappas remembers. Instruction was “hands-on,” in the sense that teachers were not just providing information, but often worked side-by-side with students—both literally and intellectually—to make sure they learned the material.⁴⁰ As the school grew, it was harder to have this type of one-on-one instruction, but teachers still worked to create these types of educational partnerships when they could. For example, Martin Nur, a 1971 graduate who stayed at Harlem Prep for three years, recalls taking a private one-on-one geometry class because he needed it for college.⁴¹ These types of scenarios—particularly since classroom discussions frequently continued informally after school hours—helped break down the student-teacher hierarchy. Both oral histories and contemporary writings from the era align to craft a narrative that does not necessarily suggest that these practices were occurring in a matter-of-fact or preordained fashion, but organically as narratives often do. Historical memory and archival research can sometimes be dissonant, but here, they mesh together to form a strongly positive narrative about the way in which Harlem Prep teachers and

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Cappas interview, November 19, 2016.

⁴¹ Nur interview, July 7, 2017.

students interacted on a daily basis.

Another way this played out in the classroom was through teachers' careful navigation between right and wrong answers with seemingly skilled precision. Sandy Campbell and Ann Carpenter suggest that students were never wrong—"they could be mistaken," explains Campbell, "but never wrong," and instead, students were "embraced" by staff (and their peers) even if they disagreed with a certain opinion.⁴² There was a balance between making sure students learned material accurately, but in a way that did not connote hierarchy. "It was the purpose of the teachers to be enablers, not persuaders," wrote headmaster Edward Carpenter in 1972, as the school was most concerned with "the ability of a faculty member to accept a student without imposing his own personal value system."⁴³ Ann Carpenter further points out that students were "not lacking in intellectual abilities.... They were looking for someone to ratify their being, to give them that support on an emotional level. That was the key."⁴⁴ This ratification of self and embrace of students' thoughts occurred because "students and teachers began to relate to one another as human beings," according to headmaster Carpenter. "There was encouragement for the teacher dedicated to humanizing relations in the classroom."⁴⁵

Perhaps owing to the blurred lines of hierarchy, classes were often described as being "informal"—certainly abetted by the unpredictable organization of the open-space classroom—and as Carpenter explained, "one important characteristic for successful teaching at Harlem Prep was the ability to be flexible."⁴⁶ With movable partitions that created different class set-ups each

⁴² Campbell in Jacobs, "Harlem Prep Revisited," group interview, ca. 2010.

⁴³ Carpenter, "The Development of an Alternative School," 80, 38.

⁴⁴ Ann Carpenter in Jacobs, "Harlem Prep Revisited," group interview, ca. 2010.

⁴⁵ Carpenter, "The Development of an Alternative School," 20-21.

day, guest speakers who frequently visited the school, and current events that percolated through curriculum, teachers welcomed the spontaneity that typified the Harlem Prep experience. For instance, math teachers would casually take students to the pool halls to teach lessons—“those weren’t the types of things that were going on traditionally” explains Bari Haskins-Jackson—and the husband-and-wife pair of photography teachers once used picture books to help encourage a student who had trouble reading.⁴⁷ Hussein Ahdieh, in his personal account of Harlem Prep, concurs:

Teaching at Harlem Prep was spontaneous and organized around the needs and interests of the students. Textbooks did not allow for this level of flexibility so teachers often made their own materials. Students and teachers were in a constant dialogue about learning in which students were asked about their interests and teachers allowed their answers to shape the courses.⁴⁸

Other examples that required malleability on the part of teachers is when they “sometimes let students teach.”⁴⁹ As this chapter later explains more, surviving documents depict programs that trained students to act as teachers in their fields of expertise, such as Harlem Prep’s “Student-Teach-Student” program.⁵⁰ Here, students would serve as student teachers to “help tutor fellow students who are having difficulties in various subjects,” which led to “everyone involved in the program develop[ing] respect for one another.”⁵¹ This program

⁴⁶ “‘Why Harlem Prep?’ Booklet,” ca. 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 37.

⁴⁷ Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017.

⁴⁸ Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 64.

⁴⁹ “‘Why Harlem Prep?’ Booklet,” ca. 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

⁵⁰ “Progress Report for Ford Foundation,” May 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

reflected Harlem Prep’s larger philosophy—it flipped the script of traditional power structures in the classrooms and pushed back against the education norms of stratified knowledge and expertise.⁵² Countless students concur that they learned from each other and this co-learning was very much woven into the fabric of Harlem Prep’s educational philosophy.⁵³



Figure 16. Students and teachers clustered together at Harlem Prep, during a school day, showing the improvisational nature of classes, ca. 1971.

Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

Finally, Harlem Prep alumni collectively explain how it was common for teachers and students to be social outside of official school time, frequently interacting late into the evenings

⁵¹ Ibid., 2-3.

⁵² For a similar “flipping of the script” in terms of challenging traditional hierarchical structures in recent years, see Barry M. Goldenberg, “Rethinking Historical Practice and Community Engagement: Researching Together with ‘Youth Historians,’” *Rethinking History* 23, no. 1 (2019): 52–77.

⁵³ See, for example, Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015; Kahamu interview, February 24, 2017; Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017.

after-school, hanging out on weekends, or even visiting faculty's homes. As one journalist who visited the school described in 1970: "Teachers, though respected for their expertise, are social peers of the students."⁵⁴ Although close relationships between teachers and students might have troubled contemporaries in other schools and would perhaps be seen as problematic in today's society, these novel relationships at Harlem Prep reflected the school's anti-hierarchical and familial model.⁵⁵

These relationships are important in understanding the Harlem Prep story as it is crafted today. While specific details of classes, for example, are bound to fade over time, relationships and meaningful interactions with teachers (and vice versa) are the type of memories that can more commonly be recalled. The fact that relationships developed more than five decades ago, through this co-learning and breakdown of the traditional teacher-student hierarchy, still exist today, also influence the way in which students and teachers remember Harlem Prep. The school, remembered now, and constructed back then, was a unique place to experience. Ultimately, Harlem Prep administrators believed in "restructuring and redeveloping all levels of the traditionally conceived secondary school programs," and this method of reimagining the teacher and student relationship was certainly central to their vision, and, most importantly, to the growth and achievement of their students.⁵⁶

Second, additional pedagogical strategies of Harlem Prep teachers—combined with the diverse course selection described later—were also essential in teachers' ability to engage students. Alumni today tell stories of how teachers always grounded their pedagogy in the lives

⁵⁴ See Campbell interview, January 14, 2015; Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013; Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017; Cardia, "Harlem Prep," *Newsday*, November 12, 1970. Again, this was aided by the fact that many teachers were often of similar age of current students (and sometimes alumni themselves).

⁵⁵ These relationships and out-of-school gatherings will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁵⁶ John Hopkins, "Draft of MARC Assessment of Harlem Prep," p. 2, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

of students, aided by the fact that many (but not all) of them had grown up in similar circumstances or were alumni themselves. For teachers who were not from Harlem—teachers like John Czerniejewski—they would make special efforts to both immerse themselves in the neighborhood and listen attentively to students’ experiences. “They teach the student to relate the subject matter to his life in a way that is relevant to him as an individual,” wrote outside observer and renowned educational psychologist Dr. Edmund Gordon of Columbia University’s Teachers College in his assessment of the school.⁵⁷ Essentially, Harlem Prep teachers crafted lessons and shaped subject matter around the needs of the student because “whatever the word ‘relevant’ meant to the student, the [teaching] staff of Harlem Prep had to bring about a change in attitude so that learning could take on the quality of joy.”⁵⁸

Today, this approach is commonly known as Culturally Relevant (or Responsive) Pedagogy (CRP), popularized by influential scholars such as Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay who codified the effectiveness of relying on the lives of students.⁵⁹ As Geneva Gay explains, CRP relies on “the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of references, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students” which caters “to and through the strengths of students.”⁶⁰ In her landmark 1995 article, Gloria Ladson-Billings lays out the lineage of culturally relevant teaching, and the work of education scholars in the late 1980s and 1990s who

⁵⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁸ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 48.

⁵⁹ Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010), 10; A wave of Black scholars in the last two decades have written extensively about culturally relevant pedagogy, such as Gloria Ladson-Billings, *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009) and Tyrone C. Howard, *Why Race & Culture Matter in Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap in America’s Classrooms* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2014).

⁶⁰ Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, 29.

documented the success of Black students in classrooms which emphasized students' culture.⁶¹ Yet, as Ladson-Billings and others have noted, this idea of culturally responsive teaching was not a novel concept—Black scholars dating back to Carter G. Woodson in the early twentieth century have put forth these same ideas.⁶² Thus, it is important to recognize that Harlem Prep—and other Black alternative schools—operated as part of a long tradition of social justice-minded education.

How did culturally relevant teaching play out specifically in Harlem Prep class spaces? First, the tumultuous context of the time period placed an emphasis on the necessity for teachers to structure lessons around current events and politics of the era. Clifford Jacobs describes how these events certainly seeped into classroom discussion, all for the sake of keeping class relevant. Jacobs explains:

Everything [at Harlem Prep] spoke to the times, and in addition to draft cards being burned, women were burning their bras, the whole women's liberation [movement] was coming into full effect. The world was aflame, the world was alive.... My friends and I, we all felt a part of that. It wasn't something that was removed from us, it was something that affected us directly, and I think the curriculum at Harlem Prep, the class discussions, all those things related to what was happening in the world. There was this sense of that everything was relevant, that this was a living, breathing, curriculum.⁶³

This idea of a “living, breathing, curriculum” that Jacobs refers to can, in part, be specifically attributed to the teachers—they purposely sought to immerse themselves not only in current

⁶¹ Gloria Ladson-Billings, “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” *American Educational Research Journal* 32, no. 3 (September 1, 1995): 465–91.

⁶² See Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990; originally published by The Associated Publishers, 1933).

⁶³ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013. Jacobs joked further about this point, saying that he “had to study Latin for two years [in college], [since] there was no dead languages being taught at Harlem Prep!”

events but, most importantly, in students' lives. Lesson plans would often include discussion about real life issues pertinent to students from "the streets," as they put it, such as issues of public housing in Harlem or drug-related events.⁶⁴

For example, teacher Raymond Crawford understood that he needed to make explicit links to the everyday. "I taught math," Crawford recalls, and "I felt it was my responsibility to make a connection with kids, to let them know that math wasn't some 'way out' subject, that you could actually use math to figure out things in life, and it shouldn't be a subject that could not be used at all."⁶⁵ Naledi Raspberry, a young English and drama teacher at Harlem Prep, reportedly encouraged students to create a class play depicting their lives while also frequently taking students to the nearby National Black Theater.⁶⁶ Without any mandated curriculum or standards to meet other than their own, Harlem Prep faculty were free to cater class curriculum in ways that were relevant to students, one of many factors that led class discussions to be "filled with electricity."⁶⁷ "We talked about anything and everything [related to current events]" affirms instructor Bari Haskins-Jackson today. "We had to be aware of all of those things that were going on around us, because there were things that were happening and they were happening in everyone's lives."⁶⁸

This relevance, of course, also centered on making sure curriculum did not only relate to students' lived experiences, but to their identities as Black men and women. "Every attempt is

⁶⁴ "Step by Step," dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD; Craig Rothman interview, October 19, 2017.

⁶⁵ Raymond Crawford in Jacobs, "Harlem Prep Revisited," group interview, ca. 2010.

⁶⁶ Hussein Ahdieh, "Sacrificial Education: For the Good of Others," *Bahaiteachings.org*, July 20, 2016, website <http://bahaiteachings.org/sacrificial-education-for-the-good-of-others>.

⁶⁷ "Why Harlem Prep?" Booklet," Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; Teachers and students both recall staying late at Harlem Prep, after school, to continue class discussions. See Campbell interview, January 14, 2015 and Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

⁶⁸ Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017.

made to enrich the young Afro-American to create for him a sense of pride in his African heritage,” asserted Dr. Ben to the *New York Amsterdam News*, “showing his ancestors all the way from antiquity to 1966.”⁶⁹ Not only did history teachers like Dr. Ben and George Simmonds—a student fondly remembers how the latter would often take students to the historic Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture—stress the countless achievements of Black people of the world, but math and English teachers also exposed students to iconic Black figures in those fields, too.⁷⁰ Teachers like Gaywood McGuire and Duane Jones would expose students to great Black mathematicians and English teachers would introduce students to iconic writers such as James Baldwin, Malcolm X, Nikki Giovanni, and Zora Neale Hurston, among many others.⁷¹ “It [was] a cultural institution,” exclaims alumnus Mwanajua Kahamu, in reference to how students were constantly engaging in Black culture.⁷² Furthermore, outside of the popular African history courses, other courses such as “Latin America-A Continent in Turmoil,” “Black Theater in the 1900s,” “History of Revolution and Social Change,” and “The Third World in International Affairs” spoke to students’ cultural past and present.⁷³ Of course, classes changed frequently from year to year and these present only a taste of the eclectic nature of the courses that were taught, including a range of mathematics and writing courses not listed, each providing

⁶⁹ Willis, “Harlem Prep School Gives Many A Chance (Last of a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 23, 1968.

⁷⁰ Bartley-Grinage and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017; Another student, Harry Smith, remembers hanging out at the Schomburg Center all the time both during school and outside of school. He became close friends with Jean Hudson, daughter of Schomburg curator Jean Blackwell Hudson, who the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division is named after. Smith tells the story of how his friend’s mother would talk about her close friendship with Langston Hughes. See Harry Smith, interviewed by author, March 7, 2017, via phone, New York, NY.

⁷¹ Clayton Willis, “Harlem Prep School Gives Many A Chance (Second of a Series)” *New York Amsterdam News*, February 24 1968; See also Collier, “A Dropout Picks Up Some Logic on His Way to College,” *New York Times*, March 14, 1968; See also Sandy Campbell, e-mail message to author, February 12, 2019.

⁷² Kahamu interview, February 24, 2017.

⁷³ ““Why Harlem Prep?” Booklet,” Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

“some type of relevance to the [student] population.”⁷⁴ Note that courses like these were rare in the educational landscape at the time. In *Black Revolution on Campus*, for example, historian Martha Biondi describes how college students in the City University of New York system fought for similar Black studies in the face of faculty and administrative resistance, and how even at the college level, it was “unusual” for universities—even HBCU’s like Howard University—to have courses like the ones at Harlem Prep.⁷⁵



Figure 17. A Harlem Prep Teacher getting ready for class, with Pan African symbolism in the back of his class space, ca. 1971.

Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

⁷⁴ Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017; A full exploration of the curriculum occurs in the next chapter.

⁷⁵ Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*, 48. Throughout the entire book, Biondi describes in rich detail the struggle for Black studies on college campuses and the work of young people to push for these courses and Black studies departments more broadly. Most notably, this is at the college level, and Harlem Prep’s wide-array of courses was close to non-existent at the secondary level.

Pedagogical relevance also pertained to helping students have autonomy in the classroom. The only remaining video documentary of the school explicitly narrates how teachers frequently let students have large say in what was going to be taught. For instance, this included teachers providing lists of books for students to choose from and then giving them autonomy to choose which titles they preferred to read. In other instances, syllabi were designed together between teachers and students, and students would often interject with new topics or questions for unplanned discussion. While teachers would “define the course”—and as multiple students across different graduating classes reassured, expectations remained high—they would also attend individually to students to help them “work out what they hope to accomplish” via a course.⁷⁶ These goals might have ranged from speaking more fluently, to being able to critically assess pieces of information, to just becoming more knowledgeable about a specific subject for later college study. Overall, there was a continual fusion of promoting autonomy with culturally relevant pedagogy that would promote students’ academic curiosities and broader life goals.

Finally, Harlem Prep teachers’ pedagogy was ultimately sustained by a more ethereal, if not more amorphous, trait critical to the school’s success: love. Although hard to describe but easy to feel, faculty taught with a love that made their lessons more powerful and their actions more meaningful—they practiced education, as Paulo Freire theorized, as *being* an act of love.⁷⁷ Prominent civil rights activist Ella Baker, too, long professed that education was an act of love; Harlem Prep was tapping into this long Black activist tradition that Harlemites like Ann and Ed Carpenter, and many of their teachers, were most certainly aware of.⁷⁸ Despite the racial and

⁷⁶ “*Step by Step*,” dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

⁷⁷ See Antonia Darder, *Reinventing Paulo Freire: A Pedagogy Of Love* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002) and Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1970), among many works.

economic divisions of the era encircling students every day, Harlem Prep teachers spoke to points of connection between each other. Love served as an essential undercurrent that redirected students' justified anger from previous educational experiences into personal growth and academic excellence.⁷⁹ In practice, love was typically promoted through two avenues: a love for each other, and a love for self (the latter, as students forced out of the public school system, often was the most absent). Contemporary critical education scholars Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade and Ernest Morrell refer to this notion in the classroom as “revolutionary love”: “a love that is strong enough to bring about radical change in individual students, classrooms, school systems, and the larger society that controls them.”⁸⁰ Yet, they ask: “What is revolutionary love?” and “how it is practiced in the context of education?”⁸¹ For Harlem Prep teachers, they believed that there was a certain “kind of love” that manifested each day at the school, where everyone was “all tied to one another on a universal basis by a strong silver thread of love.”⁸²

Part of this love was the mutual respect that teachers promoted amongst fellow classmates. Florence Carpenter, the school nurse as well as a health and biology teacher at Harlem Prep for many years, recognized this reciprocal love as an essential dynamic of the school. Carpenter explains that, at its core, Harlem Prep worked because of “the warmth and the willingness of everyone there—faculty and students—for us to support each other and help each

⁷⁸ See Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*; See also article about Black women activists, Sonya Douglass Horsford, “This Bridge Called My Leadership: An Essay on Black Women as Bridge Leaders in Education,” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 25, no. 1 (February 1, 2012): 11–22.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative School,” 281.

⁸⁰ Jeffrey M. R. Duncan-Andrade and Ernest Morrell, *The Art of Critical Pedagogy: Possibilities for Moving Theory to Practice in Urban Schools* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 187.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015; Edward Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

other when we needed help.” She adds, “I think that was really what Harlem Prep spoke to.”⁸³

Aissatou Bey-Grecia, Harlem Prep class of 1971, also describes in earnest how this love manifested at the school, in part, through administrators and teachers’ ability to foster “an atmosphere of respect” even despite disagreements, no matter the class setting. Bey-Grecia explains:

It didn't matter if I was a smarter mathematician or if somebody else was a smarter mathematician, or I was a better dancer.... Everybody brought their own thing to the party. And you had to respect what that was, whether it be different or whatever. You know, the Five Percenters, the Nation of Islam, whoever it is, you have to learn to respect that even if you didn't agree.⁸⁴

To be sure, respect should not be conflated with love. Yet, what this former student describes within her larger point is that the love students, teachers, and administrators all possessed created a deeply entrenched reverence for each other despite apparent differences. Bey-Grecia describes how twenty-five years later, the students who made up the Five Percenters at Harlem Prep—a group that she “had some pretty intense disagreements about in our time”—protected her during a situation of need because of the Harlem Prep connection. She concluded that because of their time together, “we’re family forever” and that she “love[s] all of them” still today.⁸⁵ In this way, by cultivating a family-like atmosphere, the class spaces operated not just as academic

⁸³ Florence Carpenter in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010; Florence Carpenter was only related in name to headmaster Edward Carpenter through the marriage of a mutual cousin.

⁸⁴ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015; The so-called “Five Percenters” were an off-shoot group of the Nation of Islam, who believed in the notion that only five percent of the world actually knew the “truth” about the world’s existence and sought to enlighten the rest of the population. They believed that Black men were considered “Gods” of the Earth, not in an immortal sense, but in terms of being the ancient inhabitants of the planet. For a fuller and perhaps more fair representation, see Michael Muhammad Knight, *The Five Percenters: Islam, Hip-Hop and Gods of New York* (London: One World Books, 2007).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

thresholds, but as spaces built upon by mutual love. Teachers loved their students deeply, and learning interactions between the two were often effective in no small way because of that love.

Sherry Kilgore, class of 1971, felt this constant love impressed upon her by teachers during her time at the school. Growing up north of Central Park in Harlem, Kilgore became pregnant at age 16 around tenth or eleventh grade. “Back in those days, you were not allowed to go to school if you were pregnant...whenever I started showing, they yanked me out of school.” For the next two or three years, Kilgore remained out of school, working to take care of her child. Through a neighbor, she found out about Harlem Prep, and after constant prodding, finally went to visit. Kilgore enrolled in September of 1970 and not only “fell in love [with] the caring-ness of the teachers and the administration,” but with “the way students looked out for each other” inside and outside school walls.⁸⁶ With a child to care for and a more demanding schedule, Kilgore remembers the love that teachers constantly showed her and her child when she brought him to school.⁸⁷ Kilgore went from being seen as a problem at her former public high school to being a cherished member of the Harlem Prep community, where teachers and students would happily look after her child when she was in class.⁸⁸

Through a pedagogical emphasis on group projects and collaborative learning, combined with a philosophical belief in unity—adhering to the “Moja Logo” slogan painted on the walls—teachers led students to feel a deep sense of pride when their fellow classmates met success. For instance, student Sterling Nile took inspiration from his classmates, pointing out that “if he could do it, I could do it...and [the teachers] teach you that.” Seeing other students succeed gave him

⁸⁶ Kilgore interview, May 21, 2017.

⁸⁷ Ibid. Kilgore explains that she missed a lot of classes because of her child and that teachers allowed her to do independent work, “which was really cool,” she explains, since she did not have the financial ability to place her child in daycare. She also explains how Harlem Prep also acted as a daycare at times, bringing him to school often and that other students and staff would watch him while she was in class.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

“confidence and hope,” and that he—someone who had doubted his intellectual ability prior to attending Harlem Prep—“could rise to the occasion” and achieve something special.⁸⁹ “I thought you were supposed to beat out the guy next to you. Here you feel guilty if a brother has a problem and you don’t help,” asserted student Damian Carpenter at the time.⁹⁰ Another student today explains that he “learned from all the students,” and that “we all taught each other...we all contributed to our individual growth.”⁹¹ Inserting Duncan-Andrade and Morrell’s definition here makes sense; there was a revolutionary love that was contagious and helped spark camaraderie within class spaces. Ultimately, there was a “love of everybody for what they were doing,” particularly teachers, remembers another alumnus, and this love was essential in generating an intimate level of trust that encouraged the teaching and learning process.⁹²

Perhaps the most striking way that teachers utilized love at Harlem Prep was the way in which they helped students love themselves. Multiple students today credit Harlem Prep not just for their academic preparation and subsequent college enrollment, but also for instilling an internal belief in their abilities that had been stripped away by prior experiences in education. “People think of the dropout as a loser,” expressed student Anthony Hart to the *New York Amsterdam News* in 1968, explaining that at his previous school “teachers have no interest in students.”⁹³ “Everything was phony... It was like a prison,” said another student about her prior school.⁹⁴ Such deficit feelings were certainly internalized by students and hampered their

⁸⁹ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

⁹⁰ “How to turn on the turned off,” *Business Week*, February 20, 1971, 76-77, in Series 3, Box 80, Folder 1324, Ford Records.

⁹¹ Capps interview, November 19, 2016.

⁹² Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

⁹³ Bigart, “Harlem Prep Gives Dropouts a Door to College,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1968.

⁹⁴ “‘I Can Do Anything,’” *Newsweek*, p. 16, July 8, 1968.

motivation to learn, whereas Harlem Prep sought to reverse such notions. Sandy Campbell explains that: “so many of the students came there looking for that environment that embraced them, looking for self-acceptance, and found the kind of family that sent them away, from Harlem Prep. They’d be seeing their community and their country as a family for the first time...”⁹⁵ Teachers like Campbell recognized that a familial atmosphere, steeped in self-love and self-belief, was necessary for helping students grow and discover themselves—and ultimately reach their full potential in ways that did not occur at their previous institutions.

“Conscious efforts to build student morale are evident everywhere, for every teacher seems at some point in the lesson to build an esprit,” observed Joshua Smith, the program officer at the Ford Foundation.⁹⁶ How were teachers able to help students build this self-confidence? According to headmaster Edward Carpenter, through love—and lots of it. “‘Teachers have got to have it, right here,’ said Mr. Carpenter, placing a chubby hand over his heart,” wrote the *New York Times* in 1968.⁹⁷ “We love every student who walks through that door,” and that Harlem Prep staff “take the students as we get them, treat them with respect and love and trust.” In result, Carpenter argued, students then “develop a feeling of respect for themselves, their community, and their fellowman.”⁹⁸ To be sure, this promotion of self-love was emphasized in classroom instruction; for example, English teacher Duane Jones worked to “build more self-esteem in his ‘dropout’ or ‘forceout’ students by using writings of black novelists” to help students recognize their own capabilities. Or, as Campbell and Ann Carpenter recall, instances when parents would

⁹⁵ Sandy Campbell in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

⁹⁶ Memo from Joshua Smith to Edward Meade, October 13, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁹⁷ Bigart, “Harlem Prep Gives Dropouts a Door to College,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1968.

⁹⁸ “From Harlem to Harvard: Business-Backed Prep School Turns Slum Dropouts into College Students,” *Nation’s Business*, December 1969.

wander into school, “almost in a state of awe,” wanting to see how Harlem Prep was able to transform their son or daughter into a confident learner.⁹⁹ Periodical accounts suggest that students always knew that teachers at Harlem Prep loved them unconditionally and “believed that they could learn”—a belief that went a long way in building up students’ confidence in their academic ability.¹⁰⁰ Notably, both present-day conversations with alumni as well as contemporary documents of the era largely agree with these assessments; both sources are littered with references of teachers building students’ “self-confidence” through active displays of “love.”¹⁰¹ “One of the big things Harlem Prep instilled in you [was] a good sense of confidence and self-esteem,” reiterates student Martin Nur.¹⁰²

Furthermore, these examples hint at how the promotion of revolutionary love, specifically, can not only be a catalyst for personal change, but perhaps even empower students to pursue larger social change in the way that Duncan-Andrade and Morrell argue for. “You develop a consciousness,” contends Alberto Cappas today about Harlem Prep. “You wake up and realize there are problems in the world, in society,” and with the help of teachers, “you make that connection.” Cappas and others credit Harlem Prep for developing in them both the internal belief to become active citizens *and* a love for others that inspires them to create positive change in their communities. Although Harlem Prep purposely tried to avoid promoting any particular political ideology, many graduates went on later to become activists at their respective colleges

⁹⁹ Sandy Campbell and Ann Carpenter in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

¹⁰⁰ Clayton Willis, “Harlem Prep Gives Many a Chance (Fourth in a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*, May 9, 1968.

¹⁰¹ See Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative School,” in *High School*; See also Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 73, 109; See also Bartley-Grinage and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017.

¹⁰² Nur interview, July 17, 2017.

or, just as importantly, dynamic citizens in their communities who sought neighborhood uplift.¹⁰³

As students like Peter Hopson and Sherry Kilgore explain, it was the teachers who instilled this confidence to want them to enact this change.¹⁰⁴



Figure 18. Math teacher Erskine Keary, working one-on-one with a student, ca. 1971.

Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

Guided by Carpenter’s educational philosophy, ultimately, teachers recognized that previous high school transcripts of their students “did not tell of the hopes, aspirations, and true

¹⁰³ Cappas interview, November 19, 2016. Cappas explains that he, and many of his peers, were very involved in the rise of ethnic studies program and Black or Latino student unions during this era—both of which were common occurrences of the time. For examples of historical scholarship on activism in higher education in New York City, see, for example Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*, and Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University*; See also, Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015, who explains that the love she encountered at Harlem Prep inspired her to have that same love for her Harlem community where she has raised her children, works, volunteers, and still lives.

¹⁰⁴ See Hopson interview, February 11, 2015. Hopson explains at length how he was someone with a lot of self-doubt until learning at Harlem Prep. Sherry Kilgore also expresses similar statements.

potential...they merely defined their assumed limitations.”¹⁰⁵ The stories of alumni today illustrate that teachers did not subscribe to these limitations, and used love as the foundation to help students move beyond their internalized assumptions made by others—from the Board of Education, from the media, from systemic racism of white society—about their abilities. “We don’t do anything anyone else doesn’t do,” concluded Carpenter, perhaps a bit modestly, “we just do it with love.”¹⁰⁶

In reflectively analyzing the story of Harlem Prep today, it makes sense why students, teachers, and administrators who describe Harlem Prep’s teaching and learning through love remember the school in this way: these stories of love are a “felt history,” in which memories go beyond traditional images stored in a person’s mind.¹⁰⁷ These recollections are “felt,” and in the case of Harlem Prep, have left transformational imprints on those who have chosen to share their stories about the school. If it is feelings that provoke people to remember their stories—happiness or sadness or, here, being loved by others and learning to love oneself—these positive feelings are then tied into students’ positive “felt” memories of their interactions with their fellow classmates and teachers. Ultimately, these memories of love or relevant pedagogy or hierarchy are not to be necessarily portrayed as “facts,” but as part of the narrative of Harlem Prep that has survived because they make up the most salient aspects of the Harlem Prep experience according to those who remember it. Furthermore, many of these reminiscences about the school come from Harlem Prep students and teachers who have remained close friends, fifty

¹⁰⁵ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 49.

¹⁰⁶ “How to turn on the turned off,” *Business Week*, February 20, 1971.

¹⁰⁷ Rebecca Ferguson, “History, Memory and Language in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*,” in *Contemporary American Women Writers: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora (New York: Routledge, 2013), 154. The idea of a felt history is often referred back Robert Penn Warren’s famous quote about the American Civil War being a “felt history” because it “lives in the national imagination.” See Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

years later—and, in effect, individuals who remain tied to the school through these sustained relationships. It is notable to recognize that it is these students and teachers who are most likely to speak about their experiences at Harlem Prep (even though there were students who I also spoke with who had not remained tied to the school in any meaningful way).¹⁰⁸ While it is important to acknowledge that the enduring love at Harlem Prep was a key feature of the school that has allowed individuals to remain in each other's lives, it is likewise important to understand that these circumstances about who has chosen to share their story also shapes the interpretation as it is presented here.

Thus, these memories and anecdotes about Harlem Prep are certainly not the only characterizations of the school's teaching and learning processes, nor are they the only narratives that could be told about what teaching and learning looked like. There are source limitations to what historians can understand about the past via oral history. These nearly universal affirmative reminiscences should be examined through this prism and with this understanding in mind, particularly in regards to a process—teaching and learning—that is so personalized and inexact. Yet, regardless of these limitations, they still *are* the stories that students and teachers most want to tell, and that is the overarching story—from voices that have been historically marginalized in historical scholarship—that historians and educators should most want to hear.

The Educational Program: Curriculum, Class Selection, Scheduling, and More

Understanding the teaching and learning that occurred at Harlem Prep is only part of the school's mixture of humaneness and academic rigor. The details of the educational program

¹⁰⁸ Although many of the students and former teachers I spoke with remained close friends, I did purposely seek out and speak with others who were not still connected to the school in any meaningful way and/or had little to no contact with other former students. There is still a source bias there—these individuals still voluntarily chose to speak with me—but they were not connected with other alumni or living in New York City, for example, compared to others in this dissertation who were apt to talk about their experiences.

mattered, too, in creating this reality and the full Harlem Prep experience. Students, faculty, and, notably, outside visitors not associated with the school all consistently commented on the school's culture of love and respect that was deeply embedded into the fabric of its curricular components. For example, visitors from the Institute of Educational Development concluded that, "there is a desirable combining of humanistic and intellectual values" at Harlem Prep. Still, they perceived Harlem Prep's "aim as strongly academic, with a focus on traditional academic work, although this aim is accomplished in nontraditional ways."¹⁰⁹ In what ways did Harlem Prep operate traditionally and nontraditionally? What did this academic program look actually look like? If the flexible atmosphere of Harlem Prep was vital to the school's design, so too was the multicultural educational program that was part of teachers' pedagogy.

Both Ann and Ed Carpenter were partners in developing the school's multicultural education program. Inside school walls, while Ann Carpenter most visibly enforced, designed, and kept track of Harlem Prep's courses, Ed Carpenter, too, was apt to sketch out the school's overarching philosophy.¹¹⁰ In a private progress report to the Ford Foundation, Ed Carpenter wrote explicitly about the "rationale for courses" at Harlem Prep:

Because of the rise of cultural-pluralism in the existing pluralistic technological society, young people must receive an education that will sharpen their perceptions and heighten their awareness of the sometimes deleterious effect of racism, bigotry, the bombardment of the media, revitalistic movements, and the phenomena of "Future Shock". Simply stated, the philosophy of Harlem Prep is to present course work that will integrate the antiquities of ancient history with the contemporary problems of today; train students to evaluate themselves, their culture; to evaporate any barriers preventing their induction into a post-industrial society. It is therefore necessary that an interdisciplinary approach be utilized so that students can develop perspective and regard the phenomena of society from a global point of view. In addition, it is vital that students be trained to cope with the accelerative

¹⁰⁹ Institute for Educational Development, "An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School," 6

¹¹⁰ Ann and Ed's daughter, Casey Carpenter, feels strongly that the school's "curriculum and the scheduling" was Ann's design. Other alumni and former teachers agree with this characterization. See Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017.

thrust of technology, advertising and propaganda.¹¹¹

Ed Carpenter's vision for the curriculum was very forward-thinking—and, most notably, in line with his larger multicultural vision for preparing students to enter into a diverse society. If his demographic design of the school was multicultural—selection of teachers and students, for example—his conceptual design for courses and overall curriculum, in partnership with Ann, was decidedly multicultural, too. Ed Carpenter envisioned Harlem Prep's multiculturalism to play out not just racially or culturally, but intellectually and technologically. With the latter, for example, he cared deeply about technological innovation and his grants often included proposed programs around media production and media comprehension—or perhaps what educational scholars today refer to as “critical media literacy.”¹¹² There was a desire to not only reflect the world demographically in the teaching force or the diverse range of political opinions within Black thought, but to immerse students in the changing role of media in society as well as a future-looking view of an interdisciplinary approach popular in educational research today.

Once students entered Harlem Prep, they had almost full rein to chart their own trajectory, choosing courses that most suited their interests, with the exception of taking a math course (ranging from algebra to calculus) and an English course (and science if students had not had any courses before) each term.¹¹³ (Since Harlem Prep was technically a private school, students did not

¹¹¹ Edward Carpenter, “Rationale for Use of Ford Foundation Grant,” September 18, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹¹² In addition to larger proposals such as Robert Mangum and Edward Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, Rockefeller Foundation Records, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records, see also, specifically, Robert Mangum and Edward Carpenter, “Proposal for Creative Literacy Program at Harlem Prep,” April 12, 1973, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; Among numerous scholarship, see Ernest Morrell, *Critical Literacy and Urban Youth: Pedagogies of Access, Dissent, and Liberation* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

¹¹³ F. Champion Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” June 22, 1970, p. 5, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; “Progress Report for Ford Foundation,” May 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; See also Ahdieh's description of the freedom, in Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School: An Alternative,” 87.

have to fulfill state requirements. At the same time, Harlem Prep, via their provisional charter with the New York State Education Department, provided state-recognized diplomas—as Ed Carpenter proudly declared at the end of each commencement ceremony.¹¹⁴) “The students had input,” verifies one alumnus, “we could request and suggest what courses would be interesting for us [and courses] for the teachers to teach in.”¹¹⁵ Newspaper accounts also confirm this to be true; teachers would submit a list of courses each semester, and the courses that students found most interesting would be the ones offered.¹¹⁶ Courses were “designed for problem solving” and “developed to provide skills in individual research and the daily application of learned skills to everyday community and family problems,” explained Carpenter in a 1969 grant proposal.¹¹⁷ Thus, for all these reasons, Harlem Prep “decided to provide a non-graded educational program in which each student could progress at his own individual rate”—or, in other words, with students leaving their prior high schools at different grade levels, there was no set curriculum or structured academic guidelines other than to promote students’ intellectual development.¹¹⁸ “The students are provided with opportunities to develop and progress according to their individual capacities for learning,” explained Hussein Ahdieh in 1974.¹¹⁹ There was no tracking program of any kind, and the only requirements to graduate—in addition to the required English and math courses—was faculty and/or administrator approval and a college acceptance letter.¹²⁰ Essentially, with no set number of

¹¹⁴ See *Step by Step*, dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

¹¹⁵ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

¹¹⁶ “How to Turn on the Turned Off,” *Business Week*, February 20, 1971, Series 3, Box 80, Folder 1324, Ford Foundation Records.

¹¹⁷ Edward Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 2, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹⁹ Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School: An Alternative,” 85.

classes to take or specific courses to fulfill, every class (minus English and math) acted as an elective for the purpose of quenching students' varied interests and "providing a framework for enabling each student to become a confident, independent individual."¹²¹

Much of this responsibility to enact these philosophies through the curriculum fell on the shoulders of Ann Carpenter. "Ann was very instrumental," explains 1971 alumna Sherry Kilgore. "Ann to me was the point person" in helping fulfill Ed's vision, organizing curricula and helping students choose classes and create educational plans.¹²² Her daughter, Casey Carpenter, remembers her mother telling her about the rush of registration. "One year she was doing registration and she was standing behind a table, and there were students in a whole circle—like a couple of people knee-deep—and she said she turned around in an entire circle because there were so many students!"¹²³

Harlem Prep did organize their faculty and course selection via academic departments. The English department was the largest—it had over a dozen associated faculty members in 1972—and a wide array of courses.¹²⁴ Sample English-related courses from 1968 to 1972 included: "Reading Skills Workshop," "Creative Arts Workshop," "Creative Writing, Communication Arts Workshop," "Writing Skills, Principles of Play Writing," "Eastern Literature," "Writing Skills Workshop," "Survey of World Literature," "Being and Non-Being," "Linguistics," "Semantics," "Women in Literature and Life," "Shaping of the Modern Mind," and "Issues in Comparative

¹²⁰ On the lack of a tracking system, see Institute for Educational Development, "An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School," 10.

¹²¹ Ahdieh, "Harlem Preparatory School: An Alternative," 85.

¹²² Kilgore interview, May 21, 2017.

¹²³ Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017.

¹²⁴ See "1972 Commencement Program," June 7, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. The other departments, minus communications, art, and music, had between six and eight faculty members.

Literature.”¹²⁵ More traditional courses such as “Writing Skills” sought to teach students to “communicate to difference audiences,” teaching them techniques for writing short articles, term papers and reports based on “factual information.” Other classes such as “Eastern Literature” provided “a survey of philosophy and literature underlying Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam and Japanese and Chinese Poetry.” Still other “workshop” courses sought to help students prepare for college by relying on more independent-focused assignments and less-guided oversight.¹²⁶ The goal of personal growth and internalized hope through language—whether that be poetry, short stories, scriptwriting or music—was emphasized through the Prep’s educational program, particularly in the large assortment of English classes. Expressions like this short poem, entitled “Perilous Journey Home,” by student Duane Peterson were a common occurrence:

*Through enigmatic ravines and over cascading waterfalls polluted by moral epidemics. I travel toward my home. Through Satanic beckoning passes I stumble as the vulture called mankind eagerly awaits my downfall into the slime. So that they may pick my soul clean of its character and individuality. Through parched lips I scream for want of recognition and of a pedestal like that of my oppressors. For with this spiritual nourishment I can rid my soul of its paranoiac tendencies. As soon as I can achieve this I may be able to erect a new standard of decency for myself and step forward onto a new horizon of respect. But until then I must still continue my journey towards my home.*¹²⁷

In the mathematics department, courses ranged from “brush up course[s]” like “Background Math” to college prep courses such as “Advanced Algebra” and “Calculus.” Other courses included: “Algebra I,” “Geometry as Existence,” “Pre-College Analytical Geometry,” “Pre-College Trigonometry,” and “Grass Roots Math.” “Grass Roots Math,” which took “old ideas and [gave] them a new face by attempting to relate math at its roots to people in their

¹²⁵ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 130-133; Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013; Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 2, Ford Records; Letter from Edward Carpenter to Joshua Smith, July 5, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹²⁶ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 130-133

¹²⁷ Duane Peterson, “Perilous Journey Home,” in 1970 Harlem Prep Yearbook [no page numbers], in personal collection of Henry Pruitt. Copy of yearbook given to author by Pruitt.

everyday life... in the ghetto,” was an example of Harlem Prep working to make mathematical concepts more accessible to students.¹²⁸ Math seemed to operate a bit differently than other courses, too; classes were often taught on a one-on-one basis or in small groups, and it was common for a class to be only a handful of students doing semi-supervised individual work.¹²⁹ The Science department, too, had a varied course selection that had both traditional-looking courses such as “Biology Part I and II” and “Chemistry I and II,” as well as courses such as “Fundamentals of Science” that acted as a general course and sought to teach students “scientific skills of problems solving, manipulative skills of the laboratory and research techniques.” Other Science courses included “Physics I and II” and “Oceanology I and II.”¹³⁰

The Social Science Department, which emphasized social studies, was a conglomerate of history-focused courses combined with various social science-focused courses from multiple disciplines.¹³¹ Ed Carpenter’s thinking on this was clear: “I thought it would be interesting to have all of these diverse young people in a school and present them with diverse materials that they might find interesting such as anthropology, political science, local state and government [courses], [and] all forms of studies like African studies and American studies, but from comparative points of view, so that they could test their personal philosophies and solutions against other models.”¹³² In terms of history, the popular “African Studies” course aimed “to illustrate that the Black people in the world have always recognized their common racial identity

¹²⁸ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 134-136; Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 2, Ford Records.

¹²⁹ Ibid.; and Nur interview, July 17, 2017.

¹³⁰ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 144-145.

¹³¹ This department was referred to as the “Social Science Department” but headmaster Ed Carpenter also referred to it as the “Social Studies Department.”

¹³² Carpenter, in “*Step by Step*,” dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

and interests.”¹³³ There was also a different “Ancient African History” course that focused on art and architecture on Ancient Egypt and other African civilizations, which included “trips to museums.”¹³⁴ Other history courses included: “Asian Cultures,” “Latin America: A Continent in Turmoil,” “History of the City and Urbanization,” “20th Century History of America,” “History of WWI and WWII” (including a broad study of modern Europe), “African Black Nationalism,” “Caribbean Studies,” “The Individual in the Urban Setting,” and “History of Revolution and Social Change” which covered political movements throughout the world.¹³⁵ Courses that spanned the social sciences were equally as diverse. Courses such as “Introduction to Economic Theory and History” provided both a historical and contemporary look at economic theory and capitalism while “Community Legal Problems” attempted to “give the student a practical view as to how the legal judicial and administrative affect the community.” Other courses in various disciplines included: “Principles of Sociology I and II,” “Archeology and Physical Anthropology,” “Historical Anthropology,” “Cultural Anthropology,” “Culture and Personality” (another anthropological course on “character formation”), and “Introduction to Psychology.”¹³⁶ “In a number of cases students have been able to take courses that most likely they would not have taken until they got to college,” wrote Ahdieh in 1974. “Although many of these courses are college type courses, Prep has been successful in teaching them in a high school curriculum.”¹³⁷

Finally, there was also an array of courses in the Art Department and Communications

¹³³ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 137; See also Willis, “Harlem Prep School Gives Many A Chance,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 23, 1968, which describes Dr. Ben teaching this course.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 137-140; Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 2, Ford Records; Carpenter, “Letter to Joshua Smith About Harlem Prep’s Use of Ford Grant,” July 5, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹³⁶ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 138-143.

¹³⁷ Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School: An Alternative,” 87.

Media Department. For art, courses included “Art Workshop,” where students could “extend and/or develop their abilities” in areas such as painting, drawing, sculpture, leather craft and jewelry making. Additional classes and topics covered in various workshops included art history, advertising art, and aesthetics.¹³⁸ One alumnus even remembers entering in an art contest and winning a scholarship at a local art museum.¹³⁹ In terms of communications and media courses, two popular sequential courses were “Radio and Television Workshop” which focused on journalism and mastering the use of audio/video equipment, followed by “Filmmaking” where students created their own films.¹⁴⁰ The husband-and-wife teaching team of Gary and Minna Hilton spearheaded this department, encouraging Harlem Prep youth to make films, such as “Four Women” produced by student Ilanga Witt. In this 16-mm. film, Harlem Prep women dance to Nina Simone’s “Four Women,” walking the streets of Harlem and providing a visual expression of Simone’s song about the injustice and suffering of Black women.¹⁴¹ There were also select music and dance classes at Harlem Prep, the latter often led by Harlem Prep students.¹⁴² Overall, there were at least 60 different confirmed courses across all departments during the school’s independent tenure, and most likely many more.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 147-148.

¹³⁹ Nile interview, March 4, 2017.

¹⁴⁰ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 149-150.

¹⁴¹ Ilanga Witt, “Four Women,” 16-mm. film reel, 1971, New York Public Library Reserve Film and Video archives.

¹⁴² See Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, Ford Records.

¹⁴³ This number is derived from the author’s aggregation of all courses documented in primary sources, but most likely is still a rather low estimate of all courses taught at the school during its tenure. Casey Carpenter, Ann Carpenter’s daughter, contends that her mother said that over the course of Ann’s work at Harlem Prep, there were over 500 different courses. It is unclear whether or not this figure also included Harlem Prep courses post-1974. It is also unknown how many courses were offered at any given moment. However, clues from Carpenter’s dissertation, oral histories with teachers Sandy Campbell and Bari Haskins-Jackson, and the relative number of teachers—more than 45 at the school’s peak (including part-time teachers, volunteers, and administrators)—suggests that there were many dozens of classes being offered each academic term.

Themes of flexibility and choice described in the use of the building space and the courses continue to echo across the more conventional aspects of Harlem Prep's academic program including the school's block scheduling, organization, and modes of grading. Classes officially began at nine o'clock in the morning, with the school day formally ending at four o'clock in the afternoon (although most classes ended at three). However, classes often unofficially reconvened after school "ended" as both students and staff would often stay late into the evenings.¹⁴⁴ Classes were fifty minutes to an hour, meeting two or three times per week (although some math courses, most likely small, independent-focused ones, met four times per week).¹⁴⁵ There was a bell system which signified that it was time to switch classes. However, while this block scheduling and bell system was normal, the lack of overall classes per day was atypical in secondary schools; although there were six hour-long blocks from nine in the morning to three in the afternoon, students often had only three to four classes per day (although it varied greatly by student).¹⁴⁶ "Harlem Prep had a flexible course schedule," notes one alumnus, and "there was some flexibility so that it could work around [a student's] other needs."¹⁴⁷ Some students would arrive later or earlier in the day, and schedules more closely resembled a first-year college schedule than a high school in New York City. Furthermore, there was a "flexible arrangement of class structure[s] in which individually prescribed instruction can be given on a one-to-one basis or in small groups,

¹⁴⁴ Peter Hopson student records, assorted documents, on file at Park East High School, New York, NY. Copies in author's possession and viewed with permission. Student schedules showed blocks where classes could take place from three to four o'clock, but they were often left blank in the schedules seen by the author; For anecdotes about staying late, see Aissatou interview, February 25, 2015; Campbell interview January 25, 2015; and Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

¹⁴⁵ Hopson student records, Park East High School, New York, NY.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid; Two other student record files at Park East High School confirm these estimates. However, students spaced out their class schedules differently, as some students scheduled between three and four classes per day all week long, while other students had five or six classes on some days and only two or three classes on other days.

¹⁴⁷ Nile interview, March 4, 2015; One of these needs he gave as an example was taking care of a child.

according to the needs of students and the judgment of the teachers.”¹⁴⁸ During the blocks when students did not have scheduled classes, they would either listen-in or participate in another class, meet and discuss the politics of the day with other students in the common areas, or work independently at spare tables scattered throughout the building. Students could also leave the building altogether, such as to go get lunch which they would bring back into school.¹⁴⁹ However, even though student class schedules were malleable, teachers still stressed discipline and punctuality. “You didn’t come to these instructor’s classes late,” explains alumnus Beverly Grayman-Rich. “They did not tolerate you just having an attitude of ‘I don’t care’, because if you don’t care, you don’t need to be here.”¹⁵⁰

Harlem Prep’s grading system followed traditional norms, featuring a letter graded A-D system and commonly accepted percentages for passing a course (a minimum of 70%, or a C-).¹⁵¹ Report cards went out each marking period, with handwritten notes by each teacher who wrote the course subject, grade, remarks on attendance, and other comments about students’ work or character.¹⁵² “No student is recommended for college work who does not maintain an average of 75%” was stamped on student’s academic record sheet, which listed students’ courses and final grades during their time at Harlem Prep. In addition, this document gave ratings of students’

¹⁴⁸ Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School: An Alternative,” 85.

¹⁴⁹ Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Anonymous student, “Report Card,” on file at Park East High School. An “A” grade was considered “Excellent,” “B – Good,” “C – Satisfactory,” and “D – Lowest Passing Grade” with grades below a “D” representing no course credit.

¹⁵² Ibid. Notably, the material inside student record folders varies, as some have previous educational information, tests, college acceptance letters, and/or health information, while others do not. However, all of them viewed by author have students’ “Report Cards” and “Student Academic Records,” perhaps suggesting that record keeping of students’ grades was the most well kept aspect of Harlem Prep’s notoriously poor record keeping overall.

“personal qualities” and other notes related to their tenure at the school.¹⁵³ Although the requirements for graduating were radically different—particularly for a school that was accredited by the New York State Department of Education—the way students were graded and assessed in their coursework appeared to be straightforward.¹⁵⁴

Still, Harlem Prep’s relatively conventional academic structure should not distract from the many unique programs, initiatives, and strategies that were part of the ever-changing multicultural educational program. Built into Ed Carpenter’s multicultural philosophy on a logistical level was for students and teachers to have flexibility and agency in their education—or, more simply, choices in curricula *and* choices in how to learn. For example, one novelty included the “Student-Teach-Student” program which, “because of the large number of students enrolled in the school” and not enough funds to hire more teachers, the administration “identified students at the Prep who have expertise in various subjects areas.” In this program, students tutor their fellow students who were having difficulties in various subjects.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, “free use [was] made of experts from colleges, industry, and the community,” as Harlem Prep commonly worked to partner with outside individuals for hands-on programs and learning opportunities.¹⁵⁶ For instance, the “Volunteer Teacher Program” relied on thirty-nine “experts” from entities such as Port Authority, Union Carbide, IBM, and AT&T to present various courses, “through in-kind services,” in law,

¹⁵³ Hopson student records, “Student Academic Record,” on file at Park East High School.

¹⁵⁴ The specific details regarding the accreditation process for Harlem Prep is unclear. As discussed in chapter 1, Harlem Prep received a provisional charter from the New York State Department of Education on July 28, 1967, which “established Harlem Prep as a legal entity by virtue of the authority vested in the state.” See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 23. At some point, most likely in 1970, Harlem Prep received a permanent charter by the New York State Department of Education, and was considered a “non-profit tuition free, independent school” with a recorded charter number 10274. See Letter from Edward Carpenter to Julius Bergen, October 5, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁵⁵ “Progress Report for Ford Foundation,” May 1972, p. 2-3, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁵⁶ Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 2, Ford Records.

advertising, investments, systems analysis, and other topics.¹⁵⁷ Other examples of outreach-related programming included the Media Department's work with a local TV affiliate, where students' media projects—short films, news reports, and other community reporting—would be shown on a regularly scheduled local TV program called “As We Dig It.”¹⁵⁸ The Media Department took “its [student] crew into the community and have been developing programs depicting the attitudes, desires, and efforts of community people in solving their daily problems.”¹⁵⁹

Another notable program—albeit a temporary one—at Harlem Prep was the Adult Evening Program. During the 1968-1969 academic year, Harlem Prep “sponsored Evening classes for adults desiring High School Equivalency Diploma; upgrading in present employment; entrance to Evening College; and for those people wishing to learn to read.”¹⁶⁰ Harlem Prep teachers and administrators volunteered to teach hundreds of adults four nights a week, many of them parents of Harlem Prep students.¹⁶¹ There were also, at times, short summer orientation and tutorial projects to help incoming students, current Harlem Prep students, and graduates who needed employment.¹⁶² Other one-time programs included the Engineering Concepts Curriculum Program

¹⁵⁷ “Progress Report for Ford Foundation,” May 1972, p. 3-4, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; See also Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School: An Alternative,” 87.

¹⁵⁸ Howe, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action, to McGeorge Bundy, via Howard Dressner,” November 23, 1971, p. 4, Ford Records; See also, about this initiative, “Progress Report for Ford Foundation,” May 1972, p. 2, Ford Records.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Mangum and Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, [no page numbers], Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

¹⁶¹ Ibid; Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” June 22, 1970, p. 6, Ford Records. A variety of documents discuss the existence of this evening school program, each which provide different enrollment numbers for the program. It is likely that enrollment numbers were estimates, and that somewhere between 120 and 250 adults went through the program. However, due to inadequate funds and the overbearing workload on the teachers who taught during the day and then also (as volunteers) at night, the program could not be sustained despite constant proposals to renew it. See Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 37, Ford Records.

(ECCP) co-created by the science and mathematics departments to “prepare our students for the technological age and the problems it has created so that they can be the problems solvers and creative builders in the post-technological age.”¹⁶³ Harlem Prep teachers and administrators—particularly administrator and head of curriculum, Ann Carpenter—constantly sought to develop new programs and initiatives that spoke to the school’s interest in teaching students practical skills that would prepare them for both college and society more broadly. For example, throughout the school’s existence, administrators wrote dozens of proposals for various programs that the school hoped to incorporate into its educational program. These programs included bolstering the school’s academic departments such as: more robust sculpture and ceramics courses; building a “Computer-Technology Center Program”; a separate “Oceanology Institute” that would invited oceanology scholars to Harlem Prep; a “Historical Sites” program where students would travel by bus to important historical landmarks and generate reports; a separate ten-month interdisciplinary course that would rigorously combine the humanities and social sciences; a “Drafting Course” to “enhance [students’] chance of success” in the fields of engineering, architecture, and designing; and the creation of a school band and orchestra department, among many others.¹⁶⁴

More creative projects that were proposed included a Summer Activity Program in East Africa where students would travel throughout the region, volunteering, working in camps, attending lecture at universities, and other experiences. So, too, was the “Para-Professional Training” program, which sought to train community elders at Harlem Prep and create bonds of

¹⁶² Mangum and Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, p. 6, Rockefeller Records.

¹⁶³ Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 10, Ford Records.

¹⁶⁴ See Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 7-41, Ford Records; and Mangum and Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, Rockefeller Records.

connection between these older citizens and students at the same time.¹⁶⁵ Notably, this program differed from other paraprofessional programs in the city, encouraging older participants to seek training as opposed to younger community members more common in other venues.¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, the “Police Cadet Corps” program would “prepare young men and women to enter John Jay College, graduate and enter the employ of Law Enforcement” seeing that “many young black and Spanish speaking youth have strong feelings that police officers are hostile and insensitive to minority groups.”¹⁶⁷ Both the paraprofessionals efforts above and these cadet programs were apparent needs in Harlem; similar grassroots programs to prepare police cadets and paraprofessionals were proposed by Dr. Kenneth Clark and his HARYOU team only a few years prior.¹⁶⁸ (It is important to recognize, then, that some programmatic efforts on the part of Harlem Prep might have been in response to the community—perhaps the school’s parent representatives or other community members offered this input.) There were also proposals that had great detail such as “Touch Typing Classes” to help students “turn in neat reports in college” (and parents in the adult evening program to make money as typists), as well as a “Boricuas-American Integrative Skill Development Program” to help teach Puerto Rican individuals various skills that could help their professional development.¹⁶⁹ Ultimately, due to the school’s tenuous financial situation, many—if not most—of these programs and initiatives never came to fruition. However, some, like the adult evening program and additional resources in the oceanology department, seemingly did in watered-down forms. More importantly, even if Harlem Prep staff was unable to expand its

¹⁶⁵ Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” January 5, 1969, p. 29-38, Ford Records.

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, Juravich, “The Work of Education.”

¹⁶⁷ Mangum and Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, Rockefeller Records.

¹⁶⁸ See Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., *Youth in the Ghetto*.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

academic program in the way that they hoped, these proposed initiatives illustrate how Harlem Prep envisioned a robust educational program and how both Carpenters wanted to prepare students for entry into a pluralistic society.

Finally, another key component of the school's educational program was Harlem Prep's thriving after school space. "I don't think there were any teachers that rushed out of there (unless there was something really important), but most of us stayed forever and ever [after school]," remembers English teacher Sandy Campbell. "It became almost a weekly thing that some of the teachers and students, on Friday, would sit down and plan out the activities and meals that we would have over Saturday and Sunday and everybody would just leave school and go to that person's house, and just stay there for the weekend. I'm not exaggerating, it was like every week!"¹⁷⁰ What Campbell describes—and his former students verify—is that part of the Harlem Prep experience (and perhaps an unwritten component of the educational program) was a deep camaraderie that encouraged collaborative learning and shared success. This often happened as much outside the classroom, and during after school hours, as it did inside school walls. There were some planned extracurricular programs such as dance and music practices, where the Moja Logo dancers learned African-inspired routines or where the Moja Logo chorus prepared for upcoming performances.¹⁷¹ For example, alumnus Beverly Grayman-Rich remembers one of her concerts at Harlem Prep, where the chorus sang the whole album of "Lady Sings the Blues" based on Diana Ross's portrayal of Billie Holiday; she also remembers going out on the road to sing, including giving a concert to prisoners at a state prison in New Jersey.¹⁷² Musician Harry Smith

¹⁷⁰ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

¹⁷¹ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015; M. A. Farber, "Harlem Prep Graduates 83 In a Festive Street Ceremony," *New York Times*, June 11, 1970; "Progress Report for Ford Foundation," May 1972, p. 4, Ford Records; Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017.

¹⁷² Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017.

fondly remembers playing after school hours and around New York City with the school's jazz band—it was more a hang-out group of musicians who “jammed” than a formal band program—led by Arnold Jones who was Harlem Prep's music teacher and a well-known local musician.¹⁷³ It was also very common for some of the more politically active students such as the Five Percenters to organize meetings after school, too.¹⁷⁴

However, more than anything, students and staff remember the spontaneity inherent in the after-school space that Campbell and others depict. Impromptu lectures from different Harlem Prep teachers when school officially ended was an almost daily occurrence—“they just happened”—as a result of students often asking for teachers to continue a class discussion or lesson.¹⁷⁵ Or, students themselves, after the final bell rung, “would go around and we'd have our own heated discussions about different things,” explains student Clifford Jacobs. “So even after classes were over, these conversations would go on—and I remember being there sometimes until later in the evening, just talking.”¹⁷⁶ One administrator, from his vantage point, remembers this as well: “One of the things about Harlem Prep, was that nobody went home when they were supposed to. School was out at three o'clock—you had to throw those kids out of there at six. They didn't want to leave!”¹⁷⁷

Although notes about the school's unofficial late hours and after school meetings did not fill up official curriculum or grant proposals, the thriving after school space was vital to the

¹⁷³ Smith interview, March 7, 2017.

¹⁷⁴ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

¹⁷⁵ See, for example, anecdote from Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

¹⁷⁶ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

¹⁷⁷ Pruitt interview, May 4, 2017. English teacher Sandy Campbell, who attended the interview, added in response to Pruitt's comment that it was often later than 6pm before students and teacher left.

learning process.¹⁷⁸ Failing to highlight the significance of these gatherings would not just be a disservice to students who valued this time—“it was good because you always learned new things,” explains one student—but because it was an expectation of staff to also participate in this type of environment.¹⁷⁹ Not only did teachers and volunteers (such as those from IBM who would teach courses) stay after school, or assistant headmasters like Henry Pruitt, but so did Ed and Ann Carpenter.¹⁸⁰ The school’s headmaster modeled this convergence of school, community, and home. For example, Casey Carpenter recalls how students very commonly visited the Carpenter’s house in New Jersey after school. “Students would come over [and] they would just ring the bell,” during both weekends and weeknights, unexpectedly and without warning. “It was like an open house,” she explains. Casey remembers students asking her when they entered the house, “‘Where’s Carp?’,” also sometimes calling her mother “Queen Bee.” Students would find Ann and Ed watching TV in the bedroom and join them in their room. “There was no school and home,” she asserts, and this attitude where students would sleep over on the weekends and come visit their administrators—or develop social relationships with their teachers—seeped into the educational program at Harlem Prep.¹⁸¹ Ultimately, the educational program depicted on paper documents did not fully represent the school’s approach to teaching students. The one-hour classroom block was not the only place of learning. After school gatherings and discussions, internships beyond school walls, and an overall reliance on activities that were “educative” also were deeply embedded into

¹⁷⁸ After school space and programming more broadly continues to be a ripe subject of debate among education scholars today. For example, see Glynda Hull and Jessica Zacher, “What Is After-School Worth? Developing Literacy and Identity Out of School,” *Voices in Urban Education* 26 (Winter 2010): 20-28. For the affects on students of color, see Maisha T. Fisher, “Open Mics and Open Minds: Spoken Word Poetry in African Diaspora Participatory Literacy Communities,” *Harvard Educational Review* 73, no. 3 (2003): 363.

¹⁷⁹ See, among many, Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

¹⁸⁰ See Pruitt interview, May 4, 2017 and Casey Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017.

¹⁸¹ Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017. Of course, since the Carpenter’s lived in Teaneck, NJ, it would seem that most student visitors lived close by, whom were also a minority considering a large majority of students lived in New York City; Campbell interview, January 14, 2015; See also Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017.

the educational program of Harlem Prep.¹⁸² (Perhaps it was this dynamic—so many moving parts—that affected the school’s lack of ability to sustain itself later during increased fiscal pressures.)

Harlem Prep’s culturally relevant and diverse curriculum, free-flowing class schedule, varied in-school programs, and the after-school experience all contributed to Harlem Prep’s education program and larger educational philosophy. These school elements emphasized flexibility, student agency and choice, and above all, multiculturalism—in this case, not just in terms of curriculum, but in visions of equity and stimulating school structures. As James Banks explains, “empowering school culture and social structure,” one of the five primary dimensions of multicultural education, “exists when the culture and organization of the school have been restructured so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and gender groups will experience educational equality and cultural empowerment.”¹⁸³ The leadership at Harlem Prep similarly adhered to this in practice and emphasized equality within school walls as an active concern. While a majority of students were Black, the Carpenters felt that all students, regardless of race, gender, political orientation, and beyond, should be treated equally at Harlem Prep. Non-Black students today, for example, have echoed this in their school experiences.¹⁸⁴ Banks describes further that variables that need to be examined to meet this goal include “grouping practices, the social climate of the school, assessment practices, extracurricular activities and

¹⁸² There are hints of both Ed and Ann Carpenter’s educational philosophy that relate to the ideas of historian of education Lawrence Cremin. In Cremin’s *The American Experience*, he, in part, explains how there were countless elements in society that were “educative” beyond just schools. While the Carpenters (and Cremin) of course believed in the importance of traditional education and the pivotal role of the school, based on Harlem Prep’s ideas for a more expansive curriculum, partnerships with companies, and social aspects where learning continued, there is some congruence between Cremin and the Carpenters’ conception of education. For more on Cremin, see Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Vintage, 1964) and less prominently, Lawrence Cremin, *Traditions of American Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

¹⁸³ Banks, “Transformative Knowledge, Curriculum Reform, and Action,” in *Multicultural Education*, 338.

¹⁸⁴ See, for example, Hopson interview, February 11, 2015; and Berger interview, November 28, 2016.

participation,” all of which are reflected in the ways that Harlem Prep operated on a granular level.¹⁸⁵ Ann and Ed Carpenter realized that multiculturalism was not only about appreciating different cultures or teaching culturally relevant material, but about designing a school where students—most from off the street or out of school—could return to education and thrive.

Still, to fully describe the educational program is perhaps a fool’s errand. The eclectic nature of the ever-changing curriculum, the fluidity of the extracurricular activities, and the ineffable depiction of a space (described in chapter 3) that purposely had few permanent fixtures present significant challenges to accurately capturing all of the educational components that made the school function. Most importantly, Harlem Prep was an oasis of love and passion—it was a place where, in the words of a student, there was “beautiful love with people [who] don’t hurt each other and really ‘dig’ where they’re at with each other.”¹⁸⁶ The existence of this love that fostered cooperation between everyone at Harlem Prep was the glue that made the educational program—in the eyes of students and staff—work as it did. And, it was the teachers who were the catalyst for this love; a humanity that cannot fully be described through words on a page. For example, outside evaluators who first visited the school with a “show me” attitude of whether the school backed up its claims later “expressed a sense of frustration about how difficult it is to measure the ‘humanistic climate’” in their report on the school.¹⁸⁷ Harlem Prep was a conglomerate of courses, programs, and people that, somehow, fit together thanks in part to a contagious humanity that permeated each educational component.

Moreover, whether by accident or by design, headmaster Carpenter, his wife and administrative partner Ann, vice principal Ruth Dowd, and the diligent staff were able to design a

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Anonymous student in “*Step by Step*,” dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

¹⁸⁷ Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 11.

program reliant on extreme informality—in scheduling, in class selection, in the method and manner students acted inside these classes—interwoven with conventional educational components that were also necessary for tangible learning. Students still learned math, science, English and history; they still were graded as they were before in the public schools. And, although Harlem Prep certainly had curricular shortcomings, and teachers—many of them inexperienced—assuredly had pedagogical missteps, the unorthodox mixture proved effective. “The street is Harlem Prep, like all the learning is right here—*this* is the street...you don’t have to go out there and learn it,” said a student when being interviewed in the *Step by Step* documentary.¹⁸⁸ “Everything that happens in life, whether it carries material overtones or not, touches off a particular emotion within ourselves,” English teacher Sandy Campbell told students in 1970. “[An event] may spark an interest or a desire that we have to travel toward until it is fulfilled.”¹⁸⁹ For hundreds of students, the event that Campbell speaks of—even if he and his students did not know it at the time—was attending, learning, and then graduating from Harlem Prep and experiencing the dynamic, multicultural educational program that the school proudly offered.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Anonymous student in “*Step by Step*,” dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

¹⁸⁹ Sandy Campbell in “*Step by Step*,” dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

¹⁹⁰ Today, when asked by current Harlem high school students, whether he knew the impact of Harlem Prep would have on his life and those of his students, he contends that he never would thought that at the time. See Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

Chapter Six

“It Saved Me”: Students, Their Stories, and a Commencement to Remember

“[Harlem Prep] really stressed the importance of education and higher learning. I think in that respect, it always made me eager to learn, and made me really be proactive for my kids, as far as getting that education. I think it saved so many people in that neighborhood.”

–Sherry Kilgore, 1971 Harlem Prep graduate¹

“I knew that I wanted to have ‘The Harlem Preparatory School’ on my life’s resume. I was empowered by my Prep experience which truly prepared me for the duality of life overall and continues to serve me today.”

–Cheryl Keywanda Ballard-Battle, 1971 Harlem Prep graduate²

Martin Nur can vividly recall his first moments walking into Harlem Prep. “The third of September [1968], it’s a day I’ll always remember,” explains Nur. “It was really overwhelming walking in there and hearing all of this going on, and seeing how things were organized. It was like ordered chaos!”³ Nur, in his own words, was a so-called “traditional Harlem Prep student, the high school dropout.”⁴ Although a good junior high school student, Nur was caught up in the city’s busing plans that sought to integrate area high schools and despite a new school opening close to his house, was forced to attend Martin Van Buren High School that took two hours to

¹ Kilgore interview, May 21, 2017.

² Cheryl Keywanda Ballard-Battle, e-mail message to author, February 6, 2017

³ Nur interview, July 17, 2017.

⁴ Ibid.

reach on the edge of Queens.⁵ “I tried to fight it, but I had nobody to fight with.” At Van Buren High School, Nur was placed into a lower track of “general classes” without any proper evaluation. After excelling in these general classes, administrators had no choice but to instead place him in an academic track that he desired from the start. However, due to some disciplinary issues around poor attendance and homework, Nur was later expelled from the school, and despite his pleas to stay—“I’m motivated now, I want to go to school, I have ambitions” he remembers telling administrators—they said that his only option was to attend night school elsewhere. Committed to education, Nur indeed enrolled in a night school in the spring of 1968. A few months later, Nur was hanging out with a friend who then told Nur “about a friend of his who was going to this experiential school in Harlem, and it was a school for high school dropouts.” Ultimately, the friend-of-a-friend contacted Nur with more information (to Nur’s surprise), and Nur immediately called Harlem Prep; “I ran down there the next day,” took some English and math tests that “did not look that formal,” and passed them. At 18 years of age, he was prepared to re-start his life. Although recognizing Harlem Prep’s imperfections, Nur had a meaningful experience at Harlem Prep, having “nothing but wonderful feelings” for the school, a place where he would graduate, be ushered into higher education, and later meet his lifelong partner.⁶

For Nur, and the many hundreds of students who attended Harlem Prep (as well as the dozens of teachers and administrators who worked there), the school is generally remembered as a special period in each of their lives. Their fond memories of academic achievement, overcoming of adversity, personal growth, and perhaps most of all, lasting friendships with each

⁵ See Edward C. Burks, “A Gain in Schools Sought in Queens: Blacks and Whites Seeking an End to Busing,” *New York Times*, June 20, 1971.

⁶ Nur interview, July 17, 2017.

other, still echo today. Students were the heart and soul of Harlem Prep, and this chapter explores them by examining the school’s admissions process and by providing a macro look at the student population as a whole. Who were Harlem Prep students, demographically and otherwise? More importantly, what were their stories—who were they as young people trying to navigate the world? Thus, this chapter also explores students on a granular level: their lives before Harlem Prep, how they entered the school, and whether or not the school changed their trajectories once they started attending. Finally, for many students, the outside commencement was the pinnacle of their Harlem Prep experience—graduating high school which for many had seemed out of reach—in front of family and friends. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the graduation exercises and its significance to both them and the school more broadly.

Getting into Harlem Prep: The Admissions Process

“It was kind of haphazard,” summarizes administrator Hussein Ahdieh, when reflecting on the admissions process. Not only did the process change over time, but “there was not really an established system in order to go to Harlem Prep,” according to Ahdieh, at least after the school’s first two years once the school tripled its enrollment from approximately 180 students to almost 600.⁷ One of the more mysterious aspects of Harlem Prep’s educational program was the entry into it: how did a student get admitted to the school? Actually, at the outset, admission seemed to be rather selective and straightforward, with three components: one, an application; two, a reading test; and three, an in-person interview.⁸ In terms of personal qualities of students, there was

⁷ Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016. Note that in the first year of the school, as explained in the Chapter 2, less than 50 students attended Harlem Prep and most came through the Street Academy Program. In the school’s second year, while it expanded greatly, with less than 200 students, the medium-sized population was still manageable. Thus, Ahdieh is referring to how once the school grew, the admissions process became much more unorganized and less structured out of necessity.

absolutely no restrictions on who could attend in terms of age, educational achievement, or life experiences, except one factor: a student must not be currently addicted to narcotics without being in a drug program, which, as discussed later in this chapter, speaks to the larger issue of drugs in Central Harlem.⁹ The Harlem Prep application issued a disclaimer regarding this sole qualification around drug use for students who had a prior drug history: “To be accepted as a student at the Harlem Preparatory School, you must be in a Drug Program. If you are not, the school will assist you in entering a certified rehabilitation center. Any student found to be a user of drugs during the school term will be dismissed immediately until the problem has been corrected.”¹⁰ (Such a statement suggests that Harlem Prep was eager to help students with past drug issues, not shun them, while also trying to protect students with prior addictions from being around drugs.¹¹) Harlem Prep’s six-page application reflected the school’s priorities of caring about the student personally—particularly his or her hopes and dreams—and not about the student’s educational past. Besides requiring basic personal information, the application had notable questions that matched the school’s unique (and often more mature) student body—it read more like a census for adults than for a student applying for high school.¹² Moreover, the application’s open-ended questions, asking students why they wanted to attend Harlem Prep and for them to write a “one

⁸ Evidence of this three-step process is the result of a careful piecing together of written documents from Carpenter and various oral history interviews.

