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A CASE STUDY IN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

BECKET ACADEMY, 1964-1984

A Dissertation Presented

By

DOUGLASS PAUL TESCHNER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1985

Education

Douglass Paul Teschner

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A CASE STUDY IN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

BECKET ACADEMY, 1964-1984

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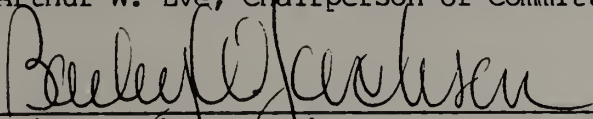
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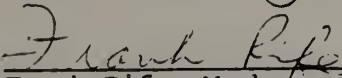
Approved as to style and content by:




Arthur W. Eve, Chairperson of Committee



Bailey Jackson, Member



Frank Rife, Member



Mario Fantini, Dean
School of Education

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the present and former students, staff, trustees, and friends of Becket Academy. Over the course of the past twenty years, their efforts (both great and small) built the school that exists today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There were many people who made this dissertation possible.

First and foremost, I thank John Wolter for providing the opportunity to undertake this study. His unceasing support included ongoing personal candor and providing access to the school's files.

I wish to thank Dr. Arthur Eve whose encouragement and support--in a myriad of ways--were significant ingredients in the success of this research. My other committee members, Drs. Bailey Jackson and Frank Rife, provided valuable ideas and criticism. I also thank the other University of Massachusetts faculty who assisted me throughout the doctoral process--especially Atron Gentry, Byrd Jones, Robert Maloy, and Horace Reed.

I must also express appreciation to my colleagues at Becket Academy without whom this project could not have been completed; special thanks are due Joan Wolter, Bea Bula, and Audrey Ely. I also wish to thank the present and former Becket staff, trustees, and associates who shared their perceptions through interviews and/or personal communication.

Lastly, I extend special thanks to my wife Marte who was consistently supportive of this endeavor during this time of her pregnancy and the birth of our son Benjamin.

PREFACE

In the process of undertaking this dissertation, I have learned firsthand of the historian's intrinsic burden. The quest for truth is elusive at best, and any author's perceptions are invariably a product of his or her own experience and perspectives. Despite this knowledge, I have continually struggled (often painfully), striving for a depth of understanding and--of equal importance--to clearly communicate that which I have derived.

ABSTRACT

A Case Study in Educational Innovation: Becket Academy, 1964-1984

(May 1985)

Douglass Paul Teschner, B.S., University of Massachusetts
M.S., University of Vermont, Ed.D. University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Professor Arthur Eve

The process of educational reform is enhanced by examining innovative schools such as Becket Academy. This study details the evolution of Becket's comprehensive program which incorporates academic, vocational, homelife, counseling, farm, nutrition, and wilderness components. The literature review is a discussion of twenty-four alternative educational purposes.

Qualitative methodologies were employed using a flexible research design. Data were collected by participant observation, document review, and interviews. Analysis incorporated triangulation, and data are presented chronologically.

The history includes a description of founder John Wolter's childhood difficulties in school and his achievement of a positive life purpose through service in the Marine Corps. Frustrated with public school teaching, twenty-seven-year-old Wolter established Becket in 1964. Despite limited financial resources, the Academy developed as a result of hard work, commitment, and anticipation. The evolution of affiliate programs (including the Institute of Experiential Studies) and acquisition of facilities in Pike, New

Hampshire, and Everglades City, Florida, are described.

The study details Becket's numerous struggles and creative adaptation to internal and external stimuli. The school's twenty-year history comprises changes and trends, including physical and programmatic expansion, increased organizational complexity, and a major transition from private to public payments for tuition.

Despite rapid development, however, Becket has maintained its initial principles of wholistic educational purpose, people orientation, programmatic structure and discipline, self-reliance, and spirituality. Wolter's charisma, idealism, pragmatism, business sense, vision, courage, perseverance, egalitarianism, flexibility, political sophistication, and complexity are described as fundamental aspects of the school's success.

The dissertation concludes with a discussion of Becket as a micro-community and model for educational and broader social change.

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SECTION ONE: THE CONTEXT

This initial section of the dissertation includes three chapters: Introduction, The Purpose of Education: A Review of the Literature, and Methodology.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Crisis in Education

The human capacity for learning so distinguishes us from other living things that it, more than any other single characteristic, provides a basis for defining our species. Learning is an integral part of human existence from birth until death, and most of what we learn is through "informal education":

the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment--at home, at work, at play; from the example and attitudes of family and friends; from travel, reading newspapers and books; or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television. Generally, informal education is unorganized and often unsystematic; yet it accounts for the great bulk of any person's total lifetime learning--including that of even a highly "schooled" person. (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974, p. 8)

Formal education ("the highly institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured [system] spanning lower primary school and the upper reaches of the university"; *ibid.*) is a relatively recent phenomenon in human history. It has grown rapidly, however: in developed societies, schooling is a well-established and broadly-supported institution. Formal education is, in fact, so established that the terms education and schooling are often used synonymously--even though the latter is but a subset of the former.

The implementation of any formal education system is political in nature, since some person or group is empowered to decide what will be taught (and how it will be presented)--thus exercising control over the learners. As Downey observes, "Education is, potentially, the most effective of the nonviolent forms of intervention in the course of human affairs" (1971, p. 157). It is thus no surprise that there has been considerable conflict and differences of opinion with respect to any given formal educational system.

Aristotle, Quintilian, Bacon, Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Mann, and Dewey are among the many notable individuals who advocated for changes in the existing educational structures of their times. Within a more modern context, the late 1960s and 1970s was a period of considerable criticism and suggested reform of education.

Some of these more recent critics advocated total abolition of existing educational structures. For example, Ivan Illich (1972) suggests that our educational system be replaced by informal learning networks. Brazilian Paulo Freire describes schooling as "narration sickness. . . an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (1982, pp. 57-58); he advocates for a process of problem-posing dialogue.

But most recent educational reform efforts have been aimed at change within the context of existing the structures. Among the many studies of American education is the Carnegie Corporation of

New York's Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education (Silberman, 1970). Similarly, there have been a number of reports on education in the United States by such organizations as the Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee, the National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education, the National Panel on High School and Adolescent Education, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Education Facilities Laboratory and IDEA (see Zajchowski, 1978).

The belief that positive change can take place in existing educational systems has also been articulated by such critics as John Holt and William Glasser. The former argues that "the schooling of most children destroys their curiosity, confidence, trust, and therefore their intelligence" (Holt, 1970, p. 51), while the later condemns "our present educational philosophy of non-involvement, nonrelevance, and limited emphasis on thinking" (Glasser, 1969, p. xii).

Calls for reform have continued into the 1980s, and there is presently a broad consensus that our educational system is in serious trouble. Mortimer Adler has decried the "present deplorable situation" (1982, p.11), offering in its place The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto. In Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School, TheodoreSizer (1984) advocates for an educational curriculum based upon Socratic questioning. John Goodlad (1983) argues in A Place Called School that a tremendous gap

exists between educational ideals and implemented realities. The Carnegie Foundation's recent report, entitled High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America (Boyer, 1983), has also attracted considerable attention; it calls for the strengthening of traditional courses, improved teacher pay and benefits, and required student participation in community service projects. Ronald Edmonds (1982) is a leading researcher examining the nature of school effectiveness.

In his book Schooling in America: Scapegoat and Salvation, Seymour Sarason (1983) argues that education should take place outside school buildings. In Barriers to Excellence: Our Children at Risk, the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (1985) proposes that schools adjust to student needs; at present, the Coalition concludes, schools are failing to serve many young people.

The report that has attracted the most attention is the National Commission on Excellence in Education's A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. This document propelled the issue of educational change from relative obscurity to a much-discussed, high-priority national agenda. The Commission argues that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people" and "if an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre performance [of our schools] that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5).

Beyond general agreement that our schools are in trouble, some critics have further suggested that our educational problems are symptomatic of, and possibly abetting, more serious social concerns. Silberman argues that "the crisis in the classroom is both a reflection and a contributor to the larger crisis of American society" (1970, p. vii). John Holt has gone so far as to suggest that schooling is the major source of what he calls "the schizoid and paranoid character and behavior that are a mark of our times, and the root cause of our deadly human predicament" (1970, p. 52).

Whether schools are really to blame for the present-day problems of the United States--or whether serious problems even exist at all--is obviously a matter of some dispute. Formal education is, however, unquestionably interwoven within the larger fabric of society. Any effort at educational reform must incorporate an awareness of this intimate interrelationship.

Purpose of the Study

Although discontent with education is widespread and well documented, there is a lack of agreement as to how it might be best improved. Proposed solutions include various approaches to curriculum reform (ranging from back-to-basics to an increased emphasis on experiential learning opportunities), increased teacher pay, expansion of compensatory education and other federally-funded programs, longer school hours, and a myriad of other alternatives. This ongoing national discussion is largely predicated in abstract, theoretical terms; many of the ideas articulated emerge from particular ideological perspectives--as opposed to tested realities.

Modern-day critics are largely failing to recognize a significant data base: the existence of schools and other educational programs that operate outside, and independent of, the public school system. In-depth information on these educational alternatives will prove valuable in suggesting directions for broad-based educational change.

More specifically, a variety of information about these educational alternatives could be of value. One important consideration is educational purpose; unfortunately, the present national discussion focuses almost exclusively on educational techniques to the exclusion of this more fundamental issue. If meaningful broad-based educational reform is to be initiated, it must incorporate theoretical and conceptual considerations as an

integral part of any practical solutions.

The congruency between articulated ideals and operational realities is also a significant, but often overlooked, theme. All too often, schools profess lofty purposes which may be very different (indeed, even contradictory) to what is being implemented in the classroom. By examining alternatives to public schools (including their principles and educational purposes and their implementation in programs), a valuable external perspective can be obtained.

The purpose of this research is to develop an in-depth case study of one educational alternative. Becket Academy is an independent coeducational boarding and day school serving 150 boys and girls in grades six through twelve. Founded in 1964, the school serves a diverse student body, primarily children with special needs. The Becket program is comprehensive and wholistic, integrating classroom-based academics, vocational training, counseling, residential homelife, work projects, farming, sound nutrition, physical exercise, and outdoor education/wilderness adventure.

In addition to its Connecticut school program, Becket operates satellite facilities in Pike, New Hampshire, and Everglades City, Florida. The New Hampshire farm property is the site of a highly individualized residential program known as the Pike School. The Florida property is used by students from both the Connecticut and New Hampshire programs as a base for exploration and scientific

study in Everglades National Park.

In addition to its two school programs, Becket has developed the Institute of Experiential Studies located on the Academy's Connecticut campus. The Institute sponsors conferences, publishes documents, and conducts training programs for individuals and organizations in education and human services.

The present study is designed to generate an understanding of these Becket programs and their impact on the field of education. More specifically, the dissertation incorporates (1) a discussion of operating principles and purposes, (2) a detailed description of program components, (3) an historical recounting of Becket's development (including significant events that preceded its 1964 founding) with emphasis upon an administrative perspective, (4) an analysis of Becket's organizational development (including both unchanged and evolving factors and the personal impact of founder John Wolter), and (5) implications of the Becket model with respect to broad-based educational innovation.

The historical development and organizational evolution of Becket is described in detail in the belief that this perspective is essential to an understanding of the present-day Becket Academy and its adjunct programs.

Significance of the Study

Existing educational alternatives have been largely overlooked during this period of widespread interest in educational reform. As an in-depth study of one such alternative, this dissertation is thus of great value. More specifically, this study will be of interest to a variety of individuals and groups. Among them:

- school administrators in both public and private education
- local school boards and other citizens who develop educational policies
- parents of school-aged children
- teachers in public and private schools
- students in elementary, junior high, and high schools
- political leaders
- professors in colleges and universities which offer teacher training
- federal and state agencies involved in education and other human services
- panels commissioned to examine education and related fields
- individuals contemplating starting their own schools or human service programs
- professionals in human services
- researchers and scholars in education and related fields
- business leaders interested in improving the educational system and, ultimately, the skills of potential employees

- taxpayers
- other individuals and organizations interested in education
or human services.

Design of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine Becket Academy in the context of broad-based educational innovation. Qualitative methodology was employed since this approach was considered the most appropriate for achieving the in-depth perspectives desired.

The research design incorporated flexibility, and data were collected by three different methods. Participant observation was utilized on the basis that the researcher was already familiar with the organization under study. Document review, the second data collection method, was facilitated by the researcher's unlimited access to the Becket files. Interviewing was the third data-gathering technique; twenty-three present or former Becket staff members, trustees, or associates participated.

Data were analyzed inductively using multiple sources and triangulation whenever possible. The data are presented chronologically in the text. Major themes discussed include the students, staff, school-year and summer programs, physical development, trustee activities, and finances.

This research design is based on several assumptions. The first is that, in order to develop the needed high level of understanding of such a program, it must be examined in great depth. Therefore, the study focuses on only one school. It is hoped, however, that it will ultimately serve as one part of a larger survey of American educational alternatives.

A second assumption of this study is that the understanding of a school can be derived from an examination of the relationship between its ideals--the sense of purpose and vision of the role of education in society--and its program design and implementation.

A third assumption is that, as a school evolves with time, so do its operating principles and program components. In order to fully understand the present-day program of an educational institution, it is essential that it be examined in an historical context--including the events that led up to its founding. Thus, the methodology employed in the present study will be consistent with the "life history" approach described by Denzin (1970).

A fourth assumption is that people are what make a school--in order to understand an organization, it is essential to understand the beliefs and aspirations of individuals in that organization. The study was designed to incorporate in-depth perceptions by staff, trustees, and associates of the school.

A fifth assumption is that, while a total understanding of a school requires a variety of perspectives (including those of students, parents, local citizens, and referral agencies), the best single source are those individuals who created and implemented the program. For this reason, the interview process included primarily those involved with the school at an administrative level.

Organization of the Study

The study comprises eleven chapters subdivided into three sections as follows:

SECTION ONE: THE CONTEXT

Chapter 1 -- Introduction

The introductory chapter includes an overview of the crisis in education followed by discussion of the study's purpose, significance, design, assumptions, and organization.

Chapter 2 -- The Purpose of Education: A Review of the Literature

Chapter two includes a discussion of educational purpose as a critical element in educational reform. This is followed by an overview of various alternative educational purposes. Twenty-four alternatives are discussed including cognitive development, affective development, aesthetic development, motivational development, physical development and health, life experience, values/morals development, character development, wholistic development, spiritual development, practical skills development, career skills development, leisure skills development, transmission of civilization, social conformity, social change, social selection, to keep the young occupied, to promote competition, to promote cooperation/human relations, individual empowerment, to promote responsibility for the ecosystem, lifelong/process skills

development, and survival/evolution/innovation.

Chapter 3 -- Methodology

Chapter three incorporates a rationale for the use of qualitative methodology. The research design is described as incorporating three principal data collection techniques (participant observation, document review, and interviewing). Methods used in data analysis and presentation are described.

SECTION TWO: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Chapter 4 -- Becket Academy: 1984

Chapter four is a description of the present-day Becket Academy (as it existed in September 1984). Elements described include the students, staff, assets, facilities, and equipment, and operating principles/educational purposes. Further description includes the various programs: Becket Academy, East Haddam, Connecticut; the Pike School, Pike, New Hampshire; Wilderness and off-campus experiential education; and the Institute of Experiential Studies.

Chapter 5 -- Before Becket: The Founder's Vision

Chapter five is a discussion of the events leading up to the 1964 founding of Becket Academy. The childhood of founder John Wolter is described in the context of his family relationships, personal struggles in public and parochial schools, and life experiences in his home communities (Brooklyn and later, Pelham, New

York). Wolter's Marine Corps experience is described as a critical turning point during which he achieved a positive purpose in life. The chapter also incorporates discussion of his college experiences, marriage, and the frustrations of teaching in a public school setting. The experience that inspired Wolter to found his own school is described, as is his tutelage in "educational pioneering" at Connecticut's St. Thomas More School.

Chapter 6 -- The Early Years: 1964-1972

This chapter begins with twenty-seven-year-old John Wolter's efforts to find a site for his proposed elementary/junior high school, enroll students, hire teachers, and renovate and construct facilities (despite a virtual lack of financial resources). The difficulties of the first eight years (most notably the inadequate facilities and limited funds) are described as a challenge that Wolter and his staff sought to overcome. The school's rapid growth is described in the context of persistence and creative energy. Becket's emphasis on experiential learning (including construction and maintenance of buildings and summer canoe expeditions) is incorporated in the discussion.

Chapter 7 -- Transition: 1972-1976

This chapter details the difficult period during which Becket Academy experienced a declining enrollment. The school was able to survive this challenge to its existence through anticipation of the growing availability of public monies for special education

students. During this period, Becket Academy also expanded offerings to include a formalized homelife component, a high school program, and expanded outdoor programming (including the purchase of a farm in New Hampshire and the first trip to Florida's Everglades).

Chapter 8 -- Consolidation and Expansion: 1977-1980

Chapter eight incorporates the consolidation of the elementary/junior high and high school programs, new thrusts in the areas of farming and nutrition, expansion of wilderness offerings (including the purchase of a Florida facility and the first senior Appalachian Trail expedition), and new program developments for an increasingly disadvantaged population.

Chapter 9 -- Institutionalization and Further Expansion: 1980-1984

Chapter nine includes the most recent events in the history of the school including refinement of the Connecticut school and development of new programs. Examples of the latter include the Ultra program (a year-round wilderness alternative for needy youth), the Pike School (an individualized residential program based at the New Hampshire farm), and the Institute of Experiential Studies (which publishes documents on innovations in education and human services and sponsors conferences and staff development opportunities). The chapter includes discussion of the 1982 Canadian incident during which Becket students were taken into police custody and seven staff arrested while in the remote Quebec

wilderness.

SECTION THREE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 10 -- Becket Organizational Evolution: Stability with Change

This chapter begins with a discussion of the changes and trends in Becket history (including physical growth, program expansion and refinement, staff specialization, organizational complexity, institutionalization, organizational diversification, a diversified student population, changing funding sources, and approval/recognition). Unchanged and/or stable factors throughout the twenty-year evolution of the school are also detailed; the wholistic education model, humanistic emphasis, opportunity for growth, hard work/sacrifice, "can do" spirit and energy, challenge/survival, spirituality, programmatic structure and discipline, reality orientation, independence and self-sufficiency, evolution and innovation, and dualism/sublime consistency are described. Elements of John Wolter that contributed to his success are discussed; these include charisma, idealism, action, a good business sense, vision, mysticism, courage, perseverance/commitment, flexibility and motivation to learn, creativity, family involvement, egalitarianism, and political sophistication. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the school's future.

Chapter 11 -- Becket Academy and Broad-based Educational Innovation

The final chapter includes a discussion of educational purpose in the context of both public schools and Becket Academy. Problems in public education are discussed, and a model of educational innovation (based on the Becket experience) is offered. The chapter concludes with a discussion of education and social change.

CHAPTER I I

THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Despite general agreement that our educational system is in crisis, there is significant diversity of opinion as to how it can be improved. As Richard Kraft observes, "The temptation at a crisis time is to further refine our technique" (1981, p. 5). Most of the proposed educational solutions are very specific, i.e. improved teacher pay, smaller classes, curriculum revisions, and a lengthened school year.

For the most part, present educational reform efforts do not address a more fundamental issue:

What is mostly wrong with the public schools is due. . . to mindlessness. . . the failure or refusal to think seriously about educational purpose. . . . The solution must lie in infusing the various institutions with purpose, more important, with thought about purpose, and about the ways in which techniques, content, and organization fulfill or alter purpose. (Silberman, 1970, pp. 10-11)

As noted by McMurrin, the process of discerning and generating educational purpose is a "difficult task of relating the facts of life to established and ideal values" (1971, p. 147). Further,

what has been, for the most part, a casual and neglected issue deserves the full force of rational analysis supported by reliable knowledge of human behavior. The end values to be sought through education must be identified, elaborated, and given operational meaning by reference to social conditions and personal experience, to the efforts and designs of society, and to the aims, needs, and aspiration of those who are educated. (ibid., pp. 147-148)

A closely related educational problem is the trend to overemphasize finite, measurable objectives. As noted by Combs in

Educational Accountability: Beyond Behavioral Objectives:

By concentrating attention on specific rather than general goals of the educational process, the major thrust of the entire system tends to be distorted as minor, rather than major, goals take precedence in the classroom. (1972, p. 9)

Although the intent may be quite the opposite, the widespread adoption of specific objectives has contributed to the loss of educational purpose.

Various efforts have been made to delineate broad educational goals. For example, the National Education Association's Educational Policies Commission developed a list that includes good citizenship, ability and willingness to work, general morality, health, command of fundamental processes, and worthy use of leisure time (Educational Policies Commission, 1961, pp. 1-2). The State of Connecticut's Comprehensive Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education lists the following goals: motivation to learn, mastery of basic skills, acquisition of knowledge, competence in life skills, and understanding society's values (Connecticut State Department of Education, 1979, p. 3).

As worthy as these goals may be, their articulation points to another aspect of the educational crisis: the gap between stated ideals and operational realities. What, for example, are the schools doing to promote general morality, health, competence in life skills, or a number of these other ideals? A closely related

problem is the implementation of covert goals: those that are operationalized, but never explicitly stated.

In sum, the crisis in education is directly related to a failure to infuse our educational system with a conceptual and operational sense of purpose. In order to achieve meaningful educational reform, it is essential that educational purpose be discussed and examined from a variety of perspectives. This chapter is one attempt to consider this important issue.

The remainder of this chapter provides an overview of alternative perspectives on the nature of educational purpose. Although each of the purposes listed could be examined in greater depth, this overview has not been designed to incorporate such detailed information on individual subcomponents. Instead, a broad approach has been selected as most suitable, given the study's goal of examining one school's perspectives on these issues.

The context of this discussion is elementary and secondary education, but the concepts could also be applied to a study of purpose in higher education. Although the focus is upon educational practice in the United States, many of the ideas are drawn from non-Americans and systems applied in other countries--both in the past and present. The concepts incorporated are derived from both educators and those not directly involved with schooling.

In some cases, individual educators or education systems may be associated with more than one of the alternatives listed. It is

considered reasonable, if not desirable, that any given educational approach incorporate more than a single purpose. Further, this discussion is not intended to be all-inclusive, serving instead as a reference point for further consideration of this important topic.

The literature review provides a context for examining the school under study. In subsequent chapters, the discussion of Becket Academy integrates those purposes which apply to its programs.

The Purpose of Education: Alternative Perspectives

The alternatives described are as follows:

- (1) intellectual/cognitive development, (2) affective/psychological development, (3) aesthetic development, (4) motivation/conational development, (5) physical development and health, (6) life experience, (7) values/moral development, (8) character/personality development, (9) wholistic development, (10) spiritual development, (11) utilitarianism/practical skills development, (12) employment/career skills development, (13) leisure skills development, (14) transmission of civilization/social continuity, (15) social conformity, (16) social change, (17) social selection, (18) to keep the young occupied, (19) to promote competition, (20) to promote cooperation/human relations, (21) empowerment of the individual, (22) to promote responsibility for the ecosystem, (23) lifelong/process skills development, and (24) survival/evolution/innovation.

Intellectual/Cognitive Development

Intellectual development ("the achievement and communication of knowledge and cultivation of reason and reasonableness"; McMurrin, 1971, p. 148) is perhaps the most widely agreed upon purpose of American education. Intellectual/cognitive development incorporates "basic skills," literacy, numeracy, rationalism, logic, and use of abstract symbolism.

The roots of the cognitive educational goal include the views

espoused by the early Greek philosophers: the Sophists, Socrates, and Aristotle (S. Smith, 1979, pp. 11-30). The latter is credited with having "invented logic" (Baskin, 1966, p. 1).

Rationality has remained a major theme throughout the history of formal education systems. It was heavily emphasized by the seventeenth century French philosopher and mathematician Rene Descartes (ibid., p. 166). The nineteenth century American educator Charles S. Pierce wrote, "A liberal education. . . means logic" (ibid., p. 508).

In a more modern context, Benjamin Bloom's 1956 Taxonomy of Educational Objectives--Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain has heavily influenced American education (Downey, 1971, p. 156). Among the recent educational reports, A Nation at Risk incorporates heavy emphasis upon intellectual development, as does Mortimer Adler's The Paedeia Proposal. Adler states three objectives for schools (all of which are cognitive in nature): acquisition of organized knowledge, development of intellectual skills, and enlarged understanding of ideas and values (1982, p. 23). John Goodlad recognizes four educational purposes, one of which is intellectual development (Page, 1984, p. 37).

Despite widespread agreement on the importance of cognitive development, there is significant disagreement regarding specific areas of emphasis. For example, there are many advocates for training in "basic skills," while others call for more complex and

diverse intellectual development. William Glasser (1969) charges that schools overemphasize rote memorization to the exclusion of teaching critical-thinking skills.

Affective/Psychological Development

As noted by Downey, affective development has been increasingly recognized as intrinsically important and as a "prerequisite to satisfactory progress in the cognitive domain" (1971, p. 155). Among the proponents of affective/psychological development was the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century German philosopher Johann Herbart (Baskin, 1966, p. 260).

Swiss educator Jean Piaget articulated developmental stages related to a child's capacity for learning. In his book On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand, Jerome Bruner (1962) calls for increased attention to the affective domain. In Freedom to Learn, American psychologist Carl Rogers (1969) advocates affective development in the public schools. Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives--Handbook II: Affective Domain (1964) has contributed to increased emphasis in this area.

Modern-day proponents of this purpose are of two basic schools of thought. On the one hand, are those who recognize that intellectual development cannot be divorced from feelings and the psyche. Their argument is that schools must integrate affective development as a means of achieving a more primary purpose: cognitive skills acquisition.

Others believe that affective development is an end in itself-- and that it is not being developed by other institutions. Schools must, therefore, assume responsibility for enhancing each student's self-esteem, inner psychological development, and regard for others.

Aesthetic Development

Some believe the schools should promote aesthetic appreciation and skills development in art, music, and related areas. Many believe that these areas are equally important as the cognitive "basic skills." Aesthetic development was highly valued by the Romans. Among more modern educators, the early twentieth century educator Maria Montessori (1973) believed that education should incorporate elements of self-expression.

The need for outlets for personal expression is widely perceived as related to affective and psychological development. It is also considered a means of developing the non-linear side of the brain--what Robert Samples (1976) describes as the "metaphoric mind."

Proponents of aesthetic development in education also argue that artistic expression is a fundamental aspect of human existence. It must, therefore, be incorporated in the school curriculum.

In addition to advocating that students be trained to express themselves, some proponents perceive a need for including formalized recognition of the work of others. "Art appreciation" is one example of a course designed to meet this objective.

Motivation/Conational Development

The conative goal of education refers to "human volition. . . . to the processes of decision-making, to motivation, intention, and conscious pursuit of ends" (McMurrin, 1971, p. 149). This purpose is closely related to the N.E.A. Educational Policies Commission's goal of "ability and willingness to work" (Educational Policies Commission, 1961, pp. 1-2). Developing and sustaining motivation was emphasized by Kurt Hahn, founder of the Outward Bound movement (see, for example, Hahn, 1964, p. 2). William Glasser has called for a closely related concept: "the teaching of relevance" (1969, p. 63).

In modern-day education, motivational development is increasingly recognized as an important aspect of learning. In earlier times, this goal was often taken for granted: those who chose to attend school were, for the most part, self-motivated. The growth of public education has created a very different situation since obligatory attendance has tended to reduce this fundamental educational ingredient.

Present-day proponents of the need to incorporate motivational development in education recognize that many youth are disinterested in schools and schooling; they argue that is no longer realistic to assume that students are intrinsically motivated. The schools must, therefore, actively incorporate motivational development in the curriculum.

Beyond motivation for learning in schools, conational development is needed by many adult citizens. Advocates of this perspective argue that schools must promote a means by which students can find purpose and motivation which will sustain them during their adult lives.

Physical Development and Health

In his classic work Emile, the eighteenth century French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau writes:

If. . . you wish to train your pupil's understanding, train the capacities which it is to control. Keep him in constant bodily exercise; bring him up robust and healthy, to make him reasonable and wise: let him work, let him be active, let him run about, let him make a noise, in short let him always be in motion. Once make him a man in vigour, and he will soon become a man in understanding. (1964, pp. 121-122)

The Swiss educator Johann Pestalozzi also promoted development of physical and motor capacities (Price, 1967, p. 236).

In the United States, education for physical health was proposed by Benjamin Franklin (Baskin, 1966, p. 239) and emphasized during the early twentieth century's Progressive era (Lagerson, 1971, p. 257). Modern-day outdoor educators have also advocated for health as a fundamental educational purpose (see, for example, Freeberg and Taylor, 1961).

The perceived need for physical development in schools has, to a large extent, evolved in association with the rapid social changes of the past century. In earlier times, most individuals were physically active as part of their agrarian life styles; the growth

of industrialization (and post-industrialization) has resulted in an overall decline in individual physical development--even as medical advances have extended the average lifespan.

Advocates of including physical development in the curriculum include both those who believe it will enhance cognitive skills acquisition, and others who argue that it is an end in itself.

Life Experience

Many believe that experience is a fundamental educational process, including the seventeenth century's Rousseau (1964, p. 197), Moravian John Amos Comenius (S. Smith, 1979, p. 120), and Englishman John Locke (ibid., p. 129). But it is the American John Dewey who has credited experience with being not only a means, but also a goal, of education (Dewey, 1963, p. 89).

Experiential learning is perhaps the most fundamental pedagogical process. In so-called primitive societies, the young were instructed through experience and adult role modelling. Experiential learning is also a fundamental aspect of the apprenticeship model--which evolved in the Middle Ages and continues to be a basis for skills development in the trades.

The modern educational focus upon abstract symbolism in classroom settings has contributed to a decline in the emphasis of experiential learning. It is thus only in response to this trend that the long taken-for-granted "experiential education" has emerged as a formal school of educational thought. Research supports the

view that it is a viable educational alternative (see, for example, Conrad and Hedin, 1981). However, much of this present-day attention focuses upon experience as a process--as opposed to a goal or purpose.

Values/Moral Development

Belief is widespread that education should promote values and moral development. China's Confucius taught traditional values and sought moral perfection (Baskin, 1966, p. 162). Socrates believed that high standards of moral conduct could be achieved by careful reasoning and mental self-discipline (S. Smith, 1979, p. 18).

In the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, a variety of individuals advocated for moral development in education. John Locke believed that the most important task of education was development of a sense of moral responsibility (Baskin, 1966, p. 344). Benjamin Franklin was an American proponent of Locke's ideas (S. Smith, 1979, p. 148). Johann Herbart (Baskin, 1966, p. 260), German philosopher Immanuel Kant (ibid., p. 322), and American socialist Robert Owen (S. Smith, 1979, p. 171) also believed that formation of moral character was the highest purpose of education.

In a modern context, "general morality" is one of the goals listed by the National Education Association (Educational Policies Commission, 1961, pp. 1-2). As Glasser notes, however, "morality is an emotional subject that causes so much controversy that schools do

not ordinarily teach or even discuss it" (1969, p. 216). He favors its inclusion in the curriculum (ibid., p. 223).

A central question in the teaching of morality is whose morality will be taught? Many (for example, some Christian fundamentalists) criticize what they perceive as the present state of "moral relativism" and wish to implement an absolute value structure. A contrary position is articulated by proponents of "values clarification"--a process by which students explore personal mores and beliefs (see Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum, 1972). Values clarification advocates are often charged with being too secular, critical of existing moral standards, and unwilling to take stands on values issues. In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Brazilian Paulo Freire (1982) calls for an education which promotes "critical consciousness"; this view incorporates values clarification concepts plus action steps based upon the information derived.

There are many individuals who believe that morals and values should be totally excluded from education. This raises the question of whether a "value-free" education is truly possible: it would seem that overt exclusion of values cannot eliminate their covert application (intended or otherwise). For example, as noted by Silberman (1970, p. 9), the actions of teachers may be as great an influence on imparting values as any intended morality instruction.

Anthony Wallace (1975) believes that educational emphasis on morality is a function of each nation's socio-cultural phase of development. He argues that morality is given high educational

priority in revolutionary and reactionary societies and less so in conservative ones. Merle Borrowman (1975) argues that American educational conflicts are, in part, a product of the clash between Hebraic-Puritan values (which emphasize the work ethic) and Hellenic-Romantic ones (which emphasize pleasure).

Character/Personality Development

Sixteenth century French writer Michel de Montaigne believed that character development was more important than mastery of cognitive skills (S. Smith, 1979, p. 109). Herbart was also an advocate of character development (ibid., p. 161), as was Pestalozzi. In a modern context, the Outward Bound movement is based upon the development of character through the crucible of wilderness challenge. Frank Boyden, the former headmaster of Deerfield Academy, reportedly wrote: "The object of education should be development of character" (McPhee, 1966, p. 109).

Precisely what comprises character is not easily resolved. Advocates of this position emphasize the development of personality strengths and the individual's ability to succeed in the face of obstacles and challenges. Other related areas include promoting respect for each person's uniqueness and fostering a willingness to stand upon one's principles.

It is a fine line that separates moral/values and character development. The latter is also closely related to the next educational purpose: wholistic development.

Wholistic Development

Advocates of wholistic development believe that one must educate the total child--that the sum is more than the previously-discussed developmental parts. Education should promote the ability to perceive the world wholistically, exercise judgment, and utilize intuition to effectively anticipate and respond to life situations.

Proponents of wholistic development include the sixteenth century Frenchman Francoise Rabelais who believed in a diverse and well-rounded curriculum (S. Smith, 1979, p. 107). Johann Pestalozzi also implemented a wide-ranging curriculum with a wholistic emphasis. The English progressive school movement also incorporated this perspective (Skidelsky, 1969).

In their early revolutionary stages, many Communist nations employed wholistic educational practices. Chinese educator Lu Ting-yi wrote that a "cultured, socialist-minded worker" is

a man who is both politically conscious and educated. He is able to understand both mental and manual work. He is what we regard as developed in an all-around way, both politically and professionally qualified. He is a worker-intellectual and an intellectual-worker. We insist on the educational policy of all-round development. (Baskin, 1966, pp. 385-386)

In A Teacher's Experience, the Soviet Union's Stanislaw Shatsky writes that schooling should include useful work, play, art, mental work, social activity, and physical development (1981, p. 218).

The Roman Catholic pedagogy is based upon the wholistic view of total-person education. Ralph Waldo Emerson also advocated for a broad education (Downey, 1971, p. 152). The modern American

educator Campbell Loughmiller, who specialized in instructing emotionally-disturbed youth, writes: "Our total effort to help a boy is a unitary process that cannot be separated into parts" (1979, p. 52). A modern wholistic approach to education is also advocated by "new age" authors such as Robert Samples (1976).

Spiritual Development

The educational goal of spiritual development has been advocated by Christian theologians including Saint Augustine (who taught that faith, rather than reason, was the basis of truth; S. Smith, 1979, p. 45), Jesuit order founder Ignatius Loyola (Baskin, 1966, p. 309), and Martin Luther (S. Smith, 1979, p. 83). Modern theologian Rev. Earle Fox believes that education is innately tied to spiritual faith:

Openness to experience and to reasoning about it is clearly a prerequisite to any truly educational process. Faith, then, is not the closed attitude that bars one from true knowledge (scientific or otherwise), it is the precondition of living in reality and of having any serious knowledge at all. . . . The life of faith, then, is the choice to risk the hurt and rejection and disappointment, at whatever cost, to experience and know the truth, whatever it may be, and to put that at the center. (1983, p. 5)

But emphasis upon spiritual development is not confined to the domain of formalized religion. Plato believed that true knowledge was derived from grasping divine ideas (Baskin, 1966, p. 530). Rousseau writes, "Every man has a special place in the ideal order of the universe" (1964, p. 29). Kindergarten founder Frederick Froebel's educational theories were based on belief in a

divine spirit governing life as part of nature (S. Smith, 1979, p. 164) and the existence of an inner connection (Baskin, 1966, p. 245). In Pestalozzi's Leonard and Gertrude, a village is transformed by a single woman's vision of lofty purpose (ibid., p. 514). In her essay "Erdkinder" (Land-children), Maria Montessori writes:

The consciousness of knowing how to make oneself useful, how to help mankind in many ways, fills the soul with noble confidence, with almost religious dignity. The feeling of independence must be bound to the power to be self-sufficient, not a vague form of liberty deducted from the help afforded by the gratuitous benevolence of others. There are two "faiths" that can uphold man: faith in God and faith in himself. And these two faiths should exist side by side: the first belongs to the inner life of man, the second to his life in society. (1973, p. 102)

Many existential philosophers and transpersonal psychologists are also advocates of spiritual development in education. As summarized by Richard Kraft, transpersonal psychology incorporates the perspective that once

skills and abilities have been learned. . . spiritual voids still exist for many persons, and these can only be filled by going deeper into the human being and outward into the cosmos for answers. (undated, p. 23)

Philosopher Alfred Whitehead believes that "the essence of education is that it be religious" (1967, p. 23). He defines a religious education as one

which inculcates duty and reverence. Duty arises from our potential control over the course of events. Where attainable knowledge could have changed the issue, ignorance has the guilt of vice. And the foundation of reverence is this perception, that the present holds within itself the complete sum of existence, backwards and forwards, that whole amplitude of time, which is eternity. (ibid.)

Utilitarianism/Practical Skills Development

Although most would agree that education should be "useful," there is considerable diversity of thought as to what exactly this means. The more classical approach, as advocated by the Greek philosophers, is that an education should incorporate abstract concepts and ideas that can be applied throughout life. A more recent school of thought is that education should emphasize concrete practicalities (for example, homemaking skills, sex and marriage education, driver training, and career and vocational development).

Earlier advocates of practical skills training include John Milton (S. Smith, 1979, p. 116), John Locke (Baskin, 1966, p. 344), Benjamin Franklin (S. Smith, 1979, p. 148), and the twentieth century social Darwinist Herbert Spencer (Baskin, 1966, p. 672). Horace Mann, who is best known as a proponent of the American public school system, believed in a practical curriculum (S. Smith, 1979, p. 178). As regards the specifics of educational utilitarianism, most modern thinking is focused upon employment and careers.

Employment/Career Skills Development

Training for employment and careers is rooted in the apprenticeship model developed during the Middle Ages (ibid., p. 55). Rousseau (1964, p. 168) also believed that children should learn a trade. Others, including Froebel (S. Smith, 1979, p. 166), implemented manual training less for vocational reasons than as a means to develop general skills.

Work and education have been linked in many of the socialist nations including China (Wong, 1980) where manual training is perceived as both a means for political training and as an end in itself (Baskin, 1966, pp. 383-394). Cuba has adopted a similar approach. Soviet educator Shatsky believes in "happiness derived through work" (1981, p. 171).

In the United States, public school vocational training evolved during the early twentieth century's Progressive education movement (Lagerson, 1971, p. 258; S. Smith, 1979, p. 171). Among the present-day reformers, some (i.e., Boyer, 1983) believe the schools should better help students develop career options. Critics of vocational training include Mortimer Adler (1982) who argues that it violates a need for universal education.

Leisure Skills Development

A second utilitarian educational purpose is the development of leisure skills. Rousseau, Froebel, and Montessori are among those who recognized the value of play as an educational tool. Training students for adult recreation is a relatively recent phenomenon, however, reflecting the availability of leisure time in industrial and post-industrial societies. The National Education Association lists "worthy use of leisure" as one of its educational goals (Educational Policies Commission, 1961, pp. 1-2).

Advocates of this position believe that it is presumptuous to assume that people are prepared for this important aspect of their

lives. They argue that individuals must be trained to use their leisure time constructively and in a fulfilling manner. Furthermore, it is the obligation of the schools to assume this responsibility.

The growth of the outdoor education movement is, in part, oriented toward fulfilling this purpose (see, for example, Freeberg and Taylor, 1961). The outdoor environment is widely perceived as a contrast to urban/suburban life and thus a valuable leisure resource.

Transmission of Civilization/Social Continuity

In contrast to achieving goals of concrete utility is the more generic purpose of transmitting civilization and providing social continuity. This model of education is based upon the belief that the best preparation for the future is an understanding of the past. The Renaissance humanists are among the earlier advocates of this approach, and it serves as the basis of Mortimer Adler's Paededia proposal. This perspective incorporates high emphasis upon the classics and liberal arts.

One rationale for this purpose is that it is not necessary to justify the imparting of knowledge--that the classics should be learned for their own intrinsic worth. Another view--that a society is obligated to pass on its collective knowledge to each succeeding generation--is more closely tied to social purpose. If a culture fails to do so, it can hardly claim to be civilized.

Critics include Margaret Mead (1943) who argued that this approach promotes educational indoctrination and creates a teacher (rather than learner) oriented pedagogy. It has also been claimed that such a purpose is elitist and unadapted to a rapidly changing world.

Social Conformity

Promotion of social conformity is closely related to the previous educational purpose. As Wallace (1975) observes, a school system's emphasis is associated with the society's culture and history. Invariably, any centralized program of education is, to some extent, a social and political control mechanism.

Good citizenship is an educational goal advocated by Plato (S. Smith, 1979, p. 22), Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann (Baskin, 1966, p. 412), and the National Educational Association (Educational Policies Commission, 1961, pp. 1-2). William Glasser adds, "Education for social responsibility should be a part of every school program" (1969, p. 17).

There is, however, a fine line between citizenship education and indoctrination. McMurrin notes that schools "can become subtle instruments of social coercion by which a society promotes conformity, prevents both dissent and genuine individuality, and projects outworn forms and institutions into the future" (1971, p. 148). Ivan Illich charges, "School is the advertising agency which makes you believe that you need the society as it is" (1972, p.

163). Others deplore the widespread educational implementation of the concepts of psychologist B.F. Skinner (author of Walden Two, 1976, and other well-read books on behavior modification).

Social Change

Social change, rather than conformity, is considered by many a more desirable aspect of "good citizenship." Plato, John Locke (Price, 1967, p. 234), and Robert Owen (S. Smith, 1979, p. 168) believed that education should promote social change.

This perspective was also a fundamental aspect of the American Progressive movement (Lagerson, 1971, p. 257; T. Smith, 1961, p. 171). John Dewey considered the schools "embryonic community life" (1974, p. 29). In a celebrated 1932 essay, George Counts asked the question, "Dare the School Build a New Social Order?" (Cremin, 1964, p. 379).

In the modern United States, education has served as an institution of social change through such efforts as compensatory education, desegregation of schools, and efforts to promote equal educational opportunity.

In revolutionary and Third World nations, education is often perceived as a tool for social change (although it can become a means to promote a different kind of conformity). Bowles quotes Cuba's Fidel Castro as claiming, "Revolution and education are the same thing" (Bowles, 1971, p. 472). China's Mao Tse-tung (1967) writes: "If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice

of changing reality" (1967, p. 118). In an essay entitled "Education for Self-Reliance," Tanzania's Julius Nyerere states, "Only when we are clear about the kind of society we are trying to build can we design our educational service to serve our goals" (1969, p. 4). In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Brazil's Paulo Freire (1982) calls for an educational process that promotes personal and political change.

Education is also perceived as a means to promote social change by nonformal educators serving as agents of Third World development (see, for example, Labelle, 1976).

Social Selection

Education serves as an element of the social selection process by which individuals gain income, status, and power. By granting diplomas, degrees, and other certificates, schools serve as "the gatekeepers of society" (Silberman, 1970, p. 69). Education thus fulfills the purpose of acting as a filter or triage system.

Although this may not be a overt, intended purpose of schools, it certainly must be recognized as a de facto aspect of their existence. With few exceptions, status and high-paying jobs require a college degree or even more higher education. Achieving such degrees almost invariably requires some success in primary and secondary schools.