⁹ See, among many statements from Carpenter in Harold Howe, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” November 23, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. See also Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016, who emphasizes that there were no demographic standards of any kind; For information about drug use in New York City and Central Harlem specifically, see Eric C. Schneider, *Smack: Heroin and the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); and, Michael Massing, *The Fix: Solving the Nation’s Drug Problem* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998) among others.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Harold Howe, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action, to McGeorge Bundy,” November 23, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹² For example, while the first page asked basic information, the second page asked questions about dependents and marital status, veteran status, social services, and previous school attendance.

page autobiography describing [his/her] past educational experiences,” further spoke to the school’s interest in their humanity, their past, and their hopes and dreams.¹³

In addition to the application, students were also required to take a forty-five minute reading test called the Gates Reading Survey, part of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test.¹⁴ The goal of this survey was to test reading speed, vocabulary, and basic comprehension. Many students such as Harry Smith and Janet McDonald remember taking some sort of test that was relatively quick and painless in their recollections today.¹⁵ Students were required to be able to read at a ninth grade reading level (or above) based on the results of the Gates Reading Survey. Combined with the lack of narcotics use, this reading requirement was the only other requirement that Harlem Prep administrators claimed to enforce.¹⁶ However, both anecdotal and contemporary information call to question how consistently this policy was actually followed in reality. For example, one teacher remembers encountering a student with reading levels much below the ninth grade level.¹⁷ Educational evaluators also wrote in 1973 report that “the particular reading test used and the score obtained may not be of crucial significance in reaching decisions about admission of students. The staff members are by now quite experienced in this process, and the

¹³ Assorted Harlem Prep student applications, on file at Park East High School, New York, NY, copies in author’s possession. In order to keep confidentiality, these records are cited here anonymously and in the aggregate, although close attention to individual applications was still made. In looking at these applications, it was not uncommon for some students to attach pieces of paper and expand on what they wrote inside the application. Contextual clues suggest that the autobiography was an important part. The final question of the application on page 6, also reflected the school’s belief in applicants’ college potential, asking them asking them their various academic interests at “the college level.”

¹⁴ Ibid. Note that each student record file had different records inside, and knowledge of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test is from a different student file than the previous two citations; See also Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep”, 4; Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 11.

¹⁵ Janet McDonald, *Project Girl* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 40; Smith interview, March 7, 2017.

¹⁶ Harold Howe, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action, to McGeorge Bundy,” November 23, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁷ Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017.

other information they obtain through applications and interviews may be more important than a particular test score.”¹⁸ Furthermore, it is also likely that few applicants—particularly considering most of these youth had been out of school for months or years—would in reality have scores that met these reading levels anyway. In the HARYOU report, Kenneth Clark and his team estimated that approximately 75% of all Harlem 8th grade students were below reading level, calling to question the academic reading levels of many out-of-school youth who might later attend Harlem Prep.¹⁹ The final component of admission, then, was an interview or informal meeting with the prospective student. According to Edmund Gordon’s assessment of the school, students met with one of the college-focused administrators to discuss college goals, such as Mother Dowd or E. Salmon-MacFarlane, as well as with faculty members, other administrators, and even other students.²⁰

However, in practice, as the school grew exponentially with many more applicants than open spots, it seems the admission process became increasingly ad hoc. Already in 1969, there were over 1,200 applications for 155 open spots, and the school’s previously established (and perhaps publicly shared) protocol was often only partially followed.²¹ It is unclear precisely how the school’s rapid growth and popularity affected administrators’ determination of the open number of spots each academic year. Enrollment was always fluid and inexact—and different clues from different voices all hint at a lack of hard cap. While evidence suggests that many students (if not a majority) continued to be formally interviewed, accompanied by a completed

¹⁸ Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 11.

¹⁹ Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., *Youth in the Ghetto*, 172-173.

²⁰ Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep”, 4; One student remembers being interviewed by Headmaster Ed Carpenter himself. See Rothman interview, October 19, 2016.

²¹ “From Harlem to Harvard: Business-Backed Prep School Turns Slum Dropouts into College Students,” *Nation’s Business*, December 1969.

application and reading test, other clues suggest that some students only completed one or two of these steps.²² Furthermore, there also seem to be a small, but substantial, number of students who showed up at Harlem Prep on the first few days of school with either a personal connection to an administrator, teacher, or student—or sometimes their own personal story that captured the attention of an administrator or faculty member—and would be admitted on the spot.²³ With the flood of applications, admission became, in part, a first-come, first-serve enterprise for a majority of prospective students. “I mean you couldn’t pre-apply [far out in advance],” recalls alumnus Peter Hopson. “I think the way it worked is that you came in that day and you queued up and you got in and when they were finished that was it.”²⁴ There seems to be some evidence to support Hopson’s recollection; other students recall prospective students just “showing up” as well.²⁵

Ultimately, there seem to be two known truths about the enigmatic Harlem Prep admission process in the school’s prime years. One, while codified in the school’s official policy, the admission process was in practice quite malleable and seemed to be more of a record-keeping formality than a strict process used to rigidly select (or weed out) incoming students. And, two, the applications that were often followed up on and the students selected were those who physically came to visit Harlem Prep either on their own accord or via the connection of a Harlem Prep member (student or staff).²⁶ With very limited human resources to review over a thousand applications—and with a mindset of believing in every student—Carpenter and staff seemed to

²² For example, some student records viewed by author have completed applications and notes from a Harlem Prep interviewer while other student records have an application with blank pages for the interview section. Still other student records, with robust academic grade reports, do not have any application or interview notes. See student records, on file at Park East High School, New York, NY.

²³ For example, see Hopson interview, February 25, 2015; and Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

²⁴ Hopson interview, February 25, 2015.

²⁵ Nile interview, March 4, 2015; Nur interview, July 17, 2017; Rothman interview, October 19, 2017.

²⁶ For example, Beverly Grayman-Rich, who through the recommendation of her brother’s friend who attended Harlem Prep, set up an interview for her to visit the school. See Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017.

admit most student applications (with or without an interview and reading test) based on timing in relatively short order.²⁷

Harlem Prep Students and Their Stories

“It was a very, very, very special time—a very, very unique experience. It was the best and most positive and productive educational experience I had.”²⁸ Sterling Nile’s reminiscences about Harlem Prep being an *experience*—not just a school—is a common theme among alumni who recall their days as young adults learning on 136th Street and 8th Avenue. For Nile, he attended Harlem Prep for two years, thrived academically, and notably, was chosen to serve as the student representative on the school’s board of trustees.²⁹ One of the older, more mature students at Harlem Prep, his journey into the school took a roundabout path. Sterling Nile was born and raised in Harlem, attending nearby Frederick Douglass Junior High School—and in a twist of fate, where he first met future Harlem Prep headmaster, Ed Carpenter, then the school’s guidance counselor. As a secondary student at DeWitt Clinton High School, Nile excelled in art, “but I liked it so much that I would not go to other classes and just stay in the art classroom and continue to work.” He struggled elsewhere in school, and although his grades were so low that he had to spend an extra six months at DeWitt Clinton, he eventually graduated with a general diploma in winter of 1968. Nile then chose to attend the School of Visual Arts to pursue an art

²⁷ In regard to the reading test, the evaluators of the Institute for Educational Development contend that this test is a low-level test and is not very useful since it is intended for younger students; In terms of accepting students within a quick turnaround time or on the spot, this differs from the school’s early years where faculty and administrators would more carefully review and discuss applications. See Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016, who discusses this change; Finally, there is no evidence that Harlem prep turned students away. Although common sense would suggest that this was bound to happen, on average, it seems most likely that students who showed up—with or without an application—were admitted if they met the school’s admission guidelines.

²⁸ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

²⁹ Ibid.

career, but after about a year and half there, Nile left the school upon realizing he needed more from his education. Out on the streets, he then went on to do “some Black Power work—I got involved in the community and stuff like that.... I went as far as I could go with that because it got to be risky,” he explains. Once the FBI showed up at his parents’ house, Nile’s mother became “concerned about [his] Black Power activities,” because, as he explains it, his parents—they grew up in the Depression with rampant segregation and discrimination and did not attend college—believed that “if you just got an education, everything would be alright.” Nile’s mother had heard about Harlem Prep and visited the school one day to speak with Carpenter, who remembered his one-time pupil at Frederick Douglass, offering her son a spot to join the school midway in October of 1969. “While I was there, I kind of excelled in that environment,” he explains. “It was a beautiful experience.”³⁰

What were the elements that made up this student experience—to be a Black or brown young adult at Harlem Prep each day?³¹ Who were these students and how did they get there? What were their stories inside and outside of Harlem Prep? While this dissertation, in part, interlaces students’ individual stories (and will continue to do so in the chapters ahead) throughout the narrative, it is also important to paint a larger portrait, with both quantitative and qualitative data, of who these young individuals were once the school grew exponentially by fall of 1969. With the former in mind, various reports on Harlem Prep’s demographics help sketch a basic picture of the type of students that attended the school.

“The more than 600 students who now contribute to the intellectual ferment at Harlem Prep represent many different national, cultural and religious backgrounds,” wrote Dr. Edmund W. Gordon, a renowned professor of psychology of education and urban education, who was

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ This question is also, in part, addressed in the previous chapter about the school’s educational program.

commissioned in 1971 to evaluate Harlem Prep as part of a federal program to assess school desegregation efforts.³² Gordon's demographic tracking mirrored Harlem Prep's initial diversity that Ed Carpenter himself documented in 1967, except by 1969, that diversity had manifested in over six times as many students. Although there were Latino/a, white, and students of Middle Eastern descent, the majority of students were Black and of low socio-economic status.³³ Students had ancestral backgrounds from all parts of the United States, both east and West Africa, and various countries in the Caribbean and West Indies; they also came from all five boroughs of New York City, as well as parts of New Jersey and Nassau and Westchester County.³⁴ A strong plurality of students seemed to live in Manhattan according to another assessment of Harlem Prep—approximately 48%, 40%, and 37% in 1969, 1970, and 1971, respectively.³⁵ There was also a diverse range of religious beliefs, including students who were Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim—orthodox followers of Islam, followers of Elijah Muhammad, and followers of Malcolm X who referred to themselves as “The Gods”—and a few

³² See Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep.” To be clear, Harlem Prep did not receive any federal funding (minus a small, one-time grant because it supported Vietnam War veterans) or was part of any desegregation program. The reason for the United States Office of Education’s interest in Harlem Prep is unknown.

³³ Ibid., 5; Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 6. To note, while both reports stress that most students were Black and from the lowest socioeconomic quintiles, the exact numeric breakdown is still unknown.

³⁴ Ibid; See also Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 73. This growth of enrolling students not just from Harlem but throughout New York City was one of the major changes as Harlem Prep grew. From all accounts, many students were from Harlem, but with an enrollment of 600 students, there was also space to broaden their geographic range.

³⁵ See Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 5. In 1973, the Institute for Educational Development produced a 42-page in-depth independent report of Harlem Prep. In this report, former (non-Harlem Prep) teachers and administrators visited the school and evaluated it over the course of a year, producing both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data, however, is limited, as it primarily described Harlem Prep graduates and not current enrollees. Still, graduates are generally a random sampling of the student body (and are represented in the course of three-year data collection), and it is reasonable to infer that the percentage of graduates who lived in Manhattan was similar to those currently enrolled. (It is also noteworthy that the percentage living in Manhattan declined over time—a feature of the changing demographics that will be discussed Part III of this dissertation.)

of the Bahá'í and Yoruba faiths.³⁶ For example, in 1970, approximately 41% of students were Protestant, 18% Catholic, 15% were part of “The Gods”/Five Percenters, 14% Black Muslim, 4% Jews of Ethiopian descent, 2% Sunni Muslim, 2% Bahá'í, and 4% who had no religious affiliation.³⁷ As expected, this religious diversity melded into great political diversity, too. “Every major philosophy of civil rights [was] represented—militant, middle class conservative, nationalist, and integrationist,” wrote Gordon.³⁸

There was also a wide range of ages of Harlem Prep students, who were as young as 16 and as old as 40, although on average students ranged from 17 to 26, with the most common age of students being 19 or 20 years old.³⁹ In turn, since most students stayed at Harlem Prep for one year, the most common age at graduation was also 19 or 20, followed by 21 or 22, according to data from another report.⁴⁰ In 1969, for example, 61% of graduates were age 19 to 20 and 18% were 21 or 22, followed by 10% who were 23 to 25. However, by 1971, “there was more dispersion across the age range” at Harlem Prep: there was a higher percentage of students who were age 23 to 25 (approximately 18%) and students who were age 17 or 18 (approximately 22%).⁴¹ With this broad age span came an equally broad range of previous life experiences.

³⁶ For Carpenter’s own description, see Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 74-75.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 119; Jewish people from Ethiopia were referred to as “Falasha” Jews, which Carpenter spelled “Balashan” in his dissertation. Falasha is sometimes thought to be a derogatory word for these Jewish people.

³⁸ Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep,” 4-5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3; Despite the occasional older student, including a grandmother who graduated at 50 years old in 1969, it seems that most students were on average 19 or 20 years old. See Edward Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Proposal: ‘Education for a New Era,’” p. 3, January 5, 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records, for more descriptions of the student body at the time.

⁴⁰ Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* These statistics are for the age of students at graduation, and not at enrollment. However, the age disparities and percentages would be similar, since most students stayed for only one year. These statistics are intended to provide a general overview, and provide the best—and perhaps the only—available quantitative data on student enrollment.

Edmund Gordon lists how students were “former dope addicts, jail inmates, delinquents, and unwed mothers,” with a small, but substantial, percentage being married.⁴² Although Gordon’s description of Harlem Prep students is deficit-oriented and in stark contrast to the way they administrators and teacher spoke about students in public and private, his description does speak to the unique population that Harlem Prep served. In addition, albeit more rare, both Gordon and the Institute of Educational Development, as well as photographs and present-day interviews, confirm that a small but notable percentage of students also had children while at Harlem Prep.⁴³ Furthermore, while many students did live with one or both parents (or, just as often, some other family member), about a quarter of students were totally independent.⁴⁴ Roughly 10% of students were Vietnam War veterans starting in 1970, and alumni today recall meeting students displaying symptoms of what doctors today have termed Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).⁴⁵ In his report, Gordon also described how students were commonly employed by Harlem Prep as part-time clerks, secretaries, switchboard operators, janitors and cafeteria

⁴² Edmund Gordon, in his report, approximated that 30% of students were married, although he recognizes this estimate. The quantitative data from the Institute for Educational Development (IED) report states that 12% of graduating students in 1969 were married during their attendance, for example, and only 3% and 5% in 1970 and 1971. However, the IED report only lists graduating students, and not the entire student body, and perhaps it is likely there were more married students in the larger student body that the report did not capture due to smaller sample sizes compared to Gordon’s report. See Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep.” Gordon’s description of Harlem Prep, again, while being using language that portrays students in a negative and unnecessary light, is significant because it is one of the few evaluations from an independent source funded by the U.S. government.

⁴³ Using a variety of estimates from both reports, it is reasonable to assert that approximately 25 to 50 students enrolled at Harlem Prep during any given year had children during. See Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep”; Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School”; See also Kilgore interview, May 21, 2017; and Assorted Harlem Prep photographs, ca. 1971, ExxonMobil Records, which depict children at Harlem Prep.

⁴⁴ Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep,” 4-5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; See also Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 16, which confirm this percentage, with data of the exact number of veterans during the years of 1970 to 1972; For example, see Bey-Grecia, February 25, 2015, who recalls students ducking and hiding when hearing loud noises or outside gunshots. See also Sandy Campbell, personal communication via phone, week of January 22 to February 26, 2018, about the struggles of veteran students.

helpers—economic insecurity for students was common and Harlem Prep (and even Carpenter personally) tried to meet students’ economic needs when it could.⁴⁶



Figures 19 and 20. Harlem Prep students caring to their child inside Harlem Prep (left) and students discussing after class (right) behind a blackboard with math equations, ca. 1971.

Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas-Austin

Just as Carpenter and staff promoted and celebrated their differences—in age, in experiences, in beliefs and opinions—students did too, according to Gordon and countless alumni accounts of the time and in reminiscences today.⁴⁷ Janet McDonald, an award-winning author and Harlem Prep alumna, described the diversity among Black students—a key element

⁴⁶ Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep,” 4-5; Carpenter was known to lend students \$5 or \$10 in cash to students who stopped by his office with severe economic needs.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; For more examples of very similar statements, see Hopson interview, February 11, 2015; Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017; Berger interview, January 28, 2016, along with student James Rogers in Carpenter and Rogers, “Harlem Prep: An Alternative Story,” in *High Schools*.

of the school's multiculturalism—in her memoir *Project Girl*, which was published by the University of California Press in 2000.⁴⁸ She explained:

Most of the students were black, from backgrounds similar to my own. Yet there was surprising diversity among us, especially for a project girl with little exposure to differently raised black people. Demetrius, a handsome high-school dropout, had grown up riding horses in Connecticut; Kwame, a native of Harlem, had served time in prison. There were Black Muslims, teenagers from New Jersey who owned expensive cars, and students wearing African clothing that they had bought *in* Africa. There were parolees, martial-arts experts, poets, musicians, and painters. Everyone espoused opinions, questioned teachers, and challenged each other's viewpoints, creating an atmosphere that was both exhilarating and intimidating.⁴⁹

In *Project Girl*, McDonald traced her impoverished upbringing in Brooklyn, where she graduated high school at sixteen “with no plans for [her] life” other than being resigned to become a telephone operator.⁵⁰ McDonald grew up in a “poor neighborhood where survival, rather than hope, was a way of life” and although she was a high school graduate “with a lot of potential,” felt lost and unwelcome in a white-dominated world.⁵¹ After hearing a radio advertisement for Harlem Prep, she immediately wanted to attend. Hopping turnstiles on the long train ride from Brooklyn to Harlem, she peaked into the school, rang the doorbell, and was given

⁴⁸ See McDonald, *Project Girl*. McDonald's book *Spellbound*, a book about a teenage mother who wins a spelling contest and college scholarship, was named the American Library Association's Best Book for Young Adults in 2002.

⁴⁹ McDonald, *Project Girl*, 42.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵¹ Catherine Ross-Stroud, “A Talk with Janet McDonald,” *The ALAN Review* (Fall 2009), 54. This article was written by an English professor in the *ALAN Review*, a peer-reviewed article published by the NCTE. In this article, the author reflects on McDonald's life and her contributions she made to the young adult genre as a Black woman author depicting her struggles of her adolescence.

an admission form from a custodian. A week after submitting the application and taking the admission test, she received an acceptance phone call, and began her two-year journey there that changed her life. At Harlem Prep, she wrote about how she developed “a renewed spirit—College Material redux” and expressed that “I *hadn’t* ‘gotten dumb’, as I’d thought after my high-school debacle. I still had brains and potential. The Carpenters were right: I *was* young, gifted, and black...”⁵² Janet McDonald’s brief biography provides a useful portrait of the many contours of the Harlem Prep student.

Last but certainly not least in terms of demographics is an analysis of the educational status of Harlem Prep students: were students all “dropouts” as the school popularly advertised?⁵³ Without equivocation, a large majority of Harlem Prep students had indeed left school and did not complete a traditional high school education—they were “early-school leavers” or “pushouts” as students rightly preferred to be labeled.⁵⁴ Other students graduated high school with a general diploma but still needed to become college eligible (such as Sterling Nile), a status that headmaster Ed Carpenter considered to be the same as those who did not graduate at all. Finally, a handful of other students had left parochial or other private schools for non-academic reasons (such as Clifford Jacobs).⁵⁵ How many students had left school compared

⁵² McDonald, *Project Girl*, 47.

⁵³ See advertisements such as in a 1970 edition of *National Geographic*, in author’s possession and located in Series 3, Box 80, Folder 1324, Ford Records; and Standard Oil, “Miracle on 136th Street,” *The Lamp*, June 1972, Exxon Series I, Subject Files: Corporate Public Affairs Box 2.707/L12e, Publications General 1971-1979, ExxonMobil Records.

⁵⁴ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 83; See Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep,” 4-5, who confidently asserts this fact. Combined with statements by alumni, documents from Carpenter and board members, and other materials, there is no reason to doubt the veracity of Gordon’s qualitative account; See also Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 7, discussed more in the following paragraphs.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Unlike during the first few years of Harlem Prep, there was, however, students who had left high performing schools to specifically attend Harlem Prep and/or were not low-income students. Two of those students included the grandson of Duke Ellington and nephew of Sammy Davis, Jr. While evidence suggests that these students were still

to how many had graduated with general diplomas (or, in more rarer cases, academic diplomas), is hard to precisely quantify. For example, the Institute for Educational Development, over the course of a year, sought data on students' past high school achievement with little success. "Precise information concerning student's schooling prior to entering Harlem Prep was very incomplete," they wrote. For records they were able to find, "high school transcripts were often too blurred or faint to read" or wholly inconsistent "with other definite information that was available."⁵⁶ Many students did not have their transcripts at all. A best estimate suggests that approximately 10 to 20% of Harlem Prep students from 1969 to 1971 had completed high school in some form (i.e., with a general diploma or equivalent).⁵⁷ More certain was that between 80 and 90% of students' most previous high school was a public school in New York City. And, a slight majority of students had been out of school less than one year—between 35 and 45% of all students had left school in June and entered Harlem Prep the following semester, while 15 to 25% of all students had been out of school between five and eleven months. Still, between 30 and 40% of all students had been out of school longer than year, with roughly a tenth of all students having last attended school more than four years prior.⁵⁸

in the small minority, it is important to recognize this change as the school became more popular and well-known—and perhaps different—then its earlier years. This change, along with others, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8. For above reference to these two students, see Letter from Robert Mangum to Alan Pifer, February 23, 1971, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

⁵⁶ Institute for Educational Development, "An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School," 7. Furthermore, much of the data they collected was through students' autobiographical sketches that they had in their admission application. However, by 1970 and beyond, students' folders rarely had these sketches, suggesting that the application process became less formal over time.

⁵⁷ This figure relies on the author's calculations based on the data from the IED report (above), and its lengthy footnotes about finding records. To create this number, the data that the report had for graduates (around 25% of each graduating class) was considered with the other 75% of missing data on students' high school transcripts—the latter assumed to be students who had left school. This assumption was made because the report states that for students who graduated, "that fact was recorded" and thus, for students without any information about high school would suggest that they did not graduate. However, these are still broad estimates, and only refer to Harlem Prep graduates.

However, trying to parse out students' previous educational backgrounds—if not particular circumstances and life experiences—belies what Carpenter and his staff actually cared about. Considering that the school's record-keeping was notoriously poor, past high school achievement (or lack thereof) was wholly irrelevant to a student's admission, and, mostly, to a student's potential for success.⁵⁹ Past history simply did not matter. "We don't give our kids just one chance. We give them three and four—as many as they need," declared math teacher Erskine Keary.⁶⁰ For Carpenter and his staff, they used the term "dropout" as a literal characterization for students who had *left* school. Yet, more notably, it also served as a broad euphemism for any student who had trouble with prior schooling experiences or in which school had failed him or her. Carpenter did not differentiate between someone who left school in the 10th grade or who graduated with honors. If that young person was out on the streets, then that was wasted human potential—and there was a spot for him or her at Harlem Prep. Barring space considerations and the (increasingly malleable) admission requirements, "We'll help anyone as long as he's not an addict [currently]," declared Carpenter.⁶¹ This sole group exclusion of drug users was most likely do the fact that many Harlem Prep students were former users and Central Harlem as a neighborhood had the highest concentration of drugs in the city.⁶² Thus, having current addicts or

⁵⁸ Institute for Educational Development, "An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School," 7. This data also involves graduates only, but seems to be fairly consistent across the three-year data set and in-line with anecdotes and oral histories observations of the student body from alumni.

⁵⁹ See, for example, Institute for Educational Development, "An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School," 6. However these authors "hastened to qualify" their comments by stating that the school put students first and record-keeping was among the first item to be cut in times of financial stress; See also Memo from Joshua Smith and Edward Meade Jr., October 18, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁶⁰ "Education: Vale, Harlem Prep," *Time*, October 1, 1973.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² For example, see Schneider, *Smack*, 121-122. Schneider describes and provides data for how heroin use, specifically, was a constant issue in New York City, but particularly in Central Harlem; See also Massing, *The Fix*.

even the influence of drugs inside school walls could be detrimental (or, worse, dangerous) to many students' now-sober status. This group aside, from a student perspective, alumnus Aissatou Bey-Grecia agreed: "The one thing we all had in common [was] that wherever we were [before], we didn't like being there school-wise. Or, we had come back from some situation and needed more school. [Harlem Prep] was the place that welcomed everybody."⁶³

In this way, the lack of precise data and Harlem Prep's resistance to labels was representative of the school's larger vision. Demographic data on Harlem Prep students—after all, they were "atypical" according to U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel—does little to fully flesh out the essence of who these bright young people really were and their remarkable life stories. Despite their demographic differences in religious and political leanings, or in age and geographic location, in the broadest scope, Harlem Prep students all generally shared three common intrinsic characteristics in terms of educational standing, demeanor, and ethos. These commonalities—and not students' differences—were the key to creating unity at Harlem Prep.

First, like their predecessors in Harlem Prep's inaugural graduating class (and hinted at in the above quantitative data), students all had prior issues with schooling. "Those close to the situation feel that Harlem Prep students for the most part have been victims of poor teaching and poorer guidance in the city's mammoth 1.1 million-pupil public school system," reported two newspapers in 1970.⁶⁴ Carpenter agreed that the Black and brown youth at Harlem Prep had been "victims of the public high school system," and frequently blamed this system—and not students—for them being out on the streets in both his public and private statements.⁶⁵ For

⁶³ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

⁶⁴ "Dropouts Offered New Hope: Harlem School Offers Them Chance To Go To College," *The Sun*, June 13, 1970; "Dropouts Score at Harlem Prep: All 121 Grads Have Gone to College; Waiting List Is 2000," *Boston Globe*, June 13, 1970.

example, students like Al Sears, a 1969 graduate, had simply “lost interest” due to teachers who did not care and curriculum that was irrelevant, dropping out to enroll in a federal work program instead; others like the previously mentioned Martin Nur had been unfairly placed into non-academic tracks or shuffled around to schools far from their home.⁶⁶ “It wasn’t so much that they were drop-outs, necessarily, because they could not perform,” explains Sandy Campbell. “They *could* perform, but they needed an alternative, or a differentiated way of approaching instruction that was individuals facilitating the learning process so that they could feel a sense of success, because many of them had never felt that before.”⁶⁷

Still others had experienced racial discrimination in their schools by both white teachers and fellow students. “They just treated us horribly, and I was just not having it,” recalls alumnus Aissatou Bey-Grecia when remembering her experience as one of only a handful of Black students at the High School of Music and Art (later becoming LaGuardia High School) in Central Harlem. Bey-Grecia was only thirteen years old when she and her mother, who was seeking to become an opera singer in Harlem, moved to New York City from a segregated town near Cincinnati, Ohio. She grew up right in Harlem, on 147th Street between 7th and 8th Avenue, in a fifth-floor walkup, terrified—but also excited—to experience New York City. With an interest in music, she auditioned and was able to attend what was then-called the High School of Music and Art, which had been facing pressure to finally start accepting Black students from Harlem. After a few years there, she could no longer withstand the constant discrimination. “I

⁶⁵ Edward Carpenter, in Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” June 22, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 4; See also “Getting It Together: The Young Blacks,” *Time Magazine*, April 6, 1970.

⁶⁶ “Dropouts Offered New Hope: Harlem School Offers Them Chance To Go To College,” *The Sun*, June 13, 1970; Nur interview, July 17, 2017.

⁶⁷ Sandy Campbell, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

was dissatisfied, unhappy.... So if you were a Black student in a situation where people were being kind of racist, you weren't having it." In the tenth grade, Bey-Grecia had indeed had enough, telling her mother she was not going back. "I just didn't want to do school anymore, I was disillusioned, I was tired," continues Bey-Grecia today. "I was sick of the white people treating me the way they were treating me."⁶⁸ Bey-Grecia found her way into a small street academy school for a short time, before eventually hearing about Harlem Prep—"[it] was the biggest game in town"—where she excelled both academically (for the first time) and socially as the leader of the school's African dance troupe.⁶⁹

Some students had also been forcibly "kicked out" of school for various reasons, such as Daniel Lloyd and Sherry Kilgore. Lloyd had been involved in a "racial clash" at his high school while Kilgore—and dozens of other women like her—became pregnant.⁷⁰ (At the time, pregnant students were not allowed to go to regular public high schools and thereafter expelled from school once their children were born.⁷¹) The school system pushed them out, and while there were a few schools for pregnant women, these schools did not present them any real shot at going to college unlike Harlem Prep. Finally, other bright Black and brown students with college potential had simply just been failed by the New York City public schools that, in the words of

⁶⁸ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

⁶⁹ Ibid. Bey-Grecia does not remember all the details of the street academy school she attended for a short time. She says that it was not part of the New York Urban League Street Academy Program discussed earlier in this dissertation, but it seems likely that it was and that she was not aware of at the time, which makes sense. Although businesses were sponsoring these schools—and she remembers the school being publicly sponsored by a business—the NYUL was the overarching sponsor, and it was likely that the students themselves were not aware of this. In addition, a school that she describes, called Lincoln Academy on Madison Avenue, seems to match a school on a NYUL Street Academy List. See NYUL, "Street Academies Locations and Junior High Schools," n.d., Secretary of the Board of Directors Records, Box 7, Folder 34-38, Street Academy, NYUL Records.

⁷⁰ "Dropouts Offered New Hope," *The Sun*; Kilgore interview, May 21, 2017; The author also conducted another interview with a different alumnus who was pregnant and forced to leave school.

⁷¹ For more information about schooling and pregnant students in New York City, see Julie Bosman, "New York's Schools for Pregnant Girls Will Close," *The New York Times*, May 24, 2007.

Harlem Prep, possessed “irrelevant, discriminatory, weak character of curriculum, school organization, facility design, and guidance efforts.”⁷² Although in the minority, there were also high school graduates students like Sterling Nile and Mwanajua Kahamu. “I wanted to go college, and I felt that high school didn’t prepare me that well,” Kahamu explains today, despite graduating from Franklin K. Lane High School in Brooklyn. “I just knew mentally and scholastically I was not ready for it.”⁷³ Kahamu spent two years at Harlem Prep before continuing on to higher education.

In connection, second, students also almost unanimously faced constant hardship, and their auspicious spirit should not belie the serious issues many students faced—prior drug addictions, family strife, and unrelenting poverty, for instance. “Some of them would come and bring with them whatever pain they were experiencing at home” into Harlem Prep, and together, as a faculty and administrators, they would work through it all together.⁷⁴ “There were a lot of young people there who were dealing with very, very serious issues,” further explains teacher Sandy Campbell.⁷⁵ Students like Harry Tyrone Smith, for example, had issues with the police, drugs, and an unstable home life that all became barriers to his pursuit of an education. Born in Clinton, New Jersey and raised “in the projects in Trenton” primarily by his grandmother and father intermittingly, during his junior high school years, his family moved to the primarily white neighborhood of East Fishkill, New York and became one of the few African American families.

⁷² Hopkins, “Draft of MARC Assessment of Harlem Prep,” March 19, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁷³ Kahamu interview, February 24, 2017.

⁷⁴ Campbell interview, January 15, 2015; See also discussion about Harlem Prep acting as a “family” and working through students’ “bad” prior experiences together and turning them into learning experiences, in Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” June 22, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

His father had started drinking and hustled to support his son and his grandmother, all the while Harry developed a stuttering problem. His family again moved to New Jersey for high school; “this was the first time I was really exposed to African Americans, so I didn’t really know where I fit in because I was really weary of white people in a way... but I was scared of black people [too] because I didn’t know where I belonged.” Smith recalls his 10th grade year where he got deep into “experimenting with drugs” and starting selling Black Panther newspapers in New York City, hanging with people much older than him. He remembers being at 42nd Street on a Friday night, when cops with riot gear approached him and his friends who were spewing anti-police rhetoric. A small riot ensued and a police officer grabbed young Harry, handcuffing him while he protested in anguish. Smith recalls: “‘I’m not doing anything,’ so he uncuffs me, says, ‘Get out of here,’ and I get up on the bus, and I’m like ‘*man*’... I never went back.”⁷⁶

Harry Smith’s story is representative of many Harlem Prep students whose adolescence was filled with experiences—many of them painful—before finding comfort at Harlem Prep. Although he stopped associating with the Black Panthers, Smith ran away from home for a time—“I’m really not doing well at all” he explains about those years—and failed tenth grade at his New Jersey high school. Deep into drugs and drinking, he went to live with his mother in North Carolina where, during his junior year, he was assaulted by a white man at a desegregated movie theater. Finally, one of his family friends told him about a school called Harlem Prep in New York. Harry Smith moved back to New Jersey, was admitted to Harlem Prep, and despite long bus rides from Montclair, New Jersey to Central Harlem, excelled and eventually graduated in the top of five of his class—he unequivocally states that the school turned around his life.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ H. Smith interview, March 7, 2017.

⁷⁷ Ibid. Today, Smith works as a counselor for students who are seeking rehabilitation from drugs, where he is pursuing a Master of Social Work at time of writing.



Figures 21 and 22. Two Harlem Prep students, photographed during a school day, ca. 1971.
Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas-Austin

Peter Hopson, class of 1971, has a similar story of struggle as an adolescent. “I feel very strongly that the Prep sort of saved me, my life, because [of] the path I was on”—a path that would have seemingly ended early at Rikers Island prison at age 16. Hopson was born in Oakland, but when his mother separated from his father, he moved to Brooklyn when he was about two years old. “I’m a Brooklynite through and through.” When his father died unexpectedly at age nine, his grandmother who had little education as a day laborer—and was the daughter of an ex-slave—raised him. As a child, Hopson would continually get in fights and had “problems with authority.” He got kicked out of multiple grade schools due to a variety of behavioral issues—“I was crying out for attention” Hopson suggests—and again got kicked out

of the seventh grade. Put back into a school in Brownsville to finish out his junior high days, Hopson was unhappily placed into a vocational track at Grover Cleveland High School in ninth grade. “I started doing really bad things [such as] heroin,” he explains. Eventually, Hopson was sent to prison for an armed robbery at age 16 at the beginning of his sophomore year: he was carrying a loaded gun at the time. At one point, Hopson was put on probation but violated his probation by using drugs and “doing stupid things.” Back in jail, Hopson was unable to get in an academic program and at that point in his life, was merely hoping to one day “get out [of prison] and wear a polo shirt and have a nice clerical job...[just] to get out of the vicious cycle [of poverty].” Although he had problems in school, Hopson was always an avid reader, including developing a love for poetry, and tried to read whatever he could in jail. Thus, he came across a full-page magazine advertisement for Harlem Prep, showing students with blazers and a slogan about the high school dropout going to college. “Oh man, Harlem *Prep!* I’m going to go to Harlem *Prep* when I get out,” he remembers thinking at the time, revising his life goals. Hopson explains further that Harlem Prep “was the only thing that I had to hold onto.” Released in April of 1970, Peter Hopson enrolled in a mechanic trainee program in the South Bronx, and by the fall, looked to find a better clerical job, all the while still hoping that he could one day attend Harlem Prep. Through some fortuitous connections, he was able to meet a well-known civil rights lawyer who wrote Hopson a short letter of recommendation.⁷⁸ In September of 1970, Hopson rode the train to the school for the first time:

I went up, can’t remember the day. But it was the day to get into Harlem Prep and folks were outside. Inside, they closed the door. It was jammed full of people and E. Salmon-McFarlane, the Assistant Headmaster, happened to be by door. And I had this letter... I

⁷⁸ Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

smacked the letter on E. Salmon-McFarlane and he was like: “Yeah, come on in!” So I got in—it was amazing, mind-blowing. It was so dynamic and unique.⁷⁹

After graduating, Peter Hopson went on to attend City College and to a successful career on the New York Stock Exchange, retiring early at age 56.

To be sure, when students arrived at Harlem Prep, they continued to face adversity. “I find love, but it is always accompanied by pain,” wrote student George Leon as part of a poem in the 1970 Harlem Prep yearbook.⁸⁰ For example, English teacher Sandy Campbell recalls learning about how one student—this student had excelled academically and received awards at graduation—lived in an abandoned building, traveling by rooftop to get to school, showering at friends’ apartments and eating whatever meals he could.⁸¹ Essentially homeless, this student persevered against great odds. Many students continued to battle drug addiction—despite “the widespread flouting of the Carpenter’s anti-drug message”—as six Harlem Prep students died by 1973 due to narcotics.⁸² Others faced constant food insecurity and similar hardships associated with poverty and a legacy of discriminatory policies pressed upon Black and brown families; Carpenter would frequently announce to students that if they had money emergencies, to contact him and the school would try to help.⁸³ These struggles, both past and present, entered with

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ George Leon, in 1970 Harlem Prep Yearbook [no page numbers], in personal collection of Henry Pruitt. Copy of yearbook given to author by Pruitt.

⁸¹ Campbell interview, January 15, 2015.

⁸² McDonald, *Project*, 50. McDonald describes the death of one of her friends at Harlem Prep who overdosed on heroin, and Ed Carpenter and other teachers’ response to this tragic event. She explains how everyone felt responsible for not helping this student more, and how Carpenter decided to hold the funeral at Harlem Prep so all the other students could see how dangerous heroin was and what it could do. See pgs. 50-53; Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 125.

⁸³ Sandy Campbell, personal communication, assorted dates in 2016; One student’s records describe, in his autobiography, how he relied on his grandmother’s \$40 check from her deceased husband’s Veteran’s benefits to

students into Harlem Prep—and why Harlem Prep, with its familial atmosphere and universal acceptance, felt like a sanctuary and a home.⁸⁴ “Harlem Prep operates like an extended family group and all experiences good and bad are shared by the total body and viewed as opportunities for learning.”⁸⁵ Furthermore, however, while students’ past experiences “have taught them the elements of survival, they are not bitter,” wrote an outside observer.⁸⁶



Figures 23 and 24. Two Harlem Prep students, photographed during a school day, ca. 1971.
Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas-Austin

pay rent and to eat; On Carpenter specifically, see for example, Barbara Campbell, “Ex-Dropouts Attain Goal: Graduation,” *New York Times*, June 10, 1971.

⁸⁴ See, among many, Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017.

⁸⁵ Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” June 22, 1970, p. 4-5, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁸⁶ Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep”, 5.



Figures 25 and 26. Two Harlem Prep students, photographed during a school day, ca. 1971.
Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas-Austin

Third, the typical Harlem Prep student possessed an inner ambition—an “inner strength” was how Carpenter described it—even if that ambition was often suppressed by previous educational experiences or masked by diffused anger.⁸⁷ Harlem Prep students were full of dreams and aspirations. “They were eager to be a part of this family,” explains teacher Sandy Campbell.⁸⁸ They had “good energy,” and yearned for a (second) opportunity to achieve a better life.⁸⁹ Despite roundabout paths into Harlem Prep, students such as Aissatou Bey-Grecia, Peter Hopson, Harry Smith, and countless others shared an internal drive for something more than the

⁸⁷ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 72.

⁸⁸ Campbell interview, January 15, 2015.

⁸⁹ Ibid; See also Ann Carpenter, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

education they had previously been provided. “At Harlem Prep, we’re all here to learn,” said Harlemiter and 1970 alumnus Bruce Dalton, who had started selling and using drugs at age 13 and spent nine months in a rehabilitation facility before finding his way to Harlem Prep.⁹⁰

Outside observers agreed with this description of Harlem Prep students. Dr. Edmund W. Gordon, in his federally commissioned report, wrote extensively about the student body, including emphasizing its heterogeneity but also how students they shared similar characteristics. “Despite th[eir] adversity,” he wrote, “the students share several things in common,” including that “for most of them, Harlem Prep represents the last or only chance to continue their education.” Furthermore, he described how students wanted to return to their communities and “help others escape from the desperate surroundings.” He concluded with the most salient trait that they all shared: “Most important, however, is their strong motivation and determination to achieve their goal—attendance at college and eventually a professional career.”⁹¹ Other evaluators wrote about the lengths that students often went to “continue their education after leaving high school,” such as students who pursued evening schools after working during the day or those who took High School Equivalency exams while serving in the Armed Forces. A few had attended college for a short time before failing and enrolling in Harlem Prep to give college another chance.⁹² Periodical coverage of the time boasted of similar sentiments. “The ambitious youngsters at Harlem Prep are self-motivated,” affirmed *The Associated Press* in 1970.⁹³

⁹⁰ “Getting It Together: The Young Blacks,” *Time Magazine*, April 6, 1970, p. 5. After Harlem Prep, Dalton attended Northwestern University, graduating with a degree in journalism, and became a broadcast engineer for local television stations in Houston and New York.

⁹¹ Gordon, U.S. Office of Education, “Harlem Prep,” 5.

⁹² Institute for Education Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” 7.

⁹³ See “Dropouts Score at Harlem Prep: All 121 Grads Have Gone to College; Waiting List Is 2000,” *Boston Globe*, June 13, 1970.

The official school song, written by secretary Shirley Jones, epitomizes students' collective buoyance and newfound hope in themselves and in Harlem Prep:

*Step by step
You're in the race at Harlem Prep.
The race has just begun,
For there's a goal for everyone.
Open the gates,
And open them wide
For those who hunger
And thirst inside.
For the creative free
Who once was denied
Keep on marching...
Until you've reached the other side.*

*Through the halls of opportunity
To the stairways of success!
Work your show,
You're on the go,
Just keep those students coming through.
For there's so much work for us to do
With the help of God and the hand of faith,
We'll make your dream come alive, hey, hey, hey
No matter what it takes.⁹⁴*

The popular school song, played at graduation by the school's nine-piece rock band "Zebra" and sang by the "Moja Logo" school chorus, represented more than just a musical encore—the lyrics suggest a collective hope devoid of bitterness. Ultimately, the Harlem Prep student was an individual who had left school and had "the ability, the desire and motivation to go on to college," but needed a little "help and guidance to get there."⁹⁵ Peter Hopson explained that "you weren't there if you didn't want to be there," and although personal academic records show that students did miss class—teachers commenting on report cards about absences was not

⁹⁴ Shirley Jones and Milton Hamilton, "Step by Step, "You're in the Race at Harlem Prep" [school song], in possession of Casey Carpenter, personal records. Copy given to author by Carpenter; See also shortened version with slightly altered lyrics in 1970 Harlem Prep Yearbook, author's personal collection via Henry Pruitt.

⁹⁵ "'Why Harlem Prep?' Booklet," ca. 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

uncommon—Harlem Prep students cared deeply about their education and their future beyond it.⁹⁶

Coming full circle, there is still much to consider about Harlem Prep students—and the stories that they have told and the portrait of the school as described here in this dissertation. These stories, to be sure, are treasures that should be cherished and nurtured—these student stories are timeless narratives that, until now, have been hidden about a school and its people that deserves attention. Moreover, stories like these from people of color have long been marginalized in historical scholarship and public discourse.⁹⁷ Yet, these stories should also be considered critically, in the context of memory and methodology. As discussed in the introduction, the way in which a person remembers the past is influenced by the present. It is natural to forget memories that a person perhaps prefers to be forgotten, particularly decades ago; it is also natural to speak glowingly about an institution that made a profound impact, as students have understandably done here. Other “interview dynamics” that affect the way a story is told such as the format of the interview and knowledge that these stories would be shared publicly, also may influence how people talk about the past.⁹⁸ If this collective positive account of experiences at Harlem Prep is the shape of the story as characterized by students—although largely by the archives, too—then it is also important to consider the unknown experiences or

⁹⁶ Hopson interview, February 11, 2017; Student records, on file at Park East High School, copies in author’s possession. In order to keep confidentiality, these records are cited here anonymously and in the aggregate.

⁹⁷ In recent decades, historians have tried to correct this gap by centering people of color in stories of activism and struggle. In educational research, critical race theorists call this approach “counter-storytelling.” See, for example, Daniel G. Solórzano and Tara J. Yosso, “Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (2002): 23-44.

⁹⁸ In addition to the introduction, for more about these latter “interview dynamics” regarding cultural and racial exchanges, see Yow, *Recording Oral History*; Plus, there is also my race, gender, and age, plus affiliation with Columbia University, which has a long, fraught history with the Harlem community, to consider. These dynamics perhaps played a role in the stories the interviewees told, in positive, negative, and unknown ways. For a more nuanced analysis of the process of interviewing Harlem Prep alumni, see Goldenberg, “Rethinking Historical Practice and Community Engagement.”

those not shared that might not be uniformly positive. “I don’t mean to paint a picture that everything everyday was wonderful and beautiful, it wasn’t. I mean, there were days that we were very angry with individuals with each other—teachers with students, students with teachers, [with the] administration, [and] with the world beyond Harlem Prep,” clarifies English teacher Sandy Campbell today.⁹⁹

These unknown narratives—about struggle, disagreement, tension, and beyond—even if few and far in between as they seem to be, do not enter into this current re-telling of the Harlem Prep story. Nor do thoughts about the gendered experience: what was it like to be a woman at Harlem Prep at the time? “I did not focus as much on the presence of gender in my courses, as I remember,” recalls Campbell again, “because of the more existential nature of the context and inclusiveness for all humanity.”¹⁰⁰ This comment from Campbell seems to be affirmed when considering how comments about gender were largely absent in alumni conversations—issues of race and racism, hope and love, diversity and inclusion, politics and religion, and Black culture, emerge in these interviews, but gender dynamics rarely do.¹⁰¹ This absence does not connote anything positive or negative—just that there is still much unknown. For example, as alumnus Aissatou Bey-Grecia recalls, there were male groups at Harlem Prep that saw women in a “chauvinist” way, in part influenced by the historical context that they were living in (“not that it’s [any] time to be chauvinist with women,” Bey-Grecia also notes).¹⁰² What were these

⁹⁹ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015. Campbell also explains about how “nasty things written in the paper” about Harlem Prep also affected students and teachers.

¹⁰⁰ Sandy Campbell, e-mail message to author, February 12, 2019.

¹⁰¹ While this statement is true, I am also responsible for not focusing on gender in my interviews. I rarely asked questions specifically about gender, to my male or female interviewees, and I hope in future scholarship and interviews I can think more consciously about questions and ways to probe about gender dynamics at Harlem Prep. Looking back on many years of interviews, I regret this negligence and oversight.

¹⁰² Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

experiences like for women at Harlem Prep? Conversely, other alumni have commented about their awareness of the women's liberation movement in the 1970s, while the large female teaching staff also was known to emphasize women writers and activists in their classes and were activists in their own right.¹⁰³ What intersections existed between the Carpenters' multiculturalism and gender, as it pertained to the 1960s and 1970s—and what were students' experiences in light of their gender identity and the school's universalism at Harlem Prep?¹⁰⁴

There are similar unknown questions, too, about sexual orientation: what were the experiences of LGBTQ students (and teachers) at Harlem Prep? How did sexual orientation intersect with the school's multiculturalism? One student recalls how there was at least one gay teacher when he attended, and how Harlem Prep reversed oppressive notions about homosexuality that were prevalent in his neighborhood. "Harlem Prep gave us an appreciation and understanding of what it meant to be gay, so we started developing that respect."¹⁰⁵ Another student remembers meeting someone gay—a student—for the first time in his life, at Harlem Prep, and was appreciative of that opportunity.¹⁰⁶ What was this student's experience? There are more questions to ask about these (and other) experiences that reflect the broader limitations of historical inquiry. For students sharing their stories today, perhaps some of their memories have faded (or perhaps certain memories were just not shared). Moreover, students whose voices are

¹⁰³ See Hopson interview, February 11, 2015, and Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013; Campbell, e-mail message to author, February 12, 2019; See also, Haskins-Jackson interview, June 6, 2017.

¹⁰⁴ In contemporary multicultural education literature, these intersectionalities have been explored. See, for example, Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Lifting As We Climb: The Womanist Tradition in Multicultural Education," and Mary McLeod Bethune: Feminist, Educator, and Activist," in *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action*.

¹⁰⁵ Cappas interview, November 19, 2016.

¹⁰⁶ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

not represented must also be considered. There are countless experiences and aspects of the Harlem Prep story that may unfortunately never be known, or, at least, are not presented here.

Still, for all these uncertainties, there is much that *is* known. To the young people who attended and have told their story both past and present, Harlem Prep was an innovative, multicultural oasis—an institution that introduced them to a pluralistic educational environment. When Peter Hopson tries to recount what it was like to be a student in this environment, he always pauses. “To say that it was unique is like an understatement that I can’t even describe,” he says. “It’s just hard to describe how dynamic and how fresh it was.”¹⁰⁷ Hopson contends that there was “something special” that could be sensed upon walking in. Whether it was a student, teacher, or, on countless occasions, outside people such as philanthropists, educational evaluators, political figures, community members, or businesspeople, all of them made similar claims.¹⁰⁸ Plus, to be a student at Harlem Prep during this fraught era added to the intrigue. “This was 1970, you know? The sixties had just ended yesterday. Dr. King had just been shot, the whole deal—it was part of everybody’s psyche.” Hopson continues: “It was wild. I mean you had the Black Power people, but you had the quiet poets [too].... You had to understand that the palette was so diverse.”¹⁰⁹ This was once again the school’s multiculturalism at work. To Ed and Ann Carpenter, teachers, and students, multiculturalism was not only—or perhaps not even primarily—about interracial tolerance, but also about a deep embrace of religious, experiential, linguistic, and political diversity beyond but particularly within Black and brown communities.

¹⁰⁷ Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

¹⁰⁸ In addition to researchers and educators who evaluated Harlem Prep, see, for example, Letter from U.S. Senator Jacob K. Javits to James Allen, February 19, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Letter from Charles Rangel to Carnegie Corporation, August 13, 1973, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; Memo from Joshua Smith to Edward Meade, October 13, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; and Letter from Leslie Dunbar to Edward Carpenter, June 12, 1969, Field Foundation Archives, Box 2T32, Harlem Prep - 1968, Field Records.

¹⁰⁹ Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

Ultimately, being a student at Harlem Prep was to experience the world—to learn about the experiences of so many other people and to avidly discuss the events of the day.

Hopson is not alone in these opinions about Harlem Prep’s vivaciousness. “There were lots of things going on—there was the culture and then there was the sub-culture,” explains Aissatou Bey-Grecia. “There were lots of [different sub-cultures] and you had the opportunity to go in and out of all of them.” For example, as one of the younger students, she had to grow up quickly, being exposed to students who had issues with drugs, those who had returned from the Vietnam War, students who had been politically active, and students who had children which they brought to school. “It was interesting, it was different, it was stimulating—it was hard to leave [and] it was hard not to stay late.”¹¹⁰ Plus, as illustrated in the previous chapter, students like Bey-Grecia would bounce from class-to-class, soaking in relevant curriculum taught by passionate and loving teachers that allowed students to learn in a flexible and individualistic way. Perhaps Hopson says it best: if you were a young person living in New York City at the time, “it was just the place to be.”¹¹¹

Commencement Celebration on the Streets of Harlem

“We were *so* proud,” remembers Hopson, reflecting on his commencement day experience with his classmates in spring of 1971.¹¹² To Hopson, and the hundreds of his peers who graduated with, before, or after him, commencement was the fulfillment of a dream: a high school diploma with an acceptance letter (and for many, a scholarship) to college.¹¹³ By 1969, just in the school’s

¹¹⁰ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

¹¹¹ Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

¹¹² Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

second year of existence, the Harlem Prep commencement morphed from a small, private event in a local gymnasium to large, public, full-day affair. The outside graduation, from its first incarnation on June 11, 1969—a day where “dreams came true for students” expressed the *New York Amsterdam News*—to its fourth, and final, manifestation on June 16, 1972, was the climax to the educational program experienced by Harlem Prep students.¹¹⁴ “It was a decidedly Harlem production, in the tone of the commencement comments, in the beat of the music, in the African-style dancing and in the obvious pleasure and pride of the students, whose idea it has been to hold the ceremonies on the street.”¹¹⁵ This apt description embodied many of the elements that the commencement ceremony, in this public forum, represented: it was a day of symbolism, showmanship, educational excellence, and above all, celebration, with parents and family members crowded in the audience full of smiles and simultaneous tears of joy.

From 1969 to 1972, the graduation was held outside in front of the historic Hotel Theresa on 125th Street, across the street diagonally from the Harlem State Office Building. As the *New York Times* wrote in 1970: Harlem Prep held a “sprawling, festive commencement yesterday in the middle of a main street in the black community that gave the school its name. More than 1,000 parents, friends and onlookers crammed the west side of Seventh Avenue between 124th and 125th Streets to watch the four-hour ceremony and strain to hear it above the din of

¹¹³ For example, see periodicals such as Lesly Jones, “83 Dropouts Graduate From Harlem Prep; To College: Harlem Prep Graduates 83,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 13, 1970, which lists all the graduates and colleges they are attending. Other articles in the *New York Times* explain how students received scholarships at prominent universities such as Harvard, Columbia, and Wesleyan University. See Barbara Campbell, “Ex-Dropouts Attain Goal: Graduation,” *New York Times*, June 10, 1971.

¹¹⁴ “Harlem Prep Gives 68 Grads Diplomas,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 14, 1969; “Last Class at Harlem Prep?,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 17, 1972; With the school expecting to close in June 1972, Carpenter was able to secure just enough funding to stay open in a skeletal state in fall of 1972. The final graduation as an independent school was in February of 1973, held in an auditorium at Harlem Hospital.

¹¹⁵ M. A. Farber, “Harlem Prep Graduates 83 In a Festive Street Ceremony,” *New York Times*, June 11, 1970.

excavation shovels and car horns.”¹¹⁶ Diagonally across the street, the Harlem State Office Building, long contested by Harlem residents who wanted a greater say in the planning and eventual use, was finally being built—behind them the building representing what the community hoped was a future of self-governance, in front of them the students representing present-day hope and optimism.¹¹⁷



Figures 27. Either a Harlem Prep alumnus or current student, with the Moja Logo patch, celebrating the Harlem Prep commencement ceremony outside on the street with family, friends, and community members, June 1971.

Source: Personal collection of Cheryl Keywanda Ballard-Battle

¹¹⁶ Ibid; Other newspaper accounts estimated a crowd of “over 1,000 parents, friends, and guests” during the 1971 commencement. See “Proud Graduates From Harlem Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 19, 1971. However, a *New York Times* reporter, estimated about 400 people attended this same ceremony. See Barbara Campbell, “Ex-Dropouts Attain Goal: Graduation,” *New York Times*, June 10, 1971.

¹¹⁷ See Charlayne Hunter, “State Building in Harlem Finally Becoming Reality,” *New York Times*, May 11, 1971. In 1969, young community activists protested the construction of this building, staging a sit-in due to concerns about the lack of community input and future uses.



Figures 28. Harlem Prep students lined up, in front of family, friends, and community members outside during the commencement ceremony, June 1971.

Source: Personal collection of Cheryl Keywanda Ballard-Battle

With their back to the Hotel Theresa, and a small hand-drawn sign that read “Harlem Prep Graduation” hung up right above the numbers “2090”—the building’s street address—students and staff sat in wooden chairs in about four or five rows on a slightly raised platform that encompassed the entire sidewalk.¹¹⁸ Facing the Harlem Prep graduates and the staff were loosely organized rows of chairs a few feet away on the street—parents and siblings, aunts and uncles, community members and more. Many had brought their own chairs to sit on, others lined

¹¹⁸ Photograph of 1971 Commencement, provided by former student Keywanda Battle. Copy of photograph given to author.

up in rows in the back, all seeking to find a clear view so they could witness the culmination of these young peoples' accomplishment. Nearby residents wandered around across the street and at the 125th intersection, peeking at the celebratory ruckus that had closed down their block. The only known documentary of the school, "*Step by Step*": *The Story of Harlem Prep*, shows students dressed in their preferred attire—some students wore suits and dresses, others wore traditional African clothing and jewelry—cheering and clapping along to various speeches, affirmations, and popular Black song and dance by students.¹¹⁹ The audience went many rows deep and wide, taking up the entire street, many hundreds watching intently at this powerful display of Black excellence.¹²⁰ A memo written from a Carnegie Corporation officer that attended the 1969 graduation ceremony perhaps best illustrates this cosmopolitan scene:

They had blocked off 126th Street for the Harlem Prep graduation so that members of the community could come and listen. And listen they did—old people sitting on the stoops and peering from the windows of the three-floor walk-ups; and crowds of children clinging to the wire fence around the playground.... Students spoke—about hope, and love and learning; of how they had been rescued from narcotics and life in the streets. Now they were all looking to college.¹²¹

As one mother affirmed, "the choice of the site couldn't have been more fitting. Many of these kids on the platform came out of the streets and that would have been their future, too, without this school."¹²²

¹¹⁹ "*Step by Step*," dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

¹²⁰ The only other known footage is an untitled two-minute clip from the Associated Press Video Archive. See "New York City, Harlem Prep Graduation," Associated Press, June 7, 1972, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/view/a35d46182c83e08ee020a26a60f6c03f?subClipIn=00:00:00&subClipOut=00:02:26>.

¹²¹ This quote is taken from a letter by Eli Evan, in a memo to Alan Pifer, June 13, 1969, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

Although the schedule of speakers certainly changed each year, an existing 1972 commencement program lists Ann Carpenter opening up the day at 10 o'clock in morning, acting as the master of ceremonies and welcoming the multiform crowd to the ceremony. "At Harlem Prep, we try to prepare our students for going on to a world of unity—the world in which the most important thing is justice," she said at the 1970 graduation, speaking to the school's theme of multiculturalism.¹²³ A processional, salute to the flag, and an invocation by the Reverend Irving Anthony of Harlem's First Episcopal Church followed.¹²⁴ Next was an address by a representative of the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees, followed by a greeting by a student which preceded music, dance, and poetry by another Harlem Prep student and student groups such as the Moja Logo Singers or the Moja Logo Dancers.¹²⁵ During the 1970 ceremony, student Sophelia Carlisle sang a rousing rendition of Nina Simone's anthem "Young, Gifted, and Black," as students gleefully clapped along, singing the lyrics with pride and ear-to-ear grins, bodies swaying with the piano melody.¹²⁶ "An emotion-filled audience of parents, teachers, and community workers all cried because these youngsters belonged to them and they were proud," wrote a columnist in the *New York Amsterdam News*, observing the crowd as students sang along.¹²⁷ Then, a guest speaker would normally address the crowd and the graduates behind him. In the 1969 commencement, president of Harlem Hospital's Medical Board and director of anesthesiology (and a Black

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ "Step by Step," dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

¹²⁴ "The First Article," *The Living Church* 180, no. 1 (1980): 40 [photograph caption].

¹²⁵ See, for example, "1972 Commencement Program," June 7, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹²⁶ "Step by Step," dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD; For picture and descriptions of dancers, see "Dropouts Score at Harlem Prep: All 121 Grads Have Gone to College; Waiting List Is 2000," *Boston Globe*, June 13, 1970.

¹²⁷ Lesly Jones, "83 Dropouts Graduate From Harlem Prep; To College: Harlem Prep Graduates 83," *New York Amsterdam News*, June 13, 1970.

physician who organized the medical team for the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery in 1964), urged students to “move onward and upwards in the world of education and make their aim exceed their grasp.”¹²⁸ As each Harlem Prep commencement hung under the cloud of potentially being the last due to lack of money to re-open the following fall, graduation speakers often spoke as much to the Harlem crowd as they did to the students. “If you love the work that Harlem Prep is doing, back it up!” declared keynote speaker and Nation of Islam minister Louis Farrakhan in 1970. “If we can spend 90 million dollars a year for whisky, and if we can spend 80 million dollars a year for wigs, and if you can spend millions and millions of dollars each year on narcotics, what do you mean that you can’t support *independent black education*?” he continued to applause.¹²⁹ In 1971, newly elected U.S. House of Representative Charles B. Rangel, too, offered his social commentary as the keynote speaker—this time not about the Black community, but about the public school system. “We can wear our dashikis and talk about back to Africa, but unless we have the power to shuck off the New York school system as you [Harlem Prep] have, we will continue to be enslaved.”¹³⁰ Rangel’s words cut sharply considering the context of the time. After years of struggle—protests, teacher strikes, parent advocacy, and much more—that saw the Harlem community (and New York City Black and Latino/a communities more broadly) fight for community control of their schools, Harlem Prep was a breath of fresh air. Harlem Prep was seen as a community determining the education of its own young people in ways that the New York City Board of Education would not allow.¹³¹ At least to Rangel and many others, Harlem Prep, operating vastly different than public schools, was the answer. Moreover, other well-known

¹²⁸ “Harlem Prep Gives 68 Grads Diplomas,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 14, 1969.

¹²⁹ Louis Farrakhan, in “*Step by Step*,” dir. Lassen, 1977, DVD.

¹³⁰ Barbara Campbell, “Ex-Dropouts Attain Goal: Graduation,” *New York Times*, June 10, 1971.

¹³¹ A more in-depth discussion about community control will be discussed in the next chapter.

Black figures such as Ossie Davis, who spoke at the first Harlem Prep graduation in 1968, were frequent visitors at commencement. Davis, who returned to speak in 1972, was “joined on the rostrum by a number of Black luminaries.”¹³² Davis praised the young people, in that, through their journey at Harlem Prep, they “know where it’s at and who they are,” while also pleading with the audience to support Harlem Prep as a Black community.¹³³

The latter half of the commencement began with the handing out of numerous student awards by Harlem Prep faculty. For example, in 1972, English teacher Naledi Alexander awarded almost a dozen students the “Sojourner Truth Certificate for Service,” school librarian Clinton Mae Morgan handed out attendance certificates, English teacher Bill Thompson handed out more than a dozen “W.E.B. DuBois Certificates for Academic Achievement,” and English teacher Lita Paniagua awarded ten students the “Malcolm X Certificate for Perseverance.”¹³⁴ Student accolades continued with assistant headmaster E. Salmon McFarlane calling each student and handing him or her a diploma, followed by headmaster Carpenter taking his turn at the podium and certifying the graduates. “By virtue of the power of the authority of the State of New York, I now declare you graduates of the Harlem Preparatory School!” he shouted in exuberance, turning to face the graduates, pumping his fist in the air.¹³⁵ The commencement concluded with some closing thoughts from another student, a convocation, and the Harlem Prep school song, “Step by Step.” Students and family members then headed roughly ten blocks to the school building, where the

¹³² “Last Class at Harlem Prep?,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 17, 1972.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ “1972 Commencement Program,” June 7, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. The 1972 program also gave out an award in honor of Albizu Campos and another for deceased Harlem Prep student Victor Gomez.

¹³⁵ See “*Step by Step*,” dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD, which captures Carpenter saying these words and his reaction. It is unclear whether Carpenter’s pump fist was simply a spontaneous reaction to his excitement or a planned ode to Black Power.

Harlem Prep Parents Associated sponsored a reception.¹³⁶

The Harlem Prep commencement ceremony served a number of different purposes. First, of course, the event meant to primarily honor the students who had come so far and showcase Black excellence. The voracious student talent on display demonstrated through poetry, song, and dance, the singing of the historic Black anthem “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” the African imagery in students’ dress and insignia, and the unapologetic rhetoric from each speaker about Black educational achievement, all provide evidence for this goal.¹³⁷ However, the public-facing event also served two other purposes, too: one, to rally the Black community together in support of the school and to genuinely share in the success of its young people; and two, to have a platform to acknowledge the school’s financial supporters and tout the school’s effectiveness to current and future ones. Balancing these objectives was always a careful act, and the commencement ceremony seemed to satisfy both aims—a particularly agile feat considering that Black pride and strong rhetoric against white systems of power were constantly on display. In terms of community pride, “Ed [Carpenter] felt that we should make the community aware...like we don’t have anything to hide or cover up,” suggests an alumnus today. “He wanted to sort of show the community that ‘we’re educating people and they’re graduating and they’re going on to a higher learning center.’”¹³⁸ Another student agreed with this assessment: “I think that’s the main point of this graduation out here on the street, so that other people can [say] that ‘if they can go to college, I can go to college.’”¹³⁹ Harlem Prep was constantly referred to as a “community school” or as an

¹³⁶ “1972 Commencement Program, June 7, 1972, Ford Records.

¹³⁷ For the singing of “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” see M. S. Handler, “Harlem Prep Chooses a More Hopeful Path,” *New York Times*, June 15, 1969. This song was also printed prominently on the back of the 1969 commencement program. See “1969 Harlem Prep Commencement Program,” Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

¹³⁸ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

¹³⁹ Anonymous student in “*Step by Step*,” dir. Lassen, 1971, DVD.

institution serving the community by media outlets, and Carpenter, his staff, and students also not just used the same terminology, but sincerely believed in what they saw as a community-driven mission to educate young people.¹⁴⁰ For example, the *New York Times* wrote that, “the community had an encouraging victory to celebrate last Wednesday,” referencing the 1969 commencement ceremony; the Baltimore *Afro-American* likewise described Harlem Prep as “a dynamic force in the community.”¹⁴¹ By welcoming the Harlem neighborhood—or those from throughout New York and New Jersey who chose to attend—to the outside commencement ceremony, Carpenter could provide a meaningful point of connection between Harlem Prep and the community, in however each defined the term.

Conversely, although a very large majority of those in attendance were people of color, the commencement ceremony also provided a key opportunity to demonstrate to the powerful white benefactors supporting Harlem Prep of the school’s success in educating young people of color. While financial supporters and the elites who supported the school were welcome to visit Harlem Prep anytime—and some often did—commencement was an ideal opportunity to see the results of their donations. For example, Carpenter invited high-ranking officials in various philanthropies to attend the graduation ceremony, printed their names in the commencement program, and even publicly recognized a few during the event.¹⁴² This infusion of white elites into what newspapers,

¹⁴⁰ For Carpenter referring to the school as a “community school,” see Mangum and Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; In his dissertation, Carpenter wrote often about how making sure Harlem Prep was embraced by the community was very important not just to him personally as someone who has worked in education in Harlem for over a decade, but to the school’s overall success. This discussion of Harlem Prep as a community school is explored more in the following chapter.

¹⁴¹ Handler, “Harlem Prep Chooses a More Hopeful Path,” *New York Times*, June 15, 1969; “Financial Aid Saves School,” *Afro-American*, July 24, 1971.

¹⁴² See, for example, among many: Letter from Leslie Dunbar to Edward Carpenter, June 12, 1969, Box 2T32, Harlem Prep - 1968, Field Records; Letter from Stephen Wright to Alan Pifer, June 10, 1968, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; Handler, “Harlem Prep Chooses a More Hopeful Path,” *New York Times*, June 15,

students, and staff deemed—and as evidence bears out, designed and enacted in practice—a decidedly community event, will be further discussed in the final chapter of Part II.

Still, zooming out, the street graduation had a greater meaning than just these few purposes that it may have served. The graduation exercises were emblematic of many core elements of the schools: its ambition to create a revolutionary education for Black and brown youth, its educational practices that were sending students to college, perhaps even its limitations that they could only accommodate the students on the stage and not the hundreds that lined the adjacent streets. Moreover, the public, outside commencement represented the school's multiculturalism. The late 1960s and early 1970s was an explosive moment in Harlem—and a moment that made Harlem Prep's commencement all the more extraordinary. Along with the teacher strikes of 1967 a few years prior, racial unrest and police brutality was common on the Harlem streets.¹⁴³ Moreover, in spring of 1969, Black youths took over City College in Central Harlem demanding diverse faculty and an Afro-centric curriculum.¹⁴⁴ And, as Brian Purnell writes in *Race Capital*, Harlem remained an important “base for black political organizing,” including the “long-standing Pan African character of its political activism.”¹⁴⁵ The Nation of Islam was rising, entering its peak years, while the rising tide of conservatism (discussed in chapter 8) contributed to increased neglect of Harlem's infrastructure.¹⁴⁶ Thus, discontent and disagreement were high; as a result, Harlem was in turn filled with political activity at this raucous moment in American history.

1969; and assorted photographs from personal collection of Hussein Ahdieh, used with permission, showing Carpenter and white supporters shaking hands.

¹⁴³ See Bruce D. Haynes and Syma Solovitch, *Down the Up Staircase: Three Generations of a Harlem Family* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 92-94, where the author recounts his experiences growing up in Harlem during the late 1960s.

¹⁴⁴ See Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*; and Haynes and Solovitch, *Down the Up Staircase*, 96-97.

¹⁴⁵ Brian Purnell, “Harlem, USA: Capital of the Black Freedom Movement,” in *Race Capital?*, 213-214

¹⁴⁶ Haynes and Solovitch, *Down the Up Staircase*, 108-109, and many others.



Figures 29. Ann Carpenter speaking at the 1971 Harlem Prep Commencement ceremony.
Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas-Austin

Therefore, the confluence of groups—not just racially, but among the primarily Black attendees—sitting in lined rows and watching on the streets, was all the more striking considering this specific context. “The graduation exercise was the occasion for illustrating that the aim of achieving unity from diversity had been accomplished,” Ann Carpenter wrote. “Members of

opposite groups of Harlem met in harmony to honor their youth; students of different political and religious ideologies embraced each other as brothers; students and faculty reflected the image of a family.”¹⁴⁷ As Ann explained further, days before the graduation, “students had passed out flyers inviting parents, housewives, local businessmen, churchmen, doctors, policemen and passersby to the open-air graduation that was to be held on the sidewalks...”¹⁴⁸ The outside commencement exercise was a community event, yes, but it was also an experimental exercise in multiculturalism that transcended school walls and flowed into the streets. Ultimately, the commencement ceremony was the capstone to the school’s beliefs—and the academic success of Black and brown men and women, unapologetic in their Blackness, was the biggest symbol of all.

¹⁴⁷ Carpenter and Rogers, “*Harlem Prep: An Alternative School*,” 276.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 272.

Chapter Seven

Building a Community Coalition: Harlem Prep's Supporters and Friends

“To visit this school is an emotional experience which will require considerable sorting out of stimuli over a period of time. Never having visited the institution before, I was somewhat unprepared for that which was to follow my crossing the threshold. The haze of blue smoke floating toward the ceiling and the high decibel level made it unlike any other educational institution I have visited.”