This issue--education as social selection--has been a troubling one for proponents of alternative education programs. As David

Evans wonders,

How can nonformal education be developed so that it does not constitute a lower-quality, second-class alternative to formal schooling? Can societies tolerate a dual educational system which tends to reinforce the division of society into groups of different economic and social status? (1981, p. 14)

Although most people would prefer to believe that education is exclusively about learning, it also clearly serves political, social, and economic purposes.

To Keep the Young Occupied

Mary Conway Kohler observes, "We bury our youth at [age] ten and don't absorb them into adult society until about twenty-two. . . . [W]e Americans seem almost obsessed with prolonging the childhood of our adolescents" (1983, pp. 9,15). One criticism of education is that it achieves little more than keeping the young occupied.

A presumed reason for this covert purpose relates to insufficient job opportunities for the adult population. If large numbers of youth sought work, the unemployment problem would be exacerbated.

Furthermore, this aspect of education has increased in importance as our society has become more complex. When the economy was primarily agrarian, children and their parents interacted throughout the day since the young were often involved in the farm activities. Industrialization has created job settings removed from the home environment--and thus generated a need for care of the

young people during working hours. The rising divorce rate and corresponding increase in the number of one-parent families has further exacerbated this demand.

To Promote Competition

The view that education should promote competition is closely related to the previously discussed selection process. Roots of this perspective include the nineteenth century's Social Darwinism. A fundamental belief is that students must be prepared for competitive situations which are an intrinsic aspect of life. Further, there is a belief that competition is the basis for achieving individual excellence.

Beyond the goal of promoting competition among individuals, a parallel purpose is ensuring that the United States maintains a competitive edge over other nations. The superiority of American technology was a theme stressed by educator Charles Eliot (Baskin, 1966, p. 200). In a more modern context, the National Commission on Excellence in Education writes in A Nation at Risk:

Knowledge, learning, information, and skilled intelligence are the new raw materials of international commerce and are today spreading throughout the world as vigorously as miracle drugs, synthetic fertilizers, and blue jeans did earlier. If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system. (1983, p. 7)

It has been suggested that the spirit of this report "is almost wholly economic and competitive in nature" (Ducharme, 1983, p. 7).

Page believes A Nation at Risk is grounded in the view that "America

is losing the struggle for predominance in the world, and education must bear the brunt of the responsibility for the failings of the nation" (1984, p. 36).

To Promote Cooperation/Human Relations

A contrasting social goal of education is promotion of cooperation and development of human relations. Advocates believe that the schools must provide a mechanism to promote healthy human interaction and positive group dynamics. This view is based on the belief that excellence and fulfillment are best achieved by cooperation rather than competition; schools are thus obligated to instill these values.

Among the advocates are outdoor educators seeking to develop models of democratic group living (i.e. Freeberg and Taylor, 1961). Community service learning represents another aspect of this perspective.

The contrast between promoting either competition or cooperation is a striking one. Alec Dickson argues that it is possible

to balance courage with concern. But there are other questions. How do we reconcile competitiveness (best grades, best marks, best colleges which count for so much in our society) with compassion? (1982, p. 16)

Empowerment of the Individual

The educational goal of individual empowerment is very much in contrast to the seven previous purposes--all of which are socially-

oriented. The empowerment perspective is rooted in the belief that every individual is unique and education should serve as a means for achieving self-fulfillment.

This view's historical roots include the ideas of the Greek Sophists (Price, 1967, p. 230), the Italian Renaissance humanist Petrarch (S. Smith, 1979, pp. 68-69), the French writer Francois Rabelais (Baskin, 1966, p. 574), and Frederich Froebel (Price, 1967, pp. 236-237). Among its best-known proponents was Jean Jacques Rousseau who wrote, "It is in vain. . . to claim that we can model different minds by a common standard" (1964, p. 33).

Among Americans, the New England Transcendentalists (including Emerson and Thoreau) were critical of social conformity and advocated self-reliance (Adams and Reynolds, 1981, p. 24). Charles Eliot believed in adapting instruction to individual interests and capacities (S. Smith, 1979, p. 181).

Child-centered instruction was a major thrust of the Progressive education movement (Cremin, 1964, p. viii; T. Smith, 1961, p. 171). John Dewey proclaimed that the "ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control" (1963, p. 64). William Kilpatrick, another of the leading Progressives, argued for the right of each individual to determine his or her own opinions (Baskin, 1966, p. 333).

The modern-day "free schools" are rooted in Progressive concepts (Cremin, 1973), as are the educational beliefs of John Holt:

We cannot be made to grow in someone else's way, or even made to grow at all. We can only grow when and because we want to, for our own reasons, in whatever ways seem most interesting, exciting, and helpful to us. (1970, p. 23)

American Arthur Combs believes that self-fulfillment should be the "primary goal of education" (1972, p. 73). In A Place Called School, John Goodlad (1983) calls for personal growth as one of his four primary educational goals. Suzanne Kindervatter, an American practitioner of Third World development, calls for education to be "an empowering process" (1979, p. vii).

Non-American modernists, including Italian Maria Montessori and Switzerland's Jean Piaget, have also articulated the need for child-centered instruction. The English Progressive schools are especially well-known for this type of education: Summerhill was based on renunciation of "all discipline, all direction, all suggestion, all moral training, all religious instruction" (Neill, 1960, p. 4). New Zealand's Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1964) also developed a child-centered pedagogy.

Education for personal empowerment is also rooted in the beliefs of American humanistic psychologists and other proponents of the "human potential" movement. This perspective was derived from existential philosophy (S. Smith, 1979, p. 193), the social-cultural climate of the 1960s, and the emergence of "new age" paradigms. Abraham Maslow's concept of "self-actualization" (see, for example, Maslow, 1968) and Carl Roger's notion of the "fully functioning person" (1969, p. 282) are prominent examples. Basing their own

beliefs on the "critical consciousness" concept of Paulo Freire (1972), Alschuler, Weinstein, Evans, Tamashiro, and Smith (1977) call for an education that promotes self-knowledge development and increases "full humanness."

A basic assumption of the individual empowerment perspective is that "the good of the individual is coincident with the good of the society and the culture" (McMurrin, 1971, p. 148). Critics argue this represents a leap of faith: an education based upon individual needs and wants is likely to promote self-indulgence, personal obsessiveness, narcissism, and a lack of concern for other persons and the larger society. One possible reconciliation is adopting a pragmatist educational perspective, "the result of which is a self-disciplined and self-actualized individual who realizes his selfness and his freedom in the context of the democratic social arrangement in which he lives" (Downey, 1971, p. 154).

To Promote Responsibility for the Ecosystem

This view, which has relatively few proponents, is based on the belief that education should serve more than individual or social human needs--it should also promote stewardship of the environment. A fundamental concept is that "western civilization seems to have developed almost exclusively by ordering the environment and in so doing has damaged it extensively" (Elkin, 1982, p. 28). The purpose of education is development of what Aldo Leopold calls a "land ethic" which "changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the

land-community to plain member and citizen of it" (1966, p. 240).

This purpose is rooted in beliefs of so-called "primitive" cultures such as the Amerindian. Western proponents include the seventeenth century Moravian John Amos Comenius and Swiss educator Johann Pestalozzi (Minton, 1980, pp. 23-32). American Henry David Thoreau also articulated this perspective.

Nature Study was one aspect of the Progressive movement (ibid.), and modern-day environmental education is derived from both conservation/nature study and school camping/outdoor education (Kirk, 1980). A leading American proponent is Steve Van Matre whose 1972 book Acclimatization has been widely read by environmental educators.

Lifelong/Process Skills Development

A major stream of educational thought is based upon the view that education should not be oriented toward assimilation of specific content matter. Instead, it should promote development of internalized processes which "provide every individual with a flexible and diversified range of useful learning options throughout his or her lifetime" (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974, p. 9).

Roots of lifelong learning go back at least as far as the Greek philosophers (Lewis, 1981). Socrates believed that learning was a lifestyle, and he emphasized the need for constant questioning (Crosby, 1981, p. 11). The Progressive education movement, which evolved during a period of rapid industrial development,

incorporated a belief that ongoing social change necessitated instructional emphasis upon problem-solving skills (Cremin, 1964, p. 215).

Maria Montessori argued that it "is necessary that the human personality should be prepared for the unforeseen. . . . [and develop] the power of adapting itself quickly and easily" (1973, p. 99). Margaret Mead adds:

We must concentrate upon teaching our children to walk so steadily that we need not hew too straight and narrow paths for them but can trust them to make new paths through difficulties we never encountered to a future of which we have no inkling. (1943, p. 639)

Arthur Combs calls for "learning not as product, but as process, the personal discovery by the learner of the special meaning of events for him" (1972, p. 20). Psychologist Carl Rogers expounds a similar philosophy that involves "letting my experiences carry me on, in a direction which appears to be forward, toward goals I can but dimly define, as I try to understand at least the current meaning of that experience" (1969, p. 154).

Educational critic John Holt writes, "living is learning. . . it is impossible, and misleading, and harmful to think of them as being separate" (1970, p. 22). Even Mortimer Adler, who advocates a relatively narrow focus for formal schooling, concedes that "education is a lifelong process of which schooling is only a small but necessary part" (1982, p. 10).

Survival/Evolution/Innovation

Closely related to the view that education should foster lifelong process skills is the perspective that it should promote survival by preparing individuals to generate innovative responses to existing conditions. Through schooling, children should acquire the necessary skills and attitudes to creatively adapt and successfully survive. Some advocates argue further that true survival extends beyond self-preservation to include service to social groups and other individuals.

This perspective is rooted in the views of a variety of noted individuals. Froebel believed that education was an important aspect of evolution (Baskin, 1966, p. 245), and Herbert Spencer called for schooling which promotes self-preservation (ibid., p. 672). Alfred Whitehead has stressed the need for imagination and creative interaction (ibid., p. 718).

This view is also articulated by a number of the present-day educational futurologists (see, for example, Haas, 1984). Downey argues that

the overarching goal of education in the future ought to be to educate for the survival of the individual, for the survival of a tolerable physical and cultural environment, and for the survival of some form of social order. (1971, p. 157)

Conclusions

To reconcile these wide-ranging (and often conflicting) educational purposes is a difficult task. An idealist will attempt to do so by considering

education as an instrument for the improvement of all human endeavors. . . . [E]ducational aims include vocational preparedness, physical health, aesthetic appreciation, love and homemaking, citizenship and a sense of social justice, knowledge or awareness of eternal things, speculative powers, and spiritual emotions and allegiances. (Downey, 1971, p. 147)

However, even an idealist must concede that there are only twenty-four hours in a day and finite financial (and other) resources. In attempting to be all things to all people, an educational system will invariably serve everyone poorly. Clearly, some choices must be made.

An important, and related, issue is the extent to which schools should bear the responsibility for the total education of youth. The family, churches, community services, and other social institutions also have a commitment to serve the educational needs of children. Decisions must be made with regard to who will assume which educational responsibilities. It has also been argued, however, that the breakdown of traditional institutions (most notably, the family) has left gaps that only the schools are prepared to fill.

Thus, the question of educational purpose involves more than simply selecting desired goals from this (or any other) list. Further, it is perhaps far more important to ask questions about educational purpose than to necessarily arrive at answers.

Children, parents, teachers, administrators, and other citizens must participate in this conscious (and never-ending) dialogue if our schools--and other educational institutions--are to be improved. Reinfusing our schools with purpose must be a Socratic process as well as an administrative and political exercise.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The Use of Qualitative Methodology

Research in the social sciences is dominated by two fundamentally different theoretical perspectives, as contrasted by Bogdan and Taylor:

One, positivism, traces its origins to the great social theorists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. . . . The positivist seeks the facts or causes of social phenomena with little regard for the subjective states of individuals. . . . [T]he social scientist [is advised] to consider "social facts," or social phenomena, as "things" that exercise an external and coercive force on human behavior.

The second theoretical perspective. . . we will describe as phenomenological. . . . The phenomenologist is concerned with understanding human behavior from the actor's own frame of reference. . . . [T]he phenomenologist examines how the world is experienced. For him or her the important reality is what people imagine it to be.

Since the positivists and the phenomenologists approach different problems and seek different answers their research will typically demand different methodologies. (1975, p. 2)

Typically, the positivist generates quantitative data while the phenomenologist seeks information more descriptive and qualitative in nature.

Quantitative measures are succinct, parsimonious, and easily aggregated for analysis; quantitative data are systematic, standardized, and easily presented in a short space. By contrast, qualitative measures are longer, more detailed, and variable in content; analysis is difficult because responses are neither systematic nor standardized. Yet the open-ended responses permit one to understand the world as seen by the respondents. The purpose of gathering responses to open-ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand and capture

the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view. (Patton, 1980, p. 28)

It has been argued that the positivist approach is an attempt to employ methods developed for use in natural science to social contexts (ibid., p. 45). R. D. Laing writes that "the methods used to investigate the objective world, applied to us, are blind to our experience, necessarily so, and cannot relate to our experience" (1982, p. 9).

Qualitative methodologies provide an alternative for those wishing to examine social contexts from a phenomenological perspective. Ray Rist writes that

qualitative methodologies assume there is value to an analysis of both the inner and outer perspective of human behavior. In German, the term is verstehen. This inner perspective or "understanding" assumes that a complete and ultimately truthful analysis can only be achieved by actively participating in the life of the observed and gaining insights by means of introspection. . . . Qualitative research is predicated upon the assumption that this method of "inner understanding" enables a comprehension of human behavior in greater depth than is possible from the study of surface behavior, the focus of quantitative methodologies. (undated, p. iv)

Given the stated problem of developing an in-depth case study of Becket Academy's principles, program, and evolution, the present study is rooted in the phenomenological perspective and qualitative methodologies were employed. The research strategy utilized has been described as purely qualitative with naturalistic inquiry and qualitative measurement and content analysis (Patton, 1980, p. 112).

Research Design

A "flexible strategy of discovery" (Lofland, 1971, p. 76) was adopted as most conducive to the present research problem. Diesing writes:

The research design serves as a place to start, an initial focus of attention, and perhaps as a point of reference or departure for later explorations. In any case, unless it is very general, it is usually transcended, supplemented, or left behind as the developing field work suggests new topics and hypotheses. It is important, therefore, that the design be loose enough to allow for developments in the field; too strict a design ties the researcher down and inhibits the changes in concepts that are characteristic of fieldwork. (1971, p. 143)

This flexibility in research design is a necessary component in qualitative research, allowing the researcher to creatively adapt to unanticipated data. Patton writes:

The strategy in qualitative designs is to allow the important dimensions to emerge from analysis of the cases under study without presupposing in advance what those important dimensions will be. (1980, p. 41)

Data collection by a solitary means is subject to error (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest, 1966, p. 173). Denzin argues that "no single method will ever permit an investigator to develop causal propositions free of rival interpretations" and believes "multiple methods must be used in every investigation" (1970, p. 26). Defining triangulation as the use of a "combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena or programs" (1980, p. 108), Patton notes that it is "highly recommended" (ibid., p. 109).

Data Collection

Data collection was designed to "not only sampl[e] people, but also settings, events and processes" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 41). The study incorporated triangulation, integrating a methodological mix of participant observation, document review, and interviewing. Multiple sources were utilized in order to allow the

investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and observational issues. However, the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry. . . . Thus, any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate. (Yin, 1984, p. 91)

Participant Observation

As in any research of an ongoing program, there is a risk of intrusion. It has been suggested that this can be minimized if the researcher is well-informed (Weiss, 1972, p. 106). This condition is facilitated by participant observation, especially when the researcher is already familiar with the program under study.

Douglas adds:

Some of the best field research is done by people who are already members of the settings they study. . . . [T]he beginning is not that much of a problem and they are able far more easily to tell what mixture of methods is likely to work best. (1976, p. 36)

Patton has suggested that participant observation may be the best evaluation method (1980, p. 30), adding:

By directly observing program operations and activities the evaluator is better able to understand the context within which the program operates. Understanding the program context is essential to a holistic perspective. (pp. 124-125)

Closeness to the program is invaluable in qualitative research

(Patton, 1980, p. 43; Lofland, 1971, p. 4). Lofland notes further:

In the strongest circumstance, the would-be observer is sometimes already known by one or more persons who are members of the setting and who either control entrance directly or have influence with those who do. (1971, p. 95)

In the present case, the researcher has been employed by the organization under study since May 1981. Although closeness to a program can generate bias (see, for example, Webb et al., 1966, p. 114; Yin, 1984, p. 87), such a risk is outweighed by the in-depth understanding of program context so afforded and the improved accessibility to key program personnel. In addition, the researcher's long-term involvement with the school reduces the possibility of distortion. As Kidder writes:

The more time a participant observer spends with the people he or she studies, the less influence the observer exerts as a researcher because although the research subjects may wish to appear a particular way in the researcher's eyes, they cannot act in unnatural ways if the observer stays with them very long. The more the participant observer is immersed in the research setting, therefore, the less likely the research subjects are to distort the research. (1981, pp. 109-110)

Based upon the assumption that the present is predicated upon the past, the researcher's in-depth involvement in the present-day program provided a valuable context for historical analysis. This perspective proved invaluable in developing a comprehensive understanding of program evolution.

In summary, the participant observer is able to gain an inside understanding, but must be wary of losing a larger perspective.

Patton describes well this paradoxical challenge:

Experiencing the program as an insider is what necessitates the participant part of participant observation. At the same time, however, there is clearly an observer side to this process. The challenge is to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the program as an insider while describing the program for outsiders. (1980, p. 128)

Document Review

The second means of data collection was review of documents and archival records. Stewart describes this type of material as secondary data: "information not specifically gathered for the research question at hand" (1984, p. 11).

As Patton observes,

in contemporary society all programs leave a trail of paper that the evaluator can follow and use to increase knowledge and understanding about the program. (1980, p. 152)

Denzin adds:

The most important data for the [case study] are private records or documents. In these materials the subject's definitions of the situation emerge. (1970, p. 225)

Weiss notes that the advantages of document review include continuity over time (1972, p. 55). Webb et al. offer cautions, but also advocate for the use of documents:

We should recognize that using archival records frequently means substituting someone else's selective filter for your own. Although the investigator may not himself contaminate the material, he may learn that the producer or repository already has. A thoughtful consideration of the sources of invalidity may provide intelligence on these, either by suggesting astute hedges or new analyses to answer rival hypotheses. In any event, the Chinese proverb still holds: The palest ink is clearer than the best memory. (1966. p. 111)

In the present case, documents reviewed were existing, rather than elicited (a distinction noted by Richardson, Dohrenwend, and Klein, 1965, p. 16). Although some quantitative records were reviewed (for example, finances and numbers of staff and students), the focus was upon qualitative documents: descriptive literature, staff manuals, evaluation reports, curriculum guides, resumes, brochures, policies and procedures, grant applications, telephone lists, trip reports, letters, memoranda, newspaper clippings, trustee minutes, scholarly work discussing the school, and publications by staff.

The researcher had unlimited access to the Becket Academy files. This was a highly unusual situation for a study of this nature and proved invaluable in developing an in-depth perspective on Becket Academy.

Interviewing

Interviewing of past and present key individuals (primarily employees and trustees) was the third means of data collection. Interviews are a useful way to "find out what is in and on someone's mind" (Patton, 1980, p. 196) and, as Richardson et al. observe, can provide corroborating information:

The meaning that [the researcher] derives from observational and documentary information is the meaning that he attributes to it rather than the meaning that it has for the persons he is studying. In the interview, by contrast, the investigator can always check his own interpretation of the data with that of his respondents. (1965, pp. 20-21)

The approach used in interviewing was consistent with that described by Patton:

The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms. (1980, p. 205)

The need for a respondent to be ready and willing to discuss the topic at hand (Richardson et al., 1965, p. 48) was facilitated by use of the relatively flexible "intensive interviewing with an interview guide" (Lofland, 1971, p. 76). The use of this data collection strategy "keeps the interaction focused, but allows individual perspectives and experiences to emerge" (Patton, 1980, p. 201). The interview guide employed is included as Appendix A.

The familiarity of the researcher with the school under study enhanced the interview process by helping him to (1) know which individuals were most important to interview, (2) gain access to these people with relative ease, and (3) know which lines of questioning would prove most fruitful. As a result, the interviews proved invaluable in procuring factual information, anecdotes, perspectives on organizational change, and assessing the complex relationships between and among individuals and the school itself.

Given the inevitable limitations of time and resources, the decision of whom to interview received careful consideration. Selection criteria included depth of familiarity and length of relationship with the Academy and extent of responsibility for developing the program. Consideration was also given to the need for representation of all phases of Becket history.

The decision was made to not interview students, parents, local citizens, social workers, and other interested parties. This choice was based on the study's primary focus of developing an understanding of the program from an administrative perspective and the desire to maximize efficiency in obtaining appropriate data. At the same time, however, it is recognized that other perspectives would provide a basis for one or more sister studies.

The twenty-three interviews were conducted in person or by telephone, and all were audiotaped (with permission). With one exception, all of the interviews were completed in one session. The length of each interview varied from approximately thirty minutes to three hours depending upon the extent to which each individual chose to elaborate in answering the questions; about one hour was the average duration.

Appendix B is a complete listing of those interviewed, including present age, years of involvement with Becket Academy, title(s) held at the school, present situation, and date of the interview.

In addition to formal interviews (those based upon the interview guide), valuable information was also procured through general conversations with (and/or specific questions directed to) a variety of individuals. Persons involved included both those who were interviewed and others who were not. In the text, any verbal information obtained outside the interview process is labelled as

"pers. comm." (personal communication).

Those interviewed were sent portions of the text which included their own major quotations. Each individual was thus able to check the accuracy of the transcription, ensure that it was used in the proper context, and suggest appropriate changes.

Data Analysis

Analysis of qualitative data is more difficult than that of quantitative data and poses significant problems for the researcher (Miles, 1979). As Stewart observes, "evaluation of information and the integration of findings across multiple sources become critical functions, functions that require research expertise as well as knowledge of information sources" (1984, p. 120).

A fundamental concept of analysis is developing what Glaser and Strauss (1967) term "grounded theory." Patton writes:

The cardinal principle of qualitative analysis is that causal relationships and theoretical statements be clearly emergent from and grounded in the phenomena studied. The theory emerges from the data; it is not imposed on the data. (1980, p. 278)

Ray Rist adds:

The view of the means by which knowledge and understanding are developed is essentially one of inductive analysis, beginning with the specific and moving towards the general. Theory begins with an extrapolation from "grounded events." (undated, p. iv)

In the present study, inductive analysis of data from multiple sources were employed to develop an understanding of Becket Academy. Throughout this analysis, the approach described by Stewart was adopted:

It is important to evaluate very carefully the information presented, to weigh potential biases and to adopt an attitude of healthy skepticism. (1984, p. 32)

Methods employed included what Yin (1984) describes as pattern matching and explanation building and Miles and Huberman call "pattern finding" (1984, p. 216).

Initial analysis was undertaken throughout the data collection process in order to let the researcher "cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new--often better quality--data" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 49). Subsequent analysis comprised "three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification" (ibid., p. 20).

Data that were reduced included information on the students, faculty, school-year and summer programs, physical development, trustee activities, and finances. Conclusions and major themes under consideration (the nature of organizational evolution, educational purpose, and implications for broad-based educational change) were also extrapolated.

Data Presentation

The data are presented in chronological order, a report strategy described by Yin (1984). The history of Becket Academy is detailed in six chapters: an initial chapter on the present (September 1984) status of the school, a chapter of the events that led up to the Academy's founding, and four chapters of actual school history. Distribution of the twenty years of operations among these latter four chapters was based upon the author's subjective perception of Becket historical periods. Conclusions are incorporated at the ends of chapters five through nine. Two discussion chapters address the themes of Becket organizational evolution and implications for broad-based educational innovation.

For purposes of this study, a school year begins September 1 and ends August 31. It should be noted, however, that not all data presented correspond precisely to these dates. For example, the Becket fiscal year ends June 30.

Due to differences in record-keeping practice, available numerical data from different years are not always directly comparable. For example, some employee records include only teaching staff, while others include all personnel; some do not distinguish between full and part-time employees, while others make this distinction. The dates of available enrollment records also vary.

In some cases, there was uncertainty about the date of a

particular event or reference document. Triangulation and/or best corroborating evidence was used to make decisions. In at least one case of a difficult-to-place event, it was noted in the text that it may have occurred in a different year.

Use of the terms "Becket" and "Becket Academy" requires clarification. In general, these terms are used interchangeably to describe the total operation directed by John Wolter. There are periods in the school's history, however, in which there is apt to be confusion. For example, from 1974 through 1976, "Becket Academy" was often used to describe only the elementary/junior high school program, while the secondary program was known as "Founder's School." In 1982-1984, "Becket Academy" is regularly used to describe only the Connecticut school, while "The Pike School" is the New Hampshire residential program and "The Institute of Experiential Studies," the Connecticut-campus-based training and technical assistance component.

Information is interspersed throughout the history to help the reader relate the circumstances described to the modern (1984) operation of the school. For example, buildings are identified by referring to their present-day use. Current situations of interviewed individuals who are no longer employed are described at that point in the history when each left Becket Academy. The terms present-day, presently, and currently are used to temporally distinguish this information from that of the period under discussion.

The citation system is a modified version of the American Psychological Association standards. Modifications were designed to facilitate incorporation of extensive verbal references (interviews and personal communication) and unpublished documents.

Bibliographic entries are arranged under three categories: published documents (including newspapers), unpublished documents, and verbal references. All newspapers cited are published in Connecticut unless stated otherwise.

Summary

In summary, the methodology incorporated multiple data collection (including participant observation, document review, and interviews) and qualitative analysis based upon triangulation. Graphically, the distribution of research activities is summarized in figure one (based upon a format modified from Lofland, 1971, pp. 117-118).

The entire rectangle represents the total time devoted to the study. Each component of the project is represented within the rectangle; the surface area of each indicates the relative percentage of time that was invested in that component. The length of the rectangle represents elapsed calendar time and serves to indicate distribution of research activities at any given point in the study.

As indicated by the figure, the bulk of the participant-observer role predated formal initiation of the study. Although participant observation contributed to new data collection, it primarily served a contextual function. Document review and interviewing were the primary data collection means during the formal phase of the study. Analysis was conducted throughout the research, particularly after the data had been collected and in the early writing phase.

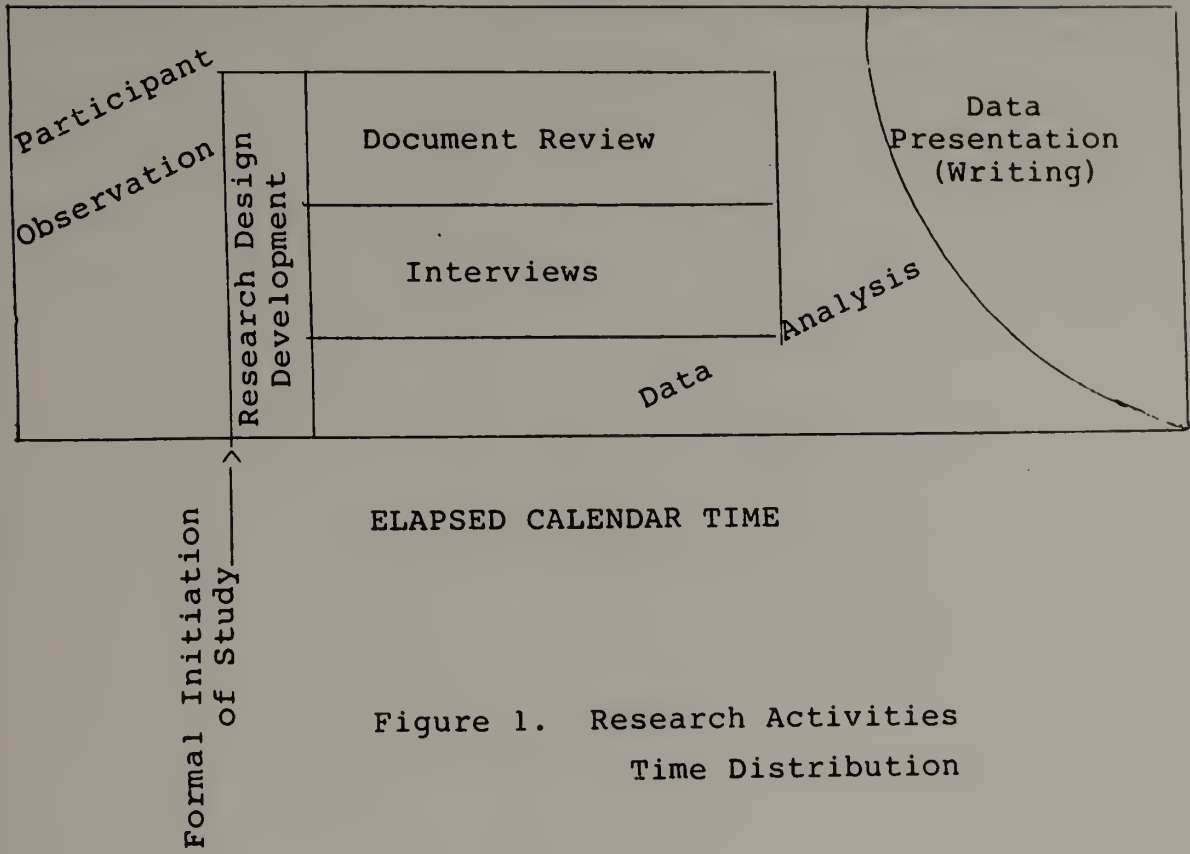


Figure 1. Research Activities Time Distribution

SECTION TWO: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The second section of the dissertation begins with a chapter on the current status of Becket Academy (chapter four). The subsequent chapters detail the school's evolution toward this present state: chapter five is background information on founder John Wolter and the events that led up to the Academy's 1964 founding, while chapters six through nine describe the school's history from 1964 to 1984.

C H A P T E R I V

BECKET ACADEMY: 1984

Introduction and Overview

In September 1984, Becket Academy began its twenty-first year, and this chapter is a description of its operations at this point in time. The discussion includes the private, non-profit school's students, staff, assets and facilities, and operating principles/educational purposes. In addition, there is a description of the present-day programs: Becket Academy (in East Haddam, Connecticut), the Pike School (in Pike, New Hampshire), mobile wilderness expeditions (throughout North America), and the Institute of Experiential Studies (based on the East Haddam campus).

Connecticut's Becket Academy is a coeducational boarding and day school serving boys and girls in grades six through twelve. Founded in 1964 by John and Joan Wolter, the school is a comprehensive and wholistic academic and life-experience community which seeks to expand and heighten traditional modes of learning and help each child reach his or her God-given potential. The Academy serves 110 students, most of whom have special academic, social, or emotional needs.

The second Becket program, the Pike School in Pike, New Hampshire, is a small (twenty-four capacity) residential program based on the Becket Academy model. It serves boys characterized by

developmental and intellectual disabilities, specialized needs related to failure in school, or emotional difficulties associated with an inappropriate family situation.

Both Becket Academy and Pike School students participate in mobile wilderness expeditions to Florida's Everglades, the southern Appalachians, New Mexico's Gila Mountains, Quebec's Reservoir Gouin, and other areas. These required school-year and summer offerings incorporate experiential learning, personal growth, and social development. The summer program is known as Becket Adventures.

The Becket-affiliated Institute of Experiential Studies conducts training programs, sponsors conferences, publishes documents, and provides technical assistance for individuals and organizations in education and human services.

With respect to organizational structure, Becket Academy (including its affiliates) is incorporated as a non-profit school and governed by a board of trustees.

The East Haddam program is licensed by the State of Connecticut as a child-caring agency and accredited as a special education school in twelve states. It is approved by the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools and the Department of Justice's Immigration and Naturalization Service and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools.

The Pike School is licensed as a special education facility by the State of New Hampshire Department of Education. The Becket Adventures program is a member of the American Camping Association,

and the Institute of Experiential Studies holds an institutional membership in the Association for Experiential Education.

Students are placed at Becket Academy and the Pike School through social agencies, juvenile courts, and local education authorities. In addition, some are privately placed and supported by their families. Both programs have open admissions policies and strive to serve the individual needs of those students enrolled.

The Becket Academy and Pike School programs are comprehensive in nature integrating classroom academics, vocational training and a farm program, residential living, counseling, nutrition, physical education, and wilderness programming.

The 150-acre main campus is located in the rural New England town of East Haddam, Connecticut. The 330-acre Pike, New Hampshire, property is on the western slopes of the White Mountains. A third property is located in Everglades City, Florida, and serves as a base for canoe trips and ecological exploration in the adjacent Everglades National Park.

Students

Although there are some private placements, most of the East Haddam students are funded by state agencies and/or local education authorities. The majority are from Connecticut, but some are from other states in the region. Although the East Haddam program enrolls youth from ten to eighteen in age, a majority of the students are between fourteen and sixteen. The school is unique among child-care programs in its willingness to accept both older youth and females. Girls comprise about one-quarter of the student population.

Becket Academy students are typically disadvantaged: most are from one-parent homes. Some have been abused or neglected. Many of the students have not had adult role models who demonstrated consistency. These youth typically have academic needs (such as learning disabilities or perceptual handicaps) and/or have experienced difficulties achieving success in public schools. A significant percentage of the students are minority youth, most of whom are from urban settings. The average period of enrollment is twelve to eighteen months, and all but a few local youth are boarding students.

The Pike School enrolls males, aged eleven through twenty-one. Although similar in many respects to the larger school's students, a number of the youth are mildly developmentally disabled. A common characteristic of the Pike School students is that their needs are

such that they are best served by a highly supervised and intensely structured program.

Enrollment of all of the 1984 Pike School students is publicly financed. About half are Connecticut residents with the remainder from other New England states. The typical Pike School student is enrolled for a longer period than a youth on the main campus.

Both programs have a policy of continuous admissions and enroll students throughout the school year and summer. Admission is open to any and all youth, and no attempt is made to exclude anyone on the basis of class, nationality, race, political persuasion, or any other such criteria. At the same time, Becket Academy and Pike School strive to accept only those youth whom they can honestly educate. Further, only those youth who voluntarily enter are accepted; once in attendance, however, the schools strive to maintain each child in the program.

Staff

Quality staff are recognized as the key to program success and major efforts are expended on the hiring, training, and supervisory processes. Staff are hired on the basis of personal qualities, life experiences, skills, knowledge, and professional credentials.

Although both schools seek individuals with specialized expertise, high emphasis is also placed on hiring staff who exhibit positive role model qualities. The schools also seek a total staff that encompasses a diversity of backgrounds and life experiences.

Individuals who exhibit commitment, initiative, and accept responsibility are rapidly promoted.

In September 1984, there are a total of ninety-eight employees (including twelve part-time) in the entire Becket operation. The East Haddam school has sixty employees (three part-time): four administrators (director, principal, pupil personnel coordinator, homelife director), three student support specialists (community liaison officer, night supervisor, and student advocate), five counselors (one part-time), seven dormitory parents, twenty-three academic and vocational staff (six full and one part-time high school teachers, five junior high teachers, seven vocational teachers, and three aides), thirteen support staff (one full and one part-time nurse, two secretaries, three dining hall staff, five maintenance men, and one part-time chaplain), plus six custodial staff (men from Brian House, Inc., a group home for developmentally

disabled adults).

The Pike School has twenty-six staff (seven part-time): one administrator, five academic staff (three classroom teachers and two aides), five houseparents, four maintenance and support personnel, one recreation director, two counselors (one part-time), one part-time nurse, one secretary, and six part-time recreation aides.

The Becket central office (on the Connecticut campus) employs twelve individuals (two part-time): five administrators (president, administrator, wilderness director, admissions director, and director of the Institute of Experiential Studies), four financial and bookkeeping staff (one of whom is part-time) and three secretaries (one part-time).

Becket Academy and Pike School salaries are competitive with other private institutions. The benefit package includes medical and retirement coverage. In addition, many staff are provided with campus housing.

Assets, Facilities, and Equipment

At the end of the June 30, 1984, fiscal year, Becket Academy, Inc. assets were nearly three million dollars, while liabilities totalled about \$800,000. Fair market value of these assets is estimated to be two to four times greater.

Becket Academy, Inc. owns the entire East Haddam physical plant. This includes 150 acres of forested and open land with three ponds, the working farm, a six-acre athletic field, a cinder track, and twenty-six structures. Major improvements include the Donohue School Building, Gubbins Vocational Education Center, Chapel of the Next Martyr, fieldhouse, dining hall (with its antique tool decor), counseling/infirmary complex, Baruch Hall dormitory (capacity ninety-six), Founder's Hall dorm (capacity ten), St. Thomas More dorm (capacity eighteen), barn, numerous faculty houses and apartments, and several maintenance and storage facilities.

The 330-acre Pike, New Hampshire, facility includes extensive hay fields and pasture, woodlands, campsites and a small pond. The facilities include three small dormitory houses (with attached houseparent apartments), an office/classroom complex, the caretaker's residence, president's house, and two barns. A fourth residential house and small gymnasium are presently under construction. The Pike property is owned by Becket Farms, Inc. and Ogunquit Corporation (limited partnership trusts owned by Joan Wolter and the five Wolter children) and leased to Becket Academy,

Inc.

The third property is a dormitory facility in Everglades City, Florida. It is owned by Joan Wolter and also leased to Becket Academy, Inc.

Becket operates working farms in both New Hampshire and Connecticut. Between both operations, there are some fifty polled Hereford cattle, sixty suffolk sheep, thirty hogs, and 150 chickens. The Connecticut organic garden is the largest in the state and provides the school with a significant portion of its produce. During the 1984 summer, more than 10,000 bales of hay were cut on New Hampshire farm properties.

Becket Academy, Inc. assets include farm and construction machinery, diverse outdoor equipment (including about thirty canoes), a fleet of motor vehicles (including passenger vans), and an extensive inventory of office, classroom, vocational, and athletic equipment. The school also owns a full-range of educational equipment and materials.

Operating Principles and Educational Purposes

Becket's approach is complex, drawing from a variety of sources and practical experience. The subcomponents described below may overlap and, in some cases, appear contradictory. At the highest level, the Becket operating principles and educational purposes represent a gestalt that transcends and integrates these elements.

Education First and Foremost

Although many programs that serve special populations stress "treatment" (the medical model), Becket focuses on education first and foremost. In addition to providing a positive programmatic framework, this approach reduces labelling.

Comprehensive, Wholistic, Humanistic View of Education

Becket's philosophy is based upon a comprehensive and wholistic model of education. Emphasis is on serving an individual's total needs: intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual.

Back to Basics

Becket emphasizes fundamentals--not only in academics, but also with regard to the other intrinsic human needs.

Programmed Success

Becket strives to find a means for each person to experience success, since positive achievement can sustain motivation and

generate similar results in both other program components and subsequent life experiences.

Diverse Paths of Learning

Since individuals learn in a myriad of ways, Becket programs include classroom academics, vocational instruction, counseling, group living, work projects, and a variety of other educational opportunities. Experiential learning is highly valued.

Individual Worth

The Becket philosophy incorporates respect for individual differences and recognizes the intrinsic dignity of each human being.

Personal Growth Through Lifelong Struggle

Becket strives to develop each individual's self-confidence, self-knowledge, and self-esteem. Such growth requires a lifelong struggle: to achieve personal change, one must experience doubt and pain, as well as elation.

The Essential Goodness of Human Beings

Becket incorporates the belief that each person is essentially good and striving to do his or her best. The school strives to help each individual accentuate his or her strengths and achieve personal fulfillment and responsibility.

High Value on Human Relationships

Individuals define themselves through their interaction with the world and other human beings. At Becket, high emphasis is placed on positive role modeling and development of meaningful personal relationships.

Empowerment

Becket seeks to help each individual achieve his or her God-given potential and achieve personal fulfillment. This complex goal includes assuming control of one's life and accepting responsibility for personal actions. True freedom is associated with this development of inner strength, self-knowledge, and awareness of life's choices.

Anything is Possible

Any goal is possible if sought with enthusiasm, faith, and persistence/determination.

Zest for Living

It is an individual's responsibility to accept the challenge of human existence, embrace life passionately, and grasp for its meaning.

Belief in the Future

The future is dependent on believing in life's possibilities and striving to implement them.

Sound Health

Sound health is an essential element of positive living which incorporates physical exercise, adequate rest, and careful attention to nutrition.

Hard Work

Work is the business of life and provides an opportunity to develop vocational skills, formulate value judgements, and experience the personal dignity associated with a job well done. Work is the catalyst and binder that forges individual consciousness and builds personal character.

"Moving the Freight"

High emphasis is placed on actively seeking to accomplish concrete and tangible tasks.

High Expectations

An atmosphere of expectation fosters the greatest possible achievements and successes, and Becket strives to maintain high ideals and meaningful goals. Anything worth achieving is inherently difficult and requires extended effort and commitment.

Challenge/Adventure

Challenge and adventure are fundamental aspects of human existence.

Imposed Discipline and Structure

Imposed discipline and structure allow the routine things to become habitual and free the individual for higher forms of expression. The ultimate goal is self-discipline: development of the inner strength and control that emerges from internalized reflection upon one's actions.

Moral Standards

High moral and behavioral standards provide a basis for human interaction and individual fulfillment.

Responsibility/Accountability/Confrontation

Becket does not avoid issues: individuals are expected to be responsible and are held accountable for their actions. Improper behavior is firmly confronted.

Simplicity/Realism

The Becket model integrates the wish "to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life" (Thoreau, 1971, p. 172). The school strives to achieve an environment free of superficial distractions. The atmosphere is Spartan and down-to-earth. Individuals are expected to behave as their real selves.

Community

Community development and individual responsibility to the group are highly valued. The school's role and responsibility with respect to the larger society (town, state, nation, world) is also

emphasized.

Self-reliance

At Becket, people experience the confidence that comes with independence and self-sufficiency, both as individuals and as a community.

Egalitarianism

Every individual deserves an equal opportunity.

True Love Includes Tough Love

Love is highly valued at Becket and perceived as firm and confrontative as well as compassionate and nurturing.

Loyalty

The individual's commitment to those with whom he or she is closest is a highly valued concept. True loyalty is not blind, but neither is it casual or easily displaced.

Reality-based Counseling

At Becket, counseling promotes affective development and helps individuals behave responsibly in action-oriented, real-life contexts. Although the school has specialized counselors, all community members are expected to act as listeners, advisors, and helpers.

Integrity and Honesty

High value is placed on personal honesty and integrity, both within oneself and in relationships with others.

Compassion

At the same time Becket strives to enhance individual greatness, there is also tolerance of weakness and forgiveness for misdeeds. Helping those in need is a fundamental commitment.

Ecological Awareness/Contact with Nature

Experiencing the natural environment and promotion of individual understanding of human/nature interactions is highly valued. The Becket program incorporates rural living, farming, and wilderness expeditions.

Conducive Milieu/Environment

Setting is a major factor in achieving educational development and personal growth. Rural and wilderness environments and harmonious, functional structures are examples of Becket settings consistent with this philosophy.

Normalization

Becket strives to achieve normalization through its attractive milieu, emphasis upon personal relationships, policy of regular vacations, and ongoing family interactions. There is awareness that the value of any educational program rests with its capability to help the individual in his or her future life.

Commitment/Perseverance/Sacrifice

Anything worth achieving involves a high degree of personal commitment, long-term perseverance, and a willingness to sacrifice short-term gratification.

Spirituality

Each person is on this earth for a reason, and that purpose can be learned only through intense industry, loyalty, and prayer. A sense of spiritual interconnectedness pervades and unifies Becket's operating principles and purposes.

Seizing Opportunity

It is important to make the most of any given situation, take full advantage of available opportunities, and recognize that one's weakness can also be a strength.

Survival

Survival is a complex, never-ending, and very necessary endeavor. The means by which Becket survives as an organization is a message to individuals that they too can survive. Further, the process of survival is inextricably linked to the educational end-product.

Flexibility/Openness/Evolution

Change is inevitable, and both openness and flexibility are requirements for successful adaptation. Healthy evolution involves developing one's own path while simultaneously moving with the

larger flow of events and circumstances.

Development and Transmission of Positive Energy

Emphasis is placed on deriving personal power and energy, utilizing it in ways that are beneficial to the self and community, and passing it on to other individuals.

Innovation/Creativity

Innovation and creativity are essential ingredients of constructive survival, positive evolution, and successful problem-solving.

Programs

Becket Academy, East Haddam, Connecticut

At the East Haddam, Connecticut campus, a typical weekday is as follows:

6:30 a.m.	Morning calisthenics and 1.3 mile run
7:00	Dormitory clean-up and chores
8:30	Breakfast
9:00-12:00 p.m.	Classes
12:00-1:00	Lunch; free time or chapel assembly
1:00-2:30	Classes
3:15-4:45	Afternoon activities
5:00	Free time
6:00	Dinner
6:30-8:00	Study hall
8:00	Free time or intramural sports
9:45	Lights out

Dorm parents live with the students and supervise all aspects of Becket homelife. Because this aspect of the program is so important, they do not have a supplementary teaching load. Informal counseling is a major function of every dorm parent. Dorm parents also lead the obligatory morning exercise program (including the group run) and supervise dormitory tasks. Before breakfast, each student is expected to make his or her bed with hospital corners, prepare his or her cubby (personal clothing storage area) in a

specified manner, and complete an assigned chore.

Dorm parents also supervise the students during breakfast and supper and conduct afternoon and weekend activities. They also assure that students maintain high standards of personal hygiene and attire. For example, school-day requirements include ties for the boys and skirts or dress slacks for girls.

The dormitories themselves are simple, but functional. Male students are housed in Baruch Hall, while the females live in St. Thomas More and Founder's Halls.

The academic program incorporates individualized instruction in small class settings (typically with eight to fourteen students). The program provides for college preparatory instruction, special education, and vocational training. Each student undergoes extensive testing (including the Wide Range Achievement, Metropolitan Achievement, Peabody Individualized Achievement, Key Math, and Woodcock Reading) which provides data used in developing an individual program of instruction. Successful completion of five courses per year is a Becket graduation requirement.

Students are organized into three academic teams: team II (the junior high), team III (the high school), and team vocational. Team II consists of four classes, two of which are self-contained. Team III is composed of five classes: one self-contained, two mainstream for students one or two years behind grade level, and two mainstream for students at grade level. Vocational students take four core

subjects in addition to specializing in one of the five vocational subjects: auto mechanics, buildings and grounds maintenance, carpentry, food preparation, and machine shop. Team II students also have the opportunity to take morning vocational offerings.

The academic curriculum emphasizes basic skills with career education as a common thread. Subject areas include reading, language arts, literature, composition, mathematics, science, social studies, and health. Spanish is offered as an elective, and the seniors take a course on career alternatives. Evening study hall is mandatory, and opportunity is available for extra and remedial help.

The afternoon activities program includes varsity and intramural sports, woodworking, art, outdoor games, board games, wrestling, aerobic exercises, agriculture, and student council. Each student is required to participate in an activity of his or her choice. Detention is also held during this time period.

Meals in the dining hall are noted for the abundance of fresh vegetables and wholesome food, a significant portion of which is raised on the campus. The diet includes limited salt, sugar, and additives and preservatives. Meat is primarily from animals raised on campus; it is served in lesser quantities than in the typical American diet. In addition to this experiential learning, nutrition is incorporated in the school's health curriculum. A campus-wide no smoking policy is also enforced as part of the school's total commitment to good health.

In addition to caring for their own living areas, students

regularly participate in campus maintenance, custodial, and farm projects. Custodial support is also provided by six developmentally disabled adults from Brian House, Inc., an independent organization informally affiliated with the Academy. Some Becket students also have paying jobs in nearby communities.

The Becket discipline system is designed to achieve behavioral change and enhance personal responsibility. Punishments include privilege withdrawal, detention, and "project payback." This latter alternative is a work program by which students "reimburse" the community for facility damage or inappropriate activities. Students may also be held back for one or more days at the beginning of the vacations. In serious cases, a discipline board is convened. At this meeting of the student; his or her parents and social worker; and Academy teachers, dorm parents, counseling staff, and/or administrators, the group reviews the youth's history and develops an appropriate plan.

Although every Becket employee is a counselor, students also have the opportunity to interact with specialized counseling staff on a regular basis. Whenever possible, families are involved. Programs in spiritual development are also offered, and a chapel service is conducted each week. In addition to religious services, the chapel is also used for midday assembly meetings held three times weekly.

In addition to campus activities, students also regularly

participate in required two to eight-week wilderness and experiential education programs (see subsequent discussion).

Classes are held on Saturday mornings; the remainder of each weekend is less formally structured (with opportunities to partake in recreational activities and off-campus field trips). Students are allowed to go home during weekends after their first five weeks at the Academy. Five-to-ten-day vacation periods are conducted after each four-to-seven-week term.

Becket Academy accepts students on a year-round basis, and the summer term is considered an extension of the school-year program.

The Pike School, Pike, New Hampshire

With a licensed-bed capacity of twenty-four youth, the Pike School is a smaller program based on the Connecticut model. The daily routine and program activities are virtually identical to those offered on the East Haddam campus (with some allowance for the smaller scale of operations). The morning run, academic and vocational offerings, work and farm programs, homelife, counseling and afternoon activities are similar to the larger school's.

The major difference between the two programs is that the Pike School is more individualized. A maximum of eight students reside in each of the three residential facilities, and the special education class sizes have a staff/student ratio of one to six.

Public service is an important element of the program: students undertake roadside cleanup projects, put on shows at the

nearby home for the elderly, and work in the local community. The facilities are also available for exercise and craft classes attended by area citizens.

Like East Haddam students, the Pike School youth participate in extensive wilderness and off-campus experiences.

Wilderness and Off-campus Experiential Education

Since 1968, Becket Academy has offered its students the opportunity to combine study and outdoor adventure. Wilderness experiences are an integral part of the educational program instilling a sense of self-reliance, perseverance, and appreciation of the outdoors. The program provides an opportunity for outdoor skills acquisition, experiential academic learning, personal growth, and social development.

The afternoon activity and weekend programs at East Haddam and Pike provide students an opportunity to do local hikes and develop outdoor skills, but the thrust of the wilderness program is longer off-campus trips. School-year offerings vary from two to eight weeks. Specific trips include canoe expeditions in Florida's Everglades and New York's Adirondacks and backpacking in New Hampshire's White Mountains, New Mexico's Gila Wilderness, and North Carolina's Pisgah National Forest. The final Connecticut program graduation requirement is a "rite of passage": completion of an extended hike on the Appalachian Trail.

Experiential learning is an important aspect of wilderness

trips, and expeditions integrate science, math, English, and social studies. Becket staff have developed curriculum guides for New Hampshire, South Florida, and the Appalachian Trail.

In addition to wilderness offerings, the off-campus program includes experiential social studies expeditions which incorporate visits to Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Williamsburg, Gettysburg, and other historical sites. In addition, travel programs for Pike School students have toured the United States. Special off-campus programs which focus on wholistic health and weight loss have also been developed.

Six-week summer wilderness trips, known as Becket Adventures, are designed for accomplishment of a specific physical goal. Traditional offerings include canoeing the entire 400 miles of the Connecticut River, hiking the 260-mile Long Trail in Vermont, climbing the forty-seven 4000-foot peaks in New Hampshire, and canoeing Quebec's Reservoir Gouin. Additional summer offerings include public service trail maintenance in New Hampshire's White Mountain National Forest and (for Pike School students) a Vermont summer camp experience.

The Ultra program is a highly specialized, year-round, and open-ended wilderness alternative for students in need of intensive and highly-structured services. It is presently not in operation.

Becket's facilities in Pike, New Hampshire, and Everglades City, Florida, serve as base camps and staging areas for many of the wilderness trips. The Pike facility (which is also used by the Pike

School program) is in the White Mountains and less than five miles from the Connecticut River--thus convenient to both these environments.

The Everglades City facility is used by Becket trips throughout the winter. As the northern entrance to Everglades National Park, Everglades City offers access to the Wilderness Waterway (for canoe expeditions) and numerous ecological sites. The facility is also the site for special Becket nutrition programs and made available, through the Institute for Experiential Studies, for use by other groups and organizations.

The Institute of Experiential Studies, Hadlyme, Connecticut

The Institute of Experiential Studies was founded to promote and support innovative alternatives in education and human services. Within this context, the Institute has a multi-faceted mission:

Professional development and graduate education. The Institute's primary focus is the development of professionals in education and human services. The Institute conducts training seminars and is negotiating to offer graduate-level courses.

Technical assistance. The Institute offers services in a variety of areas including: accreditation and licensure; administration, supervision, and leadership; development of adjunct programs for existing agencies; documentation of programs; funding procurement; liaison with state and federal agencies; personnel management; program evaluation; research design and implementation;

and safety reviews. Technical assistance is designed to meet the needs of the agency requesting services.

Organizational development. The Institute offers programs which promote team-building and improved organizational communication. Courses promote a sense of shared purpose, appreciation for other team members, and development of creative problem-solving skills.

Use of facilities and program resources. The Institute offers use of facilities, equipment, and programming expertise in Florida's Everglades and New Hampshire's White Mountains.

Conferences. The Institute sponsors conferences on innovative program alternatives and critical issues in education and human services.

Publications. The Institute publishes documents on experiential education, creative programming, and special populations.

National leadership. The Institute is nationally recognized as an authority and resource on creative and innovative programming.

The Institute is presently based on the Connecticut campus of Becket Academy.

C H A P T E R V

BEFORE BECKET: THE FOUNDER'S VISION

Introduction

The history of Becket Academy is in large part biographical: the story of John Wolter and his pursuit of a dream. To truly understand Becket, it is essential to examine the roots of that dream--Dr. Wolter's family, childhood, schooling, and other life experiences that preceded the 1964 founding of the Academy. The fundamental Becket operating principles and educational purposes evolved from this context.

Grandparents and Parents

John Wolter's maternal grandparents were Irish: Honora Decoursey came to the United States as a child, while her husband Robert Broderick was born in this country of immigrant parents (Wolter, 1982b, p. 1). John's mother Loretta, the third of five children, was thirteen when she and her four brothers were orphaned (ibid.; Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). With the help of neighbors and friends, they were able to keep the family intact and remain in their home in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, New York (Wolter, 1982b, p. 1).

John's paternal grandparents were American born, but of German descent. In his youth grandfather Frank was a professional wrestler, "the kind. . . who would take on anyone from the audience," paid for his ability to stay in the ring for a given period (ibid., p. 2). He went on to become a New York City policeman and detective "at a time when New York's finest were the finest." He was cited numerous times for bravery and "stopped the first armed robbery in New York which was done with an automobile" (ibid., p. 3).

His wife Katherine was very active in Democratic politics, attending two national conventions (ibid.)--an "extremely unusual" activity for a woman of that period (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). She also raised ten children, of which John Wolter's father (also named John) was the oldest.

The elder John Wolter met Loretta Broderick when they were aged

twenty-one and seventeen, respectively. They were married two years later--during the time of the Depression. One condition she imposed upon her husband was that he assume responsibility for her two youngest brothers (Wolter, 1982b, p. 1). The couple and Loretta's brothers settled in their home neighborhood of Flatbush.

Both were "incredible people" who enjoyed a "wonderful marriage" even though it was a case of "opposites attracting" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). Husband John studied mechanical drawing and art and eventually became art director of King Features Syndicate (Wolter, 1982b, p. 4). Despite his creative streak, he was conservative and "cautious by nature" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.).

Loretta, on the other hand, was "a bit of a daredevil." In her sixties she swung on a rope hanging from a tree during a large public picnic gathering--her husband was "aghast" (ibid.). She also handled the family's money (ibid.), a task no doubt facilitated by the fact that she was "very intelligent" (Gail Hunter, pers. comm.). Loretta was by nature relatively passive, while her husband was apt to be aggressive (ibid.).

Both parents were devoted Roman Catholics and shared a "dedication and devotion to the underdog" (Wolter, 1982b, p. 5). They were thus able to cope effectively when their fifth and youngest child Brian was born with Down's Syndrome. Not only did the couple assume the burden completely, but they also worked relentlessly in support of the mentally retarded (ibid.).

Childhood and Grammar School

On January 22, 1937, John Jay Wolter was born in Brooklyn, New York (Wolter, 1980d, p.1). He was John and Loretta's second child: Arlene was the oldest, while Gail, James, and Brian were yet to be born.

By a young age, John had developed a sense of independence. He recalls

the earliest event I can remember in my life. . . [occurred] in Kresge's five and dime store near the subway on Flatbush Avenue . . . [where I] encounter[ed] another child. We looked each other over and he said, "I'm four years old." I looked at him and said, "I'm five years old already." Even then I wanted to be grown up. My mother often said that she could put me on the streets at age seven and I would have survived quite well. (Wolter, 1982b, p.7)

John's sister Arlene recalls that if "he was told not to cross the street, [but] if there was something he wanted to see, he'd do it" (pers. comm.). Even at a very young age (about six), John declared that his ambition was to work for himself and be a farmer (ibid.). Flatbush was

a great place to grow up. . . . There were real mothers on those blocks in Flatbush, and they watched everyone else's kids. . . . Everyone's place was tidy (but not too tidy) and people respected [each other]. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 10)

World War II had a "profound influence" on the family: despite the combat death of a cousin, the children regularly played war and John was determined to go into the Marines (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). He recalls that, "[i]n those days I wanted to be a soldier, and an infantry one at that" (Wolter, 1982b, p. 9). There was not

"a war movie or a western that came out in the period 1943-44 up until 1950 that I did not see" (ibid.). During the war, his father served as an air raid warden (ibid.).

In his parochial grammar school, Wolter was "a favorite of the nuns. . . a charmer" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). John was heavily influenced by the emphasis upon a moral education and began a lifelong reliance upon prayer. He was not so successful, however, in academic learning:

Because I learned well by ear, I was able to memorize fairly well and had a "bright" look. I got up to the third grade doing quite well in school. It was at this time that a perceptive teacher realized that I was not all I was cracked up to be and began to zero in. My major recollection is that devastating report card at the end of the second or third grade. I was able to not let this happen again by a little more personality, a little more attention to detail--the beginning of slyness and diversionary tactics to keep the pressure off of me. [But s]omething was amiss. In those days no one knew what was wrong. In this day and age it would be called eye reversal (dyslexia) and hyperactivity. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 7)

It was not until Wolter was an adult that he was diagnosed as having "cross dominance" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.).

Even though he made an extra effort, John Wolter's problems in school continued:

After the sixth grade the pace picked up a little bit. . . . The homework assignments became more difficult. It was at this time when being cute. . . a young lad cease[d] to amuse older folks and. . . [was labelled] the class clown or wise guy. Luckily the iron discipline of the nuns kept these matters in control [and] parents were only a few blocks away. I. . . remember hardly anything about this time except thinking that high school had to be better. (ibid., p. 11)

Despite these emerging problems, young John managed to get good

grades (and B's for conduct and effort) on his sixth and seventh grade report card (Marie, 1948).

In the schoolyard, John was sometimes involved in fights, but "was seldom beat[en] up because I had. . . a natural ability to fight as well as a readiness to abandon the field when all looked hopeless" (Wolter, 1982b, p. 8).

After school Wolter engaged in typical boyhood adventures: fishing ("In those days I probably would have fished forever," *ibid.*, p. 10); raising "holy Cain in the theaters. . . sticking gum here and there, trying to sneak in, throwing things, stamping feet, screaming and shooting pea shooters" (*ibid.*, p. 9); playing in the local public pool where "I taught myself to swim and probably had my first near-death experience with drowning" (*ibid.*); "ringing doorbells, occasionally breaking a window and, on other occasions, shooting out windows and streetlights with a b-b gun" (*ibid.*, p. 8). "We even accidentally one time let a fire get out of hand in a lumberyard where we had built a fort" (*ibid.*). John also recalls his skin sensitivity:

I came down with massive cases of poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. Scabs from poisoning formed in my eyes, mouth, nose, and other parts of my body. But it only slowed me down a little bit. For a guy like me there was no learning the easy way. (*ibid.*, p. 9)

John's summers during the seventh and eighth grades were decidedly better than his classroom experiences:

We went up to my aunt's farm in Cherry Valley, New York. There with my b-b gun and, occasionally my .22, I roamed the fields looking for things to shoot (mostly frogs and pigeons) and explored streams, woodlands, meadows, waterfalls, and caves. Additionally, I was able to take out aggression by chopping firewood and helping the neighboring farmer with hay. His name was Mr. Fields. It was on Mr. Fields's truck that I learned to drive at approximately the age of twelve. He was a great man, and trusted me and a local boy from town to do alot around the place at haying time. It was probably the happiest time of my life up to that point. (ibid., p. 11)

High School

When John was thirteen, the Wolter family moved from Brooklyn to the suburban town of Pelham in Westchester County, New York. The change had a notable impact on young John:

Flatbush was very egalitarian. Everyone either worked for the city or had a medium-range job in New York, was a plumber or an electrician, or ran a grocery store or bar. . . . It was an ethnic neighborhood where most of the people were Irish. . . . Westchester was different. . . . There were not too many transplants in Pelham, New York. Most of the children were children of the wealthy or those who served the wealthy. . . . Their control was more verbal--'snotty' if you will. (Wolter, 1982b, pp. 13,15,16)

John Wolter was admitted to Iona Prep in New Rochelle, in part because the admissions brother thought that one of his compositions demonstrated a "creative streak" (ibid., p. 12). John had a difficult freshman year at Iona, experiencing "severe repression. . . . I was in constant trouble in school and the brothers definitely tried to break my spirit" (ibid., pp. 12,14).

Among John's few positive recollections of his freshman year at Iona are first dates, playing handball, and running cross country. As regards the latter, however,

it wasn't fun and it was too much work, so I quit; I did at the time make the mental reservation, however, that I had stamina. . . . As a matter of fact, in those days on my own it was not too much for me to hike ten miles on a weekend just to go someplace. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 15)

During the summer after his freshman year, Wolter "put constant pressure" on his parents not to send him back to Iona in September. As a result of this effort, John was enrolled instead at the public

high school, Pelham Memorial (ibid.).

However, the switch did little to improve Wolter's academic work, and he "consistently failed" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 58). John also recalls:

In high school, more and more pressure was put upon the students to think and act for themselves. I had no objection to this, but my thoughts and my actions were usually not what the school wanted. I was constantly in trouble. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 12)

The school rules "drove him around the bend" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.), and he was placed in classes for "slow learners." Despite the unpleasant experience, Wolter maintained a sense of self-esteem: "I knew I was not stupid, I knew I was not a slow learner, and I knew also that I disliked the snobbery and the verbal put-downs" used by the Pelham High teachers (ibid., p. 16).

Although he played football, Wolter was not particularly successful, nor did he really enjoy it:

I . . . was hampered by a lack of understanding of the game as well as a lack of coordination. . . . [I had] difficulty in learning which way was left or right. . . [which] didn't help me to catch passes (as I was an end). . . . I also had another problem with the game in that for some reason I always knew it was a game. . . . Playing for keeps never bothered me, but playing for getting the ball over the goal, through the hoop, or over the center fence just didn't do much for me. (ibid.)

Nor was John enthusiastic about attending school athletic events:

School spirit was either to be on a team or to go to the games and cheer. I was never a cheerer. Either I participated or did something else where I could participate. (ibid., p. 13)

He did, however, "make friends very easily" and had an unusual ability to get along with both peers and adults (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). John was enthusiastic, doing such things as entering a dance

contest even though he did not know how to dance (ibid.). Even so, Wolter was different than most everyone else:

I was never smart enough to make it with the brainy crowd. I was not a good enough athlete to make it as a jock. I was not tough enough to make it with the tough guys. . . . I also didn't make it with the 'neat' guys or the mouthy ones--I was just not one for verbal banter and chatter (if anything these were the guys I went after physically). I did enjoy physical confrontation. . . . [but] had a problem handling my toughness socially--like what do you do after you beat somebody up? Or what do you do if you beat up the wrong person? Or what do you do when you get beat up? (Wolter, 1982b, pp. 22-23)

Although he was never arrested (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.), John was involved in a number of pranks "from jumping out of classroom windows on the third floor into trees to messing up a paint job. . . on the school" (Wolter, 1982b, p. 17). Wolter also led his class in a talent show presentation in which the students wore clothing of the opposite sex--despite specific instructions (from a faculty advisor) to not dress in this manner. The performance "brought the house down" and made the first page of the Pelham (N.Y.) Sun (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.).

Another prank of note was John's decision to give the senior class the day off after a successful fund-raising effort (ibid.). This was made possible by the fact that John spent so much time in detention: he regularly helped produce the daily notice and was thus able to insert a bogus announcement (Wolter, 1982b, p. 18).

The time John spent in the office had a long-term positive impact:

Mr. Whipple, the principal, had a profound effect on my life.

He ran a good school by those standards. Because I spent so much time in the office (literally hours a week with detentions and all), I learned the exact runnings of school. Mr. Whipple could have gone on vacation for a month and I could have run the school. . . . Perhaps I could have done even a better job. But I observed and I observed and I observed and I also noticed that he treated people fairly and rationally. In the conversations that I had with him (and he with my parents), he [said] that I was a natural leader and that some day I would straighten out. That doesn't sound like much but it was alot of encouragement. (ibid., pp. 17-18)

Thank God the principal had me figured out because there was some mutual respect there and "he got me out." (Wolter, 1979d, p. 5)

John Wolter's leadership quality (as well as the fact that he was not working up to his capacity) was regularly acknowledged by his guidance counselors (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). Some of the teachers also apparently saw the positive side of Wolter because "he always had someone helping him" (Gail Hunter, pers. comm.). John recalls one particular teacher:

Miss Rockefeller, an ex-. . . Marine, who literally forced mathematics concepts into your head--either in class or after school. She was probably the finest teacher I had in high school. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 20)

Wolter did experience some small successes in academic subjects. He had a flair for the social sciences. . . . On my own I was inclined to read books about history and war. . . . I also enjoyed it when we had to memorize poetry. (ibid.)

Although he struggled with typing, John came to realize that "it made me conscious of spelling and attention to detail" (ibid., p. 21). In school John also learned "a few other things: how to guess and how to 'feel' my way through things; some people call it 'shifty,' I call it surviving" (Wolter, 1979d, p. 4).

A major positive aspect of John Wolter's life was the result of his ability to attract girls:

They were the ones who built my ego. They were the ones I could confide in about creative things and they would listen. . . . Any tenderness that came out of me for the first eighteen years of my life was probably the result of understanding females. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 23)

Throughout high school, Wolter was loyal to his one steady girlfriend (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

There were other positive experiences outside of school. At sixteen, he managed to get a commercial captain's license from the Coast Guard--by lying about his age (Wolter, 1982b, p. 24). With some amusement, Wolter recalls that "I couldn't pass a teacher-made exam after being instructed, but somehow I managed the Coast Guard exam" (Wolter, 1967, p. 4). He also explored the woods (Wolter, 1982b, p. 14) and went on two-to-three-mile swims in Long Island Sound (ibid., pp. 24-25).

Wolter also benefited from a number of jobs from delivering newspapers to working in a supermarket--where he learned about orderliness (ibid., p. 14). He also enjoyed the company of a collie dog named Prince who "was exceedingly loyal despite the fact that I frequently lost patience with him and would. . . [sometimes hit] him" (ibid.).

In the family, John was "formidable" and "always trying to wheedle you out of your allowance" (Gail Hunter, pers. comm.). He also was "a great one for getting other people to do his work," often convincing friends to undertake his Saturday chores (Arlene Wolter,

pers. comm.). As would be expected, Wolter was often in trouble because of his activities in school: his father was called down to the office "more often than he would have liked" (ibid.). Unfortunately for John, his sisters Arlene and Gail did well in school so, within the family, he suffered by comparison.

In summary, John Wolter's high school years "were spent trying to pass enough courses to stay eligible for class functions and for sports and to simply get out of school" (Wolter, 1982b, p. 21). He was a "lousy student" (Wolter, 1967, p. 1) who was "bored" and did "just as much homework as was required" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). High school for John was clearly a painful experience:

All this time you are trying to be what other people want you to be, you are not being yourself. You cry for the chance to be yourself to prove that you are not a failure although they may think you are. (Wolter, 1967, p. 2)

I try to forget the F's, D's, and 'being ineligible,' the castigation, the occasional hours of studying for a 55 or 47, the sloppy handwriting, the lack of homework. I also try to forget my retaliation[:] the slashed tires, broken windows, the messed up plumbing, and other little acts of vandalism. To say I was frustrated is an understatement! (Wolter, 1979d, p. 4).

In 1954 John Wolter graduated from Pelham Memorial High School (Wolter, 1980d, p. 1), ranked 102 out of 103 in his class and with "asterisks on my transcript explaining 'modified section for slow learners'" (Wolter, 1979d, p. 3). Eisenhower was President and the year's news was highlighted by the McCarthy hearings and the Supreme Court's decision against school segregation (Brown vs. the Board of Education). Fighting in Korea had ended the previous year.

The Marine Corps

John Wolter applied to "about six or eight colleges because it was the thing to do" (Wolter, 1982b, p. 24). He was admitted to the University of Dayton, and entered as a freshman in the fall of 1954.

The atmosphere. . . was very suitable; the snobbery was gone. . . . I became friendly with some of the brighter folks because I had a chance to express myself around people who had an idea about my background and what my aspirations might be. . . . A few things happened which radically changed my life. The first was my history professor. After writing my first exam, [he] stopped me and said. . . point blank that I had a talent for history. . . . This little comment, which I agreed with, made me listen to him. One day in class he spoke about growing up, going through France in World War II in the infantry. That stuck in my head, too. I felt I was sadly lacking in experience. . . . the real world. Because I had more freedom, I was able to complete that year fairly well with an average somewhere around C+. Still, I knew at that time that college was not for me because I did not have any real direction. (ibid., pp. 25-26)

At Dayton, John enrolled in a Marine officer training program that was offered in conjunction with his college studies. After his freshman year, he attended a course at the Quantico Marine base in Virginia. During this experience he decided

if I was to be a [M]arine officer, I wanted to do it from the ground up--in other words, become an enlisted man so I could have all the experience and honestly lead men. I was terribly afraid of becoming a boot second lieutenant who knew nothing. (ibid., pp. 26-27)

Despite severe protestations from his parents (Gail Hunter, pers. comm.; Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.), Wolter did not return for his sophomore year at Dayton, enlisting instead in the Marines. He joined "because it gave automatic status by just being a Marine and also gave a promise of adventure" (Wolter, 1967, p. 2).

John's summer experience at Quantico was little preparation for the rigors of boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina, where "the one outstanding quality. . . was lack of mercy" (Wolter, 1982b, p. 29). The experience put Wolter "in touch with that part of you that wants to put the knife in the ground and hold your place even if it means dying or killing others" (ibid., p. 27). For example, John recalls:

My own test came the second day at Parris Island. Our drill instructor came in and started punching people in the stomach. Most people doubled over. He punched me and I didn't double over. He punched me again and again and again and again and again. I still didn't double over. He kept it up until he knocked me out. I remember coming to on my bunk. I believe they were worried that they might have hurt me real bad. I received x-rays that were routine and I was called back by the doctors for questioning about bruised insides and cracked ribs. I didn't say a word. After that I was made top dog of our platoon. (ibid., p. 28)

The Marine Corps experience was a highly positive one for Wolter. It "was the first time in my life where an honest challenge was set at my feet and I was made to respond to it" (Wolter, 1967, p. 2). Furthermore, "[f]or the first time in my life I was really accepted" (Wolter, 1982b, p. 29). There was a "spirit of everyone 'can do'," and the

comradeship seemed to break down barriers for everyone. People talked about real things. I also watched people. . . [transform] physically. I saw the fat get skinny, the skinny get fat[--]all in a short period of time. This stuck in my mind. I had also not seen instruction by a group of teachers equal to the instruction given by the instructors at Parris Island. Everyone got it. (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 58-59)

Wolter was also favorably impressed with the

egalitarianism/down-to-basics philosophy espoused in the statement "[e]very Marine is a rifleman" (Wolter, 1982b, p. 28). He also learned to channel his energies "into maintaining superb physical condition" (Wolter, 1979d, p. 7). When John graduated from Parris Island, he was designated the outstanding man in his platoon (Wolter, 1982b, p. 28).

After this initial instruction, Wolter was sent to California for advanced infantry training at Camp Pendleton, where, "because I was a corporal and everyone else was a private they immediately put me in charge of. . . two hundred men. . . . I was eighteen" (ibid., p. 30).

Wolter subsequently had duty tours of Japan and Saudi Arabia and various points in between, and recalls that "a certain smoothness and flowing developed in life" (1979d, p. 8). He recalls his impressions of this period (when he was part of a reconnaissance team):

For the first time in my life I. . . went beyond my body. . . . [W]e were able to march in the hot sun as many as 75 miles in a day. Additionally, there [were] long hours of paddling our rubber boats. . . for many miles in the hot sun. . . . [It] was the beginnings of feelings of euphoria. . . . [I]n marches I would develop a loping gate and begin to like float. And I also noticed that my sense of smell, taste and vision became more acute and I enjoyed just plain being out of doors. Color was more vivid, sounds were enjoyable, as were smells. I was living a peak experience without really knowing it. It was a matter of being down to the bear essentials. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 31)

Since high school, Wolter had drifted away from church attendance, but the grammar school moral education had stayed with him, and he regularly prayed for guidance (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

During his time in the Marines, he

began attending church again and became, whenever possible, the chaplain's assistant. When I was on my way to Saudi Arabia, I made a promise to God that I would stick with Him because I felt I needed Him when the chips were down. (ibid.)

John Wolter spent considerable time aboard troop ships, on one occasion off Borneo surviving the "worst typhoon in history" (John Wolter, pers. comm.). These long trips provided time to think (Wolter, 1967, p. 3):

It was during a three-month sea voyage from Japan to Saudi Arabia and back that ideas began to fall into place in regard to my future and a meaningful goal. At first I was undecided whether to remain in the Marine Corps or become a teacher. . . . To become a teacher, however, meant I would have to return to college, and I was well aware that I had serious academic deficiencies. But my experience in the Marine Corps had shown me that the key to overcoming deficiencies was hard work and that the challenge for boys to overcome their deficiencies should be laid right at their feet so that they know what they must do. That is, they must have the inner fiber to know that things will be tough and that they must never give up. They must be taught to handle themselves and to face the world. (Wolter, 1972a, p. 60)

Subsequent to his tour abroad, Wolter was stationed at the Parris Island recruit depot. He spent a great deal of time watching the training process:

As when I went through boot camp, recruits would come in a jumbled mess--stumbling, stuttering, impolite, wide-eyed, scared and so on. They would come out the other end disciplined young men. In a short period of time they would listen to anyone in authority and would do what they were told. This enabled people to reach them with instructions. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 32)

A significant event occurred during one of John's leaves. He was with his former college roommate (Richard Maher) who was visiting a girl at New York's College of New Rochelle:

While I was waiting for someone, my roommate's girlfriend's roommate came down to keep me company. I knew immediately that this was the girl I'd dream[ed] about on board ship and her name was Joan. I decided right then and there that I would marry this girl. I also knew there were some logistical problems. . . . I had a year to go in the service, three years of college and she was already a junior in college. At any rate, I decided to try. (ibid., p. 35)

The relationship endured a rocky start:

[O]n our second date out we got in a barroom brawl in the Blossom Lounge in Garden City, New York. My roommate was seriously injured. . . . I remember holding some people at bay with a pitcher of beer in each hand and making the owner pay my bill and give me twenty dollars and guarantee safe conduct before I would relinquish the pitchers. (ibid.)

John Wolter corresponded regularly with Joan Jurgenson and the pair began planning their future:

I did not look [at] occupation, I did not look at money. [In] conversations with Joan we isolated the things that we wanted in our life. Children, to live in the country and yet near the city. Plenty of leisure time, work that would absorb both mentally and physically, enough money to do the things we wanted to do. A few bosses, none if possible. (Wolter, 1967, p. 4)

In 1958, when John completed his service in the Marine Corps (Wolter, 1980d, p. 1), he had attained the rank of sergeant (Becket Academy, 1980c, p. 5). More important than advancement, the Marine Corps represented a "conversion experience," since it propelled Wolter from a trying period of adolescence to an adult life infused with motivation and purpose (John Wolter, pers. comm.):

From these Marine Corps experiences, I had learned the value of industry for the attainment of goals and the accompanying sense of accomplishment. I had also seen what the proper kind of instruction and example can do, and I had experienced firsthand the truth that people can be transformed under rugged but inspiring conditions. The spirit of comradeship had been

instilled in me, and a sense of mission in life began to stir. (Wolter, 1972a, p. 59)

Through his Marine Corps experience, Wolter also came to appreciate the capability of small groups with "alot of freedom to accomplish a mission" (John Wolter, pers. comm.). He learned that small groups have "room for innovation and flexibility" and can thus move quickly and effectively (ibid.).

In sum, the Marine Corps

was the best experience of my life and the exact right thing to do during that period of time. I can't recall how many countries I visited, how many parts of the United States I was in, and how many adventures I had, but they all rounded me out. I was ready to go back to college and either go back in the Marine Corps as an officer or become a teacher. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 34)

University of Dayton

At the age of twenty-one, John Wolter went back to the University of Dayton "ready to go to college for real" (ibid., p. 36). It was, however, primarily a means to an end:

I regarded college as merely an obstacle to be overcome in order to achieve a higher goal. Remembering what hard work and application had done for me in the Marines, I tackled my college studies in the same spirit. (Wolter, 1972a, p. 60)

The brothers and priests and laymen at the University of Dayton were first-class people. I told the dean that I wanted to finish the last three years of college in two years and I would need all the cooperation I could get. I just told [him] I wanted to get on with my life. He totally understood and paved the way for me. If a petty requirement had to be brushed aside, he brushed it aside. Because foreign languages were impossible for me, he allowed me. . . to take one year of two different languages so I would at least have an introduction to the languages. He also allowed me to attend summer school at the University of Massachusetts and take eighteen credits one summer. He also allowed me to take as many as twenty or twenty-two credits per semester. I did this at the same time [I] worked about thirty or forty hours a week. I did everything from selling shoes to operating computers. . . . Almost all my [other] time was spent studying. My courses involved mainly theology, philosophy, English, and history. (Wolter, 1982b, pp. 36-37)

In 1960 Wolter graduated from the University of Dayton "with a B average and. . . elected to Phi Alpha Theta, [the] National [Historical] Honor Society" (Wolter, 1967, p. 4). He also made some important decisions about his life and career:

I decided against the Marine Corps because I did not believe there was a war on the horizon and I wasn't sure if I was really tough enough for the long haul. I decided to teach. . . . By graduating from college in two years that meant that Joan and I could get married. That little trick put Joan only one year ahead of me. She was teaching at Stamford [Connecticut] Catholic High School. [But her] parents insisted we not get married until I at least had a steady job. (ibid., p. 37)

That John Wolter's life during this period was clearly "on track" is perhaps best acknowledged by including portions of a handwritten letter he sent to his father:

I'm so completely sold on teaching as a career, the necessity of a family and the Catholic church, not to mention the good old U.S. I'm really going to make a dent, and I know I have your ambition and drive. Just wait and see. May not have a million bucks, but I'm sure going to stand up and be counted. One thing for sure, I'll either succeed or fail--I'm not going to spend my life taking a non-committal road. You have no idea how I want responsibilities and [to] make decisions for myself. You know, the only time I get scared is when I feel someone trying to make a decision for me, because I'm not afraid to be wrong, and stand by what I do--how do you stand by someone else's wrong? . . . Keep Joanie entertained if she stops by. She means the world to me, and I mean that in every respect. (Wolter, 1959)

New Rochelle

Immediately after graduation, John Wolter enrolled at Fordham University in a teacher certification summer program which included student teaching in the Bronx (Wolter, 1982b, p. 38). In the fall of 1960, he began teaching English and social studies at Albert Leonard Junior High School in New Rochelle, New York (Wolter, 1980d, p. 1):

I had alot of life experiences, was a hard worker, and was enthusiastic, but was scared [that I would not be good enough]. . . . By the end of two weeks of public school teaching, I was scared for everyone else, especially the kids. The 'can do' willingness to work, we-will-overcome attitude from the [Marine] Corps was not the spirit of the majority of the teachers. I looked for the sense of purpose for the group effort, for outstanding individual effort. It was lacking. Instead I saw disheveled, wise-cracking kids piling off buses, funneled into a factory-like building with a huge parking lot, to be educated by teachers whose main concern was whether they wished to be represented by the teacher's association or federation. It was my first encounter with the eight to three-ers with arguments over sick pay, fringe benefits, class size, retirement plans, etc. (Wolter, 1979d, pp. 8-9)

Public School and I did not get along right from the beginning. For one thing there was more red tape and less efficiency than [in] the Marines. I didn't believe that this was possible. Next I found more dedication in the Marines than I found in the teachers. I first was able to isolate the slipshod approaches which certainly hurt me in my youth. (Wolter, 1967, p. 4)

Wolter began to appreciate that motivation must be a responsibility of the teacher and that school problems could be solved "if teachers conceived of themselves not as performers, but as educators of individuals" (Hunter, 1970, p. 3).

Alot of teachers left early in the afternoon while someone [else] covered their class (which in itself was a disgrace). But the big disgrace was that everyone seemed to know it and

nothing was done. . . . Where were the supervisors? I also detected a fear of the public in the minds and hearts of many of the teachers. There was also a definite lack of academic freedom.

I [had been] teaching for about a month and one half when I was called to the office for teaching pro-Nazi doctrine. I was terribly frightened primarily because I could not isolate anything in my mind that could have been construed as pro-Nazi teaching. I therefore had a feeling that people were out to get me. . . . [But] while I was scared, the principal and the assistant principal seemed even more frightened. (Wolter, 1967, p. 5)

John became involved in the politics of education through the teacher's association:

I was on the executive board of the association which had over . . . six hundred (600) members. During meetings we were lucky if we could count on 20% attendance. This irked me. . . . I sympathize[d] with the Board of Education in that there were some teachers that I felt should pay the school while other teachers I felt should have their salaries tripled. Many of the teachers that I knew who didn't teach[,] or as a matter fact who untaught many things that had been taught to children[,] were on the same status or the same plane as everyone else. This I did not like. I further did not like the fact that they could not be discharged without some kind of major investigation. . . . I also found that the Board of Education, teachers groups, etc. did not work together. A frank discussion of the problem was all but impossible. . . . Additionally, this was the time of the Lincoln Court case and . . . I saw where politics had a rather direct effect on the schools. (Wolter, 1967, p. 5)

The experience also opened John's eyes to the position of blacks:

What I found was that no one really much cared about them. I was against homogeneous grouping and I wanted to have all the students integrated together. . . . This was unpopular. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 39)

Since completing his teaching certification, Wolter had continued nights in a Fordham master's degree program in social studies education. But he had an increasingly difficult time

perceiving a career for himself in the public school setting:

In trying to plan my future I found that it was impossible. . . . I would have to play things too cagey. That if I wanted to move ahead there were too many things that I had to keep in balance. I knew that I could not keep these things in balance and be myself. (Wolter, 1967, p. 6)

A bright spot in this otherwise difficult period was Wolter's marriage to Joan Marie Jurgenson on December 27, 1960 (Wolter, 1980d, p. 1). His personal struggle continued, however:

By the middle of my second year my enthusiasm for public school teaching began to wane. . . . I was ready to chuck it all and go back in the Marine Corps and bury myself in defending democracy or something. As always I was constantly praying to God for guidance and I was really at a point of almost constant frustration. . . . I went to one of the teachers' meetings which was held for all 650 teachers in the system and listened to [the superintendent] addressing everyone. He spoke about how wonderful things were. . . and I remember just feeling that I had had enough. I got up, climbed over a bunch of people and walked out. I got in my car and drove to an area where there was a little pond. I was so frustrated at that point and on the verge of despair. I prayed to God for some guidance. At that moment there was a time of euphoria and elation and a voice answered me with the simple directions, "John, start your own school." I could not believe the experience. I got in the car, drove home, told Joan about what happened and told her that I was going to start my own school. At that point we were living in an apartment. We had one child. . . [ten] months after we were married and we were still in debt paying off my education. Joanie consented to the whole idea and I began to figure how to go about it. . . . To start a school the way Becket Academy was started you have to have divine inspiration. You see, I didn't know anything. I could think on my feet, I was sly, I had been around, I was a good judge of people, I was beginning to understand the heights to which people ascend (as well as their depths). . . and also their motivations. But I really didn't know that much at that time. I was twenty-four years old. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 40-41)

At first the task seemed impossible. Joan recalls that "we laughed about the idea of John starting a school" (interview). But Wolter did not hesitate to voice his plan to some of the other

teachers, including one named Chris Warren (Christopher Warren, interview).

I told several people about the idea. . . . [Almost] everyone thought that it was impossible. I had absolutely no concept whatsoever as to where to get money to do this. I had no credit and I had absolutely no experience in business. At this point I think the whole idea would have dropped except for the fact that I visited Father Hussey. . . who was the priest that married us. . . . [He thought] that it was a wonderful idea and that I should pursue it. Before I left he told me of some people to see. (Wolter, 1967, p. 6)

From this point, John Wolter and two other dissatisfied teachers began visiting knowledgeable people in the field of education. Wolter "would not leave one person without a recommendation for another person to see" (ibid.). This trail eventually led to James Hanrahan.

St. Thomas More School

James Hanrahan was then thirty-eight years old. He had been raised a Catholic, had spent five years in seminaries (James Hanrahan, interview), and was

the basketball coach at Fairfield University [and] a mathematics teacher at Fairfield Prep. . . . He was himself on the verge of opening a prep school on the grounds of Gardner Lake Camps--a summer camp. . . in [Colchester] Connecticut which he had run for about ten years. When I saw Jim there was almost immediate agreement that we should work together. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 41)

Hanrahan was an "outstanding, dynamic-type person" (Ronald Papp, interview) who quickly recognized John Wolter's potential: "he impressed me very much, [appearing to have] lots of drive and lots of ability" (James Hanrahan, interview).

Wolter finished out the year at public school, but spent weekends at Gardner Lake fixing a "dilapidated cottage" Hanrahan gave him in return for recruiting students for the fledgling school (Wolter, 1982b, p. 41). This was John's first experience in both salesmanship and building--and he was successful at both. The second task required some creativity, however, since he was lacking money. John solved this problem by acquiring used lumber and fixtures from junkyards (ibid., p. 42).

By June, Wolter had completed his master's degree and teaching job in New Rochelle. At this time the Gardner Lake cottage was livable:

We moved up and I took a job working in the summer camp. This is significant in that I found that while great attempts were made to keep the children occupied and happy. . . the more

unhappy they became. . . . I [saw instead] that every time I offered a challenge to the children at the camp. . . they seemed to respond. (Wolter, 1967, p. 7)

In the fall of 1962, the new school (named St. Thomas More) opened on the grounds of Gardner Lake Camps. John "helped to supervise the construction, bought all the food for the dining hall, was Dean of Discipline, assistant headmaster, taught history, supervised maintenance, and was the athletic director" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 62). Jim Hanrahan recalls that Wolter "wouldn't stop, [he] worked twenty-four hours a day for seven days a week [and had] tremendous drive" (interview). Among the other staff was a man named Ronald Papp (ibid.).

At St. Thomas More, John Wolter saw his concept of education successfully implemented:

The best part of my experience at St. Thomas More was my work with boys who had been failures. . . in previous schools. I saw that each boy had potential, and that every boy, when properly handled, willingly helped to establish [the school]. . . . I sought to instill in [the boys] a bond of comradeship . . . a sense of duty, a school spirit, and a capacity for hard work. Many became enthusiastic successes because, like the Marines at Parris Island, these boys wished to be involved with real things and people in an atmosphere which encouraged honesty and which rewarded industry in a simple way. (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 62-63)

Wolter also found the boys curious about religion and morals, and there were many discussions of these topics (ibid.).