—Dr. Joshua Smith, Ford Foundation Education Program Officer, 1970¹

Deciphering how Harlem Prep pulled together its eclectic cast of financial supporters and on-the-ground community advocates is not only a question germane to historians today. Almost fifty years ago, other individuals had the same query. “What is the philosophy which holds together the unlikely mix of students, staff, alumni, sponsors, fund raisers and other friends that constitute ‘the Harlem Prep community’?” pondered the Metropolitan Applied Research Center (MARC) in 1970, the non-profit organization founded and directed by famed Black psychologist Dr. Kenneth Clark.² Although Clark and his fellow researchers at MARC, which sought to research issues of educational inequality and racial segregation, were originally contracted to evaluate Harlem Prep and in part, answer this question, it seems they never did so—or at least, if

¹ Memo from Joshua Smith to Edward Meade, October 13, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

² John Hopkins, “Draft of MARC Assessment of Harlem Prep,” March 19, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records, 4; For more about MARC, see Markowitz and Rosner, *Children, Race, and Power*, 199.

they did, their answers are lost to history.³ Fortunately, a rich paper trail and a bevy of contextual clues provide guidance to this question in the present. For all of Harlem Prep's distinct characteristics, perhaps none surpassed its diverse coalition of supporters that defied the divisiveness of the times—both interracial tension and intra-racial disagreements—in a politically charged Harlem and broader national environment.

This chapter investigates the Harlem Prep “community:” how a school run largely by local Black educators secured widespread support from parents and Left-leaning activists, the Black political and entertainment elite, large white-led philanthropies, and giant national corporations led by white (possibly conservative) business leaders. Headmaster Ed Carpenter, administrator Ann Carpenter, and his partners on the board of trustees were able to strike a delicate balance between relying on elite, mostly white, financial support while maintaining and emphasizing Black control of the school through the support of trusted community members. These two components—elite support mixed with local control—formed the basis for Harlem Prep's community coalition during the majority of the school's tenure. How did this balance occur in practice? Why did businesses and philanthropies invest in Harlem Prep in the first place—and what strategies did Harlem Prep employ to sustain their support? How did Harlem Prep create local trust despite the infusion of white money and what input did community have?

As Jerald Podair deftly writes in his book about the infamous 1968 New York City teacher strike, “The word ‘community’ is a chameleon on the American ideological landscape”—a description that also defined Harlem Prep, in that the school's leaders strategically used the word community in a variety of different settings.⁴ Headmaster Edward

³ The MARC Corporation drafted a lengthy proposal for an intensive study and analysis of Harlem Prep. However, I have found no evidence that this proposed study actually occurred.

⁴ Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York*, 21.

Carpenter and his fellow staff embraced the ambiguity, if not the malleability, of this term: a community had no preordained boundaries, no finite memberships, no exact definitions. Harlem Prep administrators, teachers, and staff understood that for their purposes, a school community did not—and in order for their institutional survival, could not—be exclusive. In fact, the Harlem Prep community, whatever that community entailed, could be multicultural.

Secondarily, then, this chapter also implicitly questions the way in which schools are sometimes described in the 1960s and 1970s as places of dispute when juxtaposed with Harlem Prep's purposeful alliance building. In an age of fracture where educational historians have continually documented the deep-seated divisions between various groups in relationship to their schools (or lack thereof), this wide-reaching independent institution in Harlem—perhaps the country's most iconic Black neighborhood—presents a different narrative of seemingly opposed groups working together. Through the existence of Harlem Prep's community coalition, administrators, faculty, and students were able largely to transcend the racial and ideological divisions of the era (and the city) by cultivating a diverse coalition of financial supporters and on-the-ground advocates. Thus, Harlem Prep's nearly seven-year independent tenure illustrates how, conversely, a school can act as a place of unification and solidarity among people of different racial backgrounds and potentially dissimilar political agendas.

“There are many headaches and problems involved in maintaining an alternative school system,” wrote Edward Carpenter in an op-ed in the *New York Amsterdam News*. “Strangely enough, none of these problems surround the attitudes, learning abilities, or ‘discipline’ of the students. The problem is money.”⁵ In this article, Carpenter explains how Harlem Prep's “philosophies are designed to explode the myths surrounding the education of minority

⁵ Edward F. Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Offers a New Opportunity,” *New York Amsterdam News*, December 25, 1971.

students,” as well as an opportunity to share the successes of it students.⁶ However, Carpenter also offers a plea to the Harlem community to help provide financial support. From the outset, securing enough funds to ensure Carpenter’s vision was a weighty struggle; at no point did Harlem Prep stand on solid financial ground, nor could Carpenter or the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees count on funds more than a few months in advance.⁷ Yet, for a short period of time—long enough to ensure the graduation of hundreds of young people—Harlem Prep was able to enact particular strategies that balanced the will of the community with the needs of the white elite to fund this alternative school. While these strategies were unsustainable long-term, they did prove momentarily effective. As Carpenter clearly put it, money was always the largest barrier to Harlem Prep. Thus, it was only by creating a diverse community—perhaps even a multicultural one—that would allow for the reception of funds from a variety of sources, that could keep Harlem Prep alive as an independent school.

Understanding Philanthropic and Corporate Support of Harlem Prep

“Thank you and the Ford Foundation for believing in our program,” wrote headmaster Ed Carpenter in late 1971, to the organization’s education program officer, Dr. Joshua Smith. “We want the Foundation to know that the money given us results in success—young men and women placed in accredited colleges in universities throughout the country.”⁸ Carpenter’s school mailbox was filled with near-daily correspondences with current or potential funders, spanning

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ For example, just a few months after opening in 1967, there were reports in early winter of 1968 that Harlem Prep might not be able to open. See, for example, “Prep School Hurting,” *New York Amsterdam News*, February 3, 1968. Moreover, by 1970, there seemed to be an annual question mark each summer whether Harlem Prep would be able to open for the following academic year. See, for example, Clay Evans, “‘Talk Is Cheap’, Prep Needs More Than Talking,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 11, 1970.

⁸ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Joshua Smith, October 27, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

notes from industry giants to smaller philanthropies. “There are only a very few organizations from which we care about receiving recognition, and yours most certainly is one,” wrote an affiliate from the less-known Field Foundation in response to a note from Carpenter.⁹ From the start, the philanthropic sector was key to Harlem Prep’s financial stability—and Carpenter, with the Board of Trustees, sought help from the sector’s biggest players, such as the Carnegie Corporation, Rockefeller Foundation, and most of all, Ford Foundation.¹⁰

Harlem Prep’s interest in securing philanthropic dollars fit with the sector’s growing influence on American life at the time, with organizations such as the Ford Foundation wielding increasing influence by the 1960s.¹¹ However, in the immediate post-WWII period, philanthropies like Ford rarely engaged in substantive educational giving directly to urban areas, let alone community organizations like Harlem Prep, preferring instead to donate money to social science research or to seek influence in foreign affairs.¹² This newfound foray into

⁹ Letter from Leslie Dunbar to Edward Carpenter, June 12, 1969, Box 2T32, Harlem Prep - 1968, Field Foundation Records. The Field Foundation of New York is now defunct, and since 1989, has been a Chicago-focused philanthropy. See <https://fieldfoundation.org/about/history/>; Other philanthropic organizations that provided funds in the \$500 to \$2,000 level include: Vincent Astor Foundation, Arwood Foundation, Dover Fund, Rockmeadow Foundation, Burroughs Welcome Foundation, Henry Luce Moses Fund, The Sheperd Fund, Francis Asbury Palmer Fund, and Haffenreffer Family Fund. See Edward Meade Jr., “List of Donors from Sept. 1968 to June 1972,” February 26, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁰ See Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), who refers to Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller as the “Big 3,” arguing for their sizable impact on Twentieth Century America; Note that the only time Harlem Prep received public funds was 1972, where the school received a small, one-time Upward Bound geared to help with providing education to Vietnam War veterans. See Lucas, Tucker and Co., “Report of Financial Statements, for 1972 to June 1973,” February 8, 1974, Ford Records.

¹¹ For example, the number of philanthropic organizations tripled from about 500 in 1944 to almost 1,500 in 1955, aided by the creation of a nationalized Foundation Center to keep track of them all. See Stefan Toepler, *Legitimacy of Philanthropic Foundations: United States and European Perspectives: United States and European Perspectives* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 55.

¹² As discussed later in this chapter, this refers to the period before the Ford Foundation’s entrance into urban policy and its demonstration districts; For more information about philanthropies in foreign affairs see Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 137-169, and Edward H. Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983); For more information about foundations’ interest in social science, see Ronald L. Geiger, “American Foundations and Academic Social Science,” *Minerva* 26, no. 3 (1988): 315–341; Conversely, Julie A.

education and community-based projects in the 1960s—and, reciprocally, a community institution seeking substantive funding *from* national organizations—was a more recent phenomenon. Why, then, did America’s wealthiest charitable organizations shift over to funding, as one philanthropy journalist described them, “community action projects” in education like Harlem Prep, which then became commonplace by the early 1970s? Part of the puzzle of fleshing out Harlem Prep’s ability to solicit funds from these organizations—notably Ford—is also to figure out why these organizations had an interest in Harlem Prep in the first place.

Two trends sparked this shift. First, on the broadest level, a relative easing of international crises by the late 1960s gave way to the Great Society agenda put forth by President Lyndon Johnson, alongside the Civil Rights Movement that, juxtaposed together, dominated the American conscience.¹³ While not discounting foreign affairs and the impact of the Vietnam War, historian Alice O’Connor suggests that there was a renewed attention to the country’s growing poverty, which resulted in Johnson’s 1960s Great Society agenda that sought to

Reuben does describe how the Ford Foundation and its president, McGeorge Bundy, worked to partner with student activists during this era, and is perhaps one work that challenges the idea that Ford, specifically, was not directly involved in urban affairs. However, as Reuben argues, the fact that Ford President Bundy wanted to advance his agenda through student activism does not answer the larger question of why this general philanthropic shift into education occurred more broadly. See Julie A. Reuben, “Consorting with the Barbarians at the Gate: McGeorge Bundy, the Ford Foundation, and Student Activism in the Late 1960s,” in *Making the American Century: Essays on the Political Culture of Twentieth Century America*, ed. Bruce J. Schulman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 188-213.

¹³ However, it should be noted that there were of course still international crises, particularly the ongoing Vietnam War, but issues like the Berlin Crisis, Cuban Missile Crisis, and nuclear proliferation with Russia had largely eased and/or passed; In connection, Critical Race Theorists have explained that the 1960s was a time of Interest-Convergence, which, as Derrick Bell asserted in an influential 1980 *Harvard Law Review* article: “the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites.” See Derrick A. Bell Jr., “Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma,” *Harvard Law Review*, 93 (Jan. 1980): 524. Critical Race Theorists such as Bell, Lani Guinier, Richard Delgado and others have long argued that international pressure forced American’s to grapple with their hypocrisy of promoting liberal ideals while continuing to discriminate against its own citizens. For example, see Richard Delgado, “Explaining the Rise and Fall of African American Fortunes - Interest Convergence and Civil Rights Gains,” *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, 37 (2002), and Lani Guinier, “From Racial Liberalism to Racial Literacy: Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Divergence Dilemma,” *The Journal of American History* (June 2004).

alleviate this poverty.¹⁴ By this time, “the mounting sense of crisis surrounding race and poverty pushed several foundations to take more aggressive approaches toward the pursuit of social change and public policy seemed an especially promising avenue,” argue philanthropy historians Benjamin Soskis and Stanley N. Katz.¹⁵ With continued activism around education combined with newfound expansion of federal involvement in education more broadly, some of the philanthropic sector’s interest in social change shifted toward schools.¹⁶ At the same time, “the polarized debates of the late 1960s may have tarnished the reputation of academic social science.” Although this “did not impede the steady expansion of federally funded poverty research” in future decades, philanthropies’ growing (albeit temporary) distrust of social science may be another possible explanation for why the Big 3 foundations (following Ford’s lead) began to focus more on community action programs.¹⁷ These community action programs differed than these foundations’ previous, more sweeping, initiatives; they were community-based and social welfare related (broadly defined, including education and schools), and generally focused in urban spaces for a narrow purpose.¹⁸

Second, more acutely, the actions of the Ford Foundation greatly influenced the sector,

¹⁴ Alice O’ Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 8.

¹⁵ Benjamin Soskis and Stanley N. Katz, “Looking Back at 50 Years of U.S. Philanthropy,” Report Commission for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, December 5, 2016, <http://www.hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/50-Years-of-U.S.-Philanthropy.pdf>, 15.

¹⁶ For example, in 1965, the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which introduced hundreds of millions of dollars for education, greatly increased the role of the federal government in K-12 education. For more information, see Christopher T. Cross, *Political Education: National Policy Comes of Age* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010), 22-31.

¹⁷ Joseph C. Gouldren, *The Money Givers* (New York: Random House, 1971), 213.

¹⁸ This was different than the Community Action Project (CAP), a federal antipoverty project, in the mid-1960s, as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s Economic Development Act and War on Poverty. However, community actions programs more broadly did fit the similar mold as CAP and were related in terms of their goals of ending poverty through local participation, community organizing, and government funds. What is important to understand is that programs such as CAP or other “community actions programs” were becoming popular during the mid-1960s. For more about CAP, see Lewis, *New York City Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 33-35.

charting this temporary path toward engagement in urban affairs. According to contemporary philanthropy journalist Joseph C. Gouldren, by the mid-1960s, Ford “boldly moved from empiricism to activism,” and that while activism was certainly not new, such hands-on engagement with the community was usually reserved for smaller, less-endowed organizations—not behemoths like Ford or Rockefeller. Essentially, “no longer would [Ford] merely study America’s problems; it would try to solve them, by getting down in the street and siding with the people most affected.”¹⁹ The Ford Foundation’s funding of the “community control” experiment from 1967 to 1969 (discussed more later in this chapter) is perhaps the most well-known example; Ford’s insertion in public education sparked years of infamous protests, teacher strikes, activism, and widespread discontent that reverberated in the school district’s decision to “decentralize” for over three decades.²⁰ Karen Ferguson, in *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism*, argues that Ford Foundation President McGeorge Bundy’s “direct and active role in New York’s school politics marked the unprecedented involvement of the Foundation in public affairs.”²¹ Gouldren continued to argue that by the late 1960s, “other foundations, tentatively, hesitantly, began to follow Ford’s example and fund community action projects” including the “ultracautious Rockefeller Foundation.”²² Two historians today largely agree with the idea that Ford had influenced its peers in engaging in so-called “activist” philanthropy; the late Waldemar Nielsen, a notable author on philanthropy who was often critical of Ford and the cautious nature of other organizations, once wrote that,

¹⁹ Gouldren, *The Money Givers*, 240, 245.

²⁰ See, most prominently, Lewis, *New York City Public Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, who argues that the legacy of community control—and the battles that perhaps were first sparked by Ford’s funding—would have a lasting imprint. The specific details of “community control” will be discussed later in this chapter.

²¹ Ferguson, *Top Down*, 96.

²² *Ibid.*, 279.

“Never in the history of American philanthropy had anything comparable in scale and aggressiveness to the Ford Foundation’s assault on the problems of race and poverty been seen.”²³ President McGeorge Bundy, pledging to turn the Ford Foundation into “an instrument of social domestic reform,” quickly led Ford to earn a “reputation as the most activist of the major foundation,” adds historian Julie Reuben.²⁴ Although still a small part of Ford’s overall expenditures, they took on a publicized role in funding activist projects, which did—even if only momentarily—shift the sector in significant ways.

Even with a broad understanding of these notable shifts in philanthropic priorities, why did these influential organizations—particularly the Ford Foundation—invest specifically in a small community school such as Harlem Prep (and how the school fit their larger policy goals)? Although both historians of education and philanthropy scholars have explored the changing philanthropic sector during this era, few works have fully explained the rationale of organizations like Ford or Carnegie for funding an alternative school.²⁵ Existing philanthropy scholarship on K-12 education largely focuses on Ford and their role in New York City community control battles in ways that do not at all explain their support to a particular institution like Harlem Prep.²⁶ This scholarship broadly explains how the Ford Foundation

²³ Soskis and Katz, “Looking Back at 50 Years of U.S. Philanthropy,” 14; Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Big Foundations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 414. However, it is important to note that Soskis and Katz explain that “it is important not to exaggerate” other foundations’ commitment to “activist” philanthropy, nor Ford’s, in that it still was a very small percentage of overall expenditures were granted for these types of purposes.

²⁴ Reuben, “Consorting with the Barbarians at the Gate,” 193.

²⁵ For example, Marybeth Gasman and Noah D. Drezner, “White Corporate Philanthropy and Its Support of Private Black Colleges in the 1960s and 1970s,” *International Journal of Educational Advancement* 8, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 79–92, explores higher education only. Marybeth Gasman and Katherine V. Sedgwick, eds., *Uplifting a People: African American Philanthropy and Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), examines Black philanthropy specifically over time; Institutional histories such as Eric John Abrahamson, *Beyond Charity: A Century of Philanthropic Innovation* (New York: Rockefeller Foundation, 2013), also offer little analysis.

²⁶ See, for example, Karen Ferguson, *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism* (Philadelphia: University of Penn Press, 2013), and Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*.

influenced various groups around their ideas of community education, and why they did so—for example, the Ford Foundation had a crucial role in starting the demonstration districts and sustaining community control activism via financial support (and by influencing public opinion). Although Harlem Prep as an institution (or its administrators or teachers) was not involved in these community control battles that embroiled the city, there were overlapping ideas about community, Black Power, and schooling that most likely linked Ford’s interest in community-based institutions with their interest in Harlem Prep. In their support for community control, the Ford Foundation sought to partner with Black activists and educational leaders—not the New York City Board of Education—to assist, through funds and influence, the Black community in making their own decisions regarding their schools (even if, as Karen Ferguson explains, Ford did so to achieve its aims and not that of Black activists).²⁷ Ed Carpenter, a Black leader in Harlem, fit that description. Ford Foundation President Bundy saw community control, in part, as “systems reform” in a school district that needed it.²⁸ These ideas of boosting the Black community’s role in their schools and reforming a failing Board of Education system also could be applied to Harlem Prep’s goals. Therefore, as the following pages explain, Harlem Prep was a singular endeavor that broadly fit into these organizations’ newfound priorities, spurred on by the school’s strategic solicitation of these funds discussed in the latter half of in the chapter.

The Carnegie Corporation was the first philanthropy to provide funds for Harlem Prep, appropriating a two-year \$300,000 grant through the New York Urban League (NYUL) in 1967.²⁹ This initial grant was Carnegie’s only investment in the school and, as described in-depth

²⁷ Ferguson, *Top Down*, 87-90.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10, 94; Additional discussion of the synergies between Harlem Prep and Ford’s funding of community control will be discussed later in the chapter.

²⁹ Letter from Florence Anderson to Eugene Callender, November 15, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

in Chapter 1, Carnegie seemingly did so for predictable reasons: one, under the leadership of new President Alan Pifer, who “was more of an activist” and “whose belief in liberalism was strong and deep,” led Carnegie to have a new interest in solving poverty like their Ford counterpart; and two, they had an interest in public policy and Harlem Prep could be seen as informing the educational policy of public schools.³⁰ Furthermore, since Harlem Prep had not yet existed—and thus, there was no paper trail to consider—a well-written proposal that matched the nascent interests of the Corporation made this grant a logical choice.³¹ This initial proposal was rather vague in terms of the school’s ideology and specific educational philosophy (i.e., pedagogy, curriculum, etc.), yet, rather clear and direct about its goal of influencing public education and helping dropouts whom posed a public policy concern. Although Carnegie did later write about how they were “proud to have been one of the initial supporters of Harlem Prep and ha[ve] been most pleased with the school’s and the students’ successes,” they had a general policy of not becoming “long-time supporters of any one program” and ultimately did not provide funds after 1969.³² A handwritten note by a Rockefeller Foundation administrator also explained that the Carnegie Corporation had less money than Rockefeller, and that his counterpart at Carnegie reasserted him that Carnegie was not “pulling out” but rather reaching out to Rockefeller to help fund Harlem Prep because it was “too big to carry alone for long.”³³

In connection, one oversight of the understudied role of philanthropy in education during the 1960s and 1970s is how the “Big 3” organizations (and other smaller foundations, too) were

³⁰ See Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 220-222; and Memo from Barbara Finberg to Mario Fantini, October 20, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

³¹ See Eugene Callender, “Urban League – Manhattanville College: A Proposal for a Prep School in Harlem,” 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

³² Letter from Barbara Finberg to Robert Mangum, March 9, 1971, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

³³ Note [Handwritten] from Leland DeVinney to Unknown Recipient [at Rockefeller Foundation], October 1, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

in frequent communication with each other.³⁴ “Dear Chuck,” affably wrote Joshua Smith of the Ford Foundation, to his counterpart Dr. Charles H. Smith at the Rockefeller Foundation. “I’ve been meaning to talk to you for some time about the Harlem Preparatory School and whether or not you might be interested in having Rockefeller take a look at providing some funding up there.”³⁵ Dozens of other similar notes show program officers for the Carnegie Corporation, Ford Foundation, and Rockefeller Foundation communicating about shared goals and suggesting funding opportunities.³⁶ Today, Smith agrees that this networking mattered. “Collaborating with other foundations was a healthy thing to do too, because we were sharing ideas and maybe we’d get them to change some of their priorities,” he explains.³⁷ Despite a broad consensus that the actions of the Ford Foundation influenced other philanthropies, previous scholarship on similar foundations have seemed to overlook the frequency—and perhaps significance—of this type of inter-organization correspondence.³⁸

These types of communications sum up the story of the Rockefeller Foundation’s near-involvement in Harlem Prep prior to 1972, where Carnegie program officers began a dialogue

³⁴ For example, in terms of smaller foundations, see Letter from Joshua Smith to Gene Schwilk, July 21, 1972, Ford Records, where Smith encourages Vice President of the Danforth Foundation to meet with Harlem Prep leaders. In the present day, see also, Barry M. Goldenberg, *Generations of Giving: The History of the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2017), 228. Although not in the 1960s and 1970s, I learned that foundations, such as the Dodge Foundation, were constantly in communication with other foundations in terms of providing funds to organizations that were acting on shared goals.

³⁵ Letter from Joshua Smith to Charles Smith, January 12, 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

³⁶ The Ford Foundation Records at the Rockefeller Archive Center host dozens of letters and notes between foundation officers not only at these “Big 3” organizations, but smaller ones, too. See, among very many, Letter from Robert Mangum to Joshua Smith, September 25, 1972, Ford Records; Letter from Joshua Smith to Charles Smith, May 11, 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

³⁷ Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

³⁸ For example, Lagemann’s *The Politics of Knowledge* focuses directly on the Carnegie Corporation as does Ferguson’s, *Top Down*, with regards to the Ford Foundation. Although there is no scholarly work specifically on the Rockefeller Foundation, its own centennial history mentions shared goals and communication between itself and other large foundations more than secondary works, even if they are broader references. See Abrahamson, *Beyond Charity: A Century of Philanthropic Innovation*, 214-217.

with their Rockefeller counterparts about contributing funds to Harlem Prep.³⁹ Sociologist Leland DeVinney, head of the foundation's new Equal Opportunity initiative created in 1963, was the point person on deciding on whether grants could fit under the guise of this initiative.⁴⁰ "It did not make sense for [Rockefeller Foundation] to start supporting this project" as it "does not fit our new educational objectives in Equal Opportunity," DeVinney ultimately concluded.⁴¹ Rockefeller Foundation's Equal Opportunity initiative, as stated in its 1968 Annual Report, was focused primarily on improving *public* schools, such as programs to better prepare "minority students" for college, and mostly, on more accessibility to higher education for minority students through grants, leadership programs, and other special initiatives.⁴² Like Carnegie (and Ford), the Rockefeller Foundation was interested in public education and public policy more broadly, which Harlem Prep was only tangentially related to. While it seemed that Carnegie was willing to consider Harlem Prep as a public institution in ways that matched its newfound interests in public education, the Rockefeller Foundation—despite frequent internal debate—ultimately was not. (Not until the spring of 1972 did Rockefeller begin to fund Harlem Prep due to program officer's relationship with the new Harlem Prep Board of Trustee Chairman Robert Mangum.⁴³)

³⁹ See, for example, Note from Leland DeVinney to Unknown Officer [at the Rockefeller Foundation], September 20, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; Note [handwritten] from J.E.B. [unknown officer at the Rockefeller Foundation], September 30, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; and Note [Handwritten] from Leland DeVinney, October 1, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

⁴⁰ Rockefeller Archive Center, "People: Leland C. DeVinney," https://rockfound.rockarch.org/biographical/-/asset_publisher/6ygcKECNI1nb/content/leland-c-devinney?inheritRedirect=false.

⁴¹ Note from Leland DeVinney to Unknown Officer [at the Rockefeller Foundation], September 20, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records. In this note, DeVinney also says that Rockefeller had "declined numerous more-or-less similar requests."

⁴² Rockefeller Foundation, "The Rockefeller Foundation: President's Five-Year Review & Annual Report 1968," <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/app/uploads/Annual-Report-1968.pdf>, 114-141; Another internal memo from Rockefeller also suggests that they did not fund Harlem Prep more because it was not officially a public school.

⁴³ Judge Robert Mangum, who played a significant role in Harlem Prep's funding in its latter years, will be introduced and discussed later in this chapter. Also note that the Rockefeller Family Fund (RFF) did provide a

The story of the Ford Foundation and Harlem Prep, however, was noticeably different. Excluding some initial funding that trickled down from the New York Urban League in the school's early goings, Ford first began contributing en masse during the 1970-1971 academic year, giving \$284,000—and notably, immediately after the general failure of community control in Ford's eyes from the previous years.⁴⁴ The Ford Foundation followed up with a \$250,000 grant in 1971-1972 and then another \$150,000 grant in December of 1972.⁴⁵ (The Ford Foundation even granted \$50,000 to Harlem Prep in May of 1974, after the Board of Education gained control of the school, to help pay past loans. "I hope that this will help to alleviate some of the anxiety that you have been experiencing over the past few months," Joshua Smith wrote to Robert Mangum.⁴⁶) The Ford Foundation, along with Standard Oil of New Jersey, was the financial bedrock of Harlem Prep, stepping in to save the school from closing time and time again. They were certainly the school's largest philanthropic supporter and closest ally—a fact, of course, not lost upon Carpenter and his colleagues. "Once again, thank you for believing in our program," reiterated Carpenter in response to the quarter-million dollar grant in 1971. "We want the Foundation to know that the money given us results in success—young men and women placed in accredited colleges and universities throughout the country."⁴⁷

\$19,000 grant in 1968-1969 academic year. RFF is a separate legal entity from the larger and more well-known Rockefeller Foundation. It is unknown why RFF donated to Harlem Prep. See Meade Jr., "List of Donors," February 26, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁴⁴ Refer to Chapter 1 of this dissertation about Ford's early engagement with the NYUL; Meade Jr., "List of Donors," February 26, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁴⁵ See Ford Foundation, "Press Release of \$250,000 Grant to Harlem Prep," October 20, 1971, Ford Records, and Letter from Howard Dressner to Edward Carpenter, December 6, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Letter from Edward Carpenter to Sam Stith, December 20, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁴⁶ Letter from Joshua Smith to Robert Mangum, May 7, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁴⁷ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Joshua Smith, October 27, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.



Figures 30. Chairman of the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees, Judge Robert Mangum, welcoming donors to Harlem Prep with the media at the school and students and staff behind him, including Ed and Ann Carpenter (center-right), ca. 1971.

Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

How did the interests of the Ford Foundation align with Harlem Prep? This alternative school fit snugly with the philanthropy’s goals in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in three overlapping ways: one—and not unlike their “Big 3” peers—the Ford Foundation had a nascent interest in local education and national educational policy, particularly ideas about autonomous institutions dating back to community control; two, Ford and their new president, McGeorge Bundy, had an overarching ideology of social change and Black progress which aligned with Harlem Prep’s multicultural vision; and three, funding this experimental school matched Bundy’s personality and interests. “Remember, in those days Ford was the giant,” contends

Joshua Smith—and Ford took the lead in investing “deeply” into education on multiple fronts.⁴⁸ While this investment changed over time from national intervention to more locally-focused projects, Smith is right: education rose to the forefront of Ford’s initiatives during the rise (and then in the aftermath) of President Lyndon Johnson’s sweeping Great Society programs. Smith remembers joining the foundation in 1970 and learning about their mid-1960s involvement funding research and small initiatives that helped inform the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965, as well as pilot projects for what became the prominent federal program Head Start.⁴⁹ Historian Julie Reuben, too, in her essay about the Ford Foundation and student activism, describes the organization’s heavy investment into higher education and in support of innovative programs on campuses.⁵⁰

The community control battles share the most acute connection to Ford’s later interest in Harlem Prep. By the late summer of 1966 in the midst of educational upheaval in New York City, the Ford Foundation soon inserted itself into the city’s educational affairs—the “first volley in the community-school movement” that would subsequently embroil the city.⁵¹ In September, groups of parents and activists prevented the opening of Intermediate School 201 in East Harlem, a new school that failed to meet the city’s promise of being integrated. Further stoking the frustrations of parents and activists, the school board appointed a white principal, and a maelstrom of “months-long activism” occurred. Seeing these continued broken promises and insults from city officials, parents and activists sought autonomy over their school. In fall of

⁴⁸ Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

⁴⁹ Ibid; See Hugh Davis Graham, “The Transformation of Federal Education Policy,” in Robert A. Divine, ed., *Exploring the Johnson Years* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 171-172; and Ford Foundation, “Millions of Lives Transformed: 50 Years of Head Start,” April 1, 2015, <https://www.fordfoundation.org/the-latest/news/millions-of-lives-transformed-50-years-of-head-start/>.

⁵⁰ See Reuben, “Consorting with the Barbarians at the Gate.” However, Reuben writes about how many of these grants to student groups and universities were either nullified or unproductive because of student unrest.

⁵¹ Ferguson, *Top Down*, 89.

1966, Ford Foundation President McGeorge Bundy became directly engaged, working with New York City Mayor John Lindsay and others to resolve this impasse. Ultimately, after months of negotiation, the Ford Foundation helped promise to fund “community-controlled demonstration districts”—including I.S. 201—that would allow community members the type of autonomous control they desired.⁵² Karen Ferguson describes in detail the Ford Foundation’s engagement in New York City’s community control struggles in the late 1960s and their full-throated efforts to support the community’s decentralization efforts. “Ford’s school reformers joined with black school activists because of their shared outrage over the failure of the city’s public schools,” she explains. Most notably, she and others add, Ford joined with these Black school activists over a shared belief: that the community should self-govern their institutions, particularly schools. Even if Ford’s engagement was “short-lived,” they had “direct involvement in the New York’s public educational system” during these years for the purposes of promoting community control.⁵³

Harlem Prep, a school *by and for* the community, with its Harlemites leaders and Harlem characteristics, had symmetries with the Ford Foundation’s interest in community-based, autonomous institutions. After the community control battles of the late 1960s passed, the early 1970s then saw Ford invest in Harlem Prep—perhaps a continuation of a belief in the idea of community control. In fact, to them, Harlem Prep could have been seen as a better idea than the failed community control demonstration districts that Ford had previously funded; instead of funding a district and operating within the public school system, Ford could directly fund a *school* and one that, while chartered by the state, could operate freely and without the potential

⁵² Lewis, *New York City Public Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 26.

⁵³ Ferguson, *Top Down*, 105, 13, 87, 89; For more information about why, and how, Ford became involved in the community control battles of the 1967 and then the infamous Ocean Hill-Brownsville teachers strike in 1968, see Chapter 3 in Ferguson’s *Top Down*. See also, Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York*, 39-49, 80-92. From a sociological perspective, see D. Crystal Byndloss, “Revisiting Paradigms in Black Education: Community Control and African-Centered Schools,” *Education and Urban Society* 34, no. 1 (November 1, 2001): 84–100.

roadblock of teachers unions or school boards. Thus, Harlem Prep applied—if not potentially expanded upon—Ford’s interest in community-based institutions, while also matching their larger priorities as part of their continued movement toward funding domestic programs that made up about 40% of Ford’s budget by 1970.⁵⁴

Second, the broader social justice philosophy behind Ford’s programming—particularly as envisioned by its president, McGeorge Bundy—shared substantial similarities with headmaster Edward Carpenter’s multicultural rhetoric at Harlem Prep. For one, Bundy, too, spoke favorably about “multicultural and ‘affective’ school curricula” in ways that matched what Harlem Prep seemed to be doing and, above all, saying.⁵⁵ For example, in the Ford Foundation’s funding of Black arts programs in Harlem in the early 1970s, Ferguson describes how Ford’s leaders wanted multiculturalism to grow “beyond race to include recognition, tolerance, and equal opportunity for all racial, gender, and sexual identities.”⁵⁶ Although this principle had already been central to Carpenter’s multicultural vision at the start of Harlem Prep, he, too, understood multicultural education (in part) to be about appreciation for all cultures and individual identities, as well as about educational equality more broadly. To re-iterate Carpenter’s thoughts, he explains that: “Our students are exposed to an education that prepares one to live and function in a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-racial society.”⁵⁷ Although there is no evidence of prior connection between the two, both Bundy and Carpenter had overlaps in terms of their vision for Black progress: that racial uplift of Black Americans could eventually occur through creating a national unity that is inclusive but also recognizes centuries

⁵⁴ Ferguson, *Top Down*, 1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 132-133.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁵⁷ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 30.

of racial inequality. Both Carpenter and Bundy spoke about multiculturalism and education.

Furthermore, Ed Carpenter's philosophies seemed to be conducive to the type of Black leaders that Bundy and the Ford Foundation wanted to support. As historian Karen Ferguson argues, the Ford Foundation "began to focus on choosing and developing black leaders who fit their acculturative vision for the black community."⁵⁸ Ferguson explains that Ford sought to:

relegitimize racial liberalism's promise of color-blind opportunity and inclusion, not by attacking black power's repudiation of this American creed but by directly engaging black activists and their call for separatism and self-determination.⁵⁹

Just like in the Foundation's method of directing working with Black activists during the struggle over I.S. 201 to create "demonstration districts" (that gave Black community members real decision power and not just an advisory role), here, Ford again is interested in engaging directly with Black leaders such as Carpenter. Even if Carpenter, in practice, did not believe in acculturation—he cared deeply about celebrating and preserving Black culture—his rhetoric around unity perhaps seemed to fit the mold of the type of Black leader Ford would support.

In connection, throughout her book, Ferguson describes further how the Ford Foundation, under Bundy's leadership, supported a nuanced strategy of "black assimilation through ongoing racial segregation," an approach that Ferguson terms "developmental separatism."⁶⁰ While the Ford Foundation did not support some of the cultural aspects of the Black nationalist agenda, the Foundation did view—seemingly paradoxically—this agenda's "separatist" and self-determination model as the mechanism for assimilation. Africana Studies scholar Noliwe Rooks largely agrees with this assessment in her analysis of the Ford Foundation's influence on higher

⁵⁸ Ferguson, *Top Down*, 132-133.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

education curricula. Rooks argues that the Ford Foundation, and Bundy specifically, aggressively supported a vision of Black Studies that would make “hesitant administrators see Black radicalism as part of the American mainstream and Black studies as a step toward racial inclusion in America in general....”⁶¹ To Bundy, in Rooks’ interpretation, Blackness was not separate from American culture, but part and parcel of it. Ultimately, Bundy and Ford straddled a unique middle ground; they felt that “a period of black separatism was a vital prelude to full participation in American life in order that African Americans might build the institutions and leadership class needed to compete with other groups within society.”⁶² Bundy and Ford differed from fellow white liberals who felt uneasy by the rise of Black Power and pushed for an integrationist model, while also not quite aligning with Black nationalists who saw Ford’s end goal—assimilation—as antithetical to their separatist agenda.

Harlem Prep believed in a similar philosophy. As established in previous chapters, headmaster Carpenter and his staff celebrated Black culture with a curriculum and school ethos steeped heavily in Pan-African ideology.⁶³ Afrocentric regalia and symbolism, and “Black is Beautiful” rhetoric echoed strongly all throughout the school. Yet, Harlem Prep also believed firmly in the idea that young people could pluralistically integrate into society; students should pursue a college degree, and use their education for personal mobility and societal progress. To Carpenter, with an education, students would be able succeed in the world even despite—or

⁶¹ Noliwe Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education* (New York: Beacon Press, 2013), 66.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 77; Conversely, Julie Reuben describes that, in the face of criticism of funding student activists from conservative voices in government, Ford tried to actually brand themselves as being more “centrist” and “present itself as the rational center between the extremes of both left and right.” (Note that this centrism that Reuben mentions is not the middle ground referred to in this passage.) Even though she argues for this re-branding by Ford, Reuben would still agree with Ferguson and Rooks that Ford was left-of-center in their politics. See Reuben, “Consorting with the Barbarians at the Gate,” 203-204.

⁶³ It is very important to clarify, however, that the word “separatist” is from Ferguson, who refers to nationalist components of Ford’s ideology as “separatist.” Carpenter would refrain from using such a term, as this term connotes a type of exclusion that contradicts the type of *inclusion* and multiculturalism he promoted.

perhaps in spite of—racism and discrimination (although he never underestimated either). Thus, if Ford Foundation’s strategy was to support schools and programs that had nationalist-leaning components, but with the ultimate goal of societal assimilation, Harlem Prep, on the surface, met both of those characteristics. In this way, Harlem Prep seemed to embody Ford’s ideological beliefs in how to best approach “the struggle for Negro equality,” most likely viewing Harlem Prep as a notable Black-led community effort that had many emphases on Black culture, but was ultimately about ushering their soon-to-be graduates into society. If the Ford Foundation “believed schools could become an essential bridge to assimilation by refashioning students’ identity through teaching and affirming a celebratory rendering of their home culture,” it would be difficult to find a more apt example than Harlem Prep.⁶⁴

Relatedly, the third reason why the Ford Foundation perhaps saw Harlem Prep as an attractive grantee was because of the school’s experimental ethos, which matched that of the Ford Foundation and its president, McGeorge Bundy. “[Bundy] would sit there on stage [at a Ford Foundation board meeting], sling his leg over the arm of the chair, lean back...and one of the things that I remember [during these meetings] is his statement that philanthropy is about taking risks,” remembers Joshua Smith. ““We have the money to be able to take risks, and you should all understand that if you bat .333, that’s really good,”” Smith recalls Bundy saying.⁶⁵

Smith further describes Bundy as a man who would “make mistakes” and that he emphasized to

⁶⁴ Ferguson, *Top Down*, 86-88; It is important to note, however, that Harlem Prep and Ed Carpenter never used the word “assimilation” nor was he an “assimilationist” in the way the word can be traditionally used in terms of meaning assimilating into white society. Instead, he was much more a “cultural-pluralist,” in that Black culture and Black struggle should be infused into American culture and that celebrating diversity was the meaning of a national unity. See, for example, Edward Carpenter, “Rationale for Use of Ford Foundation Grant,” September 18, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. However, in terms of Ford’s overall strategy for funding Black schools, this nuance goes beyond what Bundy most likely realized at the time and the ways in which certain strategies were characterized in the moment.

⁶⁵ Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

his staff to go find projects and programs that were innovative and pushing boundaries.⁶⁶ Harlem Prep fit that mold—it was new and “fresh,” at least to students, parents, and community members in Harlem.⁶⁷ The Ford Foundation specifically referred to these type of projects as “demonstration projects,” that were “intended to move a larger system toward change by imitation”—the system, in this case, being America’s public school districts in cities such as New York City and elsewhere.⁶⁸ Thus, not only did Harlem Prep satisfy the philanthropy’s broad interest in education and fit their ideological agenda, but it was the type of experimental project that Ford was eager to fund at this time and Bundy wanted his program officers to seek out.

There is one more reason for the Ford Foundation’s interest in Harlem Prep that is perhaps the most significant factor: the advocacy of Dr. Joshua Smith. Smith, a former classroom teacher in Massachusetts, graduated from Harvard’s Administrative Career Program as a young Black educator before working in the office of the Pittsburgh school superintendent. Through various connections, he was informed about a temporary opening at the Ford Foundation in New York City and decided to make the professional change. (“The one year job turned into a six-year job,” Smith laughs today.) At Ford, he soon “became a program officer on [his] own”—and one of the only Black program officers at the foundation.⁶⁹ At Ford’s Division of Education and Research, Smith “inherited Harlem Prep” from prior education program officer Mario Fantini—“he bragged about it a lot and his office was across the hall from mine, so I heard enough about it”—and after meeting with the new Harlem Prep Board of Trustee Chairman, Smith soon began

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Hopson interview, February 11, 2015; See also Smith interview, March 2, 2017, who contends that Harlem Prep was “something different” than the other schools he donated to in his role as education officer at the Ford Foundation, including Black Panther-associated schools on the west coast.

⁶⁸ Richard Magat, *The Ford Foundation at Work: Philanthropic Choices, Methods, and Styles* (New York: Plenum Press), 78-79.

⁶⁹ Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

visiting the school himself.⁷⁰ While understandably skeptical at first, over time, Smith became an ardent champion of Harlem Prep, pushing his superiors at Ford and his counterparts in the philanthropic sector to support the school. A copious paper trail of letters, memos, and notes depict a program officer who worked tirelessly to keep Harlem Prep alive.⁷¹

At the Ford Foundation, Smith provided funds to other alternative Black schools throughout the country, including schools in Oakland by noted Black administrator Marcus Foster.⁷² “We had broad generalizations of the areas that we wanted to work in, and I could dig and find places to do it,” Smith explains. Still, Harlem Prep, with a population of students that other schools “had given up on,” was unlike any of the other institutions he supported during his tenure. “There [were] things that were done because I wanted to do them”—and both present conversations and contemporary documents of the era suggest that Harlem Prep was a cause that he singularly dedicated himself to.⁷³ Smith explains that McGeorge Bundy, apropos of his philanthropic philosophy, gave program officers wide individual latitude to fund programs that they saw fit. Ultimately, when considering the reasons for the Ford Foundation’s financial support, Joshua Smith’s relentless advocacy should certainly be weighed heavily.

Outside of Smith and the Ford Foundation, Standard Oil of New Jersey (commonly referred to as ESSO or “Jersey” at the time) was Harlem Prep’s biggest supporter and other

⁷⁰ Ibid; See also Letter from Millicent Fenwick to Joshua Smith, July 28, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁷¹ In the Ford Foundation microfilm collection, there are nearly 100 different documents generated by Smith or sent to Smith, including his first time visiting school, his growing correspondences with Judge Mangum, and his overall advocacy to the higher up administrators at Ford and counterparts at other organizations. These documents strongly suggest that his individual agency was unquestionably critical in Ford’s continued support.

⁷² For a biography of Foster who was tragically assassinated, see Spencer, *In the Crossfire*.

⁷³ Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

financial salvation.⁷⁴ Standard Oil’s investment—and, to a lesser extent, that of other predominantly white-owned, national corporations such as IBM, Metropolitan Life, and Chase Bank—raises additional questions about corporate philanthropy in Black education during this era. Understanding and clarifying Standard Oil’s (and other businesses) commitment to Harlem Prep is also important to fully understanding Carpenter and Harlem Prep’s ability to build a contrasting coalition of supporters. As “the first major corporation to become interested in the school,” Standard Oil donated \$80,000, \$80,000, \$150,000, and \$150,000 in each of the four academic years, respectively, from 1968 to 1972.⁷⁵ Standard Oil “moved in to help fill the gap because we think Harlem Prep meets a vital educational need in New York,” said the company’s executive vice president—and frequent Harlem Prep visitor—Clifton C. Garvin Jr. in March of 1971.⁷⁶ Furthermore, like the Ford Foundation, Standard Oil continued to step in and save the school from shutting down in 1972 and 1973 with stop-gap smaller grants, as well as providing a \$25,000 grant to help pay down debt months after the school had already been adopted by the Board of Education in 1974.⁷⁷ Standard Oil even devoted additional resources to assist Harlem Prep’s fundraising efforts to keep the school open. “They were most impressed that Standard Oil

⁷⁴ Standard Oil of New Jersey officially changed its company name to Exxon Corporation in December of 1973. For years, Standard Oil of New Jersey executives were frustrated with their company being confused with other “Standard Oil” companies, such as Standard Oil of New York, despite being different enterprises. Although Standard Oil of New Jersey shared the same name, these companies—and other incarnations—were completely separate entities and had been since the early Twentieth Century when Rockefeller’s Standard Oil companies were broken up through various anti-trust legislation. For more information about the 1973 name change, see partial clipping of “Standard Oil of New Jersey History,” *Dun’s Review*, December 1973, in ExxonMobil Historical Collection, History of Standard Oil (New Jersey) Research Files 1940s-1980s: Volume IV Research Materials Box 2.207/K96A, General Clippings 1954-1980, ExxonMobil Records; Also note that Exxon Corporation merged with Mobil Corporation in 1999 to become the current company, ExxonMobil Corporation.

⁷⁵ Meade Jr., “List of Donors,” February 26, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; and “Harlem Prep Gets \$250,000 Gift,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 13, 1971; Lesly Jones, “Harlem Prep Gets \$50,000 Donation,” *New York Amsterdam News*, January 16, 1971.

⁷⁶ “Harlem Prep Gets \$250,000 Gift,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 13, 1971.

⁷⁷ See, among many, Letter from R.F. Neblett to Robert Mangum, May 8, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; and Letter from Robert Mangum to Richard Neblett, September 6, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

has agreed to make Frank Mitchell, from John Price Jones [Corporation], a secretary, and an office in the Standard Oil building available to Harlem Prep as a full-time fund-raising unit,” relayed Judge Robert Mangum to Ed Carpenter after the judge’s meeting with Ford Foundation officials on April 14, 1971.⁷⁸ Standard Oil was Harlem Prep’s largest corporate funder and a close ally in the ongoing quest of keeping school doors open and student dreams alive.

A notable list of other corporate giants located inside and outside of New York City perhaps followed Standard Oil’s lead, such Chase Manhattan Bank. While Chase did not match the financial heft of their energy counterpart, they did provide multiple grants of between \$25,000 and \$50,000. Furthermore, Chase representatives were intimately involved in the school’s later negotiations with the Board of Education—one memo even describes how a representative from Harlem Prep, Standard Oil, Ford Foundation, and Chase were in a room together discussing the school’s finances.⁷⁹ In addition, Chase provided a banker that would act as a pro bono Harlem Prep treasurer to provide much-needed bookkeeping assistance.⁸⁰ Other major companies such as Metropolitan Life donated multiple grants of \$20,000 and \$25,000; so too did I.B.M., which made multiple grants of \$25,000 and \$50,000, plastics company Union Carbide (\$24,000), and energy company Con Edison (\$10,000), respectively.⁸¹ Other national companies and local enterprises that donated to Harlem Prep with multiple grants of approximately \$5,000 or less included: Coca-Cola, New York Life Insurance (\$12,500 and

⁷⁸ Letter from Robert Mangum to Ed Carpenter, April 14, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁷⁹ Memo from R.F. Neblett, February 2, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records;

⁸⁰ Frank Shea, a banker at Chase Manhattan Bank, offered to provide free bookkeeping for Harlem Prep in September 1973 to help ease administrative staff shortages caused by financial constraints. Shea also later sat on Harlem Prep Board of Trustees. See Letter from Robert Mangum to Richard Neblett, September 11, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

⁸¹ Meade Jr., “List of Donors,” February 26, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

\$7,500), *New York Times*, Avon Products, New York Telephone Company, Feigen Art Gallery (\$10,000), WNEW Radio Station (\$10,000), and Manufacturers Hanover Trust.⁸² Still, these smaller donations of \$5,000 or less from various companies made up a small percentage of Harlem Prep's total funding.⁸³

Why did Standard Oil of New Jersey and other corporate giants donate to Harlem Prep? There are three broad, intertwined rationales for this corporate philanthropic interest in Harlem Prep: one, to improve companies' public relations in the context of the time period; two, a rise of "Corporate Social Responsibility"; and three, a belief in the role of education in creating a better society that would benefit everyone—or what companies called the "enlightened self-interest" model. "Historically, we have had a responsibility to account financially to our shareholders," wrote Standard Oil in a private 1971 report entitled "Jersey's Social Responsibility." "Now there is growing pressure for a broader accounting to a wider constituency."⁸⁴ This constituency that Standard Oil was cognizant was, of course, the public—and it would be naïve to dismiss the significant public relations benefit of providing large sums of money to a cherished community institution such as Harlem Prep. Here, it is important to parse the archives not only for private documents (and to recognize the public-facing ones), but to critically assess these businesses' actions beyond their words on the page. For example, frequent visits to the school were accompanied by photo opportunities, in addition to favorable media coverage in the Black-

⁸² See, for example, "List of Harlem Prep Donors for 1971-1972," Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records. This is only a small sampling of the list of businesses and organizations that donated to Harlem Prep, many, such as J.C. Penney, that donated small grants of \$1,000.

⁸³ For example, in the almost \$692,000 raised by June 30, 1971—the school's best funded year—almost \$120,000 of those funds came from "other contributions under \$5,000" that were not listed in the school's surviving documents. Or, in 1969, for example, nearly \$80,000 of the school's total \$465,000 came from small donations. Still, these small corporate donations only made up approximately 17% of Harlem Prep's total funding in both years.

⁸⁴ Standard Oil of New Jersey, "Jersey's Social Responsibility," March 19, 1971, p. 6, History of Standard Oil (New Jersey) Research Files 1940s-1980s: Volume IV Research Materials Box 2.207/K99B, Public Affairs Publications 1960-1977, ExxonMobil Records.

owned *New York Amsterdam News* and other outlets.⁸⁵ Standard Oil executives understood the negative perception of businesses—“real or supposed”—in urban communities.⁸⁶ “Business, in particular, has been called to task for having demonstrated what has been considered to be an aloof indifference to the nagging social problems of the communities in which they operate, a cavalier disregard for consumer interests, and a misuse of the physical environment,” declared high-ranking executive Clifton C. Garvin, Jr. at an employee-only seminar in 1971.⁸⁷ Garvin, Jr. and other executives continued to frequently use similar rhetoric about the poor views of urban communities on big business, including their own, in internal reports to each other and speeches to employees.⁸⁸ Thus, with articles in the company’s newsletter *The Lamp* and financial backing of the documentary *Step by Step*, supporting Harlem Prep was certainly a way to combat their negative public perception as not caring about the communities they serve.⁸⁹ Harlem Prep administrator Hussein Ahdieh (and a frequent companion to Carpenter during fundraising meetings) knew that generating a positive public relations image was a significant factor in companies’ support for Harlem Prep—particularly to large companies such as Coca-Cola that

⁸⁵ See, for example, photograph collection from Harlem Prep administrator Hussein Ahdieh, copies provided to author, which show numerous photographs of business leaders shaking Carpenter’s hand at graduation, inside school, or being handed a check; In terms of outside coverage, see “Standard Oil Gives Harlem Prep \$50,000,” *Atlanta Daily World*, January 15, 1971.

⁸⁶ Standard Oil and Clifton C. Garvin Jr., “ESSO Community Action Volunteers Luncheon [Remarks],” May 1, 1972, p. 6, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1972 [Folder 2], ExxonMobil Records.

⁸⁷ Clifton C. Garvin Jr., “Remarks at Middle Management Urban Affairs Seminar,” November 16, 1971, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records. Note that Garvin, Jr. would go on to become the CEO of Exxon in 1975.

⁸⁸ See, among multiple speeches, Clifton C. Garvin Jr. and T.H. Tonnessen, “Exxon Community Action Volunteers Luncheon [Remarks],” May 7, 1973, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, Jan - June 1973 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Standard Oil of New Jersey, “Miracle on 136th Street,” *The Lamp*, June 1972, Exxon Series I, Subject Files: Corporate Public Affairs Box 2.707/L12e, Publications General 1971-1979, ExxonMobil Records.

only gave infrequent small sums of money.⁹⁰ (While it is unknown how different sectors of the Harlem community felt about this corporate influx of money or what individuals thought about the participation of these executives in their cherished community school, the Harlem community broadly continued supporting the school through their own donations, support in the local press, use of the school in public functions, and attendance at commencement.)



Figure 31. Chairman of Exxon Corporation Board of Trustees presenting a large check to Ed and Ann Carpenter, Robert Mangum, and Harlem Prep students, ca. 1972.

Source: Personal collection of Hussein Ahdieh.

Yet, Standard Oil of New Jersey’s sustained philanthropy (and intense commitment to Harlem Prep’s cause) was rooted in a far deeper rationale than only a public relations dilemma: they believed in the importance of “corporate social responsibility.” Speaking to hundreds of

⁹⁰ Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016. For example, Coca-Cola gave \$5,000 or less, as did other major corporations.

employees at the Hilton Hotel on May 7, 1973 for the annual Exxon Community Action Volunteers Luncheon—a program “that began entirely out of the employees’ own initiatives” to volunteer in the community—Standard Oil’s Garvin, Jr. spoke to these volunteers about how this program and many other new initiatives arose out of a tangible belief in the idea of corporate social responsibility. (Referring to the term at the luncheon, Garvin, Jr. joked: “That’s a pretty weighty term, and I hesitate to using it after a weighty lunch. But we do take it seriously.”⁹¹) Garvin, Jr., explained that corporate social responsibility had three main levels: level one, to “manage our business well” in terms of economic growth; level two, “the manner in which we operate our business every day,” such as ethics, employment practices, and environmental conservation; and level three, helping to “solve some of the problems that are not directly related to the ways business operates” such as in education, lack of opportunity for minority businesspeople, and lack of healthcare access, among other issues.⁹² “Corporate social responsibility is by no means a new subject, but it is one that is commanding closer attention today than ever before,” suggested another Standard Oil executive in a shareholder meeting two years prior. “After all, business functions by public consent, and its basic purpose is to serve the needs of society to the satisfaction of society.”⁹³

An idea long theorized about, scholars tend to agree that the early 1970s saw a rise, even

⁹¹ Garvin, Jr. and Tonnessen, “Exxon Community Action Volunteers Luncheon,” May 7, 1973, p. 3, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, Jan - June 1973 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records; See also Garvin, Jr., “ESSO Community Action Volunteers Luncheon,” May 1, 1972, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1972 [Folder 2], ExxonMobil Records; Garvin, Jr., “Remarks by C.C. Garvin, Jr. at Middle Management Urban Affairs Seminar,” November 16, 1971, ExxonMobil Historical Collection, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records; and T.H. Tonnessen, “Jersey’s Social Responsibility and Environmental Objects: Implications for Advertising,” September 20, 1971, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 2], ExxonMobil Records.

⁹² Garvin, Jr. and Tonnessen, “Exxon Community Action Volunteers Luncheon,” May 7, 1973, p. 1-2, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, Jan - June 1973 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records.

⁹³ Tonnessen, “Jersey’s Social Responsibility and Environmental Objects,” September 20, 1971, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 2], ExxonMobil Records.

if a temporary one, of a belief in corporate social responsibility by companies who took seriously the task of investing in communities while maintaining profitability.⁹⁴ Standard Oil's Garvin, Jr., who later became the company's CEO, further explained:

The problem of the cities have become so pervasive and deep-rooted that they affect the daily lives of millions of people in this country. They reach into homes, into schools, in the business community. Crime, narcotics, unemployment, inadequate education and substandard housing -- these and other urban problems are eating away at the very fabric of society. All of us -- including business -- are faced with the necessity of doing something to help alleviate this critical situation.⁹⁵

In part because of this deficit-oriented perspective of the city, Standard Oil specifically enacted a legion of different programs and initiatives to address what executives felt would improve these "urban problems" as they saw them. Among the "specific urban action programs supported by Jersey, either financially or through the loan of manpower" included money to: Hospital Audiences, Inc., which sought to provide services to hospitals, detention centers, and prisons; The Urban Coalition, a liaison organization which worked with companies to create educational programs such as English classes for Spanish-speaking families; Opportunities Industrialization Centers, a nationwide organization that sought to train unemployed or underemployed people in cities various trade skills; Coalition JOBS, another job placement organization, which Standard Oil "loaned executives" to; ESSO Community Leadership Awards, a program designed to lend financial aid to "promising community programs"; the ESSO Volunteers program, an "internal program" established to help Jersey employees volunteer their time in the New York area; and,

⁹⁴ See, for example, Rosamaria C. Moura-Leite and Robert C. Padgett, "Historical Background of Corporate Social Responsibility," *Social Responsibility Journal* 7, no. 4 (2011): 528–39.

⁹⁵ Garvin Jr., "Remarks by C.C. Garvin, Jr. at Middle Management Urban Affairs Seminar," November 16, 1971, p. 1, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records.

of course, Harlem Prep.⁹⁶ While all of these programs and initiatives (including Harlem Prep) demonstrate Standard Oil's principle of corporate social responsibility in practice, they also adhere to the broader strain of liberalism that perhaps influenced urban-based companies like Standard Oil to act in the first place. Programs like the Opportunities Industrialization Centers, for example, reflect "the longstanding American traditions of self-help and self-reliance" that were blended "with themes of community uplift that had animated northern African American communities since before the Civil War."⁹⁷ This corporate social responsibility matched various elements of this type of 1970s liberalism that permeated public discourse.

Furthermore, Standard Oil proudly claimed that while many of their peer companies had chosen to relocate "to some quiet suburb far from the crowded streets of New York City," they chose to stay in the city and "make a commitment to do what we can do to make this a better one in which to live and work."⁹⁸ Standard Oil also worked to increase "minority hires," boasting that 22% of all hires in 1972 were people of color, including 15% of professional hires. "Opening up job opportunities for members of minority groups is certainly one of the most urgent social problems we face," wrote a Jersey executive, as it was their view that "a program to accelerate the hiring and upgrading of racial minorities is not only required by the laws of the land but is dictated by corporate conscience."⁹⁹ Other internal memos speak to this same

⁹⁶ A. McKenzie, "Outline for Talk, 'Business Ethics,'" April 20, 1972, pgs. 8-12, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records.

⁹⁷ Guian A. McKee, *The Problem of Jobs: Liberalism, Race, and Deindustrialization in Philadelphia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 114. For more information about the Opportunities Industrialization Centers, see Chapters 3-6 in McKee's book, which not only explains this program in-depth, but most importantly, helps explain how 1970s liberalism began to move toward some private partnerships and influence.

⁹⁸ Garvin, Jr., "Remarks by C.C. Garvin, Jr. at Middle Management Urban Affairs Seminar," November 16, 1971, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records.

⁹⁹ McKenzie, "Outline for Talk, 'Business Ethics,'" April 20, 1972, pgs. 12-13, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records. However, this talk is quoting another booklet from a previous talk by Hal Roser, one of the primary contacts with Harlem Prep. Standard Oil even created a new position, that of "Equal Opportunity Employment Advisor," to help the company in this goal.

commitment to holding managers responsible for hiring minority workers “in the same way that they are held responsible for traditional areas of business performance.”¹⁰⁰ Ultimately, this belief in a corporate social responsibility framework by Standard Oil’s executives was the foundation in which the company decided to invest in the communities that they worked in, such as Harlem.

Finally, third, although Standard Oil of New Jersey invested millions of dollars in social programs and community initiatives, both private memos and public speeches suggest that executives were most interested in improving urban education as part of their “enlightened self-interest model.”¹⁰¹ If corporate social responsibility was the broad conceptual framework that influenced Standard Oil in the 1970s, then an “enlightened self-interest” was the lever in which they—and perhaps other companies—pulled when investing in programs such as Harlem Prep.¹⁰² Enlightened self-interest meant that companies sought to be sensitive to human values and the needs of others while still considering their own self-interest, hoping that their donated money “will allow business to capitalize on its advantages in economic productivity, to the ultimate benefit of society and all of its institutions,” remarked Garvin, Jr. in 1971.¹⁰³ Garvin, Jr. explained this in practice:

Let me give just one example of how urban problems affect the business community.

¹⁰⁰ Standard Oil of New Jersey, “Background Memorandum on Minority Employment and Contributions to Minority and Urban Affairs,” 1970, p. 1, History of Standard Oil (New Jersey) Research Files 1940s-1980s: Volume IV Research Materials Box 2.207/K99B, Public Affairs Response to Urban Crisis 1970-1978, ExxonMobil Records.

¹⁰¹ While the exact amount of Standard Oil of New Jersey’s donations to community programs are unknown, one internal memo mentioned that in 1970, the company donated over \$1 million to public health, welfare, and community service agencies. See Standard Oil of New Jersey, “Background Memorandum on Minority Employment and Contributions to Minority and Urban Affairs,” 1970, p. 3, History of Standard Oil (New Jersey) Research Files 1940s-1980s: Volume IV Research Materials Box 2.207/K99B, Public Affairs Response to Urban Crisis 1970-1978, ExxonMobil Records.

¹⁰² For more information about how enlightened self-interest was connected to corporate social responsibility in the 1970s, see Lee Min-Dong Paul, “A Review of the Theories of Corporate Social Responsibility: Its Evolutionary Path and the Road Ahead,” *International Journal of Management Reviews* 10, no. 1 (December 6, 2007): 53–73.

¹⁰³ Garvin, Jr., “Remarks by C.C. Garvin, Jr. at Middle Management Urban Affairs Seminar,” November 16, 1971, pgs. 4-5, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records.

Imagine, for a moment, the effect on the economy of this city is we could somehow drastically reduce the welfare rolls. Almost overnight, we would have hundreds of thousands of additional citizens functioning as taxpayers, as law-abiding family members, and, for our purposes, as potential customers.¹⁰⁴

The future CEO envisioned education in much the same way—better-educated youth meant more opportunities to hire qualified talent, as well as future consumers of their products. Standard Oil, through their ESSO Education Foundation originally established in 1955, donated more than \$4 million to higher education per year in the early 1970s through different types of programs and grants.¹⁰⁵ Although the company had long been focused on higher education, executives saw Harlem Prep—“a remarkable school”—as a way to further that aim at the secondary school level. “In terms of achieving a broad effect, we expect that when some of the Prep’s graduates finish college, they will return to the inner city to assume roles of leadership in improving secondary education in New York’s ghettos,” Garvin, Jr. asserted in November of 1971.¹⁰⁶ It is “our young people...who will shape the world’s tomorrow,” added a public relations manager in a speech to stockholders a few months prior.¹⁰⁷ These clues suggest that Harlem Prep fit into Standard Oil’s corporate social responsibility framework while, more specifically, satisfying their belief in the significant role that education can play in fixing the so-

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁵ This included “Education Research and Development Grants” as well as unrestricted money to help colleges and universities “make ends meet.” About 10% of all ESSO Education Foundation money goes to HBCUs as well as contributed directly to the United Negro College Fund. The company also started a program to encourage Black engineers through scholarships to pursue the field at universities such as Howard University. See Tonnessen, “Jersey’s Social Responsibility and Environmental Objects,” September 20, 1971, pgs. 13-15, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 2], ExxonMobil Records.

¹⁰⁶ Garvin Jr., “Remarks by C.C. Garvin, Jr. at Middle Management Urban Affairs Seminar,” November 16, 1971, p. 6, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 1], ExxonMobil Records.

¹⁰⁷ T.H. Tonnessen, “Jersey’s Social Responsibility and Environmental Objects: Implications for Advertising,” September 20, 1971, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 2], ExxonMobil Records.

called ills of the city. While Standard Oil is only one example of a company engaging in corporate philanthropy and any definite extrapolations should be made with caution, it does seem that there is at least some evidence that other companies were engaged in similar behavior throughout northern cities.¹⁰⁸

How Harlem Prep Built Corporate and Philanthropic Support

If understanding the reasons why organizations such as the Ford Foundation and Standard Oil were interested in funding Harlem Prep is one half of the story, the other half is fleshing out the specific mechanisms for how Harlem Prep was able to recruit and sustain their support over time. Harlem Prep's key players were able to simultaneously solicit funds from white elites while maintaining fervent support from the Black community through a three-pronged strategy: one, personal persuasion; two, relationship-building, and three, welcoming of these elites into the Harlem Prep "community." Standard Oil perhaps offers the best example of the results of this strategy. Even taking into account this momentary growth of corporate social responsibility, the company seemingly went above and beyond their peers in terms of individual investment in the school. Standard Oil's support of Harlem Prep "was unique to them," recalls the Ford Foundation's Joshua Smith, a familiar presence in fundraising meetings—and a sentiment

¹⁰⁸ Administrator Hussein Ahdieh, who often served as Carpenter's assistant in fundraising negotiations, recalls other businesses speaking in similar terms. See Ahdieh interview, December 12, 2016. In his written accounts, Ahdieh provides an example of Charles E. F. Millard, president of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company, expressing similar sentiments. See Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 113; More broadly, Guian McKee, in *The Problem of Jobs*, describes at length how businesses were very active in corporate philanthropy, engaging in social programs (like the Opportunities Industrialization Centers and Standard Oil) in Philadelphia in congruent ways. In addition, scholars who have studied this phenomenon acknowledge that the 1960s and particularly the 1970s saw a rise in corporate philanthropy (although they acknowledge more research is needed). See, for example, Marybeth Gasman and Noah D. Drezner, "White Corporate Philanthropy and Its Support of Private Black Colleges in the 1960s and 1970s," *International Journal of Educational Advancement* 8, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 79–92; Doug Guthrie et al., "Giving to Local Schools: Corporate Philanthropy, Tax Incentives, and the Ecology of Need," *Social Science Research* 37, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 856–73; and Arthur Gautier and Anne-Claire Pache, "Research on Corporate Philanthropy: A Review and Assessment," *Journal of Business Ethics* 126, no. 3 (2015): 343–69.

confirmed from archival records.¹⁰⁹ Although company executives strategically mentioned Harlem Prep in both board meetings and in public relations documents, Harlem Prep was the only secondary school that garnered Standard Oil funds (and the only community organization that received such large amounts).¹¹⁰ Harlem Prep's three-prong strategy was effective at not just Standard Oil, but in soliciting other companies' and philanthropies' support, too.

First, this solicitation started with the outsized personality of Ed Carpenter. Growing up as part of the Harlem hustle, he brought that same grit to his fundraising activities. "I remember one time, the Mosler Safe Company—they were thinking about reducing the amount of money that they were going to give us. They let [Ed Carpenter] talk, and they gave us more!" laughs former assistant headmaster Henry Pruitt today, who worked closely with Carpenter. "I mean he didn't shout and holler and all that stuff, but he had the logic worked out, so that when he came to see you for whatever, you might as well just give it up because you would go home and cry on your pillow if you didn't do what he asked!"¹¹¹ Casey Carpenter, his daughter, explains that he was "scrappy," the type of guy who "could take 50 cents and do a whole lot with it"; former students describe him as "full of charisma" and a "force" to reckon with.¹¹² Carpenter had the type of personality and skillset that was conducive to networking in ways that were necessary for the school's survival. Carpenter's right-hand confidant, administrator Hussein Ahdieh, also

¹⁰⁹ Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

¹¹⁰ For example of executives mentioning Harlem Prep, see Garvin Jr., "Remarks by C.C. Garvin, Jr. at Middle Management Urban Affairs Seminar," November 16, 1971, p. 6, Speeches Exxon [2015-006], Box 4K767, 1970-1972 [Folder 1] ExxonMobil Records; and Standard Oil of New Jersey, "Background Memorandum," 1970, p. 2, History of Standard Oil (New Jersey) Research Files 1940s-1980s: Volume IV Research Materials Box 2.207/K99B, Public Affairs Response to Urban Crisis 1970-1978, ExxonMobil Records. While Standard Oil and later Exxon gave millions to support higher education initiatives and programs, Harlem Prep remained the only secondary school, according to available records.

¹¹¹ Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017; See also Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017.

¹¹² Carpenter interview, June 4, 2017; Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 35; See, among many oral history interviews, Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015; Hopson interview, February 11, 2015.

played a part in this networking with Carpenter, whom he shared a deep friendship and working partnership. “I was on the road, going and meeting people, all of these big shots,” Ahdieh explains, recalling traveling with Carpenter to meet sitting senators and multimillionaires in the city.¹¹³ Ahdieh estimates that by the school’s third year (1969-1970), he and Carpenter spent more than 50% of their time “going for luncheons with some rich folk who can give us a check for \$10,000, \$20,000 [or] \$50,000.”¹¹⁴ Ahdieh continues that, “most of [our] efforts, instead of going to [the] education of the kids and doing what our original plan was, were spent on fundraising”—while adding that this distribution of time was not Carpenter’s preference.¹¹⁵

In seemingly a tag-team effort, Judge Robert Mangum—the first Black judge appointed to the New York State Courts of Claims—became Harlem Prep’s Chairman of its Board of Trustees in late 1970, and used his connections to solicit support for the school.¹¹⁶ As a respected civil rights figure who previously served in the Johnson Administration, Mangum was well connected in both city and national circles. For example, Mangum reached out to high-profile acquaintances that may have been interested in supporting Harlem Prep’s cause of helping disenfranchised youth such as the Commissioner of Hospitals in New York City, a producer at NBC, and the Chancellor of the City University of New York.¹¹⁷ U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel also received letters from Judge Mangum, and wrote his own to encourage businesses

¹¹³ Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2017.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Douglas Martin, “Robert Mangum, a City and Civil Rights Leader, Dies at 93,” *New York Times*, October 8, 2014; Prior to becoming a Judge, Mangum served as director of the Northeast region of the Office of Economic Opportunity appointed by President Lyndon Johnson and Chairman of the State Commission on Human Rights appointed by New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller.

¹¹⁷ Letter from John Knowles to Ray Trussell, June 9, 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; Letter from Robert Mangum to James Gannon, September 17, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; Letter from Robert Mangum to Chancellor Robert Kibbee, April 18, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

and Harlem Prep's previous donors to provide (additional) financial support. Rangel wrote in August 1973 that he was "assisting Harlem Prep in its search for private emergency funding in order that Harlem Prep can survive another year" while the school continued its long-standing negotiation with the Board of Education.¹¹⁸ Prior, in February 1970, U.S. Senator Jacob Javits likewise wrote a letter to Commissioner James Allen in the U.S. Office of Education, declaring that he "personally investigated" Harlem Prep and was "deeply impressed," and that "the school appears to be a truly extraordinary example of what can be accomplished in inner-city education..."¹¹⁹ In the midst of constant financial uncertainty—in both the summer of 1972 and 1973, the odds of Harlem Prep opening seemed highly unlikely—the savvy and resourcefulness of Carpenter and Mangum cannot be overlooked.¹²⁰

However, it is important to briefly take stock out of the fact that Carpenter and Mangum were not the only figures to play a role in this fundraising, as depicted by the archives. Ann Carpenter, highly visible at each commencement ceremony and a major driving force of the school's success in educating young people, was almost certainly involved in these negotiations—if not during in school hours, then at the dinner table at home.¹²¹ Her daughter, Casey Carpenter, and numerous alumni similarly paint a picture of Ann and Ed as a true partnership. Perhaps Ann contributed to Harlem Prep's fundraising, too. Moreover, Hussein Ahdieh, gregarious and sociable in his own right, by all accounts was highly effective in his role

¹¹⁸ Letter from Charles Rangel to Carnegie Corporation, August 13, 1973, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; Records show that Harlem Prep always had an intention to receive public funding either through the Board of Education or elsewhere.