During his two years at St. Thomas More, John learned "tremendous amounts" from his mentor Jim Hanrahan (John Wolter, pers. comm.):

He was a ball of energy. . . [Jim] started the school on a shoestring, but was good enough . . . to allow me to see how it was done. He opened my eyes to the world of bankers and to zoning, to the world of dishwashers . . . cooks who were always quitting, . . . parents and students who . . . were not material for Choate or Exeter. He was the kind of man who would give you a job and let you do it. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 42)

But it had been clear from the outset that John wanted to start his own school (ibid., p. 41; Ronald Papp, interview). In addition, both Wolter and Hanrahan were "ambitious guys" (James Hanrahan, interview), and there was not room for "two top dogs" (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

During the spring of 1964, the two decided that it would be a good idea for John to start an elementary school. Mr. Hanrahan agreed to

help with financial backing of a venture of this sort. All the work, however, would have to be done by me and this could not, of course, affect my work or the other institution. Naturally I agreed to this. (Wolter, 1967, p. 8)

Becket Academy was thus born--at least on paper.

Conclusions

This chapter has incorporated discussion of John Wolter's family, childhood, schooling, and life experiences prior to his founding of Becket Academy in 1964.

Wolter was from a traditional nuclear family and was no doubt very much influenced by both parents (including exposure to their religious convictions). It has been said that John was a risk-taker like his mother (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). She said that he favored his maternal grandfather,

a likable man [who once] was denied employment because he refused to join a masonic lodge, preferring to retain his Catholicism. At that time membership in a masonic lodge meant excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 1)

His father's work in journalism promoted a high level of family discussion of ideas, fostered tolerance, and encouraged consideration of all sides of an issue (John Wolter, pers. comm.). John recalls that having a retarded brother "helped make me more open to families with problems" (ibid.). John's father worked long hours and his mother was very busy tending to the large family (including the late and retarded child). In a sense,

it was like growing up with and without a mother and father. . . . It was up to us kids to make the most out of that situation. It was impossible for Mom and Dad to really get behind the kids like good suburban parents, and teach them how to golf, tennis, play sports, dance, etc. We really were children of Flatbush whose parents made a better life for themselves and their family in a nice Westchester town. The benefits were more of an eye-opener, a broadening of experiences, a different kind of education for the kids. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 6)

In his Catholic grammar school, John Wolter received a moral education and developed a devotion to prayer (John Wolter, interview). Growing up in both the ethnic urban environment of Flatbush and suburban Westchester County exposed Wolter to contrasting perspectives and value systems.

Although high school was an unpleasant experience for John Wolter, he learned firsthand about the nature of school failure. He also developed good survival instincts. Wolter recalls, "I have probably had more failures in my life than the average person but never did I give up" (1967, p. 2). Outside school, he had positive experiences that would prove beneficial later in life--summertime farming, part-time jobs (including captaining boats), exploring the woods, and swimming.

The Marine Corps was a major influence on Wolter's life, instilling a sense of pride and confidence. He learned firsthand the value of industry and commitment, and gained an understanding of the capabilities and process of quality instruction. He also came to appreciate the capability of small, flexible groups to accomplish tasks. The Marine Corps experience exposed John to the world and helped him to develop a personal mission in life. Upon leaving the Marines, Wolter was able to successfully channel this positive energy into both his marriage and studies at the University of Dayton.

Teaching in the New Rochelle school system was a stark contrast to John's Marine Corps experience. It showed Wolter the realities

that he was facing in trying to bring into practice his evolving pedagogical approach and sense of educational purpose.

Wolter's experience at St. Thomas More was an affirmation that his goals were attainable. Furthermore, he gained valuable administrative experience under the tutelage of Jim Hanrahan.

At the age of twenty-seven, John Wolter was ready to strike out on his own. Although not completely articulated, he had a fairly clear sense of his school-to-be's approach and educational purposes. It would emphasize life experiences, adventure, and motivational, physical, spiritual, character, and wholistic development; these were the areas in which Wolter himself had achieved success and they would, in turn, become fundamental aspects of his own school.

The year was 1964. Lyndon Johnson was president, and the biggest topics in the news were civil rights and the Tonkin Gulf Resolution (which empowered Johnson to increase American involvement in Vietnam).

CHAPTER VI

THE EARLY YEARS: 1964-1972

The Founding of Becket Academy

Naming the School

Among the first decisions to be made was the name of the new school. John Wolter was well versed in history and was aware of St. Thomas a Becket, the Roman Catholic saint who was martyred in Canterbury, England in 1170. John liked Becket's "sense of sacrifice and dedication both to God and to country" (Christopher Warren, interview). Wolter adds that Becket

was a very complicated man. . . . a financial man, a warrior, a compromiser. . . . [He also] chased women (with Henry II) [and was] an intellectual. But, the bottom line [was that] he knew who he was working for. (pers. comm.)

Also at about this same time, Becket had a degree of popularity as a result of the film Becket (Christopher Warren, interview).

John Wolter thus decided to name the school Becket Academy.

The Search for a Site

The initial plan was for Becket Academy to be developed on land adjacent to St. Thomas More, but this property was later found to be unavailable. This created the new school's first problem since literature had been printed and the school's existence advertised (Wolter, 1972a, p. 78). When it became apparent that another site would be needed, John Wolter took advantage of every available free

moment from his duties at St. Thomas More to look for an alternative.

A suitable property was found: the twenty-acre Hand estate in nearby Lyme, Connecticut (Wolter, 1972a, p. 78). Wolter and Hanrahan petitioned the Lyme Planning and Zoning Commission for an amendment to the zoning regulations which was needed for such an endeavor (Winchell, 1964a). A proposed amendment was reviewed by the commission at its subsequent meeting at which time a hearing was scheduled (Webster, 1964). Public notice was given of the April 29, 1964, hearing (Reynolds, 1964), which was presumed to be routine. This was not the case, however. Some 140 people were present (Winchell, 1964b).

[A] record-breaking crowd attended. . . . Mr. Wolter, Mr. Hanrahan, and their attorney, Stephen O'Brien, were unaware that the townspeople were being misinformed that a Catholic school was to be founded. . . . Further information, spread by word of mouth, [including] such comments as "They'll build a great big cathedral right in the middle of town," and "Do you want to see a bunch of statues every time you drive down the road?" served to contribute to the resentment of the townspeople. . . . The meeting was opened by Captain Martinson who accused Mr. Wolter of writing "threatening" letters to his wife concerning an offer to purchase his home. Max Brevillier, the town clerk, summed up his feelings by saying, "We prohibit boarding houses and the only difference between a boarding house and a boarding school was the curriculum." . . . Throughout the meeting there were [also] sly references to crookedness. . . . Because neither Mr. Wolter nor his attorney were residents of the town, they were not allowed to address the gathering and clarify matters in defense of the proposed school. (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 78-79)

A nonbinding vote indicated that sentiment ran three to one against the zoning change (Winchell, 1964b). Subsequently,

[i]n a special meeting of their Lyme Planning and Zoning Commission, held on May 1, 1964, a petition to permit the zoning for private schools was turned down. Thus it looked as though

bigotry and ignorance had put an end to the existence of Becket Academy. (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 79-80)

Two very positive things resulted from the meeting, however:

I saw a young attorney there who was representing the Hands. . . . When Max Brevillier referred to him as Reardon, he stood up, took off his glasses, and said, "Mr. Brevillier, you can call me Mr. Reardon or Attorney Reardon." I looked at this young fellow and [thought], "That guy is going to be our attorney." (Wolter, 1982b, p. 43)

In addition, Louise Russell, a Lyme resident and real estate agent,

called James Hanrahan in Colchester to offer apologies and to inquire whether he and John Wolter would be interested in looking at 100 acres of land overlooking the Connecticut River in the rural town of East Haddam, approximately eight miles from the Lyme property.

The East Haddam property was by no means as readily adaptable to becoming a school as the "Hand Estate" in Lyme. It consisted of a farm house, a shed, a dilapidated pool and a turkey coop which had been converted into a summer boarding house. (Wolter, 1972a, p. 80).

The pool was green with scum and full of frogs (John F. Wolter, pers. comm.). Despite the poor condition of the facility, the

price of the property was \$65,000 as opposed to the \$80,000 price for the "Hand Estate," and there was five times as much land. Like the Lyme location, the East Haddam property was available for a school only contingent on a zoning variance, but in marked contrast to the former experience, the hearing . . . was attended by only one citizen [other than] the Board Members and this citizen favored the school. The variance was unanimously approved on May 25, 1964. . . . With a home for the Academy assured, its operation was almost a reality. (Wolter, 1972a, p. 80)

The timing was fortuitous since Wolter's efforts to recruit students had already resulted in a few boys planning to attend (Joan Wolter, 1967).

The property was purchased in July 1964, and, through a

stroke of luck. . . the bank gave a mortgage far in excess of the purchase price of the property. And with the excess I was able to begin construction on a fire proof school building. (Wolter, 1967, p. 7)

The mortgage of \$85,000--\$20,000 more than the purchase price (Wolter, 1972a, p. 83)--was a boon since neither John nor Joan Wolter had any outside funds (John Wolter, interview; William McCarry, interview; James Reardon, interview) nor any financial support from John's family (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). The purchase of the school property was solely on the basis of Jim Hanrahan's credit rating, and there was no money down (John Wolter, interview).

While it may seem impossible today that property could have been bought without a down payment, the financial climate was very different than at present. There was little inflation, low interest rates (five percent or less), and considerable mortgage money available (ibid.)

On June 1, 1964, the partnership between Jim Hanrahan and John Wolter was incorporated. Jim Hanrahan controlled fifty-one shares of Becket Academy, while John Wolter owned the remaining forty-nine (Wolter, 1972a, p. 91). Becket's total corporate value was \$1,000 (ibid., p. 57). At the first director's meeting, John Wolter was elected corporation president.

When Becket Academy moved into East Haddam, it was a quiet town that

hardly had a center. Almost any home could be purchased for \$15,000 - \$30,000 and [there were few] shops. . . . The Goodspeed Opera House was just [becoming operational]. . . . There was only

one antique store. Gillette's Castle [the former mansion which is currently a state park]. . . needed a great deal of work. (Wolter, 1983a, pp. 1-2)

On a national level,

Watergate had not happened, the Vietnam war was. . . . even less [significant than the present conflict in] Central America, Bobby Kennedy had not been killed, nor had Martin Luther King. . . . The Great Society [program] had not [been implemented], and we were paying 12 cents a gallon for oil. A five dollar bill filled any car with gas. . . . The endangered species list had not been [compiled, nor had the creation of a] Department of Environmental Protection. . . . even been considered. . . . There were dress codes in the schools, punishment and discipline were tolerated, children walked to school, or at least to the school bus, and the drug scene [was little known]. . . . Educationally. . . . [t]hese were the days before mandated programs, massive federal aid to education, [and expanded] state departments of education. Laws for special education, the handicapped, etc. had not been written, much less mandated and funded. (ibid., pp. 3-4)

Preparations for Opening

Thus, in the summer of 1964, John Wolter had a property for the school--but he still faced an awesome task. In two months time he needed to find both students and faculty plus physically prepare a woefully inadequate facility. All the while he had to "work in" these tasks around directing the summer school at St. Thomas More and the birth of his and Joan's third child (Joan Wolter, 1967).

Finding faculty proved the easiest task. Wolter received applications mostly "through word of mouth and friends" (ibid.). He sought people who were willing to be "pioneer[s] of a sort" (ibid.). With regard to specific qualifications, he looked for individuals with

human qualities especially--not only academically sound, but also young at heart and having interests similar to the boys.

Most important, a teacher would have to be warm, firm, understanding, compassionate, and an ethical model to the students. (Wolter, 1972a, p. 151)

Wolter hired three young male faculty members. Jerry Flaherty, the science teacher, was a graduate of Iona College in New Rochelle, New York (Hunter, 1970a). Flaherty, who was married with two children, had two years teaching experience in New Rochelle (ibid.). Mathematics teacher Jim McCann was single and a graduate of Boston College; he had taught one year at St. Thomas More (ibid.).

The English teacher was Chris Warren, an ex-Marine from a close-knit Catholic family (Christopher Warren, interview). Warren had grown up in Pelham, New York (but did not know the Wolters), had attended parochial schools, and met John Wolter when both were teaching in New Rochelle (Christopher Warren, interview). Chris, who was a graduate of Iona College, married his wife Fran in August 1964, just before they moved to Becket (Hunter, 1970a, p. 9).

John Wolter would teach social studies--the fourth subject area.

The first physical project was construction of a new classroom building (which was named Founder's Hall), financed by the excess mortgage money.

It was a block building, one and one-half stories high with a library, science room, and three classrooms, plus an office. It was completed on September 13, the day the first students arrived. However, it was not free of leaks until early October due to roof trouble. (Joan Wolter, 1967)

Additionally, the Boarding House, renamed St. Thomas More Hall, had to be winterized, have a heating system installed, be painted and repaired, and the plumbing [had to be] completely

overhauled. The farmhouse had to be converted into two apartments, and a home had to be constructed for the headmaster and his family. This work, by necessity, had to be completed by opening day. . . . At best, all of these projects were only partially completed by this deadline. . . . The headmaster's house [the present-day counseling/infirmary complex] was not livable until November [and in the meantime the Wolter family lived in one room--Joan Wolter, interview], and the other buildings were damp, cramped, and "rough." The heating systems and much of the building materials were purchased from junkyards. (Wolter, 1972a, p. 126-127)

There was considerable help from friends and former students. "For some reason everyone was thrilled with the excitement and adventure involved in [converting] a very run. . . down converted turkey coop . . . into a winterized dormitory and dining hall" (Wolter, 1967, p. 10). One particularly enthusiastic worker was Francis Donohue, one of John Wolter's students at St. Thomas More (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

All the while, Wolter made an all-out drive to recruit students, and he "saw many a parent. . . with a paint can in one hand and a brochure for them in the other" (Joan Wolter, 1967). Wolter advertised the school as "a new concept" (ibid.), but personal selling efforts were the most important element:

John did alot of ground work by actually visiting grammar schools all over New England. On one swing of two days, he. . . went to 56 schools. [Those he could not visit] received literature addressed by anyone John could [talk] into typing and licking stamps. . . . Anyone who showed interest in Becket, John personally visited. . . . It was a rare parent that did not send their boy to Becket after talking to John. (ibid.)

Ultimately, what sold the school to those first parents was John Wolter's "force of personality, enthusiasm, and exuberance" (Christopher Warren, interview).

The First Year: 1964-1965

Becket Academy opened in September 1964 with thirty-five male students in grades six through eight (Wolter, 1972a, p. 110). All the boys were privately financed (ibid., p. 116). Tuition and room and board was \$1400 (Joan Wolter, interview).

On opening day, the physical plant appeared so inadequate that, "[i]t amazed me any parent left their kid here" (Joan Wolter, interview). Rain exacerbated the problem:

The tarred roof which I put on with own my bare hands leaked. It leaked so badly that the thirty or forty buckets which we had scattered around [were insufficient] and people had to enroll their children in about 1/4 inch of water. No one complained. (Wolter, 1967, p. 10)

Beyond simply his enthusiasm in selling the school, John Wolter had an accurate sense that the Becket Academy he envisioned would be filling a vacuum (Christopher Warren, interview). "Almost all [of the boys] had a similar background" (ibid.). They were mostly from the northeastern states, Catholic, and the sons of "new found money" (ibid.). In addition, most were academic underachievers.

The appeal of Becket for their parents was that it offered an "alternative to the preppy existence" and was rooted in a Catholic tradition (ibid.). From the beginning, the school emphasized, "a belief that we, as human beings, have been put on earth for a reason, and that this reason can be found only by intense industry, prayer, and loyalty" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 63). Becket Academy unabashedly stated that its goal was to help each boy fulfill his God-given

potential.

Parents also liked Becket's highly individualized educational approach and family-type atmosphere in which the teachers also served as dorm parents and adult role models; John strove to have the staff "see students as an extension of our own family units" (Christopher Warren, interview). Furthermore, the decision of those parents to give their children to "four guys in two buildings on a muddy street" was helped by the timing of the school's opening (i.e., the post-Kennedy era; *ibid.*).

In sum, these parents "were trying to give their kids the best" (Joan Wolter, interview), and--despite the new school's many inadequacies--that is what Becket somehow appeared to represent.

In 1964, Becket had no approved status or accreditation of any kind (Wolter, 1972a, p. 95), and the school was minimally staffed--without a secretary, nurse, or even a dishwasher. There were five staff total: John Wolter, the three teachers and a cook. By necessity, every person was a jack-of-all-trades, including cook Aresto Alfiero who "was a guidance counselor [and] played ball with the kids" (Wolter, 1967, p. 10).

Classes were held in the new building (Founder's Hall) and each teacher developed his own curriculum (Christopher Warren, interview). There were four classes of about ten students each (Joan Wolter, 1967). The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills were utilized to assess student academic needs; their diagnostic value had been pointed out to John Wolter by Ronald Papp, a colleague at St. Thomas

More School (Hunter, 1970a, p. 13).

The students lived and ate their meals in St. Thomas More Hall. Jim McCann lived with the students in the dormitory, while the Warrens and Flahertys shared the Faculty House (the building at the corner of River Road and the present-day dining hall driveway).

The problems with the physical facilities became the focus for extracurricular activities:

The situation was so impossible that everyone, students, staff, and friends, were faced by a sense of charity to work together. A spirit of pioneering and adventure emerged in almost everyone. Those individuals who could not tolerate long hours, unrelenting physical and mental work, in the shadow of imminent failure, became burdens to the adventuresome and energetic workers.

To compensate for a lack of recreational facilities and club activities, John Wolter organized the students and faculty into maintenance and construction brigades so that the work could be completed and idle minds could be given a sense of purpose and accomplishment. With the exception of a small sports program, almost all non-academic time was spent on beautifying and cleaning the grounds and buildings, and in converting the old turkey coop [the present-day shed on the dining hall road] into a combination recreation hall and gymnasium. During that first year, not one faculty member or student had construction skills, but with the advice of a friend, Peter Gural, plumbing, carpentry, wiring, painting and wallpapering were accomplished. Work such as masonry was supervised directly by John Wolter, and workmen were hired by the hour or on a per unit cost. Because money was not available, Mr. Wolter developed a sixth sense concerning finances and an ability to deal with salesmen and construction workers. . . . Mr. Wolter had no qualms about asking anyone for anything. His only repayment was to offer a promisory note or a future favor in return. He was never denied, and acts of charity abounded. So great was the help received that first year from friends, acquaintances and tradesmen, and so complimentary was the response of the parents that John Wolter felt the school would surely prosper. (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 127-128)

By early October, the buildings were complete (for that time anyway). The students had established a certain rapport of

living and working together and all had a small job which they did as part of their daily living. This is how the school survived that first year. Many a morning before class, John or one of his staff collected the garbage, fixed the plumbing, etc. The students also appeared to catch that "work together" spirit for they would pitch in no matter how hard the job. . . . In November, the weather turned brisk so inside activities [became necessary]. . . . There were also club activities, especially popular was Mr. Flaherty's rocket club, which climaxed its efforts by launching a mouse on[e] sunny Saturday afternoon. A boy scout troop was begun under Mr. McCann and various improvements were made on the property by Mr. Wolter and his Work club. (Joan Wolter, 1967)

In addition, there were successful soccer and basketball teams (Hunter, 1970a, p. 16).

Despite the rigors of this existence, the boys did well:

The students seemed to be a happy group[,] willing and eager to help around the school. There were few long faces when work details were given out. The boys realized that this was their school and knew that it was a young new school without the money to employ many men for maintenance. . . [T]hey all pitched in very gracefully. (ibid.)

John Wolter knew that thirty-five students was an inadequate number to financially support the school, and efforts were made throughout the year to increase enrollment. By spring there were forty-two students (Wolter, 1972a, p. 110), and John began to seriously consider expansion:

Our dormitory was full, our classroom building was full. It was a matter of operating the next year at a capacity of approximately forty-four or to expand. The problem was how much should we expand? What should the ultimate size of the school be[?]. . . I also had to make the decision as to how to begin a construction program which would provide for the future while at the same time knowing full well that no one was going to give me the buildings and that we would have to earn them from income. (Wolter, 1967, p. 10)

Wolter was able to get a cheap price for concrete blocks, and,

in the spring of 1965, construction began on a new dormitory (the present-day boys dorm). The building, named Baruch Hall, was the most significant construction project undertaken up until that time. There were no construction plans (Wolter, 1972a, p. 128), but the concept was to "build a three story building" at a rate of "a story each year" (Wolter, 1967, p. 10). The bank

refused the mortgage for Baruch Hall and I went ahead with it anyway figuring that I could fill it and then when the bank saw it filled with students then they would remortgage it. They did this luckily. However, I did have some tense moments in that the banker. . . who was an older man. . . told me that he would never send his child to my school and that he didn't see how anybody could. I very politely indicated to him that he didn't know what he was talking about [W]hen you work with a banker with real vision then he can see things being done. When you work with a rather limited person in banking you can see where there is no such thing as progress but rather a person just protecting investments. No room for spirit and spirit is the most important thing in the world as far as I am concerned. (ibid., pp. 10-11)

At the same time, other work projects were undertaken:

Spring came early that year and with it the mud as there were no black-topped roads. Thus despite great expense, the roads had to be put in. . . The roads [were] the first step in [the] "Make Becket Beautiful" campaign. While the roads were being fixed we also had the swimming pool re-done for summer use. This was a real asset. (Joan Wolter, 1967)

In the spring of 1965, East Haddam's Goodspeed Opera House produced the story of Don Quixote, Man of La Mancha. The musical's theme song, "An Impossible Dream," became John Wolter's "favorite song" and "exemplified his attitude toward life" (Christopher Warren, interview). In May, the first secretary was hired; she worked on a part-time basis (Joan Wolter, interview).

Also that spring, the school experienced its first incident

involving students leaving campus without permission (ibid.). Jerry Flaherty spotted the two boys going by his house; after a "man-to-man" talk, he reportedly told them, "To show you how much I trust you, I'm not even going to walk you back to the dorm" (Hunter, 1970a, p. 18). Instead the boys left campus! After a one-day suspension, they were readmitted (ibid.).

The most serious incident of the year occurred when one of the teachers responded to a student's insubordination by giving the youth a shove. The boy was caught off balance and broke through a glass door, suffering a cut on his neck (Wolter, 1982b, p. 46). There was also a minor problem in the community as a result of Wolter's first efforts to keep animals: his two horses had a habit of escaping from their pasture and eating the neighbors' shrubs and garden produce (Hunter, 1970a, p. 19).

A major milestone was the first graduation, "held in the dining room, due to rain" (Joan Wolter, 1967). The speaker was Daniel Rippon (the priest assigned to Becket by the Jesuits) who praised the eighteen eighth-grade graduates for what they had accomplished in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds (Hunter, 1970a, p. 20).

In July, the school was approved by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for enrollment of foreign students--a status sought because Becket had one student from Nicaragua (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 95-96). This was a significant event since it was the school's first formal approval.

During the summer of 1965, John Wolter and Chris Warren ran a small summer school program which the latter described as "a school first and foremost. . . a summer extension of the regular school" program (interview).

By 1965, the young school was beginning to receive some publicity, including an article in the New York Times entitled, "Teacher's the Boss--Former Marine Owns School He Built Himself." In the article, the school's approach was described as a belief that boys need self-discipline in addition to basic academic skills.

In summary, Becket Academy's first year was a very successful one. Despite initial handicaps, especially with respect to the physical plant, morale was maintained at a high level and enrollment increased during the year. The school's basic educational principles were implemented: Becket was "a program demanding complete personal involvement, individual responsibility, and an inexhaustible willingness to work" (Hunter, 1970a, pp. 12-13). Furthermore, the physical plant was greatly improved, and work was begun on a new dormitory. Through tight fiscal management and undertaking most of its own construction and maintenance, Becket Academy actually enjoyed a surplus for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1965. This surplus of \$34,462 was based upon \$85,291 gross income less \$50,829 operational costs (Wolter, 1972a, p. 202).

The Second Year: 1965-1966

In its second year the school opened with sixty-six students (Wolter, 1972a, p. 78)--almost double the first year's September enrollment. The first two state-funded boys were admitted (ibid., pp. 116, 157). Grades four and five were also added (Christopher Warren, interview).

John Wolter and Chris Warren were the only remaining faculty: Gerald Flaherty had left Becket as a result of family considerations, and Jim McCann went on to eventually obtain a doctorate in demography at Brown University. Five new teachers were hired, including Paul Papparella, a former colleague from New Rochelle (Christopher Warren, interview).

Wolter began to move away from full-time teaching (ibid.). While this allowed him to devote energy to the job of being headmaster, it also proved effective in his dealings with the students. His greatest strength with respect to the boys was "as a large group instructor," since he was able to generate community enthusiasm (ibid.).

John took advantage of his increased flexibility to learn more about private independent schools, while--at the same time--helping to further increase enrollment. Among other activities, he took a trip in November 1965, visiting "approximately twenty schools in New England to gather information and create educational contacts" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 96).

Throughout the year, physical development and work projects continued at a steady pace:

The school began its second year with Baruch Hall occupied by students and faculty. Some classes were also held in it. Conditions this second year were even worse than the year before. The efforts put into the new building had shifted emphasis away from existing unfinished projects, and the lack of a maintenance man put the burden of day-to-day repairs on the faculty and students. While heroic efforts were constantly made by some individuals. . . it looked as though the school would decay from within. However, the spring of 1966 was particularly beautiful and enrollment prospects seemed promising.

As the Academy was unable to receive a mortgage for additional property, John and Joan Wolter purchased two acres and a house from Fred Ballek [the faculty residence near the present main entrance], located within the Academy property, in the hopes that faculty living conditions could be improved. The property also contained an excellent well, source of a much needed water supply for the school. Mr. Wolter also employed a local heavy equipment company to construct a six-acre athletic field, improve existing roads, and install the new septic systems.

In the fall of 1965, Mr. Wolter felt that without a real gymnasium it would be advisable to enclose the swimming pool for winter recreation. This project was finally completed in the spring of the second year.

In anticipation of increased enrollment, construction was started on the second floor of the dormitory during the winter of 1965-1966. (ibid., pp. 128-129)

This was done at the same time the children were living in the first floor (Wolter, 1967, p. 10).

The confusion incurred by at least five construction projects undertaken simultaneously was almost disastrous, but somehow, by the summer of 1966, the projects were beginning to fall into a pattern. The addition of black tops on the major roads. . . and the seeding of acres of grass and field, gave an impression of healthy, clean progress. (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 129-130)

The toll on the faculty, however, was immense. The latter part of the second year was one of the most difficult periods in the

history of the school:

[T]he philosophy of hard work and determination was not able to offset the inconvenience of a lack of heat, hot water, textbooks and supplies, drafts, cramped living quarters, and the fantastic amount of mud and filth created by construction and inadequate septic systems. . . . [Several staff] openly questioned the basic direction and possible success of the school. . . . By the end of the year the school was on the verge of a "palace revolt." By keeping cool heads and assuming double and triple duty, the headmaster and Mr. Warren managed to prevent open rebellion and kept the morale of the student body high. Nevertheless, at the end of the year, the school lost seven students and the entire faculty, with the exception of Mr. Warren. (ibid., pp. 71-72)

Despite these serious problems, the Academy's fiscal year ending June 30, 1966, was marked by a surplus of \$72,431 on \$186,977 gross income less \$114,546 in expenses (ibid., p. 110). Enrollment at the end of the year was seventy-eight students--an increase of twelve since September (ibid.). That summer, John Wolter and Chris Warren ran Becket's second summer school.

A particularly significant event during the second year was the March 1966 sale of Jim Hanrahan's stock in Becket Academy to John Wolter. This left John as the sole stockholder of the corporation (ibid., p. 84). Hanrahan had become "kind of embarrassed" by his lack of direct involvement in the school and felt it was appropriate to relinquish control (James Hanrahan, interview). Furthermore, "the distance between the two schools hampered communication and understanding" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 84). Attorney James Reardon negotiated the settlement (James Reardon, interview) which was a twenty-five year note for \$100,000 plus six percent interest (Wolter, 1972a, p. 84). Mr. Reardon replaced Hanrahan as an

officer of the corporation (ibid.). Also, at about this same time, William McCarry was appointed the school's accountant on the advice of Mr. Reardon (James Reardon, interview).

The agreement with Hanrahan gave John Wolter control over Becket. At the same time, it left the school with a corporate note and annual interest payments--money which could have gone

to the staff, students and program. The only benefit derived directly from the Hanrahan transaction was financial and corporate independence, for in 1966 the Academy had no cash value; its assets were all mortgaged. (Wolter, 1972a, p. 86)

Since relinquishing control of Becket, James Hanrahan has continued to serve as headmaster of St. Thomas More School--a post he still holds in 1984 (James Hanrahan, interview). St. Thomas More presently has 250 boarding students in grades seven through twelve; it specializes in serving privately-funded academic underachievers (ibid.).

The Third Year: 1966-1967

The school opened for its third year with a record ninety-seven students enrolled (ibid., p. 110). While only six of these students were publicly funded (ibid., p. 116), the remainder were not necessarily typical pre-prep school students: in many cases, their "[f]amilies had money, but it didn't leave the kids any less needy" (Neal Rist, interview).

The number of staff also increased significantly to ten full-time teachers plus the headmaster (Wolter, 1972a, p. 11). After the heavy turnover of the previous year, Wolter looked for people who were interested in longer-term employment (Christopher Warren, interview). Although John preferred couples from the point of view of service to the students, he thought single men might do better given the spartan conditions (Wolter, 1972a, p. 18). Much of the staff recruiting was done by word of mouth, and a number of the teachers from this period in the school's history were former Fairfield University basketball team members (Sidney DuPont, interview).

Among the new faculty members was Neal Rist, a twenty-two-year-old Fairfield University graduate from a Catholic family. Neal, who had been a student of Jim Hanrahan's when the latter taught at Fairfield Prep, was hired to be a teacher, dorm parent, and coach (Neal Rist, interview).

Sidney DuPont, age 26, was another of the new staff. DuPont, who had been in trouble as a child ("I broke 125 windows in the

local grammar school"), was a graduate of Central Connecticut State College (Sidney DuPont, interview), where he had been a "nationally rated athlete" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 72). He was "very disillusioned" after two years of public school teaching, but nevertheless had responded to an ad for Becket staff placed by John in the New York Times. After talking in person with John, Sid was "enchanted by the whole thing" and took a job for "\$5,000 and room and board, and all I had to do was work twenty-four hours a day for 365 days a year" (Sidney DuPont, interview). During his first year at Becket, Sidney was a teacher of math and social studies, dorm parent, athletic director, and assisted with maintenance (ibid.). Like all Becket staff, he was expected to pitch in wherever help was needed: Sid's very first task at Becket was helping John Wolter bury a dead horse (Joan Wolter, interview; Wolter, 1982b, p. 45).

Diana Schleis was another important addition to the staff. She was initially hired as a secretary "for a couple of weeks' work" (Diana Schleis, interview)--and has remained an employee of Becket Academy ever since.

In 1966, the school also employed its first bookkeeper. Up until that point, Joan Wolter had handled the financial record-keeping, in addition to raising the Wolter children (Joan Wolter, interview).

John Wolter continued in the role of headmaster, but maintained individual contact with the students through the nightly canteen which was conducted in the Wolter home. He also ensured that morale

was high: "everytime we got low, John would buy a pool table or get the cook to make the [cake] icing three inches thick" (Sidney DuPont, interview).

Physical development of the school continued as John plowed the surplus and available tuition money into capital improvements. These moves were a definite gamble, especially since the school had continued difficulties getting credit (Wolter, 1967, p. 11).

The year 1966-1967. . . brought to Becket a particularly valuable man, Jan Lorenc. Besides possessing many attributes as an artist and mathematics teacher, Mr. Lorenc was a graduate architect and he and Mr. Wolter spent long hours concocting various schemes for the school. . . . That winter, the third story of Baruch Hall was added and a three story faculty apartment building was erected. Mr. Wolter also built a 1500 square foot extension onto his home so he could . . . [better accommodate] the school canteen. . . . The lower floor of St. Thomas More Hall. . . which was dormitory space, was completely gutted and refinished in order to triple the size of the dining hall facilities. Lastly, the winter. . . culminated in the beginning of the gymnasium-classroom complex [the present-day school building], a building of some 14,000 square feet. . . . For the first time in the history of the school, a building had construction plans. In this regard, both the faculty apartments and the gymnasium-classroom complex were a milestone. John Wolter was still the General Contractor and Head Maintenance Man, and the faculty and students labored in their non-academic hours. (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 130-131)

John went to a building materials company and convinced the owner that the materials in his lot could be put to better use stacked in the walls of the new school building. As a result, he was given the materials for an open promise to pay (William McCarry, interview).

Wolter also deeded Christopher Warren one-half acre on the school grounds so that he could build a house for his family (Wolter, 1972, p. 130). Warren was beginning his third year at

Becket and, as the only holdover from either of the two previous years, was the assistant headmaster. At that time, Chris saw himself and his family "living there forever" (Christopher Warren, interview).

Since the spring of 1966, John Wolter had been inquiring about receiving formal approval and accreditation for the school (Wolter, 1972a, p. 96). On the advice of James Bunting of Bunting and Lyon, Inc., John contacted Dr. Wilson Parkhill who agreed to evaluate Becket Academy (ibid., p. 97).

Dr. Parkhill visited Becket in October 1966, and was favorably impressed by the school. His recommendations included reduced class loads, improved record-keeping, and construction of a gymnasium; he also suggested that Becket seek non-profit status (ibid., pp. 97-98). After a second visit (in January 1967), Dr. Parkhill contacted Nelson Farquhar, Executive Secretary of the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools, and told him that Becket was capable of passing a C.A.I.S. evaluation (ibid., pp. 98-99). John Wolter was heavily influenced by Parkhill whom John considers a mentor (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

Subsequently, Becket staff began preparations for this evaluation, which was scheduled for the fall of 1967. That summer, the school was visited by Langdon Rankin (Langdon Rankin, interview), a highly experienced private school headmaster. At the same time, Becket Academy was becoming increasingly well known in private school circles. The school was described in the authoritative Private

Independent Schools, 1967 by Bunting and Lyon, Inc.

A corporate change was instituted in May 1967, when Becket became a nonstock corporation (Becket Academy, 1967a). Since June 1964, Becket had been a stock corporation (Wolter, 1972a, p. 83).

During the 1966-1967 school year an important Becket policy was instituted: "the school adopted a schedule which required every student to return home to family, friend, or relative during the school vacations" (ibid., p. 144). This policy was in keeping with John Wolter's belief that it was in each boy's interest to spend time away from the Academy, preferably with his family.

Also of significance was Becket's continuing emergence from the shadow of St. Thomas More. The financial independence achieved the previous year was followed by movement away from the initial concept that Becket would be a feeder for the other school. At the same time, however, there was increased emphasis placed on helping graduates to be suitably placed in private high schools (Christopher Warren, interview).

In 1967, there was another summer school conducted at Becket Academy (Wolter, 1972a, p. 161).

In summary, 1966-1967 was a "cementing" year (Christopher Warren, interview): "[w]ith improved conditions and a much heartier, mature and experienced staff, the end of the third year brought a measure of stability and a new thrust toward raising the quality of the facilities, especially for faculty members" (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 72-

73). Despite improvements over the previous year, the situation was still trying and as many as one-third of the potential returning students did not come back in 1976-1968 (ibid., p. 73). Neal Rist recalls it as "one of the toughest years of my life"--and yet there was a "feeling of being part of something important" (interview).

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1967, the school had a surplus of \$106,366 on \$272,699 gross income against \$166,333 expenses (Wolter, 1972a, p. 202). In a Bunting and Lyon preprint entitled "Becket Academy, East Haddam, Connecticut" (1967), the value of the school's physical plant was stated as \$325,000.

The Fourth Year: 1967-1968

On opening day of the fourth year, 120 students were enrolled (Wolter, 1972a, p. 110), a twenty-four percent increase over the previous year. The student body included the son of the Staten Island borough president ("A Day at Home with the Borough's 'First Family,'" 1968). Tuition, room and board was \$1975 ("Becket Academy, East Haddam, Connecticut," 1967) and none of the students were publicly financed (Wolter, 1972a, p. 113). The total teaching staff was thirteen (ibid., p. 110). Among the five new teachers was John Shea, who brought forty years of school experience to Becket, and Shaun Lavin (ibid., p. 121).

Improvements in the physical plant continued:

Another septic system was installed and the water lines. . . [to] all the wells in the campus were inter-connected. The entire student body was moved to the new "structurally complete" Baruch Hall. The rooms on the second floor of Thomas More Hall above the dining hall were converted to infirmary rooms, and an apartment was constructed for a resident school nurse. Separate plumbing and kitchens were gradually installed in the single teachers' apartments, and the barn-gymnasium was reverted back to a shed-storage area to accommodate maintenance vehicles. During this year, there was an opportunity to put in outdoor recreational apparatus such as a swing, backstops, goal posts and. . . dig a large shallow pond for a hockey team. (ibid., p. 132)

The backstop was built of materials procured from the 1964 World's Fair site (Sidney DuPont, pers. comm.). Also, during the spring of 1968, the school began to develop land for a farm program (Wolter, 1974, p. 9).

The staff continued to develop the school's academic and

athletic programs. Socialization of the students also received appropriate emphasis: at about this time in the school's history, a 44-page booklet on table manners was produced. It included such details as proper pacing of a meal, use of a napkin, proper posture, how to chew food, which piece of silver to use in a given situation, and "things to avoid doing" (Becket Academy, 1967b).

In October, John Wolter made a presentation entitled "Education of Boys" to the Cromwell parish mothers club. He said that "boys are either pushed into the adult world too soon or they are brushed aside not to be heard from," and he advised parents to strive to strike a happy medium (Joan Wolter, 1969b).

Undoubtedly, the biggest event of the 1967-1968 school year was the evaluation by the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools. Becket personnel completed a detailed self-evaluation (Wolter 1972a, p. 99) prior to the evaluation committee's visitation on October 9-10, 1967 (ibid., p. 100). "The evaluators visited every classroom, spoke at length with every teacher and many students, and generally looked everywhere" (ibid., p. 161).

On January 2, 1968, Becket was informed that it had been voted membership and accreditation by the Association (Farquhar, 1968). The Academy was thus one of very few schools to achieve this status after only three years of existence.

In its report, the evaluation team called Becket a "lively, energetic, masculine school" (Breene, Norcross, Reed, and Rankin, 1967) with "an overall spirit of willingness, interest, dedication,

and enthusiasm" (ibid., p. 2). The committee thought the faculty was

inexperienced but not groping. . . [T]here is a tremendous number of workhorses. The administration is quick to take advantage of a willing talent. (ibid., p. 17)

With respect to the physical plant, the evaluators noted:

For a school entering its fourth year, this is a rather incredible array of buildings. The plant has been built, and acquired, at an unusually low cost. (ibid., p. 11)

As regards the school's finances, the committee reported that

the school's fiscal policy is sound [and] the school's income is being used correctly and effectively for the well-being and advancement of the school's structural and academic objectives. (ibid., p. 14)

The team applauded John Wolter's efforts to transfer the school to non-profit status (ibid., p. 15). It further noted that "[m]uch of what would ordinarily have been the headmaster's salary has been plowed back into school funds," and that it was "clear that the headmaster did not start the school for his personal gain, nor is he continuing it for that purpose" (ibid., p. 16).

Recommendations included improvement of the science equipment, better faculty coverage of athletics, greater faculty involvement in guidance, new plans for tests and measurements and reports, improved dormitory furnishings, and improved maintenance (Farquhar, 1968, p. 1).

Overall, the report was "very favorable" and helped "to set the school on its feet" (Langdon Rankin, interview). Among the faculty and staff, C.A.I.S. membership was recognized as a "major positive

event [for] the school" (Diana Schleis, interview). John Wolter sent copies of the entire report to all the parents. For some reason this action did not sit well with the Association, but Langdon Rankin (who later became a Becket trustee) helped to smooth over the conflict (Langdon Rankin, interview).

Not long afterward, Becket was approved by the Connecticut State Board of Education for listing in its directory. Among the state committee's recommendations were increased clerical assistance, expanded library resources, and lower teacher-pupil ratios (Learned, 1968).

A major corporate restructuring occurred in the spring of 1968 when Becket Academy became non-profit. Attorney James Reardon and accountant William McCarry had advised Wolter that such a move was not in his best interest, but John believed it was in the long-term interest of the school (William McCarry, interview). Through the efforts of Reardon and McCarry, the transfer went through "fairly quickly" (James Reardon, interview), and the Internal Revenue Service granted Becket Academy tax-exempt status on July 30, 1968 (Wolter, 1972a, p. 89). John Wolter received no reimbursement for transferring the school to non-profit status, but the newly-formed Becket School, Inc. received a tax deduction (John Wolter, pers. comm.; William McCarry, pers. comm.).

As a result of this restructuring, "Becket Academy, Inc." was non-profit and directed by a board of trustees (ibid., p. 91). The Wolter family continued to own the property of the school (and

assumed all debts and mortgages) through "Becket School, Inc." A third organization, "River Road Corporation," was created for the purpose of assuming responsibility for all Becket summer programs (ibid.).

The first Becket Academy board of trustees meeting was held May 31, 1968. John and Joan Wolter, Bartholomew O'Rourke (father of a Becket student), Michael Someck, and F. Joseph O'Hara were elected to the board, and Joan Wolter was elected secretary (Joan Wolter, 1968). A second meeting was held in July (ibid.), at which time by-laws were approved (Becket Academy, 1968a).

In 1968, another summer school was run under the direction of assistant headmaster Chris Warren. The program incorporated some new elements and was considered a trial for the coming school year. Classes were held in English, math, and reading, and there were three study halls. Students were graded weekly and there was positive reinforcement for those who did well. Activities included swimming and crafts. Overall, the students felt a tremendous sense of accomplishment and purpose and were able to see improvement. Most also experienced the strong feeling of being part of a team (Christopher Warren, interview).

Additionally, during the summer of 1968, the first "Becket Adventure" was undertaken. At a cost of \$700, a boy could participate in this six-week program that culminated in canoeing the 400-mile length of the Connecticut River (Becket Academy, 1968b).

Through his childhood and Marine Corps experiences, John Wolter

was well aware of the value of outdoor experiences. More recently, he and Sid DuPont had undertaken occasional hikes in New Hampshire's White Mountains (Joan Wolter, interview). Extending the use of the outdoors to the school program was a logical next step; when Sid proposed the river expedition idea, Wolter's response was "Plan a trip and let's go" (Sidney DuPont, interview).

DuPont (1968b) developed a six-week "Training Routine and Schedule." The first three weeks were based at the Connecticut campus and consisted of training, preparation, and studying natural history. Subsequently the group of twenty boys and six adults, including new staff member Curt Hunter (Hunter, 1970b, p. i), paddled the river from the Canadian border to Long Island Sound.

To make the trip more interesting, it was decided to study the river and its pollution (Sidney DuPont, interview). The Becket group "had all kinds of scientific equipment" and documented weather conditions, water temperatures, and pollution sources. At one point, the group became stuck in mud flats (the result of dam drawdowns); subsequently, "we fought [with eventual success] for minimum stream flow" standards (ibid.).

Although environmentalism as a movement had yet to come into vogue ("Earth Day" was not until 1970), the media picked up the story of the Becket group and their concerns about the river. By the time the paddlers reached Hartford, "we were [considered] heroes" (ibid.). The Becket group was "like the Ralph Nader crowd, but we were doing it with thirteen-year-old boys" (ibid.).