¹¹⁹ Letter from U.S. Senator Jacob Javits to James Allen, February 19, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹²⁰ For example, for the school not being able to open, see Letter from Joshua Smith to Charles Smith, May 11, 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; See also "Budget for One-Half Year to Keep Skeletal Staff at HP," September 7, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

¹²¹ Her daughter, Casey Carpenter, and numerous students, paint their relationship as a partnership.

communicating with companies and philanthropic officers. Teachers and students, too, had the most important roles of fostering academic achievement and achieving themselves. Above all else, students needed to excel in the classroom, and this fact certainly mattered in this fundraising—not to mention meeting and greeting benefactors during school visits.¹²² These voices are absent from the philanthropic archives and the unknown contributions by other individuals, in what was likely a team effort, should also be acknowledged. There was also consistent support from community members who advocated for Harlem Prep, asking for businesses and philanthropies to support their community-based school—newspaper op-eds and fundraisers that invited executives and programs officers were common.¹²³ These efforts, recorded or not, most definitely made a difference in encouraging outsiders to support the school.

Still, Carpenter and Mangum were undoubtedly responsible for most of the heavy lifting. Beyond personality traits and peripheral help from others, key to Carpenter and Mangum's success in soliciting funds from philanthropic and corporate elites was their ability to develop close relationships with powerful individuals. These relationships the archives do illustrate quite clearly. For instance, Joshua Smith, the Ford Foundation program officer, remembers receiving a call from the “brand new chair on the board”—Robert Mangum—about meeting to discuss Harlem Prep. “He was really good about [staying connected],” Smith adds today, crediting Mangum for initiating this relationship.¹²⁴ Over time, frequent letters and correspondences show a budding friendship between Smith and Mangum, with Smith becoming Harlem Prep's most fervent supporter, lobbying his peers in the philanthropic sector to aid the school. (As attested by

¹²² For example, as discussed later in this chapter, Nile interview, March 5, 2015. See also photographs of Carpenter and other administrators speaking to a crowd of press, providing recognition to CEO's of companies, in Hussein Ahdieh, personal photograph collection, copies in author's possession, with permission.

¹²³ See “Leaders Unite To Raise Funds For Harlem Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 31, 1973.

¹²⁴ Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

Smith's first visit illustrated in this paper's epigram, his interest in the school was anything but guaranteed.¹²⁵) Carpenter, too, developed a relationship with Smith, evidenced by reciprocal letters that gradually moved from formal to informal as years went by. "Dear Josh," wrote Carpenter in the summer of 1972, "It was great to see you at graduation.... I hope you will be able to get a few weeks rest of rest."¹²⁶ Or, just a few months later: "Dear Josh...[I] look forward to having you come to visit your friends at Harlem Prep."¹²⁷ Carpenter made sure to develop relationship with businesspeople, too, such as New York City socialite Sheila Mosler (and wife of prominent businessman John Mosler). "She liked Ed—they were friends," recalls alumnus Sterling Nile, "she used to sit in his office and talk." Nile continues: "It was more than fundraising.... She stayed in touch and she liked what was going on at the school."¹²⁸

While these relationships seem to be built on a mutual admiration and apropos to Carpenter's multicultural worldview, such outreach was certainly strategic, too.¹²⁹ Robert Mangum's relationship with incoming Rockefeller Foundation President John H. Knowles provides a prime example, in which Mangum reached out to a mutual acquaintance in hopes of this acquaintance being able to schedule an introductory meeting with Knowles.¹³⁰ Mangum's

¹²⁵ It should be noted that this friendship was not predetermined. Not only did Smith not know Mangum, but expressed clear skepticism about the Harlem Prep program after his first visit. See Memo from Joshua Smith to Edward Meade, October 13, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. It is also important to note that Carpenter and Smith's engagements were unbalanced—Carpenter needed money from Smith, and this need drove their relationship. Still, in my 3-hour oral history with Smith, he spoke about the deep friendship he developed with both Carpenter and Mangum over time.

¹²⁶ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Joshua Smith, July 19, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹²⁷ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Joshua Smith, September 15, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹²⁸ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

¹²⁹ See Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

¹³⁰ See Letter from Ray Trussell to John, June 1, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

plan worked: “[I] saw Judge Mangum re[garding] Harlem Prep—wonderful man!,” scribbled Knowles to longtime education program officer Charles Smith on a handwritten note in 1972 after their arranged meeting. “I know it’s outside our policy, but should we consider \$15,000-25,000 from our GIA ‘fire-fighters’ fund[?]”¹³¹ Records show that Rockefeller Foundation indeed followed up with a \$25,000 grant—the organization’s first ever donation despite consistent outreach by Harlem Prep administrators since the school’s founding.¹³²

Furthermore, Mangum and Carpenter also seemed to specifically seek out other people of color in these predominantly white-operated organizations.¹³³ Joshua Smith, most likely the only Black program officer at the Ford Foundation, was one such example. So, too, was how Mangum and Carpenter developed a relationship with Black and Hispanic employees at Standard Oil, both who became primary contacts. Letters show Dr. Richard Neblett, a Black contributions officer at Standard Oil of New Jersey, in frequent contact with Robert Mangum.¹³⁴ Student Sterling Nile,

¹³¹ Letter from John Knowles to Charles Smith, July 25, 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records. It is unclear what fund Knowles was referring to in this note.

¹³² John Knowles, Leo Kirschner, and Ralph Davidson, “Grant in Aid to Harlem Prep, for \$25,000,” April 9, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; During prior requests, Rockefeller concluded that Harlem Prep did not meet their requirements for funding public education through their Equal Education Opportunity initiative, despite much internal debate.

¹³³ The idea of “black faces in high places” has long been a debated concept in the Black community. In this era, by the mid-1970s, some activists felt a need for Black people to insert themselves in electoral politics and other arenas, such as Amiri Baraka (even if these efforts were ultimately unsuccessful in creating the type of structural change the Black community desired). See, for example, Komozi Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Bobby Seale, the co-founder of the Black Panther Party, also ran for mayor of Oakland in 1973. See Bobby Seale, *A Lonely Rage: The Autobiography of Bobby Seale* (New York: Times Books, 1978); Ultimately, in thinking about “black faces in high places” in sectors such as business or philanthropy, there are larger questions of the roles of these individuals in an environment of liberal inclusion and affirmative action meeting conservative policies of the Nixon era. See chapter 8 for discussion about the changing political atmosphere.

¹³⁴ For example, among more than a dozen letters, see Letter from Robert Mangum to Richard Neblett, September 6, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. Himself a chemist with a Ph.D., Neblett eventually became head of contributions at Exxon in their New York City office. An article in *Black Enterprise* mentions how Neblett “is largely responsible for the Company’s commitment to educating a significant number of minority engineers,” and how he held substantial influence as his role of contributions manager for Exxon’s charitable contributions, including earmarking money to education and to organization such as the NAACP

who served as the student representative on the board of trustees, recalls how Ed Carpenter's main contact with Standard Oil was with another Black employee, who "helped negotiate that company giving us money for our education."¹³⁵ Joshua Smith, too, remembers himself communicating with a Latino program officer, who lived in East Harlem—"he was a champion [of Harlem Prep]"—during Ford and Standard Oil's mutual goal of keeping the school alive.¹³⁶ Smith contends that although Standard Oil was investing in other philanthropic initiatives, engaging in K-12 education and funding Harlem Prep specifically was a singular cause.¹³⁷ It seems these cultivated relationships played a part.

Finally, third, Headmaster Edward Carpenter, Robert Mangum, and others affiliated with Harlem Prep consciously welcomed powerful individuals such as Smith, Knowles, Neblett, and numerous others into their conceptualized (if not strategic) version of the Harlem Prep community. "Mr. Carpenter spread the cloak of community fraternity to the many white benefactors who received awards for their support of Harlem Prep," noted the largely white-staffed *New York Times* at the 1969 commencement ceremony.¹³⁸ While students and teachers may have felt differently, Harlem Prep leaders did not shy away from this inclusivity—at least in public for necessary fundraising purposes. Honoring financial supporters at commencement was one of the most significant avenues for Carpenter to include these individuals—older, white, wealthy, mostly male—into the fabric of Harlem Prep. Playfully referring to them as "fat cats" (and "beautiful cats" for women supporters) in public, Carpenter printed their name in the

(\$20,000) and the National Urban League (\$70,000) in 1976. See "Payoff from Petroleum's Profits," *Black Enterprise* 8, no. 4 (November 1977): 63-67.

¹³⁵ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

¹³⁶ Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ M. S. Handler, "Harlem Prep Chooses a More Hopeful Path," *New York Times*, June 15, 1969.

Harlem Prep commencement program, called them on-stage to hand them awards one-by-one, and publicly thanked them in front of the many hundreds in attendance.¹³⁹ “On behalf of the Carnegie Corporation,” wrote its president, Alan Pifer, “I want to thank you, Edward Carpenter, and all of the other trustees and faculty of The Harlem Preparatory School for the Distinguished Service Award which you so thoughtfully presented to us at graduation.”¹⁴⁰ Hussein Ahdieh recalls CEOs being recognized at the ceremony, taking home “special awards” for their support—he even remembers an executive from Coca-Cola flying from Atlanta just to receive an award.¹⁴¹ It was clear, however, that these relationships were cultivated out of economic necessity; on multiple occasions, Carpenter spoke about his strong preference for Harlem Prep to be supported only by the local Harlem community. For example, in an op-ed in *The Amsterdam News*, Carpenter described how if churches can be developed and maintained by the community, so could—and should—schools. If schools such as “Harlem Prep are to exist,” he wrote, “primary support will have to come from the community.”¹⁴² Moreover, the school’s relationships with white benefactors on display were not equal, either. Carpenter relied on wealthy businessmen and philanthropists to fund the school, which resulted in him having to acknowledge them in between what was supposed to be a Harlem undertaking—at commencement and during school hours. It is notable that Harlem Prep’s school design, or perhaps just its inability to secure community-sourced (or public) funds, made this all a reality.

¹³⁹ Ibid. See, among many sources, 1968 Commencement Program, in “Harlem Prep [Report],” July 2, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

¹⁴⁰ Memo from Eli Evan, June 13, 1969, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

¹⁴¹ “From Harlem to Harvard: Business-Backed Prep School Turns Slum Dropouts into College Students,” *Nation’s Business*, December 1969; Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016.

¹⁴² Edward F. Carpenter, “... Harlem Prep Offers a New Opportunity,” *New York Amsterdam News*, December 25, 1971.

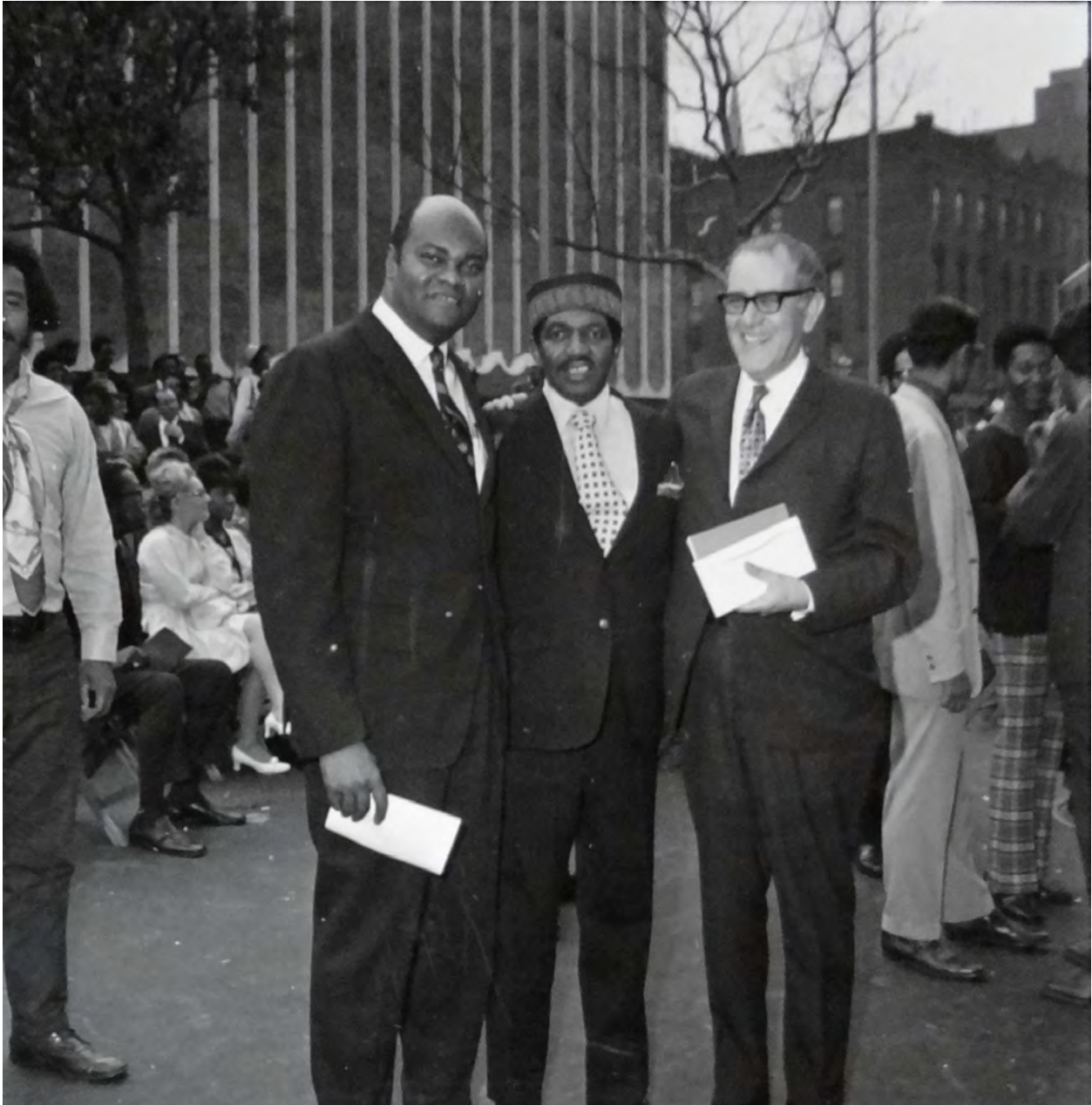


Figure 32. Headmaster Ed Carpenter with two Harlem Prep supporters at the commencement ceremony, 1971.

Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

The commencement ceremony, and all of these relationships, uneven or unequal as they might have been, was also a statement on how a multicultural society could look like to Carpenter outside the confines of school walls. Harlem Prep, in the mind of Carpenter and the Board of Trustees at least, was not a school community with strict membership—it was an idea

that was codified through an inclusiveness that welcomed any person, regardless of ideology or race, committed to the success of the young people attending. Even if the motivations for these alliances were mainly out of necessity, they did not necessarily clash with Carpenter's multicultural worldview, either. Publicly recognizing these white benefactors in the midst of the Pan-African themed—and primarily Black attended—commencement ceremony on the streets of Harlem was an important statement about the opportunity for a pluralistic society.

Regardless of rationale, this strategic broadening of community and inclusiveness extended beyond graduation. Both photographs and student anecdotes illustrate how CEOs of companies and other funders were frequent school visitors.¹⁴³ Ahdieh, with his rolodex of wealthy individuals, was fond of welcoming a supporter inside school walls—sometimes Carpenter would even call an impromptu all-school assembly (after all, all the chairs and tables were movable) or allow the visitor to mingle with students during the school day.¹⁴⁴ Visitors ranged from politicians such as U.S. Senator Jacob Javits, to musicians such as jazz pianist Billy Taylor, to educational reformer Jonathan Kozol and conservative firebrand William Buckley—although someone ideologically and politically conservative such as Buckley was a rarity.¹⁴⁵ Businesswoman and donor Sheila Mosler would visit the school too—“she came up to Harlem Prep a lot,” says alumnus Sterling Nile. Nile, as one of the older students and the student

¹⁴³ Hussein Ahdieh, personal photograph collection, copies in author's possession, with permission; See also Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

¹⁴⁴ See, Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*; and Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016.

¹⁴⁵ See Ahdieh photograph collection; Ahdieh interview, November 11, 2016; For Jonathan Kozol donating \$1,000 to Harlem Prep, see Meade Jr., “List of Donors,” February 26, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. Kozol also wrote a lengthy op-ed praising Harlem Prep and lambasting that fact that it had financial troubles. See “Fasting for the Free Schools,” *Boston Globe*, November 20, 1973; Finally, Ahdieh tells the story of Buckley asking to visit the school and Harlem Prep, with its rhetoric of welcoming everybody, said that he was welcome to come. Surprised Buckley actually took up that offer, Ahdieh recalls that he knew Buckley's conservative ideology and talking points (not to mention his past comments about the racial superiority of the white race) would clash with students and staff, and describes how both aggressively confronted Buckley about his ideas. However, Ahdieh also recalls that Buckley made a substantial donation and asked to keep his donation anonymous to avoid the perception of trying to “buy students' support.”

representative who served on the school’s board of trustees, also recalls the instance when Carpenter asked Nile to accompany him to meet David Rockefeller at Chase Manhattan Bank to collect a \$50,000 check. “We talked for about 45 minutes” about what it was like to be a student, he says, helping to cultivate a small sense of camaraderie between himself and Rockefeller within the grandiose boardroom at Chase Bank in front of one of the nation’s wealthiest men.¹⁴⁶ “The community was primarily the staff, students *and* funders,” explains 1972 Harlem Prep graduate Francisco Rivera. “Harlem Prep was all about community in the sense that the school made us feel that we were all on a journey together”—a journey that explicitly welcomed anyone who wanted to be part of it.¹⁴⁷ Ultimately, headmaster Edward Carpenter, Board of Trustee Chairman Robert Mangum, and Harlem Prep administrators publicly conceptualized their community to be one that had few boundaries, purposely reaching across racial and ideological lines—albeit driven by an economic necessity—to cultivate a wide-ranging community coalition.

Harlem Prep Builds Local, Grassroots Support

“‘I didn’t have time for an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation,’ Mr. Carpenter says. ‘I asked for 10 months. I told them ‘If you’re interested in your children, you’ll give me 10 months.’ When that time was up, we had 35 students at colleges and that was the answer.’”¹⁴⁸ Speaking to *Nation’s Business* in 1969, Carpenter’s retort was in response to a reporter’s question regarding the initial community criticism that there was not an all-Black faculty and board. At the school’s outset, administrator Ann Carpenter understood this to be an issue, too. “We had the problem of

¹⁴⁶ Nile interview, March 4, 2015. Nile seemed to think that Rockefeller wanted to connect with a student, and make sure that all the positive press and others’ praise was accurate.

¹⁴⁷ Francisco Rivera, e-mail message to author, April 7, 2018.

¹⁴⁸ “From Harlem to Harvard: Business-Backed Prep School Turns Slum Dropouts into College Students,” *Nation’s Business*, December 1969.

getting acceptance from the community,” she explains, just by the natural skepticism of this new institution that included educators of multiple ethnicities, including whites.¹⁴⁹ Ed Carpenter, with his long tenure working in Harlem, understood the community he was serving—and he knew that community support was essential to the survival of Harlem Prep.¹⁵⁰ In fact, one of his constant refrains over the school’s entire tenure was that it must have a vital presence in and promptly serve the Harlem community. “Since Harlem Prep was the first high school in Central Harlem, its presence had to be more than a symbolic gesture,” he explained, meaning first in recent years.¹⁵¹ While the academic success of the school’s students spoke for itself and certainly was the catalyst for widespread Harlem favor, Carpenter and his staff also sought to strategically build and then maintain community support in three specific ways: one, to intimately network and work with the local community to fundraise; two, by framing and making the school a Harlem institution not just in name, but in character and action; and three—and as explained in the next section—making sure Harlem Prep was locally run and operated with community input. “Harlem Prep is a community school for the community’s youths,” with programs and opportunities for the adult community to be a part of too.¹⁵² Carpenter made sure to support this rhetoric with practical steps to meet “higher expectations” for “our community.”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Ann Carpenter, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010.

¹⁵⁰ For example, in his dissertation, Carpenter wrote candidly about how it was important to learn who the “real” community leaders were and that he initially made this mistake in not doing so. See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 128. He also describes in great detail his belief that the Harlem neighborhood should feel as if Harlem Prep was serving them and that “interested community people should be invited to share in the formation and development of Harlem Prep.” See pg. 85. Finally, Carpenter recognized that he knew Harlem Prep “could not be isolated from existing community problems,” and in turn, it was encouraged for students from the community who attended Harlem Prep to bring with them these lived experiences. See pg. 28.

¹⁵¹ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 84.

¹⁵² Edward F. Carpenter, “Letter to Editor from Carpenter,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 30, 1968; See also Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 84-88.

¹⁵³ Edward F. Carpenter, “Harlem Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, May 11, 1968.

In contrast to outreach to wealthy white elites, on a more local and school-based level, Carpenter and his fellow administrators worked to raise money by networking with local activists and leading countless school-sponsored fundraisers. In fact, again, it was Carpenter's preference: "Folks are always asking why it is we have to go the white community to beg and ask for money. It's partly because we're not getting the financial support we could be getting from institutions and individuals right here in Harlem," speaking about Black wealth flowing through Harlem.¹⁵⁴ Despite this criticism—or perhaps because of it—grassroots fundraisers were frequently held on Harlem Prep's behalf, ranging from student dances at the school to fashion shows with local Black models.¹⁵⁵ Local businesspeople stepped up to hold events, too, such as Black entrepreneur Ronnie Holly who hosted an event at his popular Ronnie's Casualwear store in the heart of Central Harlem.¹⁵⁶ There were even large-scale events in midtown Manhattan featuring Black entertainers and jazz musicians, organized by a Harlem-based committee.¹⁵⁷

Looking at these efforts more closely reveal how Harlem Prep was interconnected with the surrounding Harlem community. For example, in April 1973, through the "concerted efforts on the part of the school, its students, faculty and parents," Harlem Prep co-sponsored a luncheon with the *New York Amsterdam News*, the Better Business Bureau, and One Hundred Black Men—a local organization founded in 1963 to advocate for better living conditions in Black

¹⁵⁴ Clay Evans, "'Talk Is Cheap', Prep Needs More Than Talking," *New York Amsterdam*, July 11, 1970.

¹⁵⁵ See, among many, "Harlem Prep School Dance," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 24, 1970; "Fashions To Glow For Harlem Prep," *New York Amsterdam News*, February 13, 1971; "'All for Harlem Prep School!'," *New York Amsterdam News*, December 18, 1971; and "Fashion Show, Cruise Planned for Harlem Prep," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 3, 1973; There are dozens of newspaper clippings that mention a Harlem Prep fundraising or community event. From January 1971 to December 1973, the *New York Amsterdam News* wrote about Harlem Prep 73 different times on a near-weekly basis, many of them highlighting or promoting these events.

¹⁵⁶ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Ronnie Holly, September 17, 1973, Personal Collection, Veronica Holly, copy provided to author; and Ronnie Holly, "Ronnie's Casuals Entertainers for Harlem Prep Benefit Fashion Extravaganza Show & Dance [program]" November 18, 1973, Personal Collection, Veronica Holly, copy provided to author.

¹⁵⁷ "Display Ad 40 -- Harlem Prep Presents \$URVIVAL," *New York Amsterdam News*, April 29, 1972.

communities. (Interestingly, the goal of this community-sponsored luncheon was also, in part, to “invite corporate executives so that they might see the school in operation” in hopes that they would be willing to provide support.) Surviving documents from this event also listed co-sponsors that included noted Black Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, Dr. Samuel Proctor from the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church, and President of Harlem Hospital Dr. Herbert Cave, among many others.¹⁵⁸ Also in spring of 1973, “a group of 35 citizens in various professions” formed to sponsor a benefit that would be chaired by Bill Cosby, as fundraising efforts such as these sought to rally as many people and organizations in Harlem and New York City as possible.¹⁵⁹ It was common for Harlem-based organizations to collaborate in support of Harlem Prep.¹⁶⁰ (One sector of the community that does not seem to appear in support rolls for the school was politically-affiliated groups. Although numerous different political sects were represented through the student body and faculty, few, if any, seemed to provide money or public advocacy.)

Alternatively, other smaller community groups and Harlemites skipped the fundraisers altogether, donating directly to Harlem Prep to publicly show their support. For example, representatives from the “Harlem Professionals Basketball League”—a loosely-organized group of players who ran basketball tournaments at the famed Rucker Park on Eight Avenue and 148th Street—visited the school to present a \$2,000 check to Harlem Prep in 1972.¹⁶¹ Other residents listed Harlem Prep as their requested place for donations in lieu of flowers after the passing of a

¹⁵⁸ “Program from Harlem Prep Fundraising Luncheon,” April 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

¹⁵⁹ John Knowles, Leo Kirschner, and Ralph Davidson, “Grant in Aid to Harlem Prep, for \$25,000,” April 9, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

¹⁶⁰ See, for another example, “Leaders Unite To Raise Funds For Harlem Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 31, 1973. This fundraiser featured the Harlem Prep Parents Association and their partners.

¹⁶¹ “‘Harlem Cagers’ (Receives \$2000 from Basketball League),” *New York Amsterdam News*, January 1, 1972. For more on Harlem’s famous Rucker Park, home of many future NBA basketball players and local legends, see Vincent M. Mallozzi, *Asphalt Gods: An Oral History of the Rucker Tournament* (New York: Doubleday, 2003).

loved one. For instance, the family of Harlem businessman G.H. Cunningham—who had “expressed a deep interest in the school” prior to his death—raised over \$1,500 for Harlem Prep made up over 100 individual donations from family and friends.¹⁶² The parents of Harold Finkling, a Black 19-year old who died of sickle cell three days after being admitted to Harlem Prep, donated \$500 (which they received from his life insurance policy) in honor of their son. “It is what Robert would have wanted, he loved Harlem Prep.”¹⁶³



Figure 33. Ed Carpenter and Harlem Prep students receiving a contribution from Robert McCullough, a well-known local basketball player from Rucker Park in Harlem, 1972.
Source: New York Amsterdam News Photograph Archive, Cornell University

¹⁶² “Cunningham Family Gives \$1500 To Aid Harlem Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 1, 1973.

¹⁶³ “\$500 to Harlem Prep, Sickle Cell Victim,” *New York Amsterdam News*, January 13, 1973.

Letters of support for Harlem Prep included locally known activists and scholars such as Preston Wilcox and Dr. Kenneth Clark, as well as prominent national African American figures such as Sammy Davis, Jr., Louis Farrakhan, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, Whitney Young and many others—each of whom visited the school on various occasions or advocated on the school’s behalf.¹⁶⁴ The range of ideologies and Black thought are striking. This eclectic group speaks to the complexity of Harlem Prep and how there were so many different elements of the school that individuals with various priorities could grasp onto. For Preston Wilcox, a noted Harlemite and community activist, perhaps the fact that Harlem Prep was grounded in the Harlem community attracted him to the school. Wilcox, who spearheaded a number of grassroots educational projects, social service initiatives, and job training projects in East Harlem starting in the 1950s, believed that schools should be a “reflection of local interests and resources.”¹⁶⁵ Harlem Prep’s commitment to engaging with the local community and responding to the community’s needs aligned with Wilcox’s beliefs as a community organizer. For other individuals such as Kenneth Clark, perhaps the school’s impressive numbers of students enrolling in college sparked his support; for Louis Farrakhan, maybe the school’s emphasis on Black pride and Pan-African curriculum generated his support, which had similarities to his own ideological alignment. Or, Whitney Young, president of the National Urban League, likened Harlem Prep’s multicultural ethos and interracial partnerships to his own belief in an integrated society. Regardless, these important figures’ support and advocacy, should probably not be overlooked. Public figures like Wilcox and Clark—the former via his school activism and the latter with his involvement in the

¹⁶⁴ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015; Memo from Donald Harris to Mario Fantini, February 4, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; “1968 Harlem Prep Commencement Exercises Program,” June 17, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

¹⁶⁵ Wilcox “To Be Black and Successful,” quoted in Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, 296-297; For more about Wilcox’s grassroots activism, see also Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement*, 147-149, in which Lee describes his philosophy about the potential of low-income community members and his work in East Harlem.

Northside Center in Harlem—were trusted in the Harlem community.¹⁶⁶ Considering that Carpenter wrote extensively about the initial skepticism of Harlem Prep and its integrated staff by the surrounding Black community, gaining the full-fledged support of these individuals may have helped legitimize the school in the eyes of the community. Harlem Prep was able to create a delicate balance of being financially sustained by mega corporations and philanthropy, and yet still be trusted by local residents, laypeople, and Black elites inside and outside of Harlem.

The second way that Harlem Prep generated community support—and perhaps offset white, outside dollars—was to make sure the school was a Harlem institution in character and action. As this dissertation has illustrated, regardless of who funded the school—or certain (white) individuals’ membership to its real or imagined “community”—Harlem Prep cared deeply about educating Black and brown youth in Harlem and throughout New York City no matter their past. “The school works with and for victims of the public school system,” Ed Carpenter would continually assert in response to a community need of educating its youth.¹⁶⁷ “These are our children,” added the *New York Amsterdam News* in a plea to keep the school open in 1972, “this is our school, it is located in the very heart of our community.”¹⁶⁸ Also of note is that even while the school expanded to include students from all over New York City (and even

¹⁶⁶ Although Kenneth Clark is known for a variety of reasons such as his involvement in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case and HARYOU (and sometimes not considered the most radical or progressive by historians today), his Northside Center that he led with his wife, Mamie, was an important institution in Harlem and one of the few educational institutions in the area. See Markowitz and Rosner, *Children, Race and Power*; Preston Wilcox was an influential advocate for community controlled schools in Harlem and educational activist in the community during these fraught years. In addition to supporting the school at fundraisers, he wrote an impassioned plea of support for the school and lambasted the Board of Education in 1974 for taking over the school. See Preston Wilcox, “Harlem Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 30, 1974. For more information about Wilcox’s community work in Harlem, see Chapter 7 of Juravich, “The Work of Education: Community-Based Educators in Schools, Freedom Struggles, and the Labor Movement,” 357-378.

¹⁶⁷ Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action,” June 22, 1970, Ford Records.

¹⁶⁸ “We Can’t Lose It!,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 18, 1972.

some from New Jersey), it still retained its Harlem flair.¹⁶⁹ There did not seem to be any tensions between a Harlem identity and a New York City identity. Harlem—and Harlem Prep—was as much of a community with boundaries in terms of space and demographics as it was an idea that all students, no matter what part of the city they had come from, could adopt.¹⁷⁰ Harlem had always been an idea, and that symbolism was woven into Harlem Prep’s identity.¹⁷¹

What did this look like in practice? For one, Harlem Prep was a popular neighborhood space that was utilized *by* the community. “There is no reason why the school should not be opened for service on Saturdays and Sundays because we are a community school, created to serve the people of the community and of the city,” Carpenter wrote in January 1971 in another grant proposal.¹⁷² “Harlem Prep was going to be used from morning until the late hours of the night. Community groups needing a place to hold meetings could use the school without payment.”¹⁷³ Periodical coverage further affirms how outside Harlem community groups would

¹⁶⁹ There is no evidence that discussions over priority for Harlem residents took place. However, a majority of students always were from Harlem by nature of the community’s demographic needs and visibility.

¹⁷⁰ In the present-day, I founded and directed Youth Historians in Harlem, an after-school program where I worked with young people from a public school in Central Harlem. Many of the students who were part of the program were not from Harlem and retained an identity from their neighborhoods (i.e., Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens). However, I also saw them, as the program progressed, embrace Harlem also as their community and take pride in the program’s “Harlem-ness” over the years. It is not that Harlem Prep students necessarily lost other geographic identities, but it seems, at the very least, they also embraced being part of Harlem, learning there many hours each week. See Barry M. Goldenberg, “Rethinking Historical Practice and Community Engagement: Researching Together with ‘Youth Historians,’” *Rethinking History* 23, no. 1 (2019): 52–77; and Barry M. Goldenberg, “Youth Historians in Harlem: An After-School Blueprint for History Engagement through the Historical Process,” *The Social Studies* 107, no. 2 (2016): 47–67. For middle school students identifying with Harlem, see Barry M. Goldenberg, Andrew Wintner, and Carolyn Berg, “Creating Middle School Harlem Historians: Motivating Urban Students through Community-Based History,” *Voices From the Middle* 23, no. 1 (2015): 73–79.

¹⁷¹ For an in-depth analysis of Harlem’s iconic status throughout the 20th century, see Fearnley and Matlin, ed., *Race Capital?* This book explores Harlem’s symbolism as a Black community in ways that are reminiscent of Harlem Prep’s vision of being a community school despite not necessarily enrolling only Harlem students.

¹⁷² Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action,” June 22, 1970, Ford Records.

¹⁷³ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 87-88; Carpenter writes further that musical or drama groups desiring a place to rehearse were welcomed at Harlem Prep, and that the original plan was always to use the school be an “educational, social, cultural, and civic center.”

use the Harlem Prep building for evening meetings or community events.¹⁷⁴

The school also functioned at times as an impromptu tutoring center, where students would hang out after school to tutor children in the community seeking remedial help during weekdays and Saturdays.¹⁷⁵ Harlem Prep believed in the need for “cooperate efforts” with those who lived around the school.¹⁷⁶ These service activities included helping the community in times of need, such as “serv[ing] the youngsters forced out of school by the [1968] teachers’ strike” or providing tutorial and recreational summer programs for local children.¹⁷⁷ Harlem Prep even allowed the presence of a daily, yearlong drug rehab program that spoke to administrators’ concern about being an authentic community institution. Ann Carpenter once told the story of how when they first moved into the supermarket space in 1968, that a group of “squatters” held a daily drug program in the basement and initially refused to vacate. She explains:

So, we came in every day and we had our classes up on the main floor, and they had a program downstairs, because we just thought it was not nice—not brotherly—just to displace them, because basically they were in need, and we didn’t want to treat them the way that everybody else in society had treated them. So, we kept the areas separate, for that whole year, and finally they moved out when they saw that we were really doing things with the young people.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, among many, “Cong. Shirley Chisholm To Be At Harlem Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 10, 1973.

¹⁷⁵ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 32-33.

¹⁷⁶ See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 88, 109.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ann Carpenter, in Jacobs, “Harlem Prep Revisited,” group interview, ca. 2010. Carpenter further describes in this anecdote that this group had some sort of “kangaroo court, for want of a better expression,” that invited to Ed Carpenter to speak with them. So, at the end of the year, he spoke with them about the goals for the school and accomplishments to date, and, in result, “the real grassroots leaders of the community voted in favor of the school” and decided to move their rehab program out of the building.

While Ann Carpenter’s anecdote offers an unprompted community interaction, the school did welcome more formal community partnerships with local organizations. These included partnerships with Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and the Phoenix House to help students with narcotics use, as well as other New York City based organizations such as Port Authority who provided volunteers and other services to students.¹⁷⁹ And, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Harlem Prep hosted a popular and parent-requested—although short-lived—adult evening program for parents and community members.¹⁸⁰

Perhaps the most recognizable element of the institution’s commitment to Harlem and Carpenter’s belief in a “community school” was its outside—and very public—commencement ceremony. As discussed in the previous chapter, journalists from the *New York Times*, *New York Amsterdam News*, and elsewhere described in vivid detail the crowd of onlookers from the community in attendance and the ceremony’s distinct Harlem flare—“a decidedly Harlem production,” wrote one columnist.¹⁸¹ Also discussed in the previous chapter, alumni today agree with this assessment; the outside graduation ceremony served as a celebration of Harlem and Black life vis-à-vis a cherished neighborhood educational institution. “[Harlem Prep] was based in the community,” clarifies one alumnus today, and the commencement ceremony was a notable instrument in embracing that goal.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Edward Carpenter, “Proposal for Harlem Prep: Education for a New Era,” January 5, 1969, p. 37, Microfilm Reel 1781, Ford Records; Letter from U.S. Senator Jacob Javits and Dennis Allee to James Allen, November 12, 1969, Microfilm Reel 1781, Ford Records; Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

¹⁸⁰ See, among many, Mangum and Carpenter, “Grant Proposal for 1971-1972 to Rockefeller Foundation,” January 1971, [no page numbers], Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; “Port Authority Rallies To Harlem Prep For Third Year,” *New York Amsterdam News*, December 30, 1972.

¹⁸¹ M. A. Farber, “Harlem Prep Graduates 83 In a Festive Street Ceremony,” *New York Times*, June 11, 1970.

¹⁸² Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

Harlem Prep's Commitment to Community Input and Guidance

As white, wealthy businessmen—outsiders—eagerly graced the stage on 125th Street at the commencement ceremonies, they did so in Harlem's backyard surrounded by rows of Black residents joyfully singing to gospel and blues. As local parents and community members—most poor- or working-class people of color—continued to donate their hard-earned money to Harlem Prep, they did so with the open knowledge that white (and Black) elite were frequent schools guests who served as lavish financiers.¹⁸³ Headmaster Edward Carpenter and chairman Robert Mangum, and numerous other staff and advocates, were able to balance the desire of the community for a Harlem-based school with the different systemic or institutional interests (and perhaps requests) of the elite. With careful precision, Harlem Prep cultivated a diverse community of supporters in an era (and in a city) that was rife with division and racial tension.

Despite the unequal power dynamic between wealthy, white benefactors and Black school leaders who depended on their dollars, Harlem Prep actively worked to increase community members' authority-making and input in the school. Ann and Ed Carpenter, both experienced educators who must have remembered the battles over community control in the late 1960s, understand that the need for parental and concerned stakeholder involvement. The Carpenters were responding to ideas about self-governance that had been circulating for years—most notably, that local community members should have some degree of autonomy and input in their children's schools.¹⁸⁴ “The involvement of the community as decision-makers is another

¹⁸³ See, for example, Carpenter explaining how he received \$57 from a parent in his mailbox to help pay for the school under the threat of closure, in Edward Carpenter, Letter from Edward Carpenter to Robert Mangum, March 19, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. Although these donations were not tracked, Carpenter frequently commented how Harlem community members would donate five or ten dollars to show their support for the school.

¹⁸⁴ See, for example, parent leaders in the demonstration districts in the late 1960s, in Lewis, *From New York City Public Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 37-40.

aspect of the philosophy of Harlem Prep,” wrote Carpenter in 1973.¹⁸⁵ There was an open-door policy to the school and even into his office, and he explicitly sought out community involvement in decision-making, as much as he could. The school operated through a community partnership lens, aided by the fact that Ann and Ed Carpenter, along with many teachers and administrators, either were from the Harlem community or had adopted it as their home.

Part of Harlem Prep’s community vision was parental involvement. Groups of parents, despite being few in numbers according to Carpenter, played a substantive role in school decisions; for example, parents developed a scholarship fund to every graduating student to receive \$50 upon graduation, “visit[ed] Harlem Prep freely,” and were included on various school committees including the “Education Committee” (to provide input on curriculum) and fund-raising committee. Furthermore, parents—selected by the school’s parent association to serve a period of ten months—were also placed on the committee involving school personnel as well as the committee that helped write proposals to granting agencies.¹⁸⁶ “Parents are considered to be partners in the decision-making process,” wrote Carpenter, “they contribute experiences and ideas necessary for keeping the school open.”¹⁸⁷ Even though overall parent involvement was small in relation to the school’s large population, Carpenter actively invited parents to be part of Harlem Prep’s decision making process in a conscious attempt to “counteract the negative experiences that parents had been exposed to” in previous schools.¹⁸⁸

These negative experiences may have included frustration with the Board of Education and their

¹⁸⁵ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 88.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 70-72

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 72.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 67; Conversely, when asked about parental involvement, some students did not recall parents being too involved in the school. Based on Carpenter’s writing and periodical coverage of the Parents Committee, it seems parental involvement focused on fund-raising and larger school decisions, respectively, as opposed to in-school programs or activities. See also Lita D. Allen, “The Battle To Survive: First In A Series,” *New York Amsterdam News*, April 7, 1973, which describes how Carpenter works closely with the Harlem Prep Parents Association.

lack of concerns being heard as they fought to achieve community control only a few years prior. Added the *New York Amsterdam News* in a 1973 multi-part profile about the school: “Parents are important components of Harlem Prep’s success.”¹⁸⁹

Still, in critically analyzing parent involvement, many alumni today do not remember seeing parents and no parents can be interviewed today.¹⁹⁰ Carpenter, in his discussion of parents, was either speaking to the local press—and thus, the Harlem community—his academic peers for his dissertation, or philanthropy program officers whom he wrote to. Ultimately, this raises questions about parents’ actual tangible levels of involvement and input on a day-to-day level in practice without additional sources to verify Carpenter’s words. Thus, it is likely that some of Carpenter’s rhetoric on parents (and broader plans for community engagement) was exaggerated and his goals did not always occur in practice due to logistics, funding issues, or lack of resources. (However, newspapers from the *New York Amsterdam News* to the *Atlanta Daily World*—the latter claiming that the parents association was “strong” and “gives direction to the school”—must have been based on some legitimate accounts of parental input.¹⁹¹)

Parents—and other community members—did, however, have verified authority on Harlem Prep’s Board of Trustees. Although Carpenter maintained hiring authority, he explained that he “willingly gives up power in order to achieve the result of an organization,” in part through student, parent, and community representation on the Board of Trustees which was the formal governing structure that oversaw Carpenter.¹⁹² Although of course changing over time, the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees, led by Judge Robert Mangum for most of Harlem Prep’s

¹⁸⁹ Zita D. Allen, “The Battle To Survive (Third in a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*, April 21, 1973.

¹⁹⁰ However, student positionality should also be considered in this case. As students, it is probable that they were less attentive to the often behind-the-scenes parental activity and work of PTA groups.

¹⁹¹ See, for example, “Global Portraits,” *Atlanta Daily World*, August 13, 1972.

¹⁹² Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 72.

tenure, featured an eclectic mix of parents, community members, and businesspeople. For example, a 1972 snapshot of the 14-person board consisted of five parents, a current student, a local Reverend, Executive Director of the Negro Labor Committee, a Black consultant from the College Board, and four businesspeople—President of Coca-Cola of New York, Vice President of Chase Manhattan Bank, Sheila Mosler of Mosler Safes, and a lawyer from a well-known local law practice.¹⁹³ This interwoven board of enterprise and community, particularly a large group of parents, reflected Harlem Prep’s multicultural ethos. (Notably, one Harlem Prep alumnus, who served as the Board of Trustees’s student representative in 1971, commented that the board always had a full-voting student representative and that the experience made him aware of the intensity of fundraising from a wide array of sources.¹⁹⁴) Yet, this diversity also spoke to the school’s democracy in decision-making; nine of the fourteen board members were of the Harlem community, with the parent group wielding the largest and most influential voting block (over one-third of total votes). As the *New York Amsterdam News* added at the time: “[Parents] are not merely on the usual Parent Teachers Association, or students at the school, but they are also members of the Board of Trustees and as such have the kind of say in their children’s education at Harlem Prep that other parents around the city are fighting for yet.”¹⁹⁵ The *Atlanta Daily World*, a historic Black newspaper in the South, agreed in a profile on Harlem Prep that “input from the community, the parents, and the students exist in all major decision making.”¹⁹⁶ Despite the connections that Harlem Prep had made with both the Black and white elite, Carpenter wrote about how it was a conscious decision—one accepted by the Board of Trustees—to craft a board

¹⁹³ “‘Why Harlem Prep?’ Booklet,” 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records.

¹⁹⁴ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

¹⁹⁵ Allen, “The Battle To Survive (Third in a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*, April 21, 1973.

¹⁹⁶ “Global Portraits,” *Atlanta Daily World*, August 13, 1972.

that had many local individuals.¹⁹⁷ “The Board of Trustees found that the experience of these Board members assisted them in creating policies that benefited the school and the community,” declared Carpenter, continuing that community members on the board “provided Harlem Prep with meaningful leadership.”¹⁹⁸ As the *Amsterdam News* boldly claimed: “This is a community-involved school.”¹⁹⁹ As noted, countless other observers of the school agreed.

Still, as philanthropy historians Benjamin Soskis and Stanley N. Katz explain, “There is a small mountain of academic literature suggesting the ways in which philanthropy has tended to co-opt and moderate grassroots social justice organizations.”²⁰⁰ It is important to consider Harlem Prep within this history. Yet, when doing so, Harlem Prep not seem to be that story. Buoyed by the support of the Harlem community and trust of Black community leaders, Carpenter, Mangum, and other staff never ceded control of Harlem Prep to the white organizations that largely funded the school. As described, instead, they actively worked to involve the community—a rarity, to be sure, in the long history of this philanthropic dynamic.

Unsurprisingly, in rhetoric, Harlem Prep spoke against this notion. “It is fiercely independent in

¹⁹⁷ See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 86-88. Here, Carpenter describes in-depth the selection criteria of the community members who would sit on the board, voted upon by students and parents, of who should represent them. Community members not selected were asked to serve on other standing committees.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁹⁹ Allen, “The Battle To Survive (Third in a Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*, April 21, 1973; and Lita D. Allen, “The Battle To Survive: First In A Series,” *New York Amsterdam News*, April 7, 1973.

²⁰⁰ Soskis and Katz, “Looking Back at 50 Years of U.S. Philanthropy,” 15. As the authors alluded to, there is a long history dating back to Reconstruction to the present of white philanthropy interjecting, if not attempting to control, Black efforts in education. For example, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see most prominently, James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), who (albeit only one element of the book) describes the role of the Rosenwald Schools by white philanthropist Julius Rosenwald. In recent years, Noliwe M. Rooks has illustrated how “racial inclusion, white philanthropy, and historical memory are ultimately at the center of the creation of African American studies” in the 1960s and 1970s. See Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education*. For a more sociological view of white influence on Black education, see prominently, William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001). In his book, Watkins describes how a variety of different actors in both the nineteenth and twentieth century—Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Franklin H. Giddings, the Phelps Stokes family, Thomas Jesse Jones, and the Rockefeller family, among others—shaped and constructed (consciously and unconsciously) Black education through their wealth, influence, and colonizing mindset.

thought and educational programming and unwilling to compromise its principles or goals,” wrote a Harlem Prep administrator in a 1970 grant proposal.²⁰¹ More importantly, however, the school’s record and actions back up this claim. There is no evidence—archival, oratory, or otherwise—to the contrary that suggest white benefactors influenced the school’s educational program or core philosophies even despite this clear power dynamic that made the school dependent on outside, white, philanthropic dollars. In addition to Harlem community input and governance, there does not seem to be record of Ann or Ed Carpenter changing, revising, or adjusting (or suggesting in writing or through oral anecdotes) any educational component of the school due to this dynamic. As this chapter also explained earlier, while white benefactors were visibly present at the school and at commencement, however, the school’s history suggests that their influence was minimal when it came to actual school operations. A closer examination of the peculiar dynamics of this power structure also might help explain this. Even though Carpenter relied on the money of powerful organizations like Ford or Standard Oil, he did so in an ad hoc fashion, driven by relationships with people of color inside these organizations at a time when philanthropy was booming. As Part III of this dissertation documents next, when philanthropic and corporate dollars slowed, perhaps this financial drought was abetted by Carpenter being “unwilling to compromise” in adjusting his “independent” community-driven model or allowing for outside influence at the school in a nascent conservative environment.²⁰²

First, ample evidence suggests both Ann and Ed Carpenter’s multicultural vision that began in 1967 and expanded the following year in the 1968-1969 school year—before Harlem Prep’s finances began to include a rolodex of businesses and philanthropies—remained

²⁰¹ Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” June 22, 1970, p. 4, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. These principles included a proudly Pan-African school culture, with rhetoric and curriculum that spoke to the “Black is beautiful” movement of the era.

²⁰² Ibid. Greater discussion of Harlem Prep’s financial struggles are the focus of Chapter 8.

consistent. Their multiculturalism, in all its virtues and imperfections, only became more entrenched as the school grew further; if white benefactors latched onto the school's integrative elements and the Carpenters' emphasis on unity, they did so on their own accord and not due to a change of beliefs from either Ed or Ann. Second, as the school grew, if any atmospheric changes were to occur as the school progressed, one change was how it came to exhibit slightly more of a Black Power flair. The growth of Black Power in the early 1970s and fade of the integration struggle of the 1960s was only naturally felt at Harlem Prep—an environment that became less friendly to white leaders, not more.²⁰³ In fact, as the school became more reliant on white money as the school expanded and funds lessened, the school became more culturally radical and less integrationist than at its founding. Third, as will be discussed in the final chapter, the New York City Board of Education expressed at length the school's cherished and deeply entrenched place in the Harlem community in ways that they felt uneasy about. The board expressed fear of a grassroots backlash if they did not save the school financially because they saw it—accurately or not—as being an engrained, community-controlled institution. At the same time, Board of Education members also characterized the school in private discussions as being a school run by Harlemites—the Carpenters—who were not being influenced by outside institutions or groups, which made them difficult to deal with and influence themselves.²⁰⁴ More simply, there were parallels in how the Board of Education responded to the pressure from the Harlem community's demands regarding Harlem Prep, and in the community control era of the late 1960s. Although the Board of Education is far from the best arbiter of Harlem Prep's community status, their view of the school as being of and by the Harlem community at least deserves note.

²⁰³ For example, comparing photographs from the school's inaugural commencement ceremony to the 1970s commencement ceremonies show students in very different attire (although attire was never standardized). Later ceremonies show students more frequently dressed in Pan-African regalia, not less.

²⁰⁴ As discussed in Chapter 9, Harlem Prep's leaders were unwilling to compromise on their principles and school design to match the requests of the Board of Education.

Still, even considering Harlem Prep’s record, there is much that will forever remain unclear. Conversations or actions within these unequal relationships between powerful white donors and Black school leaders are perhaps not always codified or passed on—and neither Carpenter or Mangum are alive to share their stories today. In turn, then, it is important to recognize that there are clear limits of what can be known with certainty in terms of the relationship between Harlem Prep and its funders. Essentially, these limits prevent a full understanding of this complex dynamic and only evidence (or lack thereof) can be the guide.

This same principle applies to Harlem Prep’s community relations. The mechanisms for how Harlem Prep acted as a community school—how it specifically operated with local controls and the tangible levers of community influence—is simply impossible to know fully. Yet, despite these methodological issues and unknowns, what does remain almost entirely certain is that by all indicators—widespread advocacy from lay Harlemites, support from left-leaning Black activists, advocacy from community institutions such as the *New York Amsterdam News*—Harlem Prep was fully enmeshed into the fabric of Harlem’s rich cultural, social, and political life, outside influence or not. Although students such as Francisco Rivera recognized that funders were a part of the school’s community ethos, he was also clear about Harlem Prep connection to surrounding neighborhood: “We were very proud that... the outer Harlem community claimed us as their own.”²⁰⁵ English teacher Sandy Campbell, too, explains that Harlem Prep had a cherished reputation amongst the local community. He remembers one instance coming home and stopping at a convenience store—it was about 2 o’clock in the morning—with a diamond ring on his finger, when a person in the store gave him a warning about coming in there with that type of jewelry. ““Don’t you know that somebody will knock you in your head?”” Campbell recalls the shopper telling him. “Before I could answer him, the owner of the store said, ‘Oh no.

²⁰⁵ Francisco Rivera, e-mail message to author, April 7, 2018.

No one would ever bother him. He's one of the teachers over at the Prep."²⁰⁶ If at the beginning of Harlem Prep "the community was resistant," Campbell adds, "it also became the attitude of the community [in that] they became our protectors in many ways."²⁰⁷

The Harlem Prep "Community"—In Perspective

Thinking broadly, what is a "community school" when that said community ranged from people spanning the local to the national, to the neighborhood clergyman to the wealthiest businessman? It was not that Ed Carpenter sought to redefine the notion of community, just that he was able to curate a school community that was inclusive and strategic to his and the school's ideological and fiscal needs. Harlem Prep—a neighborhood school as referred to by local press, cheered on by hundreds of community members, and supported by local activists, organizers, and small businesspeople—was far from being a contested space where different groups were fighting for control or representation. Instead, the existence of Harlem Prep's broad community coalition leads to an additional historical understanding about schools and communities during the fraught 1960s and 1970s: that schools can also be places of unification, not (only) division. Harlem Prep was able to balance many different voices together—with different agendas—for a common goal of educating young people.

"The term 'community control is not precisely defined," Carpenter poignantly wrote in 1973, recognizing further that the term "evokes an anxiety in one segment of the city, and a feeling of strength and purpose in another segment."²⁰⁸ In order for the school to survive—politically within the Black community, financially in a white-dominated society—Carpenter and

²⁰⁶ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

²⁰⁷ Sandy Campbell, in Jacobs, "Harlem Prep Revisited," group interview, ca. 2010

²⁰⁸ Carpenter, "The Development of an Alternative School," 55-56.

his staff had to act on the idea that it was important to bridge these divides and foster a community where all constituencies could at least participate. Creating an element of inclusivity among white benefactors and Harlem outsiders was to ensure the fiscal health of the school and its year-to-year survival. This was undoubtedly the primary rationale for Carpenter and his colleagues' actions; after all, Carpenter's preference was always to keep Harlem Prep funded and run by the local community, even if the former was not possible, as he understood. Still, notwithstanding the economic necessity to do so, Carpenter's straddling of different community groups also fit into his larger multicultural worldview: being exposed to different voices, regardless of race or ideology or class, had value to the Harlem Prep students, as each of these external voices could be heard without sacrificing equity or Black pride inside school walls. Ultimately, Carpenter was able to negotiate between different contexts of white elites and a Black community affiliation. Perhaps educators can learn from these strategies today.

PART III

The Descent of Harlem Prep, 1972-1974

Chapter Eight

Diverging Realities at Harlem Prep: Fiscal Uncertainty in a Changing Era

“It is a very bad situation. It breaks my heart. I hate to talk about it. To think there is something so good and no one could bring the money to salvage it!”

–Judge Robert Mangum, Chairman of Harlem Prep Board of Trustees, 1973¹

“Oh, Harlem Prep must survive / It is my only chance, to keep me alive.”

–Gary Thomas, Harlem Prep student, 1972²

It was the winter of 1971, and although the financial situation at Harlem Prep had always been on shaky ground, this time it was different. “If saved, it’ll be a miracle; if not saved, it’ll be a crime,” declared Board of Trustee Chairman Judge Robert Mangum. “Harlem Prep does not have enough money to open in the fall,” wrote the *New York Times*.³ Even the status of the 170 potential graduates in June was uncertain, with Mangum explaining both publicly and privately that the school needed \$100,000 to assure these students’ commencement.⁴ Harlem Prep “is in serious financial difficulty and may have to close its doors next month,” added the *New York*

¹ “Harlem Prep Dies For Lack Of Funds,” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 15, 1973.

² Gary Thomas, in “New York City, Harlem Prep Graduation,” *Associated Press*, June 7, 1972, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/view/a35d46182c83e08ee020a26a60f6c03f?subClipIn=00:00:00&subClipOut=00:02:26>. At the 1972 commencement, student Gary Thomas walked up the microphone, and in two quick stanzas, said these two lines and raised his fist in appreciation of the crowd.

³ Charlayne Hunter, “Harlem Prep and Academies Periled: Harlem Prep and Street Academies Periled,” *New York Times*, February 16, 1971.

⁴ Letter from Robert Mangum to Alan Pifer, February 23, 1971, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records; See also Hunter, “Harlem Prep and Academies Periled,” *New York Times*, February 16, 1971.

Amsterdam News in February of 1971.⁵ Mangum, the board of trustees, and headmaster Ed Carpenter and his confidants entered into a full press to solicit funds; they continued to reach out to their contacts, fundraisers continued throughout the community, Harlem's local press ran daily pleas for donations, and a documentary was even made and shown on TV.⁶ Student writing, too, was used to encourage supporters to dig into their pockets one more time. In a note entitled, "IF WE SHOULD DIE," a Harlem Prep student wrote:

I cringe to think what would happen if we should die. If for one moment the heart of Harlem Prep should stop beating, for me the sun would never rise again. If we should die a beautiful family would no longer exist, and our hopes to our country and world would cease. We at the Prep have never thought of dying because a family that has loved together and cried together could never think of death.... We are now in the midst of our most severe crisis in a short life filled with crises. If Harlem Prep should die, one more dream will be broken in a community that can't stand any more broken dreams. If we should die, it will mean a loss for my child, your child, and the children of the world. If we should die, it would mean the loss of leaders and positive contributions to our nation, indeed, to your world.⁷

A year and a half later, Harlem Prep was presented with an identical crisis. "As you know, we are in serious need of funds for the school year 1972-3, and any consideration you are able to extend to us will be gratefully appreciated," wrote Ed Carpenter to his friend Joshua Smith at the Ford Foundation in June of 1972.⁸ "Harlem Prep to close..." headlined the *New*

⁵ Lesly Jones, "Harlem Prep Plea For \$\$," *New York Amsterdam News*, February 20, 1971.

⁶ See, for example, among many periodicals, "We Can't Lose It!," *New York Amsterdam News*, November 18, 1972; "Photo Standalone 8 -- 'All for Harlem Prep School!'," *New York Amsterdam News*, December 18, 1971; and "Photo Standalone 8 -- 'All for Harlem Prep School!' [Fundraiser]," *New York Amsterdam News*, December 18, 1971; For example of a fundraiser, see Sara Slack, "Danced for Harlem Prep: Professional Women ... at Their Charity Ball," *New York Amsterdam News*, February 12, 1972; There is evidence that Harlem Prep was on T.V., too, including commencement exercises, multiple times. For example, *Step by Step* was shown in 1973: "Harlem Prep On TV Sunday," *New York Amsterdam News*, January 20, 1973; In terms of soliciting new funds, see Letter from Robert Mangum to Charles Smith, February 2, 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; and Memo from Harold Howe to Edward Meade, June 23, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁷ Note from Bruce Farkas, April 18, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; However, students interviewed throughout this project largely did not recall being aware of the severity of funding issues and were generally immune to the administrative and funding-related work being done to keep the school afloat. This is discussed briefly later in the chapter. See, for example, Francisco Rivera, e-mail message to author, April 7, 2018.

York Amsterdam News the same month.⁹ The situation only seemed to become more ominous as the summer progressed. “This will not be a long letter but one right to the point,” wrote Mangum to the newly elected president of the New York City Board of Education a month later. “Harlem Prep will close in February [1973] unless some government funding can be arranged.”¹⁰ Despite these dire predictions, Harlem Prep’s community coalition ultimately came through—as they had before in 1971, here in 1972, and finally once more in 1973. “Contrary to what some people felt -- that we would fold and close -- we have been able to survive and will be able to open next fall with the reduced budget which I have requested that you prepare,” Mangum once wrote in relief to Carpenter in spring of 1971.¹¹ Although each subsequent summer led to another ultimatum about the school not being able to continue—including repeated patterns of public outcry from the media and private frustration from Harlem Prep’s leaders—Carpenter and his team were able to scrap together just enough funds to keep doors open and students on their way to college.¹² The stories of student graduates during these years are living embodiments of those tireless efforts. And, securing enough funds was no small feat. In the midst of a changing national environment, financial support was harder to come by each passing year, and Carpenter and staff leveraged every connection—and cut countless expenses—to continue their mission until it was

⁸ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Joshua Smith, June 6, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁹ “Harlem Prep to Close Down,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 3, 1972.

¹⁰ Letter from Robert Mangum to Joe Monserrat, July 28, 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; A larger discussion about Harlem Prep’s seeking government funding—particularly from the Board of Education—since 1970, will be presented in Chapter 9.

¹¹ Letter from Robert Mangum to Ed Carpenter, April 14, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹² For example, see Letter from Robert Mangum to Joshua Smith, December 20, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. Mangum writes, in part, that “Everybody tells me ‘Harlem Prep cannot close,’ but the money to keep it operating doesn't seem to come in”; See also numerous newspaper articles, such as “Display Ad 59 -- ‘Help! Harlem Prep Need\$ Your Help Now!’,” *New York Amsterdam News*, May 13, 1972. The ad states that Harlem Prep “must raise approximately half its budget for next year by June 30, 1972, or it will be forced to close its doors...”

no longer possible. Even though Harlem Prep was able to stave off dissolution year after year, what Carpenter and others knew was that this improvised model of community fundraising and the solicitation of private money would not last forever. Either Harlem Prep would finally receive public funds that it had always desired, or the closing of school doors would be in sight.

This chapter explores the diverging realities of the school during its final years, after it became a well-known institution (locally but also nationally) and during its increased financial troubles. On one hand, Harlem Prep continued to educate and empower students—and this chapter further shares the stories of young people whose lives were changed as a result. These stories mattered, and from the perspective of students, the school hummed along in empowering and effective ways described in Part II. On the other hand, however, Harlem Prep’s financial uncertainties reached a fever pitch; administrators scrambled chaotically behind the scenes (and in the public press) for funds to keep Harlem Prep operating. In service of the story and recognition of their efforts, this chapter, in part, recounts the human drama of Ed Carpenter and colleagues doing all they can to keep the Harlem Prep dream alive. Harlem Prep’s ad-hoc model of requesting funds from the private sector was no longer viable. As explained in the previous chapter, Harlem Prep arose at the tail end of a type of liberalism that saw businesses and philanthropies, combined with a national political environment, which looked favorably on “urban” projects such as Harlem Prep. In this way, Harlem Prep was able to receive support from these institutions at a time when funds were more readily accessible and organizations more willing to give. However, the school’s lack of real blueprint or long-term plan to secure funding if they were unable to gain public monies eventually caught up to them. As the political winds shifted toward a more conservative environment in the early-to-mid-1970s, these changes affected Harlem Prep’s financial reality—a reality that would stymie their month-by-month,

improvisational funding model (and make clear the absence of any long-term financial plan if public funds never arrived). Thus, what economic and political conditions led to the philanthropic and business sectors to stop supporting this community school? Why specifically did Harlem Prep's funding pipelines, after so much early success, eventually go dry? This chapter explores these questions, taking into account their effect on Harlem Prep's story and the rapidly altering political and educational context in which it existed in the early-to-mid 1970s.

There were other diverging realities. On one hand, Harlem Prep remained a multicultural school, with the same principles, structures, and educational program as it had at its founding and earlier years. School leaders continued to emphasize a philosophy that envisioned unity in diversity—both inter-racially and intra-racially and beyond—and designed the school in a way where ideas of inclusivity (white retaining a focus on Black culture), openness, and flexibility could blossom. Moreover, students continued to be “so proud to attend,” in an environment that was “inviting and exciting” full of staff with “great enthusiasm” according to alumni.¹³ Yet, on the other hand, there were significant changes occurring in the school's twilight years, too, such as demographic changes and shifts in public perception. While this chapter explains that these changes did not clash with the school's steady employment of its multicultural philosophy, they were examples of the broader instability occurring within and around the school post-1972. This chapter also, then, documents the school's internal evolution during its latter years, as well as its relation to the alternative and free school movements that emerged around Harlem Prep in this decade. Understanding Harlem Prep within these emerging movements helps better historicize the school as a unicorn on the (known) educational landscape. Like in the previous era, Harlem Prep's multiculturalism was both distinct and an enigma compared to Black independent schools, emphasizing a college education and academic achievement, through a multicultural lens, that

¹³ Francisco Rivera, e-mail message to author, April 7 and April 15, 2018.

differed from its peers. And, it remained that way into the 1970s. Was it a public school? Or was it not? Was it a free—and independent—school? Or was it not? Furthermore, understanding Harlem Prep’s shifting characterization, including by educational scholars in the 1970s as the school gained national acclaim, also helps foreground how the Board of Education (discussed in the final chapter) similarly had trouble placing the school inside their system.

Unfortunately, a house divided cannot stand, and all of these diverging realities became too much to bear for Harlem Prep to continue standing.

Harlem Prep in the Age of Rising Conservatism

“The funding started drying up,” argues Sterling Nile, the student representative of the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees in 1970-1971, when asked why Harlem Prep struggled to maintain their sources of private funding after he graduated.¹⁴ What led to this change of funding availability at this time? There seems to be both micro and macro reasons for this shift—some related to Harlem Prep’s particular situation and others due to broader changes in both the economic and political climate. At the core of the issue, first, was Harlem Prep’s lack of a stable funding model for the school that left them vulnerable to changes in the philanthropic world and to the national environment. At the end of Harlem Prep’s first year in 1968, administrators had already expressed hope that after “one-to-two additional years of funding” (for 1969 and 1970) through private sources, the school would then work “out the terms and conditions that on which city, state, and federal financial aid may be available.”¹⁵ While these initial conversations happened between various public officials, they never panned out in practice. “For more than a

¹⁴ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

¹⁵ “Harlem Prep, 1968 [on Founding],” p. 7, July 2, 1968, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 951, Rockefeller Records; The reasons why the Board of Education refused to support Harlem Prep—and why it finally decided to do so in 1974—will be the focus of Chapter 9. Here, this paragraph is only intended to simply underscore that the lack of securing these public funds and developing a back-up plan hurt their ability to prepare for a sustainable future.

year [starting in spring 1969], Harlem Prep has been pursuing negotiations with public agencies, including the Board of Education in New York and The City University of New York, in order to extend the work of Harlem Prep and to secure continued support via public sources.”¹⁶ Harlem Prep’s ultimate goal was to garner public support “on a contract basis or with some kind of direct or indirect association” that would significantly lessen their reliance on private money.¹⁷ Both Ann and Ed Carpenter, as well as the board of trustees, knew that establishing their school would take some time—yet, by 1972, after hundreds of students graduated and repeated overtures for support, Harlem Prep found itself still without public funding.¹⁸ By this time in the early 1970s, the issue of securing money soon became a circular problem: private funds were often granted on the basis of future public support, which never came through. “If the Board of Education will become more active [then] the [\$50,000] grant would probably be made,” wrote Joshua Smith to a Harlem Prep trustee, in regards to a private conversation with two Standard Oil representatives in late 1970.¹⁹ Harlem Prep never developed a “Plan B” if they were unable to secure public funding, instead getting by on a year-to-year—sometimes month-by-month—basis on the charisma and skills of Ed Carpenter and Robert Mangum, and most of all, a strong reputation of academic success by Black and brown youth.

This lack of a long-term back-up plan without public money was compounded by poor accounting practices that accumulated over time, as well as a lack of financial foresight. Not only was Harlem Prep unable to prepare for a financial future based on private money—“the school

¹⁶ F. Champion Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” p. 7, June 22, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See for example, among many, Letter from Robert Mangum to Joe Monserrat, July 28, 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

¹⁹ Memo from Joshua Smith, December 1, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

has never enjoyed endowments, nor the services of professional fundraisers”—but Carpenter himself was continually overburdened, leading to administrative errors and perhaps inefficiency from a budgetary perspective.²⁰ “The Harlem Prep financial accounting is one of the worst accountings I have ever seen,” once wrote a grants manager at the Ford Foundation.²¹ Carpenter, with his background in teaching and school counseling, relied on pro bono accountants (or those who would take late payments) and year-to-year grants instead of any type of systematic process for annual school funding.²² Furthermore, by 1972, Harlem Prep owed “in excess of \$100,000” in back taxes, and more than a dozen correspondence between Mangum, Carpenter, and their contacts at the Ford Foundation, Chase Manhattan Bank, and Exxon in 1974 illustrate that Harlem Prep still owed more than this amount after the Board of Education took control.²³ Of course, historians have the benefit of hindsight; Carpenter and his staff, teachers at heart (and by training), were focused on educating as many students as possible each year. The goal of Harlem Prep was to “explode the myths surrounding the education of minority students,” and perhaps that laser-like focus—deep commitment that led to the fulfillment of hundreds of dreams of young people cast aside by the public school system—contributed to the school’s lack of fiscal attention and the accrual of debt over time.²⁴ Neither Ann nor Ed Carpenter initially sought to

²⁰ Hunter, “Harlem Prep and Academies Periled,” *New York Times*, February 16, 1971.

²¹ Memo from Roberta Lynch, May 2, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

²² See, for example, Carpenter thanking an accounting firm for being flexible with late payments, in Letter from Robert Mangum to Parnell Drayton, April 5, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

²³ Memo from Frank Mitchell to Robert Mangum, p. 2, June 1, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; See, for example, about owing money to the IRS post-independent status, in Letter from Francis Shea to Josh Smith, April 22, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; and Letter from Francis Shea to Robert Mangum, June 7, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

create a permanent, private school. Instead, their goal was to create a model, influence theories of education, and then join the public schools in some (albeit unclear) capacity.²⁵ However, as years went by without securing a partnership with the public system, Harlem Prep ultimately became to be known as an independent school and not as a school associated with the Board of Education or that had any type of public connection.

Taking into account Harlem Prep's lack of a backup plan for long-term sustainability, there seems to be three interconnected reasons why Harlem Prep was unable to continue raising private funds as it did before. Two of these problems were more specific to Harlem Prep and its particular situation—the third, and the most encompassing, due to the changing 1970s political environment. First, one of the more acute reasons is that many philanthropies did not prefer to fund a program in perpetuity. “We are expected, it seems, to find other sources after a company or foundation extends aid for two years,” Ed Carpenter explained.²⁶ The *New York Times*, in their own 1971 investigation of why Harlem Prep (and the Street Academy program) was struggling to receive funds, similarly identified a lack of long-term commitment of philanthropies to be one major issue.²⁷ And, in hindsight, this perhaps should not have been a surprise to Harlem Prep leaders. While it is common practice for many philanthropies to provide annual grants to certain organizations that are either “legacy” organizations or match certain ideological principles, it is

²⁴ Edward F. Carpenter, “... Harlem Prep Offers a New Opportunity,” *New York Amsterdam News*, December 25, 1971. How much weight should be given to these specific accounting issues within the context of larger societal changes is unknown, but probably should not be discounted when considering their accruing debts.

²⁵ In this way, Harlem Prep differs from the charter schools today that are purposely set up to operate outside their public school counterparts without regard to how public schools operate. While Harlem Prep certainly believed that the public school system of educating Black and brown youth needed to be changed, the school's goal was to inform practice and ultimately become part of the system. It is debatable whether charter schools today operate with a goal to influence public schools in this same way.

²⁶ “Harlem Prep to Close Down,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 3, 1972.

²⁷ Charlayne Hunter, “Harlem Prep and Academies Periled: Harlem Prep and Street Academies Periled,” *New York Times*, February 16, 1971.

far less common to fully fund actual programs or initiatives—think, earmarks for certain projects—for long periods of time, particularly in such large amounts as the Ford Foundation, for example, provided to Harlem Prep.²⁸ “The foundations that supported the school in its early years are reluctant to continue,” added the newspaper in another school profile roughly a year later.²⁹ “People got tired of it, they wanted to move on to another cause,” adds Sterling Nile today, perhaps recognizing that Harlem Prep’s initial novelty had perhaps worn off too.³⁰ English teacher Sandy Campbell, from his recollection, felt that these “big” organizations like Ford only wanted to fund something—particularly something new—for a set amount of time.³¹ Letters from foundations, too, also depict a scenario in which it was not a continuing practice to fund a specific project or program in perpetuity. “After serious consideration, we have concluded that we must adhere to our policy of not providing continuous supports for operating programs,” wrote the Carnegie Corporation after Judge Robert Mangum’s repeated requests in early 1972. “The decision is always a difficult one, but the competition for funds from other new special and innovative educational projects is keen, and we cannot do both.”³² This letter from Carnegie reflected both of the aforementioned viewpoints: that Harlem Prep’s initial shine had faded and that continuous funding for programs or project was not the norm.