As a result of this effort, a major article appeared in the New York Times ("The Connecticut: Can the River Be Saved From Its Own Beauty") on January 12, 1969 (Mill, 1969). An article in Sports Illustrated acknowledged the group's finding that the Haddam Neck nuclear power plant was discharging 114 degree F. water into the river (Sidney DuPont, interview). Subsequent to the expedition, DuPont appeared every month on an environmental talk show on the most popular Hartford radio station (ibid.). The log of the trip was also published (DuPont, 1968a) and distributed to "over three hundred local, state, and Federal officials" (Ewert, 1969, p. 8).

In summary, despite significant program growth, 1967-1968 was another difficult and demanding year for the staff (Wolter, 1972a, p. 143). By the end of the school year, enrollment had grown to 132 students (ibid., p. 110) and the facility and staff were both heavily taxed. Financially, however, the school was gaining increasing strength. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1968, Becket had a surplus of \$142,268 on \$373,038 gross income less \$230,770 expenses (ibid., p. 202).

Although Becket was yet to become directly influenced, it is important to note that it was in 1967 that the Connecticut General Statute 10-76d became law. This regulation required local education boards to provide special education programs for students in need of services. It was a forerunner of increased state--and federal--involvement in education.

The Fifth Year: 1968-1969

During discussions prior to the outset of the fifth year, there was agreement that the campus had reached its capacity; as a result, enrollment was cut back (Wolter, 1982b, p. 164). The school year began with 122 students (ibid., p. 110), seven of whom were publicly funded (ibid., p. 116).

The teaching staff was increased by three to sixteen. As before, Chris Warren and Sid DuPont continued to be John Wolter's key assistants in the operation of the school. Neal Rist became director of athletics (Neal Rist, interview). Curt Hunter (who would later marry John Wolter's sister Gail) was one of the teachers. New staff included Patrick Scully and Gilbert Morneault.

Morneault was a Catholic from a low income family in Maine. He had met John Wolter while attending Holy Apostle's College in Cromwell, Connecticut (where John taught on a part-time basis). When the need arose for a reading teacher, Wolter sent Morneault to courses and conferences on teaching dyslexics. Additionally, Gil instructed arts and crafts, was a dorm parent, and helped develop the library (Gilbert Morneault, interview).

This was Becket Academy's first year with a budget as "[t]he first four years [had been] strictly 'hand-to-mouth' with John Wolter juggling figures any way he saw fit" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 135).

The year's major physical project was construction of the Chapel of the Next Martyr, named after a chapel dedicated by Saint Thomas a

Becket. It was the only facility in the history of the school financed by solicited money (Joan Wolter, interview). Fund raising of this nature was possible as a result of the school's recently acquired non-profit status (Wolter, 1972a, p. 133).

Jan Lorenc, though he had left the school, designed the chapel which was started in the fall of 1968 before any money was raised. . . . [W]ith the help of John Shea, Mr. Wolter raised \$26,827.00, an amount that was almost exactly the cost of the chapel. As the donations came in, more materials were bought and the chapel slowly took shape, using rough-cut, native lumber and wood-blend asphalt shingles. (ibid.)

As in previous construction projects, the students and faculty did most of the work. The chapel was dedicated in March 1969.

Subsequently, it became the setting for daily all-school meetings and a "focal point" for campus activities (Christopher Warren, interview).

While considerable physical growth had been accomplished in the school's first five years, there still remained much to do (for example, Sid DuPont recalls "septic problems all the time"-- interview). The chapel was, however, the last major construction project for some time. Based upon the advice in independent 1969 evaluation reports by Brother Albertus (superintendent of schools for the eastern province of the Brothers of the Holy Cross) and Wilson Parkhill, "Mr. Wolter made a firm commitment to himself to cease building, politicing and supervising, and to concentrate now on investigating new educational trends" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 103).

As regards program during the school's fifth year, the success of the Becket Adventures led to occasional school year camping trips.

During one overnight trip in the woods near the campus, the participants experienced a "spectacular" (but not dangerous) earthquake (Sidney DuPont, interview). (The East Haddam area is noted for small tremors known locally as the "Moodus Noises.") Perhaps the most notable of the school year camping trips was a backpack along the beaches of Cape Cod in the autumn of 1968--the first in a series of seven biannual (fall and spring) trips to that environment (ibid.).

During the winter of 1969, the first edition of the student newspaper (the Becket Bulletin) was published under the direction of editor-in-chief Albert Ewert and faculty advisor Sid DuPont. On page two, John Wolter expressed his support for the project:

To publish a newspaper is a very brave thing because you are willing to show what you think to many people. Often you will be criticized. If you are really doing your job it will hurt because you are really pouring yourself onto the pages. (Ewert, 1969, p. 2).

Among the items noted in the newspaper were Richard Nixon's defeat of Hubert Humphrey in a school straw vote, the third Fall Parents Day, the upcoming Alumni Day, the Becket Adventures program's new membership in the American Camping Association, reports on the school's soccer, cross-country, and basketball teams, and school ski trips (Ewert, 1969). As regards the latter activity, John Wolter recalls that

we wound up with several broken legs so we decided that whoever skied should have lessons. On the day that we had lessons no less than five students broke their legs. (1982b, p. 46)

Summer school was again supervised by Chris Warren. It was during this summer (or possibly the following year) that the students became involved in an "up with people" concert to which the parents were also invited. Many parents did not recognize their newly healthy and enthusiastic children--even though the students had only been at Becket for six weeks (Christopher Warren, interview). It is noteworthy that, during this period of the school's history, many of the summer school and Becket Adventures students did not attend the Academy during the school year (Sidney DuPont, interview).

Also during the 1969 summer, Sid DuPont ran the second Connecticut River trip. The first year's publicity resulted in an enrollment of thirty-five boys (ibid.). The seven staff included Pat Scully and the previous year's veteran Curt Hunter. The group produced a 67-page log with a variety of student-collected information: river depths, pollution sources, water temperatures, meteorological data, geological features, and listings of sighted wildlife, birds, and trees and shrubs. The students also included extensive graphics--photographs, maps, profiles, and line drawings (DuPont, 1969). Even in 1984--fifteen years later--the 1969 log continues to represent the state-of-the-art in environmental/outdoor education.

The trustees met five times during the course of the year. Among the items approved were the continued lease of the property and the headmaster's contract. The possible purchase of the property, which

was still owned by the Wolters through Becket School, Inc., was also discussed (Joan Wolter, 1968, 1969).

Overall, 1968-1969 was a relatively good year for the school. Enrollment was maintained at a high level (there were 128 students at the end of the school year; Wolter, 1972a, p. 110), and financial growth continued. Under its new non-profit accounting system, the Academy ended the June 30, 1969, fiscal year with assets of \$92,950 against liabilities of \$66,531 (Becket Academy, 1973b). Total expenditures were \$400,397 (ibid.). Despite these positives, however, the difficulties and demands on the faculty were significant:

In the analysis of the development and growth of Becket Academy, it can be seen that the history of the early years of the school, with its loosely structured organization and inadequate financing, was a series of frustrations culminating in the large turnover and loss of students at the end of the fifth year. . . . But dedicated people who are willing to work together long and hard can establish a measure of stability, as exemplified by the successful 1970-1971 school year. It points up the fact that different people respond differently to a situation; what inspires one individual is sometimes discouraging to another. (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 148-149)

The Sixth Year: 1969-1970

At the beginning of the sixth year, enrollment had declined to ninety-five students (Wolter, 1972a, p. 110), twelve of whom were fully or partially state funded (ibid., p. 116). The number of teaching staff declined in proportion, down to twelve from the previous year's sixteen (ibid., p. 110). In addition to the teachers, there was one administrator (John Wolter), one maintenance man, one secretary, one bookkeeper, two full-time dining hall staff, and one part-time dishwasher (Becket Academy, 1980c, p. 1).

In 1969-1970, Becket also hired its first therapist/caseworker on a part-time basis (one day per week). The need for such an individual arose because "special guidance problems were created by the growing number of students from divorced, adoptive, or deceased-parent families" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 144). J. John Ashe, age 27, was a former college athlete from a Catholic family; he held a master's degree from Boston College (J. John Ashe, interview). Prior to becoming the Academy's caseworker, he had worked at Becket part-time as a recreation and child-care aide during the 1966-1967 school year and in the summers of 1968 and 1969 (ibid.). Although he later became deputy superintendent of the Hamden County Jail in Massachusetts (a post he holds in 1984), Ashe worked continuously as a part-time Becket counselor up through, and including, the 1983-1984 school year (ibid.).

In the same year, Neal Rist also became increasingly involved

in the social service aspect at Becket, working directly with individual students and making contact with the outside agencies which funded them (Neal Rist, interview). This was in addition to his other duties which included teaching English, directing the athletic program, and serving as a dorm parent (Cadwell, 1970, p. 5).

The winter 1970 edition of the Becket Bulletin noted a number of school events and activities: the autumn completion of the chapel and its use for daily school meetings, teacher Gil Morneault's work in library development, the planned change to an ungraded curriculum, the eighth grade dance, formation of a boy scout troop, weekly school-wide "Town Meetings," rabbit keeping, the popular hobby of wood carving, ongoing letter writing to politicians regarding Connecticut River pollution, and a hike up Vermont's Mt. Ascutney led by teacher Curt Hunter (Cadwell, 1970). Reports on the soccer, cross-country, and wrestling teams were also included, as was a French language crossword puzzle (ibid.).

Although there were no major construction efforts that rivaled the previous year's efforts, student work crews did a great deal to beautify the buildings and grounds. A major effort was made to give the campus a "uniform appearance" by "attaching a veneer of rough-cut, native lumber to the cement block buildings" (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 133-134); prior to this time, all the buildings were painted lime green (John F. Wolter, pers. comm.). The students and faculty also planted more than 100 rose bushes and other shrubs (Wolter, 1972a,

p. 134). Other projects included the addition of three faculty apartments to Baruch Hall, the bricking-in of the pool, and reroofing of Baruch Hall and the pool building (ibid., pp. 133-135). As a result of these various efforts, "[b]y the fall of 1970, Becket Academy, with its blending of buildings into the natural landscape, looked as though it had been in existence for fifty years" (ibid., p. 134).

Hereford cattle were first brought to the campus in 1970 (ibid.). Although the livestock would eventually become an integral part of the school's evolving farm program, their initial introduction was partially motivated by practical considerations; as Sid DuPont recalls, the campus community "couldn't keep the lawn cut" (interview).

The school year ended with 109 students (Wolter, 1972a, p. 110), forty-nine of whom graduated at the sixth annual eighth grade commencement in June (Becket Academy, 1970). School attorney James Reardon was the graduation speaker (ibid.).

During the summer of 1970, a summer school was conducted. Forty-six boys attended at a cost of \$700 tuition, room, and board (Wolter, 1972a, p. 41). The program maximized student-teacher relationships, provided intensive remedial work (in mathematics, reading, spelling, vocabulary, penmanship, grammar, sentence structure and composition), and included swimming, fishing, camping, hiking, movies, and arts and crafts (ibid.).

The summer was also the third year of the Becket Adventures Connecticut River trip. There were twenty-eight students and ten staff including Sid DuPont, Curt Hunter, Pat Scully and John Kennedy (Hunter, 1970b). Kennedy had been a teacher at Becket since September 1967 (M. Smith, 1970). Sid Dupont recalls that the students were invited into farmers' homes along the river and "little old ladies made us blueberry muffins" (interview).

The 1970 river trip received tremendous publicity including a front-page story in the Lebanon (N.H.) Valley News with a headline that proclaimed, "The Filthy Connecticut: Youthful Scientists Chart Its Grim Route" (Moore, 1970). There were subsequent articles in the National Geographic School Bulletin (Goodwin, 1970), Junior Scholastic (Chapman, 1970), Scholastic Vacation Fun ("Canoeing the Connecticut," 1971), and Senior Weekly Reader ("Adventurers Aim for a Cleaner River," 1971). An article entitled "Students Work for Unpolluted Environment" appeared in a 1970 issue of Current Events: Becket Academy pupils were cited as "ready for 'Earth Day.'"

The group produced a 98-page log with extensive observational data (Hunter, 1970b). Although improving water cleanliness was noted, the group made ongoing efforts to document pollution and confront polluters. Among the devices utilized was distribution of a "tag a polluter" form (ibid.). Dupont also organized a "toilet paper boycott" to protest the actions of one particular company (John F. Wolter, pers. comm.). As in the past, the log was distributed to political leaders and various public agencies,

including the United States Department of Interior's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. In June 1971, this agency presented Becket Academy its "NERO award."

In addition to efforts to protect the Connecticut River, Becket students of this period were also involved in the preservation of the local Salmon River at the request of East Hampton citizen Ralph Adkins; activities included picketing the state capitol (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

During 1969-1970, the board of trustees held four meetings (Joan Wolter, 1969, 1970). Richard Maher, John Wolter's former college roommate, was elected a new member (ibid.). The trustees agreed to purchase the assets of River Road Corporation (which had operated Becket summer programs) from John Wolter for \$62,000, and they discussed the purchase of the Becket School, Inc., property (ibid.). Further, several policy changes were enacted for the 1970-1971 year: the addition of a ninth grade, introduction of a staff medical insurance plan, and approval of a year-long sabbatical for John Wolter (ibid.).

Wolter had been

getting restless. I enjoyed starting new programs, but there were . . . none on the horizon. I really needed to have my batteries recharged. . . . I was on the Board of Finance in town. . . . [and] on the Democratic Town Committee. However, even in politics I had learned just about all I cared to learn at that time. . . . I considered making a job change, but couldn't think of what I could do. . . . In the mail came a flier from the National Association of Independent Schools offering fellowships in. . . [a doctoral program entitled] Leadership and Administration at the University of

Massachusetts. . . . I immediately applied and was accepted. I [had] asked Wilson Parkhill, who was my idol, to write . . . a recommendation. . . . [He wrote,] "This is quite a fellow, take him. . . . He plays to win." (Wolter, 1982b, pp. 48-49)

The fellowship was John's second award during that period: in 1969, he was named Eastern Connecticut Junior Chamber of Commerce Man of the Year (Wolter, 1980d).

Overall, the school's sixth year was a good one. "With construction completed and programs developed, a general calm and status quo began to prevail" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 144). "The extreme rigors. . . began to mellow" (ibid., p. 74). By the end of the June 30, 1970, fiscal year, the Academy's assets had grown to \$135,483 against liabilities of \$91,702 (Becket Academy, 1973b). Total expenditures were \$343,031--a decline by more than \$50,000 from the previous year (ibid.). This drop paralleled reduced enrollment: lacking endowment, the school was forced to cut operating costs.

One other important event occurred in 1969, which--although it had limited short-term impact on the Academy--would have significant future effect. It was in this year that the present-day State of Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services was created (Marcus, 1984, p. 134).

The Seventh Year: 1970-1971

Becket Academy opened in the fall of 1970 with 116 students (Wolter, 1972a, p. 110), twenty-three of whom were fully or partially publicly funded (ibid., p. 116). Fourteen of the boys (thirteen eighth-grade graduates and one first-year student) were in the new ninth grade (M. Smith, 1970, p. 1).

Of the total student body, ninety (seventy-eight percent) were Roman Catholic, 103 (eighty-nine percent) were white, and eighty-seven (seventy-five percent) were from two-parent, intact families (Wolter, 1972a, p. 46). Fifty-four students (forty-seven percent) were from Connecticut, thirty-two (twenty-eight percent) from New York state, nine (eight percent) from New Jersey, five (four percent) from Massachusetts, while the remainder were from other states and, in two cases, foreign countries (ibid.). Tuition, room, and board for the 1970-1971 school year was \$2975 (ibid., p. 31).

Becket's tradition of open admissions continued with

absolutely no restrictions or quotas in regard to race, creed or national origin. We make no attempt to screen students for academic, athletic prowess, or social background. (ibid., p. 45)

One requirement, however, was "a demonstration of normal intelligence and emotional stability" (ibid.).

The number of teaching staff rose by two to fourteen (ibid., p. 110). A general description of the 1970-1971 faculty is as follows:

All the professional faculty members are male, American-born Caucasians. Eight are married (five with children), and the

rest are bachelors. Nine resided in the dormitory, four had private homes or apartments on the campus, and one lived off the school grounds. All but three are of the Roman Catholic faith and these three are of the Protestant faith. The oldest faculty member is thirty-eight and the youngest is twenty-two. The average age is twenty-nine. . . . [O]ne staff member [Chris Warren] has been at the Academy since its founding seven years ago. Two [Sid DuPont and Neal Rist] have been at the Academy for five years, one [John Kennedy] for four years, three [Curt Hunter, Gil Morneault, and Pat Scully] for three years, one for two years, and six were new on the staff. (ibid., p. 48)

School year salaries generally ranged from \$4,500 to \$11,000 including room and board (ibid., p. 51). Teachers taught five classes per day, covered one daily study hall, supervised afternoon activities and were assigned dormitory and dining hall coverage (ibid., pp. 52-53).

During 1970-1971, John Wolter was at the University of Massachusetts on sabbatical, and Christopher Warren and Sidney DuPont were Becket co-administrators. Warren handled office administration, guidance and academics, while DuPont was in charge of the dining hall, maintenance and student activities (ibid., pp. 19-21). Neal Rist was responsible for discipline and dormitory supervision (ibid., p. 21; Neal Rist, interview).

One of the new faculty members was Joseph LaFrance, Jr., age 35. Previously Joe had been a student at Deerfield Academy (where he was influenced by headmaster Frank Boyden), had served in the Marine Corps, and had worked as a house parent at Pennsylvania's Milton Hershey School (Joseph LaFrance, interview). At Becket he took an active role in guidance and discipline, was director of athletics, and helped supervise dormitory living (Wolter, 1972a, p. 20).

Peter Kenney was another new faculty member (*ibid.*, p. 122). A graduate of Harvard with a master's degree from Villanova, he had employment experience in business and insurance (M. Smith, 1970, p. 1). In addition to teaching English and social studies, Peter was the track and cross-country coach (*ibid.*). With the assistance of Sid DuPont, he founded the Becket Athletic Club.

Another addition to the school-year faculty was Ivan Ferguson, Becket's first full-time chaplain (*ibid.*). He had previously instructed at Becket summer schools in 1966 through 1968 (*ibid.*).

The academic program emphasized "work in basic study techniques as well as remedial and development[al] reading" (*ibid.*, p. 33).

Class size ranges from eight to thirteen boys. The student-teacher ratio is approximately eight to one.

Tutoring and special help classes are held in the afternoons and on Saturday mornings. Grades are posted and reported every three weeks, and standardized tests are given early in October to facilitate placement. The curriculum includes reading, composition, spelling, grammar, arithmetic, mathematics, social studies and science. French, art, drama and music are special activities. The average student, upon graduation, continues an academic program in the secondary school of his choice. Students generally attend private high schools, either non-sectarian or religiously orientated. A fair percentage return to public school. (*ibid.*, p. 34)

The school day began with wake-up at 6:45, followed by 7:30 breakfast, 8:00 assembly, classes from 8:30 to 12:11 and (again after lunch) from 12:50 to 2:33, afternoon athletics and free time from 2:45 to 5:00, study hall before and after supper (from 5:00 to 6:00 and 7:00 to 8:00), canteen from 8:00 to 9:20, and lights out at 9:30 (*ibid.*, p. 35).

Efforts were made to incorporate experiential learning within the formalized classroom structure. As noted by Wolter, "approximately fifteen percent of the instructional time is spent out of formal class" (ibid., p. 39). Particularly notable in this regard was the project-oriented science day program (ibid., p. 167). In addition, the concept of the summer Becket Adventures began to be formally implemented within the school-year program (M. Smith, 1970, p. 2).

In addition, the biannual Cape Cod backpacking/environmental education trips continued. The November 1970 outing--a retracing of Henry David Thoreau's 1849 trip--was described in Scholastic Voice (Spiegel, 1971, pp. 2-5). The author claimed that Sid DuPont, who whittled a total of nine woodcarvings during the trip, "never got tired."

Becket's guidance program was coordinated by Chris Warren, but "conducted by the entire staff" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 39). As for discipline, there was "no definite set policy" (ibid., p. 28):

Although the general form of punishment was correction, a full range of punishments were employed, principally detention, work, the writing of explanatory essays on behavior, and the withdrawal of privileges. On occasion, suspension was employed to allow the student to discuss with his parent or guardian whether he wished to remain at the school. If a student sought separation from the Academy, he was allowed to leave after consultation with all parties involved. (ibid., p. 29)

Every student participated in afternoon activities. "In 1970-71, there was more emphasis on competitive sports than in any year" up until that point (ibid., pp. 42-43). In the fall, teams were

fielded in soccer, the new Becket sport of six-man tackle football, and cross country (ibid., p. 42). On November 4, 1970, the New England Junior High School Cross Country Championships were held at Becket ("New England Championships to be Run in East Haddam," 1970; "Four Win Medals in Becket Meet," 1970).

In the winter, the Becket Bulldogs competed interscholastically in basketball, hockey, wrestling, swimming, and track (Wolter, 1972a, p. 42). Spring sports included baseball and track and field (ibid.).

A significant program event in 1970-1971 was celebration of the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Thomas a Becket (Gilbert Morneault, interview). Chaplain Ivan Ferguson had gone to the celebration in Canterbury, England, and he brought back various materials used in the school's commemoration of the event (ibid.). In addition, the students continued to produce the Becket Bulletin (M. Smith, 1970). With respect to physical development, construction included

the chaplain's quarters, an athletic storage shed and renovation in the library and faculty apartments. This was the least amount of construction at Becket Academy since its beginning, and it was marked by the lack of faculty and student participation in the construction and planning. . . . Calvin Johnson, Director of Maintenance, attended to repairs that had accumulated over the years. . . . The Academy entered the summer of 1971 in better condition in regard to maintenance and repair than any other year in the history of the school. (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 32-33)

During the summer of 1971, the Becket Adventures program was expanded to include both the Connecticut River trip and a Long Island

Sound expedition. Regarding the latter, one group of eleven students spent twenty-eight days on a forty-one foot yawl studying the marine environment and learning to sail (Sidney DuPont, interview). A second group did seine fishing from a shad boat, and supervisor Sidney DuPont was in a third vessel coordinating both experiences (ibid.). A log calling for reduced pollution of the Sound was produced, and the sailing trip was described in the May 1972 Junior Scholastic as "Summer School on the Sound."

In 1971, the Connecticut River Watershed Council published a revised edition of its Connecticut River Guide. The effort was chaired by Sid DuPont who was assisted by Curt Hunter, "The Boys of Becket Academy," and other individuals.

The trustees of Becket Academy, Inc. met three times during the 1970-1971, and discussion included secretary/treasurer William McCarry's proposal for the sale of Becket School, Inc. assets to the Academy (Joan Wolter, 1970, 1971). Becket Academy, Inc. then owned the "physical and financial assets of the school [including] monies, goodwill, equipment, the chapel, and chaplain's quarters," while it leased the other buildings and land from Becket School, Inc. and the Wolters (Wolter, 1972a, pp. 18-19). The actual lease was for fifteen acres, although the Academy had use of an additional eighty acres (ibid., p. 22) owned by Becket School, Inc. and/or the Wolter family.

During his sabbatical, headmaster John Wolter spent at least four days per week at the University of Massachusetts (Wolter, 1972a,

p. 55), but "maintained board contact and financial responsibility for the school" (ibid., p. 19). Wolter, who was then in his mid-thirties, recalls:

It was a time of student protest so it was a good time to be on a college campus. The University of Massachusetts . . . [had] one of the top five schools of education in the country. It was a little difficult for me because, frankly, I was older than any of the students and knew a little more. Because I had been an administrator. . . for about eight or nine years, I knew the administration game. Because I had been on the [town] board of finance, I knew the finance game. Because I had majored in history, English and philosophy, I was pretty well able to grasp the foundations of philosophy and history of education. However, I took courses which interested me and decided I would use this time to broaden my perspective about what was going on in the world. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 49)

One particularly notable event during John's studies at the University of Massachusetts was a trip to Florida to evaluate differentiated staffing of schools (Wolter, 1980d, p. 2). He found time to visit the Everglades which he found attractive:

It reminded me of the country that I had been in while in the Marine Corps. I like[d] the swamps with [their] own beauty: the bird life, the reptiles, the animal life and the fish. I also felt. . . [the Everglades would be] good for endurance activities such as long-distance canoeing. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 51)

In 1971, Wolter wrote a comprehensive examination paper entitled "The Non-Public Boarding School as a True Community" in which he argued that individuals have a responsibility to be part of a community. A community's responsibility, in turn, is the "development of human potential and aspirations" (Wolter, 1971b, p. 14) which is achieved through "endless experiments and groping" (p. 15). He also argued that contemporary life was promoting the

breakdown of communities and that micro-communities such as boarding schools had an important role as models for the larger society.

Wolter further noted that the survival of boarding schools depended upon overcoming "the financial problem," but this is not "the critical issue" since it "can be overcome by time and effort" (ibid., p. 19). More important is the "spiritual problem": he argued that new ideals for larger society would be developed through "prompt treatment of dissensions, rivalries and threats to individuals and groups within the community" (ibid., p. 20).

Wolter's second comprehensive paper focused on the nature of organizations. He argued that a school is best served by a dynamic and fluid organizational structure since this approach provides maximum opportunity for individual initiative and creativity.

By the end of Becket Academy's seventh year, a degree of growth and stability had been attained (Wolter, 1972a, p. 13). The school year had ended with a solid enrollment of 110 students (ibid., p. 110), and the program was well-established and recognized for its quality.

Despite its youth, Becket Academy is fully approved and accredited. It is approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education and by the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization of the Department of Justice for the enrollment of foreign students. It is accredited by the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools, and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools, the National Catholic Education Association, the Orton Society, the Educational Records Bureau, and Project Learn. The academy is listed and described in Private Independent Schools, The Educational Register, and is considered by Porter Sargent's Private Schools. . . [to be] one of New England's leading schools. (ibid., pp. 17-18)

Financial records show that, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1971, Becket Academy had \$183,491 in assets against \$105,967 in liabilities (Becket Academy, 1973b). Total expenditures were \$379,371 (ibid.). Taking into consideration the assets of Becket School, Inc. and the Wolter family, the total assets owned directly and/or available for use by the Academy were \$1,097,000 (Wolter, 1972a, p. 87)--a striking contrast to the assets of \$1,000 when the school was founded in 1964 (ibid., p. 57).

The Eighth Year: 1971-1972

During the 1971-1972 school year, there were 105 students enrolled in grades four through nine (Schleis, 1971). When the trustees had voted in the ninth grade in 1969, they intended that the "Academy remain a terminal eighth grade school where possible in the best interest of the child" (Kenney, 1978f, p. 1). By 1971, however, it was becoming increasingly apparent that there was a need for serving ninth graders: nineteen of the previous year's graduates returned in 1971-1972 (Wolter, 1972a, p. 47). At the same time, there was a declining market for private elementary students.

John Wolter had completed his coursework at the University of Massachusetts and was back at Becket as full-time headmaster (while also working on his doctoral dissertation). Sid DuPont and Chris Warren continued to serve in key administrative posts (Sidney DuPont, interview; Christopher Warren, interview). Neal Rist had left at the end of the previous year (Neal Rist, interview), and Joe LaFrance took on increasing responsibility in the dormitory and guidance areas. Robert Chase was one of several new staff members.

The year's major construction project was the new fieldhouse behind the school building (Becket Alumni News, 1973, p. 4).

The chapel continued to be the focal point for the Becket program. Among the activities conducted there was a thirtieth anniversary reenactment of the announcement of the Pearl Harbor bombing (Christopher Warren, interview).

Athletics continued to be of major importance. Particularly active were the fall cross-country runners ("Becket Academy Gains Victory," 1971; "Guthrie, Sheahan Lead Becket Club in X-Country Win," 1971; "Runners from 25 Schools in Becket Academy Meet," 1971) and the spring track team ("GJHS, Becket Runners Top Eaglebrook Meet," 1972). In addition, the Connecticut Amateur Athletic Union twenty-kilometer championships were held at Becket on April 2, 1972; the race was won by 1968 Boston Marathon winner Amby Burfoot ("Burfoot Wins A.A.U. Race," 1972; "Burfoot Wins Conn. A.A.U. Run," 1972; "Amby Burfoot Defeats 34 Runners in Connecticut Road Race Contest," 1972). The race was organized by the Becket Athletic Club.

John Wolter's dissertation, Becket Academy, The First Seven Years: A Case Study, was completed in April 1972. In the final chapter, John made nineteen specific observations/recommendations with regard to starting a school, including "state funding of students is available and considerable, especially if the school truly has an open admission policy" (1972a, pp. 197-201). Although Becket had enrolled a few publicly-funded students as early as the second year, the quantity of publicly-financed students jumped significantly during the 1970-1971 school year. Through his Becket experiences and University of Massachusetts education, Wolter came to appreciate that

the government was into special education in a big way. Laws were passed which mandated that the state and school systems provide special instruction for students with learning disabilities as well as emotional problems or. . . any handicap. I also realized that the school[-age] population was declining

and. . . that in the area of special education, particularly at the elementary school level, the [public school] instruction was getting better. . . . For the first time in my experience, public schools began competing with independent schools for hard-to-teach children. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 49)

This theme was a major point of discussion at the January 15, 1972, trustee meeting. It was decided that Becket should enter into contract with the state for special education (Joan Wolter, 1972). John had previously initiated correspondence regarding possible state special education approval (Wolter, 1971a; Learned, 1971). In June 1972, the Special Education Review Committee of the State of Connecticut Department of Education made specific recommendations regarding obtaining such approval, and noted that

the department is committed to the development of programs within public schools under the auspices of local boards of education. As local boards move to this commitment, only the very seriously handicapped or severely impaired child will be educated in private facilities. (Simches, 1972)

In other trustee actions, the board discussed the recent expulsion of a student for extensive cigarette smoking: "Mr. Wolter has decided to draw the line with the smoking in hopes of preventing drugs" (Kenney, 1978f, p. 2). At the trustee meeting in August 1972, it was noted that only eighty-five students were expected to enroll for the fall term; there was discussion of possible staff cuts (Joan Wolter, 1972).

The 1972 summer program included the traditional summer school and an expanded Becket Adventures program. In addition to the Connecticut River expedition, there was a 1500-mile bicycle trip around the perimeter of New England (Sidney DuPont, interview; Becket

Alumni News, 1973, p. 4). There were about thirty boys and girls on the bike trip, making this Becket's first significant co-ed offering.

Although the Connecticut River trips had previously visited the White Mountains, it was in 1972 that the first trips were designed with these New Hampshire mountains as their primary objective; two one-week programs were undertaken (*ibid.*). Other outdoor activity included John Wolter and Gilbert Morneault's canoe trip on Maine's Allagash as a reconnaissance for future student offerings (*ibid.*).

In addition to the summer school and Becket Adventures, Joseph LaFrance ran a day camp program for about twenty-five faculty and local children aged four to eight (*ibid.*; Joseph LaFrance, interview; Becket Academy, 1972). The program was based at the Becket campus and included sailing on the Connecticut River (Joseph LaFrance, interview). "Captain Bob" Chase instructed from one of the sunfish sailboats, while LaFrance supervised from a Boston whaler (*ibid.*).

By 1972, John Wolter had hired a graduate student in agriculture to run the farm. The man, who overprotected the school's only cow, was subsequently let go. The cow was then moved to John Wolter's backyard. It took a liking to John--if milked by anyone else (or later than scheduled), the animal became quite ornery and "actually sulked" (Dye, 1983, p. 12).

The fiscal year ending June 30, 1972, was marked by financial

gains: Becket Academy had assets of \$183,491 against liabilities of \$105,967, and total expenditures of \$375,779 (Becket Academy, 1973b). There were serious concerns about the future, however, given the expected enrollment decline. The increasing cost of tuition (\$3,480 for the 1972-1973 school year according to Becket brochures) was an "economic necessity" due to inflation, but--even so--the school "began to price [itself] out of the range of parents of the kids in the early years" (Christopher Warren, interview).

There were some significant staff losses at the end of 1972, including teacher Peter Kenney (Becket Academy, 1980c, p. 6). Sidney DuPont and Christopher Warren announced their departures "on the same day" (John Wolter, pers. comm.), leaving John Wolter "shocked" and "flabbergasted" (Christopher Warren, interview).

Warren's decision to leave was based on his family's situation as well as changes taking place at the school (ibid.). Wolter bought his property and house (on the present-day farm road). Christopher subsequently became a reading consultant for the Middletown, Connecticut, public schools and is presently--1984--journalism and media instructor at Middletown High School (ibid.). Recalling his eight years at Becket, Warren remembers that

John Wolter infused in me the same spirit he used to start the school. . . . I've been grateful ever since [and] never found that acceptance elsewhere. . . . There was [also] a spiritual force at work at Becket. At a time when religion was on the decline, I gained in my religious beliefs. . . . [Furthermore,] as an educator [Becket] opened the door on what education can be. (ibid.)

Sidney Dupont had an offer--to become the principal at a new elementary school in Vermont--that he "couldn't pass up" (Sidney DuPont, interview). He vividly remembers driving away from Becket: "I was bawling" (ibid.). DuPont, who got his doctorate at the University of Connecticut, was in Vermont for six years and then became--at age 34--a superintendent of schools in Connecticut; he is currently--1984--headmaster of Michigan's Grosse Point Academy (ibid.).

Recalling his Becket experiences, DuPont observes that Becket is "a special place. . . [that] attracts special people" (ibid.). With respect to his career, he says, "I learned everything there is to know about [running] a school at Becket--I mean everything! . . . I draw upon it all the time" (ibid.). He adds, "when I die I want my ashes dumped into the Connecticut River, off the East Haddam bridge" (ibid.).

In separate interviews, both Warren and DuPont used the concept of marriage to express the essence of their complex relationship with Becket and John Wolter. As for the combination of Wolter, DuPont, and Warren: "As a three-member team, we did it all" (Sidney DuPont, interview).

Conclusions

Characteristics and Trends

The first eight years of the school can be characterized as follows:

Growth. The growth of Becket Academy in the first eight years was significant. With respect to the physical plant, John Wolter was able to capitalize much of the school's income: all available money was plowed into structural improvements. Through hard work, sound management, and resourceful procurement of materials, it proved possible to "make something out of nothing" (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

Each year there was a surplus, and the school became increasingly sound financially. Expenditures rose from \$50,000 the first year to \$375,000 by 1972. Assets rose from the initial corporate value of \$1,000 to over one million dollars in Becket Academy, Inc. and Becket School, Inc. combined.

There was also significant growth in the number of students enrolled: there were forty-two in the first year and 132 by 1967-1968. In subsequent years, however, enrollment declined somewhat--first by design, but later as a result of a declining private market. There were 105 students in 1971-1972.

There was also growth in the number of staff: there were only three teachers and the headmaster in 1964-1965, but by 1968-1969 there were sixteen teachers. Furthermore, there was an increase in

the number of support staff (including maintenance, dining hall, and bookkeeping personnel).

Increasing stability. Survival and growth were achieved despite serious obstacles, particularly in the first four years. Becket Academy had an underdeveloped program, inadequate facilities, and limited financial resources. The staff were constantly faced with significant challenges. Many people found the demands overwhelming, and there was considerable turnover (Sid Dupont recalls that one year there were seventeen different cooks; interview). The "palace revolt" at the end of the second year was one of the most trying periods in the twenty-year history of the school.

By 1969-1970, however, there was a growing sense of stability. In 1970-1971, Becket had a well-developed program with numerous accreditations and approvals.

A relatively stable and homogeneous student population. Although the early Becket has been called a "junior prep school" (J. John Ashe, interview), it would be inaccurate to infer that the majority of the students were candidates for Andover or Choate. Most were "underachievers" (Joan Wolter, interview) who were "not above average" academically (Wolter, 1972a, p. 172).

Most students were from stable two-parent households; family involvement was very much encouraged through formalized conferences and parent days (ibid., pp. 163-164). An "overwhelming number" of the students were Roman Catholic and the student body was

"predominately Caucasian" (ibid., p. 111). Some of the parents were quite well-off, including an opera singer who once came to get her son by helicopter (Sidney DuPont, interview; Gilbert Morneault, interview).

For most of the students, participation in the Becket Academy program was financed by their families. Becket's first two publicly-financed youth were enrolled the second year, and there were several such funded youth in the years that followed. The number of publicly-financed youth increased significantly--to twenty-three--in 1970-1971; this increase corresponded with the rapidly developing state and federal involvement in education. (A third source of income was some limited church funding for summer programs; Joan Wolter, interview).

Becket opened in 1964 with students in grades six through eight only. Grades four and five were added in 1965 and grade nine in 1970. While there were occasional incidents involving students off campus without permission, major discipline problems were relatively rare. Smoking was considered a serious offense.

A young, energetic, multi-talented, flexible staff. Although there was considerable staff turnover in the early years, individuals who remained for more than a single year were invariably highly motivated and dedicated. Nearly all the staff were male, and most were young. There were, however, several older individuals (including John Shea) hired to bring experience to the faculty.

The successful staff loved children, were (or became) jacks-of-all-trades and adaptable, and made a near total commitment to the Becket program. As examples of the latter characteristic, Sid DuPont recalls long periods when he never left the campus and John Wolter did not even take a vacation until after the fifth year (Sidney DuPont, interview).

There is little question that the physical facilities and general working conditions during these early years were substandard. One of the most interesting aspects of the early Becket is that some individuals perceived the situation negatively (as a problem to be abandoned), while others viewed it positively (as an exciting challenge). In his doctoral dissertation, John Wolter wrote:

Working and living under stressful conditions is not necessarily detrimental; faculty and students can thrive and develop creative skills by meeting the challenges of a rugged atmosphere. (1972a, p. 199)

Changing corporate control. In 1964, Becket began as a partnership between John Wolter and Jim Hanrahan, and soon afterward became a stock corporation with Jim Hanrahan owning the majority of shares. In 1966, John Wolter became the sole stockholder, and the following year the school became a non-stock corporation. In 1968, the school was transferred to non-profit status with control in the hands of a board of trustees. Through Becket School, Inc., the Wolter family continued to own the land, most of the school's buildings, and the assets of the Becket summer programs. The latter were sold to the Academy in 1970.

Ongoing program development and experimentation. The initial Becket program included academics plus construction/maintenance as the principal extracurricular activity. As the school evolved, the academic program was refined and developed, including the addition of a reading program directed by Christopher Warren (and later Gilbert Morneault). New extracurricular activities were added. Initial efforts were made to develop counseling and farm programs. (The latter had a variety of problems including runaway animals--two of the sheep once made it into the dormitory; John F. Wolter, pers. comm.) A summer school program, implemented the very first year, was subsequently expanded and refined.

Also of note is the growth of the school's outdoor program which began as a summer Connecticut River trip in 1968. By 1972 the program had grown to a multi-trip summer program with additional school-year offerings.

In most Becket activities (including construction and farming), the staff had limited, if any, experience. A willingness to experiment, learn, and risk failure was fundamental to the school's success.

Seeking sound advice. The success of the school was also, in part, a result of careful consideration of outside advice. Wolter sought out Wilson Parkhill and others to evaluate the Becket program, and he implemented their recommendations. He also procured the legal and accounting services of James Reardon and William McCarry, respectively. Both Reardon and McCarry made major

contributions with respect to Becket's corporate structure and other financial and legal issues.

Good community relations. Efforts were made to maintain good community relations, and staff were actively involved in town affairs. Although there were some incidents involving students in the community (including a car that was driven into the Connecticut River; Sidney DuPont, interview), most were relatively minor. East Haddam's first selectman

took a liking to us and pretty much watched out for us on the town level. Whenever we had a problem, Sam somehow smoothed it over. He was a great man and very kind. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 47)

Wolter considers first selectman Sam Pear to be one of his mentors.

The headmaster's evolving role. Although John Wolter's title (headmaster) remained the same throughout this early period, his role unmistakably shifted. Initially, he was a classroom teacher and general contractor for all construction activities--two responsibilities that he ultimately relinquished.

Many administrative and supervisory responsibilities were gradually passed on to Chris Warren and Sid DuPont who, in 1970-1971, supervised day-to-day operations while Wolter was on sabbatical. By this time, John had begun to assume a role that involved a broader, long-term leadership perspective. He did, however, continue to be involved in admissions, finances, hiring staff, and interacting with the other trustees.

Creative and innovative energy. This final characteristic is somewhat intangible, an element that incorporated excitement, creative expression, commitment, sense of humor, and a perceived lack of limitations. This was the life blood that kept the Becket community stimulated and motivated despite the many difficulties. It is perhaps best understood (or at least alluded to) through particular incidents and stories.

When a salesman came to Becket to sell an "unbreakable" desk, staff asked a student to take one out to the parking lot and try to break it; the youth was successful (Sidney DuPont, interview).

In addition to the farm program, there were other animal-related projects: a "turtle ranch," a zoo (that included a bear, raccoons, and a possum), and a garbage can full of bird seed set out for the purpose of finding out what kind of birds were in the area (ibid.).

The staff included "a real cast of characters" (Gilbert Morneault, interview)--true individualists in every sense of the word. For example, two of the dining hall staff also worked in the circus (Gilbert Morneault, interview). Three support staff made particularly important contributions to the school; maintenance man Calvin Johnson, nurse Esther Bettigole, and cook Beulah Cromies were all senior citizens and their contributions influenced John Wolter's evolving beliefs with respect to the vital role of the elderly in our society (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

On one occasion, a teacher found ten dollars on the road. Instead of pocketing the money, he used it to buy trees to plant on

the campus (ibid.).

When the snowplow broke down right after a major winter storm, John Wolter convinced all the students to line up for a "snow stomp" (ibid.).

One year there was a rash of fires, one of which burned the first floor of the dormitory to a such an extent that students slept in the study hall during two weeks of reparations (ibid.). Through a dream, John Wolter identified the arsonist who was subsequently apprehended (Sidney DuPont, interview).

Becket's Relationship to the Larger Society

It is also important to comment on Becket's relationship to the larger society during this period, a turbulent one in American history. This was the time of the Vietnam War and associated protest, the black riots in Watts (1965) and Newark (1967), the Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations (1968), the first manned moon landing (1969), the Charles Manson trial (1971), and the Lyndon Johnson and early Richard Nixon presidencies. It was also a period of openness and permissiveness in American society.

Although John Wolter commonly asserts that he is the "original flower child," it would be erroneous to conclude that Becket was in large measure a product of "The Sixties." Admittedly, there are aspects of Becket that parallel the period's ethos--two being the back-to-the-land movement (as best exemplified by Helen and Scott Nearing's Living the Good Life, 1970) and the search for simplicity.

In addition, a number of the Becket teachers chose this profession as a means of avoiding the draft.

There were, however, many aspects of Becket directly in contradiction to the spirit of the period--most notably the emphasis on hard work, sacrifice, discipline, respect for authority, and other traditional family and Christian values. The school was also a drug-free environment at a time when drug use was growing in popularity (Christopher Warren, interview). Sid DuPont (interview) remembers that, when he and John Wolter first heard about hippies, the pair made a special trip to Boston to see if they could find one! As Chris Warren recalls, "we were out of step with it all" (interview).

Becket was--in many respects--"a closed society" (ibid.) with a program based upon the prior experiences of John Wolter and the other staff (as well as trial and error). Further, the school became increasingly stable at the same time that the country as a whole was experiencing increasing unrest. The following brochure quotation is indicative of the school's growing atmosphere of confidence:

This is the story of Becket Academy. We have told it simply and honestly because we are proud of it. In an age of uncertainty, we are confident. We know what we are trying to do, and we know we are succeeding.