²⁸ For example, the Ford Foundation provided long-term support for the NAACP and National Urban League. See Ferguson, *Top Down*, 70; As a personal example, I learned much about the philanthropic sector during my writing of the history of the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation, one of the oldest foundations in the country and a highly-respected one in New York City. While only one example, the Dodge Foundation gave annual grants to certain “legacy” organizations that were either original grantees of its founder or matched the key goals of the foundation. The former is a function of the Dodge Foundation’s unique status as still operating as a family foundation, the latter, however, common practice. Furthermore, when the Dodge Foundation granted large sums of money beyond annual grants, they were for certain projects that were not expected to be funded in perpetuity. See Goldenberg, *Generations of Giving*.

²⁹ C. Gerald Fraser, “Harlem Prep Is Striving To Survive as Funds Fall,” *New York Times*, December 4, 1972.

³⁰ Nile interview, March 4, 2015.

³¹ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015

³² For example, see Letter from Barbara Finberg and Alan Pifer to Robert, January 3, 1972, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

Another specific reason for philanthropies and corporations to stop funding Harlem Prep was that it was perhaps a victim of its own success—after all, why help fund a school that seemed to be flourishing? “Success has not spoiled the school, but success may will kill it,” headmaster Carpenter felt.³³ He expanded on this theory in his own op-ed article in 1971: “Commerce, industry, and funding agencies, which become caught up in the glamour of a new organism, will provide initial sums of money. However, as the system thrives and disapproves the aforementioned myths [about Black and brown students succeeding], former contributors draw back and monies—the life-blood of the organism—dry up.”³⁴ Carpenter thought it was natural for philanthropic officers and industry leaders to see the school’s success and feel as if they were no longer needed, or responsible, to sustain it, regardless of their funding policies or priorities. (Ann Carpenter argued at the time, as well as a number of former students today, that ultimately, Harlem Prep became “too successful”—a threat to the power structure in education and beyond. Evidence of this argument and discussion of this notion in relation to the New York Board of Education will be examined at length in the next chapter.³⁵) It is here that the diverging realities, again, affected the school from the outside: funders perhaps saw Harlem Prep to be a prospering institution and students going onto college by the hundreds, even though the school’s financial coffers were empty. Both Ann and Ed Carpenter specifically felt like the notion of success hurt the school’s ability to fundraise through private means, and often hid the school’s growing economic struggle.

Still, as the decade progressed, there were larger political, economic, and cultural forces

³³ Hunter, “Harlem Prep and Academies Periled,” *New York Times*, February 16, 1971.

³⁴ Edward F. Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Offers a New Opportunity,” *New York Amsterdam News*, December 25, 1971.

³⁵ This will be discussed at length in the Chapter 9. Both Ann and Ed Carpenter directed similar comments to the Board of Education as they did to the private sector: that Harlem Prep was already successful (maybe even “too successful”), and did not need Board of Education help or private assistance.

at play that compounded Harlem Prep's particular circumstances, and influenced both philanthropic and corporate funding streams to all sorts of community projects. The climate in each of these realms, both nationally and city-wide, had changed drastically in five years' time; from 1967 to 1972 (and beyond), the tide of liberalism had slowed, (white) perceptions of the Black freedom struggle changed, and a fiscal crisis was brewing in New York City. Politically, the inauguration of Richard Nixon in 1969 began a turn away from the War on Poverty and government intervention to solve the so-called "urban crisis." (Moreover, Robert Self and others argue that liberals, too, moved away from welfare programs that dominated the American political agenda during these years.³⁶) Although in practice President Nixon continued to advance legislation and government spending on various welfare programs for the first few years of his presidency, he eventually "tacked hard to the right, at least in terms of his public rhetoric."³⁷ He criticized welfare programs and President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society initiatives, while promoting "law and order" that implied subtle (and not so subtle) critiques of mostly Black, poor, urban centers.³⁸ "Nixon charged that liberals had promised a Great Society, but had delivered great disorder," writes historian Michael Flamm—a message that resonated with much of white America and built off continued excoriations of liberalism by Patrick

³⁶ See Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 39-40, 278-279. Part of Self's larger argument is that splits in the Democratic Party between middle-class (white) men, and African-Americans, women, and LGBT groups, also contributed to this rise of conservatism because it created a vacuum of political power.

³⁷ For example, this includes legislation such as the Financial Assistance Program (although it ultimately failed), the Federal Pell Grant, and the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA). See Annelise Orleck, "Conclusion: The War on the War on Poverty and American Politics Since the 1960s," in *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980*, eds. Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 439, about how Nixon increased spending on welfare programs. Nixon actually tripled the amount of money spent on anti-poverty programs and public housing funding doubling during his tenure.

³⁸ Michael Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 173; Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (2nd ed.), (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 24; and Premilla Nadasen, *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 234.

Moynihan and others.³⁹ In the election of 1972, Nixon, who continued to move “distinctly to the right” in his politics and, mostly, his public discourse, took a “rhetorical hard line against welfare” and won one of the most lopsided elections in American history in 1972.⁴⁰ Although Harlem Prep was certainly not a government-run program—to outsiders and on the surface, it could be seen as fitting a conservative ideology of individualism and relying on private money—how did this changing political environment affect the school’s fundraising efforts? This decline of liberalism and rise of conservatism, together, created an atmosphere where there was less interest from philanthropies and companies in helping poor people of color in urban areas. Such efforts and this growing public opinion most likely affected Harlem Prep’s funding solicitation. It is perhaps no accident that this shift away from the advancement of racial equality (combined with widespread disillusionment from the Left) coincided with Harlem Prep’s financial crises in 1971 and into 1972 and beyond.⁴¹

There can be no doubt that corporations and philanthropies took note of this shift in popular opinion and political discourse. With the former, the “climate of the times” affected corporations’ willingness to donate to community projects, admitted a liaison for a company that sponsored a New York Urban League Street Academy, in a lengthy article about the Street

³⁹ Flamm, *Law and Order*, 173; Laurie B. Green, “Saving Babies in Memphis: The Politics of Race, Health, and Hunger during the War on Poverty,” in *The War on Poverty*, 144-145; Self, *All in the Family*, 26-36.

⁴⁰ Marisa Chappell, *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 115-117; On Nixon’s election, see Yanek Mieczkowski, *The Routledge Historical Atlas of Presidential Elections* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 125-127.

⁴¹ Despite this pattern of both conservatives and liberals moving away from funding community programs like Harlem Prep and others, there is much evidence that these programs and overall efforts made a significant impact on many impoverished communities. For example, in Noel A. Cazenave, *Impossible Democracy: The Unlikely Success of the War on Poverty Community Action Programs* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), he argues for the success of community actions programs and criticizes the move away from these efforts—and perhaps Harlem Prep fits into that broader framing. Furthermore, Cazenave also argues (as do others) that racial politics transcends the traditional ideological lines of the left-right paradox, and the stopping of a pursuit of racial justice can be blamed on all parties.

Academy and Harlem Prep's financial woes in 1971.⁴² (Although the Street Academies had their own distinct problems—and Harlem Prep had not been associated with them since 1967—they did share the interests of some overlapping corporations.⁴³) Ann Carpenter elaborated about how corporations' priorities, specifically, had changed with regards to Harlem Prep: "In the past, consumers and stockholders pressured corporations to pay their dues, to justify their existence to the black community by supporting our school. But these efforts were not sustained. The nobility of the act died out."⁴⁴ With support for civil rights initiatives—a euphemism for Black progress and mobility—quickly waning, businesses had less public relations incentives to support Black-led institutions or projects. The "corporate social responsibility" of companies described in the previous chapter was quickly reversed in the midst of these political changes. Ann Carpenter put it best in September of 1973: "It seems that the business community and the country at large is pulling away from a commitment to care about their fellow man and the death of Harlem Prep is just one manifestation of this."⁴⁵ Although Standard Oil of New Jersey continued to fund Harlem Prep and continue their belief in "corporate social responsibility" for a few more years, it seems that their peers did not do the same. While this was the Harlem Prep community's understanding of the problem at the time, scholars of philanthropy, too, have largely agreed with this interpretation. In earlier years, it was in "firms' own self-interest" to wield its social influence in Black communities, and if corporate philanthropy ultimately "serves the company's interests," it

⁴² Hunter, "Harlem Prep and Academies Periled," *New York Times*, February 16, 1971.

⁴³ To be fair, companies also stated that they pulled out of sponsoring Street Academy schools due to them not sustaining success and not leading to any institutional change. Still, corporate representatives interviewed in the above *New York Times* article felt that they had lived up to their commitment and "did their fair share"—statements that match these companies' disillusionment with racial philanthropy as well as matching a broader narrative of the era of that the country (or, more accurately the white power structure) being "tired" of civil rights.

⁴⁴ Fraser, "Harlem Prep Is Striving To Survive as Funds Fall," *New York Times*, 1972.

⁴⁵ Ronald Smothers, "Opening Delayed at Harlem Prep: School Cites Lack of Funds for Failure to Start Classes Monday Getting the Run-Around," *New York Times*, September 12, 1973.

seems that investing in programs like Harlem Prep no longer met that goal.⁴⁶ Moreover, combined with being in the midst of an economic recession in the mid-1970s, the corporate sector seemed to not only shift toward other projects or initiatives, but wanted to ease its giving altogether within this “conservative backlash” against 1960s liberalism.⁴⁷

The philanthropic sector by the early-to-mid 1970s, too, was affected by a rise of conservatism. The novel approach to activist funding modeled by the Ford Foundation (and followed by other foundations) in the 1960s was sharply reversed in the opening years of the 1970s. For one, the “hostile reactions [activist funding] engendered” led to many foundations—including Ford—to “disengage in the political realm.”⁴⁸ The Ford Foundation “began to rethink their commitment to community action,” explains Karen Ferguson, further adding that the New York City schools crisis also in part “led the Foundation itself to reconsider the underpinnings of its urban activism and to pull back from this short-lived experiment.”⁴⁹ Combined with the newly passed Tax Reform Act of 1969, which imposed a slew of new regulations and restrictions on philanthropic institutions, criticism of the so-called “liberal philanthropies” that inserted themselves into the public sphere “encouraged a retreat... from the support of grassroots social

⁴⁶ Arthur Gautier and Anne-Claire Pache, “Research on Corporate Philanthropy: A Review and Assessment,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 126, no. 3 (2015): 347; Rosamaria C. Moura-Leite and Robert C. Padgett, “Historical Background of Corporate Social Responsibility,” *Social Responsibility Journal* 7, no. 4 (2011): 531; Some scholars have also described how influential economists such as Milton Friedman argued during the 1970s that corporate social responsibility was bad for shareholders, and it is possible that these ideas also contributed to less direct philanthropy to urban programs as the decade progressed. See Lee Min-Dong Paul, “A Review of the Theories of Corporate Social Responsibility: Its Evolutionary Path and the Road Ahead,” *International Journal of Management Reviews* 10, no. 1 (December 6, 2007): 53–73.

⁴⁷ See Christian Olaf Christiansen, *Progressive Business: An Intellectual History of the Role of Business in American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 142-145.

⁴⁸ Soskis and Katz, “Looking Back at 50 Years of U.S. Philanthropy,” 17

⁴⁹ Ferguson, *Top Down*, 12-13.

movement organizations in particular.”⁵⁰ Although internal documents often neglected to subscribe specific reasons, correspondence between administrators, board of trustees, and funding contacts consistently depict a situation where philanthropies, in particular, were reducing their support.⁵¹ In this vacuum, a conservative philanthropic movement began to take hold—mimicking the actions of their progressive counterparts from the previous decade—that promoted free enterprise and a conservative individualistic vision for society.⁵² It is no surprise, then, that in 1972 or 1973, organizations like the newly formed Heritage Foundation had no interest in providing funding for a school such as Harlem Prep. Ultimately, the “neoconservative backlash against 1960s urban liberalism” did a school like Harlem Prep no favors.⁵³

The early 1970s also featured a political fracturing of traditionally liberal coalitions from past decades. An abundance of urban history and history of education literature of the last two decades has documented these divisions: Daniel Perlstein describes the breaking apart of white and Black liberals as an “eclipse of liberalism” in New York City; Jeffrey Mirel details the breaking apart of the New Deal coalition of white liberals, labor supporters, and Black liberals in Detroit; Wendell Pritchett offers context for the tension between liberal Jews and Blacks; and

⁵⁰ Ibid. For more information about the Tax Reform Act of 1969, see Peter Frumkin, “The Long Recoil from Regulation: Private Philanthropic Foundations and the Tax Reform Act of 1969,” *American Review of Public Administration* 28, no. 3 (1998): 266-286; See also Alice O’Connor, “Foundations, Social Movement, and the Contradictions of Liberal Philanthropy,” in Helmut Anheier and David Hammack, eds. *American Foundations: Roles and Contributions* (New York: Brookings Institution, 2010), 334. While O’Connor discusses the inherent tensions of powerful philanthropies engaging in social justice of poor- and working-class people, she also covers the criticism of this engagement on a broader scale.

⁵¹ Letter from Frank Mitchell to Robert Mangum, p. 2, June 1, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁵² Soskis and Katz argue that, ironically, these Right-leaning institutions which previously criticized the progressive causes championed by philanthropies in the prior decade, now, purposely sought to politicize philanthropy themselves and create social change that matched their conservative vision. Many of these institutions, such as the Heritage Foundation and Cato Institute, trace their origins to the 1970s. See Soskis and Katz, “Looking Back at 50 Years of U.S. Philanthropy,” 17-18; For a more in-depth understanding of the influence of these organizations in society since their founding and particularly still today, see Jane Mayer, *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right* (New York: Doubleday, 2016).

⁵³ Ferguson, *Top Down*, 13.

Peniel Joseph reveals the white backlash to Black Power during these years (as do many others).⁵⁴ Not only did a wave of conservatism take hold during the early 1970s, but the traditional liberal coalitions were disintegrating—and liberalism weakening—in ways that were certainly not conducive to Harlem Prep’s continued solicitation of funds from their mostly white liberal partners. To be sure, it remains unclear to what extent these wider political shifts tangibly affected Harlem Prep’s fundraising efforts; the school’s aforementioned circumstances were intertwined with a changing society, and pulling each of these factors apart is exceedingly difficult. Furthermore, these societal changes did not happen overnight. Still, in as much as Harlem Prep’s birth was a product of its Harlem environment and of the political moment, its decline was, too. Harlem Prep’s ad-hoc funding model that was effective earlier in the school’s tenure became ineffective in the changing national context—and exacerbated by the fact that school leaders had no back-up model of funding if their normal efforts came up empty or public money never came through. Ultimately, all of these factors together provide the best explanation for why the school was unable to sustain the private funds that it needed to survive.⁵⁵

Changes in Education: Harlem Prep and the Alternative School Movement

“One of the tragic—but almost unnoticed stories of the past two months—has been that of the imminent demise of New York’s Harlem Prep,” wrote acclaimed education author

⁵⁴ Perlstein, *Justice, Justice*; Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System*; Wendell E. Pritchett, *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews, and the Changing Face of the Ghetto* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003); and Joseph, *The Black Power Movement*.

⁵⁵ What is not mentioned is that New York City was also approaching a fiscal crisis that would occur in 1975. While slightly after Harlem Prep was searching for funds to stay open, perhaps the economic conditions of the city—for example, more competition for private sources to help actual public services, including schools—was a factor. This will be discussed more in Chapter 9. See Seymour P. Lachman and Robert Polner, *The Man Who Saved New York: Hugh Carey and the Great Fiscal Crisis of 1975* (Albany: Excelsior Editions, 2010).

Jonathan Kozol in a 1973 op-ed in the *Boston Globe*.⁵⁶ Kozol's essay was notable for both his strong praise of Harlem Prep's track record of success in educating youth and his searing words about society's (particularly "local liberal communities'") failure to continue financial support. Yet, also notable in this article was how Kozol, an influential voice in educational discourse at the time, referred to Harlem Prep as a "Free School"; he did the same in his 1972 book *Free Schools*, complimenting Harlem Prep and particularly Ed Carpenter for his "remarkable and long-sustained success" of this "renowned" institution.⁵⁷ Although Harlem Prep generally does not fit the definition of a free school crafted by historians today—they "were overwhelmingly white and middle-class" asserts Russell Rickford—Kozol's use of the term back then speaks to the broader evolution of the educational landscape occurring in the mid-1970s.⁵⁸ Changes occurring in Harlem Prep including the aforementioned devolution of private funding (and demographic and public image shifts discussed later in this chapter) should not only be understood within the changing political landscape, but in relation to the changing *educational* landscape, too. One way to understand all of these changes is to understand Harlem Prep within the context of free school and alternative public schools emerging in the 1970s. As Harlem Prep developed widespread acclaim in its later years, various labels and characterizations came along with its increased visibility. Moreover, explaining how the school was an enigmatic institution

⁵⁶ Jonathan Kozol, "Fasting for the Free Schools," *Boston Globe*, November 20, 1973. Kozol, who had given small donations to Harlem Prep over the years, gained acclaim in 1967 after his book *Death at an Early Age*, sold over 2 million copies and won the National Book Award. See Claudio Sanchez and L.A. Johnson, "Frozen In Time, Remembering The Students Who Changed A Teacher's Life," *nprED*, <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/06/30/418599078/frozen-in-time-remembering-the-students-who-changed-a-teachers-life>.

⁵⁷ Kozol, "Fasting for the Free Schools," *Boston Globe*, 1973; Jonathan Kozol, *Free Schools* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), 50, 62.

⁵⁸ Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 8; Kozol, in the pages of his book, clearly seeks to reclaim the mantle of what a "free school" entailed and explicitly notes how there are many definitions of free schools that have been used by "disparate and even antagonistic individuals and groups." See pgs. 7-8 in *Free Schools*. It is also important to note that Kozol thanks Ed Carpenter in his acknowledgements section of the book, and was a donor to Harlem Prep on multiple occasions. Therefore, his use of the term "free school" when Carpenter—based on all available evidence—did not use that term, is notable.

during these years not only helps better understand the changes that took place in the school, but also continues to help situate it as something distinct—a multicultural school that did not fit squarely into any movement in the 1960s *or* 1970s.

First, Harlem Prep in the 1970s was sometimes described as being part of the free school movement. However, the school’s relationship to the free school movement is complex. On one hand, the idea of a student-centered school, cooperative learning, and general free school thinking of the time undergirded Carpenter’s educational philosophy. To follow Jonathan Kozol’s lead, the “Free School” movement does jive with aspects of Harlem Prep’s story and many of its characteristics. “Free Schools,” which emerged in the 1960s (but died out by the early 1970s), rose to prominence following Alexander Sutherland Neill’s book *Summerhill*. This influential book described Neill’s school in England, which operated under his child-rearing philosophy that children should be free to pursue their interests and had equal rights of adults.⁵⁹ Using these principles as a guide, individuals such as John Holt, Paul Goodman, and Edgar Friedenberg—building off of the classic works of John Dewey and a child-centered education—advanced these ideas further inside school walls.⁶⁰ Still, these were not necessarily new concepts in education. The free school movement was less of a concrete development of institutions than a broader philosophy that began to take hold through the creation of private schools due to

⁵⁹ See Alexander Sutherland Neill, *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*. (New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1960).

⁶⁰ See, for example, Paul Goodman, *Compulsory Mis-Education and the Community of Scholars* (New York: Vintage, 1964); Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959); and John Holt, *How Children Fail* (New York: Pitman, 1964); Preeminent historian of education and president of Teachers College, Columbia University Lawrence Cremin wrote about the free school movement in 1976, and similarly connected this movement to a broader movement in progressive education. Among other notable arguments, he argues that the aforementioned book *Summerhill*, which many historians then and today see as a catalyst for the free school movement, offered “nothing” that was novel or had not been tried in the 1920s and 1930s. See Lawrence A. Cremin, “The Free School Movement—A Perspective,” in Mario Fantini, ed., *Alternative Education: A Source Book for Parents, Teachers, Students, and Administrators* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1976), 59-65.

continued public disillusionment in the wake of the social unrest of the 1960s.⁶¹ Harlem Prep was no stranger to incorporating these principles of student freedom into its broader multicultural philosophy and daily pedagogy, and was, too, a reaction to the lack of public school options. Both Ed and Ann Carpenter similarly envisioned their multicultural school model to be student-focused learning environment.⁶²

Not only did Kozol refer to Harlem Prep as a free school (and other urban schools), but so did Ford Foundation program officer (and close friend of the school) Joshua Smith.⁶³ Administrator Hussein Ahdieh, in recollecting Harlem Prep's origins, also considers free school ideology to be the "underlying philosophy" of the school and Harlem Prep to be part of the movement.⁶⁴ Thanks to Harlem Prep's national recognition by the early 1970s, outside voices who learned about the school similarly referred to Harlem Prep in the same way. For example, M.I.T. education professor Allen Graubard characterized Harlem as part of the free school movement in 1972; so did prominent historian of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, Lawrence Cremin, calling Harlem Prep a "community free school."⁶⁵

Conversely, Harlem Prep was not a free school by current historians' standards. Not only were most of these self-labeled free schools white and middle-class, "free school ideology was

⁶¹ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to further discuss the free school movement, but free schools took on many forms, to Kozol's school he founded in Boston, to Bill Ayer's Children's Community school in Chicago.

⁶² Ed Carpenter does briefly refer to Dewey and other past scholarship relevant to child-centered education such as Paul Goodman in an introductory section of his dissertation. See Carpenter, "The Development of an Alternative School," 7-8, 17-18.

⁶³ Joshua L. Smith, "Free Schools: Pandora's Box?," in *Curricular Concerns in a Revolutionary Era*, ed. Robert R. Leeper (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1971), 237-241.

⁶⁴ See Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 49-51.

⁶⁵ Allen Graubard, "The Free School Movement," *Harvard Educational Review* 42 (August 1972): 74. In this article, Graubard delineates the different elements and factions of the free school movement, placing Harlem Prep and other "black street academies" within this movement. He also writes later in the paper that Harlem Prep is "a really effective alternative school," but does not situate it within any relation to public schools; See Cremin, "The Free School Movement—A Perspective," 61.

explicitly counter-cultural” in a way that contrasted some of Harlem Prep’s beliefs.⁶⁶ As established in Chapter 4, while Harlem Prep certainly pushed back against the dominant white cultural norms, it was not focused on fully creating a Black counter-culture—the school’s focus was on sending kids to college and, philosophically, that Black culture (and Puerto Rican culture and so on) should be inserted into mainstream cultural norms. Black culture was American culture in Carpenter’s eyes. Thus, Carpenter’s multicultural philosophy was not always congruent with historians’ current definitions of free school ideology. Furthermore, free schools “consciously rejected the defining institutions and practices of American society—corporate capitalism and all that it entailed.”⁶⁷ While many individual students (and some teachers) at Harlem Prep strongly felt this way, it was not an institutional goal.

From a historiographical perspective, this tension between free school definitions of historians today and characterizations of broader free school lineage of the past suggests that historians of education should perhaps re-examine the influence of free school ideology on Black institutions of the era.⁶⁸ Harlem Prep is a prime example. The stark disconnect between how current scholars describe free schools and how the historical actors in this narrative—Kozol, Smith, Ahdieh, and others—internalized free school ideology back then is notable. Although important, still, the point here is not to decide on Harlem Prep’s label as a free school, or to anachronistically criticize Kozol or others who used the term (correctly) to emphasize the school’s similarities with free school ideology. Instead, it is to recognize that Harlem Prep by the

⁶⁶ See also Richard Neumann, *Sixties Legacy: A History of the Public Alternative Schools Movement, 1967-2001* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 74, who declares definitively that most free schools were overwhelmingly white and middle-class.

⁶⁷ Miller, *Free Schools, Free People*, 3.

⁶⁸ For example, both Cremin and Graubard discuss the Nairobi Free School as a certain type of free school. Conversely, in Rickford’s *We Are an African People*, the Nairobi Free School is a prominent part of his narrative and analysis, but does not relate this school to the free school movement in any way.

1970s—in part by virtue of its growing popularity—was seen as being something different depending on one’s perspective.⁶⁹ In as much as Kozol and others envisioned Harlem Prep as a free school, many others at this entangled time in education—and at Harlem Prep—did not. There remains no contemporary evidence of either Ann nor Ed Carpenter referring to Harlem Prep as a free school; countless documents from Ed Carpenter nor founding proposals from the mid-to-late 1960s ever use or even allude to the phrase. Although it is impossible to examine the full taxonomy of Black schools, Black educational leaders such as Marcus Foster and the many individuals Russell Rickford describes in *We Are an African People* did not characterize Black schools in this way, either.⁷⁰

For example, instead of considering Harlem Prep a free school, conversely, some educational observers still considered it a vestige of an earlier era of private institutions spearheaded by Street Academy initiatives (even though it had long disassociated with the Street Academy program and the New York Urban League). Prominent education journalist Fred Hechinger recognized Harlem Prep as one of the “pioneering efforts” in private education, contextualizing it with other Street Academy schools in 1970.⁷¹ A program executive of the philanthropic Danforth Foundation similarly described Harlem Prep as part of the system of street academies and “storefront schools” run by NYUL in the *Journal of Negro Education*.⁷² So, too, did another scholar in a 1975 *Journal of Negro Education* article, examining the success of

⁶⁹ See Kozol, *Free Schools*, 7-10, where Kozol specifically draws attention to white, “country free schools” and argues that low-income Black communities should build their own free schools.

⁷⁰ See Spencer, *Marcus Foster*; and Rickford, *We Are an African People*.

⁷¹ Fred M. Hechinger, “Education 1980,” in *Conflicts in Urban Education*, Sheldon Marcus and Harry N. Rivlin, eds. (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 6-7.

⁷² William C. Nelson, “The Storefront School: A Vehicle for Change,” *Journal of Negro Education* 40, no. 3 (1971): 248.

street academies such as Harlem Prep.⁷³ Even Joshua Smith, though he labeled Harlem Prep a free school, wrote about Harlem Prep as a street academy institution—primarily because it enrolled a unique population of students that other alternative schools of the era did not—in a 1971 book about curriculum and educational leadership.⁷⁴

Still other scholars, authors, and Ed Carpenter himself envisioned Harlem Prep, by the 1970s, as being much closer to the oncoming alternative *public* school movement. “A number of schools have been credited as the first public alternatives [such as] Harlem Prep,” wrote notable public school advocate and education scholar Mary Anne Raywid in *Phi Delta Kappan*, reflecting on the growth of alternative schools in the 1970s.⁷⁵ Part of Raywid’s argument was that schools such as Harlem Prep did not seek to offer “any mere alternative to the conventional way of keeping school,” but instead, believed that “their programs [were] the kind of reform desperately needed by *all* education.” Raywid continued that the use of the term “alternative” was to connote that other schools had failed in educating youth, and not to suggest there has been another effective way to teach young people employed by public schools.⁷⁶ These definitions seemed to fit with Harlem Prep, particularly by the 1970s once the school had established itself as an effective educational pathway. Harlem Prep was not trying to provide an “alternative” mode of education, but instead, act as a blueprint for how all (or at least most) students in Harlem and New York City should be educated. This also matched Harlem Prep’s planned funding model: secure private money at the start, then demonstrate the effectiveness of their

⁷³ Daniel U. Levine, “Educating Alienated Inner-City Youth: Lessons from the Street Academies,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 44, no. 2 (1975): 139.

⁷⁴ Joshua L. Smith, “Free Schools: Pandora’s Box?,” 237-241.

⁷⁵ Mary Anne Raywid, “The First Decade of Public School Alternatives,” *The Phi Delta Kappan* 62, no. 8 (1981): 551; In honor of her advocacy for education, the Society of Professors of Education gives the annual Mary Anne Raywid Award to a scholar who has made an impact in education.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

multicultural education program, and ultimately become part of a public system.

Other education voices at the time also seem to associate Harlem Prep with being a public-facing institution—and in conversation with public schools and whom these institutions are supposed to serve. In an article assessing alternative schools, another education scholar discussed Harlem Prep in the context of what schools like it meant for public education: that Harlem Prep, and others, could not be cast off as unrelated private schools (like a small “Street Academy”), but assessed vis-à-vis public education.⁷⁷ “An alternative school offers the choice of a different kind of schooling for clientele of the public sector,” asserted two other educational researchers, including Harlem Prep as a prime example of meeting their stated definition.⁷⁸ Susan Egan, New York State Coordinator for the Committee of Community Schools, writing in the magazine *Current History* in 1972, best sums up these sentiments:

It may seem strange to begin a discussion of independent schools by considering the public schools and the problems they have. The two have always been considered separate school systems with different problems and different interests. In fact, the distinction between them is less and less valid.⁷⁹

Harlem Prep, a widely known institution by the 1970s, was not immune to this shifting educational reform landscape. Later in the article, Egan, in the context of Harlem Prep and another school, further states that: “The distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’, in the conventional sense of the terms, has lost its meaning.”⁸⁰ In hindsight, Egan’s assessment of the

⁷⁷ See Harry S. Broudy, “Educational Alternatives: Why Not? Why Not,” *The Phi Delta Kappan* 54, no. 7 (1973): 438–40.

⁷⁸ Phil Deturk and Ray Ivey, “National Alternatives Schools Program,” in *Alternative Education: A Source Book for Parents, Teachers, Students, and Administrators*, Mario D. Fantini, ed. (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1976), 474–475.

⁷⁹ Susan S. Egan, “The Independent Public Schools,” *Current History* 63, no. 372 (August 1, 1972): 73.

time still seems correct. By the middle of the decade, the “small schools movement” in New York and in other cities began to grow, combining elements of private schools—small size, alternative methods, different resource allocation—within the public school system.⁸¹ The New York City Board of Education, specifically, was grappling with how to include (and/or create) small schools in the public system.⁸² “A growing number of the City’s high schools had begun to establish mini-schools, and the concept of alternative public educational programs was spreading across the nation,” they concluded in a 1976 report.⁸³ By the late 1970s, the Board of Education even created a specific district and office to manage the various “independent alternative schools.”⁸⁴ Questions of who should be running schools, what their size and scope should be, and who they should serve rose to the forefront of educational discourse in the decade. Although the small schools movement and larger growth of alternative public schools mainly occurred after Harlem Prep lost its independent status, the discourse and events of the 1970s (and private-public hybrid schools like Harlem Prep) helped spark the decade’s later movement to public school

⁸⁰ Ibid., 74.

⁸¹ See Heather Lewis, *New York City Public Schools From Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 120-123; Memoir-focused books such as Deborah Meier, *The Power Of Their Ideas: Lessons For American From a Small School in Harlem* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995/2002), describe the small school movement, as does Seymour Fliegel and James Macguire, *Miracle in East Harlem: The Fight for Choice in Public Education* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1994). Although in a later time period and mostly in regard to pre-K education, see also Tom Roderick, *A School of Our Own* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).

⁸² New York City Board of Education, “Humanization and Involvement: The Small-Unit Approach: Implementation of Recommendations Set Forth in Toward the Twenty-First Century,” June 1975, p. 25-37, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I: Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 22, Folder 264, BOE Records. For example, this report states that “the Board of Education recognizes both the mini schools and the independent alternative high schools as legitimate avenues of alternative education,” listing eleven schools (including Harlem Prep) as serving specific roles inside the system.

⁸³ Community Service Society [New York City], “Another Chance: A Survey of Alternative Public High School Programs in New York City,” October 1976, p. v, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I: Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 23, Folder 279, BOE Records. This report also acknowledged that the “alternative high school movement is a relatively new development in public education.” See pg. 5.

⁸⁴ See, among many documents at the Municipal Archives, New York City Board of Education, “List of Independent Alternative High Schools (Board of Education),” February 1977, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I: Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 23, Folder 279, BOE Records.

innovation and experimentation.

Thus, considering that Harlem Prep was born out of the explosive late-1960s political moment that consisted of fragments of freedom school ideology and nascent Pan-Africanism (among many other influences as well), the school perhaps felt increasingly adrift in this early-to-mid 1970s muddled educational habitat. Whereas the 1960s featured an emergence of privately funded, independent schools such as Pan-African schools, Black Panther Schools, and private (white) free schools, the subsequent decade was different. As explained, by the early 1970s, “many educational activists turned to the *public* schools as potential sites for educational and social innovation and transformation.”⁸⁵ Thus, instead of Pan-African schools emerging—Russell Rickford describes 1970 as their “high-water mark” and a decline thereafter—and “Free Schools” which had faded by 1972, public alternative institutions became the norm in educational experimentation.⁸⁶ Although Pan-African schools and (white) free schools had many differences, they both could be seen, in part, as “a response to the existentially alienating character of the bureaucratic, machine-like system of schooling.”⁸⁷ Now, by the 1970s, the public alternative school movement that followed throughout the decade would be “the next stage in the larger history of alternative education.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Judith Kafka, “Review of Free Schools, Free People: Education and Democracy after the 1960s; Sixties Legacy: A History of the Public Alternative Schools Movement, 1967-2000, by Ron Miller and Richard Neumann,” *History of Education Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (2005): 137. See also Neumann, *Sixties Legacy*, 90-105, which specifically addresses how public school began to innovate through the desires of educational activists.

⁸⁶ Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 17; Miller, *Free Schools, Free People*, 4-5.

⁸⁷ Miller, *Free Schools, Free People*, 16; Part of the challenge is that “Free Schools” have been defined differently. For example, many Pan-African schools rightly considered themselves to be free schools because, as the term was popularly used, these were schools that were steeped in counter-culture and fought against traditional modes of schooling (i.e., grades, classes, a focus on college, etc.). See Miller, *Free Schools, Free People*, 2-16, who thinks about Free Schools as not being characterized by race such as the African Free School (AFS) in Newark. For the African Free School, see Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 138-142.

⁸⁸ Kafka, “Review of Free Schools, Free People: Education and Democracy after the 1960s; Sixties Legacy: A History of the Public Alternative Schools Movement, 1967-2000,” 137, in reference to Neumann’s framing.

So, where *does* Harlem Prep fit within this educational metamorphosis? Understand first that Harlem Prep's existence was already a rarity—few alternative schools that were founded in the 1960s seemed to still exist into the mid-1970s.⁸⁹ The average life of private alternative schools was about 28 months, according to the U.S. Office of Education and the National Institute of Education's Experimental Schools Project. This fact was not lost on educational stakeholders at the time. "By national standards Harlem Prep has already proved to be extraordinarily durable," wrote a representative of the Educational Facilities Laboratories, an independent research agency funded by the Ford Foundation, in summer of 1973.⁹⁰ Even taking into consideration the danger with making generalizations based on an incomplete taxonomy, existing scholarship on independent schools of the era does seem to suggest, at least qualitatively, that many schools founded in the 1960s closed by the decade's end, just as many new schools emerged at the beginning of the 1970s.⁹¹ Harlem Prep crossed the threshold, existing throughout prime years in both of these decades from 1967 to 1974.

The uniqueness of Ed Carpenter's specific brand of multiculturalism embedded within Harlem Prep, sustained from its foundational years in the 1960s, makes it hard to accurately

⁸⁹ For example, "Freedom Schools" from the South had long been disintegrated, the "Free Schools" discussed by Miller and others founded in the late 1960s had largely faded away (and were generally much smaller institutions), and other long-running Pan-African-inspired schools such as Uhuru Sasa Shule and the Oakland Community School directed by the Black Panther Party were both founded in 1971 (and closed in the 1980s). For Uhuru Sasa Shule, see Rickford, *We Are an African People*. For the Oakland Community School, see Murch, *Living for the City*.

⁹⁰ Educational Facilities Laboratories, Inc., "Letter to James Harris about Harlem Prep's Survival," July 7, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. For more about the EFL, see National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, "A History of Educational Facilities Laboratories (EFL)" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Institute of Building Sciences, 2009), <http://ncef.org/pubs/efl2.pdf>.

⁹¹ This is not to say that the late 1960s and 1970s were disconnected—nothing could be farther from the truth. Countless books exploring the educational history of these years explain how the late 1960s influenced the events of the 1970s. These pivotal years in educational and urban history, if not American history, are very tightly intertwined in cause and effect. Martha Biondi's *The Black Revolution on Campus*, where she contextualizes the events of the mid- and late 1960s that led to the rise of student-led Black studies movement in the early 1970s, is one of many examples. However, few actual *schools* founded in 1967 seemed to have survived into the mid-1970s. Instead, the closing of certain schools based on a particular ideology by the late 1960s led to new schools based on different ideology in the 1970s—connected, and influenced by each other, but separate institutions.

characterize the school in the 1970s. Plus, the confluence of ideas and ideologies swirling around education reform at the beginning of the decade only compounds the difficulty of this task—if not redraws the boundaries of certain terms and movements described by scholars. As this dissertation argues, Harlem Prep’s multicultural principles (and its more granular operational components that enforced them) was distinct in the era that it began—the mid-to-late 1960s—and, still, in the early-to-mid 1970s. For Harlem Prep to be a school and a representation of a philosophy that has been outside educational scholarship about these important two decades, it must also be understood as something distinct in relation to movements emerging in the 1970s, too. The school’s multiculturalism and educational philosophy continued to be a chameleon on the educational landscape in a way that deserves inclusion into educational history.

Moreover, situating Harlem Prep within the broader educational landscape of the era and how it related to the varying educational trends also helps explain the latter half of the Harlem Prep story’s narrative arc. First, as alluded to earlier in this chapter, the changing educational landscape in which Harlem Prep was caught between perhaps also affected school leaders’ ability to continue soliciting funds. Carpenter, Mangum, and others had to navigate these disparate educational contexts—being a free school, or public school, or private school, and so on—while, in practice, it was none of those at all. Second, and discussed next in this chapter, the school’s growing public-facing ethos went hand-in-hand with its growth and size compared to its small school status during its early years. And third—and perhaps most consequently—the fact that Harlem Prep was seen as being a different type of school depending on perspective was an underlying, if not fully understood, tension that arose during later discussions with the Board of Education. What kind of school was Harlem Prep and, consequently, whose responsibility was it to take care of it? While some Board of Education members saw the school as being in the

purview of the private sphere (perhaps as a separate “free school”), other members believed that it was *their* role as the Board of Education—the overseer of public education—who was responsible for its fiscal troubles (by not helping fund it earlier) and even for its future success. (As discussed in the following chapter, contributing to these tensions was the Board of Education’s reception to widespread public pressure to keep the school open.) While the board’s resistance occurs for a multitude of reasons, the educational context of the era certainly played a part.⁹² There was, once again, another diverging reality: of what Harlem Prep was—a distinct multicultural institution—and what others perceived that it should (or should not) be.

Sketching the Prep Post-1972

Beverly Grayman-Rich had left Washington Irving High School in the 10th grade, a number of family crises forcing her hand. On the streets for about a year, Grayman-Rich knew that she still wanted to pursue an education—she had always wanted to become a nurse. “I was ready to go back to school, but I couldn’t go back to traditional school,” she explains. “That was completely out.” She found out about a New York Urban League program, but after trying that out, she needed something more. “This is not gonna’ work,” she recalls, noting that to fulfill her dream of being a nurse, she needed an actual *school*. Through a few connections, she heard about Harlem Prep, interviewed there, and was accepted in fall of 1972. The school changed her life. “I felt the stream of confidence in our abilities and just to be the best that we could be. That’s what Harlem Prep gave to us,” Grayman-Rich asserts today. “We walked into that renovated supermarket with those open classes, and we had professors who were the best caliber of educators that we had ever known. These individuals were phenomenal.” Shortly after enrolling at Harlem Prep, Grayman-Rich got married, became pregnant and had her first child—and she

⁹² The final chapter discusses the school’s final year and merging with the New York City Board of Education.

continued to feel an overwhelming sense of support during these exciting life changes while she pursued her much-desired diploma.⁹³ After about a year and half at Harlem Prep, Beverly Grayman-Rich graduated as part of the last graduating class in winter of 1974. She continued on to Bronx Community College, where she eventually received her nursing credentials and after working as a nurse, went back to school two more times, earning a bachelor's degree in nursing, and finally a dual master's degree in nursing and health administration. "If I had never gone to Harlem Prep, I wouldn't be where I am at today. I would not have acquired those degrees," she asserts. "I know I wouldn't have. I *wouldn't* have."⁹⁴

Grayman-Rich's story continues an important trend of this dissertation: the monumental impact of Harlem Prep on young people's lives. Despite the major societal changes happening outside Harlem Prep, and the changes occurring within Harlem Prep discussed in this section, it is important to keep in perspective that Harlem Prep's educational program stayed remarkably similar during its tenure. During the school's latter years, these diverging realities became stark: while the school was rapidly becoming fiscally insolvent, students like Grayman-Rich continued to soar academically and graduate thanks to the school's tried-and-true educational design. Students consistently experienced the same type of affirming school atmosphere, embrace of multiculturalism, and constant love from teachers and classmates in 1973 as they did in 1969.⁹⁵ Grayman-Rich describes teachers such as Sandy Campbell who "was so cool" and created an "environment [that] made us want to learn"; other students during these years likewise expressed

⁹³ Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Changes at Harlem Prep were funding-related and not philosophical. For example, see Bartley-Grinage and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017, where they talk about how Penny, as part of the last graduating class, did not experience the same type of fieldtrips and programs as Ajuba; As discussed earlier in this chapter, perhaps Carpenter and his staff's reluctance to take attention away from students and the school's educational program contributed to their fiscal issues, debt, and overall financial downfall.

how classes inspired them, teachers motivated them to learn, and the school atmosphere was dynamic and electric.⁹⁶ Furthermore, teachers and administrators consciously worked hard to hide the school's financial woes in favor of continuing to focus on student wellbeing—a point that Grayman-Rich and others make clear.⁹⁷

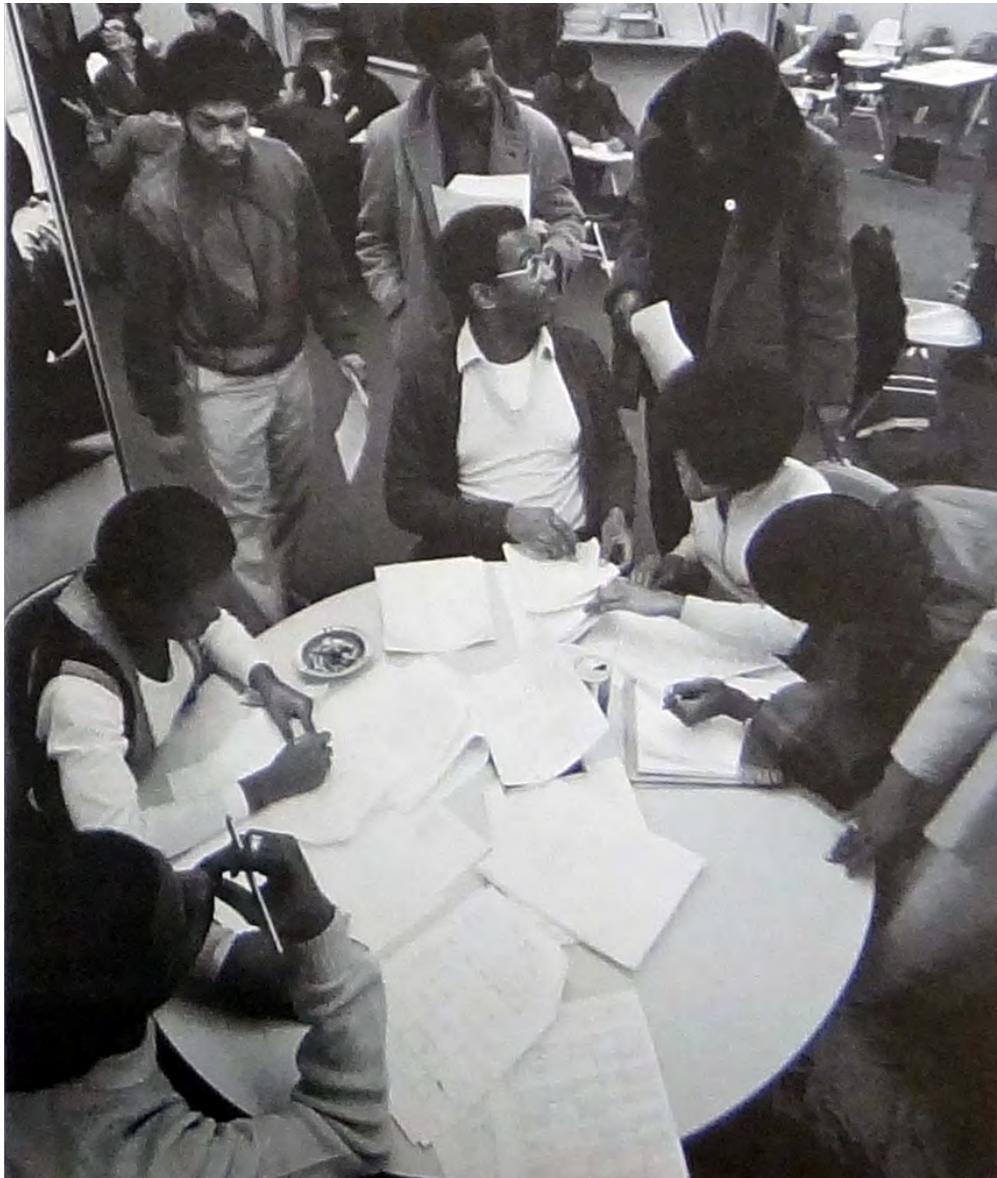


Figure 34. A Harlem Prep teacher counsels incoming students on registration day, 1972.
Source: The Lamp Magazine, ExxonMobil Historical Collection, University of Texas-Austin

⁹⁶ Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017; See also Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

⁹⁷ See Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017, where she says she did not know about the school's financial problems until about a few months before the school would actually close; See also Bartley-Grinage and Grinage interview, April 11, 2017; Hopson interview, February 11, 2015; and Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

There is much evidence to this bifurcated narrative, one of institutional struggle, another of student achievement, the latter of which mirrors the story of previous years. For one, in terms of educational programming, “[despite fiscal uncertainty] no major changes in structure are planned for the school,” stated a grant in late winter of 1972. “The school would enroll 550 students and the atmosphere of free interaction between student and teacher would continue to prevail.”⁹⁸ From a more ground-up perspective, the anecdotes and memories of students *and* teachers agree with this narrative. While some students seemingly were vaguely aware of funding difficulties—particularly many of the fundraisers with Black entertainers—others do not recall knowledge of the school’s fiscal issues, and students continued to be positively affected by the Harlem Prep experience.⁹⁹ Beverly Grayman-Rich was not alone in her late-stage Harlem Prep attendance. Students such as Alicia M. Harrison Williams, a 41-year old mother and professional caterer, was one example. Salutatorian of the 1973 graduating class, “when she walks up to make her Salutatorian speech her commencement audience might well salute her,” wrote the *New York Amsterdam News*.¹⁰⁰ Williams, after seeing her son Berkeley Harrison graduate from Harlem Prep the year before, was inspired to go back to school. “I am over 40 years of age and have seen my youngest child successfully enter college. I feel that now that I have served my children, it is time to serve myself.” Harrison expressed that Harlem Prep presented “her last opportunity to receive an education,” and after a robust experience there,

⁹⁸ Harold Howe, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” December 12, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. Anecdotes from students suggest that at times teachers were paid late, but that it was largely not a major issue in morale. See Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013 and Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

⁹⁹ See Nile interview, March 4, 2015; Hopson interview, February 11, 2015; and Rivera e-mail message to author, April 7, 2018, for example.

¹⁰⁰ “Mother Of Three Graduates At 41. Plans To Study Law,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 9, 1973.

planned to enter John Jay College and pursue a career in law.¹⁰¹ Clifford Jacobs and Dawn Seavers, two 1972 graduates, also had their lives changed because of Harlem Prep. Each received traveling scholarships to visit Europe as part of a partnership program between a local TV affiliate and Harlem Prep that worked to create opportunities so that “minority students could afford [a] European experience.”¹⁰²



Figure 35. Harlem Prep teacher John Czerniejewski (center) and students during a school day, with students working on the other side of the movable partition, ca. 1972.
Source: The Lamp Magazine, ExxonMobil Historical Collection, University of Texas-Austin

Brad Jeffries was another student where Harlem Prep’s institutional struggles seemed to have little bearing compared to his own. Born and raised in Harlem without a mother and a

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² “2 Harlem Prep Writers Win CBS’ Europe Tour,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 9, 1973.

father—the former died when he was a baby and the latter left soon after—Jeffries was raised by his older sister until he was about twelve or thirteen. “In order to survive I started working at a drug store downtown,” he explained at the time, eventually catching bad luck with the police.¹⁰³ “I was in the apartment one day [and the police] closed in and found some junk [drugs] in one of the rooms. Took us all down to the pen. All of the white kids were released and put on probation, but I was sent away.” Although Jeffries explained that he was “framed” and “got the worst end of the deal,” the entire experience was an eye-opening one for him. “I began to get myself together and try the best way I could to build my life again.” Jeffries explained further that he read a story about Harlem Prep in a *New York Amsterdam News* article and wrote to the editor about how to attend. The newspaper responded that he could get help at Harlem Prep regarding his arrest and trial—a suggestion that turned out to be momentous. Once admitted, Jeffries received advice from Harlem Prep’s guidance counselor Ruth Kyler and eventually, through the school’s connections and various legal processes, his trial was reopened and his charges dismissed. He credits Harlem Prep and the caring staff for turning his life around. “When I didn’t have any place to stay [Miss Kyler] let me stay at their place for a couple of nights and several other teachers put me up from time to time until I got a place to stay.... Being at the Harlem Prep School has really helped me and I want to accomplish something in life.”¹⁰⁴ Issues of late payments for teachers or lack of resources for students seemed to be the concern of administrators, teachers, and the board only; Brad Jeffries graduated in 1972 along with 150 other students, receiving college acceptances to Morehouse College and the City University of

¹⁰³ Earl Calloway, “There’s a Second Chance and Hope for Today’s Troubled Youth,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, April 1, 1972. Note that in this article, the author does not include the last name of this student. However, cross-referencing student graduation lists from 1972 reveal only one student named Brad. (In addition, there were no students who graduated named Brad in 1971.)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

New York.¹⁰⁵

Still, even if Harlem Prep's program stayed consistent, the school *had* changed by 1972 in other ways, mostly in public perception and status as well as student demographics—changes that were mutually reinforcing. First, as alumna and lifelong Harlem resident, Aissatou Bey-Grecia explains, “Harlem Prep was the biggest game in town”—and a wave of media reports and national buzz by the 1970s suggest much truth to this statement.¹⁰⁶ In other words, any discussion about education or schools in Harlem would circle back to Harlem Prep; businesspeople, community activists, and lay people of all sorts knew of Harlem Prep and its role in the community, particularly in comparison to K-8 schools or high schools in surrounding neighborhoods. Continued newspaper coverage from not just local but national outlets as well as dozens of mentions from educational scholars in peer-reviewed journals and books speaks to the level of awareness surrounding Harlem Prep in the school's latter years.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, by 1972, press coverage of Harlem Prep included radio interviews and television coverage, suggesting that the school's P.R. reach was significant; it was not uncommon for Ed Carpenter and students to be interviewed on local radio stations or for local TV stations to film the Harlem Prep commencement ceremonies.¹⁰⁸ The 1971 documentary *Step by Step: The Story of Harlem*

¹⁰⁵ Joshua Smith, “List of 1972 Graduating Class,” June 16, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; For late payments, see Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ For example, outlets such as the *Atlanta Daily World*, *Time*, *Jet*, and the *Christian Science Monitor* all wrote articles on Harlem Prep. See “Global Portraits,” *Atlanta Daily World*, August 13, 1972; “Education: Vale, Harlem Prep,” *Time*, October 1, 1973; *Jet*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 13 (July 2, 1970): 44-45; and Mary Kelly, “Harlem Prep Shows Fine Results with Dropouts but Hits Financial Shoals: Dissatisfaction Aired State Funding Urged,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 16, 1973; Examples of scholars writing about Harlem Prep were listed in the previous sections, but included notable voices like Jonathan Kozol and Mario Fantini, formerly of the Ford Foundation and then dean of the school of education at SUNY-New Paltz.

¹⁰⁸ In terms of media coverage, see “Harlem Prep Grads Exercises on TV,” *New York Amsterdam News* November 4, 1972; and Nur interview, July 17, 2017, where he discusses being on a local radio with Ed Carpenter and explaining all about Harlem Prep on the air.

Prep also was widely distributed and shown on TV on multiple occasions in subsequent years, winning a film festival award along the way.¹⁰⁹ This media coverage went hand-in-hand with the cult of celebrity that accompanied the school during these years. “It became big,” expresses 1969 graduate Frank Berger, referring to how by the early-to-mid 1970s, there were “all these people” who visited the school—at least according to the newspaper coverage that he remembers reading and the giant commencement ceremonies he heard about. “At the beginning it wasn’t like that.”¹¹⁰ A 1972 star-studded fundraiser at the renowned Lincoln Center for performing arts in midtown Manhattan, headlined by Sammy Davis, Jr., and accompanied by Ossie Davis, Melba Moore, Diana Sands, the Isley Brothers, and other prominent Black musicians and actors, was a prime example of how Harlem Prep transcended the boundaries of a local school.¹¹¹ It was only natural, then, that this widespread acclaim and national (and perhaps even international) attention affected the school’s aura inside and outside of school walls.¹¹²

The school’s effectiveness in graduating students also mattered. By the 1972 commencement ceremony which featured “a number of Black luminaries” up on stage, the total number of Harlem Prep graduates surpassed 500 students—and now, almost a dozen of the original 35 graduates from the inaugural class had graduated from college. Two of them even joined the Harlem Prep faculty and others had returned to the community.¹¹³ With school

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, “Harlem Prep On TV,” *New York Amsterdam News*, April 3, 1971; and “‘Harlem Prep’ Film Wins-Award,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, November 18, 1971.

¹¹⁰ Berger interview, November 28, 2016.

¹¹¹ “Display Ad 59 -- ‘Help! Harlem Prep Need\$ Your Help Now!!,’” *New York Amsterdam News*, May 13, 1972.

¹¹² Hussein Ahdieh, in his book *A Way Out of No Way*, refers to Harlem Prep as being internationally known, albeit without citation. However, in personal communication with teacher Sandy Campbell on May 17, 2018, he shared the story of how a friend who lives in Malaysia came to the United States and wanted to visit the “famous Harlem Prep,” only to be disappointed it had closed. Campbell explains that this is the third or fourth time that a non-United States citizen had mentioned to him about being familiar with Harlem Prep while living abroad.

leaders' public pleas for funding reverberating throughout the city, the school was simultaneously able to proudly share the stories of countless students whose lives had been changed and whose dreams were in progress. For example, Harlem Prep's Board of Trustee Chairman Judge Robert Mangum hosted a discussion about Harlem Prep's financial woes—and its many student achievements—on his local television program “Right Now.” “The story of a unique preparatory school of which all graduates—former high school dropouts and the ‘academically unqualified’—go to college will be told tomorrow on a television program,” stated a press release from the New York State Division of Human Rights.¹¹⁴ Featuring a panel of Ed Carpenter, a Harlem Prep board member and public school teacher, a donor, and a student, Mangum proudly shared the “drama of the recent financial crisis at the school” while at the same time praising its virtues. Mangum quoted Dr. Harvey Scribner, Chancellor of Education for New York City schools, describing that Scribner shared how he “had a dream that all schools in the City of New York would have the same atmosphere and be run the same as Harlem Prep.”¹¹⁵ Even New York City's mayor, John Lindsay, publicly supported the school. “Harlem Prep has already made an immeasurable contributions to hundreds of New York City young people,” he said on behalf of one of the school's many fundraisers. “I highly commend the initiative and commitment of these students who are devoting long hours to help their school survive.”¹¹⁶ Ultimately, Harlem Prep's fundraising efforts went hand-in-hand with amplified media coverage

¹¹³ “Last Class at Harlem Prep?,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 17, 1972; Edward F. Carpenter, “Harlem Prep Offers a New Opportunity,” *New York Amsterdam News*, December 25, 1971.

¹¹⁴ New York State Division of Human Rights, “Press Release about Harlem Prep Going on TV,” March 13, 1971, New York Urban League, Secretary of the Board of Directors Records, Box 7, Folder 34-38, Street Academy, NYUL Records.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ “Mayor Makes Appeal For Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, January 20, 1973.

and growing popularity beyond just the corner of 136th Street and Eighth Avenue.¹¹⁷

However, Mangum's rhetoric about drama surrounding the school's fiscal challenges rang true and was probably no accidental verbal slip. It was, yet again, another incidence of disparate realities occurring at once: widespread recognition and growth in popularity with financial despair bubbling up under the surface. "[Harlem Prep's] battle to survive," aptly narrated by the *New York Amsterdam News* in a three-part series about the school's financial struggles, was not without its consequences from an administrative and staff perspective.¹¹⁸ While the budget always fluctuated from year to year depending on the number of enrolled students, by fall of 1972, Mangum and both Ann and Ed Carpenter had no choice but to make hard choices about how to accommodate students under these financial circumstances. "Sensing the precarious financial outlook for Harlem Prep, Judge Mangum ordered Mr. Carpenter to reduce his budget significantly, thus requiring him to release a number of staff," stated a 1971 grant proposal. For example, teachers who "remained have significantly tightened their belts" while "they have voluntarily lengthened the school day so that they might accommodate the total admission of 556 students; several reduced their lunch period to fifteen minutes; several have foregone their preparation periods' and they have accepted no raises."¹¹⁹ Despite admitting roughly the same number of students the following year—one newspaper article put Harlem Prep's total enrollment at its largest ever number of 650 students—1972 presented a similar

¹¹⁷ It is important to note, however, that on multiple occasions, Carpenter expressed that he would much rather not have to fundraise and spend time in media circles—actions that were out of necessity, and not out of preference or want for added attention. In addition to his own op-eds referred to throughout Chapter 7 and this chapter, see Bryant Rollins, "The Battle To Survive (Second In A Series)," *New York Amsterdam*, April 14, 1973. It is unclear, however, whether others saw Carpenter's actions in this same light.

¹¹⁸ See Lita D. Allen, "The Battle To Survive: First In A Series," *New York Amsterdam News*, April 7, 1973.

¹¹⁹ Harold Howe, "Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy," November 23, 1971, p. 3, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

pattern.¹²⁰ “Ed has discontinued a number of staff people, placed others on part-time schedules, and all staff members have voluntarily taken a 10% reduction in salary,” wrote Mangum to Joshua Smith in a lengthy letter about their “financial dilemma.”¹²¹ Ann Carpenter, who had the most frequent interactions with teachers, was assuredly affected by these decisions and helped carry out these directions. Harlem Prep, with a per pupil budget already lower than the per pupil average in the city’s public schools, continued to face harder and harder decisions to keep the school open and functioning as the months carried on.¹²²

On a granular level, part of the school’s struggles was due to the touch-and-go nature of the tangible funding from private sources that may or may not come through and the immediacy of which the school needed these funds because of their lack of cash on hand.¹²³ One emergency letter from Mangum to Charles Smith of the Rockefeller Foundation, asking for \$25,000 just to keep the school open for a few more months in March of 1973 until they could secure future public funding, illustrates the critical need. (When receiving Smith’s note about Mangum’s request, Rockefeller Foundation President John Knowles did not hesitate to help: “By God!, I

¹²⁰ See Les Ledbetter, “More Aid by Community Urged for Harlem Prep,” *New York Times*, June 8, 1972. It is not clear whether or not the supermarket was supposed to hold that many students. Photographs show that as the years went by, the school looked more and more crowded.

¹²¹ Letter from Robert Mangum to Joshua Smith, December 20, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹²² Harlem Prep’s per pupil cost averaged between \$900 and \$1000 from 1969 to spring of 1973. By the fall of 1973, the per pupil cost dipped to about \$700 per student. See, in multiple documents that, taken together, confirm these estimates, C. Gerald Fraser, “Harlem Prep Is Striving To Survive as Funds Fall,” *New York Times*, December 4, 1972. In this article, Ann Carpenter is quoted about per pupil spending and fiscal concerns; See Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 115; and Letter from Millicent Fenwick to Joshua Smith, July 28, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Conversely, the per pupil cost in the New York City public secondary classrooms increased from roughly \$1,200 in 1969 to almost \$1,800 in 1973. See U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *State Comparisons of Education Statistics: 1969-70 to 1996-97*, by Thomas Snyder, Leff Hoffman, and Claire Geddes, NCES 98-018 (Washington DC: 1998), 102; Fraser, “Harlem Prep Is Striving to Survive as Funds Fall,” also report that Harlem Prep per pupil costs are below specialized New York City schools, including those that participated in the Upward Bound program.

¹²³ See, among Carpenter’s many statements, “Harlem Prep to Close Down,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 3, 1972; Harlem Prep was often in debt, as much as a confirmed \$100,000 owed in back taxes as of June of 1972. See Memo from Frank Mitchell to Robert Mangum,” June 1, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

think we should give them the help they need and deserve - !”¹²⁴) On a broader scale, for example, Harlem Prep had projected expenses of about \$623,000 for the 1972-1973 academic year, yet, as of that December, the school only had secured half of that amount.¹²⁵ However, as often became the case, Harlem Prep would raise some of these funds—enough to stay open—but short of fully meeting their goals, operating on a budget somewhere in the mid-\$400,000 range.¹²⁶ Moreover, the grants that Harlem Prep did receive from their primary allies, the Ford Foundation and Standard Oil of New Jersey, were often earmarked to specifically pay teacher and administrator salaries so that “no hardship occurs to these individuals.”¹²⁷ Again, this “drama,” as Chairman of the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees best described it, was not without an impact on the administration and staff.

Additional diverging realities at the school emerged in these latter years on a more acute level. Harlem Prep stayed remarkably consistent in employing its multicultural program—its pedagogical approach, school design, and unity through diversity principles and beyond—while

¹²⁴ Letter from Robert Mangum to Charles Smith,” March 15, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; and John Knowles, “Handwritten Note to Charles Smith about Harlem Prep,” March 22, 1973, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

¹²⁵ See Harold Howe, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action, to McGeorge Bundy,” December 12, 1972, p. 4, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹²⁶ See, for example, in 1971 when Carpenter projected that they would run on a budget of about \$460,000 in the 1971-1972 school year, in Letter from Edward Carpenter to Joshua Smith, October 27, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; For 1972-1973, see Memo from Frank Mitchell to Robert Mangum, June 1, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Although the archival trail regarding budget figures is dense, it remains very difficult to confirm the exact budgets for each year. Not only do different documents often present competing figures, but words like “budget” versus “expenses” are not clearly defined. Furthermore, while the academic years of 1971-1972 and 1972-1973 have similar student enrollments and suggest similar expenses—and financial shortfalls—the existing budget-related documents are still inconsistent and contradictory over these two years (in terms of precise figures). After reading through dozens of budget-related documents and with the benefit of hindsight of knowing the end of this story, throughout this chapter, I made careful inferences based on which figures seem the most accurate and how these financial dilemmas actually played out.

¹²⁷ Letter from Richard F. Neblett to Robert Mangum, August 29, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; Correspondence between Carpenter and Smith also detail similar conversations about paying salaries, with itemized lists of departmental teacher salaries to be paid out through Ford Foundation grant money. See, for example, Letter from Howard Dressner to Edward Carpenter, December 3, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

simultaneously undergoing changes in the student population, spurred on by the aforementioned school growth and widespread adoration. When Harlem Prep opened in 1967, it was known as a school for dropouts; by 1971 or 1972, this perception had gone by the wayside. When it opened, it was also a small institution that, by the early 1970s, was regularly enrolling close to 600 students each year. Martin Nur, the rare student at Harlem Prep who attended for three years from 1969 to 1972, agrees that the school's ethos changed over time: "Traditionally, it started that way [as a school for dropouts], and then it sort of morphed into something else."¹²⁸ This "something else" was a school in Harlem that young people enthusiastically wanted to attend—and not just those who were out on the streets. Nur specifically recalls a memory of seeing two women who he did not think were traditional early school leavers like him, and wondering which schools they had previously attended.¹²⁹ Teacher Sandy Campbell asks a similar question: "At what point did Harlem Prep change from being a school for dropouts to a school for dropouts *and* those who chose to dropout?" Or, more simply, when Harlem Prep's population of students went from being almost exclusively full of students who had been out of school to also having students who purposely dropped out to attend Harlem Prep. Campbell remembers how, when he first started teaching, almost all the students he encountered "had no place to go because they were put out of school," but later, felt a "shift" occur. "I remember students saying to me, 'Oh, I'm in such and such school, but I want to come here,' and they would drop out of where they were to come to Harlem Prep."¹³⁰ (However, this malleability in Harlem Prep's demographics in response to a changing reputation did not clash with the school's larger multicultural vision—adaptability had always been central to administrators and teachers' multiculturalism in practice,

¹²⁸ Nur interview, July 17, 2017.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Sandy Campbell, in Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017.

as well as had little effect on Harlem Prep’s stable educational program.)

It is difficult to parse out any concrete estimates of how much the student population may have altered post-1972. With an enrollment of nearly 600 students whose past transcripts and stories were increasingly absent from the school’s records, existing empirical reports on Harlem Prep provide little insight of the school’s final years.¹³¹ Harlem Prep almost certainly remained a school in which a large majority of young people were early school leavers and non-traditional students; students such as Beverly Grayson-Rich and countless others profiled in a steady stream of newspaper articles in 1972 and 1973 affirms this conclusion.¹³² For example, in a multi-part 1972 *New York Amsterdam News* series on the school, Ed and Ann Carpenter describe how two Harlem Prep students were homeless and that they “were lucky enough” to be able to welcome both (at separate times) into their home as if they were their own sons.¹³³

Yet, anecdotes from the school’s final years also suggest that there was at least a significant minority of students who came to Harlem Prep out of choice, rather than urgent need—students who, as Sandy Campbell remembers, left their prior institutions just to attend Harlem Prep. Clifford Jacobs, who left his private Catholic institution to enroll in Harlem Prep (even if he felt as if he was being pushed out for his political beliefs at the time), was a prime example.¹³⁴ So, too, was Mike Williams, who left a private school to attend a different public

¹³¹ For example, the report by the Institute for Educational Development, “An Assessment of the Alternative Educational Program at Harlem Preparatory School,” referenced earlier in this dissertation, ends in 1971. Also, this report depicts that less and less information was being acquired about students’ past academic life as years went by. And, as Harlem Prep had to make more and more cuts to keep the school in operation, record keeping and administrative work seemed to be the first services to be cut.

¹³² See Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017; See also Rivera, e-mail message to author, April 7, 2018; For newspaper articles, see, among very many, student stories being highlighted in regard to being on the streets and Harlem Prep reviving their education: Earl Calloway, “There’s a Second Chance and Hope for Today’s Troubled Youth,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, April 1, 1972.

¹³³ Bryant Rollins, “The Battle To Survive: Second In A Series),” *New York Amsterdam News*, April 14, 1973.

¹³⁴ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

school (which he found to be “chaos”) before hearing about Harlem Prep.¹³⁵ One student even attended both the prestigious High School of Music and Art, and Harlem Prep, concurrently, before eventually leaving the former to attend Harlem Prep full time because her other school “was just too stuffy.”¹³⁶ (And, to be sure, these stories should not be discounted—their inclusion into the Harlem Prep narrative speaks to continued failure of the public school system to educate students of color at the time and the necessity for an institution like Harlem Prep.)

By the 1970s, it was no secret in Harlem and throughout New York City that those who attended Harlem Prep would not only go on to college, but be part of a provocative educational experiment, full of vitality and tales of celebrity visits. Even if other schools may have had visits from the Harlem elite, few, if any, had the type of community-wide breadth of Harlem Prep.¹³⁷ “The school was always buzzing with activity. It was truly a fun place to be,” explains 1972 graduate Francisco Rivera. Rivera recalls his emotions seeing the Harlem Prep celebrity connection. “I remember thinking, ‘Wow, the great Sammy Davis, Jr. is not only a friend of Ed Carpenter, but a patron of the school as well.’ I mean, here was Sammy Davis, Jr. taking time to help Harlem Prep! It was truly incredible.”¹³⁸ While Rivera was a traditional Harlem Prep

¹³⁵ Simon Anekwe, “Grads of Harlem Prep Return To Teach,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 18, 1972.

¹³⁶ Hopson interview, February 11, 2015. I did not interview these students, as this information was delivered from Hopson who reported on hearing about these students; Aissatou Bey-Grecia, also a Harlem Prep alumnus, previously attended the High School of Music and Art prior to attending Harlem Prep. (However, she explains that she was essentially forced out because of discrimination and had stopped going to school.)

¹³⁷ For example, the historic Wadleigh High School most likely had visits from Black elite, but press or T.V. coverage of these visits was comparably non-existent, nor did Wadleigh—despite its importance in the community—have the type of penetration into business, activist, or press (local or national) spheres. To illustrate this point, a discrepancy can be seen considering that scholars have often written about or pointed to Wadleigh as an important school in Harlem’s educational history. See Mary Anne Raywid, “7. The Wadleigh Complex: A Dream That Soured Mary Anne Raywid,” *Journal of Education Policy* 10, no. 5 (1995): 101–14; Lauri Johnson, “A Generation of Women Activists: African American Female Educators in Harlem, 1930-1950,” *The Journal of African American History* 89, no. 3 (July 1, 2004): 223–40; and even included stories of teachers in prominent books such as Michele Foster, “Black Teachers on Teaching” (New York: The New Press, 1993). Yet, there are rarely any newspaper articles from the *New York Times* or *New York Amsterdam News* about any visitors to the school.

¹³⁸ Rivera, e-mail message to author, April 7, 2018.

student who was out of school and out of educational options before enrolling, his enthusiasm upon learning of the school's favor with famous Black icons was certainly a universal feeling for most young people—early school leavers like himself *and* currently enrolled students elsewhere in the city. There were even a few children of the Black elite that were known to attend the school. In a solicitation letter to the Carnegie Corporation president, Judge Robert Mangum wrote: “I believe the best indication of [the school's] success is the fact that Duke Ellington's grandson and Sammy Davis' nephew have left more prestigious private schools and enrolled in Harlem Prep, where they have been successful academically.”¹³⁹ Mangum's definition of success in this way, at this moment, was telling, even if this definition ran counter to Ann and Ed Carpenter's definition of school success; the school needed financial support, and perhaps describing the school as a suitable place for students of all classes would further prove the school effectiveness to potential benefactors. While students such as these were certainly a rarity, their enrollment—and Mangum's eagerness to make the link between their attendance and institutional success—does speak to how Harlem Prep's public perception shifted in the school's final independent years. (It also speaks further to deviating narratives of the school: an institution that seemed to be flourishing with Black elites sending their children there, when in reality, the school barely had enough funds to stay open each day.)

In comparison, there were no children of Black celebrities looking to transfer to Harlem Prep in 1968 or 1969. Nor was Harlem Prep actively trying to build a wide-ranging community coalition of elites—beyond the philanthropic sector—at its founding, since they had initial grants with their own subsequent plans (albeit with few action steps) to gain public money. These plans and their original model changed, even if the school's multiculturalism stayed the same. Inherent in the Carpenters' multiculturalism was the understanding that flexibility was important, not just

¹³⁹ Letter from Robert Mangum to Alan Pifer, February 23, 1971, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

in pedagogy or school design, but in response to the community and to the needs of the school. Still, as a result of both the school's growth and acclaim, and a need for financial support and advocacy, within only a few years' time, Harlem Prep took on a larger presence in Harlem and in the city than Carpenter ever would have imagined (or ever would have wanted). No longer was Harlem Prep only a school for dropouts—it was the place that all youngsters in the city wanted to attend, regardless of academic status or income levels. As one alumnus ultimately spells out in urban slang: “It *was* the ‘big kahuna’.”¹⁴⁰ While Harlem Prep no doubt became a larger-than-life institution in practice and in reputation, perhaps it was also this bigness—abetted by the array of political, economic, and educational changes of the era—which led to its instability and descent.