Our goal, as simple and honest as our story, is to prepare young men for the business of living in this world of ours. If we share the same goal, come and visit us. Only then can you fully understand the meaning of Becket Academy. It is a community of unique individuals, an environment dedicated to education; it is a way of life. (Becket Academy, 1971)

Despite Becket's divergence from the period's ethos, the 1960s had a major influence on John Wolter's thinking. Up until that time, he had believed in the intrinsic greatness of the United States and the American way. The 1967 death of Francis Donohue (a former St. Thomas More student who had helped build Becket) in Vietnam compelled Wolter to question many prior assumptions (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

Wolter was also very much in tune with the times in a more immediately important area: the market for private school students. The parents who sent their children to Becket believed in traditional values and were concerned that the sixties was negatively impacting upon their children. By the early 1970s, however, a declining private market and the rapidly increased state and federal role in education would require adaptation and continued evolution.

Educational Purpose

With respect to educational purposes, John Wolter successfully implemented many of the elements he had previously espoused. The Becket program included academics, but intellectual development was considered only one part of the school's broader purpose.

Spiritual development was perhaps the unifying element of the Becket program which also incorporated character (including self-discipline) and wholistic development, life experiences (including group living), and practical skills (in construction and farming).

The outdoor program offered development of leisure skills and also enhanced the evolving purpose of ecosystem understanding and responsibility.

Cooperation and human relations were highly valued as articulated in Wolter's 1971 comprehensive examination paper. In this same paper, he also argued that a school should be a community which promotes individual fulfillment and serves as a model for social change.

CHAPTER VI

TRANSITION: 1972-1976

The Ninth Year: 1972-1973

In its ninth year, Becket enrollment was down significantly. The records of Diana Schleis (1972, 1973) list seventy-nine students, a decrease of twenty-six from the previous year. At its low point, 1972-1973 enrollment dipped to sixty-eight, the least number of students since the school's second year. The school began to enroll more publicly-funded students, and a two-track admissions policy was articulated: "The educational program at Becket Academy is geared to the average child as well as to those children who might be experiencing a demonstrable learning disability" (Learned, 1972b, p. 1).

With respect to staff, the loss of both Sid DuPont and Chris Warren meant that "some vacuums were created" (John Wolter, pers. comm.). John Wolter continued in the role of headmaster, while Curt Hunter handled admissions and houseparent director Joe LaFrance played an increasingly important role with respect to dormitory supervision. Bob and Linda Chase were among the dorm parents, as were Bill and Mary Toller. The latter couple, who had been married in 1971 (right after college), joined the staff in February 1973 (William Toller, interview). Bill, age 23, was from a Catholic family and, prior to responding to a newspaper ad for Becket staff,

had spent an unsatisfying year selling computers (ibid.).

Altogether, there were ten teachers (Learned 1972b, p. 2).

A major program change was the addition of a formalized homelife program (Becket Alumni News, 1973, p. 2): the dorm parent job became separate from, and independent of, the teacher's. Joe LaFrance supervised the homelife program and hired dormitory couples, one pair for each floor of the dormitory. The ideal couple was perceived as

vitaly interested in youth, capable of guiding the development of boys, and supervising the activities of boys. They must provide a warm, friendly atmosphere in the dormitory that will create within the boy a sense of security or well-being. This must be a type of adult leadership and example that can be found in only the very best of Christian homes in a democratic society.

The dormitory couple role is an entity in itself; it has its own characteristics, purposes, and methods of accomplishment. It offers a new and different opportunity to the boy as compared to the true-parent role. It supplements the boy-family relationship rather than attempting to provide a substitute for the relationship. Dorm couples are not in competition with parents.

The dormitory couple must be able to provide an active leadership role in such areas as recreation, education, work assignments, counselling, disciplinary guidance, etc. They are in charge of the work schedules of boys and are expected to work with them in the assignments. The dorm couple is expected to maintain a good working relationship with relief personnel. The success of this personnel depends a great deal upon the supervisory capacity of the dorm couple and their ability to properly motivate. (ibid., pp. 2-3)

In retrospect, Joe LaFrance believes that the houseparent program "filled in needed nurturance," in part because of the role played by the female houseparents (interview).

Beyond living with the boys in the dormitory, the couples were

involved in counseling the youth. Jay Ashe worked with LaFrance to help train the couples in counseling skills (ibid.). The dorm parents also supervised evening activities, including canteen, which, beginning that year, was only held intermittently at the headmaster's house (Becket Alumni News, 1973, p. 3). In sum, the development of specialized dorm parents was a "big step" in the Academy's development (Diana Schleis, interview).

Among other 1972-1973 activities, an art show and contest (held in conjunction with Parents' Day) was supervised by teacher Gilbert Morneault (Becket Alumni News, 1973, p. 4). A small museum of John Wolter's collection of early American tools and other arts and crafts was also assembled (ibid.).

The farm program continued to develop; by 1972-1973, there were pigs and at least one goat: Billy, the school mascot (ibid.). The first edition of the Becket Alumni News was published in the spring of 1973. Contributions to the school were solicited and past donors acknowledged.

Despite declining enrollment, construction continued: as John Wolter recalls, he tried "to build [during] the low points, so we could take in on the high points" (pers. comm.). By this time, the exterior paneling of Baruch Hall and the school building had been completed (Becket Alumni News, 1973, p. 2). In addition, a five-acre pond had been dug (ibid., p. 3) and a small cabin built for weekend camping "about a half a mile in the woods behind the pond" (ibid., p. 4).

The new fieldhouse had been completed the previous year, leaving the central area in the school building (which had formerly served as a gym) available for other purposes. A new library was constructed in part of this space (ibid., p. 3); the design was unusual since the library was suspended above the existing ground floor.

In 1972, John Wolter published an article entitled "Give Them a Challenge" in the Educational Register. He argued that "most children have not approached their limits of physical tolerance, and, what is worse, many have been led to believe that their meager efforts border on the heroic."

In October 1972, the Connecticut State Department of Education visited Becket to evaluate the school's previously-filed application for special education status (Learned, 1972b). On December 8, John Wolter was notified that the State Board of Education voted "that the educational program at Becket Academy in East Haddam, Connecticut, for boys in grades four through nine, who are also experiencing learning disabilities, be approved under section 10-76 (a-j) of the General Statutes" (Learned, 1972a). Becket was the first private school in the state to be so accredited (Ronald Papp, interview). The Academy also continued to be approved as a regular independent elementary school serving children in grades four through nine (Harrington, 1973).

On January 17, 1973, a major tragedy occurred: a student was killed in an accident at nearby Gillette Castle State Park. The

Park property is only one mile from the school and, at that time, was virtually "an extension of the campus, [students walked there] nearly every day in the spring and the fall" (Joan Wolter, interview). On

that particular day the temperature was in the seventies which I had never seen in January in Connecticut. This was so unusual that I called school off and allowed the students to play games, hike, and . . . enjoy the out[doors]. Some students went down to Gillette Castle State Park. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 46)

The students who left campus were required to be in a group of at least three (Gilbert Morneault, interview). As recounted in a front-page story in the Hartford Courant, one of Jeb's two companions

told police the three squeezed around a metal safety fence which had been [recently] installed. . . to keep the curious away from the jagged, overhanging cliffs which rise. . . from the Connecticut River. The trio climbed down only a short way when. . . [Jeb] fell. One of his companions said. . . [the boy] grabbed a small tree to break his fall, but was unable to hang on to it. The youth was pronounced dead at the scene. (Condon, 1973)

Diana Schleis vividly remembers receiving the call and informing John Wolter (interview).

The previous spring, Wolter, Sidney DuPont, and attorney James Reardon had been socializing, and the topic of what to do in the event of a major problem was discussed (Sidney DuPont, interview). Reardon's advice: "Call someone you respect who is uninvolved" (ibid.).

Upon receiving word about the accident, Wolter immediately called Reardon who advised him to get a priest on the scene to

administer last rites (ibid.). This John did, as evidenced by a photograph of last rites administration which was published on page 70 of the January 18th Hartford Courant.

On the evening of January 17, 1973, the students assembled in the chapel, and John Wolter announced the death. The boys cried "uncontrollably," many throughout the night (Gilbert Morneault, interview). The subsequent quiet on the campus "continued for days" (ibid.).

Jeb was an adopted boy who

was very close to his parents. His father was a prominent attorney from Long Island and active in political circles. This really scared me, but I handled the matter as honestly and straightforwardly as I could. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 46)

Jeb's parents were grateful that the last rites had been administered. They remained friends of the school and donated funds to build the chapel belltower (Sidney DuPont, interview).

The town first selectman was supportive, and the Hartford Courant reporter (who happened to be visiting the Park at the time of the accident)

was a great comfort to me. He remarked. . . "Don't you know who I am, John?" He explained that he [had] applied. . . [for a job at Becket some] years before. I refused him the job because he was a journalism major, and I told him he should be like my father and get any job he can in the newspaper business. . . if necessary. . . start from the bottom. But I felt he should be a journalist. He heeded my advice. . . and our paths crossed. . . during the time of that tragedy. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 46)

The state police detective assigned to investigate the case

told me he was the father of a boy. . . [to whom] I gave a scholarship. . . in the early years of the school because he

had been hurt in an automobile accident and needed some catching up. (ibid., pp. 46-47).

The school also benefited from the efforts of attorney Reardon who helped explain what had happened to interested parties and thus minimized adverse publicity.

Within the Becket community, the tragedy had a major impact: "everybody became so close, like a family" (Diana Schleis, interview). John contacted Sid DuPont and Chris Warren, both of whom attended the funeral (Christopher Warren, interview). Although there had been some ill feeling between Chris and John Wolter (related to the terms for repurchasing the Warren property), Warren recalls the reconnection with Becket at the time of Jeb's death as "an emotional link. . . a pleasant experience" (ibid.).

A serious incident of this nature is a threat to any organization, but Becket Academy survived. John Wolter handled the situation

extremely well, no one could have done it better. [But] it took tremendous wear out of him. Most good leaders, when things are going bad, they go ahead. . . . [John Wolter demonstrated the] mark of a real leader. (Joseph LaFrance, interview)

The trustees met on March 24, 1973, and their actions included the decision to admit day students to Becket Academy; further, they decided that students who will not live under the school rules should be dismissed (Joan Wolter, 1973). The former decision was precipitated by declining enrollment, while the latter was designed to maintain standards even though the school could ill afford to

discharge students.

The 1973 summer program included a seven-week outdoor living program with a variety of activities (exploring rivers in Connecticut, hiking in the White Mountains, exploring Cape Cod, and boating in Long Island Sound) at a cost of \$825; a bicycle trip was also conducted in Nova Scotia (Becket Academy, 1973a; Becket Alumni News, 1973, p. 4).

In summary, 1972-1973 was a tumultuous year in the history of Becket Academy. Declining enrollment, special education approval, the new homelife program, and the death of a student were each of major importance.

Financially, the school's assets and liabilities rose to \$209,296 and \$149,944 respectively, while the difference between them declined by more than \$18,000 (Becket Academy, 1973b). Total expenditures declined (by more than \$41,000) to \$334,402 (ibid.), reflecting the enrollment decline and associated tight management. Tuition and room and board for the 1972-1973 school year was \$3,480 (Becket Academy, 1973a)--more than double that of the first year.

Staff losses at the end of the year included veteran teachers Curt Hunter and Pat Scully (Hughes, 1973a, p. 1).

The Tenth Year: 1973-1974

In 1973-1974, there was a slight increase in enrollment to ninety-three students (Schleis, 1974). About one-quarter of the students were publicly funded, while the remainder were fully or partially financed privately; in some cases, the parents paid for board and care, while the local educational authority reimbursed for educational costs (Malcolm Winkley, interview). There was also a "small core of day students from the surrounding area" (Wolter, 1974, p. 7).

There were six couples employed as teachers and/or dorm parents. Most were young, recently married, and high in energy: "People were really into it" (William Toller, interview). Among the holdovers from the previous year were the Chases and Tollers (Hughes, 1973a, p. 1). Among the new employees were Malcolm and Peggy Winkley (ibid.).

Malcolm Winkley was twenty-three years old and one course short of his bachelor's degree at American International College when he saw a newspaper ad for a teaching job in Connecticut (Malcolm Winkley, interview). He and Peggy had spent the previous year in New Mexico and were looking for one year's employment in the area before returning to the Southwest (ibid.). The newspaper ad did not include the name of the school or list a telephone number--there was only a post office box. But Winkley was somehow intrigued, and he set out immediately (at night) to find the "private school in East

Haddam" (ibid.). Local inquiries eventually led him to Becket which Mal thought "had a look about it" (ibid.).

The couple returned to Becket the next morning and encountered a "maintenance man" who gave them a tour. By the end of their visit, they learned that presumed maintenance man was homelife director Joseph LaFrance! Malcolm had a variety of first impressions of Becket: "kind of a camp," "alot of energy," "cleancut," "young," having a "religious quality" and an "up-with-people flavor" (ibid.).

In the process of the tour, the couple encountered John Wolter, and the three discussed the Southwest. Later, as they drove away from Becket, Malcolm experienced a "spooky" feeling, and he said to Peggy, "That man is going to have an impact on my life" (ibid.; Peggy Winkley, pers. comm.). Soon thereafter, the Winkleys became a dorm couple and Mal also a history teacher. At that time, "there was no other place for me to be," Mal recalls (interview). They lived in Pat Scully's former apartment in Baruch Hall.

In addition to the teaching and dormitory staff, there were four individuals who assumed administrative roles: Dr. Wolter (headmaster), Joseph LaFrance (dean of students and teacher), Gilbert Morneault (academic dean), and newcomer Ronald Papp, who was director of admissions and a teacher (Hughes, 1973a, p. 1). Mary "Hat" Trask was librarian (Malcolm Winkley, interview) and, as a veteran teacher, a valuable resource person particularly in the area of special education (Gilbert Morneault, interview).

Ronald Papp joined the Becket staff at the age of thirty-six, after eleven years at St. Thomas More (where he had started in the beginning with Jim Hanrahan and John Wolter). He had academic training in the classics and philosophy and had spent eight years as a Jesuit seminarian, including one year in Jamaica as a missionary (Ronald Papp, interview). At Becket, Papp used the title director and assumed responsibility for admissions (ibid.). Among the other staff, he was perceived as a "senior faculty member" (Malcolm Winkley, interview).

Despite the long hours of work at Becket, many of the staff were able to pursue college degrees. Papp was in a fifth year program in special education at St. Joseph's College (Ronald Papp, interview), and William Toller was working toward a master's degree from the same institution (William Toller, interview). Joe LaFrance attended the University of Massachusetts through its University Without Walls program (Joseph LaFrance, interview).

With John Wolter's encouragement, staff were also involved in other training and personal growth opportunities. For example, in February 1984, Bill Toller attended a Cursillo experience which had a "profound [personal] effect" (William Toller, interview).

Programmatically, the Becket homelife component continued to be developed under the leadership of LaFrance. During this period, LaFrance developed a handbook for staff and student use (Joseph LaFrance, interview). He was also involved in restructuring the school's discipline system (ibid.).

At least four issues of Becket's newspaper, then called the Dialogue, were published under the direction of faculty advisor William Toller (Hughes, 1973a, 1973b, 1974). These included an article by the oldest Wolter child John F. (better known as Jef) about the farm--which then included six cattle, five pigs, two sheep, chickens, and a beehive. Other topics described in the papers included model rocketry, the radio club, fall and spring family days (at which money was raised for the library), the school play ("The Ghost of Jerry Bundler"), the school's music program and band, science exhibits, the art program, and dances.

The newspaper also included articles on interscholastic sports (football, soccer, cross country, wrestling, and basketball), intramurals, and other activities (including ping pong and karate). Additionally, there was an article by the second Wolter child (Kim) describing what it was like to be a girl student among ninety Becket boys.

The OPEC oil embargo and associated "energy crisis" created a problem for Becket: at a time of low enrollment (when the school could least afford it), energy costs increased dramatically. John Wolter acted to solve this problem by outfitting all campus buildings with wood stoves (Havourd, 1973).

An interesting event occurred during the 1973 Christmas vacation period. John Wolter called a meeting of all the male faculty; there was speculation that a major decision was about to be

announced (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Instead, the group ended up at the Gelston House bar where John proclaimed, "Friends, I have \$500 in my sock and I'm ordering. . . a round of drinks" (ibid.).

Throughout the school year, the Winkley family endured a personal tragedy which, ironically, had a major long-term impact on the school. In November, Mal and Peggy's infant daughter was diagnosed as having a fatal illness. Soon afterward, John Wolter told Mal that there was money set aside for such emergencies; "whatever it took" was available to help them (Malcolm Winkley, interview). At the same meeting, Wolter handed Winkley a set of car keys and told Malcolm that he now owned John's car (ibid.).

At that time, the Winkleys had only been at Becket for three months and had intended to stay for only one year. But, as Mal recalls, they were "personally just struck" by John's generosity and became committed to Becket (ibid.). An "incredible relationship" developed between John and Malcolm; among other topics, they discussed their mutual interest in developing a high school program (ibid.).

In 1973-1974, Becket's educational program "designed to meet the needs of children (ages 8-16 years) with learning disabilities" received reapproval by the State Department of Education (Harrington, 1974a; Apker, 1974). In August, the State of Connecticut also continued approval of Becket as an "independent elementary boarding school for boys in grades 4-9" (Harrington, 1974b).

During the 1974 summer, there was a summer school (Malcolm Winkley, interview) attended by thirty-four students (Papp, 1974), but no river trip or other major outdoor offerings (William Toller, interview). Nor had there been any significant outdoor trips conducted during the school year (ibid.).

The trustees met three times over the course of the school year (Joan Wolter, 1973, 1974). A major point of discussion was the sale of Becket School, Inc. assets to the Academy. On November 7, 1973, John Wolter wrote a letter to the trustees in which he outlined a specific proposal and stated:

It has been my feeling for some time that for the Academy to wholly own and control its own destiny and solidify its own position[---]by eliminating the uncertainties of leasing the premises and ultimately reducing its own financial obligations[---]is the only proper course for orderly growth and purposeful direction. (1973b, p. 3)

In other trustee business, Dr. Roger Peck (who chaired John Wolter's doctoral dissertation) was elected to the board; John Wolter stepped down as board President, replaced by Richard Maher (Joan Wolter, 1973, 1974). There was also discussion of possible fund-raising alternatives (ibid.), and Maher presented the board with two lengthy memoranda concerning the sale of the property and the need for fund-raising to achieve this goal (Maher, 1973, 1974).

A major point of trustee discussion was John Wolter's interest in changing his role at the Academy. In a letter to trustee Bartholomew O'Rourke, Wolter stated:

The reason I have enjoyed the past ten years immensely is because of the physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, economic, etc. challenges. . . . [T]o have been not only an educator, but an innovator, problem solver, and handyman was a rare opportunity. I still have not changed in regard to needing challenges nor do I wish to be anything but what I have been. Specifically, I have found that I have been happiest and at my best with the boys when engaged in projects which involve group effort and getting dirty. I am, and always have been, a natural leader and always chose the elements rather than shelter and comfort.

Recently [however] my work has caused me to spend more time than I like in the offices working on "finer" points of programs and handling rather heavy parent contact. While I recognize the importance of both functions. . . . they are a little too "fine" for a person of my temperament. . . . I also desperately want to have more time. . . to enjoy being a father to my own children.

Specifically, I want to continue to do the things that I do well, but have other functions performed by people who can do a better job. I welcome overall responsibility and challenge. . . . Becket is more than a school; it is a community. I wish to be head of the community, but not the Headmaster. Someone else who desires the position should have it. . . . This [community] quality is what has made Becket what it is and will insure our survival in the future. I have always known this and feel it in my soul. (1973a)

The trustees were, of course, concerned about the implications of such a change. As Richard Maher stated in his second memorandum:

The trustees all felt the prospect would harm Becket which derives its caliber from the effort, vision, character and personality of John Wolter. "John Wolter is Becket Academy" as some of the trustees expressed it. However, John contends: 1) the transition toward professionalizing must be made sometime--why not now. 2) Becket may change, but it won't die. 3) The change is personally necessary because the drain over the past 8 years has diminished the "fresh enthusiasm" of individual personal attention that he says is imperative for a headmaster to give to the boys. 4) He can do more for Becket in a different role [including] working to fulfill plans for Becket's future. 5) He ask[s] that the Trustees contemplate and formulate a plan for the future. (1974, p. 3)

Prior to the June 1974 trustee meeting, John Wolter

disseminated his long-range plan for Becket, which included a brief review of the school's history; memberships, approval, and accreditations; and rationale for existence (Wolter, 1974). The school's two-track admissions policy was reaffirmed:

It has been discovered, with dramatic results, that the individualized instruction, programmed for the child with a learning disability, also produces remarkable results for the superior student. (ibid., p. 2)

Proposed future projects included expansion of the day student population and farm program, and development of a guidance clinic (to serve both the school and the general public), a senior citizen center, a high school program, an arts and crafts store and inn, and a college and graduate school program. Also proposed was fundraising and purchase of the Becket Academy property from Becket School, Inc.

The report concluded with the proposal that John Wolter assume the title of president and move into a role of new program development. Wolter recommended that Ronald Papp assume the title and duties of headmaster. At its June meeting, the trustees agreed to these title and responsibility shifts (Joan Wolter, 1974).

In summary, 1973-1974 was "a tremendous transition year" (Malcolm Winkley, interview). The school was moving increasingly toward publicly-financed students, and some staff perceived the change as a threat to Becket Academy's identity and its pre-prep school image. (At the same time, Joseph LaFrance was advocating that Becket move toward becoming a child care facility; ibid.)

There was also "a sense of a new structure" at Becket (Malcolm Winkley, interview). John Wolter's new role and the assumption of the headmaster duties by Ronald Papp represented a major evolutionary step in the organizational development of Becket Academy. Wolter was even considering the possibility of leaving the Academy altogether (Ronald Papp, interview; John Wolter, pers. comm.).

For the staff, 1973-1974 was a "good, but difficult year" during which people put a lot of energy into the program, typically working seventy-five-to-ninety-hour weeks (William Toller, interview). The effort took a toll, however: a significant number of the staff left at the end of the year (ibid.; Malcolm Winkley, interview).

Among them was veteran Gilbert Morneault. He recalls that the evolving nature of the school was a major factor in his decision: "I'm not much of a disciplinarian, and there was disciplining to be done" (interview). Subsequent to leaving Becket, Morneault taught reading at the Forman School, temporarily joined a monastery, and is presently--1984--displaying published materials on dyslexia, learning disabilities, and special education (ibid.).

Throughout 1973-1974, there was tight management of available funds (Ronald Papp, interview), but--despite ongoing low enrollment--the school continued to develop financially. For the year ending June 30, 1974, total assets grew slightly to \$223,877 against liabilities of \$119,039; total expenditures were \$385,789 (Becket Academy, 1974).

The Eleventh Year: 1974-1975

In August 1975, John Wolter decided to start a high school program and informed Mal Winkley of this opportunity "to take the program and run with it" (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Mal recalls:

I was to be director of the new high school [which] was to open in three weeks. Being naive, my questions were, "Where is the school and staff?" That didn't phase John. [With regards to the students,] he had gotten a call from [the parents of a recent Becket ninth grade graduate] desperate for a placement. John said, "We had one student, we could get more." (ibid.)

John's concept was that the students would be "older brothers" to the elementary/junior high students. They would also work on campus, among other things helping to develop the growing farm program (ibid.; Winkley, 1975).

By September, the new high school program (named Founder's School because the classrooms and living quarters were in Founder's Hall) had eight students; it grew to twelve by year's end (Malcolm Winkley, interview). The staff consisted of Mal and Peggy Winkley, Hat Trask (special education teacher), and student teachers from Brown University (ibid.).

Founder's School had a "one big happy family" atmosphere; it was "a real alternative school" with "alot of field trips" (ibid.). In the program's first written description entitled "The Adolescent Program," Mal Winkley (1975) emphasized the need for such a program to serve students with learning disabilities and school failure experiences. He also articulated the merits of an integrated academic and work program incorporating experiential learning

(ibid.).

During this period of Becket history, the name "Becket Academy" was often used to refer to the elementary/junior high program (grades four through nine), while "Founder's School" referred to the high school (grades ten through twelve). At times, there was confusion, however, since the terms "Becket" and "Becket Academy" were also used to describe the entire operation.

In December 1974, total enrollment was ninety-four students: the elementary/junior high program had seventy-four boarders and twelve day students of whom fifty-one (fifty-nine percent) were publicly funded (Papp, 1974). The publicly-supported students were increasingly from disadvantaged home situations and/or had experienced failure in public schools (William Toller, interview). An increasing number had multiple needs (ibid.). Many of these students were entitled to individualized programming under the special education laws, and Becket staff participated in numerous PPT meetings (ibid.).

In addition to paying for tuition, board, and care, this was the first year that public monies were available for partial reimbursement for psychological and nursing services under Public Act 296 (Wolter, 1975).

The elementary/junior high program had eighteen staff including Ron Papp (headmaster), Joe LaFrance (assistant headmaster), Bill Toller (administrative assistant and English teacher), Robert Chase (dorm parent) and Linda Chase (dorm parent and head nurse) (Papp,

1974).

The relationship between the two programs was, at times, uneasy: there were disagreements about the extent of Ron Papp's authority over Mal Winkley and conflicts with regard to campus resources (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Winkley's sense of the structure was that John Wolter was, in effect, a school superintendent with two schools, while Ron Papp perceived that he was responsible for both programs (ibid.).

When Papp asked Winkley to run the dining hall, the latter readily agreed: despite the extra work involved, Malcolm assumed the "Machiavellian" stance that "whoever controls the dining hall controls the campus" (ibid.). Furthermore, while Mal did not control his own budget, he was convinced that Founder's School (which had a higher state-funding rate than the other program) was bringing in more money than it was spending (ibid.). Winkley was, of course, young and inexperienced and did not completely understand the workings of the school, but Wolter allowed him room to maneuver since Becket's interest was served.

Over the course of the year, headmaster Ron Papp produced two reports on the status of Becket Academy. In the first (completed in December 1974), he described the fall interscholastic sports program (soccer, junior varsity football, and varsity football) and included a detailed overview of the latest means for assessing and evaluating new students with respect to the special education laws. He noted an "idyllic hope" that learning disabilities could be diagnosed

prior to adolescence: "the actual situation is that there are thousands of unidentified learning disabled adolescents in our schools who are now labelled behavior problems" (Papp, 1974, p. 8).

In his second report (completed in June 1975), Papp noted academic program improvements including initiation of a master teacher system, implementation of individualized programs, improved reporting, and a religious education program conducted by the Reverend Earle Fox. Papp also noted that the afternoon activity period included gymnastics, model building, and citizens band radio. Physical improvements were also noted: construction of a new counseling center/finance office (the present-day faculty residence between Baruch Hall and the counseling/infirmary building), an addition to the equipment garage, completion of a new water system, and repainting of the entire facility.

The same report included two major recommendations: construction of a new dining hall and establishment of a full-time social worker position (Papp, 1975). The report also included William Toller's description of the new Saturday morning enrichment program; contemporary music, values clarification, engine and appliance repair, chess, wood carving, cooking, and electronics were among a variety of activities offered.

The farm program continued to grow with school's first vegetable garden and the construction of the barn (Dye, 1983, p. 12). Efforts were made to formally incorporate farm activities within the science curriculum (Joan Wolter, 1975).

In April 1975, the State of Connecticut notified John Wolter that Becket was granted a three-year extension of its approval for special education (Margolin, 1975). An increase of the maximum age to nineteen years was "significant" in that it allowed Founder's School to pursue a rate increase (Malcolm Winkley, interview).

A major staff loss occurred in March when Joseph LaFrance moved to West Virginia. LaFrance went on to receive a master's degree in human development and family resources and subsequently served as assistant director of a program for neglected children; he is currently--1984--back at Pennsylvania's Hershey School where he is employed as a caseworker (Joseph LaFrance, interview). Looking back on his Becket experience, LaFrance recalls that he was "always motivated for a challenge. . . . John [Wolter] gave me [an] opportunity [and] I've always been grateful" (ibid.).

With the loss of LaFrance, William Toller became Ron Papp's assistant (William Toller, interview). Toller's first real test came when he ran the 1975 summer school and thus "felt the yoke of responsibility" (ibid.).

The six-week summer school program was highly structured with morning instruction in basic skills and afternoon recreational activities (ibid.), including work on the farm (Papp, 1975). Twenty-nine students attended, including continuing school-year boys, potential new fall enrollees, and privately-funded students (including some from the New York inner city) enrolled only for the summer (William Toller, interview). There was no summer program for

Founder's School students; Mal Winkley spent the time generating admissions and developing the program for the upcoming year (Malcolm Winkley, interview).

As during 1973-1974, the wilderness program was very limited compared to previous years. There were no multi-week expeditions during the school year or summer (William Toller, interview).

A major positive event for the school was the hosting of its first conference on June 27, 1975. The topic was school leadership, and the event was attended by numerous school superintendents (Joan Wolter, 1975).

In addition to the many positive aspects of the 1974-1975 year, there were also some minor incidents in the East Haddam community; on at least one occasion, a neighbor complained that students were smoking on his lawn (Joan Wolter, interview).

Additionally, there were conflicts among the trustees: board member Bartholomew O'Rourke (1974) described the situation as a "certain sense of futility that seemed to enshroud us." Trustee Roger Peck recalls that "those days were rough. . . . I don't know how we ever got anything done" (interview). On the surface, the conflicts centered around the sale of the Wolter-controlled Becket School, Inc. property to the Academy. Board members O'Rourke and Richard Maher objected to John Wolter's offer to sell only a portion of this property, retaining the Wolter family dwelling and the pond and farm area. John Wolter's position was based on a desire to provide a home for his family; he also believed that maintaining a

partial private interest was an incentive to his own involvement and served as an indication to both the Becket staff and local community of his personal investment in the success of the school (John Wolter, pers. comm.). There was various correspondence on this subject (see, for example, O'Rourke, 1974, 1975; Reardon 1975a, 1975b).

The trustees met four times during 1974-1975 (Joan Wolter, 1974, 1975). At the July 1975 meeting, a variety of resolutions were passed. With respect to finances, the trustees resolved that all purchases would be on a cash basis (following purchase order approval), that no program would operate at a deficit, and that all staff positions were to be maintained on the basis of current income (ibid.). Claire Matthews, the school's first full-time director of admissions, was instructed to outline a detailed strategy "toward the maintenance of a diversified student body," and the president was authorized to borrow up to \$85,000 for construction of a new dining hall (ibid.). Headmaster Papp's request for a full-time counselor was denied on the basis that Becket was an educational model, and that houseparents and/or an individual student's social worker should assume these responsibilities (ibid.).

Programmatically, the 1974-1975 year was even smoother than the previous one (William Toller, interview), despite the addition of the new high school program. In summary, it was a "good year [with] alot of new staff" (ibid.).

By 1975, income had risen dramatically from \$233,000 to

\$588,000 in just two years. In large part, this was the result of a major transition towards increased admissions of publicly-financed children (Ronald Papp, interview). Both the state and local education authorities were involved. Most youth were referred because of academic needs, but an increasing number had social and/or emotional handicaps (ibid.).

Despite the financial benefits of this transition, some staff continued to believe that the shift to publicly financed youth would lead to the loss of Becket's identity. This did not overly concern John Wolter, however. From his perspective, any changes in Becket were more the result of increasing involvement of the state and federal governments in education--as opposed to any fundamental differences in the students or their needs (John Wolter, pers. comm.). Many of the students who would have been private placements were, under the new laws, eligible for public funds (ibid.).

Wolter believed that Becket's role was to serve youth--how they were funded was a secondary consideration. He resented the implication that Becket had in any way compromised its standards or principles by accepting an increasing number of youth who were publicly financed (ibid.). He expressed this belief in a highly personal way by having his five children attend Becket Academy for a minimum of five years each.

The Twelfth Year: 1975-1976

Throughout the 1975-1976 year, Founder's School and the elementary/junior high Becket Academy maintained separate identities. There were a total of 104 students in the system: seventy-one boarders and fifteen day students in the elementary/junior high program and twenty-two pupils in the high school (Toller, 1976b, p. 1). The former program continued to serve students in grades four through nine with those considered best-suited for the program "of average or above average intelligence, with or without a learning disability" (Toller, 1976a). The high school was willing to accept children with emotional needs, but "students who have severe emotional, drug or alcohol problems are beyond the scope of our program design" (Winkley, 1976a).

During the previous summer, Founder's School had received numerous state referrals and a rate had been negotiated that was double that of the other program. This high rate "really impressed John [Wolter]" (Malcolm Winkley, interview) and provided an impetus for further development of the Founder's School program.

Despite projected enrollment increases, there was considerable doubt regarding the number of high school students who would arrive on opening day. Winkley recalls, "I wasn't allowed to hire staff until the students showed up" (interview). But some twenty students enrolled, and Winkley hired Robert and Patricia Birk, Fred and Carol Richart, and Richard Clapp (ibid.). Peggy was busy raising the

Winkley children and no longer directly involved.

The sudden increase in Founder's School enrollment created another problem: when the students arrived, there were not enough beds (ibid.). When the new dining hall building was completed, additional space would become available, but construction had only begun the day the students arrived (ibid.). John Wolter looked for other properties in the area, but none suitable were found (ibid.). A creative solution was required.

By this time, John Wolter had personally climbed all the 4000-foot peaks in New Hampshire's White Mountains and was very familiar with that area. New teacher Dick Clapp was a former Appalachian Mountain Club hutman and accomplished outdoorsman. It was thus decided to send half the students backpacking under the leadership of Clapp (ibid.). While it had been intended from inception that Founder's School would integrate outdoor experiences into its program, this initial step was inspired "out of necessity" (ibid.).

That autumn, the students did well under Clapp's leadership. Because Winkley had limited knowledge of outdoor education, John Wolter did most of the supervision. Mal did visit the program, however, and on one occasion lost the trail and spent the night in the woods (ibid.). On a rotating basis, half the students were on the Connecticut campus using "temporary classrooms set up in various locations. . . including faculty apartments and the Chapel" (Winkley, 1976b).

By December, the new dining hall was completed and in use by

both programs. Founder's School also used the basement classrooms, and its students were housed in Founder's Hall (which was transformed for exclusive dormitory use) and St. Thomas More Hall (in which dormitory space was increased by elimination of the kitchen and dining hall). The elementary/junior high students were housed in Baruch Hall with their classes conducted in the school building.

By March, the number of high school students had risen to twenty-six (Winkley, 1976b). In his mid-year report (*ibid.*), Winkley described the curriculum which included English, social studies, science, math, foreign language, outdoor education, physical education (including a two-mile run every morning), religion, and electives. A school-wide notebook system was employed for purposes of organizing material and grading students. The report also included discussion on the individualized treatment program which included counseling and testing.

Winkley's June year-end report (1976c) included information on the addition of a part-time social worker, the school's baseball team, and the winter Everglades trip (see subsequent discussion). The graduation of three students was noted, and enrollment of thirty students for the 1976-1977 school year was projected.

At about this same time, a Founder's School brochure was printed (Becket Academy, 1976b). The high school was described as a "total life experience" which "gives students the opportunity to develop a true awareness of themselves and others" (*ibid.*).

With regards to the elementary/junior high program, a major event was the loss of headmaster Ronald Papp who resigned and became administrative supervisor at the Colburn School in Massachusetts (Ronald Papp, interview). Papp subsequently became director of special education in northwestern Connecticut and is currently--1984--the administrator of a public high school (ibid.). Papp recalls Becket as a "very humanistic"--as opposed to behavioristic--program, and he remembers especially the "quality of the people at Becket" (ibid.).

William Toller replaced Papp (whom Bill calls "my mentor") as the top administrator of the elementary/junior high program, assuming the title principal (William Toller, interview). (In the history of Becket, Papp was the second, and last, person to adopt the title headmaster; administrative staff have always had considerable leeway to select a title of choice.) As principal, Toller was "incredibly competent" (Malcolm Winkley, interview). By this time, the Tollers' first child was born, and Mary Toller was no longer directly involved in the program (William Toller, interview).

In addition to Toller, the elementary/junior high program employed sixteen teachers and dorm parents, half of whom were enrolled in graduate programs (Toller, 1976b). Curt Hunter, who was working on his doctorate, provided weekend coverage for Toller (William Toller, interview). Bob Chase was in charge of Becket's maintenance and grounds (Joan Wolter, 1976).

Among the items noted in Toller's mid-year report (1976b)

were a bicentennial movie program (prepared by film enthusiast and former assistant headmaster Chris Warren), monthly meetings with day student parents, the school newspaper, a variety show on family day, and an arts and crafts program. Fall activities included soccer, football, gymnastics, rocketry and model building, cross country, and swimming (ibid.).

In his June report, William Toller (1976c) noted the first Florida expeditions (see subsequent discussion) and the continued growth of the farm program. As regards the latter, each day four students worked with the school's farmer: "Enthusiasm and student interest were very high. . . and because of this success, we will be venturing into other areas of industrial arts and vocational education in the near future" (ibid., p. 1). Toller reported that it was a solid year academically: "We had fewer problems this year because our staff was experienced and followed the curriculum guidelines that were written in the summer" (ibid.). Drama productions and science projects were also noted, and the report included a description of the health curriculum by teacher Jack Drozd.

There was limited interaction between the two programs (Joan Wolter, 1976) and a sense of rivalry between Toller and Winkley (Malcolm Winkley, interview). "John [Wolter] loved it" (ibid.) believing that the energy stimulated program improvements and fostered personal growth in both individuals.

In addition to managing the finances and other administrative

responsibilities, John Wolter's activities that year included a presentation (entitled "Facts and Myths about Children Who Learn Differently") at the Burritt Mutual Savings Bank in New Britain. The speech was sponsored by the New Britain chapter of the Connecticut Association for Children with Perceptual Learning Disabilities. (It should be noted that the use of specific educational labels--for example, "perceptual learning disability"--has changed rapidly in recent years; frequency of usage of any particular term is largely a factor of the educational vogue at any given moment. For this reason--and because the labelling of a student can evolve into a self-fulfilling prophecy--Becket has, throughout its history, avoided labelling as much as possible.)

During 1975-1976, the school's outdoor program grew and developed. In addition to programming in New Hampshire, John Wolter decided to develop a new winter alternative. Since first visiting Florida's Everglades as a doctoral student, John had returned several times with his family. The more he saw, the more he was impressed with the area's potential for educational programming. During these visits, he also met Glenn Smallwood, a fishing guide and the leading authority on the Everglades backcountry (John Wolter, pers. comm.). Wolter recognized that Smallwood's assistance would be invaluable in developing a safe and educationally effective program for Becket students. In 1984, Smallwood continues to be the key Becket Florida program resource.

During the winter of 1976, John organized and led the school's

first Florida trip (which included participants from both programs). The four staff and eleven students studied science and canoed the 100-mile Wilderness Waterway through Everglades National Park. A report detailing objectives, preparations, trip activities, finances, and evaluation of the trip was produced (Becket Academy, 1976a), and a second trip was scheduled for April (*ibid.*, p. 14). There was a great interest in these trips and more than thirty students qualified by running eight miles (Toller, 1976c, p. 1). The program was so successful that plans were made to expand for the following year (*ibid.*).

William Toller directed the 1976 summer school (which cost \$890 tuition, room, and board). For Founder's School students, two Becket Adventures were offered: Richard Clapp led five students on a 260-mile end-to-end hike on Vermont's Long Trail (Flammer, 1977, pp. 7-8), while David Blake led three students down the Connecticut River. This was the first River trip since the summer of 1973, and a detailed log was compiled (Blake, 1976).

During the summer of 1976, John Wolter acquired the Dearborn farm in Pike, New Hampshire (McCabe, 1981, p. 53); this represented the first Becket-related acquisition outside Connecticut. At the time of its purchase, the property was in very poor condition: the buildings were dilapidated, the fields overgrown, and the fences all needed replacement (John F. Wolter, *pers. comm.*). An old truck was parked in the living room of the main farmhouse (*ibid.*).

During 1975-1976, conflict among the trustees continued. There

was extensive discussion of the sale of the school property to the Academy with some board members arguing for acquisition of all the Becket School, Inc. property. But John Wolter wanted to sell only twenty-five acres (including all the buildings other than his own house and the new barn), and board chairman Richard Maher (1976) wrote the trustees to have this offer considered. It was also suggested that Becket utilize the services of Boston accounting and insurance companies--a move that John Wolter resisted (John Wolter, pers. comm.). Wolter wanted a totally independent auditor and insisted that Connecticut firms be employed (ibid.). Specific trustee actions included reaffirmation of the decision not to hire a full-time social worker; staff smoking was also restricted to private offices and residences (Joan Wolter, 1975, 1976).

Programmatically, 1975-1976 was "an outstanding year" (William Toller, interview), "the best in the history of the school" (Toller, 1976c, p. 3). Enrollment returned to a relatively high level, in large part because of the growth of the Founder's School program; this development had been accomplished by the "pioneering spirit" of the high school staff and students which enabled them to overcome an initially inadequate facility (Winkley, 1976c). The school's outdoor program, dormant for several years, was reestablished with major offerings during both the school year and summer. The first Everglades trips were run and the New Hampshire farm acquired, augmenting Becket's capability for off-campus programming.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1976, the school had assets totalling \$412,134 against \$189,021 in liabilities; total expenditures were \$549,655 (Siskin, Shapiro, & Co., 1976).

A year-end major staff loss occurred when Bill Toller left to pursue doctoral studies on a full-time basis--although he did occasionally assist during the following year. Toller is currently--1984--assistant deputy superintendent for human services at the Hampden County Jail in Springfield, Massachusetts; he looks back "very fondly" on his Becket experience which represented "a tremendous opportunity for personal growth" (William Toller, interview).

Lastly, it is important to note that a major piece of federal legislation was passed in 1975. Public Law 94-142, known as the "Education for All Handicapped Children Act," provides for "identification of handicapped children, assessment, and placement in programs with individual treatment plans" (Kennamer, 1977, p. 2). The act's broad definition of handicapped children includes those who are emotionally handicapped, learning disabled, and mentally retarded (ibid.). The law also calls for placement in the "least restrictive environment" possible (ibid.). This act was probably the single most important piece of legislation as regards increasing federal involvement in education and, as such, had a major impact on Becket Academy.

The First Half of the Thirteenth Year: Fall 1976

By the end of the fall 1976 term, there were 110 students enrolled: fifty-six in the elementary/junior high program (including eleven day students) and fifty-four in Founder's School (Flammer, 1977, p. 1). The latter program had doubled its previous enrollment and was co-ed (with three boarding girls) (ibid., p. 9). The students were, as a whole, more needy than those of the previous year (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Most of the tuition money was derived from public sources. Advertising for private students had greatly declined (Rouse, Grote, Howat, Soderlind, Webb, and Woodhall, 1977, p. 4).

There were a number of new staff including new administrator John Flammer (who used the title director). Flammer, a curriculum specialist, was selected after a major outside search. With the exception of Ron Papp (who had close ties to Becket through having worked with John Wolter at St. Thomas More), Flammer was the first outsider in the history of the school directly appointed to a major administrative post.

Another new staff member was Francis J. McCabe, Jr., who had been working in the Rhode Island correctional system (Francis McCabe, interview). His first reaction to a Becket employment ad was "it's one of those places where they work you [hard] and give you no money" (ibid.). Visiting Becket, he first met with Bob Chase who was second in command to Flammer in the elementary/junior high

program. At a second interview, he met Flammer, and at a third Winkley and Wolter (ibid.). As Francis recalls, John Wolter "liked me: I was the only guy he ever interviewed who put his feet on the table" (ibid.).

McCabe returned to Becket a fourth time to meet with Winkley again, and Malcolm offered him a job as his assistant (Malcolm Winkley, interview)--even though McCabe's initial response was to an ad for an elementary/junior high dorm parent position. Winkley perceived Frank as a potential major asset and lobbied hard within the organization to hire him (ibid.).

McCabe was twenty-seven years old and married with one child. Frank assumed a variety of duties in the Founder's School program: he was dean of students, teacher of five classes of history plus karate and French, covered study halls, and provided dormitory relief (Francis McCabe, interview). He worked very long hours (ibid.).