A Changing Harlem Prep, and Diverging Realities, in Perspective

As Harlem Prep grew, changes that occurred at the school were not exclusive to the student population or to the school's funding needs. In terms of the some educational components, special programs, initiatives, and partnerships were cut or scaled back, too (even if the core aspects of the program remained the same).¹⁴¹ Furthermore, by this time, core personnel such as vice principal Mother Ruth Dowd and the Manhattanville nuns had left the school, while new faculty and administrators rotated in.¹⁴² Dowd, specifically, left the school back in 1970 to help establish what became Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn “with community backing,

¹⁴⁰ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

¹⁴¹ See, for example, a comparison of programs and opportunities in Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 18, 2017. However, it also seems that programs were cut back less than would be generally assumed. Educational programs were the last things to be scaled back, and many programs were in result of partnerships that were sustained or even increased because of the increased solicitation for financial help—some of which came in the form of volunteer opportunities.

¹⁴² See “Women Award Given To Sister Ruth Dowd,” *Call and Post*, April 29, 1972.

support, interest, and to serve local needs.”¹⁴³ The Harlem Prep Board of Trustees also had substantial turnover by late winter of 1971.¹⁴⁴

Still, no matter who was teaching—or the type of student being served—the school continued to emphasize student wellbeing. Despite the financial difficulties “brewing overhead... teachers gave us everything that they could,” recalls 1974 graduate Penny Grinage. “They gave us the best of everything.”¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, despite the political and educational winds hurting Harlem Prep’s future, Carpenter and his staff seemed to maintain, if not slightly increase, the student population each year. Carpenter would cut staff, reduce salary, and revise the school day before decreasing the number of students who could attend Harlem Prep—combatting an overflowing demand that, by 1972, had exceeded more than 2,500 students who were turned away annually.¹⁴⁶ While counterintuitive at first glance, this decision makes sense; since Ed Carpenter and his staff were concerned with helping as many students as possible, and with the growing financial uncertainty of whether the school would re-open each term, Harlem Prep seemed adamant about “pushing through” as many young people as they could.¹⁴⁷

Carpenter and his colleagues led a bifurcated existence: they continued to aggressively support

¹⁴³ Ibid. The reasons for why she left Harlem Prep are unclear, as are the details of why—and when—the other nuns left, too. It is possible that the other two nuns left before 1972, but they had definitively left by 1972 according to various documents that show them no longer a part of the faculty.

¹⁴⁴ Harold Howe, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action, to McGeorge Bundy,” November 23, 1971, p. 2, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁴⁵ Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 18, 2017.

¹⁴⁶ Howe, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action,” 1971, p. 3, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, Carpenter and administrators tried to maintain student enrollment under all circumstances, willing to do whatever it took to avoid limiting students solely because of budget issues.

¹⁴⁷ See Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 18, 2017, where alumnus Penny Grinage explains how she felt like, by the final two terms, teachers were doing all they could to push students through academically and on to college because of the uncertain future; Although no other documents explicitly say this, reading between the lines in Carpenter’s private letters to Judge Mangum as well as public statements suggest that Carpenter wanted to help as many young people as possible before Harlem Prep might close.

students while at the same time just as aggressively trying to seek out funding in the midst of growing financial uncertainty.

Throughout Harlem Prep's narrative arc, the varying sources of historical evidence that inform different parts of the school's existence generally reinforce each other—student anecdotes, archival records from Carpenter and his correspondence, newspaper accounts of the era, and present-day scholarship all offer similar accounts of each particular aspect of the Harlem Prep story. While offering notably different perspectives, they are pieces of the same puzzle that, so far, have fit together. However, the school's latter years seem to be a momentary exception of diverging realities: archival records and secondary sources of the era tell a deviating story when juxtaposed with alumni accounts. One stream of important evidence—stories, anecdotes, and memoirs (and *memories*) of former students—depict a school that continued to effectively educate and inspire large numbers of young people to reach their dreams, with few, if any, noticeable educational programming glitches along the way. Students who graduated in the 1970s speak in identical glowing terms, and with similar experiences, as their earlier graduating counterparts. Yet, countless letters, documents, and journalistic accounts from the archives also portray a school during these years in a state of severe financial turmoil, with administrators deep in the midst of constant logistical peril. Even an important figure like Ann Carpenter, whose voice is generally absent from the archive, is quoted in newspaper accounts about the school's struggles. The shifting political discourse and educational landscape both contributed to these issues, too, in ways that match the words and clauses expressed by Ed Carpenter, Robert Mangum, and others in their correspondence. Still, “Harlem Prep has survived against great odds” wrote a Harlem Prep administrator in 1972. These binary narratives based on different sets of voices suggest that, ultimately, while Harlem Prep's story is in part one of descent, it is also

one of perseverance, determination, and most of all, of undeterred belief in student potential in the face of constant adversity.¹⁴⁸

In late December of 1972, Harlem Prep Board of Trustee Chairman Judge Robert Mangum wrote to Joshua Smith of the Ford Foundation about his thoughts on the recent spate of newspaper articles about the school's financial troubles. Mangum explained:

Ed, Ann and I are all on the horns of a dilemma. When you constantly receive correspondence from people speaking of the wonderful work of Harlem Prep and in the next breath indicate "however, we are very sorry we cannot help at this time" it does have a depressing effect.... Everybody tells me "Harlem Prep cannot close," but the money to keep it operating doesn't seem to come in.... Somewhere, somehow, we will have to find at least \$100,000 beyond the Ford Foundation grant, which we all thank you for.¹⁴⁹

The contents of Mangum's letter sums up all that was happening at this complicated moment: the high accolades from outside people and organizations, frustration about the lack of incoming funds, an allusion to a fraught political climate, and dogged persistence in finding additional money to stay open. (They would find that necessary \$100,000 to stay open through the spring term of 1973.) Mangum also wrote one more line of great significance: "I am not totally pessimistic, however, and feel that if we can possibly keep going through this academic year, we should be able to obtain future funding through government sources."¹⁵⁰ This prediction—after many years of Harlem Prep seeking government help—would finally come true, but not without a struggle along the way.

¹⁴⁸ Harold Howe, "Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action, to McGeorge Bundy," November 23, 1971, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁴⁹ Letter from Robert Mangum to Joshua Smith, December 20, 1972, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Chapter Nine

The Final Year and Struggle with the New York City Board of Education

“Harlem Prep’s record is far superior to that of the Board of Education: Harlem Prep is George Washington Carver, the New York City Board of Education is George Wallace.”

–Preston Wilcox, Harlem activist, March 30, 1974¹

“I hope the Board of Education realizes what it is getting when it does. The board will not be getting just another high school to add to its list.... It will get the hearts and souls of Bob Mangum, Ed Carpenter, and some of the greatest guys and gals on the face of this earth.”

–James L. Hicks, executive editor of the *New York Amsterdam News*, July 28, 1973²

By the time the 1973 fall term arrived, the choice was clear: either the New York City Board of Education would take over Harlem Prep and provide the financial backing the school desperately needed, or it would have to shut down. After years of clawing and scraping together just enough funds to stay open, the odds, this time, were finally too steep to overcome. “Opening Delayed at Harlem Prep: School Cites Lack of Funds for Failure to Start Classes Monday,” read the headline in the *New York Times* on September 12, 1973.³ Three days later, the *New York Amsterdam News*—Harlem Prep’s steadfast champion—poignantly illustrated this unraveling situation:

Schools opened throughout the city this week but for some 500 would-be students of

¹ Preston Wilcox, “Harlem Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 30, 1974.

² James L. Hicks, “Another Angle,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 28, 1973.

³ Ronald Smothers, “Opening Delayed at Harlem Prep: School Cites Lack of Funds for Failure to Start Classes Monday Getting the Run-Around,” *New York Times*, September 12, 1973.

Harlem Preparatory School, the institution that has set a unique record in preparing the supposedly “unfit” for college, the school’s doors were closed. Lacking federal, state or city financial aid as well as that of philanthropic bodies, the deeply in debt Harlem Prep had no money to pay its teachers. So the Board of trustees advised its teachers to seek employment elsewhere and locked its doors for the 1973 fall term.⁴

The weeks that followed were steeped in chaos and uncertainty. The local media continued to report varying, and sometimes conflicting, details about Harlem Prep’s negotiations with the Board of Education.⁵ “When Harlem Prep closed its doors this month, the sound echoed sadly across the city,” again wrote the *New York Amsterdam News* in an advertisement, promoting a local TV broadcast called “Positively Black” that would discuss news surrounding Harlem Prep’s closing.⁶ The outlet continued to rally behind the school, with its lead editor, James L. Hicks, writing a sharply worded op-ed that described Harlem Prep’s student population as “murder victims” due to the school’s closing.⁷ At the same time, the Board of Education was putting out favorable, if vague, public statements about Harlem Prep while school administrators, such as Ann Carpenter, were expressing how the Board was giving them the “run-around.”⁸ Behind the scenes, trustee chairman Robert Mangum continued to pressure New York City School Chancellor Irving Anker for board support and others within the system; Ed and Ann

⁴ “Harlem Prep Dies For Lack Of Funds,” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 15, 1973.

⁵ For example, one report stated that “an agreement in principle” had been reached with the Board of Education while that same article—and others from different outlets—reported that discussions were still underway and nothing had been decided. See “Anker Reports Pact With Harlem Prep For City Take-Over,” *New York Times*, September 13, 1973, compared to “Harlem Prep Dies For Lack Of Funds,” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 15, 1973, which explains that an agreement was “just conjectural” and discussions were still underway.

⁶ “Display Ad 90 – “Is It Doomsday for Harlem’s Alternative Schools?,” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 22, 1973. This advertisement was primarily for Harlem Prep, equating Harlem Prep as a community school.

⁷ Hicks, “Another Angle,” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 15, 1973.

⁸ New York City Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting, Sept. 12, 1973,” September 12, 1973, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 5, BOE Records.

Carpenter, and other administrators and staff, worked feverishly to figure out how to best serve the young people who were all of a sudden without a place to learn.⁹ Community fundraisers continued to be ongoing. “Since we can’t seem to keep Harlem Prep alive, I simply could not stand by without trying to help this last class to graduate,” expressed Harlem businessman Ronnie Holly, who organized a fundraiser on the school’s behalf.¹⁰

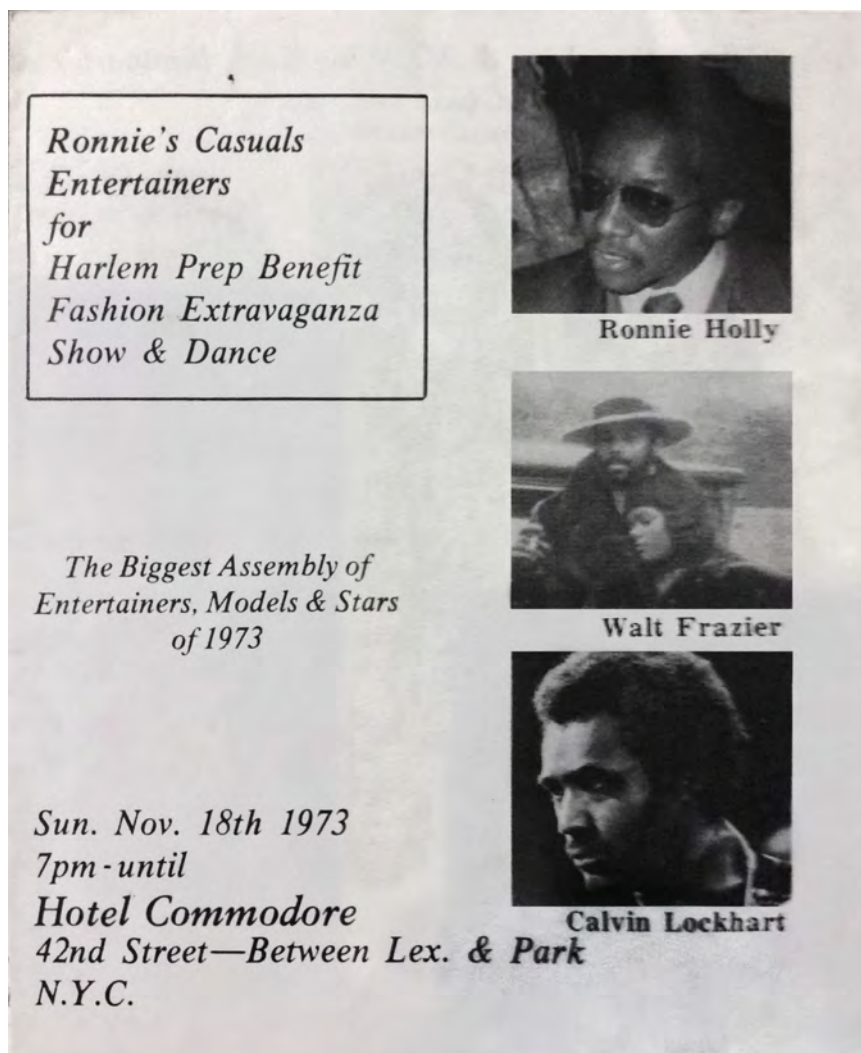


Figure 36. The pamphlet handed out to attendees at the Harlem Prep fundraiser, organized by Harlem businessman, Ronnie Holly, who owned a popular clothing store, 1973.

Source: Personal collection of Veronica Holly.

⁹ For example, for pressure from Mangum, see Telegram from Robert Mangum to Chancellor Irving Anker, September 11, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; For Carpenter’s work in figuring out school plans, see “Budget for Skeletal Staff in Fall 1973,” September 7, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁰ “Harlem Prep To Benefit,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 17, 1973.

With school doors seemingly closed, what did this mean for the students and staff during the fall term? What did these internal negotiations with the Board of Education look like and how did the Harlem community respond? This final chapter explores these questions, completing Harlem Prep's narrative arc from its independent beginning to its ultimate merging with the city's public school system—and the issues that plagued this merger in the months that followed. Furthermore, the school came full circle, becoming part of the public system and, technically, meeting a long set out goal of securing public funds. This chapter also then revisits the school's original goals, and explores whether they were actually met in the context of the era.

Despite a negotiated resolution in late fall of 1973, the partnership with the Board of Education was anything but smooth; deep-seated disagreements, broken promises, slow payments, and other complications stemming from the Board of Education characterized this fragile and, at times, contentious relationship between the two parties. Both sides felt as if they had no choice but to help each other: Harlem Prep was out of funds and had nowhere else to turn, while the Board of Education felt that they would be held “responsible” by the Harlem community for the school's closing.¹¹ Why was the Board of Education so hesitant to support Harlem Prep and adopt its multicultural philosophy? Thus, this chapter also explores this question and the two sides' merging within the context of the racial politics of the era, arguing that there were a variety of reasons that affected the Board's reluctance to fully support Harlem Prep, particularly a mixture of racism and hubris radiating from the board's membership.

Harlem Prep in the Fall of 1973

While media reports broadly sketched the scene and feelings of the Harlem Prep

¹¹ See Executive Director of the Division of High Schools Sam Polatnick, in New York City Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting, Sept. 12, 1973,” September 12, 1973, p. 5, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 5, BOE Records; This will be discussed later in this chapter.

community, the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees had already been in the process of making arrangements for the school's potential closure. There were loose ends to tie up, documents to store, preparations to be made if conversations with public school system never panned out. Even though Harlem Prep had "discontinued formal instruction as a school," these duties included: organizing student and teacher records; transmitting letters of recommendation for faculty, staff, and students; pursuing "vigorous negotiation" with the New York City Board of Education; and formally closing down the physical school building "if necessary."¹² By the first week of September, the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees approved a skeletal staff of nine individuals that featured both Ann and Ed Carpenter, Hussein Ahdieh, E. Salmon-McFarlane, three part-time secretaries, and two part-time custodians, to be paid out for half a school year.¹³ With continued printing and supply bills in excess of \$50,000, a \$250,000 mortgage, and little cash on hand, the rest of the Harlem Prep workforce was ultimately let go.¹⁴ Harlem Prep students' short-term academic future—or so it seemed—was highly uncertain.

Yet, it was only fitting that Harlem Prep's teachers would step in to save students after these financial decisions had been made. Just like the school itself, Harlem Prep's final stretch as an independent school was to be defined by perseverance and selflessness by a group of individuals determined to help young people reach their dreams. "Well, the money hasn't come but volunteers have and the school was expected to open this past Wednesday [September 26]," eventually wrote the *New York Amsterdam News* a few weeks after declaring the school

¹² "Budget for One-Half Year of Skeletal Staff and Discontinued Formal Instruction," September 7, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

¹³ Ibid. Although the school was deeply in debt, some of Harlem Prep's most loyal supporters—notably Ford and Exxon—supplied small grants to provide this interim funding.

¹⁴ Ibid; and Willie L. Hamilton, "Volunteer Teachers Will Keep Harlem Prep Open," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 29, 1973.

permanently closed.¹⁵ Determined to help their nearly 180 students who were “losing time” during this closure, a group of at least nine teachers tutored students each night, without pay, with goals of making sure students could graduate and enter college by February.¹⁶ Carpenter explained how “the teachers feel they owe an obligation to those students” who had been enrolled at Harlem Prep but not yet graduated.¹⁷ Thus, the school would partially re-open only during the weekdays, from nine o’clock to noon, and again from four-thirty to eight-thirty each evening—times that were arranged to potentially allow teachers to find paid work during the other hours of the day.¹⁸

Al Burley, one of those volunteer teachers, is representative of the type of full circle story that was a microcosm of the school’s larger arc. Burley, who first started working at Harlem Prep as a cafeteria cashier, began to take photographs of students and staff in between his duties, and eventually was asked if he would teach a photography class during the school’s prime years. Let go due to budget issues, Burley once again returned to Harlem Prep in fall of 1973 as a volunteer instructor because he wanted to do his part in helping students during this perilous time.¹⁹ “The teachers gave us everything that they could. They gave us the best of *everything*,” emphasizes 1974 Harlem Prep graduate Penny Grinage today about these final months at Harlem Prep. Even though Harlem Prep teachers always gave their best, as Grinage recalls it, “with the [financial

¹⁵ Hamilton, “Volunteer Teachers Will Keep Harlem Prep Open” *New York Amsterdam*, September 29, 1973.

¹⁶ These teachers had just been released by Harlem Prep a few weeks prior, and despite losing their jobs, were determined to return to Harlem Prep on this pro bono basis to help students anyway. See Letter from Robert Mangum to Richard Neblett, September 11, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁷ “Harlem Prep Dies For Lack Of Funds,” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 15, 1973.

¹⁸ Willie L. Hamilton, “Volunteer Teachers Will Keep Harlem Prep Open,” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 29, 1973; See also Letter from Joshua Smith to S.F. Marland, Jr., October 5, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁹ Hamilton, “Volunteer Teachers Will Keep Harlem Prep Open,” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 29, 1973.

issues] brewing overhead, they [did] even more so,” although “there was a melancholy, a sense of sadness.”²⁰ Grinage remembers that despite “this heaviness” that permeated throughout the school, teachers were remarkably determined to help remaining students walk down the commencement aisle and go to college. “They were passionate,” she explains, and by these months, “it wasn’t a job for them at that point...they were connected [to our lives], they were friends.” Ultimately, Grinage concludes, “they were family.”²¹

Grinage’s use of the term family was in stark contrast to some teachers at other K-8 Harlem schools that were often described as “warm bodies” in the classroom and felt resistance to teaching young people of color.²² Here, the use of the term family was not pejorative—such as how paraprofessionals or teacher aides were sometimes referred to as “family assistants”—but to connote the highest level of respect. “Mainly what we look for is humaneness in a teachers,” Carpenter said in 1974.²³ The teachers at Harlem Prep during these years were like family because, like family, each cared deeply about their students as if he or she was a brother, sister, son, or daughter. Family was a word that was constantly being used to describe Harlem Prep throughout its tenure and a foundational element of the school’s multiculturalism—and especially at this pivotal juncture. “We, at the Prep, have never thought of dying because a family that has loved together and cried together could never think of death,” wrote one student in an essay about the school. “We have experienced inside the walls of Harlem Prep all the emotions and moods which characterize the love relationship of a family.”²⁴

²⁰ Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017.

²¹ Ibid.

²² See Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights*, 122-123.

²³ Mary Kelly, “Prep Sends Dropouts on to College: City System Adopted Classes Are Small Few Drop Out, Accreditation Questioned,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 11, 1974.

It was this family atmosphere that kept Harlem Prep afloat.²⁵ Ed Carpenter, along with Ann who helped organize a group of teachers on volunteer duty and the few core staff members on reduced salary, was determined to keep the school open at least until December—“then, he just [didn’t] know what will happen.”²⁶ Just like the teachers, other people chipped in, too. Judge Robert Mangum began dedicating inordinate amounts of time to Harlem Prep, including negotiations with the Board of Education and reaching out to his wide-reaching network for help; his efforts were pivotal in raising enough funds to create the skeletal staff during these months until an agreement with the Board could be finalized.²⁷ Frank Shea, a banker with Chase Manhattan Bank also provided pro bono bookkeeping services in the interim.²⁸ So, too, did supporters of the school, with continued “expressions by the community, the parents, teachers and students with the view of directing attention to the plight of Harlem Prep.”²⁹

Actual school days from late September until January, by all estimates, were in reality quite bare.³⁰ Administrators were overburdened with “a great deal of paperwork” and external negotiations—one student at the time does not remember seeing Ed Carpenter at all—and

²⁴ Ahdieh, “Harlem Preparatory School: An Alternative.”

²⁵ See, for example, Robert Mangum discusses the “uniqueness” of the school in Letter from Robert Mangum to James Gannon, September 17, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

²⁶ Hamilton, “Volunteer Teachers Will Keep Harlem Prep Open,” *New York Amsterdam*, September 29, 1973.

²⁷ For example, see Letter from Robert Mangum to Richard Neblett, September 11, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ This picture of Harlem Prep is painted by more what is *not* in the archival record. Unlike in every year since the school’s founding, both the archival trail and periodical records suddenly go nearly dark. There are no curriculums, grant proposals, or education-related notes about what was happening at the school. Furthermore, there were largely no more profiles about Harlem Prep in any newspapers or notices about celebrity visits, only reports about Board of Education negotiations or about the school’s financial peril. Even one former student, Penny Grinage, cannot recall any other details related to the school during these last few months other than her mostly one-on-one work with teachers.

teachers worked with students in informal class settings, at various times of the day and night.³¹ While the love, camaraderie, and togetherness that defined the Harlem Prep experience still remained strong, the school was zapped of much of its energy and vibrancy that also characterized its earlier years—there was an aim to “push” students through and make sure students could graduate and be ready for college by the end of the term.³² The *New York Amsterdam News* concurred: “This class of over eighty young men and women have worked exceptionally hard since Fall to complete one year of schooling, in a six month period.”³³

Penny Grinage was one of those students. Born in Brooklyn, New York, Grinage grew up in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area, with parents who were aware of the educational disparities that still existed in the late 1960s post-civil rights New York City. “They wanted to get me into a school where there were white children so I could benefit, even through osmosis,” she explains today. As a result, her parents used a fictitious address to help her attend a gifted junior high school in Crown Heights with better resources than her neighborhood school. In this diverse setting she excelled as a young adolescent, until she started having “developmental issues,” as she refers to it, once she enrolled in Fashion Industry High School. “I thought I wanted to be a fashion designer, but it wasn’t what I thought.... It didn’t fit the fantasy,” she remembers. Her visits to the sweatshops and factories differed from the glamour she associated with designing clothes. At the same time she started to question her educational choices and future vocation, Grinage also began grappling with her identity. The biracial daughter of a Japanese national and an African-American military man, she was adopted at a young age by two American parents—a

³¹ Letter from Robert Mangum to Richard Neblett, September 11, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; and Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017.

³² Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017.

³³ “Harlem Prep Sets ‘Saddest’ Graduation,” *New York Amsterdam News*, January 26, 1974. The newspaper reported that there were 160 students that started the year—thus, only about half graduating. Other figures have put the starting group of students in fall of 1973 at 180.

mother from the Caribbean and a father from the American South. “I started to lose myself and become adrift. I started hanging out with [the wrong] people, not going to school,” Grinage describes about her teenage years. “[I] started going up to 116th Street and hanging out in Harlem, and then the next thing you know, I was under-credited [in school].”³⁴ Once a promising student in gifted programs with a family that constantly stressed the importance of education, Grinage was on the verge of an academic collapse. Knowing that her parents would be aghast at a report card that showed her frequent absences, she remembers one instance creating a fake report card to give to them, even forging her mother’s signature so she could return the report card to her high school counselor. As time went on, with no prospects of graduation, Grinage eventually left school at age 16. She looked around for jobs, but without a high school diploma, she was turned away time and time again. “I was a dropout, and I had no future.”³⁵

After about six or seven months adrift, her mother had found out about Harlem Prep, and together, they were able to set up an appointment with Ed Carpenter for an interview in January 1973. “He wanted to know what were my intentions, what happened, what did I want out of life.” She was admitted—and, like so many others, Harlem Prep instantly jumpstarted her future. “It was such a different experience.” She remembers from the start being immersed in the college preparatory work, and being inspired hearing about all the different schools that students were getting accepted to. “That [information] was sort of shared freely, because it was to motivate us, to know that they did it, and [that] you can do it too...” At Harlem Prep, Grinage began to “get more serious about school again,” excelling academically and experiencing internships, even if, by fall of 1973, the bitterness of the school’s impending closure began to dampen everyone’s spirits. Still, after graduation, Grinage went on to college, which led to a long, fruitful career in

³⁴ Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017.

³⁵ Ibid.

public education—first as special education teacher, then as an assistant principal, and finally more than a decade as a principal, all in New York City.³⁶ Today, despite her successful career, Grinage tells the story of her adolescent struggles for the first time—a “hard moment” in her life that she has buried away from family and friends.³⁷ Reflecting on Harlem Prep, however, has led her to reconcile her past, ultimately crediting the school with changing her life. “When I did get back on track, it felt good, and yes, when I graduated from Harlem Prep and went right to college, it *was* good—I felt then, I was on my way.”³⁸

Harlem Prep Negotiates with the Board of Education

During these months when Penny Grinage and her peers pushed toward graduation, Harlem Prep continued to negotiate with the New York City Board of Education about becoming part of the public school system. However, these urgent discussions were not new: Harlem Prep had been in contact with public school officials for many years, including a “long-standing request to meet with the Board.”³⁹ Furthermore, many of these same officials were aware of the school’s successful track record in graduating students and its plea for financial help. “I know that you are intimately familiar with Harlem Preparatory School,” wrote Judge Robert Mangum to the Deputy Superintendent of Schools and incoming chairman of the Alternative High School Committee of the Board of Education, Dr. Seelig Lester, in May of 1973. Mangum wrote further

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ I want to particularly thank Penny Grinage for sharing her story—for the first time—and entrusting me to share it with the world. I am grateful for her candor and warmth during our oral history interview.

³⁸ Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017.

³⁹ Letter from Robert Mangum to Joshua Smith, February 7, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; On earlier contacts with the Board of Education, see, for example, Letter from Robert Mangum to Joe Monserrat, July 28, 1972, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; and F. Champion Ward, “Recommendation for Grant/DAP Action to McGeorge Bundy,” June 22, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records, which mentions how there had been outreach since 1969.

that Harlem Prep representatives had met with “several members of the Board of Education” in the past, listing their names as well as his own previous meetings with previous school chancellor, Harvey Scribner.⁴⁰ Thus, internal discussions within the Board of Education regarding Harlem Prep’s candidacy had been broached before, and certainly not a topic that board officials could claim to be surprised about.

However, it was not until that May and into the summer months that Harlem Prep began to reach out in desperation, predicting—correctly—that the school was almost certain to close at the end of the term without public support. By late summer, Harlem Prep had exhausted all their other funding options, including inquiries with the President of Teachers College, the U.S. Office of Housing, Education and Welfare, and the City University of New York—the latter which included multiple correspondence between the CUNY chancellor and Robert Mangum into late June about a potential partnership that never solidified.⁴¹ Ultimately, absorption into the New York City Board of Education was Harlem Prep’s final hope. All throughout the summer, Harlem Prep’s leaders and friends sought to convince the Board of Education to take the school under its “financially protective wing.”⁴² For example, Ed and Ann Carpenter met with New York City’s Committee for Alternative High Schools in late June; Harlem Prep Board member,

⁴⁰ Letter from Robert Mangum to Seelig Lester, May 15, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. It is important to note that Chancellor Scribner had left his post in 1971, so these meetings with him occurred more than two years prior. Although Mangum does not provide dates, he infers that the other meetings with the Board of Education members were much more recent.

⁴¹ See, among multiple examples of outreach and negotiation, “Board Of Ed Urged To Take Over Harlem Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 28, 1973; Letter from Joshua Smith to S.F. Marland, August 7, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Note [handwritten] from Joshua Smith to Ed Carpenter and Harold Roser, June 21, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Letter from Robert Mangum to Harold Roser, June 1, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; Memo from Robert Mangum, July 11, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; and Memo from Robert Mangum to Board of Trustees, June 18, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records. In this last document, Mangum writes to the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees that a partnership with CUNY was preferred to the Board of Education, but he was not hopeful about either.

⁴² That is how Mangum once referred to the Board of Education. See Letter from Robert Mangum to Joshua Smith, February 5, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

friend, and pro bono accountant Frank Shea wrote a long plea to Board of Education chairman Seymour Lachman; Joshua Smith at the Ford Foundation and Hal Roser of Exxon Corporation also wrote to the Board of Education; and Robert Mangum worked his contacts, being in stealth correspondence with “one of the highest ranking black officials” in the school district for insight on the Board of Education’s thought process.⁴³ Furthermore, Carpenter and Harlem Prep representatives had notable meetings with the Executive Director of the Division of High School Samuel Polatnick in August.⁴⁴ Polatnick, specifically, who was the point person for these talks, continued to play hardball, telling Harlem Prep representatives that he did not think that issues between the Board of Education and Harlem Prep could be resolved. These issues centered on making sure that Harlem’s Prep “essential characteristics and personality [were] maintained”—in other words, the school’s multicultural principles and operating mechanisms—while adhering to the Board of Education’s rules and regulations, such as teacher licensing, for example.⁴⁵ According to the description told to Joshua Smith of the Ford Foundation, Polatnick was “unwilling to stick his neck out” to resolve these tensions in this first early August meeting.⁴⁶

It was additional meetings and negotiations in August between Polatnick and Harlem Prep that finally seemed to generate the most traction. After discussions concerning the “eligible student body, staff licensing, qualifications for supervisory staff, the location of the school, and

⁴³ Memo from Robert Mangum to Board of Trustees, June 18, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; Letter from Francis Shea to Seymour P. Lachman, August 6, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Letter from Hal C. Roser to Seymour P. Lachman, July 23, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; Letter from Robert Mangum to Edythe Gaines, June 22, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records; and Margalit Fox, “Edythe Gaines, 83, a Top-Ranked Educator, Dies,” *New York Times*, April 1, 2006.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Letter from Samuel Polatnick to Robert Mangum, August 28, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

⁴⁵ See Memo from Robert Magnum to Board of Trustees, August 13, 1973, Rockefeller Foundation Records, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

⁴⁶ Memo from Joshua Smith to Harold Howe, August 15, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

other relevant matters,” wrote Polatnick to Judge Mangum in late August, “[Chancellor Irving] Anker indicated a very sympathetic attitude and asked me to initiate detailed steps within the next few months to explore exactly what would have to be done.”⁴⁷ However, in the weeks to follow (and only weeks before Harlem Prep needed money to open), the Board of Education stalled in their internal discussions on the school. Much like in the prior months—and perhaps prior years—the Board failed to act, leading to Harlem Prep’s aforementioned closure in mid-September of 1973. Judge Mangum once again tried to encourage the board to take action on Harlem Prep. “Funds are being solicited to maintain cadre of executive staff in order to continue negotiations for Board of Education affiliation as an alternative high school,” Mangum said in a telegram to Chancellor Anker immediately after the school failed to open for the fall term. “Trust that you will instruct all your staff to expedite negotiations, so that favorable action can be obtained prior to February, 1974 semester.” This plea of help, unlike the hundreds of other communications that emanated from Mangum over the years, was different: it came from Mangum’s personal telephone.⁴⁸ Mangum, who was “well connected politically” and was “personally acquainted with most members of the Board of Education,” used his political capital to go beyond speaking with other city officials such as Samuel Polatnick, and instead, took his concerns straight to the top in a highly personal manner.⁴⁹

Still, with the school closed and the Harlem community outraged, it was public pressure that seemingly dictated the Board of Education and Chancellor Anker to make a decision on

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Note from Robert Mangum to Irving Anker, September 11, 1973, Series 200, Box 149, Folder 952, Rockefeller Records.

⁴⁹ Memo from Joshua Smith to Harold Howe, August 15, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

Harlem Prep.⁵⁰ For example, *Time* magazine, in an early October profile about Harlem Prep's financial plight and excellent track record, wrote that "The only solution, apparently, lies in the public school system," suggesting later in the article, erroneously, that the city had already agreed to take over the school.⁵¹ The negotiations between Harlem Prep and the Board of Education even became an issue in the 1973 mayoral campaign—at least in the Black community. "I've urged the Board to [bring Harlem Prep under its supervision]," said mayoral candidate and eventual winner, Abe Beame. "When the situation was called to my attention I wrote to the Board of Education asking them to look into the possibility of maintaining Harlem Prep."⁵² Losing mayoral candidates too, made similar statements during campaign season. For example, congressman Herman Badillo said he would create a special school district for Harlem Prep if elected and called out the Board of Education for not funding the school in this time of need.⁵³ Internal documents from the Board of Education—in tandem with undisciplined public statements from New York City officials—confirm that outside pressure was forcing their hand. "What I am saying is that when an Executive Director of the High Schools talks about [the Board] moving favorably—but is subject to the Chancellor [and] of the Board—he is putting the Chancellor on the spot...it is not a smart thing to do," commented Board President Murray Bergtraum during an informal meeting on September 12, 1973.⁵⁴ Chancellor Anker, in

⁵⁰ See, for example, James L. Hicks, "Another Angle," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 15, 1973.

⁵¹ "Education: Vale, Harlem Prep," *Time*, October 1, 1973.

⁵² "The Candidates Tell Where They Stand On The Issues: Abe Beame Talks," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 27, 1973.

⁵³ "Badillo Supports Separate District For Harlem Prep," *New York Amsterdam News*, May 12, 1973.

⁵⁴ New York City Board of Education, "Minutes: Informal Meeting, Sept. 12, 1973," September 12, 1973, p. 5, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 5, BOE Records. Notably, Robert Mangum wrote privately that he thought, although not a "conclusive" impression, that Bergtraum was a "stumbling block to [Harlem Prep] receiving favorable reactions from the Board." See Letter from Robert Mangum, to Joshua Smith, February 7, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

agreement, ultimately added that: “we have gotten [a] series of sharp letters indicating [that] we are responsible if this school will dissolve.”⁵⁵ While there was shared, widespread admiration for Harlem Prep by Anker and board members, these comments also suggest that motivation for absorbing Harlem Prep into the public system was dictated also by strong public perception and pressure—not necessarily (or at least solely) because they felt saddened that a cherished community institution was in serious peril.

Finally, on November 13, 1973, New York City School Chancellor Irving Anker presented to the Board of Education a resolution on Harlem Prep, which the Board adopted two weeks later. This resolution read, in part, that it be:

RESOLVED, That the Board of Education assume jurisdiction and control over the alternative school program known as “Harlem Prep”... RESOLVED, That the Chancellor be and he is hereby authorized to enter into such agreements and understandings with the Board of Trustees of Harlem Preparatory School... Inasmuch as Harlem Prep has aided high school dropouts to prepare for admission to college, it is recommended that this valuable program be continued. Since full funding for the school is no longer available from private sources, and *in view of deep community interest in the program*, it is proposed that the Board of Education assume the funding and operation of this school.⁵⁶

However, in practice, this resolution had little actual bite. No other details were given about how (or when) this takeover would occur, leaving Harlem Prep still on its own for the immediate future. Would the school’s multicultural workings be upheld? Moreover, not only did it gloss over the logistical issues—staffing and equivalency, budget questions, diploma policies, and

⁵⁵ New York City Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting, Sept. 12, 1973,” September 12, 1973, p. 5, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 5, BOE Records.

⁵⁶ Irving Anker, “Resolution of Harlem Prep-Board of Education Transfer,” November 13, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. Emphasis added by author.

whom the school should serve—that had plagued earlier negotiations, but only constituted as an informal statement with no legal bearing. “We are in the process of having to negotiate with [Harlem Prep] on [a] formal agreement,” said Chancellor Anker a day *after* the resolution was released during an informal, confidential meeting with members of the Board of Education.⁵⁷ Those on the Harlem Prep side also were unsure of what the resolution actually meant for them. “Apparently nothing exists in writing at the moment except for the resolution passed by the Board of Education,” wrote Joshua Smith in mid-December. “No verbal agreements have been reached yet and it is expected that negotiations concerning teacher status, curriculum, admissions policy and rent will continue over the next few days.”⁵⁸ Furthermore, public awareness continued to be at the forefront of the board’s agenda. “If and when this resolution is passed because we have had so much pressure and negative articles and editorials written on this, I think we should make this into a major public relations piece,” asserted new Board president, Dr. Seymour Lachman, confidentially, at the time. “You [Chancellor Anker] have been attacked on this; I have been attacked; we should make this into a major information piece, not just as a routine resolution as obviously it has much more importance; perhaps even a major press conference.”⁵⁹

The Board’s preference for a public-facing event came true. On November 21, 1973, Chancellor Irving Anker held a press conference at the Board of Education’s headquarters, officially announcing that, “the private and nationally recognized school will become a unit of

⁵⁷ Chancellor Irving Anker and Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting, Nov. 1973,” November 14, 1973, p. 28, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 6, BOE Records.

⁵⁸ Memo from Joshua Smith to E.J. Meade, December 17, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁵⁹ Dr. Seymour P. Lachman and Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting, Nov. 1973,” November 14, 1973, p. 30, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 6, New York City BOE Records; Although it is impossible to know if there were other analogous alternative or private take-overs in this period, the scholarship discussing alternative schools—both free schools and Pan-African schools—does not refer to any other similar take-overs. See, for example, Miller, *Free Schools, Free People*; Neumann, *Sixties Legacy*; and Rickford, *We Are an African People*; Furthermore, for the New York City Board of Education, it is clear based on the archival evidence that there was no precedent for this type of agreement.

the Board of Education's Division of High School on February 1, 1974."⁶⁰ The three page press release provided a list of acknowledgements of both parties, a brief history of the school, and a statement about plans to provide funds for 500 students and other details that were being worked out; it also included a spoken statement from Chancellor Anker about the school's history of "filling a special need for young people" in New York City and the school's "deep community support."⁶¹ Again, Anker and the board emphasized Harlem's significant role in the community. Following the press release, word of the board's adoption quickly spread: "Board of Ed Takes Over Harlem Prep," headlined the *New York Amsterdam News*; "Take-Over Voted For Harlem Prep" and "Hope for Harlem Prep" similarly stated the *New York Times*; "Harlem 'free school' rescued," added the *Christian Science Monitor*.⁶²

However, all of this news was predictably jarring for many in the Harlem community, whose distrust of the Board of Education ran deep. For years, the Board of Education had promised the Harlem community—and Black and brown communities in New York City more broadly—that they would improve (and desegregate) their schools and that they heard their concerns.⁶³ And, in each of those years, the Board of Education had largely failed to fulfill or sustain those promises. To be sure, the Harlem community's distrust of the Board of Education

⁶⁰ See Bernard Gifford and Board of Education, "Official Press Release of Harlem Prep Transferring to the Board of Education," November 21, 1973, Deputy Chancellor Bernard Gifford, Series 1202, Box 25, Folder "H" Correspondence, BOE Records.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² "Board Of Ed Takes Over Harlem Prep," *New York Amsterdam News*, November 24, 1973; ⁶² Edward Hudson, "Take-Over Voted For Harlem Prep: Board of Education to Retain Staff and Curriculum Recruiting Planned," *New York Times*, November 29, 1973; "Hope for Harlem Prep," *New York Times*, November 29, 1973; Mary Kelly, "Harlem 'free School' Rescued: Board of Education to Take over Debt-Ridden School, Which Has Met Needs of Dropouts Skepticism Voiced Some Requirements Lacking Wait-and-See Attitude," *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 6, 1973.

⁶³ For examples of discord in Brooklyn, see, most prominently, the 1968 Ocean Hill-Brownsville teacher strikes, in Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York*, and Perlstein, *Justice, Justice*. For examples of tension and parent activism in the Bronx, see Adina Back, "'Parent Power': Evelina López Antonetty, the United Bronx Parents, and the War on Poverty," in Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 158-183.

was decades in the making; as explained in the introduction, Harlem’s public schools had long been neglected and its children cast aside.⁶⁴ Not only were public schools purposely segregated, but the Harlem community had little representation on the Board of Education or influence in deciding the education of their children.⁶⁵ Still, this immediate tension that the Harlem community felt in the short-term could be traced back to the fall of 1966 when the “Board of Education refused to allow parents to appoint the principal of their choice at IS 201,” a new middle school in East Harlem. As historian Heather Lewis details in response, “tensions over who would control the schools in the [Harlem] community erupted” and so began more than a year of protests, strikes, and discord between the Harlem community and the Board of Education (as well as primarily white teachers unions).⁶⁶ In the ensuing years of the late 1960s, the Board of Education (with the help of the Ford Foundation), set up “demonstration districts”—essentially localized governing boards—that were able to exercise various degrees of self-governance and autonomy on their schools, including in parts of Harlem. “Our community will decide who’ll teach, who’ll administer and what the program will be,” said Isaiah Robinson, Jr., the only Black Board of Education member and longtime school activist in Harlem in 1969.⁶⁷ It was these ideas and others—appointment of principals, control over where schools would be built, what standards would be followed and more—that guided parents and educational activists.

While these demonstration districts were “a major accomplishment” for communities of

⁶⁴ See, for example, Harbison, “Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?”; The HARYOU Report examined earlier in this dissertation also describes the poor condition of Harlem schools, as do scholars such as Martha Biondi, in *To Stand and To Fight*.

⁶⁵ For example, it was not until 1971 that the Board of Education finally had its first Black president, Isaiah E. Robinson, Jr. See “NYC Education Board Getting Black President,” *New Journal and Guide*, June 26, 1971; For a classic text about how Harlem and New York City was designed to be segregated, including Harlem, see Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage, 1975).

⁶⁶ Lewis, *New York City Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 26.

⁶⁷ Leonard Buder, “NEGRO APPOINTED TO INTERIM BOARD: Isaiah Robinson Last School Aide to Be Picked,” *New York Times*, May 24, 1969.

color in New York City, they were short-lived and ultimately replaced by a period of decentralization that placed limits on the power that communities of color, including Harlem, actually had.⁶⁸ While the effects of a 1969 decentralization were complex with various new school boards being created and debates about what types of decision-making power each should have, the distrust between the Harlem community and the Board of Education continued to grow throughout the early 1970s. For example, longtime activists such as Babette Edwards—and a Harlem Prep supporter—continued to fight for better public schools and for increasing the influence of parents. Seeing that this new 1970s decentralization phase curbed community members’ decision-making power, activists such as Edwards continued to exhibit “a deep pessimism about the city’s willingness and ability” to educate Black and brown children.⁶⁹ Moreover, community control of Harlem’s K-8 schools continued to again seem out of reach.

So, when Harlem’s cherished high school, led by Harlemites Ed and Ann Carpenter who welcomed parental and community input, was now to be placed under Board of Education control, it is no wonder why community members were disheartened. “It hurts deep down where your heartstrings begin,” expressed James Hicks, executive editor for the *New York Amsterdam News*.⁷⁰ Harlem Prep, for all its complexities and meanings to different people, possessed a common denominator in the eyes of the Harlem community: they collectively saw the school’s independence as one of its key features, in contrast to other schools in the neighborhood. Harlem Prep had, up until this time, only answered to them—the community—and not to the Board of Education. Considering the long, fraught history over community control, Harlem parents and

⁶⁸ Lewis, *New York City Schools From Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 27.

⁶⁹ Brittney Lewer, “Pursuing ‘Real Power to Parents’: Babette Edwards’s Activism from Community Control to Charter School,” in *Educating Harlem*. See Lewis, *New York City Schools From Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 6-7, for the limits of decentralization and activists’ lack of power.

⁷⁰ Mary Kelly, “Harlem Prep Shows Fine Results with Dropouts but Hits Financial Shoals: Dissatisfaction Aired State Funding Urged,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 16, 1973.

activists felt that this independence—autonomy to make decisions about their own children—made good schooling possible. “There’s something devastatingly wrong with the city schools,” declared Babette Edwards, also the co-chair of the Harlem Parents Union, as word got out about these negotiations. “Something has to be done. They put children in a box. They all come out alike. I feel my tax money is wasted. But I completely trust what Harlem Prep is doing. They run the school with the conviction that the kids can make it.”⁷¹ Hicks and Edwards’ statements reflected the feelings of the Harlem community: support for Harlem Prep’s independent track record of educating and empowering their youth, and lack of trust in the city’s public schools. Headmaster Ed Carpenter and his staff certainly understood these sentiments. From the school’s start, he agreed that the Board of Education’s methods were pushing students out of school and were ineffective in every facet. Now, however, this belief by the Harlem community was more fervent than ever. After a half-dozen years of operation, Harlem Prep proved that Harlem’s youth (and young people of color throughout New York City) did not need the Board of Education to succeed. In fact, they were better off without city interference.

Thus, with Harlem Prep on the verge of losing this independence—even if in perception, as the details of the school’s merger was still yet to be determined—the community expressed its discontent. In addition to an editor of the *New York Amsterdam News*’ harsh attacks on the board’s failure to educate the community’s children, Preston Wilcox, the recognizable community control activist in Harlem, also exercised his penchant for sharp rhetoric. “The Board of Education has an unbroken record of disrespecting our most effective educators,” Wilcox wrote. “Harlem Prep—take the Board’s money, but don’t let them kill the Harlem Prep’s

⁷¹ Ibid. Babette Edwards, a Harlemitte, was a prominent advocate for school reform and educational activist. For more about her, see her archival records at the Schomburg Center for Research and Black Culture in Harlem.

heritage.”⁷² (The epigram of this chapter, in which Wilcox compares the Board of Education to ardent segregationist and Confederate sympathizer, Governor George Wallace of Alabama, further clarified where he stood.) Furthermore, a group of fifteen Harlem community members—the “result of some forces in the community which want[ed] to help the school but which probably made some mistakes about how to do it”—led an impromptu (and ill-advised due to the fragile nature of the negotiations) press conference at Harlem Prep, advocating against taking public funds.⁷³ Lay people also wrote their concerns about this takeover: “The City of New York is not doing to well operating their own schools and, I think the Board of Education will attempt to make changes that may be detrimental to the students and do away with their freedom,” wrote Harlemite Barbara Johnson. Another Harlem resident, James Rankin, suggested that, instead, every person in Harlem should have to contribute at least \$1.00 to support the school.⁷⁴

This was also a bittersweet moment for headmaster Ed Carpenter. At the school’s founding, Carpenter had expressed an optimism about one day securing public funding and perhaps merging with the public school system in some capacity (although he was never fully clear on this latter point). Yet, the auspices in which these negotiations were occurring and the way in which he—and the community—felt powerless to keeping their independence and distinct multicultural educational program was not what he had in mind back in the late 1960s. These negotiations also mirrored the unequal power dynamics that the Harlem community had felt in the previous years with their lack of long-term success to acquire sustained autonomy of their own schools. As Harlem Prep’s partnership with the Board of Education began to codify,

⁷² Preston Wilcox, “Harlem Prep,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 30, 1974.

⁷³ [Internal] Memo from Joshua Smith to E.J. Meade, December 17, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. Smith wrote that, “Ed Carpenter explained that he had an angry phone call from Judge Mangum after this press conference was held.” Mangum called up the leader of this group to explain that they had no choice or the school would close permanently.

⁷⁴ Tex Harris, “Tex Harris’ Roving Camera,” *New York Amsterdam News*, January 5, 1974.

the shadow of the community's prior struggle for control—and the consequences that resulted in diminished parental authority and continued unequal schooling—most certainly weighed on the minds of Harlem Prep's leaders and the community they served.⁷⁵ Understandably, then, Harlem Prep's merger was out of necessity, and not choice. During these months of negotiations, Carpenter made surprisingly few public comments, letting Harlem Prep Board of Trustee Chairman Robert Mangum take the lead.⁷⁶ However, when he did speak, his rhetoric echoed the community's fear about the threat that the Board of Education's bureaucratic hand proposed. "It would change Harlem Prep," he said, explaining how various components unique to the school's multicultural educational program might be removed or altered.⁷⁷ He also expressed concern about the uncertainty in all these negotiations, in a handwritten note, to Joshua Smith in mid-August of 1973.⁷⁸ Ann Carpenter, too, was critical of the Board of Education, accusing them of giving her the "run-around" in negotiations regarding "teacher competence criteria and curriculum questions."⁷⁹ Still, despite these concerns, Ed Carpenter realized that "there is no

⁷⁵ See Back, "Parent Power"; As Heather Lewis explains, although some school districts such as District 4 (East Harlem) and District 13 (Bedford-Stuyvesant) had some success actualizing these earlier community control goals and school reforms, Central Harlem largely did not. Plus, Harlem Prep remained one of the few high schools.

⁷⁶ Carpenter was, however, still aggressively pursuing private funds to keep the school open in the fall at the same time these negotiations were taking place. See, for example, Memo from Edward Carpenter to Joshua, August 16, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; and Letter from Edward Carpenter to Ronnie Holly, September 17, 1973, Personal Collection, Veronica Holly; Part of the reason for less statements from Carpenter might be because he had less leverage in these negotiations, as his role—whether he should be headmaster—was one part of the negotiations between the Harlem Prep Board and the Board of Education.

⁷⁷ Willie L. Hamilton, "Volunteer Teachers Will Keep Harlem Prep Open," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 29, 1973.

⁷⁸ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Joshua Smith, August 16, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁷⁹ Ronald Smothers, "Opening Delayed at Harlem Prep: School Cites Lack of Funds for Failure to Start Classes Monday Getting the Run-Around," *New York Times*, September 12, 1973.

other logical choice” except to become part of the public school system.⁸⁰ This conflict within Carpenter would only grow in the months ahead: deep disappointment and shared frustration with the community about the loss of independence, with an understanding, if not some eventual cautious optimism, that these course of events were the only option to keep the school alive.

Others in the Harlem Prep community struggled with the impending news. Harlem Prep Board of Trustee Chairman, Robert Mangum, worked to quell the discontent among members of the Harlem Prep Board who expressed concerns about potential changes to the school’s distinct multicultural elements.⁸¹ Supporters within the school’s community coalition expressed skepticism, such as Harlem Prep advocate and chair of Central Presbyterian Church:

Harlem Prep’s program was pioneered and is maintained by dedicated people, many of whom, like the students the school seeks to serve, left the public school system in despair. Now that the school has demonstrated a viable and effective alternative education program...it seems that forcing the school to make substantial changes necessary to becoming part of the public school system cannot help but lessen its effectiveness.⁸²

Finally, students and staff were worried too. “Everyone was saying, ‘It’s not going to be the same. It’s not going to be the same,’” recalls Penny Grinage about news of the Board of Education’s takeover. “We all felt that way. As an independent school, we knew we got the best. We also knew once the Board of Ed came in, curriculum would change, the honest conversations of how *we* can make it in this world would no longer be the focus.”⁸³ A little over six years later,

⁸⁰ Willie L. Hamilton, “Volunteer Teachers Will Keep Harlem Prep Open,” *New York Amsterdam News*, September 29, 1973.

⁸¹ Letter from Robert Mangum to James Hicks, December 19, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁸² Letter from Annette Burford to Clifford Gavin, Jr., October 31, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

Harlem Prep had come full circle: from a press release on the school's opening to a press release on the school's end as an independent school (and new beginning as a public one). Unlike the former, however, Harlem Prep would not experience the same type of excitement about this (second) new beginning; feelings of great relief, mixed with hope and loads of trepidation, dominated the conscience of the Harlem Prep community and all who supported the school.

These mixed emotions carried over to the last official act as an independent institution: the seventh, and final, Harlem Prep commencement ceremony on January 25, 1974. "This day marks the death of one of the most successful schools in the world," proclaimed headmaster Edward Carpenter to the audience of about 500 students, family, friends, and community members in an "emotion-filled ceremony" in the Martin Luther King Auditorium at Harlem Hospital.⁸⁴ (Although Carpenter knew that merging with the city was the school's only hope for survival and issued cautious praise for the Board of Education in public, his stinging language echoed that of the Harlem community, and perhaps was most reflective of what he truly felt.) The *New York Times* aptly set the scene for this graduation, the first of which not to occur in the summer and outside on the streets since the inaugural ceremony almost seven years ago: "There were awards and songs and proud parents. But it was not a routine commencement. The speakers sought to inspire the 94 graduates, but there was an undercurrent of bitterness and defeat in their words, and the young valedictorian wept through her talk."⁸⁵ There was a heavy sense of melancholy of all who attended—it was the "saddest graduation" said Carpenter. "This is not just another graduation," added assistant headmaster E. Salmon-McFarlane, explaining how unlike in

⁸³ Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017.

⁸⁴ Frank J. Prial, "Harlem Prep Ends With Class Of '74: 94 Graduated as Financial' Woes Force Its Closing as a Private School Practically Penniless Woman Graduates at 40 Faculty Is Thanked," *New York Times*, January 26, 1974.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

past years, this year it took an extraordinary effort of volunteer teachers to make sure students were prepared for college and would reach the point where they could receive their diploma.⁸⁶

This final graduation, while somber, also had moments of joy and defiance. For students such as Penny Grinage, the commencement ceremony was the rescuing of a dream, a coda to an adolescent journey that had been full of tough moments. “It was beautiful,” Grinage explains today when reflecting on the ceremony. Dressed in a long, flowing green dress with a white corsage flower pinned on the top left, Grinage remembers her parents taking pictures, walking down the auditorium aisle grinning ear to ear, holding the arm of her friend Cliff as they walked together to the front of the room.⁸⁷ Although the auditorium was crowded, with students and the audience packed in tightly, Grinage remembers it fondly—“it was *so* nice”—and this different community location spoke to both the impracticality of holding a large public graduation at this time but also to the school’s sustained commitment to still celebrate in a prominent community space.⁸⁸ Finally, then, the commencement ceremony concluded with words of resistance for all who attended. The last speaker, Valedictorian Edith Thompkins, exclaimed “with tears streaming down her face”: “We pledge ourselves to keep alive our one wish, that every black child be afforded the experience of a Harlem Prep.”⁸⁹ Carpenter, too, made one final statement about the unknown journey ahead. Although he explained that both he personally, and Harlem Prep, had no choice but become part of the public school system, either all Harlem Prep teachers are

⁸⁶ “Harlem Prep Sets ‘Saddest’ Graduation,” *New York Amsterdam News*, January 26, 1974.

⁸⁷ Penny Grinage photograph, personal collection, copy provided to author.

⁸⁸ Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017. While the exact reasons why they were unable to hold the outside graduation are unknown, most obvious was that doing so in the middle of winter in New York City was unrealistic. Furthermore, due to the state of the school, with few paid staff, and how much effort had been placed just to get to this point, a large planned commencement festival like in years prior seemed impractical.

⁸⁹ Prial, “Harlem Prep Ends With Class Of ’74,” *New York Times*, January 26, 1974. Not coincidentally, the two newspaper articles referenced here, covering the school’s final act as an independent school, were two of the last substantive periodicals on Harlem Prep until its closing in 1981. Excluding a few very short updates and one column in 1975, the media record suddenly went dry from this point forward.

allowed to teach there in the future or “none of us are going.” Carpenter concluded that, “If we could starve for the last six months, we can raise hell for another six months.”⁹⁰ His statement was perhaps an apt foreshadowing of the many future battles with the Board of Education that were still to come in the months to follow.



Figure 37. Penny Grinage walking down the aisle at the final (independent) Harlem Prep commencement ceremony at Harlem Hospital in June 1974.

Source: Personal collection of Penny Grinage

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Assessing Harlem Prep's Goals and Public Partnership

After years of intense negotiations and unsuccessful outreach—and decades of fraught community relations—finally, and maybe even ironically, Harlem Prep was part of the public system (even if the school's partnership with the city was not on their, or the Harlem community's, terms). The school's merging with the Board of Education, almost seven years after first opening in the Harlem Armory with 35 students and a handful of teachers, was a full circle moment—a one-time small educational experiment that had now arguably coerced top city leaders to integrate it into the largest school district in the country and “enjoyed individual fame” along the way.⁹¹ At this critical juncture, had Harlem Prep's original educational goals been reached? And, how can this unique, if fragile, partnership be understood within the historical context of New York City education and the rise of alternative public schools?

On the surface, Harlem Prep did not seem to have reached its highest goal of influencing the inner workings of the public school system in New York City and beyond. The Carpenters' dream of spreading their multicultural philosophy throughout public schools ultimately did not transpire. As the Carnegie Corporation wrote internally back in the school's early years—and a refrain echoed by other philanthropists and businesses which supported Harlem Prep for similar reasons—the school “is demonstrating what can be done with dropouts[,] and furthermore, it is trying to change the model for the next generation.”⁹² This model, in the most idealistic rendering, was a public school system that served youth of color in a way that was culturally relevant, equitable, humane, and ultimately designed to promote the brilliance of young Black and brown students. In other words, to those had been involved or supported it over its tenure, a

⁹¹ Mary Kelly, “Prep Sends Dropouts on to College: City System Adopted Classes Are Small Few Drop Out, Accreditation Questioned,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 11, 1974.

⁹² Memo from Barbara Finberg, October 18, 1967, Series III, Box 743, Folder 7, Carnegie Records.

radically multicultural school like Harlem Prep. “It is most important that the techniques and approaches successfully demonstrated by Harlem Prep be incorporated into the [public school] system so that they may benefit not only the hundreds of students touched by Harlem Prep but the tens of thousands of others with similar needs,” wrote an Exxon executive in late 1973. This executive shared the belief of the Carpenters and all supporters that the school’s “methods of instruction can eventually benefit New York City public education as a whole.”⁹³

Of course, the Board of Education’s public schools had largely remained unchanged; Harlem Prep’s strategies were not adopted nor emulated in any large scale. Students of color continued to be pushed out of schools at an alarming rate due to the “the irrelevant, discriminatory, weak character of curriculum, school organization, facility design, and guidance efforts” that Harlem Prep had described years earlier.⁹⁴ In fact, the percentage rate of dropouts in city schools slightly increased from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s.⁹⁵ Moreover, debates about the direction that urban school reform should take following the tumultuous 1960s and what needed to be done about addressing educational inequality also raged on in educational discourse. Reports such as *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*, which painted a deficit-view of students of color and that discounted the role that schools can play to create social change, were responded to with fervor by Black scholars and activists whom sought to double-down on equalizing education funding and other measures.⁹⁶

⁹³ Letter from M.F. Kane to Annette Burford, November 15, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁹⁴ Hopkins, “Draft of MARC Assessment,” March 19, 1970, p. 1, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

⁹⁵ See, for example, internal statistics from the Board of Education, such as New York City Board of Education, “Annual Report on Dropouts for Public Academic and Vocational High Schools,” Office of the Secretary Harold Siegel Subject Files 1970-1977, Series 1028, Subseries I, Box 5, Folder 196, BOE Records.

With a worsening fiscal crisis that began in the early 1970s that led to “fiscal austerity” measures being implemented 1973 and in subsequent years, the New York City public schools did not constitute a model—or adopt multiculturalism—in ways that Harlem Prep had hoped for.⁹⁷

This inability to significantly impact the public school system was not an indictment of Harlem Prep, however. This multicultural educational experiment, by administrators and teachers’ aims of educating, empowering, and sending students to college, had succeeded. “By boldly reconstructing and redeveloping all levels of the traditionally conceived secondary school programs,” explained educational researchers working under Dr. Kenneth Clark back in 1970, “Harlem Prep is bringing students, previously labeled 'incorrigible and uneducable,' back into the mainstream of American education.”⁹⁸ With six graduating classes by fall of 1973 and more than 750 students previously out of the street sent to college, they had done that and more. Remember, these were primarily students without any educational opportunities prior to Harlem Prep. Even without exact statistics and follow-up reports, the fact that such large numbers of students who had been out of school would—because of Harlem Prep—receive diplomas and go on to higher education was a success by any objective reasoning. In reality, changing a school district—let alone the largest, most bureaucratic in the country—was a large expectation, and Ann and Ed Carpenter, and their many colleagues, joined a protracted list of activists, parents, educators, and community members who hoped to spark a profound shift in how schools

⁹⁶ Christopher Jencks, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1972); For more on the response to this report and debates about reform in the early 1970s, particularly in New York City, see Lewis, *New York City Public Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 72-73.

⁹⁷ See Lewis, *New York City Public Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 73-74. The New York City fiscal crisis will be discussed more in-depth later in this chapter, in the context of being a significant factor in negotiations with particular funding elements of Harlem Prep.

⁹⁸ John Hopkins, “Draft of MARC Assessment of Harlem Prep,” March 19, 1970, p. 2, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

educated students of color in urban communities.⁹⁹ Harlem Prep was but one of countless other efforts to impart educational equity in a system that had, as of the 1970s, yet to reach that noble goal. This is a battle that educational stakeholders continue to fight today.

It is unclear to what extent Harlem Prep had directly tried to influence the Board of Education's methods through targeted outreach efforts, beyond just focusing on their own practices and educating their students. There is evidence of at least some discussions taking place. In early 1970, for example, a representative of the Ford Foundation wrote internally about the "many problems" regarding Harlem Prep's potential funders, with "the most important being the creation of some connection between Harlem Prep and the New York City Board of Education." While this memo spoke to funding sources, it also called the situation a "puzzle" and asked what were the "present and future goals of Harlem Prep." Within this same context, referring to the Board of Education and Harlem Prep, the memo added that, "there does not seem to be much change in the positions in the parties involved."¹⁰⁰ These different positions may have gone beyond just public support; they may have been about a partnership that spoke to a larger influence within the school system. Still, even as the negotiations became more serious in the years to come, the fact that they were happening at all was telling. Integration, at that point, was about survival, not influence—the latter should have already occurred based on the school's prior track record. Logistically, Harlem Prep's long-term plan in terms of *how* they would receive public money and what a partnership in a public system, the New York City Board of Education or elsewhere, would look like was never fully sketched out. Harlem Prep's urgent

⁹⁹ Noting how "successfully" Harlem Prep educated students, one Exxon Corporation supporter even wrote that influencing the Board of Education's entire operations was a "feasible outcome." See Letter from M.F. Kane to Annette Burford, November 15, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁰⁰ Memo from Donald Harris to Mario Fantini, February 5, 1970, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

entry in the city system under the circumstances was, in part, a reflection of those lack of plans.

Still, even if Harlem Prep did not reach its ultimate goal of changing public education, it did, at the very least, influence the Board of Education's desire to initiate similarly aimed alternative schools. While Harlem Prep was of course not the only factor in the growth of alternative schools in New York City, there is evidence that its achievements played a significant role. "The concept of 'alternative schools' has been recognized by the New York City Board of Education," asserted one corporate leader in regard to Harlem Prep in late 1973.¹⁰¹ First, as this chapter has shown, Harlem Prep's leaders had long been in discussion with high-ranking city officials—the latter who were aware of the school's track record and prominence in Harlem—and the emergence of alternative schools was surely not just a coincidence. For example, within the Board of Education, city officials planned to start an alternative school for "dropouts" in a similar vein as Harlem Prep, looking to serve the same population and "raise expectations" of these youngsters. "As you know, the High School Office and Urban Coalition are cooperating in the development of a special program of education for students who are alienated and are potential dropouts," wrote an assistant superintendent to then-Chancellor Dr. Harvey Scribner in late 1970.¹⁰² The planning of the school occurred at the same time Harlem Prep had begun—in 1970, if not earlier—speaking to the Board of Education about inclusion into the system.

Furthermore, in June of 1972, Chancellor Scribner sent a lengthy memo to the entire Board of Education with plans to start more alternative schools, including "Harlem High School."¹⁰³ The goals—and even some of the language—echoed much of the aims and rhetoric

¹⁰¹ Letter from M.F. Kane to Annette Burford, November 15, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁰² Memo from Jacob B. Zack to Harvey Scribner, October 29, 1970, Chancellor Harvey Scribner, Central Files, 1970-1973, Series 1101, Subseries I, Box 4, Folder 70, BOE Records.

of Harlem Prep. “The alternative high schools under discussion here are projects which are generally designed to be free-standing in the sense that they are not (or will not be) attached administratively or organizationally to existing ‘regular’ high schools,” wrote Scribner. In this memo, he wrote how “alternative forms of education are both needed and legitimate” and how these new schools “represent an effort to capitalize on the desire and leadership ability of groups of students to attend school in alternative settings at a time when truancy and dropping out are severe problems.” Finally, Scribner explained that these new high schools would be “constructive projects designed” for students at a time when “it is widely agreed upon that high schools, in general, are in need of substantive reform.”¹⁰⁴ Following the 1973-1974 school year, the Board of Education issued its first report on these new school efforts: a 54-page evaluation of the district’s “independent alternative schools” that including their origins, goals, empirical data about school performance, and other summary and conclusions. Notably, at the beginning of the report, the authors mentioned how the Board of Education’s new “Independent Alternative Schools are related historically to the Street Academy.” There, they specifically named Harlem Prep as one prominent example.¹⁰⁵ After all, Board of Education Chancellor Harvey Scribner did apparently say that he wished all public schools in New York would have the “same atmosphere

¹⁰³ Memo from Harvey Scribner to Board of Education, June 30, 1972, Chancellor Harvey Scribner, Central Files, 1970-1973, Series 1101, Subseries I, Box 4, Folder 72, BOE Records; The details surrounding Harlem High School are unclear. However, it does seem there were ongoing issues with the school. See Letter from Jerome D. Smith to Irving Anker, October 1, 1976, Deputy Chancellor Bernard Gifford, Series 1202, Box 10 [unprocessed folders], BOE Records.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid; In addition, see another memo describing these projects more in-depth, Memo from Harvey Scribner to High School Superintendents, April 6, 1972, Chancellor Harvey Scribner, Central Files, 1970-1973, Series 1101, Subseries I, Box 4, Folder 70, BOE Records.

¹⁰⁵ Seth Wohl [preparer], “INDEPENDENT ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS,” Evaluation (Office of Educational Evaluation, New York City Board of Education, July 1974), p. 3, Chancellor Irving Anker, Series 1105, Box 50 [unprocessed folders], BOE Records.

and be run the same as Harlem Prep.”¹⁰⁶

Even though deciphering the exact level of Harlem Prep’s influence on New York City’s alternative school program cannot be known—and certainly there were a confluence of local and national factors that sparked this movement—Harlem Prep’s existence should not be understated. It seems logical that the outgrowth of alternative schools during this era was, at least in part, influenced by Harlem Prep, one of the first alternative schools to generate widespread acclaim and academic achievement in New York City over a substantial period of time.¹⁰⁷ Incoming public schools chancellor, Irving Anker, in 1973, spoke clearly about how he saw Harlem Prep: “We can learn from their techniques of recruiting dropouts who to go on to college.”¹⁰⁸ Whether the Board of Education learned and actually emulated Harlem Prep’s multiculturalism is up for debate (and future scholarship is needed), his comments do suggest that city leaders had taken a keen eye to Harlem Prep as they began opening their own alternative schools in future years.

Post-Resolution: The Struggle Between Harlem Prep and the Board of Education

“I find myself in an untenable bind,” Ed Carpenter began, in a long letter to Joshua Smith of the Ford Foundation in mid-January of 1974. In this letter, Carpenter describes in granular

¹⁰⁶ New York State Division of Human Rights, “Press Release about Harlem Prep Going on TV,” March 13, 1971, Secretary of the Board of Directors Records, Box 7, Folder 34-38, Street Academy, NYUL Records; However, Scribner resigned in 1972, and the new chancellor, Irving Anker, would now take over.

¹⁰⁷ As this section briefly explains, in 1974 and onward, the Board of Education began creating more and more alternative schools and issuing reports both evaluating and promoting these school projects. For additional examples, see Bertha G. Balsan [preparer], Board of Education, “Implementation of Recommendation Set Forth in Toward the Twenty-First for the New York City High School: A Report from the Office of ACCESS Programs of the Division of High Schools of the New York City Board of Education,” June 1975, p. 26-27, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I, Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 22, Folder 264, BOE Records; Joe Lociero [preparer], Committee on Education, Department of Public Affairs, “Another Choice – Another Chance: A Survey of Alternative Public High School Programs in New York City,” October 1976, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I, Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 23, Folder 279, BOE Records; and for periodical coverage, see Gene L. Maeroff, “Minischools Have Given New Lift to Potential Dropouts,” *New York Times*, n.d., [part of special report on “New York City High Schools”], Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I, Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 22, Folder 264, BOE Records.

¹⁰⁸ “Anker Reports Pact With Harlem Prep For City Take-Over,” *New York Times*, September 13, 1973.

detail the many issues he is already having with the bureaucracy of the Board of Education and the lack of necessary funds to plan for the first semester as a public school. For example, Carpenter explains how he is unable to provide an estimate of the previous year's expenditures, which is required by the Board of Education to establish a rate of lease, because he does not have the money to pay the audit company. "I have another serious problem," Carpenter wrote, in terms of the Board of Education informing him that Harlem Prep must have more toilets in order to meet board requirements. Yet again, Harlem Prep did not have any funds to pay for contractual work, which prevented the board from leasing the supermarket—and "obviously we can not begin school unless we have a building," demurred Carpenter. Finally, with less than a month before the school would open, Carpenter wrote how they had only received a fraction of the money that was to be raised: "I am in a position where I don't even have a secretary to care for the voluminous amounts of paper work that has arisen at this time. It is impossible to ask them to work any longer without paying them. Further, I can no longer ask Hussein, Ann, McFarlane nor myself to work without salary from this date until the Board takes over."¹⁰⁹ Although Harlem Prep was not technically the responsibility of the Board of Education until February 1, these initial financial and bureaucratic issues would only compound as the first semester under board control approached. "I want you to know that I have done all that I can to transfer the school to the Board of Education. However, I do not know nor can I predict what will happen..."¹¹⁰

Carpenter's letter to Smith foretold the uncertainty that the next year and half would

¹⁰⁹ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Joshua Smith, January 16, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹¹⁰ Ibid; This issue of just having basic functions continued into the fall of 1974. Ed Carpenter described how toilets were still not fixed, custodians could be paid, lights were "sub-standard," and there were leaks in the roof. See Letter from Edward Carpenter to Robert Mangum, September 24, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

bring, a microcosm of the type of financial issues and bureaucratic concerns that would continue to plague the school as administrators worked to integrate Harlem Prep with the city system. For instance, there were debt and utility issues in March of 1974, such as the school losing temporary telephone capability and the serious threat of losing all electrical services due to indebtedness that still had not been paid off.¹¹¹ (“We can function without telephones, but we cannot function without light,” wrote Carpenter in a non-joking tone.¹¹²) There were disagreements regarding teacher salaries, stating how these “negotiations with the Board of Education have been difficult,” wrote Carpenter. “They did not honor their agreement to give us the salaries that had been agreed upon by all.”¹¹³ Issues regarding teachers’ licensure also continued to be a stumbling block in future negotiations for well over a year; teachers teaching under the Board’s Certificate of Competency were paid less and were not eligible for tenure.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, there were

¹¹¹ Letter from P.J. O’Hare to Robert Mangum, February 27, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹¹² Letter from Edward Carpenter to Robert Mangum, March 19, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹¹³ Ibid. The specific details of this agreement, however, are unknown. What became a later issue were teacher certifications. While the Board of Education was working on certifying Harlem Prep’s teachers and granting them certificates of competency, they were being paid less than the base pay of Board of Education teachers. Harlem Prep felt that this was unfair, and requested two conditions: one, base pay of \$9,600; and two, a cost of living increase since September 1, 1971 that matched other districts whose teachers went through the same process. (Teachers also wanted more than one year to achieve certification.) However, the United Federation of Teachers, led by Albert Shanker who had written a column criticizing Harlem Prep, were unhappy with the Board of Education working to certify Harlem Prep teachers. The latter increase in salary, a 5.5% raise, was not approved by the Board of Education. Harlem Prep teachers already felt disrespected since they had been teaching for many years and would not be paid accordingly. See Memo from Frank Arricale II, August 22, 1974, Deputy Chancellor Bernard Gifford, Series 1202, Box 25, Folder “H” Correspondence, BOE Records; and Memo from Bernard Gifford to Frank Arricale, August 29, 1974, Deputy Chancellor Bernard Gifford, Series 1202, Box 25, Folder “H” Correspondence, BOE Records.

¹¹⁴ “Progress Report about Absorption of Harlem Prep into Board of Education,” January 16, 1975, Microfilm Reel 1781; Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records. For example, by January of 1975, almost a year after the Board acquired Harlem Prep, only three teachers were licensed, and the rest taught under temporary “Certificates of Competency,” which were not going to be renewed. Some teachers would not be able to complete college credits in time, while others were not able to take relevant examinations because the subject examination did not exist; Related to this issue was also lack of money for staff, as two custodians were working without pay because they had not been added to Board of Education payroll. See Letter from Edward Carpenter to Robert Mangum, March 19, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

ongoing concerns regarding the school's changing admission policies. "The information that Harlem Prep has automatically accepted all students referred by other schools...and is no longer screening applicants for admission was disturbing to me and is clearly contrary to the Board of Education to support Harlem Prep in a way that preserves its unique character," wrote Hal Roser of Exxon to Robert Mangum in mid-May of 1974.¹¹⁵ Clearly, the erasure of any admissions standards—even considering the fact that Harlem Prep already had relaxed guidelines—would be a threat to the way the school had previously operated. For example, students with current drug addictions or students not interested in higher education could now be accepted, changing certain elements of the school that Carpenter felt were vital to its identity and individual elements that were interwoven into the entire educational program. More than anything, this would change the identity of the school away from a school for motivated high school "dropouts" that philanthropists and corporate advocates such as Exxon believed they were funding. Carpenter, in a letter a few weeks prior, concurred that while expressing his delight in the high student attendance, "we are unable to mount a college-directed program because two-thirds of the youngsters need lengthy remediation."¹¹⁶ This was not the first time that Carpenter or another representative of Harlem Prep expressed their frustration with changing an essential school element, such as graduation requirements or age restrictions.

Finally, continuing tensions between Harlem Prep and the Board of Education regarding the future of the supermarket space (and later, heated rhetoric *within* the Board) remained the biggest hurdle and point of disagreement between all parties. Harlem Prep strongly felt that the supermarket space was pivotal to the school's multicultural educational program, while the

¹¹⁵ Letter from H.C. Roser to Robert Mangum, May 16, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹¹⁶ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Robert Mangum, April 29, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

Board felt that the lease was too expensive and suggested other school buildings.¹¹⁷ As discussed later in this chapter, the two sides' negotiation over price tag must also be understood within the context of the city's fiscal crisis that threatened the budget of every public service, including the school district.¹¹⁸ Every dollar mattered, and elected school board officials, already worried because of potential budget cuts to schools, did not want to—in their eyes at least—overpay for a space that could put them in hot water with their constituency. Still, the budget crisis and the board's fiscal austerity was not the concern of Harlem Prep. "This has been going on for a year and we are coming back to the same thing all over again," said a lawyer representing Harlem Prep in frustration, referring to discussions about the school building's lease and how the building reflected the school's multicultural ethos (as described in Chapter 4). "This is a community...that school belongs to the community and when it belongs to the community it belongs to the tax-payers and anything else belongs to 110 Livingston St....[the Board of Education's address]"¹¹⁹ New York City Schools Chancellor Irving Anker understood Harlem Prep's refrain about the importance of the location, too. While Anker thought the leasing fee was "very high," he also explained to the board that the Harlem Prep "Program is closely and

¹¹⁷ See New York City Board of Education, "Minutes: Informal Meeting, Nov. 12, 1974," November 12, 1974, pgs. 9-27, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 7, BOE Records. In this meeting, Ed Carpenter is invited (mid-meeting) to join members of the Board of Education and Chancellor Anker to discuss the supermarket location. Carpenter is open to different buildings in Harlem, but they must be an open-space set-up and is very against moving to a normal school building with classrooms—he even mentions knocking down walls. Chancellor Anker understands the criticism of both sides: one, how the Board is being criticized for leasing when there are "under-utilized spaces in Manhattan"; and two, Carpenter's perspective about moving locations and buildings despite promising to keep the school the same. For an example of this public criticism, see "The Daily Wa\$tebasket about Harlem Prep," *Daily News*, September 11, 1975, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I: Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 26, Folder 303 [High Schools, Manhattan], BOE Records.

¹¹⁸ See, among many, Lewis, *New York City Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*; Kim Phillips-Fein, *Fear City: New York's Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2017); Seymour P. Lachman and Robert Polner, *The Man Who Saved New York: Hugh Carey and the Great Fiscal Crisis of 1975* (Albany: Excelsior Editions, 2010); Lynne Weikart, "Decision Making and the Impact of Those Decisions During New York City's Fiscal Crisis in the Public Schools, 1975-1977" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1984; and Joseph Vitteriti, *Across the River: Politics and Education in the City* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1983).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

psychologically tied up with location; they have commitment to it—it involves open school and is not a regular school situation and to do so it might almost destroy it.”¹²⁰ (It seems some members of the board never understood how the space grounded the school’s larger multicultural philosophy.) Ultimately, this “problem” of the Harlem Prep space—its price, the fact that Harlem Prep Board of Trustees owned it, outside criticism about empty school buildings, and Carpenter’s insistence on an open-space learning environment—was the most challenging barrier to a smooth integration between the board and Harlem Prep, well into the 1975 spring term.

Why was the Board of Education so hesitant to pay for the Harlem Prep building lease—and to help Harlem Prep in general? Where did this resistance come from? Considering the November 1973 resolution and school’s sustained financial issues well into 1975, why did these negotiations occur so slowly? And, mostly, while Harlem Prep and the Board of Education did eventually settle some of the aforementioned disputes (although others remained a point of contention), why did this partnership not pan out as both sides hoped?¹²¹ This final segment of the Harlem Prep story is the school’s end as an independent institution: the reasons why the Board of Education was unable (or perhaps unwilling) to sustain Harlem Prep as it previously existed. There are three primary groups of reasons for this failure to continue Harlem Prep as it was—reasons, both hidden and overt, that scaffolded upon each other like compounded layers that prevented the school from receiving the support that it needed and, to many, deserved.

First, from the outset, the fraught relationship and clear distrust between Harlem Prep (plus the Harlem community more broadly) and the Board of Education led to an atmosphere unripe for cooperation. As this chapter has described, the Board of Education felt tremendous

¹²⁰ New York City Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting, Nov. 4, 1974,” November 4, 1974, p. 24, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 7, BOE Records.

¹²¹ To be sure, part of this question is much beyond the scope of this dissertation. Issues between the Board and Harlem Prep continued throughout the late 1970s. Other parts of this question, however, can be directly tied back to these initial negotiations in 1973 through 1975.

public pressure to rescue Harlem Prep from permanent closure—pressure that only ramped up once the school shut down in mid-September of 1973. (After all, at this point, no longer was Harlem Prep trying to improve public education by influencing the board’s methods, but instead, just trying to gain favor for a potential funding solution.) With a long history of failing to educate Black and brown children, the board had little capital with the Harlem community, and Chancellor Irving Anker stated on many occasions among his colleagues the fear of being held responsible for Harlem Prep’s closure if they did not take action. In a discussion with board members about the Harlem Prep lease, Chancellor Anker expressed privately that not only would withdrawing the proposal for a lease create much resistance from Harlem Prep, but “[the board] would be charged [by the community] as soon as we said we could take over...of scuttling Harlem Prep.”¹²² Latent within these feelings was the fact that some board members were already unhappy about the whole process. “A lot of things are troubling for me here,” said board member Dr. Amelia Ashe in late 1974, including “the whole nature of the transaction.” She continued: “We took over a non-public school and in the process of doing so we never made a decision about housing for the school.”¹²³ Internal notes from board conversations illustrate members who were clearly unhappy with having to absorb the responsibility of taking over Harlem Prep. Starting from a place of forced negotiation and discontent among some members did not set the groundwork for productive discussions in the months and years to come.

Harlem Prep, for their part, also approached the Board of Education with distrust and a sense of resignation. As this chapter has also described, teachers and administrators at Harlem Prep—and again, the surrounding Harlem community—were less than thrilled by the current

¹²² New York City Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting, Nov. 4, 1974,” November 4, 1974, p. 21, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 7, BOE Records.

¹²³ New York City Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting, Nov. 12, 1974,” November 12, 1974, p. 10, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 7, BOE Records.

chain of events. "I know that many people, including myself, approached the affiliation with the Board of Education with considerable skepticism," wrote Robert Mangum in early 1974. While he expressed optimism about the state of current negotiations at this time, he explained further that: "Frankly, however, it has been a difficult task to persuade some of our staff members and to urge them to communicate and cooperate fully with the Board of Education."¹²⁴ Headmaster Ed Carpenter continued to give off conflicting sentiments in both public and private: he was sometimes defiant and resistant to any changes to the school, other times optimistic and hopeful about "positive" developments and "build[ing] bridges," still other times critical in the press about the "not sufficient" budget that was allocated by the board.¹²⁵ Board of Education members, in their meetings, realized that Harlem Prep's connection to the community might be a barrier to a seamless absorption. They were right: Carpenter, Mangum, and their colleagues struggled to openly interact with the Board of Education when steady streams of discontent were coming from the school's constituents and the community for which it proudly served.

Moreover, even though there was a mutual distrust where both sides felt coerced into cooperating, Carpenter felt strongly that Harlem Prep was always at a disadvantage in their discussions with the board. In a long, insightful letter to Robert Mangum, Carpenter's resignation about the situation is clear:

You asked me about the relationship of Harlem Prep and the Board of Education. My feeling is that there is a neutral relationship. I don't believe we can do anything to make it more positive. There was never serious negotiation between Harlem Prep and the Board, I feel, because negotiations take place between equals. We certainly lacked equal

¹²⁴ Memo from Robert Mangum to Board of Trustees, March 29, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹²⁵ See, for example, of being optimistic, Letter from Edward Carpenter to Robert Mangum, March 22, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; See, for example, of being critical, "Harlem Prep Problem Ridden," *New York Amsterdam News*, February 15, 1975.

resources.¹²⁶

Despite the winds of the community at Harlem Prep's back, still, in reality, the school's key negotiators had little actual leverage—and Carpenter understood this all too clearly. With “no other alternatives” and hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt, Harlem Prep had no choice but to acquiescence to the demands of the board.¹²⁷ “There's nothing wrong with the Harlem Prep name—it is very favorable but with us in control,” expressed Board of Education President Dr. Seymour Lachman, confidentially, in a Board meeting on September 12, 1973, in one of the earlier group discussions on Harlem Prep.¹²⁸ Although Lachman's comment is vague, his allusion to holding power and having “control” suggests the board, in the context of whether or not to take over Harlem Prep, wanted to have decision-making ability over the school. From the start (and throughout discussions in the following years), Harlem Prep negotiated from a position of weakness. When considering the mutual skepticism of the two parties, the odds of a successful collaboration were handicapped from the start.¹²⁹

The second group of related reasons why the partnership between Harlem Prep and the Board of Education was strained is because there were real, legitimate issues to iron out in what was an unprecedented situation. First, among this group, was the rushed nature of negotiations: in fairness, the Board of Education was tasked with absorbing a unique school with an unfamiliar

¹²⁶ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Robert Mangum, March 19, 1974, Ford Foundation Records, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹²⁷ Memo from Robert Mangum to Board of Trustees, March 29, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹²⁸ New York City Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting, Sept. 12, 1973,” September 12, 1973, p. 6, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 5, BOE Records.

¹²⁹ In the interest of brevity, these reasons are only briefly discussed since earlier parts of this chapter also demonstrated this mutual mistrust and skepticism.

multicultural philosophy into a giant bureaucratic system in the midst of a school year.¹³⁰ On the Harlem Prep side, Ed Carpenter, in addition to running a financially broke school of 500 students, also had to negotiate with the Board of Education and advocate for its survival—not an easy (or particularly fair) feat in the moment. For Carpenter and his staff—a group of educators that, since the school’s beginning, acted on the belief that the lives of students could not wait—there was ample frustration with the lack of urgency from the Board of Education. Ed Carpenter wrote on April 29, 1974 about the difficulty in getting information from the board about delay in payments; he also described a transition that had been “somewhat lengthy and painful” despite optimism, at the time, that a “complete integration” would occur by June.¹³¹ (His hope did not come true.) Conversely, as this chapter illustrated earlier, there were Board of Education members frustrated with their agreement to integrate Harlem Prep into the city system without deciding on a number of important factors about how the school would actually fit.¹³²

There was indeed a complexity, at least from the Board of Education’s perspective, of adopting an uncommon private institution such as Harlem Prep into the rigid bureaucracy of the New York City school system. As this dissertation has explained, Harlem Prep’s multiculturalism was the opposite of rigid and standardized. While the school was notably flexible in terms of ideas and cultures—an inclusivity and focus on diversity that perhaps seemed foreign to the board—it was also flexible in how it operated. Personnel, pedagogy, school design, and countless other logistical measures were similarly defined by Harlem Prep’s adaptability to

¹³⁰ However, it should be noted that it was the Board of Education’s fault for rebuffing Harlem Prep’s previous overtures in past years. With private funding at the time, the Board could have eased the school into the system but only chose to integrate due to public pressure, as argued earlier in this chapter.

¹³¹ Letter from Edward Carpenter to Robert Mangum, April 29, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹³² For example, see Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting,” November 12, 1974, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 7, BOE Records.

the personal and academic needs of students. While a few private schools had been incorporated in the public system, they were few and far in between, and not of the type of scale, community significance, or characteristics of Harlem Prep. For example, Lower East Side Prep had been adopted in 1973, yet, it had a smaller population that largely served the contained Chinatown community in lower Manhattan with a “more traditional academic curriculum” that most likely led to a more seamless integration.¹³³ In addition, a year later in 1974, the first Central Park East school was founded as part of School District 4 in East Harlem, a collaboration between educator Deborah Meier and district superintendent Anthony Alvarado.¹³⁴ However, Meier describes their efforts to start this elementary school as “small and careful”—the opposite of the Harlem Prep-Board of Education situation which was rushed, contentious, and involving many people and moving parts.¹³⁵ Thus, even within this local context of alternative or private schools integrating into the district, Harlem Prep entire program presented a disparate challenge.

Thus, Harlem Prep’s existence was in contrast to most public schools under board jurisdiction: it was malleable, boundary-less, and sought to tear down walls both literally in terms of classroom space and metaphorically in terms of what kind of student could succeed. Preconceptions about age limits or about teacher experience ran contrary to board regulations. For example, with the former, state compulsory education laws mandated that anyone over the age of 21 could not attend public school, which would hurt a sizable minority of students at Harlem Prep who were above that age; board members were troubled by older students age 18 to

¹³³ See Seth Wohl [preparer], “INDEPENDENT ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS,” Evaluation (Office of Educational Evaluation, New York City Board of Education, July 1974), p. 5, Chancellor Irving Anker, Series 1105, Box 50 [unprocessed folders], BOE Records.

¹³⁴ See Deborah Meier, *The Power of Their Ideas: Lesson for America from a Small School in Harlem* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 18-21.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

21 attending a public school, even if the students “had a right to go to school” by law.¹³⁶ Another issue related to the graduation requirements. “It is my opinion that the school is being forced to comply with the standards of the Board of Education relating to criteria for graduation,” wrote Carpenter in mid-January of 1975 in a progress report on the merger to the Harlem Prep Board. “If true, this is serious in that Harlem Prep is an alternative school using different criteria in the graduating/college admissions process.”¹³⁷ Although Chancellor Anker complimented Harlem Prep on many occasions, he also expressed a common refrain among Board members: “They have criteria which we would not dare to use in our schools.”¹³⁸ Chancellor Anker understood that certain Harlem Prep requirements were incompatible with Board regulations, while also understanding that they “accepted commitment that [Harlem Prep] would continue to run as a proprietary school.” The Board of Education—again, as they saw it—was stuck choosing between two seemingly bad options: either maintain the promise of not altering Harlem Prep (but disobey their own district rules), or be consistent in enforcing the rules placed upon other schools in the public school system (but break their promise to Harlem Prep about changing the school).

These issues also extended to teachers in these schools, which, through Albert Shanker and the UFT, attacked Harlem Prep (in part) for its teachers’ lack of credentials. This was another wing of pressure that the Board of Education had to consider.¹³⁹ Related impasses

¹³⁶ Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting,” November 4, 1974, p. 24, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 7, BOE Records.

¹³⁷ “Progress Report about Absorption of Harlem Prep into Board of Education,” January 16, 1975, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ In his weekly column, “Where We Stand,” Shanker criticized Harlem Prep twice, writing how the school (falsely) only “sent a few students to college,” among other assertions. Shanker and the UFT were unhappy with Harlem Prep teachers getting equal salary as Board of Education teachers without proper certifications. See Albert Shanker, “Where We Stand: Harlem Prep: Success or Failure?,” March 17, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records; and Albert Shanker, “Where We Stand: A Tale of Two Programs,” *New York Times*, March 31, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Ford Records.

included the need for Harlem Prep to meet “legal and union contract requirements for certification of teachers, planning of curriculum and pupil attendance zones,” explained Manhattan Board of Education member Isaiah E. Robinson. “The unions would probably raise hell” if the Board of Education sought to bypass teacher certifications.¹⁴⁰ Ann Carpenter, protective of her teachers and unyielding in her defense of their abilities and the school’s multicultural curriculum—and both their and the school’s track record—saw this as a major obstacle toward integration with the Board of Education. Finally, the aforementioned lease issue also was abnormal. (Some members saw it as a conflict of interest to pay an organization—the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees—who in turn would use that money pay down Harlem Prep’s debt.) “We can’t run a private school with public funds,” stated Chancellor Anker, adding that the school would have to be run “according to the Board of Education’s rules and regulations” such as equitable admission standards and use of licensed teachers.¹⁴¹ Ultimately, there were legitimate issues latent within integrating a school that had little precedent with vastly different sets of rules (and philosophies) into the city system.

There was also an oncoming financial crisis that encompassed New York City in 1975, shortly after the board absorbed Harlem Prep and during continued negotiations about the school’s integration into the system. “The City is in the middle of its worst fiscal crisis in more than forty years,” stated the Board of Education in a policy paper in June of 1975. “The magnitude of cuts from fiscal year 1974-1974 is unprecedented.”¹⁴² As numerous scholars have pointed out today, the city’s celebrated public services and infrastructure was facing serious

¹⁴⁰ Iver Peterson, “Take-Over by City Called Harlem Prep’s Only Hope,” *New York Times*, August 9, 1973.

¹⁴¹ “Anker Reports Pact With Harlem Prep For City Take-Over,” *New York Times*, September 13, 1973.

¹⁴² Board of Education of the City of New York, “The 1975-1976 Allocation Formulae, Policy Paper No. 3,” June 27, 1975, p. iii, Joseph G. Barkan Files, 1974-1986, Series 314, Subseries I, Box 4, Folder 44, BOE Records.

decline, with the public school system no exception.¹⁴³ “Within the city schools, the fiscal crisis forced dramatic staff cutbacks and savagely pared down schools’ curriculum offerings,” writes historian Heather Lewis.¹⁴⁴ Kim Phillips-Fein, in *Fear City: New York’s Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics*, describes at length how “school cuts” affected almost every element of the city system: after-school programs, school security, and basic cleaning services and school upkeep.¹⁴⁵ With fiscal austerity policies in full affect, public schools also faced increased class sizes, inflated student-teacher ratios, and an exacerbated decaying of school buildings.¹⁴⁶ While it is unknown to what affect the city’s financial peril swayed the board’s decisions regarding budgetary decisions such as teachers’ salaries or lease payments, it most likely played some underlying role. On at least one occasion during a discussion of Harlem Prep, a board member referenced “this time of fiscal stringency” and how other public schools would have to be closed “as necessary for the economies” of the board.¹⁴⁷ The Board of Education was adding another school (and one with significant financial debt) when the city itself was struggling just to avoid bankruptcy. Situating Harlem Prep’s integration with the city in this context provides evidence of both the strength of Harlem Prep’s allies in the community and its stellar academic reputation.

Still, despite all of these apparent reasons—the initial mistrust between the two parties, the on-the-go nature of the negotiations, the novelty of integrating a singular multicultural school into a bureaucratic conglomerate—many alumni and former staff today believe that the school’s

¹⁴³ See, among many, Lewis, *New York City Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*; Phillips-Fein, *Fear City*; Lachman and Polner, *The Man Who Saved New York*; Weikart, “Decision Making and the Impact of Those Decisions During New York City’s Fiscal Crisis in the Public Schools, 1975-1977”; and Vitteriti, *Across the River*.

¹⁴⁴ Lewis, *New York City Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 7.

¹⁴⁵ Phillips-Fein, *Fear City*, 220-226.

¹⁴⁶ Lewis, *New York City from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 73-74.

¹⁴⁷ New York City Board of Education, “[Official] Leasing of Entire Building, Manhattan, to House a College Preparation High School,” in *Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York, 1975* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education, 1975), 769, Series 116, City Journal, BOE Records.

partnership with the Board of Education failed for a deeper, less explicit, but no less significant reason: racism. Both unconscious and conscious personal bias, amplified by existing structural racism built into the city school system, provides the best explanation for Harlem Prep's untimely decline at the board's hands. To remove the issue of race—black educators pleading with largely white representatives with decision-making power for help—would be futile, and primary evidence suggests the wisdom of taking at face value the reasoning of alumni and staff. As prominent philosopher Charles W. Mills explained, there is a “racial contract” that exists between white and non-white persons—a set of unspoken rules that centers race in society and establishes a racial polity where the status between whites and people of color must remain unequal.¹⁴⁸ In these years, the civil rights movement disrupted this contract; so did Black Power and Pan-African schools that had emerged in the early 1970s.

Harlem Prep similarly upset the status quo in education. Particularly in the context of the growing conservative national environment discussed in the previous chapter, Harlem Prep was able to demonstrate that poor, “uneducable,” Black and brown students were able to achieve academic success on par with (or beyond) their white, affluent peers.¹⁴⁹ “Liberals and conservatives can't deal with the idea [of Harlem Prep],” quipped Ann Carpenter, notably, to the press in December of 1972 when asked why the school had trouble securing private *and* public funds. “It is a subtle threat to the Establishment and to the powers that have money and influence

¹⁴⁸ See Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997). Mills' work is often cited as foundational in Critical Race Theory scholarship, particularly how Mills argues that white supremacy is the “unnamed global political system.” See, for this latter point, Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 17, and Edward Taylor, “The Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education: An Introduction,” in *Foundation of Critical Race Theory in Education*, eds. Edward Taylor, David Gillborn, and Gloria Ladson-Billings (New York: Routledge, 2009), 4-5. More recently, Afro-American studies scholar Carol Anderson has drawn attention to this beyond academia, in her book: Carol D. Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016).

¹⁴⁹ Hopkins, “Draft of MARC Assessment of Harlem Prep,” March 19, 1970, p. 2, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

that we could put our graduates into colleges to rub shoulders with their children.”¹⁵⁰ Board of Education Chancellor Irving Anker hinted at his surprise of the school’s success considering its racial makeup; Anker stated that the successful group instruction inside the school “appeared not [to] be a show” and was “pleasantly surprised” that there was “no black power display.” That Anker’s default view of Harlem Prep would be that its programming would only be a “show” and why Black Power within the school mattered at all is curious, at best.¹⁵¹ Harlem Prep’s success in educating students, as an independent school, was clearly not helping the reputation of the city’s public schools. Board of Education member, Joseph Monserrat, even admitted to his peers at the time that “evidently [Harlem Prep] was more successful than our systems were.”¹⁵²

This idea that Harlem Prep was too efficient in educating students of color—or, more simply, that the board and its constituency were resistant to Black and brown youth achieving at a higher level than white, middle-class youth—is a common sentiment among alumni. “Somehow, [Harlem Prep was] too successful—you’re doing *too* good of a job. You’re sort of encroaching on our territory here,” 1973 valedictorian Clifford Jacobs explains today. “I think Harlem Prep was too successful for its own good. I don’t know if that’s an actual truth, or if that’s a romantic way of looking at it, but I remember hearing people say that [Harlem Prep was]

¹⁵⁰ Fraser, “Harlem Prep Is Striving To Survive as Funds Fall,” *New York Times*, 1972.

¹⁵¹ There are decades of sociological research showing how implicit bias in white teachers affects the educational performance of Black students. See, for example, among many, Ronald F. Ferguson, “Teachers’ Perceptions and Expectations and the Black-White Test Score Gap,” *Urban Education* 38, no. 4 (2003): 460–507; and Seth Gershenson, Stephen B. Holt, and Nicholas W. Papageorge, “Who Believes in Me? The Effect of Student–Teacher Demographic Match on Teacher Expectations,” *Economics of Education Review* 52 (2016): 209–24. In the most classic sense, this has been called the “self-fulfilling prophecy”—or that teachers who assumed students would not perform as well would go on to meet those lower expectations. See Ray C. Rist, “Student Social Class and Teacher Expectations: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy in Ghetto Education,” *Harvard Educational Review* 40, no. 5 (August 1970): 411–451. Although Anker is an administrator, the same principle applies. Even if he had benign intentions, the fact that Anker felt surprised that Black students were able to achieve academically is telling—his bias showing since there is no reason, other than internal racial bias, for why he should be surprised at all.

¹⁵² Board of Education, “[Official] Leasing of Entire Building,” in *Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York, 1975* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education, 1975), 772, Series 116, City Journal, BOE Records.

almost too successful.”¹⁵³ Jacobs was referring to both the school’s lack of ability to privately fundraise as well as the board’s reluctance to integrate the school into its bureaucracy. Another alumna, Beverly Grayman-Rich, puts forth the same reasoning, alluding to this racial element of the city: “The politics being what it was—New York City being New York City—[the board was] like: ‘We can’t let this school keep going. This is just too successful.’” Grayman-Rich argues that the Board of Education members disliked how the Harlem Prep model went “against the grain” of what educators and those inside the board thought should work for poor, Black and brown students.¹⁵⁴ Sandy Campbell, the venerable English teacher, who, ironically, after being pushed out of Harlem Prep by the board because he did not have a teaching credential, returned to work for the board as a sought-after literacy specialist for many decades, also concurs with this reasoning. “The Board [of Education] took it over and destroyed it...it was too successful.” Beyond that common refrain, Campbell continues: “We were producing students who went off to the London School of Economics. [The Board and other funders] were just not having it, because [Harlem Prep] was outdoing anything that the Board was doing, particularly for Black and Hispanic students.”¹⁵⁵ For a school system where students of color were dropping out of public schools at an alarming rate, it might seem logical that the Board of Education would be eager and willing to accept a school that was succeeding in educating the population that they had been failing to educate for decades. However, digging deeper, perhaps their reluctance to do so made even more sense. The Board of Education, an institution with a long-standing discriminatory history and in recent years a particularly tense relationship with much of their constituency, wanted to protect themselves and their already-fragile public perception. Plus, Harlem Prep’s

¹⁵³ Jacobs interview, November 18, 2013.

¹⁵⁴ Grayman-Rich interview, May 11, 2017.

¹⁵⁵ Campbell interview, January 14, 2015.

multiculturalism ran counter to the board's entire philosophy and system of education. If the board admitted that Harlem Prep, an independent school that shirked the rules of their own city system, could educate and graduate students far beyond their ability to do so in their own public schools, this would certainly be problematic in their eyes. Moreover, the fact that it was specifically Black students who had been largely pushed out of their public schools in the first place, plus considering the context of both institutional racism and personal bias of city leaders, probably only compounded these feelings.

This allusion to racism—to something beyond school logistics or mere funding battles—came to a head when a Board of Education member explicitly called out his colleagues for being so intransigent when it came to paying Harlem Prep's lease. In many ways, the battle over Harlem Prep's lease, and if the school should pay the required amount to stay in that open-space building, became a proxy war over the school's worth more broadly. After a long May 21, 1975 board meeting where the issue of paying Harlem Prep's lease was finally up for a vote—more than a year and half after the board agreed to take over the school—and where a number of board members spoke on the topic, the board president asked if there were any more members who would like to address the topic before voting.¹⁵⁶ Board member Joseph Monserrat, a man of Puerto Rican descent who grew up in poverty in East Harlem, took command of the floor. “Mr. President, I've given a great deal of thought to my reaction to the comments of my colleague,” began Monserrat, referring to the comments of board member Amelia Ashe who, moments before him, expressed that it was “unconscionable” for the board to assume Harlem Prep's debts and approve their lease.¹⁵⁷ “Six years sitting on this Board, I have never reacted [to] what might

¹⁵⁶ After contentious discussion, the New York City Board of Education had previously agreed to pay for the Harlem Prep lease for one year only while long-term plans could be debated further in a less rushed manner. However, that year had since passed and the lease issue needed to be decided on more definitive basis.

even appear to be personal, I find it necessary to do so tonight.” Dismissing decorum, Monserrat publicly chastised his fellow board members who did not want to pay the lease—and he recognized that some of his colleagues’ reluctance to do so was not just about money, but about race.¹⁵⁸ Monserrat addressed a number of particular issues regarding what he saw as the board’s façade over potential expenses. To him, the discussion over finances and money was just a convenient cover-up for his colleagues to avoid speaking about the larger issues of racism and neglect of the Harlem community. For example, Monserrat described the Board of Education’s baseless attacks on the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees for their non-profit status and spending habits.¹⁵⁹ “I find, that by inferring that the use of the income [Harlem Prep’s Board] might make from this lease to pay past debts ranging before 1974 [is] an inference that there is something wrong in the use of those funds,” retorted Monserrat—or, more simply, insinuating that Harlem Prep would be unable to properly manage lease funds received by the Board of Education. These comments, as Monserrat noted, were racially tinged, to say the least. Monserrat took offense to how, in his mind, the Board “wash[ed] their dirty laundry in public” and that the board has never had this type of criticism for “anybody else.”¹⁶⁰ Here, Monserrat was quick to call out his colleagues for holding poor, Black and brown citizens to a different standards than their white peers in other parts of the city. Instead, he explained, that no matter what, the Board should “continue a commitment that a previous Board made to a group of citizens, who I believe have

¹⁵⁷ Board of Education, “[Official] Leasing of Entire Building,” in *Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York, 1975* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education, 1975), 770, Series 116, City Journal, BOE Records.

¹⁵⁸ This setting is notable. Unlike other informal meetings that were private and confidential—and only released years later in semi-processed records buried deep in the Municipal Archives—Monserrat’s comments were to the full board as part of the official board minutes (and covered by the press). Monserrat was also one of two people of color on the board, in addition to Isaiah Robinson, a Black man. For more about Monserrat, see Wolfgang Saxon, “Joseph Monserrat, 84, Leader in Efforts to Unify Latinos, Dies,” *New York Times*, November 19, 2005.

¹⁵⁹ In terms of the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees, who owned the Harlem Prep building, the board accused this group of not being transparent with their funds, while Monserrat explained that even non-profits have expenses.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

been maligned. . .”¹⁶¹ In the same comments, Monserrat also criticized the board’s cold reception that young people of color received when they visited the board to speak about what an alternative program could look like.¹⁶² Moreover, these comments came on the heels of citywide cuts to schools, libraries, and other social services that “angered parents and families all over the city.”¹⁶³ In Harlem specifically, as historian Kim Phillips-Fein explains, the “deterioration of the public schools” led parents, local newspapers, and community activists to sharply criticize city officials.¹⁶⁴ This idea that individuals in power were neglecting people of color, as Monserrat described, was only exacerbated by this tense historical moment.

Monserrat’s lengthy diatribe continued. He further berated one of his colleagues for her comments and reiterated his previous remarks, pointing again to race as the underlying factor—not money. In his final statement, Monserrat addressed this issue head-on:

I am concerned too, over the fact that it’s Harlem Prep that we’re making these statements about. Just as I was concerned last night, that it was almost an all black organization that had to come down here to plead and think that we were going to outdo them and do away with them. I believe the issue involved here is not funding. . . I believe the issue involved here is a question of whether or not we are going to accept the educational judgment of our Chancellor and of others involved in [the Harlem Prep] program and not use dollars to equate education. . . . I’m sorry to say that I resent the statement and I resent its implication and I personally apologize to those who made this agreement with us because I don’t believe we have any right to infer that they are going to use the rentals that they receive for improper purposes. And the inference of this statement is that they will so do so.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Board of Education, “[Official] Leasing of Entire Building,” in *Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York, 1975* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education, 1975), 770, Series 116, City Journal, BOE Records; Here, Monserrat is referring to past Board of Education members who previously promised to support Harlem Prep a year and a half ago.

¹⁶² Monserrat is referring to a time when a group of largely Black and brown youth visited the board, not from Harlem Prep, but similar students who had been put out of school and into an alternative program.

¹⁶³ Phillips-Fein, *Fear City*, 222.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁶⁵ Board of Education, “[Official] Leasing of Entire Building,” in *Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York, 1975* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education, 1975), 772-773, Series 116, City Journal, BOE Records.

Monserrat's pointed rhetoric, for the public record, was notable. In regard to the most tense and lengthy element of the school's incorporation—its controversial lease and unorthodox location—he asserted, rather clearly, that the board's reluctance to agree to pay the Harlem Prep lease and accusation of financial incompetence was an example of racism against the mostly Black board and primarily Black school serving Black and brown students.

Still, this granular example of racial prejudice, albeit important at the time to securing Harlem Prep's future, was only one of many potential examples when considering the broader racial politics of the time. Zooming out, certain sectors of the city (if not the larger public) were never accepting of Black excellence, particularly if dictated on Black citizens' terms.¹⁶⁶ Nor was the city's white power structure eager to transfer decision-making power to poor, Black communities, as demonstrated by the community control battles of the late 1960s. Union head Albert Shanker's attack on Harlem Prep was one such example, where he called the school "a failure"; clear language about how he (wrongly) thought it was impossible for non-UFT-staffed schools (and its mostly white teaching force) to educate young people.¹⁶⁷ "Why does Mr. Shanker seem so threatened by the retrieval of America's most precious resources, its young minds?" wrote 1968 alumnus Edward Randolph, in a response letter to one of Shanker's columns.¹⁶⁸ Former Harlem Prep administrator Henry Pruitt concurs today, in that the board and those who wielded decision-making power were never comfortable with the idea that teachers

¹⁶⁶ Although long understood by historians and race scholars, most recently, Afro-American Studies scholar Carol Anderson articulated this her book, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016). While Harlem Prep's negotiations with the Board of Education certainly does not compare to the level of backlash as addressed in the book, there are synergies in what was happening with the Black educational progress at Harlem Prep and school efforts in New York City in prior years.

¹⁶⁷ Shanker, "Where We Stand: Harlem Prep: Success or Failure?," March 17, 1974, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

¹⁶⁸ Edward Randolph, "Readers Write: Letter Of The Week," *New York Amsterdam News*, April 6, 1974.

from the Harlem community—“self-appointed people” like Africanist George Simmonds, a street corner orator—could be successful teachers.¹⁶⁹ The hiring of unlicensed, teachers of color had a particular meaning for Shanker as head of the UFT. As historians of education such as Jonna Perrillo have explained, the UFT and Shanker, which generated most of their power from high levels of white, middle-class support, were ripe with structural racism in their union and hiring practices. For one, the UFT under Shanker was “committed to a belief in color-blind professionalism”—unlike Harlem Prep which explicitly saw race (and other types of diversity) as essential in hiring. More broadly, Shanker and the teachers union most likely would not have approved of the school’s multiculturalism, which centered diversity in all facets of the school. Shanker also characterized “black activists as violent and radical.”¹⁷⁰ Teachers like Simmons, Dr. Ben, Sandy Campbell, and numerous other Black educators who were unlicensed, starting teaching at Harlem Prep by circumstance, and embodied culturally relevant teaching went directly against Shanker’s practices of centralized hiring and policies to avoid teachers with racial politics that clashed with his own union constituency.¹⁷¹ Clearly, Shanker’s issue with Harlem Prep was not performance based, but race-based.

Structural racism within the school system itself, and not just unions, should also be recognized within the context of Harlem Prep’s integration with the public school system. Although schools all across New York City were affected by the austerity measures taken by the city in the wake of the financial crisis, schools in poor communities serving students of color were hit the hardest—a consequence of an interwoven web of past discriminatory policies that

¹⁶⁹ Pruitt interview, May 11, 2017.

¹⁷⁰ Perrillo, *Uncivil Rights*, 158-159; See also Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York*, among many others. Shanker and the UFT’s structural racism has been well examined by historians of education.

¹⁷¹ See Lewis, *New York City Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 57-58.

had already created segregated schools and inequitable divisions of school resources.¹⁷² Already in crowded classrooms with less experienced teachers, schools in Harlem, for example, saw mass teacher layoffs, shortened school days, and “plans to close schools.”¹⁷³ On a personnel level, some Black and brown paraprofessionals from Harlem (and other areas) employed throughout the public schools experienced racism, prejudice, and denigration in classrooms—although this is only one of the ways in which these individuals experienced their work. On some occasions, “Poor, non-white women were relegated to the back of the class as menial laborers,” writes Nicholas Juravich in his important research on paraprofessionals, even though, in reality, paraprofessionals were significantly valuable in the classroom and activists in their own right.¹⁷⁴ This treatment of paraprofessionals and their struggle for fair wages and representation, despite the “unheralded achievements” of their community-based educational work, is a prime example of the type of institutional racism that characterized the city’s public system.¹⁷⁵ In a school system where poor students of color continued to receive an inferior education—and school leaders constantly battled for control of their communities’ schools despite rapid decentralization—Harlem Prep was entering into a city system that was not particularly sensitive to the concerns of many of its constituents.

¹⁷² For example, Heather Lewis explains that throughout the 1960s, there was a “concentration of African American and Puerto Rican students in emotionally disturbed programs, disproportionate teacher turnover, lower academic standards in schools in poor communities, and inadequate facilities.” See Lewis, *New York City From Brownsville to Bloomberg*, 18. These circumstances continued in the 1970s. For a more acute example, such as redlining that created segregated school zones, see Clarence Taylor, “Conservative and Liberal Opposition to the New York City School-Integration Campaign,” in *Civil Rights in New York City: From World War II to the Giuliani Era*, ed. Clarence Taylor (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 101.

¹⁷³ Phillips-Fein, *Fear City*, 223.

¹⁷⁴ Juravich, “The Work of Education,” 133. This is only, at best, a partial representation of Juravich’s work, who dissertation traces the paraprofessional movements from the early 1950s to the early 1930s. Juravich charts the accomplishments of paraprofessionals and their activism in securing unionization, among other accomplishments, and their participation in the labor struggle during these decades.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

Teasing out how much racial prejudice, conscious and unconscious, structural or not, affected the school's ongoing tension with the Board of Education remains inexact. Many of the actors involved in these negotiations, particularly Chancellor Irving Anker, were complimentary of Harlem Prep on many public occasions. Still, examples and clues from key players of the time suggest that Harlem Prep—its unorthodox pedagogy, disregard for many educational conventions, and overarching multicultural philosophy—was not so warmly received by some of the (white) power players in New York City and, as shown, in private correspondence. Carpenter and Harlem Prep's unique brand of multiculturalism transcended what the city's public schools could offer. Perhaps certain actors could just not fully comprehend the school's multicultural ethos. Harlem Prep was not the display of Black Power that white power players feared—a point even admitted by Chancellor Anker, generally a consistent advocate during the negotiations.¹⁷⁶ Yet, it was not the conservative, docile institution that might have been preferred, either. As Ann Carpenter suggested, students were becoming educated *and* liberated, with the fervent support of the Harlem community. For all these reasons, it was a school that could not easily be dismissed. If the reason for Harlem Prep's effectiveness as an educational institution was due to the school's multiculturalism (and all that it encompassed and embodied in curriculum, staffing, and design, as discussed in Part II), then the city's refusal to fully accept the school as it was perhaps contributed to its downfall.

The post-script to this lack of favor by the Board of Education lends credence to the reasoning that board officials never fully embraced Harlem Prep. By summer of 1975, the Board of Education began to judiciously encourage the growth of alternative schools—but not

¹⁷⁶ Anker expressed in private that he was “pleasantly surprised” at a number of school characteristics, including “no black power display.” See Board of Education, “Minutes: Informal Meeting,” November 4, 1974, p. 24, Board of Education, Informal Meetings, Minutes, 1966-1985, Series 1011, Box 7, BOE Records.

necessarily Harlem Prep.¹⁷⁷ In the context of the small school movement and changes in the educational landscape (discussed in the previous chapter), the public school system created or adopted various small, alternative institutions, and released documents and plans regarding this new direction.¹⁷⁸ “A growing number of the City’s high schools had begun to establish mini-schools and the concept of alternative public educational programs was spreading across the nation,” wrote an allied organization with the board in a 43-page report in October of 1976. The authors, which sought to analyze the school’s budding alternative program, explained that: “the alternative high school movement is a relatively new development in public education, having gained its impetus from the turmoil and dissatisfaction of the sixties and the alienation that many young (and some not so young) people felt toward established bureaucratic institutions.”¹⁷⁹ Yet, while true to some extent, Harlem Prep was not new; as part of the city system and a school listed in this report (and other official reports), it was rarely paid any special attention, even if during the merger the board recognized its important impact. Reasons why the school was not considered a model in later years—or why its methods were not replicated—is unclear and can only be inferred. Despite student demand beyond what Harlem Prep could admit, and a track record of success of engaging the aforementioned student demographic, there is no evidence that the board sought to open a similar institution or probe the school’s strategies in their alternative school efforts. Perhaps they did not have the personnel or wherewithal; or, perhaps, they consciously chose not to do so.

¹⁷⁷ For a list of all alternative schools in 1977, see New York City Board of Education, “List of Independent Alternative High Schools,” February 1977, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I: Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 23, Folder 279, BOE Records.

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, New York City Board of Education, “Humanization and Involvement: The Small-Unit Approach: Implementation of Recommendations Set Forth in Toward the Twenty-First Century,” June 1975, p. v, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I: Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 22, Folder 264, BOE Records.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 5.

The Coda to Harlem Prep’s Integration With the Board of Education

After more than a year and a half of negotiations and consultations between Harlem Prep and the New York City Board of Education—and many years since the school initially reached out for public support—finally, by late May of 1975, everything had seemingly been agreed to or resolved. Former Harlem Prep teachers had either gained a teaching certification or, more frequently, new teachers were moved from elsewhere in the district to teach there and fill the vacancies.¹⁸⁰ Board of Education requirements in terms of admissions and other regulations were adopted or to be adopted, whether Ed or Ann Carpenter approved of them or not.¹⁸¹ New administrative monikers were selected.¹⁸² And, last of all, the Board approved the Harlem Prep lease and the school would stay in the supermarket for the foreseeable future.¹⁸³

Despite the lengthy, charged process (and occasional disgruntlement from Ed Carpenter and the Harlem Prep community), for a short moment, there was also a sense of optimism. The first commencement under the guise of the Board of Education occurred in June of 1975 with renewed fanfare. The *New York Amsterdam News* covered the outside graduation—the first in exactly two years—and Carpenter wrote a warm letter to Chancellor Anker thanking him for giving the keynote speech at commencement. “I can assure you that your appearance along with the other officials of the central office changed the opinions of many community people who

¹⁸⁰ For example, teachers such as Al Nofi and Nick Mbumba worked in the school system and were relocated to Harlem Prep post-transition. See Sandy Campbell, e-mail conversation with author, February 1, 2017; and Ahdieh and Chapman, *A Way Out of No Way*, 124-125.

¹⁸¹ See, for example, Carpenter telling the *New York Amsterdam News* that Harlem Prep has been forced to comply with various regulations: “Harlem Prep Problem Ridden,” *New York Amsterdam News*, February 15, 1975.

¹⁸² A point of tension early in negotiations was how Carpenter, without a proper principal license, could not be principal (or “headmaster”) of a Board of Education school. His title then shifted from Headmaster to “Director,” and the other administrators were considered “Coordinators.” See Letter from Edward F. Carpenter to Irving Anker, June 23, 1975, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I: Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 26, Folder 302 [High Schools, Manhattan], BOE Records, which depicts the new titles on the letterhead.

¹⁸³ For press coverage of this, see “Lease Renewed For Harlem Prep: School Board Acts Despite Plea of Fiscal Woes,” *New York Times*, May 22, 1975.

claimed that officials at the Board of Education were insensitive to the Harlem community,” wrote Carpenter.¹⁸⁴ Most importantly, 136 more students had graduated from Harlem Prep and were off to college, and according to Carpenter’s announcement that morning, over 350 former Harlem Prep students had now graduated college and were “leading productive lives.”¹⁸⁵ After so many years of seeking financial security—and tirelessly having to fundraise just to keep doors open—finally, Carpenter and his colleagues had felt like they had achieved a long-desired goal.

Unfortunately, that sense of optimism was short-lived. Harlem Prep ceased to be the same institution that it once was in future years: over time, the teaching staff experienced mass turnover, Ann Carpenter resigned to begin her second career as a chiropractor (her loss could not be understated), certain programs such as music, art, photography, and film were cut or scaled back, and the overall sense of individuality and malleability that defined the school would be chipped away by unyielding bureaucracy.¹⁸⁶ Its multicultural philosophy devolved as its parts were altered piece by piece. The school system’s rules—the ones in which had failed Black and brown youth for many decades—clashed with Harlem Prep and its leaders’ multicultural vision for education (even if certain standards and regulations were more relaxed in the alternative schools program that Harlem Prep was a part of). Continued public budget crises, issues of personnel licensing, and an overall lack of commitment by the Board of Education to retain all

¹⁸⁴ Letter from Edward F. Carpenter to Irving Anker, June 23, 1975, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I: Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 26, Folder 302 [High Schools, Manhattan], BOE Records.

¹⁸⁵ “Harlem Prep Graduates 100 In Eighth Class On Friday,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 25, 1975; and James L. Hicks, “Harlem Prep Sends 136 To College,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 2, 1975.

¹⁸⁶ In terms of teacher turnover, while no specific records illustrate which Harlem Prep teachers from earlier years stayed post-1974, numerous clues suggest that very few actually did. For example, in *A Way Out of No Way* and in an interview, administrator Hussein Ahdieh notes how there were many new teachers that transferred to the school and how most former teachers left after the Board of Education took over. English teacher Sandy Campbell also left. Furthermore, many teachers had already moved on from Harlem Prep once they were laid off due to the school closing in September of 1974; For information on Ann Carpenter leaving Harlem Prep, see Hicks, “Harlem Prep Sends 136 To College,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 2, 1975. However, Ann Carpenter would stay involved in Harlem Prep and later become interim headmaster in the late 1970s; and for Carpenter complaining about the lack of funds for the arts, see “Harlem Prep Fashion Show,” *New York Amsterdam News*, March 22, 1975.

the school's distinct educational components, over time, began to erode at Harlem Prep's independence and autonomy in school-decisions, ranging from admissions to graduation requirements and beyond.

Furthermore, some evidence suggests that, despite its integration with the board and placement into the alternative school program, Harlem Prep remained an outlier. In frequent reports about these alternative schools, Harlem Prep was always described differently than its counterparts; its focus was on higher education and operated as a college prep program, while most other alternative schools had a particular curricular focus, were remedial in nature, or provided a vocational education.¹⁸⁷ For example, of the eleven schools listed and described in a February 1977 Board of Education report on their alternative schools, *all* of them focused on remedial education, evening classes, or vocational training except one school: Harlem Prep, which had a focus on “preparation for college (and scholarships) in the U.S.A. and abroad.”¹⁸⁸ In another report on these eleven schools, the Board of Education described Harlem Prep as being “the most strongly college placement-oriented school in this group, designed for the greater Harlem community.”¹⁸⁹ Here, too, remnants of the school's distinct multicultural philosophy remained: a focus on educational equity and academic achievement different from these peers.

Ultimately, the Harlem Prep dream—the “wish” that student Edith Thompkins declared

¹⁸⁷ See, for example, Bertha G. Balsan [preparer], Board of Education, “Implementation of Recommendation Set Forth in Toward the Twenty-First for the New York City High School: A Report from the Office of ACCESS Programs of the Division of High Schools of the New York City Board of Education,” June 1975, p. 26-27, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I, Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 22, Folder 264, BOE Records; and Joe Lociero [preparer], Committee on Education, Department of Public Affairs, “Another Choice – Another Chance: A Survey of Alternative Public High School Programs in New York City,” October 1976, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I, Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 23, Folder 279, BOE Records.

¹⁸⁸ New York City Board of Education, Division of High Schools, “Independent High Schools, 1977-1978,” February 1977, p. 1, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I, Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 23, Folder 279, BOE Records.

¹⁸⁹ Seth Wohl [preparer], “INDEPENDENT ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS,” Evaluation (Office of Educational Evaluation, New York City Board of Education, July 1974), p. 5, Chancellor Irving Anker, Series 1105, Box 50 [unprocessed folders], BOE Records.

at the final graduation that “every black child should be afforded the experience of a Harlem Prep”—did not immediately die, but it did, under the guise of the Board of Education and evolving national environment, slowly, fade away.¹⁹⁰ Despite the school’s ending, still, Harlem Prep made a lasting legacy not just through the lives of the students that it changed, but also in the battle of ideas. The school influenced discourse around Black and brown achievement, alternative schools, and urban education more broadly during the era. It introduced a “radical multiculturalism” that had not yet been seen elsewhere. Although Harlem Prep did not reach its ultimate goal of changing the structures of public education back in the 1960s and 1970s, perhaps it can still do so today.

¹⁹⁰ Prial, “Harlem Prep End With Class of ‘74,” *New York Times*, January 26, 1974.

Conclusion

Harlem Prep's Multiculturalism in Perspective

“You know, [Ed Carpenter] believed in multiculturalism way before people even used that term.”

–Sterling Nile, 1971 Harlem Prep alumnus¹

When Dr. Joshua Smith started his job in 1968 as the new education program officer at the Ford Foundation and inherited the responsibility of overseeing grants to Harlem Prep, he had already heard a lot about how “special” it was from his predecessor.² As the only Black program officer at Ford, over the next five years on the job, Smith would find, assess, and fund (or deny funding) to dozens of Black alternative schools all across the country ranging from Boston to Berkeley.³ However, to him, Harlem Prep always seemed different. “The school is clearly one of the most unique that I've ever seen,” wrote Joshua Smith to the Chancellor of the City University of New York in 1973.⁴ Smith, who was a classroom teacher and previously earned a doctorate in education from Harvard University before his job at Ford, has had a long 40-plus year career in education since those days. He has held positions ranging from being chancellor of the California Community College system—the largest system in the country encompassing well over 100 campuses—to a dean of the school of education at the City University of New York and

¹ Nile interview, March 4, 2015

² Smith interview, March 2, 2017.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Letter from Joshua Smith to Chancellor Kibbee, June 21, 1973, Microfilm Reel 1781, Folder Harlem Preparatory School (FA732D), Ford Records.

professor of education at New York University, among numerous other positions.⁵ Yet, almost five decades later, Smith still sees Harlem Prep as being “such a unique place”—and among the most important work of his long career.⁶

As I argue throughout this dissertation, Harlem Prep was indeed a unique institution, not just because of what it did in terms of graduating young people, but for its radical multicultural vision. With the benefit of hindsight, the distinctness that Smith and countless others referred to but could not quite describe, was Harlem Prep’s multiculturalism at work. “It was interesting—you walked in there, you could feel it, and you didn’t necessarily know what the feeling was that you were getting, but it was extraordinary, and you were receiving it.”⁷ Harlem Prep was one of hundreds of alternative schools that emerged during this explosive era in educational history, and one of many dozens of prominent Black alternative schools, specifically, in the country’s major cities. The school’s headmaster, Ed Carpenter, in partnership with Ann Carpenter and other administrators and staff, also followed a long tradition of Black educational activism that preceded them in the southern and northern civil rights movement and in Harlem particularly. Still, despite all of this activism—and all of these different educational ideologies ranging from integration and freedom schools to Black Power and Pan African schools to everything in between—Harlem Prep had a different vision of Black education in this era that has not yet been recognized or explored by historians. This vision, as conceptualized by the Carpenters and all who attended Harlem Prep, was radical multicultural education. This conclusion seeks to

⁵ “Former BMCC President Joshua L. Smith Creates Faculty Development Fund,” *City University of New York*, March 3, 2019, <http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2018/05/03/former-bmcc-president-joshua-l-smith-creates-faculty-development-fund/>; Robert Lindsey, “Californians Take Aim At Community Colleges,” *New York Times*, August 16, 1987.

⁶ Smith interview, March 2, 2017. In this interview, Smith said that his biggest regret of his long career is that Harlem Prep did not survive. Moreover, at one point of the interview, he said that he found himself “choking up now in memories of it right now.” Notably, Smith had not been in touch with Harlem Prep people for many decades.

⁷ Ibid.

summarize the key historical contributions of this project, as well as briefly exploring what both educators and scholars of other disciplines can learn from the school's philosophy today.

Recapping Harlem Prep's Multiculturalism and Historical Scholarship on Black Education

In this dissertation, I argue that Harlem Prep was guided by a multicultural philosophy—radical multiculturalism—that has yet to be studied or explored. Considering this philosophy's role in the key Black community of Harlem, more specifically, Harlem Prep's vision for multicultural education was a significant stream of educational thought that historians have not yet located with the Black freedom struggle of the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, this philosophy mattered in understanding the school: it shaped the school's ethos, connected it to and made it diverge from other institutions of the time, and helped generate its accomplishments, all before multiculturalism was a common educational phenomenon. Each of the three parts of this dissertation illustrates this argument in layered ways to show that Harlem Prep was distinct and worthy of historical attention.

Part I documents Harlem Prep's origins and practices, laying the groundwork for understanding why Harlem Prep's multicultural philosophy was unique and unlike freedom schools or Pan African schools. In contrast to the former, Harlem Prep was created through a well-connected group of Black and white figures in New York City. (However, headmaster Ed Carpenter would quickly seek to engage the local community in Harlem Prep and undergo a much broader grassroots community effort to sustain the school.⁸) This differs from the organic grassroots energy of the southern-led freedom schools, for example, that Charles Payne

⁸ For example, even though the New York Urban League's Eugene Callender—the primary founder of the school—and others were certainly not national heroes, many were still prominent civil rights activists in the city. To illustrate this point, Eugene Callender, Mother Dowd, initial chairman Stephen Wright, and others who become prominent people in the Harlem Prep story (i.e., future Board of Trustees Chairman Robert Mangum) have sizable obituaries in *The New York Times*, even if they are not recognized on a national level.

illuminates in *I've Got the Light of Freedom* or how Jon Hale describes the work of young people who “were on the front lines” in Mississippi.⁹ Zooming out to include educational activism more broadly, the northern-led Black movement for better schools aptly documented by Martha Biondi, Thomas Sugrue, and others also differed from Harlem Prep’s initial founding.¹⁰ For example, Sugrue shares the story of how protestors—mothers, fathers, local residents—boycotted current school conditions in upstate New York; Adina Back shares a similar story, a decade before, about the “Harlem Nine” mothers who boycotted their children’s segregated institutions.¹¹

Harlem Prep was not like these prior efforts. Instead, Harlem Prep’s locally connected founders sought to establish a new school—to create an entirely new educational community instead of trying to address the existing institutions that Harlem students had attended. In this way, the founding of Harlem Prep shares more with the efforts of Black leaders who started Pan African schools. As referenced throughout this dissertation, Russell Rickford’s groundbreaking book *We Are an African People* serves as an apt point of comparison. Rickford’s book on Pan African schools describes “a moment in which cadres of activist-intellectuals saw rethinking schools in poor and working-class African-American communities both as a way to redeem the process of formal learning and as a way to pursue, indeed *prefigure*, black cultural and political

⁹ Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, and Dittmer, *Local People*, detail the on-the-ground community mobilization of Black laypeople; Hale, *Freedom Schools*, 2; One similarity with these accounts, however, is the racially integrated nature of Harlem Prep’s founding, not unlike that of many Freedom Schools. See Cobb, Jr., “Organizing Freedom Schools,” 69-74. However, Cobb, Jr. acknowledges the internal struggle of many Black Freedom School organizers who debated whether or not they should allow liberal whites to participate in these efforts, skeptical of their involvement.

¹⁰ In addition to Sugrue, Theoharis and Woodard, who describe individual moments of protest and activism, as well as Jon Hale who details the larger grassroots youth-led movement for education in Mississippi, there are many others work that demonstrate this grassroots approach cited throughout this dissertation.

¹¹ Adina Back, “Exposing the Whole Segregation Myth?: The Harlem Nine and New York City’s School Desegregation Battles” in *Freedom North*, 65-92.

sovereignty.”¹² Surely, Harlem Prep’s founders like NYUL Executive Director Eugene Callender, too, wanted to rethink education in their beloved Harlem community.

However, in great contrast to these Pan African schools that Rickford and others have described, Callender, even at his most radical point, and his early colleagues were not “cultural and revolutionary nationalists” or “Pan Africanists,” even if they did, as Rickford explains, seek to “develop alternatives to the oppressive institutions that dominated their lives.”¹³ The way in which Harlem Prep would advance Black struggle and progress was through radical multiculturalism—not these other avenues. And, it was Harlem Prep’s inaugural year that set the foundation for the school’s multiculturalism in ways that made it distinct, yet still synergistic with the Black freedom struggle more broadly. Even if Harlem Prep did strongly embrace Black culture and African heritage, the school’s first year was focused keenly on valuing diversity and mostly, on academic achievement and sending these young people to college. These foci differed from Harlem Prep’s Pan African peers. In essence, Harlem Prep offered another vision for Black progress, in addition to those other emancipatory visions documented by scholars.

If Harlem Prep was not a freedom school, or Pan African school, or a mixture of both, then what was it? Part II seeks to answer that question: to explain, in detail, what made Harlem Prep a multicultural school and how its radical multiculturalism operated in practice. One way that the school employed this vision was through its flexibility as exhibited through the school’s administration and inclusivity of ideas—exemplified by its adaptable open-space classroom. Both of these were important elements of the school’s multiculturalism on a foundational and operational level that allowed Ed and Ann Carpenter’s overarching philosophical principles to

¹² Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3; It is important to note that Harlem Prep employed Pan-Africanist teachers such as Dr. Yosef ben Jochannon and later, George Simmons, both who were integral to the school and among the most popular teachers.

flourish. These key principles laid out by the Carpenters included: one, freedom of expression and individuality; two, an appreciation for all cultures; and three, perhaps the most defining characteristic, a belief in oneness and unity. On a more tangible level, these principles played out in school spaces through a focus on: academic success and educational achievement; on giving back to the community and *creating* community; and internalizing Black pride and an exploration of Blackness, including a commitment to supporting students' diverse range of political expressions. This was Harlem Prep's "unity through diversity" on display.

Harlem Prep teachers were the key people responsible for emphasizing both these broader philosophical principles and more specific points of emphasis on a pedagogical and curricular level. The school's diverse teaching staff—in race, age, religion, training, religion, and more—was highly effective in their teaching and learning processes, helping students thrive academically, grow personally, and internalize the school's multicultural ideas. Through granular examples and stories, this dissertation illustrates how teachers, in their class spaces, taught through a breakdown of hierarchy, use of culturally relevant pedagogy, and an embrace of revolutionary love. The school's educational program also aided teachers' efforts. The school's Afro-centric curriculum played a key role in the school's multicultural philosophy, as it was expertly employed to help increase academic achievement (unlike some Pan African schools).

Learning about Harlem Prep's students and sharing their stories also helps understand the school's multiculturalism and what "unity through diversity" looked like on perhaps the most important level: from the perspective of students. Multiculturalism was not just about racial diversity (as Harlem Prep was made up primarily of Black students), but mainly about religious, political, and ideological diversity within the Black community. Sharing the lives of students helps depict how Harlem Prep was able to emphasize the breadth of the Black experience, as

well as other experiences, in their conceptualization of multiculturalism. Furthermore, the school's multiculturalism also occurred beyond school walls.¹⁴ Not discounting the economic necessity of soliciting private money from elites, Harlem Prep was seemingly accepting of outside (white) money also in part because its multicultural principles of inclusivity allowed this to occur. Multiculturalism, to Harlem Prep, did not have set boundaries, racially or ideologically.

Part III of this dissertation further bolsters the argument that Harlem Prep's multiculturalism was a unique educational philosophy by historicizing the school not just in the 1960s, but in the 1970s, too. The stability of Harlem Prep's ideas, despite widespread political and educational upheaval both locally and nationally in the 1970s, shows that its multiculturalism was not a loose or flimsy philosophy that would change according to the politics of the time. Even if rising conservatism of the 1970s ultimately created an inability to secure private funds, the school's existence—and the continued achievement of its students—is a testament to how Harlem Prep's leaders were steadfastly committed to a multicultural vision regardless of whether or not doing so was economically feasible. Harlem Prep was something distinct that educational scholars could not characterize or explain in the 1970s (and not just the 1960s)—it did not fit any “free school” or “public school” or “private school” definitions that characterized this era because it was neither of them fully. It was a *multicultural* school. This pattern can also be seen when the school was forced to merge with the New York City Board of Education. City leaders had trouble grasping Harlem Prep's multiculturalism—and perhaps felt threatened by its record of Black excellence—in part because the school was something so different, and its ideas so durable, compared to other schools in the city.

The final narrative about the school's eventual merging with the public school system

¹⁴ However, chapter 7 also seeks to clarify how—and why—the school built their community coalition of funders, and why funders invested in the school, in service of this particularly interesting part of the school's story.

reiterates many of these points about why the school defied any characterization of the era. As Harlem Prep's leaders—and the Harlem community more broadly—clashed with the Board of Education, the school's key beliefs became even clearer. The Board of Education had previously failed to meet the goals of what the Harlem community saw as being important to sustaining what became their multicultural school: the academic achievement and belief in Black and brown youth with an educational program steeped in flexibility, inclusiveness, and community input. Ultimately, once the school lost its independent status as an autonomous school and became under the purview of the city system in winter of 1974, Harlem Prep's leaders could no longer implement all parts of its multicultural educational program. As a result, over time, the school's radical multiculturalism (and its community support) was stripped away—a reminder that Harlem Prep's educational program was unique and had a prominent role in the Harlem community, but only when its radical multiculturalism could be fully realized.

Coming full circle, this dissertation argues that Harlem Prep's multiculturalism deserves attention by historians, particularly in the context of Black alternative schools and Black emancipatory education during this key era in American history. In Russell Rickford's book about Pan African schools, he concludes how there were multiple views on a spectrum of how to achieve Black progress, particularly within the specific realm of education.¹⁵ On the surface, it might seem that Harlem Prep was just another school on this wide-ranging spectrum of black education. Both the school's nationalistic elements and integrationist tendencies do reflect the various, often intermingled, strands of Black activism of the time. However, as these chapters have shown, Harlem Prep was *not* like these schools. Its radical multiculturalism was distinct—certainly in the era that it existed, and perhaps even within the longer continuum of Black emancipatory educational institutions that historians and education scholars have explored for

¹⁵ Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 16.

decades. These institutions include both “independent” ones that were “closely associated with grassroots, militant enterprises” separate from the white power structure, and segregated Black schools throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁶ From schools that emerged out of the Freedman’s Bureau during Reconstruction to community efforts such as Roses in Concrete in Northern California today, Harlem Prep was certainly connected to this long line of institutions and efforts.¹⁷ However, as of yet, no school that resembles Harlem Prep has been found.

More specifically, if scholars are to recognize that the late 1960s and 1970s, in particular, offered an important moment for Black education, then Harlem Prep’s multicultural philosophy does not seem to be represented in the current historical narrative of Black educational thought amongst the “range of impulses” of this era either.¹⁸ In the case of Rickford (although he notes that his book is not intended to be a full taxonomy of all Black institutions of the era), he purposely excludes Harlem Prep in his far-reaching discussion of Pan African institutions for good reason: Harlem Prep, despite its many elements of Pan Africanism and support from the some of the most “radical” activists, does not fit this characterization. Correctly, Rickford notes how Harlem Prep is different than the schools that he profiles due not only to the fact that it served a different school population—“dropouts”—but had a vastly different educational philosophy.¹⁹ The historical adage rings true here: what has been left out of the story of Black

¹⁶ Ibid., 8; See also V. Lawson Bush, “Independent Black Institutions in America: A Rejection of Schooling, an Opportunity for Education,” *Urban Education* 32 (1997): 98-116; For example, see influential books such as *Their Highest Potential* by Vanessa Siddle Walker and *Black Teachers on Teaching* by Michele Foster.

¹⁷ For example, see, among many, James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) and Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); For information about the Roses in Concrete Community School, founded by Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade, visit <http://rosesinconcrete.org>; This is also not to same that institutions are the same—that is clearly not the case—but only that many institutions have important similarities in ideological orientation or educational philosophies.

¹⁸ Rickford, *We Are an African People*, 16. Rickford, throughout his book, mentions approximately forty different schools throughout the United States. For a map of these schools, see pg. xiv.

educational thought of the era—Harlem Prep—says a lot about what has yet to be explored in this history, such as the existence of multiculturalism during these years. Although Harlem Prep was squarely of this mid-to-late civil rights moment where education took a prominent role in the larger Black freedom struggle, it was also *unique* for this moment in that no other schools known to scholars operated like Harlem Prep. And, as Part III illustrates, Harlem Prep remained a distinct school in a new educational moment—the early-to-mid-1970s—that further proves that the lack of scholarship on Harlem Prep has led to an incomplete educational portrait of this later era, too.

In sum, historians cannot fully understand Black emancipatory education during the 1960s and 1970s without understanding Harlem Prep and its radical multicultural philosophy. Shaped by the contours of this explosive period, Harlem Prep became a powerful example of Black excellence that stood out in an era full of countless other emergent institutions and in a singular community—Harlem—that has (and perhaps still has) profound importance to people of African descent.²⁰ Through my argument, I hope that I have been able to illustrate Harlem Prep’s uniqueness and significance in American educational history throughout my dissertation.

Still, there is one more question to consider: what are the implications of recognizing that Harlem Prep’s multicultural philosophy has not previously been documented by historians? Most notably, the existence of Harlem Prep suggests that scholars should continue to explore the history of multicultural education—and perhaps look for other earlier examples of multicultural education. As scholars such as James Banks and others have noted, multicultural education has

¹⁹ To be sure, Rickford admits that his book does not look into alternative institutions like Harlem Prep that educated “dropout” students or nontraditional students. However, Harlem Prep’s leaders would disagree with such a characterization in the first place; all students at Harlem Prep had the same capacities and same abilities as other schools, with the goal of serving public school-age students. It is also important to point out that Rickford was aware of Harlem Prep and very briefly discusses the school in his dissertation, but not in his newer book—therefore, a purposeful omission. See Rickford, “‘A Struggle in the Arena of Ideas’,” 245-246.

²⁰ See, for example, Fearnley and Matlin, *Race Capital?*.

deep roots in the Black freedom struggle dating back to the late 19th century and all throughout the 20th century.²¹ However, it was not until the late 1980s and more prominently in the early 1990s that multicultural education became popularized in both scholarly discourse and in public practice. The early 1990s saw important scholarship on multiculturalism flourish: what its primary principles entailed, what it looked like in the classroom, and more broadly, how it re-framed knowledge construction and educational equity. Harlem Prep's existence perhaps bumps up the timeline. Like Banks and others who began to formulate their ideas in the early 1970s, Ed Carpenter, too, was writing about multiculturalism (even if he did not use the term)—however, he was also putting it into practice on a large scale. Even if it is unknown whether Harlem Prep was the first multicultural school, the school's existence does suggest that there is more work to be done in understanding the timeline—and even the historical impact—of multicultural education and how scholars think about when these generative ideas were first put into practice in substantive ways.

Learning From Harlem Prep's Multiculturalism in the Present

“Opportunity and outcome gaps continue to plague our students and us as educators,” writes educational scholar, Tyrone C. Howard, today. “This has never been a problem we should ignore, but it has—even among the most well-meaning educators—been one we sometimes did.”²² Howard, a leading voice on educational inequity and renowned scholar on culturally relevant pedagogy and race in education, understands that educators, administrators, and all

²¹ See, for example, James A. Banks, “The African American Roots of Multicultural Education,” in *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action*, Chapter 4.