Michael R. Penkert, age thirty, was another new staff member. He was originally from California and as a child "was never excited about school [and] barely graduated" (Michael Penkert, interview). Before coming to Becket, Penkert managed a restaurant in nearby Chester, Connecticut, where he met John Wolter. Michael told John he wanted to be an art teacher and "in one of those typical John Wolter deals" was told he might have such an opportunity the following year if he would work one year as dining hall manager (ibid.). Bullit, as he is popularly known, accepted the offer.

After a six-year absence, Neal Rist returned to Becket, becoming assistant principal of the elementary/junior high school and in charge of the dormitory staff (Neal Rist, interview).

All told, there were four administrative staff (John Wolter, Ben Meryweather, John Flammer, and Mal Winkley), three office staff (including Diana Schleis), four dining hall personnel, two maintenance men/farm staff (Alan Clark and Anthony Savitsky), two nurses (including Linda Chase), four outdoor and physical education instructors (including Dick Clapp and Peter Ely), three part-time counselors (including Jay Ashe and Gene Schulze), and two part-time chaplains (including Earle Fox). Additionally, there were twelve line staff specifically assigned to the elementary/junior high program (including science teacher David Blake, fifth grade teacher Peggy Scribner, and dorm parent Bob Chase) and eleven assigned to the high school (including Frank and Poala McCabe, teachers Bob and Patti Birk, and dorm parent James Broatch). In the entire system, there were forty-eight employees (Flammer, 1977, pp. 1-2).

The high school girls lived in Founder's Hall, while the boys resided in St. Thomas More; classes were held under the dining hall. The elementary/junior high boys resided in Baruch Hall and attended classes in the school building. John Wolter's office was in the small building between Baruch Hall and the Wolter family residence. All the secretaries were there as well: "John kept control that way" (Malcolm Winkley, interview).

Major physical improvements were made in the physical education program (under teacher Jack Drozd), and the fieldhouse was enclosed and insulated (Flammer, 1977, p. 3). Fall intramurals were conducted in gymnastics and swimming, and interscholastic offerings included soccer and cross country (ibid., pp. 4-5). Improvements were also made in the curriculum (ibid., pp. 5-7). Three five-day backpacking trips to the White Mountains were run for students from both programs (ibid., p. 8). The dining hall was reorganized and the nursing service improved by development of a new infirmary on the second floor of Baruch Hall (ibid., p. 10).

Despite these gains, the elementary/junior high program experienced difficulties maintaining discipline (Malcolm Winkley, interview; William Toller, interview). In October, the program was restructured from a departmental arrangement to self-contained classes (Flammer, 1977, p. 8).

Founder's School, on the other hand, enjoyed its "best year" (Malcolm Winkley, interview) and was "developing strength" (Francis McCabe, interview). Winkley and McCabe worked extremely well together (ibid.) and "became fast friends" (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Winkley recalls that Frank "was an inspiration to me" (ibid.). Under the combined leadership of Winkley and McCabe, the program became increasingly physically rigorous and strict with respect to discipline (ibid.).

One major problem that year was that the campus wells ran dry. The problem was eventually solved by importing trailer

trucks of water, and, subsequently, new wells were dug (Francis McCabe, interview).

There was some conflict between the two programs. John Wolter instructed Winkley to report to Flammer, which Winkley resented: "I made a vow that I wouldn't work for a guy from the outside" (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Further, Winkley complained that discipline problems in the elementary/junior high program were adversely impacting the Founder's School (ibid.).

The trustees held one meeting that autumn at which it was decided to initiate a new staff development program (Joan Wolter, 1976). The program was subsequently implemented under the direction of Dr. Roger Peck and Neal Rist (who was working on his doctorate at the University of Massachusetts).

A major fall 1976 event was the evaluation by the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools--its first since the initial one in 1967 (Malcolm Winkley, interview). The ninth grade was transferred to Founder's School two weeks before the evaluation, and Francis McCabe was asked to cover the younger program's study halls while the evaluators were on campus (ibid.).

Overall, the school did not make a consistently favorable impression on the evaluation team. As a result, Winkley recalls, "I knew the tide was changing" (ibid.). Early into 1977, Mal Winkley was given the responsibility to run both programs: there was a sense of excitement, "energy. . . electricity" (Francis McCabe,

interview). A new era in the history of Becket Academy had begun.

In summary, the fall of 1976 was a turbulent period for the school. The Founder's School was growing stronger, but the elementary/junior high staff experienced difficulties in maintaining discipline. Although the period has been called "the worst in the history of the school" (J. John Ashe, pers. comm.), it would be unfair to blame John Flammer. He "served his purpose" with respect to curriculum development, an area which needed improvement (John Wolter, pers. comm.). Furthermore, the difficulties during Flammer's tenure at Becket were largely the result of circumstance: "It was the wrong time [for] someone to come in from the outside" (Malcolm Winkley, interview).

Conclusions

Trends and Characteristics

The period 1972-1976 can be characterized as follows:

Continued growth. Enrollment declined to a low of sixty-eight in 1972-1973, but rebounded to 110 in the fall of 1976. Despite this gain, it never reached the high levels of 1967-1968 and 1968-1969 (in part, because the capacity was reduced through conversion of student rooms to staff apartments). The school did grow financially, however, in large part the result of increased tuition and board and care rates for publicly-funded special education students. Total 1975-1976 expenditures of \$549,655 were sixty-four percent higher than 1972-1973 disbursements. The number of employees also increased, reaching a total of forty-eight full and part-time staff by January 1977 (Flammer, 1977, pp. 1-2).

Growth in the physical plant was less dramatic than in the early years, but nevertheless significant. Additions included the new dining hall and basement classroom complex, the business/central office building, and the five-acre pond. There were also numerous minor renovations and improvements (for example, the new library in the school building). The purchase of the initial New Hampshire farm property represented a significant acquisition.

Another aspect of growth was the beginning of institutionalization, marked by the development of a combination business/central office in a separate building from the academic

complex. By this time, former secretary Diana Schleis was very involved in the school's day-to-day business transactions (Diana Schleis, interview).

Transition to publicly-funded tuition/special education. This period in the school's history was "a time of profound transition" when the school rapidly changed "from pre-prep to special education" (Ronald Papp, interview). A declining private market for an elementary boarding school led to significantly reduced enrollment. In part, this was the result of declining public school enrollments (as a result of demographics) which forced those schools to compete for hard-to-teach children by improving their programs (Wolter, 1982b, p. 49).

In addition, the recession reduced the number of parents who could afford private education. The rapidly increasing federal and state involvement in education (including passage of Public Law 94-142) also contributed to the decline in private admissions since many of these same students became eligible for public funding. Government involvement also contributed to rising tuition costs as a result of increased regulation; this, in turn, abetted the decline in private education.

Becket was able to successfully capitalize upon the increasing government involvement in education. The Academy was the first private school in Connecticut to be approved as a special education facility. Special education is, however, only a label--and one that rapidly came into vogue during this period. It is thus

important to recognize that the changes at Becket were as much the result of changes in educational nomenclature and labelling than they were changes in regard to the nature of the students being served by the school.

Two-track admissions. Despite the increased emphasis on special education, Becket maintained a two-track admissions policy of enrolling both publicly-funded (often special education) students and privately-funded (often mainstream or college prep) youth. This policy helped stabilize enrollment.

An older, more needy, and more diverse student body. The relative homogeneity of the earlier student population (i.e., young, white, Catholic males) gave way to an older, more needy, and more diverse student body. The development of the high school program expanded the student age range, and the first boarding girls were admitted in the fall of 1976. Founder's School, which began as a small adjunct program to the elementary/junior high school, grew in three years time to become the "center of power" (Malcolm Winkley, interview). In the earlier years, a majority of the youth were from Roman Catholic backgrounds, but--by 1976--this was less of an admissions factor (Rouse et al., 1977, p. 7).

Although Becket programs began to enroll increasingly needy youth, the extent to which their behaviors were different from those of students who attended in the earlier years is a point of some debate. As previously discussed, the labels were different and the source of tuition payment was changing--but it does not necessarily

follow that the youth, as a whole, were substantially different from the previous Becket students. Joseph LaFrance (interview) believes that there was little change in this period, but Gilbert Morneault (interview) remembers a need for increased discipline.

Ronald Papp recalls that cigarette smoking was considered "a big crime" (interview). Francis McCabe (interview) recalls that the Founder's School tried to foster independence; it was common practice to give the students money to do their laundry and allow them to hitchhike into town. John Wolter also argues that the nature of the students did not increase significantly as a result of the transition from private to public financing--that the suggestion that private students are "good kids" and the publicly-financed youth "bad kids" is a gross distortion.

Perhaps the most significant change was the increasing average age of the student population. As a result, serving the students required different skills than during the earlier period.

Organizational restructuring. Although John Wolter had given some thought to leaving Becket during this period (John Wolter, pers. comm.; Ronald Papp, interview), he chose instead to assume a broader role of overall responsibility and initiation of new projects (including development of a long-range plan). In 1974, he assumed the title of president and subsequently left the much of the day-to-day running of the school to middle managers (including Papp, Winkley, Toller, and Flammer).

Middle management turnover. In the earlier years, middle

management stability had been provided by Christopher Warren and Sidney DuPont. This transition period, however, was characterized by a fairly rapid turnover of middle managers (one exception: Malcolm Winkley). It is also noteworthy that the two outsiders-- Ronald Papp and John Flammer--had relatively brief tenures at the school. Throughout Becket's history, insiders such as Warren, DuPont, and Winkley have almost always been the most successful in managerial roles. Despite the fact that they were young and had limited prior experience, these individuals more than compensated by both their familiarity with the program and a high degree of charisma, moxie, and enthusiasm.

Trustee conflict. The latter portion of this transition period is characterized by conflicts among the Becket trustees. On the surface, these disagreements focused on the purchase of the school-utilized property from the Wolter family. There were deeper issues, however. Some members of the board were concerned about the rapid transition from a pre-prep to a special education school. Further, a faction within the trustees attempted to assert control financially by changing Becket's accounting and insurance firms.

Of course, the fundamental issue was a simple one: who was going to control the destiny of the school? In this sense, the conflict was inevitable. As a result of the previous change from proprietary to non-profit status, formal control was transferred from one man to a board of trustees. Simply put, the conflicts were

a result of the fact that many more people were involved in the decisions affecting the school.

New and/or refined programs. The 1972 addition of a formalized homelife program was a major advance for the school, as was the increased use of the farm. The latter program expanded to include chickens, pigs, and honey bees; there were constant problems, however--the local veterinarian was a regular visitor to the campus (John F. Wolter, pers. comm.). Formalized counseling, while still relatively limited, also began to increase in importance during this period.

The use of the outdoors during this period is particularly interesting: the early-year activity peaked during the summers of 1972 and 1973. With the drop in enrollment and loss of key outdoor staff (most notably Sidney DuPont in 1972), there was very little outdoor programming from September 1973 through August 1975.

The growth of Founder's School beyond the capabilities of the East Haddam physical plant (plus the availability of the highly capable outdoor instructor Richard Clapp) provided a stimulus for the fall 1975 White Mountain trips; this was the first comprehensive use of the outdoors during the regular school year. School-year outdoor programming was subsequently expanded with the first Florida trips in 1976. The summer Becket Adventures program was reestablished in 1976. Although the reemergence of the outdoor program was initially associated with the increased high school enrollment, the value of outdoor experiences was long-recognized by

John Wolter and well-rooted in the school's tradition.

Survival. Perhaps the most noteworthy point about this period is that the school survived at all. The early years had been difficult: the "palace revolt" at the end of the second year is particularly noteworthy. Overall, however, the period 1972-1976 was in many ways more trying than the earlier period. The school withstood two major crises: the 1973 death of a student and the precipitous enrollment drop in 1972-1973. The latter problem was faced by all private schools, many of which closed down in the early 1970s. Becket not only survived and adapted: it emerged more stable and prosperous.

Becket's Relationship to the Larger Society

Becket's difficulties during this period paralleled the national mood of doubt and disillusionment. News events included the American exit from Vietnam (1973), the OPEC oil embargo and energy crisis (1973-1974), the Watergate scandal which led to Richard Nixon's 1974 resignation, the abducted Patty Hearst's reemergence as a terrorist bank robber (1975), revelation of Lockheed's foreign bribe payments (1976), and Jimmy Carter's election victory over incumbent Gerald Ford (1976). In 1976, the nation celebrated its bicentennial.

Of more particular concern to Becket was the growth of the Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services. At the time of its 1969 creation, the Department's responsibility had been only

for delinquent youth (Maloney, 1984, p. 129). By 1976, however, the agency's role had expanded to include provision of services to a wide range of youth in need (ibid.). The Department became one of the only youth agencies "in the nation to have been given such a comprehensive and innovative mandate" (Connecticut Association of Child Caring Agencies, 1981, p. 8). In part because of this expanded responsibility for serving Connecticut youth, the Department of Children and Youth Services came to increasingly rely on private care providers (ibid., p. 9), including special education schools such as Becket Academy.

Educational Purpose

With respect to educational purpose, the elements of the early years continued to be incorporated into the program. In addition to the school's continued emphasis on academics and motivational development, the addition of a specialized homelife program was an affirmation of the school's commitment to affective, character, and wholistic development and human relations. Life experiences (including the farm and outdoor program) continued to be a vital aspect of Becket.

Although never formally articulated, the concept that education was related to survival, evolution, and innovation is perhaps the most notable aspect of this period.

C H A P T E R V I I I

CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION: 1977-1980

The Second Half of the Thirteenth Year: Spring and Summer 1977

The spring of 1977 was the beginning of a new era at Becket Academy. The administrative reorganization resulted in Malcolm Winkley assuming responsibility for both the elementary/junior high and high school programs; he used the title director. John Flammer was put in charge of curriculum and academics for both programs, Neal Rist was director of homelife, and Francis McCabe, dean of discipline (Winkley, 1977, p. 1).

Winkley totally reorganized the elementary/junior high program after requesting every staff member's resignation (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Any residual distinctions between the two programs were eliminated in May when they were formally reconsolidated (McCabe, 1981, p. 22) as Becket Academy, grades four through twelve.

With respect to specific program activities, the outdoor component continued to be developed. School-year New Hampshire trips were led by Dick Clapp (Francis McCabe, interview). Between January and April, there were four trips to the Everglades; a total of forty-eight students participated (Winkley, 1977, p. 1).

In the spring, the Ivey House was purchased (Spaulding, 1977). This structure was a run-down former boarding house in Everglades City, the northern terminus of the Wilderness Waterway canoe trail

through Everglades National Park. The facility was an historic building, having been used to house workers who built the Tamiami Trail (the first east-west highway across south Florida). After renovation, it became the base of operations for the Becket Florida trips.

Also of significance with respect to Florida was John and Joan Wolter's involvement with the Shangri-La health spa (in Bonita Springs) and Naples organic farmer Willard Hedden. As John recalls:

At farming, frankly, we. . . [had] failed for close to thirteen or fourteen years. . . . I always knew I could do it for myself, but I felt that, if small farming was going to make it, it had to do it for other people, too. The missing ingredient fell into place on one of my trips to Florida. . . . I knew [that] nutrition and farming were tied together [and] I began reading books on nutrition and fasting. I read. . . books by Herbert Shelton and [in] one of his books he mentioned the Shangri-la Natural Hygiene Institute in Bonita Springs, Florida. . . . I decided that I would make a visit. When I got there I couldn't decide if I was in a mental institution, an old age home, or a fat farm. The place seemed a little strange, but I did talk with a woman who weighed about 300 pounds, whose eyes were bulging out of her head, and who just plain couldn't. . . [stop talking]. I could see she was agitated and lonely and she told me she'd [only] been there for . . . [a] few days. But the place smelled clean and kind of hung together, so I made a mental note that I would come back.

I came back several weeks later to see the same woman. By that time, the woman looked years younger, had lost a considerable amount of weight, her eyes no longer bulged, and she talked with a calmness that I did not quite believe. I felt whatever she. . . [had done, it amounted to] a miracle. . . . I went back with my wife and spent about ten days. I fasted for about six days, lost a great deal of weight (about two and one-half to three pounds per day), and achieved a mental clarity which I had not . . . [experienced] for a long time. My blood pressure also dropped to well into the normal range. But the main thing I got from Shangri-la was their educational program. (Wolter, 1982b, pp. 52-53)

There were lectures on the hygienic system (including the causes of disease, food-combining, and a knowledge of bodily function) and organic gardening; in addition,

there was a bookstore which had a wealth of information on everything from natural hygiene through organic farming. I read widely and deeply on these subjects. I also. . . [learned] there was a man [named Willard Hedden] in Naples, Florida who was beginning a commercial organic farm. I visited him that year and saw this rather pathetic farm which had just been hit by a frost. (ibid., p. 53)

These experiences were the foundation of Becket's eventual major thrusts into nutrition and organic gardening.

In February 1977, Robin Goeler was hired as a new dorm parent on the Connecticut campus (Robin Goeler, interview). Robin had grown up on Long Island, a member of a Jewish family; in his youth, he had been into "fast cars [and] drinking" (ibid.). Goeler came to Becket with his wife Jennie after managing a shoe store and taking a cross-country trip; they had "no money and a broken-down van" (ibid.). Robin accepted the Becket offer because it provided both financial stability and an opportunity to go to graduate school (ibid.).

Goeler was committed to athletics and coached spring baseball, the "first high school interscholastic team" (Dye, 1983, p. 21). Other sports events included a twelve-mile road race, an outgrowth of the high school's daily (and required) two-mile morning run (Winkley, 1977, p. 1). In the homelife program, Roger Peck and Neal Rist's "comprehensive staff development program was carried on. . . with much success" (ibid.). At the end of the school year, three

students graduated from the high school (ibid., p. 2).

The Connecticut Association of Independent Schools released its report of the previous October's evaluation during the spring term. The committee detailed many positive aspects of the school, including "its very warm and caring atmosphere" (Rouse et al., 1977, p. 30), "the dedication and involvement of all the adults" (p. 31), staff "versatility, rapport, and flexibility" (p. 8), the "well developed" printed curricula (p. 12), "a remarkably well-rounded and interesting physical education program" (p. 14), the "extensive and effective" student work program (p. 14), and the "extremely effective" management of financial resources (p. 24).

There were also a large number of specific recommendations including systematic review of the school's objectives (ibid., p. 4), increased professional counseling (p. 5), creation of an "overall resource person to whom the staff could look for guidance in areas of learning and behavior" (p. 11), increased diagnostic testing (p. 12), improved maintenance and upkeep (p. 26), the hiring of more teachers certified in special education (p. 30), an independent outside audit (p. 30), and purchase of the school property (p. 24).

The committee also questioned the rate differentials: "Does a special education student receive sufficient extras as contrasted with a regular boarding student to warrant charging \$8,904 versus \$4,446?" (ibid., p. 25). Further, the committee felt that the Becket

and New Hampshire farms "appear to have a 'get-away-from-it-all' quality rather than an emphasis on educational improvement" (p. 18).

The evaluation team acknowledged that "the School has changed rather dramatically in the past two or three years with a very large majority of the students being special education students" (ibid., p. 2), but felt that "many of these changes did not appear to have had a great deal of pre-planning" (ibid., p. 20). On the basis of the report, Becket was voted continued institutional membership in C.A.I.S. for five years upon the provision that all the recommendations were implemented by October 1978 (Thompson, 1977).

There was no traditional summer school: the main campus was closed for major renovation of Baruch Hall and for improvements in the school building and grounds (Winkley, 1977,). A small group of students was employed on the main campus to assist with these projects (ibid.).

Wilderness programs were the main thrust of summer activity (ibid.). Although an application for a federal grant to study the Connecticut River was unsuccessful (Blake, 1977), a group of students paddled the river. Students were also based on tent platforms on a hill above the New Hampshire farm buildings (near the site of the present-day Wolter house) and undertook day hikes in the White Mountains (Francis McCabe, interview). A group under the leadership of Robin Goeler climbed twenty-three of the forty-seven 4000-foot peaks in New Hampshire (Robin Goeler, interview). Dick Clapp also led a Long Trail trip in neighboring Vermont (Francis

McCabe, interview).

Francis McCabe coordinated this summer program while also working directly with students; he lived in one of the hillside tents with his wife Poala and daughter Leah (*ibid.*). John Wolter spent most of the summer supervising the program; he lived in the property's run-down farmhouse (*ibid.*).

Among the trustees, there was considerable correspondence concerning the major issues: acquisition of the property, the choice of a new corporation secretary-treasurer, and the selection of an independent auditing firm (see, for example, O'Rourke, 1976, 1977a, 1977b, 1977c, 1977d; Wolter, 1977a, 1977b). The board met three times between March and August 1977 (Joan Wolter, 1977).

Their most important act was the vote to purchase the buildings and land upon which the main part of the school was situated--for \$650,000 inclusive of assumed mortgages (Joan Wolter, 1977). This acquisition of about thirty-two acres did not include the Wolter residence (the present-day counseling/infirmary building), pond, or farm area (including the barn) (Joan Wolter, *pers. comm.*). The price was less than half the value as appraised in 1974 (Silverstein, 1974).

In other business, Joan and John Wolter resigned their respective posts as secretary and treasurer of the corporation, replaced by former teacher Peter Kenney who assumed both roles (Joan Wolter, 1977). The independent firm of Siskin, Shapiro, & Co. was

appointed Becket Academy's auditor (ibid.). Roger Peck and John Wolter were elected to new terms as trustees, and Richard Maher resigned from the board (ibid.). Arthur Eve (a professor at the University of Massachusetts) and Frank Carr (an Essex, Connecticut, businessman) were elected new trustees (ibid.).

As a young man, Carr had a Navy experience that paralleled John Wolter's in the Marine Corps: "I realized if I wanted to be anything, I had to get up and move" (Frank Carr, interview). In addition to successfully operating his own business, he had ten years experience on local school boards (ibid.).

John Flammer was among the staff who resigned at the end of the year (Winkley, 1977, p. 2). Also by this time, Bob and Linda Chase had left Becket; during five years at Becket, Bob had served in a variety of capacities from dorm parenting to maintenance to instructing in the day camp and other summer programs (including the Becket Adventures).

Financially, the school's assets and liabilities both increased significantly for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1977 (in large part due to the property acquisition). Assets were \$1,165,000, while liabilities totalled \$842,630 (Siskin, Shapiro, & Co., 1977). Total expenditures rose to \$781,301 (ibid.)--a forty percent increase over the previous year's.

The Fourteenth Year: 1977-1978

The growing reputation of Becket Academy led to a significant increase in enrollment for the 1977-1978 school year (McCabe, 1981, p. 15). By March, there were 129 students: 106 boys and twenty-three girls (Winkley, 1978a, p. 15). All but seven were boarders (ibid.). As a result of the rapid influx of females, St. Thomas More Hall became the girls' dormitory (Malcolm Winkley, interview).

The students were predominately publicly funded (McCabe, 1981, p. 16); local education authorities and/or the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services were the principal funding agencies (Joan Wolter, pers. comm.).

The central office staff grew significantly. Marian Poliner was the admissions director, and Oliver Ford, Jr. became the school's first full-time business manager (Winkley, 1978a, pp. 1,5). Peter Kenney was also employed full-time as secretary/treasurer of the corporation and assistant to John Wolter (Malcolm Winkley, interview); among his tasks was pursuit of grant opportunities (Winkley, 1978a, p. 6). John Wolter took a "step back": other than directing the financial operation and admissions and supervising the wilderness program, he let Winkley run the Academy on a day-to-day basis (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Wolter also worked in the area of planning and future program development (Joan Wolter, pers. comm.).

Winkley enjoyed "the most power that year" of any he worked at

Becket, before or since (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Given an opportunity to develop the school, Winkley, in his own words, "took the ball and ran" (ibid.). As dean of students, Francis McCabe was Winkley's assistant in this effort. Winkley hired many new staff, among them Donald and Betty Hirth (ibid.).

Donald Hirth was then twenty-five years old. He had grown up in a Bristol, Connecticut, Catholic family, attended parochial schools, and graduated from Springfield College in Massachusetts with a degree in physical education (Donald Hirth, interview). Before coming to Becket, Don and Betty had been married for one year, and both had prior residential school experience at Woods Lane School in Gilman, Connecticut (ibid.).

Having spent the summer travelling around the country, the Hirths were without employment and learned about Becket through the Springfield College placement office (ibid.). They called on a Thursday afternoon at 4:30 p.m.; Malcolm Winkley answered and told them, "Come down right now" (Donald Hirth, pers. comm.). Among those they met were Frank McCabe who was "walking around barefoot in his karate uniform" (ibid.). The following day they met Robin Goeler and other staff, and that Friday night decided to accept an offer to be a dorm couple (ibid.). Twenty-four hours later they were moved into the Founder's Hall apartment (which they had not seen previously); school opened thirty-six hours later on Monday morning (ibid.). Founder's was used as a dormitory for the younger students (ibid.).

Donald was physical education teacher and athletic director, while Betty assumed the principal dormitory responsibilities (Donald Hirth, interview). Both responded well to the Becket environment. Betty did a "tremendous" job as a dorm parent (Malcolm Winkley, interview).

Peter Marshall, then forty-six, was hired as Becket's first full-time counselor/social service worker (Peter Marshall, interview). A native of Brooklyn, New York, Peter had attended Catholic parochial schools and held a master's degree from Fordham University (ibid.). Marshall, who has ten children, had moved to Connecticut at about the same time John Wolter was founding Becket; he had met John during the school's early period and had followed the development of the school (ibid.), occasionally working on a part-time basis (Joan Wolter, pers. comm.).

Before coming to Becket, Peter had been director of the Children's Center in Hamden, co-director of Middletown's River View Hospital, and a counselor at Mount St. John's, a youth facility in Deep River (across the Connecticut River from Becket) (ibid.). At Becket, Marshall became director of social services and worked with two part-time staff: J. John Ashe and clinical psychologist Gene Schulze (Winkley, 1978a, p. 1).

Continuing staff included Neal Rist (who was employed on a consulting basis); he worked primarily in the area of staff development and, later in the year, did some individual counseling

(Neal Rist, interview). Robin Goeler continued as a dorm parent and was heavily involved in the athletic program (Robin Goeler, interview).

Michael "Bullit" Penkert learned two weeks before the term started that he would be the art teacher (Michael Penkert, interview). His class, which incorporated such tasks as constructing musical instruments, was described in an article entitled "Students Make Strange Music in East Haddam" in the Hartford Courant (Auclair, 1978).

By March, there were sixty-one full and part-time employees: six administrative staff, four office personnel, two nurses, three social/psychological services staff, six dining hall workers, two maintenance men, eleven outdoor staff, twenty-one educational staff (including Mary Kay Long, Patricia and Robert Birk, Peggy Scribner, and librarian Mary "Hat" Trask), and six dorm parents (including the Hirths, Robin Goeler, James Broach, and J. Ryan Murphy) (Winkley, 1978a, pp. 1-2).

In the academic program, a four-team system was initiated. Team I consisted of the fourth and fifth graders, team II the junior high, team III the special education section of the high school, and Team IV the college preparatory high school section (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Each team had a designated leader who taught full time and also coordinated the team's efforts; these individuals were, in ascending order, Mary Kay Long, Kevin Fennessey, Jacqueline O'Brien, and Patricia Birk (Winkley, 1978a, p. 1).

A small community-based apprenticeship vocational program was implemented, and efforts were made to train youth to be peer counselors (ibid., p. 5). The nursing program was also improved, and the school's infirmary granted state approval (ibid.).

The mandatory afternoon activities program included fishing, hiking, gymnastics, arts and crafts, a special girls, program called Mind and Body, and interscholastic sports (ibid., pp. 3-4). The latter component was marked by major improvements including team uniforms, better scheduling, and admission into the Independent League of Southern Connecticut (for basketball) (Dye, 1983, pp. 21-22). But, as was the case the previous year, there were no winning seasons (ibid.). Team sports included soccer, cross-country, flag football, basketball, and track (Winkley, 1978a, pp. 3-4).

The mandatory morning run was, by this time, a campus-wide institution. Comparing the Becket of this period to that of earlier years, Neal Rist describes the program as a whole as more "boot camp like" (interview). It did not, however, match the rigors of the school's first four years (Joan Wolter, pers. comm.).

With regards to the physical plant, Winkley initiated actions to upgrade the facility including the purchase of carpet worth \$25,000 (Malcolm Winkley, interview).

The extent to which Malcolm asserted the power to run the Academy invariably led to conflict. The issue which became the focus of dispute was expulsion of students.

At that time there were no discipline boards: Winkley and McCabe were "law and order"; the pair demonstrated no hesitation in expelling youth who exhibited what they considered to be inappropriate behaviors (ibid.). This strategy was designed

to distinguish the program from others that had a laissez-faire approach to child care through policies of non-confrontation and maintaining the status quo. A [Becket] student. . . . had to be serious about personal growth. If he or she was willing to make that commitment, the school would provide the atmosphere in which that individual could mature. (McCabe, 1981, p. 15)

The large number of expulsions concerned John Wolter (Francis McCabe, interview), since the financial health of the school was dependent upon stable enrollment. At Christmas time, a major meeting was held in the central office. Winkley recalls a certain amount of "audacity" in bringing along McCabe, Jay Ashe, Peter Marshall, and other staff to help make a case for his perspective (Malcolm Winkley, interview). The opposing view was represented by John Wolter and Peter Kenney (ibid.).

At the meeting, Wolter made a comprehensive presentation (including data on flip charts) and outlined a five-year plan which involved admitting increasingly disadvantaged youth (ibid.). John argued that this step, plus development of new programs for the mentally retarded and senior citizens, was essential for the school's survival (ibid.). The session evolved into a "shouting match" (ibid.). Eventually, Wolter said, "I vote we adjourn and take this meeting to Steamboat Dock" (a nearby pizza restaurant), where he made a toast to Malcolm Winkley (ibid.).

Becket Academy had always survived by what John Wolter describes as "finding a need and filling it." By 1977-1978, it was increasingly clear that the existing Connecticut program was not always successful in meeting the needs of some of the more disadvantaged youth being referred. "It became apparent that the program must adjust to the needs of its new clients" (McCabe, 1981, p. 16).

The outdoors--first integrated into the Becket program as a recreational and educational supplement--became increasingly recognized as a creative alternative for students unresponsive to the Connecticut program. During the fall of 1977, Robert Perkins ran a small program in New Hampshire's White Mountains for such youth and a number achieved success (*ibid.*, p. 15). Having experienced success in the outdoors, most were able to reintegrate into the Becket mainstream.

In the spring, John Wolter thus decided to expand the New Hampshire program (*ibid.*, p. 16), and Francis McCabe became Becket's first full-time wilderness director. McCabe purchased a house in Pike, New Hampshire, and lived with his family in Becket's farmhouse until the sale was completed (McCabe, 1981, p. 20). Ryan Murphy replaced McCabe as dean of students on the main campus (Malcolm Winkley, interview).

The New Hampshire program was outdoor-activity oriented, emphasizing cross-country skiing, hiking, and wilderness survival

skills (Winkley, 1978a, p. 4). In addition to meeting the needs of those youth who were unsuccessful in Connecticut (in what became known as the Ranger program; *ibid.*), the New Hampshire program also served Becket's mainstream students (McCabe, 1981, p. 34) on a rotating basis. There were approximately ten students in New Hampshire each month (Winkley, 1978a, p. 4).

Invariably, the issue of accountability was raised, particularly with respect to those Ranger youth who spent more than a month of the school year in the outdoors. Initially, some parents and social workers were concerned that, in such a situation, a youth's educational needs would not be met (McCabe, 1981, p. 16).

But, upon consideration of alternatives, it became apparent that

Becket had something that no other program offered: the ability to adapt to the needs of the students within certain constraints and to confront inappropriate behavior in a reality-based program. Funding agencies trusted the school's commitment to educating their students and. . . [provided] leeway to adapt the curriculum to meet the educational goals and objectives of the placement agency. (*ibid.*, p. 17)

By the end of the school year, the evolving Becket North program had an operations manual which included detailed procedures for hiking and swimming, trash disposal, water supply protection, maintaining student hygiene, and use of motor vehicles and various types of outdoor equipment (McCabe, 1978).

At the same time the New Hampshire program was developing, Florida was also used extensively as a Becket program site. During the winter of 1978, nearly every student enrolled at Becket Academy participated in an Everglades experience (Winkley, 1978a, p. 4). In

addition to the traditional canoeing and ecological investigation trips, the Florida program expanded to include hiking in northern Florida's Ocala National Forest and a special nutrition offering for overweight students (Winkley, 1978a, p. 4).

Barney Marshall (Peter's son) and his wife Theresa (a nurse) were stationed at the Ivey House on a full-time basis (ibid., pp. 1,4). Other Florida staff included Dick Clapp, David Eve, Bob Perkins, the returned Pat Scully, and ex-student Kieran O'Rourke (ibid.). The "highlight of the year" for the Hirths was their Florida experience: Don remembers the trip down in a school bus with twenty-six youth, instructor Dick Clapp, and driver Alan Clark (Donald Hirth, interview). In Florida, Clark helped with the Ivey House renovations (Alan Clark, pers. comm.).

The special spring Florida nutrition program was described as a "holistic, hygienic approach to weight loss and living in general which is dependent upon: sun, air, exercise, food, water, rest, mental health, fasting, habits, work, body care, [and] environment" (Holzgreen, McMahon, and Birk, 1978, p. i). The program was a direct result of the Wolters continued affiliation with Shangri-la. Among their developing contacts, they met a natural hygienist named Helen Hunt. John also revisited Willard Hedden's organic farm and witnessed this man's tremendous persistence and initial successes.

Wolter also undertook construction of a personal cottage in Everglades City. During this period, he also constructed a new

family residence behind the farm on the Connecticut campus (the Winkleys eventually moved into the original Wolter dwelling) and a small house on a hillside above the New Hampshire farm (John Wolter, pers. comm.). John financed these three dwellings through large mortgages plus assets he had acquired through the sale of the school; he undertook all three at the same time because he had been advised (correctly) that mortgage interest (then eight percent) was about to rise (ibid.).

Wolter's decision to build family dwellings in Connecticut, Florida, and New Hampshire involved a degree of financial risk and served as an indication of his continuing commitment to Becket Academy (John Wolter, pers. comm.). Wolter's moves also were an indication to local residents that Becket would be a stable factor in those communities--not what John calls "a moving target."

During the summer of 1978, there was program activity in both Connecticut and New Hampshire. On the main campus, thirty-two students participated in a summer school of morning academics and afternoon recreation (Winkley, 1979a). Twenty-three students worked on campus and were paid through the C.E.T.A. program (ibid.).

The Becket North program had a "good summer" (Francis McCabe, interview). Robin Goeler and Jim Broatch staffed a Connecticut River trip (ibid.), which the former recalls with many "fond memories. . . [it was] a real neat experience" (Robin Goeler, interview). Bob Chase returned to lead a group that climbed all of the 4000-foot peaks in New Hampshire ("Everyone made it"); they were

based at the farm (Francis McCabe, interview). Frank McCabe, who was by then living in his own house about two miles from the farm, coordinated the summer program (ibid.).

Also of interest during the summer of 1978 was John Wolter and Michael Penkert's road walk from East Haddam to Pike. The pair and Penkert's dog Brandy hiked the 240 miles in seven days (Urbano, 1978). Their trip was described in articles in the Old Lyme (Ct.) Gazette (ibid.) and the Lebanon (N.H.) Valley News (Pomiecko, 1978). Penkert recalls this as the first of his "sojourns" with John Wolter and "a real solidifying thing" in their relationship (Michael Penkert, interview). Along the way, the pair talked about a variety of subjects including the value of endurance-type activities and how they relate to the Becket program (ibid.).

By this time, the major trustee conflicts had been resolved and those board members who most strongly disagreed with the outcomes had resigned. The board met three times during the 1977-1978 year and elected several new trustees including Jean Banks, East Haddam resident Nancy Cornwall, and former employee V. Curtis Hunter (Kenney, 1977a, 1978a). Joan Wolter was elected board chairman (ibid.).

Among other actions, the trustees empowered the president to contract with local businessmen for vocational education and to enter into contracts for state child nutrition programs (ibid.). They also took a firm stand with respect to student expulsions:

none were to be implemented without consideration for transfer to the "Re-entry" (Ranger) program (ibid.).

The trustees also agreed to purchase from the Wolters the original Wolter home on campus (the present-day counseling/infirmary complex) for \$85,000. Other approved property acquisitions included a small lot across the street from the Ivey House in Florida and the old two-room schoolhouse one mile from the New Hampshire farm property (ibid.).

Further physical expansion was also considered during this time including the option of opening a branch in Maine (ibid.); Peter Kenney explored the possibilities of acquiring a remote island for the Ranger program and/or a residential school on the mainland (Kenney, 1978b, 1978c). Neither of these options materialized, however.

Also during this period, consideration was given with regards to a vastly expanded role for Becket, both geographically and programmatically. The trustees voted to pursue liaison with public and private schools in the African nation of Liberia (Kenney, 1978a). Further, contacts were initiated regarding potential involvement of Becket with senior citizens (Wolter, 1978b).

In summary, 1977-1978 was one of the most successful years in the history of the school. Increased enrollment generated an influx of new staff. There was a rapidly increasing diversity of program offerings with considerable creativity applied to present needs and future possibilities. The youth served by the program were

increasingly needy, but Becket responded innovatively by developing new program alternatives--most significantly, in the outdoors.

This rapid programmatic expansion created a need for improved planning and paperwork. Among the documents produced were the New Hampshire program manual (McCabe, 1978) and a detailed planning document for Florida (Becket Academy's Florida Program, 1978). Although he recognized the necessity for increased paper accountability, John Wolter knew all too well that it was no substitute for personal initiative. With respect to written job descriptions (which were a relatively new phenomenon at Becket), he wrote:

The purpose of written job descriptions is to facilitate staff performance and to maintain open communication and understanding between all Becket functions and personnel. The purpose of written job descriptions is not to in any way limit or inhibit staff initiative which arises from the exercise of good judgement and common sense. Specifically, the purpose of written job descriptions is not to promote the use of such excuses as "it is not in my job description." A written job description does not in any way constitute a contract of employment but rather should serve as a guide to better job performance. (Wolter, 1978a)

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1978, the school's assets grew to \$1,470,751 against liabilities of \$978,812 (Siskin, Shapiro, & Co., 1979). Total expenditures rose to \$926,954 (ibid.).

The Fifteenth Year: 1978-1979

In July 1978, Mal Winkley developed a comprehensive 33-page proposal for the upcoming year (Winkley, 1978b). The report detailed a variety of changes including introduction of a vegetarian diet (ibid., p. 2), expansion of the art, music and drama programs (p. 2), the securing of a child-placing license from the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services (p. 3), investigation of program opportunities in the southwestern United States (p. 3), development of a Becket graduate school (p. 3), implementation of a business education program (p. 11), expansion of the counseling program (p. 21), implementation of a new three-phase staff development program (p. 27), and extensive renovation and capital improvements including reopening the swimming pool (which had fallen into disrepair and been closed down) (pp. 30-32).

Of course, most of these proposed changes were already in progress, and many were eventually implemented (if not in 1978-1979, then in later years). Major changes of the types proposed typically take years to become fully operational.

Enrollment during the 1978-1979 year reached record high levels. In January 1979, there were 116 boarding and thirteen day students at Becket Academy (Winkley, 1979a, p. 1). By year's end, the total had risen to 153 (Winkley, 1979b, p. 1). In documents prepared for the State of Connecticut Department of Education, children who tended to be successful in the program were described

as "learning disability students with mild emotional problems relative to failure in school" or a disadvantaged family situation (Winkley, 1979c, p. 6).

With respect to staff, in January 1979, there were fifty-five full or part-time employees, including five administrators (president John Wolter, director of development Peter Kenney, director Malcolm Winkley, dean of students Ryan Murphy, and admissions officer Marian Poliner) and six central office support and clerical personnel (Winkley, 1979a, pp. 1-5). The teaching faculty included Mary Kay Long (team I leader and teacher), Peggy Scribner (team I teacher), Judy Olson (team II leader and language arts teacher), Robin Goeler (team II math teacher), Hugh Wright, Jr. (team III leader and English teacher), James Broatch (team III social studies and vocational teacher), Sue Bassett (team III algebra and language arts teacher), Marie-Helene Raho (head title I resource room teacher), and Mary Smith (resource room teacher aide) (ibid.).

Donald Hirth continued in the role of athletic director as did Mary Trask as librarian (ibid.). Homelife staff included Betty Hirth (in her second year) plus newcomers Sanford Bassett and Carl and Joyce Englemann (ibid.). Additionally, there were two nurses, seven dining hall staff, and three additional maintenance people-- including Alan Clark who ran the farm and coordinated food services (ibid.). In the outdoors, there were three staff each in New Hampshire and Florida (ibid.).

As was always the case at Becket, staff assisted wherever they were needed. For example, Robin Goeler wore a variety of hats: in addition to teaching full time, he worked in the dormitory and coached three varsity sports (Robin Goeler, interview).

Michael Penkert left temporarily in the fall to pursue a bachelor's degree in art education through the University Without Walls program at the University of Massachusetts (Michael Penkert, interview). He returned to work in the winter, however.

Neal Rist began the year as school principal, but left at mid-year (Neal Rist, interview)--having worked a total of seven and one-half years at Becket. His departure occurred at a time of mid-year staff cutbacks that also led to the elimination of the full-time business manager position held by Oliver Ford (Winkley, 1979a).

Rist went on to complete his doctorate at the University of Massachusetts and is presently--1984--a human resource consultant for the Connecticut firm of Alexander and Alexander. Neal remembers his Becket experience as an opportunity to "increas[e] . . . my own empathy. . . [plus gain] insight into children and their struggles" (Neal Rist, interview).

In 1978-1979, there was limited physical development on the main campus. The most significant improvement was installation of a wood furnace in the fieldhouse (ibid., p. 3). This significantly increased the functionality of that facility during the winter months.

Academically, there were three school teams: team I for grades five through seven, team II serving grades seven through nine, and team III for the upper grades (Winkley, 1979a). Team I was consolidated with individualized instruction; students were encouraged to take responsibility for daily scheduling of academic activities (ibid.). The team II curriculum included remedial and intermediate reading, literature, English, remedial math and algebra, geography, a field-based United States history program, and health education (ibid.). The team III curriculum comprised United States history, language arts, literature, world cultures, algebra, general math, geometry, advanced algebra and trigonometry, biology, physics, reading, and electives in physical education, human behavior, interpersonal relationships, health, career choices, drama, yoga, Italian, and Spanish (ibid.).

The new Title I (federally funded) resource room, which had been under negotiation since the previous year (see Kenney, 1978d), was a significant addition to the program (Winkley, 1979b, p. 1). In addition, Becket staff were increasingly involved in Pupil Planning and Placement Team meetings and implementation of Individualized Education Programs (as developed by referring agencies) for each student (ibid., p. 3). These developments were a direct result of federal and state mandates in the field of education.

Program improvements also included more detailed record-keeping for each student. An academic evaluation, homelife report, health

report, counseling summary, and a wilderness summary were among the reports sent out on each student (ibid., p. 2). The counseling program was also further developed during the 1978-1979 year (Winkley, 1979a).

The athletic program continued to prosper under the continued efforts of Donald Hirth, Robin Goeler, and other staff. Students were issued new Becket Academy sweatsuits which they were required to wear during the two-mile morning run (Winkley, 1979b, p. 4). Afternoon interscholastic sports and other activities continued to be a required aspect of the program. Formal physical education classes were required of students in teams I and II and offered as an elective for team III. There was also an evening recreation program. The school year ended with the annual field day and twelve-mile run (ibid.).

With the return of Peter Kenney to the Academy, the Becket Athletic Club expanded its membership (ibid.). The organization of students, staff, and friends of the school held its eighth annual meeting in October (Kenney, 1978e). Club members participated in a variety of road races (Winkley, 1979b, p. 4; "Runs Strong Race for Fifth Place," 1979).