²² Tyrone C. Howard, “Dismantling the Equity Problem One Conversation at a Time,” *Shaped Blog*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, June 20, 2018, <https://www.hmhco.com/blog/dismantling-the-equity-problem-one-conversation-at-a-time>.

advocates for a more just educational system, have for too long failed to solve this injustice.²³ Or, perhaps more accurately, critical educational stakeholders have been prevented from solving it. Educational inequity, ingrained in the fabric of this country's history, continues to exist broadly still today, particularly for students of color and others who are the most vulnerable in society. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, lifelong educators Edward Carpenter and Ann Carpenter, student advocates Hussein Ahdieh and E. Salmon McFarlane, and dozens of compassionate educators such as Sandy Campbell, George Simmons, Bari Haskins-Jackson and so many others, partook in an experiment to solve the issue of educational inequality of their community in *their* era. And, for a moment in time, their experiment largely worked. As preeminent scholar Eric Foner once wrote, there is a "usable past" that can inform the present, and Harlem Prep has much to contribute to our current day issues in education that are not so dissimilar from the era that Harlem Prep existed.²⁴

Chief among the lessons that we can learn from Harlem Prep is the fruitfulness of re-visiting an authentic version of multicultural education. Harlem Prep's broader multicultural vision, which was tremendously forward thinking, has palpable implications for education today. Specifically, the Carpenters' brand of radical multiculturalism needs to be re-examined in a present-day context; it was both immersed in Black culture and powerful Pan-African heritage, while emphasizing inclusivity and a deep appreciation for the diverse society (including their

²³ Howard's scholarly work on Black males, critical race theory, educational equity, and culturally relevant pedagogy include books such as Howard, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*; Tyrone C. Howard, *Black Male(d) Peril and Promise in Education of African American Males* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2013); and Tyrone C. Howard, Jonli Tunstall, and Terry K. Flennaugh, eds., *Expanding College Access for Urban Youth: What Schools and Colleges Can Do* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2016). Prominent articles include Tyrone C. Howard, "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Ingredients for Critical Teacher Reflection," *Theory Into Practice* 42, no. 3 (2003): 195-202; Tyrone C. Howard, "Multicultural Teacher Education for the 21st Century," *The Teacher Educator* 36, no. 1 (2000): 1-16; and Tyrone C. Howard, "Who Really Cares? The Disenfranchisement of African American Males in Pre-K-12 Schools: A Critical Race Theory Perspective," *Teachers College Record* 110, no. 5 (2008): 954-985.

²⁴ Eric Foner, "Forgotten Step Toward Freedom," *The New York Times*, December 30, 2007.

own Black community) in which students lived. It is why Ed Carpenter, a very proud African American man steeped in the histories of the African diaspora, was also proud to lead a school that has “caused Black youth to call a White youth Brother.”²⁵ Both Ann and Ed Carpenter conceptualized an all-encompassing school philosophy that mixed cultural heritage in a bona fide, critical manner, while strongly emphasizing the value of diversity—not just racially, but linguistically, ethnically, religiously, socio-economically, and beyond within the Black experience. This vision that the Carpenters and their staff put into action over fifty years ago is the future of American life; in the country’s growing metropolises and in its beautiful diversifying society, Harlem Prep’s vision for not just for education, but for the world, could not be more timely.

Sonia Nieto, one of the foremost scholars of multicultural education today, explains that multicultural education is “primarily a set of beliefs and a philosophy, rather than a set program or fixed content.”²⁶ It is not “tolerance” for others—that is a “superficial ‘bandaid’ or a ‘feel-good’ addictive to our school curricula,” adds Nieto, but something more, something deeper and more meaningful.²⁷ The quotes from Carpenter above about students being brothers (and sisters) goes far beyond tolerance and matches Nieto’s vision for true multicultural education. Today, Harlem Prep’s history provides an example of what powerful school-wide multiculturalism looks like in practice—as its original theorists intended—instead of the watered-down, surface level multiculturalism promoted in many classrooms today.²⁸ Moreover, considering the school’s

²⁵ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 129.

²⁶ Sonia Nieto, *Language, Culture, and Teaching: Critical Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 249.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 248.

²⁸ For a larger discussion of the origins and other key tenets of multiculturalism, refer to Chapter 4. For recent texts, see, for example, James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks, *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*,

emphasis on Black intra-racial diversity, it helps combat the notion that multiculturalism is only about difference across racial and ethnic or cultural categories, which has sometimes had the effect of essentializing or homogenizing the experiences of all Black people and other groups. (Furthermore, Harlem Prep’s existence also shatters more overt racist notions that emphasizing Black culture, or ethnic studies more broadly, somehow promotes discrimination.²⁹) Total school environments (and not *just* pedagogy) can be radical and inclusive—these concepts go hand-in-hand with a liberal, humanistic education that seeks to teach students about, and how to civically participate in, a globalized world. Harlem Prep’s goal of preparing students “to live and function in a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-racial society,” and do so in a culturally affirming and academically rigorous fashion, should be re-visited in the context of current American schooling.³⁰ Harlem Prep’s multiculturalism was both idealistic and hopeful, while also critical and grounded in the histories of marginalized people. The school’s philosophy is (or at least should be) the essential American creed: *e pluribus unum*—out of many, we are one. Or, as Carpenter might have told his students at an impromptu assembly: “unity can be achieved through diversity.”³¹ Almost twenty-five ago, James Banks wrote that: “a significant challenge posed by the increasing recognition of diversity within the U.S. society is how to create a cohesive and democratic society while at the same time allowing citizens to maintain their ethnic, cultural, and primordial identifications and affiliations.”³² That challenge has never been

9th ed. (New York: Wiley, 2015) and Sonia Nieto, *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*, 10th ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2009).

²⁹ See, for example, the fight for Ethnic Studies in Arizona, which, after years of legal battles, is now allowed in the state. Nolan L. Cabrera, Elisa L. Meza, and Roberto Dr. Cintli Rodriguez, *NACLA Magazine*, December 8, 2011, <https://nacla.org/article/fight-mexican-american-studies-tucson>.

³⁰ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 30.

³¹ Banks, “Transformative Knowledge, Curriculum Reform, and Action,” in *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action*, 335

more pressing in our current age, particularly as this challenge has gone unheeded, forcing marginalized peoples to adapt a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture throughout the entire history of this country's existence—and since this existence, and still today, feeling the forces of oppression as a result. Instead of an *unum* that values the cultural capital of white society, and values the lives of people based on race, the *unum* that should be taught is the one at Harlem Prep: a shared identity based on respect, kindness, hope, civic participation, and a valuing of diversity in a way that allows for individual group identity to still flourish and grow.

Also key to this *unum*—of making all the parts of Harlem Prep's multicultural philosophy work—was love. At its core, Harlem Prep is a story about what love in an educational space looks like and how it manifests beyond school walls. Harlem Prep illustrated, time and time again, that love is at the root of education. Love is timeless—it has no expiration date, no pre-contexts, no boundaries. The administrators, teachers, and staff at Harlem Prep never forgot that—and nor should we. For educational stakeholders who are interested in closing outcome gaps, or building a school, or training teachers, or hiring an administrator, they must remember that any of those actions must be rooted in love. Love was at the center of everything that Harlem Prep did, and it was this love—a “revolutionary love”—that made the whole experiment work.³³

Harlem Prep provides a blueprint for what this philosophy of unity (and love) could like look on a school-wide and community-wide level, if adapted and learned from—both its successes and its missteps—for our current age. To be sure, our country is a vastly different society than it was when Ann Carpenter stood on the stage in front of the Hotel Theresa on 125th Street in Harlem and declared how her brilliant Black and brown students would “go onto a

³² Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 35.

³³ See Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, *The Art of Critical Pedagogy*, 187.

world of unity, where the most important thing was justice.”³⁴ Politically, demographically, technologically, and beyond, the United States of America today—and New York City particularly—is very different than the one in which Harlem Prep inhabited. Still, despite these different contexts, many components of that world *are* the same and have shamelessly remained ugly characteristics of American society: structural (and personal) racism in schools and the fact that Black and brown students are still not receiving the equitable education they deserve. Thus, the work of Harlem Prep remains exceedingly relevant. Educational scholars today should consider Harlem Prep’s model in current schools, meshing their practices and placing them in context with other progressive forms of schooling such as critical pedagogy, culturally relevant leadership, reality pedagogy, and many more.³⁵ Moreover, multicultural education—too often co-opted by uncritical educational stakeholders in the last few decades to be a simplistic curricular exercise—relates to so many of these important innovations in education scholarship, just at different levels of the school. Harlem Prep’s multicultural philosophy is applicable not just to the classroom, but to the principal’s office and the parents’ association. It encircles an entire school—not just one particular element. Harlem Prep was an example of that in practice, incorporating multiculturalism as the underlying principle to every school idea, action, or goal. The past does not provide prescriptions, but it can provide guidance. Perhaps we would be wise to use Harlem Prep as a guide in our own challenges in creating an equitable and just society where schools and school communities must play a central role.

³⁴ “*Step by Step*”: *The Story of Harlem Prep*, dir. Kurt Lassen, 1971, DVD.

³⁵ For critical pedagogy, see Peter McLaren and Joe L. Kincheloe, *Critical Pedagogy: Where Are We Now?* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007); For culturally relevant leadership, see Kathy L. Guthrie, Tamara Bertrand Jones, and Laura Osteen, *Developing Culturally Relevant Leadership Learning: New Directions for Student Leadership, Number 152* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2016); For reality pedagogy, see Christopher Emdin, *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y’all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017).

Harlem Prep in Conversation with Contemporary Educational Research

Although Harlem Prep's multiculturalism is the central argument of this dissertation, there are other elements of the Harlem Prep story that can provide a number of insights to current discourse in education and for contemporary education scholars. First among those insights is the addition of a unique data point on culturally relevant teaching. On a granular level, the story of Harlem Prep builds upon decades of scholarship that shows how culturally relevant teaching and pedagogy rooted in the lives of students leads to academic achievement and socio-emotional empowerment. Popularized by scholars such as Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay who codified the effectiveness of relying on students' cultural knowledge and experiences, elements of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) occurred at Harlem Prep before the term was invented in educational literature.³⁶ There, CRP was employed by non-credentialed faculty and in a noisy, open-space classroom that paralleled students' city experiences. Harlem Prep's existence provides atypical examples of CRP's effectiveness in an informal, in-school educational environment over a seven-year longitudinal period—as opposed to CRP research in traditional classroom settings or during out-of-school time in shorter studies. Whether occurring at the turn of the 20th century in Carter G. Woodson's *The Mis-education of the Negro*, in segregated schoolhouses in the Jim Crow south, in the urban environment at Harlem Prep in the post-Civil Rights era, or today in organized classrooms with particular syllabi all throughout the country, pedagogy that speaks to students' culture has proven to be effective no matter the era or context. For scholars today theorizing new strands of research on CRP, Harlem Prep, as a historical case study, can be a fruitful example.

³⁶ A wave of Black scholars in the last two decades have written extensively about culturally relevant pedagogy, such as Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010), 10; Gloria Ladson-Billings, *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009); and Howard, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*.

Harlem Prep’s focus on a particular group of students—young people characterized as “dropouts” and other non-traditional students who did not find success within the public school system—can inform scholars who research this student demographic today.³⁷ Currently, there are many scholars of urban education who seek to identify and promote the academic success of similar groups of students that sociologist of education Prudence Carter terms “noncompliant believers,” or those who believe in education but clash with (white) mainstream school culture and rules.³⁸ The students who attended, and then excelled, at Harlem Prep fit this definition almost to a tee; this dissertation has shared the stories of many former students who left (or were pushed out of) traditional education because of discrimination in their classrooms or because they felt unwelcome there, while also still wanting an education elsewhere (either at their own or somebody else’s urging). Since Harlem Prep successfully sent over 750 of these students who had left the public school system to college, exploring how administrators and faculty were able to do so has far-reaching ramifications, including insight on how to best identify “dropout” or struggling students, how to create a welcoming school climate, and what kind of scaffolds and supports are needed for bright, but underachieving, youth. While there are sure to be other examples of schools with similar populations of students, the totality of Harlem Prep’s story and length of its tenure—and, its Harlem location (and not part of a suburban high school district, for example)—make it a particularly valuable data point for contemporary scholars to learn from. Moreover, urban education scholars such as Tyrone Howard have studied Black male excellence in schools, specifically, and considering that Harlem Prep’s largest population was Black males, examining the success of students at this institution can connect—and perhaps build on—

³⁷ For example, the Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA has researched students who have been pushed out of school for decades. See <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/school-dropouts>.

³⁸ See Prudence Carter, *Keepin’ It Real: School Success Beyond Black and White* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10.

poignant new research in this sub-field, too.³⁹

Finally, research on Harlem Prep has the possibility to inform education policy scholars who study charter schools and the pressing issue of corporate involvement in education. Since Harlem Prep shared many characteristics with today's charter schools—for example, an alternative pedagogical model and financial backing of philanthropies and corporations—yet, existed decades before the contemporary charter school movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s, it presents new information about current understandings of charter school ancestry. Harlem Prep's history can bring valuable new insight to current academic debates on the original purpose of charter schools, which, as some supporters claim (and Harlem Prep administrators wanted), was to provide a model for public schools to innovate and perhaps even emulate—not to build large school networks based on accountability that are common today.⁴⁰ The creation of large charter school networks has seemingly drifted far away from the original purpose of charter schools decades ago. Perhaps re-examining Harlem Prep in a present-day context can provide much needed clarity about the role charter schools should (or should not) play in supporting public education, since improving public schools that serve a very large majority of students, should be the focus of educational stakeholders. Harlem Prep represents one manifestation of the earlier strong desire for autonomous institutions, given frustrations with the public system, while

³⁹ For example, see Howard, *Black Male(d)Peril and Promise in Education of African American Males*, and Tyrone C. Howard, "How Does It Feel to Be a Problem? Black Male Students, Schools, and Learning in Enhancing the Knowledge Base to Disrupt Deficit Frameworks," *Review of Research in Education* 37, no. 1 (2013): 54–86.

⁴⁰ For example, left-leaning charter school advocates—of which there are fewer today as opposed to the 1990s—such as Richard Kahlenberg argue this fact. See Richard D. Kahlenberg and Halley Potter, "Restoring Shanker's Vision for Charter Schools," *American Educator* 38 (4), Winter 2014-2015: 4-13. For the original intent of charters from the era, see Ted Kolderie, "Beyond Choice to New Public Schools: Withdrawing the Exclusive Franchise in Public Education (Report No. 8)," (Washington, DC: Progressive Policy Institute, 1990). Of course, prominent scholars such as Amy Stuart Wells and others who have studied charter schools for decades argue that they emerged solely out of the conservative accountability and standards movement, and were not about equity or access. See, among many, Amy Stuart Wells, ed., *Where Charter School Policy Fails: The Problems of Accountability and Equity* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002); Lisa M. Stulberg, *Race, Schools, and Hope: African Americans and School Choice after Brown* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2008); and Eric Rofes and Lisa M. Stulberg, eds., *The Emancipatory Promise of Charter Schools: Toward a Progressive Politics of School Choice* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004).

it also had hopes—like charters—of providing a useful example to help improve that system.

There has also been a recent scholarly focus on the influx of private money into public education.⁴¹ Studying the historic impact of private money over Harlem Prep's seven years can be useful for understanding the benefits and drawbacks of this contentious flow of corporate money today. For example, there is potential insight to be learned from the school's strategies for securing these funds, its potential downfalls and harmful limitations, how it created networks for students, and/or the way in which the school worked to balance the concerns of corporations with the will of the local community. Harlem Prep walked the very delicate balance of securing external funding sources from mostly white powerful institutions while remaining autonomous and responsive to the largely Black Harlem community that it proudly served. Furthermore, in a more idealistic rendering, Harlem Prep was also able to create alliances across racial and ideological lines. In a society where unaccounted streams of money and strong interest groups with questionable intentions continue to attack progressive education reform, Harlem Prep shows that it is possible—and that there are enough interested parties—for groups and institutions to work together across race and ideology when necessary. Harlem Prep provides a rough blueprint for how it is done, but more tangibly, proves that it indeed *can* be done. For these reasons, Harlem Prep can be an interesting point of reference for scholars who study community schooling and public-private partnerships.⁴² All of these streams of scholarship are only examples of the timeliness of Harlem Prep's story, and surely there are many more ways that educational scholars today can learn from the school's history.

⁴¹ See, for example, Pritha Gopalan, *PPP Paradox: Promise and Perils of Public-Private Partnership in Education* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2013); Antoni Verger et al., *The Privatization of Education: A Political Economy of Global Education Reform* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2016).

⁴² See, for example, recent collections: Steve Sheldon and Tammy Taylor-Vorbeck, *The Wiley Handbook of Family, School, and Community Relationships in Education* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2019); and Joyce L. Epstein et al., *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 2018).

Epilogue

The Legacy of Harlem Prep

“I think [Harlem Prep] was a gift, now that we look back, because it really—we weren’t bad kids, but it saved us It saved me.”

–Ajuba Grinage-Bartley, 1970 Harlem Prep Graduate¹

“I went to Harlem Prep to receive a high school diploma that I could be proud of. I received much, much more than I could ever imagine.”

–Francisco Rivera, Jr., 1973 Harlem Prep Graduate²

Although this dissertation documents Harlem Prep from its beginning as an independent school to its merging with the Board of Education, the total story of Harlem Prep does not end in 1975. In the years that followed, many more hundreds of Harlem Prep graduates would parade down the streets of Harlem, celebrating their commencement with family and friends and head off to college.³ Many more hundreds would undergo some dose of the Harlem Prep experience—albeit less and less as the years went by. And, finally, many more hundreds of young people would continue to pursue their dreams because of the work of dedicated teachers, staff, and administrators. Even if Harlem Prep’s independent status suddenly vanished, it would take years before Harlem Prep’s methodology and the influence of previous students and staff would

¹ Grinage-Bartley and Grinage interview, April 17, 2017.

² Francisco Rivera, e-mail exchange to author, April 7, 2018.

³ See pictures from 1978 commencement, via Casey Carpenter, personal collection; However, by at least 1978, commencement was no longer held on the actual street in front of the Hotel Theresa on 125th Street, but in the courtyard of the Harlem State Building across from the Hotel Theresa. It is unknown why this location switched.

disappear. The stories and triumphs of these young people who passed through Harlem Prep post-independence should not be discounted in the scope of the school's entire history.

From 1975 to 1981, Harlem Prep remained part of the New York City Board of Education as an alternative public school, one of eleven alternative schools managed by the city system.⁴ Based on public school data, Harlem Prep continued to have high attendance rates and graduation rates during the first few years under the Board of Education, perhaps aided by the school's lasting reputation and remaining administrators.⁵ In fact, all 118 students of the 1977 graduating class—100% of students—received their diplomas.⁶ Board of Education reports continued to describe Harlem Prep as having a “broad range of elective programs” in comparison to other alternative schools, which hints at its still-robust educational program.⁷ Furthermore, students who attended Harlem Prep during these initial public school years still report memorable experiences at the school. “It was beautiful, it was a blessing—it was a blessing *and* a community. It saved me,” explains alumna Cynthia Harmon who attended and graduated during the late 1970s. “Once you got there, it was home. It was no nonsense; people respected you and you respected people.”⁸ (And, Harmon adds, “Mrs. Carpenter was the best.”⁹) Harlem Prep alumni groups today include many individuals who graduated in the mid-to-late 1970s, and

⁴ See Board of Education, “List/Description of Independent Alternative High Schools (Board of Education),” February 1977, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I: Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 23, Folder 279, BOE Records.

⁵ New York City Board of Education, *School Profiles 1976-1977*, Office of Student Information, School Profiles, 1971-1984, Series 1480, BOE Records. For example, in the 1976-1977 academic year, Harlem Prep had a 67.4% daily attendance rate and, impressively, 100% of students in the graduating class received diplomas. See pgs. 78-101.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ New York City Board of Education, Division of High Schools, “Independent High Schools, 1977-1978,” February 1977, p. 1, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I, Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 23, Folder 279, BOE Records.

⁸ Cynthia Harmon, personal communication with author, December 18, 2018.

⁹ Ibid.

like Harmon, their words of praise and similar descriptions of the school—of it being a home and a cherished community, about it forever changing their lives—echo the experiences of those who graduated during the school’s independent phase.¹⁰ To those who graduated later, they do not distinguish between these two phases of the school’s existence—a reminder to historians that the politics of the school or how we choose to create particular narratives do not transcend meaningful, life-altering learning experiences of the students who attended.

However, as the late 1970s progressed, Harlem Prep seemed to quickly descend. Just three years later in 1980, not only did attendance rates continue to systematically fall, but less than *half* of all graduating students received their diplomas.¹¹ Moreover, the esteemed supermarket space, now “structurally inadequate and deteriorating,” was no longer a viable school building, and after much negotiation and discussion, Harlem Prep moved to the infamous Intermediate School 201—site of the community control struggles in the late 1960s—to start the 1980 fall term.¹² It is striking that the school, once defined by its open-space classroom and an openness of ideas, moved to a building that had no windows and represented a very different architectural reality. By this time, the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees was virtually non-existent and most importantly, Ed Carpenter had departed the school and was replaced by Ann Carpenter

¹⁰ The Harlem Prep Alumni Facebook group is one such example, which has over 80 members. Furthermore, there was a gathering of alumni in 2011 that featured alumni of all graduation years and a small gathering that I attended in 2016.

¹¹ Board of Education, *School Profiles 1979-1980*, Office of Student Information, School Profiles, 1971-1984, Series 1480, BOE Records.

¹² “Harlem Prep Fights Relocation to a Site Notorious for Drugs,” *New York Times*, May 29, 1978; See, among many, Board of Education, “[Official] Transfer of Jurisdiction of Intermediate School 201, Manhattan from Community School District 5 to the Division of High Schools (Division 78),” in *Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York, 1981*, City Journal, Series 116, 1981, 607–8, BOE Records. Robert Mangum, still the Chairman of the Harlem Prep Board of Trustees, sought to sell the supermarket space to the board or have the board take control of the building for a few years prior. See Letter from Robert Mangum to Irving Anker, February 17, 1978, Chancellor Irving Anker, Series 1105, Box 20, BOE Records.

in an interim basis.¹³ Not only did the school lose its open-space classroom and its visionary headmaster, but other multicultural elements of the school such as its community-based teaching staff, flexible content standards, and adaptable school policies were eventually eroded, too. Even if the school's multicultural principles of unity through diversity remained the same, the school and its leaders no longer had the freedom to put this vision into practice in all the ways described in this dissertation. Despite what was certainly Ann Carpenter's best efforts, without all of these elements working together "as a whole," Harlem Prep—and its entire multicultural educational program—ceased to operate and cohere together as it once had. Harlem Prep became a relic of its former self.¹⁴

Finally, on February 6, 1982, the *New York Amsterdam News* wrote a short column about Harlem Prep merging with Park East High School, a remedial-focused alternative institution in East Harlem. This brief column—the only media coverage of this event—stood in stark contrast to the school's beginnings (and later merger), where newspapers like the *New York Times* and other national outlets clamored to write in-depth profiles and frequent news updates about the school. (During the school's independent tenure, the Black-owned *New York Amsterdam News* wrote nearly weekly columns about Harlem Prep; in the late 1970s and into the 1980s, it was rare to even see one.) "In an effort to save Harlem Prep from phasing out because of substantial

¹³ The Board of Trustees, once a robust collection of community members, businesspeople, and parents that fundraised and supported the school, was "merely a landlord" with only active participation from Mangum and Chase Manhattan banker Francis Shea. See Letter from Robert Mangum to Irving Anker, May 19, 1978, Chancellor Irving Anker, Series 1105, Box 20, BOE Records; In terms of Edward Carpenter's departure, it is unclear why and when he left—as are the circumstances by which Ann Carpenter was hired on this interim basis, even though she was still involved in the school. Still, Board of Education records state that Ann Carpenter was the interim headmaster starting in 1980. See Memo from Nathan Quinones to Richard F. Halverson, January 8, 1980, Amelia H. Ashe Files, Series 312, Subseries I: Subject Files 1974-1985, Box 23, Folder 279, BOE Records.

¹⁴ Student records from these later years also began to look vastly different than student records from the school's independent years. These records became bureaucratized and standardized, in ways that matched other Board of Education schools—and not full of questionnaires and student stories that dominated student record folders at the start. I had the opportunity to view remaining student records at Park East High School, across different graduation eras, in the aggregate.

decline in its enrollment, the Central Board of Education this week gave the green light for the institution to merge with Park East High, an alternative school in Manhattan,” stated the *New York Amsterdam News*.¹⁵ In spring of 1981, of Harlem Prep’s 502 registered students, only 34% attended on a daily basis, and only 22 students were part of the graduating class—almost all of whom would not attend college.¹⁶ With the transfer of the school’s remaining students to Park East High School in East Harlem in early 1982, Harlem Prep’s story, officially, was complete.

The Harlem Prep Legacy

Although Harlem Prep has long ceased to physically exist, today, the school’s legacy remains as strong as ever in the lives of former students and staff. As headmaster Edward Carpenter once wrote, “no one enters Harlem Prep that is not changed for the better”—and alumni today still speak of the indelible mark that the school made on their lives.¹⁷ Harlem Prep was able to do what every school—what every educator—hopes to do: to help a young person reach his or her dreams. Ultimately, the essence of the Harlem Prep story, in all its complexities, contradictions, and novelties, is a story about people and the boldness of their dreams: dreams for a better world, dreams for a better school system, dreams for a better life.¹⁸ “I’m a dreamer,” confidently declared a student in the introduction of the *Step by Step* documentary. “And, I think, the Prep is the *machine* for the fulfillment for my dream.”¹⁹ This student was right. As the story

¹⁵ J. Zamgba Browne, “Harlem Prep Merges with Park East High,” *New York Amsterdam News*, February 6, 1982.

¹⁶ Board of Education, *School Profiles 1980-1981*, Office of Student Information, School Profiles, 1971-1984, Series 1480, BOE Records. Only 7 students of the 22 students applied to college—less than a third of all graduates. This is a stark difference to compared to 1997, when almost two-thirds of students applied to college in 1977.

¹⁷ Carpenter, “The Development of an Alternative School,” 129.

¹⁸ On the power of dreams in the Black freedom struggle, see Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (New York: Beacon Press, 2003).

¹⁹ “*Step by Step*”: *The Story of Harlem Prep*, dir. Kurt Lassen, 1971, DVD.

of Harlem Prep proves, dreams are immensely powerful. They are innate. They are everywhere. They are *everyone*.²⁰ Dreams inspire people to keep going, to persevere, against what can seem like insurmountable odds. For Ed and Ann Carpenter, all the Harlem Prep teachers, and particularly the many hundreds of students who had faced deep personal hardships, the dreams for themselves or for others was their North Star.

This is how educational stakeholders must judge Harlem Prep today. It was not a perfect institution nor were its educators infallible—there is, and never has been, a silver bullet to creating educational equity. Moreover, surely, due to continued personal hardship or unceasing social injustice (or both) many students never reached those dreams once their school experience ended; these students, the ones who remain voiceless and unable to contribute to the Harlem Prep story (or have passed on), should not be forgotten. These former students are as much a part of the school’s legacy as any.

But so many young people did reach their dreams—*because* of Harlem Prep. “We promised [students] that if they really commit themselves, and if they stick to their dreams and our suggestions, we’ll ensure they go to colleges and universities,” insists administrator Hussein Ahdieh in reflection.²¹ Today, students and staff who continue to carry on the Harlem Prep legacy are the embodiment of those dreams. Fifty years after the New York Urban League and Edward Carpenter enthusiastically opened the doors in the Harlem Armory, Harlem Prep alumni and former staff remain in touch. Some have formed a close-knit community in New York City, as well as a virtual community online.²² There have been Harlem Prep reunions and public facing

²⁰ These thoughts are taken from a blog post on my personal website, where I reflected on writing the Harlem Prep story and the concept of life dreams. See Barry M. Goldenberg, “Birthday Dreams,” June 9, 2018, <http://barrygoldenberg.com/birthdaydreams>.

²¹ Ahdieh interview, November 12, 2016.

²² See for example, as described above, the Harlem Prep Reunion Facebook group.

events in recent years where Harlem Prep alumni have attended.²³ The “legacy” that students speak of is not in the physical presence of the school, but in the people who experienced it.²⁴ Harlem Prep is Harry Smith, a social worker, who is currently working on his second master’s degree; it is Beverly Grayman-Rich, a nurse of 38 years. Harlem Prep is Penny Grinage, a longtime teacher and principal who used what she learned at Harlem Prep and taught it forward; it is Aissatou Bey-Grecia, a lifelong Harlemitte dedicated to her community. And, Harlem Prep is Sandy Campbell, also a lifelong educator who was generous and trusting enough to help and befriend a young, white graduate student—an outsider—out of kindness and a belief in hope that he developed all those years ago at Harlem Prep. These people and their impact on the world are the school’s legacy today.

* * * * *

I remember sitting across the living room table at Sandy Campbell’s apartment, on a cold, snowy New York City afternoon. Campbell, in his early 70s, taught English at Harlem Prep for most of its independent existence, and over the years, became a key figure—and that is an understatement—in helping me connect with dozens of his former students and otherwise steep upon me information about Harlem Prep. He also became, and remains, a close friend. But on that snowy afternoon, I had only met Campbell one time before—our initial oral history interview in January of 2015. Here, at this moment, he had kindly invited me into his home to meet. We could not be more opposites in appearance. Campbell, tall and broad; me, short and slender. He identified as Black, me as white. Campbell had a long, fruitful career in education

²³ In 2017, Casey Carpenter, the daughter of Ann and Ed Carpenter, and I organized an event discussing Harlem Prep legacy’s and the first known public showing of *Step by Step: The Story of Harlem Prep* at the Montclair Art Museum in New Jersey. The event included attendance by Harlem Prep alumni, many who reconnected after many years.

²⁴ Bey-Grecia interview, February 25, 2015.

while I was still trying to figure out what my career in education could even be. Him, a man of great cultural capital and worldly experiences, me, on the other hand, with few comparable cultural experiences of note. Campbell had entered his sage years post-retirement, I was—then—in my mid-20s. Yet, as we shortly came to realize, we had much in common. Harlem Prep helped bring us to this moment, together.

I do not remember our exact conversations that afternoon, sitting across the table from each other, my MacBook closed in front of me, his notebook and fountain pen at his side. I do know that we of course talked about Harlem Prep—and I do recall that he provided some additional phone numbers of former students who might be willing to speak with me, helping me plan future oral history interviews with the young Harlem high school students that I had been working with at the time.²⁵ I vaguely remember discussions ranging from the fraught state of our nation's politics to sharing a bit about our families. What I do remember—vividly—was his kindness, the love that radiated from his soul, and his belief in me as a young-ish person trying to figure life out even though he barely knew me. From that afternoon and subsequent meetings, our cordial relationship and his role as somebody generously helping me research Harlem Prep grew into a deep friendship—a friendship that transcended race or age or ideology. (Despite our differences, we shared—and still do—so many similarities.) My Harlem Prep research, already in a consistent progression, further flourished after that meeting, and, as historians are apt to do, I then spent the next four years going to what felt like the ends of the earth to capture fully the Harlem Prep story the best that I could.

Yet, when I reflect on my personal Harlem Prep journey, my countless hours of research, and my imperfect attempt to write the story of Harlem Prep through this dissertation, I realize that it all can be winnowed down to that snowy afternoon at Sandy Campbell's apartment—to

²⁵ See Goldenberg, "Rethinking Historical Practice and Community Engagement."

the feelings I had that day that were reflective of everything I have learned about Harlem Prep ever since. Campbell's kindness shown to me that day was Harlem Prep. His belief in me as a young person to tell a story that far predated me was Harlem Prep. The love in his words—and flowing throughout the pictures, scriptures, and books decorating his apartment—that was Harlem Prep too. As Robin D. G. Kelley poignantly once wrote in his book *Freedom Dreams*, it is love that may be one of the “most revolutionary ideas available to us, and yet as intellectuals, we have failed miserably to grapple with [its] political and analytical importance.”²⁶ While the scholarly contributions of Harlem Prep's story are important, they may fall out of favor or can be changed through the next wave of scholarly revisions. People, too, come and go; so will school buildings, which rise and fall and change over time. But, *ideas*, however, are forever. Ideas about kindness, compassion, belief in young people, and most of all, love—the same ideas shown to me by Sandy Campbell that day and acted upon during Harlem Prep's existence—have immense, eternal power. If we are to re-imagine education, it will be through embodying these ideas in our practices, codifying them inside schools and through the people who run them. These ideas that radiated from Harlem Prep live in the people who hold the school's story in their hearts. So, as we think about what education can be, I hope that we too hold these ideas close and reflect on the Harlem Prep story because it is these timeless ideas that will change the world—and will outlast us all and, hopefully, inspire future educators and beyond for many generations to come.

²⁶ Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, 11-12.

Sources and Bibliography

Archival Collections (organized by the abbreviations that are used in the footnotes):

BOE Records	Records of the Board of Education of the City of New York, Municipal Archives of New York City, NY (BOE)
Carnegie Records	Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, Columbia University Rare Books & Manuscripts, Columbia University, New York, NY
Field Records	Field Foundation Archives, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
Ford Records	Ford Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, NY
ExxonMobil Records	ExxonMobil Historical Collection, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
NYUL Records	New York Urban League, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division
Rockefeller Records	Rockefeller Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, NY
Tamiment Records	United Federation of Teachers Records, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York, NY
Durst Collection	Seymour B. Durst Old York Library Collection, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University [CLIO], New York, NY

Periodical Sources:

Atlanta Daily World

Associated Press

Baltimore Afro-American

Black Enterprise

Business Week

Boston Globe

Call and Post
Chicago Daily Defender
Chicago Tribune
Christian Science Monitor
Daily News
Harper's Magazine
Harrison Patch
Jet
Los Angeles Sentinel
Nation's Business
National Geographic
New Journal and Guide
New York Amsterdam News
New York Urban League News
Newsday
Newsline
Newsweek
The New York Times
The Hartford Courant
The Record/Herald News
The Sun
Time
Urban League News

Oral Histories Conducted by the Author (transcripts available upon request):

Hussein Ahdieh, November 11, 2016

Frank Berger, November 28, 2016

*Aissatou Bey-Grecia, February 25, 2015 (co-conducted with Robert Randolph and Ibrahim Ali)

*Sandy Campbell, January 14, 2015 (co-conducted with Robert Randolph and Michael Montero)

Alberto Cappas, November 19, 2016

Casey Carpenter, June 4, 2017

Beverly Grayman-Rich, May 11, 2017

Penny Grinage, April 17, 2017

Ajuba Bartley-Grinage, April 17, 2017

Mwanajua Kahamu, February 24, 2017

Bari Haskins-Jackson, June 6, 2017

*Peter Hopson, February 11, 2015 (co-conducted with Michael Montero)

Clifford Jacobs, November 18, 2013

Sherry Kilgore, May 21, 2017

*Sterling Nile, March 4, 2015 (co-conducted with Chris Brooks and Ibrahim Ali)

Martin Nur, July 7, 2017

Henry Pruitt, May 11, 2017

*Ed Randolph, February 21, 2017 (co-conducted with Robert Randolph)

Craig Rothman, October 19, 2016

Harry Smith, March 7, 2017

Joshua Smith, March 2, 2016

*These interviews were co-conducted with then-current public high school students from Harlem, as part of the Youth Historians in Harlem (YHH) program.

Published Works:

Abrahamson, Eric John. *Beyond Charity: A Century of Philanthropic Innovation*. New York: Rockefeller Foundation, 2013.

Adickes, Sandra. *Legacy of a Freedom School*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Ahdieh, Hussein. "Harlem Preparatory School: An Alternative." PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1974.

_____. "Sacrificial Education: For the Good of Others." *Bahaiteachings.org*, 2016, <http://bahaiteachings.org/sacrificial-education-for-the-good-of-others>.

Ahdieh, Hussein, and Hillary Chapman. *A Way Out of No Way: Harlem Prep: Transforming Dropouts Into Scholars, 1967-1977*. Self-published, CreateSpace, 2016.

Anderson, Carol D. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016.

Anderson, James D. *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

Armfield, Felix L. *Eugene Kinckle Jones: The National Urban League and Black Social Work, 1910-1940*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

Auletta, Ken. *Hard Feelings: Reporting on the Poles, the Press, the People and the City*. New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2011.

Back, Adina. "Exposing the "Whole Segregation Myth": The Harlem Nine and New York City's School Desegregation Battles," In *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*, edited by Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, 65-91. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Back, Adina. "'Parent Power': Evelina López Antonetty, the United Bronx Parents, and the War on Poverty." In *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980*, edited by Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, 184-208. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011.

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. New York: Vintage, 1962.

_____. "Unnameable Objects, Unspeakable Crimes." In *The White Problem in America*, edited by Ebony editors. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1966.

Banks, Cherry A. McGee. "Intellectual Leadership and African-American Challenges to Meta-Narratives." In *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action: History*

- and Contemporary Analysis*, edited by James A. Banks, 46-63. New York: Teachers College Press, 1996.
- Banks, Cherry A. McGee, and James A. Banks. *Improving Multicultural Education: Lessons from the Intergroup Education Movement*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2004.
- Banks, James A., and Cherry A. McGee Banks. *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, 9th ed. New York: Wiley, 2015.
- _____. "A Content Analysis of the Black American in Textbooks." *Social Education* 33, no. 8 (1969): 954-963.
- _____. "Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals." In *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, 9th ed., edited by James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks, 3-26. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2016.
- _____. "Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, and Practice." *Review of Research in Education* 19 (1993): 3.
- _____. *Multiethnic Education: Theory and Practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1988.
- _____. "The African-American Roots of Multicultural Education." In *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by James A. Banks, 30-45. New York: Teachers College Press, 1996.
- _____. "The Construction and Historical Development of Multicultural Education, 1962–2012." *Theory Into Practice* 52, no. 1 (October 20, 2013): 73-82.
- Berger, Jane. "A Lot Closer To What It Ought To Be: Black Women and Public Sector Employment in Baltimore, 1950-1970." In *Life and Labor in the New South*, edited by Robert Zieger, 76-100. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012.
- Baraka, Amiri. *The Autobiography of Leroi Jones*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1997.
- _____. ed. *African Congress: A Documentary of the First Modern Pan-African Congress*. New York: Morrow, 1972.
- Bell Jr., Derrick A. "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma." *Harvard Law Review*, 93 (Jan. 1980): 524.
- Berman, Edward H. *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1983.
- Biondi, Martha. *The Black Revolution on Campus*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.

- _____. *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Black, Allida M., ed. *Courage in a Dangerous World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Blain, Keisha N. *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.
- Blee, Kathleen. "Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics: Lessons From Oral Histories of the Klan." In *The Oral History Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, 322-332. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Blitz, Barbara. *The Open Classroom: Making It Work*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1973.
- Bloom, Nicolas Dagen. *Public Housing That Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Bradley, Stefan M. *Harlem vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009.
- Broudy, Harry S. "Educational Alternatives: Why Not? Why Not." *The Phi Delta Kappan* 54, no. 7 (1973): 438-40.
- Brown-Jeffy, Shelly, and Jewell E. Cooper. "Toward a Conceptual Framework of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: An Overview of the Conceptual and Theoretical Literature." *Teacher Education Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2011): 65-84.
- Burke, Catherine, and Ian Grosvenor. *School*. London: Reaktion Books, 2008.
- Bush, Lawson. "Independent Black Institutions in America: A Rejection of Schooling, an Opportunity for Education." *Urban Education* 32 (1997): 98-116.
- Butchart, Ronald E. *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013.
- Byndloss, D. Crystal. "Revisiting Paradigms in Black Education: Community Control and African-Centered Schools." *Education and Urban Society* 34, no. 1 (November 1, 2001): 84-100.
- Cabrera, Nolan L., Elisa L. Meza, and Roberto Dr. Cintli Rodriguez. "The Fight for Mexican American Studies in Tucson." *NACLA Magazine*, December 8, 2011.
- Callender, Eugene S. *Nobody is a Nobody: The Story of a Harlem Ministry at Work to Change America*. New York: Eugene S. Callender, 2012.

- Caro, Robert. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Vintage Books, 1975.
- Carpenter, Ann, and James Rogers. "Harlem Prep: An Alternative System." In *High School*, edited by Ronald Gross and Paul Osterman, 272-284. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971.
- Carpenter, Edward F. "The Development of an Alternative School: Harlem Prep, 1967-1972." PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1973.
- Carson, Clayborne. *In Struggle : SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Carter, Prudence. *Keepin' It Real: School Success Beyond Black and White*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Cazenave, Noel A. *Impossible Democracy: The Unlikely Success of the War on Poverty Community Action Programs*. New York: SUNY Press, 2007.
- Chappell, Marisa. *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.
- Chodnicki, Cheryl and Marjorie Pearson. "369th Regiment Armory." Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1985, http://www.neighborhoodpreservationcenter.org/db/bb_files/85-369th-REG.pdf.
- Christiansen, Christian Olaf. *Progressive Business: An Intellectual History of the Role of Business in American Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- City University of New York. "Former BMCC President Joshua L. Smith Creates Faculty Development Fund," *City University of New York Online*. March 3, 2019. <http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2018/05/03/former-bmcc-president-joshua-l-smith-creates-faculty-development-fund/>.
- _____. "The History of Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York. ca. 1999. www.nyc.gov/html/records/rwg/cuny/pdf/history.pdf.
- "Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles," University of California-Los Angeles, 2019. <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/school-dropouts>.
- Clark, Kenneth. *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*. 2nd ed. Middletown: Wesleyan, 1989.
- Cobb, Charles. "Organizing Freedom Schools." In *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: An Anthology of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement*, edited by S. Erenrich. Montgomery: Black Belt Press, 1999.

- Collier-Thomas, Bettie, and V. P. Franklin, eds. *Sisters in the Struggle: African-American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*. New York: NYU Press, 2001.
- Collins, Christina. *"Ethnically Qualified": Race, Merit, and the Selection of Urban Teachers, 1920-1980*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2011.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Corbould, Clare. *Becoming African Americans: Black Public Life in Harlem, 1919-1939*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Countryman, Matthew J. *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.
- Cremin, Lawrence A. "The Free School Movement—A Perspective." In *Alternative Education: A Source Book for Parents, Teachers, Students, and Administrators*, edited by Mario Fantini, 59-65. (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1976.
- _____. *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957*. New York: Vintage, 1964.
- _____. *Traditions of American Education*. New York: Basic Books, 1979.
- Cross, Christopher T. *Political Education: National Policy Comes of Age*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2010.
- Cuban, Larry. "The Open Classroom." *Education Next* 4, no. 2 (2004), <http://educationnext.org/theopenclassroom/>.
- Danns, Dionne. *Desegregation Chicago's Public Schools: Policy Implementation, Politics, and Protest, 1965-1985*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Darder, Antonia. *Reinventing Paulo Freire: A Pedagogy Of Love*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2002.
- Darian-Smith, Kate, and Julie Willis, eds. *Designing Schools: Space, Place and Pedagogy*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016.
- Davis, Ossie, and Ruby Dee. *Life Lit by Some Large Vision: Selected Speeches and Writings*. New York: Washington Square Press, 2010.
- Delgado, Richard. "Explaining the Rise and Fall of African American Fortunes - Interest Convergence and Civil Rights Gains." *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, 37 (2002).

- Delmont, Matt. *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2016.
- Dentler, Robert A. "The Controversy over I.S. 201." *Urban Review* (July 1996): 12-17.
- Deturk, Phil, and Ray Ivey. "National Alternatives Schools Program." In *Alternative Education: A Source Book for Parents, Teachers, Students, and Administrators*, edited by Mario D. Fantini, 474-484. Garden City: Anchor Books, 1976.
- Dittmer, John. *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*. Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995.
- Dougherty, Jack. *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004.
- Doughty, James Jefferson. "A Historical Analysis of Black Education: Focusing on the Contemporary Independent Black School Movement." PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1973.
- Dowling, Robert M. *Slumming in New York: From the Waterfront to Mythic Harlem*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903.
- Duncan-Andrade, Jeffrey M. R., and Ernest Morrell, *The Art of Critical Pedagogy: Possibilities for Moving Theory to Practice in Urban Schools*. New York: Peter Lang, 2008.
- Dyson, Michael Eric. *I May Not Get There with You: The True Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000.
- Egan, Susan S. "The Independent Public Schools." *Current History* 63, no. 372 (August 1, 1972): 73.
- Emdin, Christopher. *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2017.
- Epstein, Joyce L., Mavis G. Sanders, Steven Sheldon, Beth S. Simon, Karen Clark Salinas, Natalie R. Jansorn, Frances L. VanVoorhis, Cecelia S. Martin, Brenda G. Thomas, Marsha D. Greenfield, Darcy J. Hutchins, Kenyatta J. Williams. *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 2018.
- Erickson, Ansley T. "HARYOU: An Apprenticeship for Young Leaders." In *Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling in a Black Community*, edited by Ansley T. Erickson and Ernest Morrell. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.

- _____. *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- _____. “Review of Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*.” *History of Education Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2018): 165.
- Erickson, Ansley T., and Ernest Morrell, eds. *Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling in a Black Community*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.
- Evans-Winters, Venus. *Teaching Black Girls: Resiliency in Urban Classrooms*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Farmer, Ashley D. *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2017.
- Fearnley Andrew M., and Daniel Matlin, eds. *Race Capital?: Harlem as Setting and Symbol*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.
- Ferguson, Karen. *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism*. Philadelphia: University of Penn Press, 2013.
- Ferguson, Rebecca. “History, Memory and Language in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*.” In *Contemporary American Women Writers: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora, 154-174. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Ferguson, Ronald F. “Teachers’ Perceptions and Expectations and the Black-White Test Score Gap.” *Urban Education* 38, no. 4 (2003): 460–507.
- Fernandez, Johanna L. del C. “Radicals in the Late 1960s: A History of the Young Lords Party in New York City, 1969—1974.” PhD diss., Columbia University, 2005.
- Fisher, Maisha T. “Open Mics and Open Minds: Spoken Word Poetry in African Diaspora Participatory Literacy Communities.” *Harvard Educational Review* 73, no. 3 (2003): 363.
- Flamm, Michael W. *In the Heat of the City: The New York City Riots of 1964 and the War on Crime*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.
- _____. *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Fliegel, Seymour, and James Macguire. *Miracle in East Harlem: The Fight for Choice in Public Education*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1994.
- Forest, Jennifer. “The 1958 Harlem School Boycott: Parental Activism and the Struggle for Educational Equity in New York City.” *Urban Review* 40, no. 1 (March 2008): 21–41.

- Foster, Michele. *Black Teachers on Teaching*. New York: The New Press, 1993.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum, 1970.
- Gasman, Marybeth, and Katherine V. Sedgwick, eds. *Uplifting a People: African American Philanthropy and Education*. New York: Peter Lang, 2004.
- Friedenberg, Edgar Z. *The Vanishing Adolescent*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959.
- Frumkin, Peter. "The Long Recoil from Regulation: Private Philanthropic Foundations and the Tax Reform Act of 1969." *American Review of Public Administration* 28, no. 3 (1998): 266-286.
- Gasman, Marybeth, and Noah D. Drezner. "White Corporate Philanthropy and Its Support of Private Black Colleges in the 1960s and 1970s." *International Journal of Educational Advancement* 8, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 79-92.
- Gautier, Arthur, and Anne-Claire Pache. "Research on Corporate Philanthropy: A Review and Assessment." *Journal of Business Ethics* 126, no. 3 (2015): 343-69.
- Gay, Geneva. *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2010.
- Geiger, Ronald L. "American Foundations and Academic Social Science." *Minerva* 26, no. 3 (1988): 315-341.
- Gershenson, Seth, Stephen B. Holt, and Nicholas W. Papageorge. "Who Believes in Me? The Effect of Student-Teacher Demographic Match on Teacher Expectations." *Economics of Education Review* 52 (2016): 209-24.
- Gillespie, Daniel M. "'They Walk, Talk, and Act Like New People': Citizenship Education Program in Southeastern Georgia, 1960-1975." In *Teach Freedom: Education for Liberation in the African-American Tradition*, edited by Charles M. Payne and Carol Sills Strickland, 43-55. New York: Teachers College Press, 2008.
- Gislason, Neil Briem. "School Design: History, Case Studies, and Practice." PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2009.
- Goldenberg, Barry M., Andrew Wintner, and Carolyn Berg. "Creating Middle School Harlem Historians: Motivating Urban Students through Community-Based History." *Voices From the Middle* 23, no. 1 (2015): 73-79
- Goldenberg, Barry M. *Generations of Giving: The History of the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2017.

- _____. “Rethinking Historical Practice and Community Engagement: Researching Together with ‘Youth Historians.’” *Rethinking History* 23, no. 1 (2019): 52-77.
- _____. “Youth Historians in Harlem: An After-School Blueprint for History Engagement through the Historical Process.” *The Social Studies* 107, no. 2 (2016): 47–67.
- Goodman, Paul. *Compulsory Mis-Education and the Community of Scholars*. New York: Vintage, 1964.
- Gopalan, Pritha. *PPP Paradox: Promise and Perils of Public-Private Partnership in Education*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2013.
- Gordon, Edmund W. *Harlem Prep*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1972.
- Gouldren, Joseph C. *The Money Givers*. New York: Random House, 1971.
- Graham, Hugh Davis. “The Transformation of Federal Education Policy,” In Robert A. Divine, ed., *Exploring the Johnson Years*, edited by Robert A. Divine, [page range of chapter]. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014.
- Grant, Carl A. “An Empirical Study of the Effects of Relevant Curriculum Materials Upon the Self-concept, Achievement, and Attendance of Black Inner-city Students.” PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1972.
- Grant, Colin. *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Graubard, Allen. “The Free School Movement.” *Harvard Educational Review* 42 (August 1972): 74.
- Green, Laurie B. “Saving Babies in Memphis: The Politics of Race, Health, and Hunger during the War on Poverty.” In *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980*, edited by Annelise Orleck and Lisa Hazirjian, 133-158. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011.
- Greenberg, Cheryl Lynn. *Or Does It Explode?: Black Harlem in the Great Depression*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Gregory, Steven. *Black Corona: Race and Politics of Place in an Urban Community*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Guinier, Lani. “From Racial Liberalism to Racial Literacy: Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Divergence Dilemma.” *The Journal of American History* (June 2004).

- Guthrie, Doug, Richard Arum, Josipa Roksa and Sarah Damaske. "Giving to Local Schools: Corporate Philanthropy, Tax Incentives, and the Ecology of Need." *Social Science Research* 37, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 856–73.
- Guthrie, Kathy L., Tamara Bertrand Jones, and Laura Osteen. *Developing Culturally Relevant Leadership Learning: New Directions for Student Leadership, Number 152*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2016.
- Gutman, Marta. *A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850-1950*. University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- Gutman, Marta, and Ning De Coninck-Smith. *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2008.
- Hale, Jon N. *The Freedom Schools: Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.
- Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past." *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233–1263.
- Hall, Stuart, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts. *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Harbison, Thomas. "Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution? Harlem Public Schools, 1914-1954." PhD diss., City University of New York, 2011.
- Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc. *Youth in the Ghetto: A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change*. New York: HARYOU, 1964.
- Harper, Shaun R. *Black Male Student Success in Higher education: A Report from the National Black Male College Achievement Study*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2012.
- Harris, Angel L. *Kids Don't Want to Fail: Oppositional Culture and the Black-White Achievement Gap*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Harris, Fredrick C. "The Rise of Respectability Politics." *Dissent* 61, no. 1 (December 20, 2013): 33–37.
- Haskins, Jim. *Diary of a Harlem Schoolteacher*. New York: Grove Press, 1969.
- Haynes, Bruce D., and Syma Solovitch. *Down the Up Staircase: Three Generations of a Harlem Family*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.
- Hechinger, Fred M. "Education 1980." In *Conflicts in Urban Education*, edited by Sheldon Marcus and Harry N. Rivlin. New York: Basic Books, 1970.

- Hemenway, Catherine. "The Story of the New York Urban League: 1919-1979 Sixty Years Of Service," edited by Rita Robinson. New York: New York Urban League, 1979.
- Herman, Frederik, Angelo Van Gorp, Frank Simon and Marc Depaepe. "The School Desk: From Concept to Object." *History of Education* 40, no. 1 (2011).
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. "African-American Women's History and the Netalanguage of Race." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (1992): 251-274.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Highsmith, Andrew R., and Ansley T. Erickson. "Segregation as Splitting, Segregation as Joining: Schools, Housing, and the Many Modes of Jim Crow." *American Journal of Education* 121, no. 4 (2015): 586.
- Hochschild, Jennifer, and Nathan Scovronick. *The American Dream and the Public Schools*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Hoffnung-Garskof, Jesse. *A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York after 1950*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Holt, John. *How Children Fail*. New York: Pitman, 1964.
- Horsford, Sonya Douglass. "This Bridge Called My Leadership: An Essay on Black Women as Bridge Leaders in Education." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 25, no. 1 (February 1, 2012): 11–22.
- Howard, Tyrone C. "Black Male Success." In *Black Male(d): Peril and Promise in the Education of African American Males*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2014.
- _____. "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Ingredients for Critical Teacher Reflection." *Theory into Practice* 42, no. 3 (2003): 195–202.
- _____. "Dismantling the Equity Problem One Conversation at a Time." *Shaped Blog, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*. June 20, 2018. <https://www.hmhco.com/blog/dismantling-the-equity-problem-one-conversation-at-a-time>.
- _____. "How Does It Feel to Be a Problem? Black Male Students, Schools, and Learning in Enhancing the Knowledge Base to Disrupt Deficit Frameworks." *Review of Research in Education* 37, no. 1 (March 1, 2013): 54–86.
- _____. "Multicultural Teacher Education for the 21st Century." *The Teacher Educator* 36, no. 1 (2000): 1-16.

- _____. "Who Really Cares? The Disenfranchisement of African American Males in Pre-K-12 Schools: A Critical Race Theory Perspective." *Teachers College Record* 110, no. 5 (2008): 954-985.
- _____. *Why Race & Culture Matter in Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap in America's Classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2014.
- Howard, Tyrone C., Jonli Tunstall, and Terry K. Flenbaugh, eds. *Expanding College Access for Urban Youth: What Schools and Colleges Can Do*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2016.
- Howard, Tyrone C., La Mont Terry, Oscar Navarro, and Brian Woodwood. "The Counter Narrative: Reframing Success of High Achieving Black and Latino Males in Los Angeles County." *UCLA Black Male Institute Report*. Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, 2017.
- Hull, Glynda, and Jessica Zacher. "What Is After-School Worth? Developing Literacy and Identity Out of School." *Voices in Urban Education* 26 (Winter 2010): 20-28.
- Itzkoff, Seymour W. *Cultural Pluralism and American Education*. Scranton: International Textbook, 1970.
- Jencks, Christopher. *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*. New York: Basic Books, 1972.
- Johanek, Michael C., and John L. Puckett. *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School: Education As If Citizenship Mattered*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006.
- Johnson, Lauri. "A Generation of Women Activists: African American Female Educators in Harlem, 1930-1950." *Journal of African American History* 89, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 223-40.
- Jones, Charles E. and Jonathan Gayles, "'The World Is a Child's Classroom': An Analysis of the Black Panther Party's Oakland Community School." In *Teach Freedom*, edited by Charles M. Payne and Carol Sills Strickland, 100-112. New York: Teachers College Press, 2008.
- Joseph, Peniel E. *Stokely: A Life*. New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2014.
- _____. ed. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Juravich, Nicholas. "The Work of Education Community-Based Educators in Schools, Freedom Struggles, and the Labor Movement, 1953-1983." PhD diss., Columbia University, 2017.

- Kafka, Judith. "Review of Free Schools, Free People: Education and Democracy after the 1960s; Sixties Legacy: A History of the Public Alternative Schools Movement, 1967-2000, by Ron Miller and Richard Neumann." *History of Education Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (2005): 137.
- Kahlenberg, Richard D., and Halley Potter. "Restoring Shanker's Vision for Charter Schools." *American Educator* 38 (4), Winter 2014-2015: 4-13.
- Katznelson, Ira. *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.
- Kinloch, Valerie. *Harlem on Our Minds: Place, Race, and the Literacies of Urban Youth*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2010.
- Kitzmiller, Erika M. "The Roots of Educational Inequality: Germantown High School, 1907—2011." PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2012.
- Knight, Michael Muhammad. *The Five Percenters: Islam, Hip-Hop and Gods of New York*. London: One World Books, 2007.
- Kohl, Herbert. *The Open Classroom: A Practical Guide to a New Way of Teaching*. New York: Vintage Books, 1970.
- Kolderie, Ted. *Beyond Choice to New Public Schools: Withdrawing the Exclusive Franchise in Public Education (Report No. 8)*. Washington, DC: Progressive Policy Institute, 1990.
- Kridel, Craig. *Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies*. New York: SAGE Publications, 2010.
- Labaree, David F. *How to Succeed in School Without Really Learning: The Credentials Race in American Education*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
- _____. "Public Goods, Private Goods: The American Struggle over Educational Goals." *American Educational Research Journal* 34, no. 1 (1997): 39–81.
- Lachman, Seymour P., and Robert Polner. *The Man Who Saved New York: Hugh Carey and the Great Fiscal Crisis of 1975*. Albany: Excelsior Editions, 2010.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria. "But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." *Theory into Practice* 34, no. 3 (1995): 159–65.
- _____. "Lifting As We Climb: The Womanist Tradition." In *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by James A. Banks, 179-200. New York: Teachers College Press, 1996.
- _____. *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.

- _____. "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." *American Educational Research Journal* 32, no. 3 (1995): 465–91.
- Lagemann, Ellen Condliffe. *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1989.
- Lee, Sonia Song-Ha. *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement: Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Justice in New York City*. Raleigh: UNC Press, 2016.
- Lepore, Jill. *These Truths: A History of the United States*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.
- Levine, Daniel U. "Educating Alienated Inner-City Youth: Lessons from the Street Academies." *The Journal of Negro Education* 44, no. 2 (1975): 139.
- Levine, David P. "The Birth of Citizenship Schools: Entwining the Struggles of Literacy and Freedom." *History of Education Quarterly* 44, no. 30 (2004): 388-414.
- Lewer, Brittney. "Pursuing 'Real Power to Parents': Babette Edwards's Activism from Community Control to Charter School." In *Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling in a Black Community*, edited by Ansley T. Erickson and Ernest Morrell. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.
- Lewis, Heather. *New York City Public Schools From Brownsville to Bloomberg: Community Control and Its Legacy*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2013.
- Ling, Peter J., and Sharon Monteith, eds. *Gender and the Civil Rights Movement*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004.
- Locke, Alain. *The New Negro*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1925.
- Magat, Richard. *The Ford Foundation at Work: Philanthropic Choices, Methods, and Styles*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Mallozzi, Vincent M. *Asphalt Gods: An Oral History of the Rucker Tournament*. New York: Doubleday, 2003.
- Marable, Manning. *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*. New York: Viking Books, 2011.
- _____. *Race, Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Markowitz, Gerald, and David Rosner. *Children, Race, and Power: Kenneth and Mamie Clark's Northside Center*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

- Massing, Michael. *The Fix: Solving the Nation's Drug Problem*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- Mayer, Jane. *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right*. New York: Doubleday, 2016.
- Mendes, Gabriel N. *Under the Strain of Color: Harlem's Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of an Antiracist Psychiatry*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015.
- McCloskey, Patrick. *The Street Stops Here: A Year at a Catholic High School in Harlem*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- McDonald, Janet. *Project Girl*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- McKee, Guian A. *The Problem of Jobs: Liberalism, Race, and Deindustrialization in Philadelphia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- McGruder, Kevin. *Race and Real Estate: Conflict and Cooperation in Harlem, 1890-1920*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.
- McLaren, Peter, and Joe L. Kincheloe. *Critical Pedagogy: Where Are We Now?*. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.
- McMullen, Mike. *The Bahá'ís of America: The Growth of a Religious Movement*. New York: NYU Press, 2015.
- Meier, Deborah. *The Power Of Their Ideas: Lessons For American From a Small School in Harlem*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995/2002.
- Mieczkowski, Yanek. *The Routledge Historical Atlas of Presidential Elections*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Miller, Ron. *Free Schools, Free People: Education and Democracy after the 1960s*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003.
- Mills, Charles W. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Mirel, Jeffrey. *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907-1981*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.
- Moore, Jesse Thomas. *A Search for Equality: The National Urban League, 1910-1961*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981.
- Morrell, Ernest. *Critical Literacy and Urban Youth: Pedagogies of Access, Dissent, and Liberation*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

- Morrell, Ernest, Rudy Duenas, Veronica Garcia, and Jorge Lopez, *Critical Media Pedagogy: Teaching for Achievement in City Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2013.
- Moura-Leite, Rosamaria C., and Robert C. Padgett. "Historical Background of Corporate Social Responsibility." *Social Responsibility Journal* 7, no. 4 (2011): 528–39.
- Murch, Donna Jean. *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
- Nadasen, Premilla. *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, "A History of Educational Facilities Laboratories (EFL)." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Institute of Building Sciences, 2009. <http://ncef.org/pubs/efl2.pdf>.
- National Urban League. "Mission and History." 2016. <http://nul.iamempowered.com/who-we-are/mission-and-history>.
- Nelsen, James K. *Educating Milwaukee: How One City's History of Segregation and Struggle Shaped Its Schools*. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2015.
- Nelson, William C. "The Storefront School: A Vehicle for Change." *Journal of Negro Education* 40, no. 3 (1971): 248.
- Neumann, Richard. *Sixties Legacy: A History of the Public Alternative Schools Movement, 1967-2001*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003.
- Nielsen, Waldemar A. *The Big Foundations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.
- Nieto, Sonia. "From Brown Heroes and Holidays to Assimilationist Agendas: Reconsidering the Critiques of Multicultural Education." In *Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and the Politics of Difference*, edited by Christine E. Sleeter and Peter L. McLaren, 191-220. Albany: State University Press of New York, 1995.
- _____. *Language, Culture, and Teaching: Critical Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- _____. *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2010.
- O'Connor, Alice. "Foundations, Social Movement, and the Contradictions of Liberal Philanthropy." In *American Foundations: Roles and Contributions*, edited by Helmut Anheier and David Hammack, 328-346. New York: Brookings Institution, 2010.
- _____. *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

- Ogbar, Jeffrey O.G. *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005.
- Orleck, Annelise. "Conclusion: The War on the War on Poverty and American Politics Since the 1960s." In *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980*, edited by Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, 437-462. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011.
- Osofsky, Gilbert. *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto, 1890-1930*. New York: Ivan R. Dee, 1967.
- Parmar, Inderjeet. *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.
- Parris, Guichard, and Lester Brooks. *Blacks in the City: A History of the National Urban League*. New York: Littlefield & Brown, 1971.
- Paul, Lee Min-Dong. "A Review of the Theories of Corporate Social Responsibility: Its Evolutionary Path and the Road Ahead." *International Journal of Management Reviews* 10, no. 1 (December 6, 2007): 53–73.
- Payne, Charles. "Introduction." In *Teach Freedom: Education for Liberation in the African-American Tradition*, edited by Charles M. Payne and Carol Sills Strickland, 1-14. New York: Teachers College Press, 2008.
- _____. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Payne, Charles M., and Carol Sills Strickland, eds. *Teach Freedom: Education for Liberation in the African-American Tradition*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2008.
- Perlstein, Daniel. "Freedom, Liberation, Accommodation: Politics and Pedagogy in SNCC and the Black Panther." In *Teach Freedom*, edited by Charles M. Payne and Carol Sills Strickland, 74-94. New York: Teachers College Press, 2008.
- _____. *Justice, Justice: The Eclipse of Liberalism*. New York: Peter Lang, 2004.
- _____. "Teaching Freedom: SNCC and the Creation of the Mississippi Schools." *History of Education Quarterly* 30 (1990): 297-324.
- Perrillo, Jonna. *Uncivil Rights: Teachers, Unions, and Race in the Battle for School Equity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- Phillips-Fein, Kim. *Fear City: New York's Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2017.

- Podair, Jerald E. *The Strike that Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Portelli, Alessandro. *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: From and Meaning in Oral History*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1991.
- Pritchett, Wendell E. *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews, and the Changing Face of the Ghetto*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Ramsey, Patricia G., and Leslie R. Williams. *Multicultural Education: A Source Book*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Rasmussen, Lisa Rosén. "Touching Materiality: Presenting the Past of Everyday School Life." *Memory Studies* 5, no. 2 (April 1, 2012): 114–30.
- Ravitch, Diane. *The Great School Wars: A History of New York City Public Schools*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- Raywid, Mary Anne. "7. The Wadleigh Complex: A Dream That Soured Mary Anne Raywid." *Journal of Education Policy* 10, no. 5 (1995): 101–14.
- _____. "The First Decade of Public School Alternatives." *The Phi Delta Kappan* 62, no. 8 (1981): 551.
- Reed, Touré F. *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Reuben, Julie A. "Consorting with the Barbarians at the Gate: McGeorge Bundy, the Ford Foundation, and Student Activism in the Late 1960s." In *Making the American Century: Essays on the Political Culture of Twentieth Century America*, edited by Bruce J. Schulman, 188-214. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Rhodes-Pitts, Sharifa. *Harlem Is Nowhere: A Journey to the Mecca of Black America*. New York: Back Bay Books, 2013.
- Rickford, Russell. "Integration, Black Nationalism, and Radical Democratic Transformation in African American Philosophies of Education, 1965–74." In *The New Black History*, edited by Manning Marable and Elizabeth Kai Hinton, 287–317. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- _____. *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power and Radical Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

- Rist, Ray C. "Student Social Class and Teacher Expectations: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy in Ghetto Education." *Harvard Educational Review* 40, no. 5 (August 1970): 411-451.
- Roderick, Tom. *A School of Our Own: Parents, Power, and Community at the East Harlem Block Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2001.
- Rofes, Eric, and Lisa M. Stulberg, eds. *The Emancipatory Promise of Charter Schools: Toward a Progressive Politics of School Choice*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2004.
- Rojas, Fabio. *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Movement Became an Academic Discipline*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007.
- Rooks, Noliwe. *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education*. New York: Beacon Press, 2013.
- Ross-Stroud, Catherine. "A Talk with Janet McDonald." *The ALAN Review* (Fall 2009): 54-57.
- Ryan, James E. *Five Miles Away, A World Apart: One City, Two Schools, and the Story of Educational Opportunity in Modern America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Sabaroff, Rose Epstein. *The Open Classroom: A Practical Guide for the Teacher of Elementary Grades*. Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1974.
- Sammons, Jeffrey T., and John H. Morrow, Jr. *Harlem's Rattlers and the Great War: The Undaunted 369th Regiment and the African American Quest for Equality*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014.
- Sanchez, Claudio and L.A. Johnson. "Frozen In Time, Remembering The Students Who Changed A Teacher's Life." *nprED*. 2015. <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/06/30/418599078/frozen-in-time-remembering-the-students-who-changed-a-teachers-life>.
- Schneider, Eric C. *Smack: Heroin and the American City*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Seale, Bobby. *A Lonely Rage: The Autobiography of Bobby Seale*. New York: Times Books, 1978.
- Self, Robert O. *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2012.
- Seubert, Mary Jean. "The Origin, Development, and Issues of the Community Education Movement in the United States, 1935–1995." PhD diss., Florida Atlantic University, 1995.

- Sheldon, Steve, and Tammy Taylor-Vorbeck. *The Wiley Handbook of Family, School, and Community Relationships in Education*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2019.
- Shield, Bridget, Emma Greenland, and Julie Dockrell. "Noise in Open Plan Classrooms in Primary Schools: A Review." *Noise and Health* 12, no. 49 (October 1, 2010): 225-334.
- Silberman, Charles E., ed. *The Open Classroom Reader*. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.
- Sleeter, Christine E., and Judith Flores Carmona, eds. *Un-Standardizing Curriculum: Multicultural Teaching in the Standards-Based Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2016.
- Smith, Lee L. *Jack Out of the Box: A Practical Guide to the Open Classroom*. West Nyack: Parker Publishing Company, 1974.
- Snyder, Thomas, Leff Hoffman, and Claire Geddes. *State Comparisons of Education Statistics: 1969-70 to 1996-97*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1998.
- Soskis, Benjamin and Stanley N. Katz. "Looking Back at 50 Years of U.S. Philanthropy." *Report Commission for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, December 5, 2016*, <http://www.hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/50-Years-of-U.S.-Philanthropy.pdf>.
- Spencer, John P. *In the Crossfire: Marcus Foster and the Troubled History of American School Reform*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
- Smith, Joshua L. "Free Schools: Pandora's Box?." In *Curricular Concerns in a Revolutionary Era*, edited by Robert R. Leeper, 237-240. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1971.
- Steele, Claude M. *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011.
- Stent, Madelon D., William R. Hazard, and Harry Rivlin. *Cultural Pluralism in Education: A Mandate for Change*. New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1973.
- Stockman, Robert H. *The Encyclopedia of Cults, Sects, and New Religions*. Edited by James R. Lewis. Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2001.
- Strain, Christopher B. *The Long Sixties: America, 1955 – 1973*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016.
- Stulberg, Lisa M. *Race, Schools, and Hope: African Americans and School Choice after Brown*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2008.
- Sugrue, Thomas J. *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. New York: Random House, 2009.

- Sutherland, Alexander. *Neill, Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*. New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1960.
- Taylor, Edward. "The Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education: An Introduction," In *Foundation of Critical Race Theory in Education*, edited by Edward Taylor, David Gillborn, and Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1-16. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Taylor, Clarence. "Conservative and Liberal Opposition to the New York City School-Integration Campaign." In *Civil Rights in New York City: From World War II to the Giuliani Era*, edited by Clarence Taylor, 95-117. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.
- Theoharis, Jeanne, and Komozi Woodard, eds. *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Toepler, Stefan. *Legitimacy of Philanthropic Foundations: United States and European Perspectives: United States and European Perspectives*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006.
- Trowbridge, Augustus. *Begin With a Dream: How a Private School with a Public Mission Changed the Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in American Education*. New York: Xlibris, 2005.
- Ture, Kwame, and Charles V. Hamilton. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. New York: Vintage Books, 1967/1992.
- Verger, Antoni, Clara Fontdevila, Adrian Zancajo, Gita Steiner-Khamsi. *The Privatization of Education: A Political Economy of Global Education Reform*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2016.
- Vitteriti, Joseph. *Across the River: Politics and Education in the City*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1983.
- Walker, Vanessa Siddle. *Their High Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Wanzer-Serrano, Darrel. *The New York Young Lords and the Struggle for Liberation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015.
- Warren, Robert Penn. *The Legacy of the Civil War*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- Watkins, William H. *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2001.

- Webber, Thomas L. *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831-1865*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981.
- Weikart, Lynne. "Decision Making and the Impact of Those Decisions During New York City's Fiscal Crisis in the Public Schools, 1975-1977." PhD diss., Columbia University, 1984.
- Wiese, Andrew. *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Weiss, Nancy. *The National Urban League, 1910-1940*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- _____. *Whitney M. Young, Jr., and the Struggle for Civil Rights*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Wells, Amy Stuart, ed. *Where Charter School Policy Fails: The Problems of Accountability and Equity*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2002.
- Williams, Heather Andrea. *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Wilson, Sandra Kathryn. *Meet Me at the Theresa: The Story of Harlem's Most Famous Hotel*. New York: Atria Books, 2004.
- Woodard, Komozi. *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.
- Woodson, Carter G. *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990.
- Yosso, Tara J. "Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8. no. 1 (2005): 69-91.
- Young, Whitney. "To Be Equal." *New Journal and Guide*. (March 2, 1968).
- Yow, Valerie. "Do I Like Them Too Much: Effects of the oral history interview on the interviewer and vice-versa." In *The Oral History Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, 54-72. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- _____. *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008.
- Zipp, Samuel. *Manhattan Projects: Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Zunz, Olivier. *Philanthropy in America: A History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.