The public was invited to the May Becket Academy fair which included "farm animals, contests, pony rides, and a bake sale" ("Becket Academy Trustees Elect Chairman," 1979).

The 1978-1979 school-year program included considerable outdoor

activity, primarily in three locations: New Hampshire, Florida, and the Southern Appalachians.

The New Hampshire program operated virtually the entire year, serving groups of students from the Connecticut campus. The students were a mix of youth who had experienced difficulty succeeding in Connecticut (for whom New Hampshire was regarded as an alternative to prepare them for East Haddam re-entry) and those for whom the experience was considered an educational supplement (McCabe, 1981, p. 24). Students resided in both the farmhouse and in space leased in instructor Bob Chase's newly acquired residence in nearby North Haverhill.

The addition of veteran Outward Bound instructor James Gravely (McCabe, 1979b, p. 1) resulted in an infusion of Outward Bound-type activities including solo experiences, ropes courses, and rock climbing and rappelling. The Outward Bound movement had come to the United States from Britain in the early 1960s (Miner and Boldt, 1981), and was, by this time, a highly popular model for outdoor experiences.

Becket Academy had, however, evolved totally independently of Outward Bound traditions. Even with the infusion of Outward Bound ideas, Becket retained some very clear distinctions from Outward Bound; this is particularly so as regards the school's focus upon working with disadvantaged students, the long-term nature of the program, and its diversity and comprehensiveness (with outdoor experiences being but one aspect). The New Hampshire program was

but one part of the the Academy's total commitment to youth.

Programmatically, Becket New Hampshire was a hybrid of applied academics (including field trips), farming and other work projects, wilderness expeditions, Marine Corps influences, endurance activities, adventure/challenge programming, plus other components of particular interest to individual staff (including Frank McCabe's speciality--the martial arts).

The New Hampshire program was improved by the development of the 74-page A Curriculum Guide to the Becket-New Hampshire Program by Bob Birk and Frank McCabe. This document includes a description of the program's philosophy, educational goals, testing procedures, itineraries, and educational materials and equipment. Specific courses were outlined in a variety of educational content areas including physical conditioning, mountaineering, meteorology, human history and impact, farming, geology, water resources ecology, spirituality (devotionals), and astronomy.

The capability to fully integrate academics within the New Hampshire program was further enhanced by the May 1979 acquisition of the old two-room Pike schoolhouse (Wolfe, 1979). This facility became a base for educational activities and also provided space for equipment storage and a small office.

At this same time, effort was underway to bring the New Hampshire farm property back into agricultural production. Cattle, oxen, geese, and goats were introduced and pastures cut for hay

(Dye, 1983, p. 12).

The growth of Becket's New Hampshire operation led to efforts to acquire formalized status in the state. In May 1979, Becket Academy received a certificate for a foreign corporation to do business in New Hampshire.

Becket's Florida program was operational from January through May of 1979 (Winkley, 1979b, p. 1), and physical improvements were made at the Ivey House (Wolter, 1979a). Among the staff were natural hygienist Helen Hunt (who managed the Ivey House) and trip leaders Michael Penkert and Paul Gardner (Winkley, 1979a). When Penkert was asked to instruct in the Florida program, he was "more excited than the kids" (Michael Penkert, interview).

The academic component of the program was enhanced by completion of the 106-page A Curriculum Guide to South Florida Ecology by Bob Birk. Educational content areas described included canoeing and water safety instruction, physical conditioning, camping techniques, Florida geology, plant communities, astronomy, microbiology, wild foods, shells, birds, and historical sites (Birk, 1979).

Diet and nutrition were increasingly emphasized in the Becket Florida program. According to an article in the Hartford Courant, "Living outdoors much of the time, being able to relax in quiet, natural surroundings, sleeping a lot, eating only wholesome foods and canoeing up to 12 miles many days, the students said, gave them a sense of healthful well-being that is carrying over into their

lives back at Becket" (Auclair, 1979). Some of the Becket students had an opportunity to visit and attend courses on natural hygiene at Shangri-la ("Students Tour Shangri-La's Organic Gardens," 1979).

A number of Becket staff also attended programs at Shangri-la during this period of the school's history (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

A new outdoor program was first implemented in the spring of 1979: the first extended Appalachian Trail hike for seniors. The idea for the trip was rooted in the Australian "walkabout" concept (Malcolm Winkley, interview), and it evolved from the early Founder's School notion that everyone should be required to participate in wilderness experiences. The more than 500-mile trip along the southern Appalachian ridge crest was perceived as a "rite of passage" for the Becket Academy seniors and was so successful that it became a Becket graduation requirement.

Trip leader Donald Pelletier, who had previously hiked the complete 2000-mile trail, prepared the 38-page Self-discovery and Southern Appalachian Ecology: A Curriculum Guide. Topics included animal life, vegetation, wild foods, geology, and human history (Pelletier, 1979b). While on the trail, each of the seven students maintained a daily log and read Colin Fletcher's The Man Who Walked Through Time (Pelletier, 1979a, p. 6). The students demonstrated "great discipline in completing the daily hiking and, except for a couple of circumstances, needed little outside motivation" (ibid.)

The expedition lasted almost seven weeks.

A total of ninety-two students were enrolled in summer programs (Winkley, 1979b, p. 5). On the Connecticut campus there was a C.E.T.A.-funded work program, an academic remedial program, and a small foreign student program (in which five youth from Venezuela, Puerto Rico, and Switzerland learned English as a second language) (ibid., p. 5). There was also a large Becket Adventures program (McCabe, 1979a).

Becket Adventures director Frank McCabe recalls it as a "great summer" (Francis McCabe, interview). A group of girls climbed all of the 4000-foot peaks in New Hampshire; they were based at the farmhouse under the direction of Helen Hunt (house manager and dietician) and hike leaders Laura Eve and Liz Poliner (Eve, 1984; Poliner, 1979; McCabe, 1979b, 1979d). A group of boys (led by David Eve, Peter Ely, and Chris Cornwall) hiked the Appalachian Trail from Maine's Katahdin to the Becket farmhouse (McCabe, 1979b, 1979d; Joan Wolter, pers. comm.). Two three-week trips were run on the Connecticut River (led by Bob Chase) and on the Appalachian Trail from Hanover, New Hampshire, to Mt. Washington (led by Michael Penkert) (ibid.; Francis McCabe, interview; Michael Penkert, interview).

The trustees met three times during 1978-1979 (Kenney, 1978a, 1979a). Frank Carr was elected chairman ("Becket Academy Trustees Elect Chairman," 1979) and attorney James Reardon became the unpaid vice-president of the corporation ("Reardon Named Becket Officer,"

1979; James Reardon, interview). Among the board actions were approval of continued leases for the Connecticut and New Hampshire farms (Kenney, 1978a, 1979b).

During 1978-1979, Becket Academy received a number of formal approvals. The Connecticut Association of Independent Schools team returned to Becket: "they couldn't believe what had happened" in the way of improvements since their prior visit in October 1976 (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Calling Becket "an interesting and truly independent school," C.A.I.S. continued the school's membership until 1986 (Adams, 1979).

The State of Connecticut Department of Education extended Becket's approval until 1983 (Shedd, 1979). Although the Ranger program had ended by this time (with the more needy children mainstreamed with supplementary outdoor experiences), efforts were undertaken to recognize this alternative under the school's special education approval (Winkley 1978c, 1978d).

A highly significant event with respect to approval was Becket's June 1979 receipt of a child-care license from the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services (Maloney, 1979). This was sought as a result of a legislative statute mandating licensure of all special education schools (Edmund Gubbins, pers. comm).

In summary, 1978-1979 was a highly successful year with firm enrollment and new programs (including the senior Appalachian Trail

expedition and Title I resource room). The growth of the outdoor program was such that, over the course of the school year, approximately 100 students participated in extended wilderness experiences (Winkley, 1979b, p. 1).

The variety of outdoor offerings led to the creation of the Major Rogers Award granted to any student who accomplished at least five tasks from a list that included hiking Vermont's 260-mile Long Trail, backpacking 500 miles on the Appalachian Trail, hiking to the summits of all forty-seven of New Hampshire's 4000-foot peaks, canoeing the 400-mile Connecticut River, traversing the Everglades by canoe, and completion of a twenty-kilometer road race (Kenney, 1979b). The award was named after the French and Indian War hero who, as commemorated by a plaque on New Hampshire's Route Ten, had canoed the Connecticut River during one of his expeditions.

Despite these many programmatic gains, 1978-1979 was, for Mal Winkley, a "miserable year" (Malcolm Winkley, interview) because of the year-long absence of his former right-hand-man Frank McCabe. Winkley returned from a summer vacation on Block Island determined to make some East Haddam personnel changes for the 1979-1980 year (ibid.).

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1979, the school's assets rose to \$1,584,464 against liabilities of \$993,244; total expenditures surpassed the million-dollar mark at \$1,087,615 (Siskin, Shapiro, & Co., 1979).

The Sixteenth Year: 1979-1980

In 1979-1980, mid-year enrollment was 129 youth: 117 boarders and twelve day students; there were 105 boys and twenty-four girls (Winkley, 1980a, p. 1). By June 1980, total enrollment had risen to 147 (Winkley, 1980b, p. 1).

A major staffing change was the August 1979 promotion of Donald Hirth to the position of dean of students (Winkley, 1979b, p. 1). Over the course of the year, three different women filled the post of academic dean (principal). Judy Olson began the year in this important role (Winkley, 1979b, p. 1). Upon Olson's departure, Mary Kay Long became principal, but she left (to have a baby) before the year had ended (Winkley, 1980a, p. 5). Long was replaced by Mary Smith (ibid.), who, like Olson, had begun at Becket as a teacher's aide (Donald Hirth, pers. comm.). Smith had begun the 1979-1980 year as head resource room teacher (Winkley, 1980a, p. 2).

In February 1980, there were forty-nine staff: six administrators (including Peter Kenney and Marian Poliner), five office staff, two nurses, four psychological services personnel (Peter Marshall, Jay Ashe, R. Ben Meryweather, and Dr. Gene Schulze), three dining hall and maintenance people (including supervisor Alan Clark), thirteen mainstream teachers (including team I leader Linda Condon, team I aide Betty Hirth, team II leader Sandy Bassett, team II teacher Robin Goeler, team III leader Christine Wagner, and librarian Mary Trask), four Title I resource room

academic staff, four dorm parents/child care specialists (including Carl Engelmann and Gary Henderson) and eight outdoor staff (ibid., pp. 1-2).

There were approximately thirteen students in team I (grades four through six), fifty students in team II (grades seven, eight, and remedial nine), and sixty-five students in team III (grades nine through twelve) (ibid., pp. 2-3). More than one-third of the student population was served by the resource room where a "diagnostic prescriptive approach to teaching is implemented for each. . . student" (ibid., p. 3). Both the resource room and the counseling program were among the areas described in Becket literature distributed during this period (Becket Academy, 1980a).

In addition to regular course offerings, each student could choose from a variety of electives including media study, career counseling, human relations, drama, and woodworking (Winkley, 1980a, p. 3). At the end of the school year, the Metropolitan Achievement Test was administered and "excellent gains were made in all subject areas by the students" (Winkley, 1980b, p. 1). The resource room students "showed an average gain of 18 months" (ibid., p. 2). In the spring, Becket academic staff met with representatives of over fifty schools to review individual student programs (ibid.).

In the homelife area, the boys lived in Baruch Hall and the girls in St. Thomas More, while Founder's Hall was used as a special honor dormitory (Winkley, 1980a, p. 2). Early in the fall, there was a major incident involving a conflict between black and white

male students in Baruch Hall; Don Hirth was able to quell the disturbance, his first significant test as dean of students (Donald Hirth, pers. comm.).

The athletic program continued to improve (Winkley, 1980b, p. 3). There were interscholastic teams fielded in soccer, cross country, basketball, baseball, and softball (ibid.). The soccer, baseball, and softball teams were co-ed (ibid.; Winkley, 1980a, p. 4). Night basketball games were a major social event (Winkley, 1980b, p. 3).

In addition to interscholastic sports, mandatory afternoon activities included touch football, weight lifting, fishing and hiking, woodworking, a women's fitness program, astronomy, jewelry making, music appreciation, and activities at the Middletown Y.M.C.A. (ibid.). A field day of games and athletic competition was held in the spring (ibid.).

Members of the Becket Athletic Club participated in numerous running events along the East coast (ibid.; "Becket Runners Compete in Pennsylvania Race," 1979). John Wolter completed eleven 26-mile marathons during a twelve-month period.

Connecticut physical plant improvements included fieldhouse floor resurfacing and interior repainting (Winkley, 1980b, p. 4). In July, comprehensive energy audits of Baruch Hall and the school building were conducted (Thoren, Ball, and Gregoire, 1980a, 1980b).

In addition to main campus activity, there was extensive use of

the outdoors. Comprehensive, year-long plans were developed with regard to utilization of New Hampshire, Florida, and the Appalachian Trail (McCabe, 1979c; Winkley, 1979d). By this time, a general manual for trips was developed (Becket Academy, 1980d), entitled "Procedures for Trips Taken by Becket Academy, Inc." It included detailed trip preparations, the format for maintaining a trip log, and trip-end procedures.

In New Hampshire, classes on earth science and American history were conducted in the schoolhouse (Winkley, 1980a, p. 4)--in addition to the usual outdoor activities. Vehicles were not always available, so groups regularly departed from the farm by foot for any hikes up nearby White Mountain peaks (Francis McCabe, interview). Fall staff included Robert Chase, Michael Penkert, and James Gravely (ibid.). Francis McCabe was increasingly moving into a more administrative/supervisory role, but he still provided coverage as needed (ibid.).

Students resided in the farmhouse, the barn across the street (which had been converted into a bunkhouse), and the "Chase Lodge" (Bob Chase's house). The program itself became increasingly structured and goal-oriented. In September 1979, Robert Chase developed a program handbook entitled "Becket North Program"; it included detailed rules, a daily schedule and routine procedures, reporting directives in the event of an emergency, emergency telephone numbers, hut chore descriptions, procedures for using woodstoves, a menu, and procedures for equipment use and storage

(Chase, 1979). The New Hampshire program ran continuously throughout the school year.

From Thanksgiving to mid-May, a number of trips were run in Florida. Staff included Michael Penkert, Helen Hunt, Peter Ely, James Gravely, and Barbara Schultz (Winkley, 1980a, p. 2). By this time, a manual entitled "Canoeing in the Everglades" had been developed. It included such information as canoe route descriptions, canoe training and safety, Everglades ecological sites, group and individual equipment lists, a daily schedule and itinerary, and menu options (Becket Academy, 1980b). In addition to Becket's own use of the Ivey House, space was leased to the North Carolina Outward Bound School (Wolter, 1980a, p. 2).

The school-year outdoor program reached a climax in June when nearly sixty youths participated in a variety of offerings: Connecticut River canoeing, Maine's Allagash River canoeing (led by Mitch Michaud), hiking Vermont's Long Trail, and the regular New Hampshire program (Francis McCabe, interview; Becket Academy Wilderness Program--September 1979-June 1980, 1980). At the same time, a group of seniors were completing their 600-mile trek on the Appalachian Trail, ending the trip which began in April; the experience was described in an article entitled "Student Hikes His Way Out of High School" in the Old Saybrook Pictorial (Engel, 1980).

In sum, the outdoor program during the 1979-1980 school year was the largest in the school's sixteen years. Some 129 students

participated in New Hampshire and other northern programs, while sixty-seven experienced Florida offerings (Winkley, 1980b, p. 3). By spring, however, McCabe experienced difficulties hiring a sufficient quantity of staff with both the outdoor skills and ability to work with special needs youth (Francis McCabe, interview).

During the summer of 1980, there were forty students in summer school, thirty-three working on the Connecticut campus, and thirty in the Becket Adventures program (Winkley, 1980b, p. 4).

A significant portion of the working students were involved in the farm program. Since first meeting Willard Hedden in Florida, John Wolter had been following his progress in developing a commercial organic farm (Wolter, 1982b, p. 53). Witnessing Hedden's persistence and eventual success, Wolter hired him to work at Becket for the 1980 summer (Dye, 1983, p. 12). With this assistance, Becket ended its history of "horrendous [gardening] mistakes" (John Wolter, pers. comm.), and there was a bountiful harvest. Under Hedden's direction, the garden was "one-fifth [its previous] size and ten times" as productive (John F. Wolter, pers. comm.). Willard Hedden's expertise and execution proved the key for achieving one of John Wolter's goals: establishment of Becket's capability to grow much of its own produce.

In addition to the garden, the Connecticut farm included six beef cattle, eight calves, six sheep, eight goats, 150 chickens, and nine pigs--not to mention three tractors (Wolter and Kenney, 1979).

The New Hampshire farm had thirty-two beef cattle and four sheep (ibid.).

The 1980 summer Becket Adventures program began with two groups on the Connecticut River, but both were eventually combined under the leadership of Mitch Michaud (Francis McCabe, interview). Michaud, then in his late forties, was a highly experienced outdoorsman whose 1970 expedition to the highest point in each of the fifty states had been highly publicized (Michaud, 1980). Also among the staff was Ron Fullerton, a native of Woodsville, New Hampshire (which, like Pike, was part of the Town of Haverhill); he had first met John Wolter while hitchhiking.

There was a growing sense that use of the outdoors had been pushed as far as could have been at that point in time (Francis McCabe, interview). The students were more needy (McCabe, 1981, p. 32), and it was increasingly difficult to find staff with the needed skills and commitment to the rigorous lifestyle required.

John Wolter thus decided to close the New Hampshire program for the following year (ibid.; Francis McCabe, interview). At the same time, however, he was also exploring new alternatives for training staff for this type of work. Wolter had already begun to seriously investigate the possibility of beginning a master's degree program in experiential education (Wolter, 1979d).

By the 1979-1980 year, John Wolter gave Malcolm Winkley increasing latitude to run the Academy. Wolter expended considerable energy investigating future options and opportunities

for the school. Among the alternatives proposed were diversification of assets (including expanding the farm animal population and purchasing additional woodlots), discharge of existing debt, diversification of income (including the sale of farm products, opening a construction or retail business, facility rentals, and initiating adult programs), and preparation for scarcity (including developing an energy-saving program, limited use of paper goods, and reduced use of chemicals) (Wolter and Kenney, 1979). During this period, contacts were made with senior citizen groups with regard to using Becket facilities, particularly the Ivey House (see, for example, Wright 1980).

In a memorandum to the Becket community entitled "The Future of Becket Academy," John Wolter wrote:

What we have been doing, are doing, and will continue to do is to survive, and to help the staff and students to learn how to do that too. So, while you may be inconvenienced, even pressured, by the increase in [the student] population now, you should know that in the long run we will all benefit. (1980a, p. 1)

He went on to detail a plan to increase the school's financial independence, increase the scope of the farm operation, and develop a full vocational curriculum. Wolter concluded:

We have always been in a survival mode, and we have always tried to give our students the skills they need to do the same, whether in reading, writing, and number skills, or outdoor survival skills, in athletics, dorm life, and counselling. We will continue these programs and improve them. . . . [In] the future, we will become even more what we are, creating a community in which we all participate in our corporate survival and well-being, in which we train ourselves and our students to endure and live together healthily. (ibid., pp. 2-3)

In August 1980, Peter Kenney wrote a detailed program for chemically-dependent adolescents entitled "Positive Alternatives." Among its components were six-month placement (p. 1), use of an isolated setting (p. 5), a rate of \$2,000 per month (p. 6), emphasis on achieving "peak experiences" (p. 8), sound nutrition (p. 9), physical exercise (p. 10), and rational self-counseling (p. 13). Although this program was never funded, this documentation laid a foundation for future Becket alternatives (including the Voyager and Ultra programs).

Despite these interests in expanding programs, John Wolter was wary of developing too large a bureaucracy. In November 1979, he sent a memorandum to all administrators and support personnel informing them that "administratively there will be changes and reductions" (Wolter, 1979e, p. 1). To aid his decisions, Wolter requested that each individual provide:

1. A list of functions and duties you currently perform.
2. Your suggestions as to the person within the organization who can best perform each of the duties you now perform.
3. A list of duties that you feel you can perform or would like to perform. (ibid., p. 2)

The trustees met twice during the 1979-1980 year (Kenney 1979a, 1980b). Among their decisions was the purchase of some farm equipment from John Wolter (ibid.).

In summary, 1979-1980 was a period of relative stability and less student turnover (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Donald Hirth brought a judicial approach to the discipline process (ibid.)-- paralleling the growing government formalization of student rights.

On the main campus, there was evolving program strength due to an emerging core of veteran staff that included Donald Hirth, Robin Goeler, Mary Smith, and Sanford Bassett (ibid.). The Becket organization began to increase in complexity (Organizational Outline: Becket Academy, 1979), which was undoubtedly a factor in the increased emphasis on paperwork, reporting procedures, and planning. There was substantial growth in both the farm and outdoor programs, although the latter was subsequently curtailed temporarily.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1980, there was a \$38,000 drop in assets from the previous year (to a total of \$1,546,225) against a \$62,000 decline in liabilities (to \$931,303); total expenditures increased to \$1,200,724 (Siskin, Shapiro, & Co., 1980). The school-year (ten-month) rate for room, board, and special education instruction was \$9,618 (Connecticut State Department of Education, 1979). Becket's income was distributed as follows: sixty-three percent from the states of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, and New Hampshire; eighteen percent from local school districts in Connecticut; nine percent from private (primarily parental) support of students; nine percent from various government programs (including the child nutrition act, Title I, Title IV, EDO 380, and C.E.T.A.); and one percent from the annual fund (which typically produced between one and two thousand dollars) and the two farms (Wolter and Kenney, 1979).

Conclusions

Characteristics and Trends

The period 1977-1980 can be characterized as follows:

Continued growth. Becket Academy's fund balance (the difference between assets and liabilities) nearly doubled during this period. Total expenditures rose to over \$1,200,000. With respect to the physical plant, there were no major construction projects in Connecticut, but numerous minor improvements were made in the facility. There were significant renovations, and acquisition of additional properties, in both New Hampshire and Florida. Programmatically, there was tremendous growth in the outdoors, farm, counseling, academic, and athletic programs (see subsequent discussion).

Stable enrollment. High enrollment was maintained throughout this period of the school's history. The Academy was almost continuously operating at capacity, and, although there were some private students, most were referred by public agencies (see subsequent discussion).

Consolidation, then expansion. The period began with the 1977 consolidation of the elementary/junior high and Founder's School (high school) programs. This was followed by vigorous programmatic expansion, especially development of New Hampshire (year-round) and Florida (seasonal) offerings.

Middle management stability. In contrast to the previous period, 1977-1980 was marked by middle management stability, especially in the persons of Malcolm Winkley and Francis McCabe. While there was turnover among the Connecticut line staff, an emerging core of veterans developed. In the school's next period, they would emerge as the next generation of Becket middle managers.

Trustee tranquility. Unlike during the previous period, there was considerable harmony among the trustees. Several board members resigned and new members were added. Overall, the board was highly supportive of John Wolter's efforts in undertaking new program initiatives. The 1977 purchase of thirty-two acres and most of the buildings on the Connecticut campus was a major event for the school.

An evolving relationship with the Department of Children and Youth Services. A significant percentage of the earlier publicly-funded youth were referred by local school boards. By the end of this period in the school's history, however, the Department of Children and Youth Services was making nearly all the placements (although local school authorities continued to pay educational costs). The school's involvement with D.C.Y.S. was further augmented by the legislative mandate that the Department become a licensing agency for all special education schools.

More needy youth, more creative programs. The student population during the previous period consisted primarily of youth with learning disabilities and special academic needs.

Increasingly, however, referred youth exhibited more complex needs. John Wolter always considered it Becket's role to serve existing needs--as opposed to "force fitting" youth to a single programmatic structure. As a result, this period in Becket history is characterized by "struggling with ways to deal with kids creatively" (Malcolm Winkley, interview) through extensive development of program alternatives.

Expanded outdoor programming. The outdoors, which had served primarily as a recreation outlet and educational supplement in the school's earlier years, was increasingly recognized as a "therapeutic tool" (Malcolm Winkley, interview). It had long been evident that students were "more relaxed, ready to go back into the classroom" after wilderness trips (Diana Schleis, interview), and this capability of outdoor experiences was increasingly utilized as student needs became greater.

There was significant expansion of the New Hampshire program (to a year-round operation). The Florida program was expanded to the point that it was in continuous operation for four to six months each year. The Appalachian Trail expedition for seniors was initiated in 1979. Further, there was an increasing diversity of summer offerings, including the New Hampshire forty-seven peaks and Maine's Allagash canoe trip.

Paralleling this expansion was development of detailed curriculum guides (for New Hampshire, Florida, and the southern

Appalachians) and manuals incorporating safety and operational procedures.

An expanded farm/nutrition program. Both the Connecticut and New Hampshire farms came into increased productivity during this period. The New Hampshire farm property, which had been acquired in 1976, was first cut for hay and livestock were introduced. The Connecticut garden gained a significant boost in productivity through the efforts of organic farmer Willard Hedden. In addition to the food produced, the farm programs benefited students educationally and provided paying job opportunities in the summer.

Paralleling this growth in the farm program was an expanded awareness and implementation of affirmative nutrition concepts. Application of an improved (reduced sugar, salt, additive, animal fat) diet--plus introduction of nutritional concepts in the curriculum--began in the Florida programs, and would later be implemented throughout the Becket system.

An expanded counseling program. Becket's counseling and psychological services program grew significantly with the 1977 addition of Peter Marshall as the school's first full-time counselor. In addition to serving youth directly, Marshall was instrumental in helping staff improve their service to the children; he recalls this latter work as "often more important" at this stage of the school's development (Peter Marshall, interview). By the end of this period, the part-time counseling staff had grown to three persons.

Improved implementation of mainstream and special education.

The 1977 consolidation of the Founder's School and elementary/junior high resulted in a single program with grades four through twelve. During 1977-1978, the team system was initiated as a means to subdivide the student body into academically appropriate units. Significant improvements were initiated with respect to curriculum development and implementation of the academic program.

In the area of special education, Becket staff were increasingly involved in meetings with local education authorities and development of individual educational plans. A Title I resource room program was initiated. Improvements were also made in documenting student progress.

Growth of the athletic program. Significant growth was achieved in the athletic program, especially in the area of interscholastic sports; the first high school teams were organized. The two-mile morning run became a campus-wide institution. The Becket Athletic Club was active, and staff were involved in various athletic and endurance activities (marathons, the walk from East Haddam to Pike).

Increasing organizational complexity. The growth in the number of programs and staff led to increased organizational complexity. A central office was developed in the new building between Baruch Hall and the Wolter residence. There was also increased emphasis on planning and paperwork (including formalized job descriptions). Despite this growth, there was concern about this trend toward increased administrative personnel and paper programs.

Becket's Relationship to the Larger Society

While Becket Academy was both consolidating and expanding, the country was undergoing a period of weakness and retrenchment under the presidency of Jimmy Carter. Major news events included the first criminal execution in ten years (1977), approval of the Panama Canal treaties (1978), the Three Mile Island nuclear accident (1979), federal government loan guarantees for Chrysler Corporation (1979), the seizure of American hostages in Iran (1979) followed by an unsuccessful rescue attempt (1980), the Cuban refugee boatlift to Florida (1980), and the Mount St. Helens volcanic eruption (1980).

The 1970s have been called the period of the "me generation"-- a time of narcissism and the quest for pleasure. This outlook conflicted significantly with Becket's ongoing emphasis on sacrifice, hard work, and social commitment.

Educational Purpose

With respect to educational purpose, the Becket program evolved in several areas during this period. Physical development and health were given significant emphasis through expanded outdoor and athletic offerings, as well as introduction of a formalized nutrition component.

Affective development was enhanced through a greatly expanded counseling program. Motivational development was a major goal accomplished by expanding the range of program alternatives (including the year-round New Hampshire program).

Intellectual development through experiential learning was increasingly formalized. The curriculum guides developed for the wilderness and nutrition programs are indicative of this ongoing effort to integrate life experiences with academic learning.

Responsibility for the ecosystem was incorporated in the outdoor and farm programs. Spiritual development and survival also continued to be aspects of the school's program.

C H A P T E R I X

INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND FURTHER EXPANSION: 1980-1984

The Seventeenth Year: 1980-1981

At mid-year in 1980-1981, there were 127 students enrolled: 119 boarding and eight day students, 100 boys and twenty-seven girls (Winkley, 1981a, p. 1). According to Bunting and Lyon, Becket served "students with learning disabilities, perceptual handicaps, and other school-related and general behavior problems" ("Becket Academy, East Haddam, Connecticut," 1981, p. 1). Although the students were primarily state funded, the two-track admissions policy was still very much in effect; the school continued to advertise for private students in Bunting and Lyon (ibid.). In addition, a new admissions brochure was printed (Becket Academy, 1981a) and distributed.

The twelve-month board, care, and tuition rate was \$11,492.40 (Diana Schleis, pers. comm.). Becket Academy was the least expensive residential placement alternative in the state of Connecticut (Connecticut Association of Child Caring Agencies, 1981). With respect to this issue, John Wolter wrote in a memorandum entitled "History of Becket Academy Rates":

Becket Academy started in 1964. Shortly thereafter (one year) Becket. . . began accepting students under various State programs. The school was a "self-help" school from the beginning. Living was day-by-day, and bills were incurred as much as possible only when we could pay. . . . It was strictly pay-as-you-go. . . . Recently it has become apparent to some

individuals that perhaps we have something to offer the society and children in need. I'm not sure why this is so, but it probably has to do with our low rate, varied programs, and our ability to handle a variety of problems. However, with declining public school enrollments and better-prepared public school teachers, we are being asked to handle a clientele with more complex and varied. . . [needs]. We have found that the energy required is now greater than it was before. . . . Becket personnel simply will no longer "wear a variety of hats" nor will regulations allow this to happen. Elaborate reporting systems have brought bookkeeping and secretarial staff almost to a standstill. Additionally, our small margin of surplus is being destroyed by [the] high cost of energy (electricity and oil). Because of these things, we are in a crisis, and our existence and program delivery capabilities are in jeopardy.

Because we have always been one of the least expensive programs, "across the board" rate increases gave us the least amount. . . . Each year the gap between our rate and the rate of other institutions increases because of the compounding effect. Attempts. . . to catch up have often hurt us even more because we must hire accountants, auditors, attorneys, consultants, [etc.] to bring the message to those responsible. . . . Our administration, until recently, has simply been "program-centered." Consequently, we delivered a large variety of programs to a great number of children at a reasonable cost. Now, because of inflation, we must work on costs, and at the same time, struggle to deliver program, which is what we are supposed to be doing in the first place. Without sympathy in this area, program delivery will be reduced. (Wolter, 1980b, pp. 1-2)

As in the past, Becket was almost exclusively dependent upon tuition for income. At the same time, however, attempts were made to generate grant money (and also cut expenses). Under Connecticut state statutes, the Department of Education began partially reimbursing private schools for medical expenditures (Schleis, 1980c; Diana Schleis, pers. comm.).

At mid-year there were forty-eight employees: five administrative staff (president John Wolter, director Mal Winkley, director of admissions Marian Poliner, dean of students Don Hirth,

and academic dean Mary Smith), five office staff (including Diana Schleis, Betty Helmedach, and Audrey Ely), two nurses (including Joyce Englemann), four psychological staff (Peter Marshall, J. John Ashe, Dr. Wayne Smith, and R. Ben Meryweather), three dining hall and maintenance personnel (including supervisor Robert Wertz), fifteen mainstream educational staff (including team III leader Sandy Bassett, team III teachers Judy Downs, Peggy Scribner, and Nancy Shapiro, team II leader Robin Goeler, team II teachers Robert McGee and Scott Leslie, and librarian Mary Trask), four resource room teachers (including Richard Dodge, Nancy Jermaine, and Peggy Winkley--who somehow found time in addition to raising the Winkley children), six child-care staff (including Carl Engelmann, Karen and Dick Cooney, and Gary Henderson), and four outdoor staff (including William Fullerton, Ethan May, and Elaine Becker) (Winkley, 1981a, pp. 1-2).

Although still residing on campus (in the former Warren residence) with her husband Don, Betty Hirth was no longer employed at Becket (Donald Hirth, interview). After the New Hampshire program was closed at the end of the 1980 summer, Frank McCabe had assisted on the main campus and, in late fall, gone to Florida to help set-up the winter program; at Christmas, he left Becket to begin work on a doctorate in educational leadership and administration at the University of Massachusetts (Francis McCabe, interview). An additional staff loss occurred when director of

development Peter Kenney resigned.

A major step in the institutionalization of Becket was the 1980 production of the first faculty manual. The 27-page first draft included some history of the school:

In the first, and for several ensuing years, Becket was a naive school which survived and prospered because the purity of its intentions was clear to all who chose to look. No one here knew much about the requirements of the state; there wasn't much money, and Becket received much gratis help from local people. In time, we became knowledgeable about state regulations and other niceties of being an institution in the public eye. Today we believe in the reality and necessity of cooperation between the private sector and the state. (Becket Academy, 1980c, pp. 1-2)

The document also included sections on school governance, background information on administrative staff, and a section on the demands involved in employment:

At Becket, life has a tendency to become intense, and employees are involved with students in many capacities in a given day. It is important that you know this is going to happen, and that it is a reality and necessity of employment here. We are a total educational environment, and that means that at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, we are engaged in the education of children. We expect total involvement in community life when the students are here, including attendance at meals and social functions, and we expect staff to be careful with the lives of all the children. . . . [S]taff at Becket are acting in loco parentis, and the care which this necessitates always goes beyond the confines of any formal job description. (ibid., pp. 9-10)

The manual also included a discussion of the need for staff to adapt to Becket's continuous admissions policy (p. 11) plus a description of the major program areas: academics, homelife, outdoor education, counseling, athletics, afternoon activities, the farm, chapel, infirmary, and dining hall (pp. 11-15). Also included were

employment policies including personal restrictions, benefits (medical, holidays, vacations, sick and personal days), retention and dismissal, and business office and emergency reporting procedures (ibid., pp. 16-27).

The organizational growth of Becket Academy continued to pose a dilemma for John Wolter. He saw a need for more administrative personnel, but was also uncomfortable with the growing bureaucracy. In a memorandum to all administrators and supervisors, he wrote:

Our administration is growing in numbers, and at the same time, confusion. Administrators are not frontline troops. We should not lose sight of the fact that we are more expendable than anyone. The absence of a dorm parent causes considerable difficulty. The absence of a teacher causes difficulty also. The absence of a secretary (especially one who answers the telephone) causes disruptions. The absence of an administrator often makes for a smooth day. (Wolter, 1980c, p. 2)

Further, he perceived a need for "uniform standards and expectations" (ibid., p. 1) and policies/procedures, but was wary that such developments would dilute the spontaneous energy that had always been the heart of Becket Academy.

During 1980-1981, the principal programmatic change on the Connecticut campus was the elimination of team I--a response to the shift towards an "older student population" (Winkley, 1981a, p. 3). The new team II incorporated grades five through remedial nine, while team III remained grades nine through twelve (ibid.). Spanish was offered as an elective, and the resource room continued to serve about one-third of the population (ibid.).

The athletic program continued to develop (ibid.). Robin

Goeler (interview) recalls fondly the pride that was instilled during this period; a particularly memorable event was Becket's first ever basketball victory over Williams, a New London preparatory school (ibid.).

With the elimination of team I, academic classes were all conducted in the school building (Winkley, 1981a, p. 3). The vacated dining hall basement was renovated for use as a new central office. The former central office building became the counseling center. Also with respect to physical development, the unused Founder's Hall underwent renovation during the 1981 summer.

A major event in the school's history occurred in October 1980 when forty-two East Haddam residents filed a "formal complaint" stating that Becket had become a "probationary institution" and that their "families and property are in constant danger 24 hours a day" (Auclair, 1980b). According to an article in the Hartford Courant,

complaint signers said the students have been caught stealing cars, smoking marijuana in a barn, taking mail out of private boxes, spitting at women and children in cars, using abusive language, breaking bottles on the pavement, stealing and wrecking a school bus, running away and hiding in the woods where they sleep overnight and smoke cigarettes, jogging down the middle of the road and trespassing. (ibid.)

East Haddam's first selectman Douglas Ferrary agreed to investigate whether Becket's operation was in violation of town zoning regulations (ibid.).

Responding to these allegations, Mal Winkley was quoted in the Old Lyme Gazette (Urbano, 1980). He questioned the term "probationary institution," calling it "distasteful" (ibid.).

Winkley added that many of the charges were based on "rumor and hearsay" and speculated that "it makes people feel secure" to place the blame for crimes on Becket students (ibid.). (It should be noted that this complaint was filed at a time of increased crime in East Haddam; John Wolter, pers. comm.) Winkley also acknowledged that the Academy was not a secure facility and that students did occasionally leave the campus (Urbano, 1980). He further agreed to review each purported incident on a case-by-case basis (ibid.).

In the same Gazette article, Dr. Kenneth Roulx of the Department of Children and Youth Services was quoted as calling Becket "an excellent facility and one 'absolutely needed' by the state" (ibid.). With respect to the school's student population, he added, "Some are delinquent, some are learning disabled, some are from home situations which are not viable. . . . We do not place youngsters primarily because they are delinquent" (ibid.).

Soon thereafter, Becket Academy hired John Blaschik, Jr. to help develop community relations (Auclair, 1980a; Friedman, 1980b). Blaschik, a lifelong East Haddam resident, was a town constable and volunteer fireman (ibid.). In hiring Blaschik, John Wolter acknowledged that the school's relationship with East Haddam had always been of "deep concern"; he further pointed out that there had "never been a major problem" (ibid.). Blaschik became available to receive and respond to complaints (ibid.). Subsequent to his hiring, the furor subsided.

John Wolter's decision to hire Blaschik was based in part on the advice of Edmund Gubbins. Wolter became acquainted with Ed through a newspaper advertisement for the consulting services of Edmund Gubbins Associates (John Wolter, pers. comm.). Gubbins, an Irish Catholic, had recently retired from a public service career in corrections and education (Edmund Gubbins, pers. comm.). He had lived in East Haddam since 1964 when he was superintendent of schools (ibid.). Gubbins was well-known in town and held the office of second selectman.

Wolter hired Gubbins to defend Becket's position before the Planning and Zoning Commission (John Wolter, pers. comm.), but--after the hiring of Blaschik--the issue was dropped. Wolter and Gubbins established a quick rapport, and John recognized that Edmund had a number of talents that could serve Becket. Gubbins was put to work pursuing grant opportunities and negotiating an increase in Becket's rates.

With the closure of New Hampshire and the loss of Francis McCabe, the 1980-1981 wilderness program had a slow start. Mitch Michaud supervised a limited autumn program before leaving during the spring. During the winter, there were only three traditional Florida trips, one for girls and two for boys (Florida Trips, 1981). In the meantime, John Wolter was formally pursuing the possibility of starting a graduate school program to train outdoor instructors and other professionals for work with special populations; during 1980-1981, an initial proposal for the creation of an "Institute of

Experiential Studies" was submitted to the State of Connecticut Board of Higher Education.

There remained a need for creative alternatives for those youth who experienced difficulties adapting successfully to the Connecticut mainstream program. A solution for one youngster was winter placement with Mitch Michaud's friend--a hunting guide and pilot who lived in northern Maine (Francis McCabe, interview; John Wolter, pers. comm.). But it was clear that a more formalized approach (such as something along the lines of the earlier Ranger program) was needed.

Given this need, the Voyageur program was begun in the winter of 1980-1981. The program operated in the Everglades and was supervised by William Fullerton, a former school principal from Woodsville, New Hampshire. The new program was described as

a high intensity, remedial program specifically designed for the [male] student who has proven unresponsive to the structure and interventions of the Becket mainstream, itself a special education program. These unsuccessful students typically. . . . have a low sense of self-regard, refuse to adhere to limits, disregard instructions, and deny personal responsibility for the events and quality of their lives. Structure, staff confrontation and externally determined consequences have been ineffective in facilitating positive change, because the student's current needs, values and expectations do not permit these interventions to be truly significant.

The Voyageur Program begins from the basic assumption that these needs, values and expectations are acquired, and thus, are changeable. However, for such change, socialization or resocialization, to occur, the student must be placed in a context completely unique from that which has fostered and maintained his maladaptive behavior and world view, and from those remedial contexts which have been ineffective. (Becket Academy, 1981e, p. 1)

Known within the Becket organization as "the show that never ends," the Voyager program was a different concept in wilderness programming. Unlike the mainstream trip offerings--which involved an unchanging group of students for a finite period--the Voyager program operated continuously and individual involvement in the program was open-ended. Since a boy's stay in the program was based on individual need, the group was constantly changing.

When the student exhibited pro-social behavior he would . . . graduate from the program. If he returned to Becket and his behavior regressed, he would be placed back in the program. (McCabe, 1981, p. 37)

With respect to activities, the program was similar to mainstream Florida trips (including canoeing and applied academics). There was also added emphasis on therapeutic goals, and the program benefited from the professional psychological services of the newly hired Dr. Wayne Smith. In sum, the Voyager program was a creative means to continue serving youth who would have otherwise been discharged from Becket Academy.

The program was named after the recently acquired 26-foot Voyager canoe which John Wolter and Mitch Michaud had driven from Canada to Connecticut (Friedman, 1980a). The canoe was partially purchased through a fund-raising effort (Wolter, 1979b). Voyager was a term originally applied to the early Canadian fur trappers (who travelled by canoe).

The Ivey House served as a base of operations for Becket's mainstream Florida trips and the Voyager program. Space was also

leased to North American Canoe Tours and North Carolina Outward Bound School.

In the spring, the Voyageur program was moved to the southern Appalachian Trail. The program experienced less success than during the winter due to the relative ease of access to roads and populated areas, as well as difficulties in motivating students for the rigorous demands of backpacking. In late spring, the Voyageur program temporarily ended, pending reorganization for the summer. Two of the students who had no temporary placement options went hiking on the Long Trail with staff member Ronald Fullerton.

The Becket seniors and two groups of underclassmen also hiked sections of the Appalachian Trail during the 1981 spring. This program was coordinated by Steve Messier, a veteran 2000-miler and botany doctoral student at the University of Connecticut. The seniors received some publicity including a front page article and picture in the Waynesboro (Va.) News-Virginian (McManus, 1981). Despite some low student motivation, these three trips ended successfully.

In May 1981, a group of senior Becket staff participated in a five-day fast at the New Hampshire farm. There was also instruction in natural hygiene by Shangri-la's Dr. Jeff Fine.

Two major staff changes occurred at this same time. Marian Poliner left after two and one-half years as admissions director and was replaced by Michael Penkert (Michael Penkert,

interview). Secondly, Douglass P. Teschner was hired to administer the Becket wilderness programs.

A former Peace Corps volunteer in North Africa, Teschner had extensive outdoor experience and degrees in forestry (B.S.) and botany (M.S.) from the universities of Massachusetts and Vermont, respectively. Although he had taught in private and public schools, Doug's major employment experience was in outdoor and other experiential programs (both in the United States and overseas).

In proposing employment to Teschner, John Wolter wrote, "Becket is a 'jealous mistress' and demands time on its own terms" (Wolter, 1981a). Douglass was the first outsider since John Flammer brought directly into a supervisory position. His first tasks were hiring staff for an extensive summer program, development of a new wilderness staff manual, and planning a staff training program. Prior to this time, wilderness staff had been trained by outside agencies including Vermont's Camp Keewaydin and the Appalachian Mountain Club.

There was also a need for a more remote summer setting, and Steve Messier was asked to reconnoiter one area selected from a Quebec highway map. An isolated town named Clova was visited and subsequently selected to become a base of operations; although serviced daily by rail, it was 300 road miles northwest of Montreal--and the final 125-mile stretch was an unpaved logging road. From Clova, it was possible to canoe into the extensive and uninhabited lake country of the Reservoir Gouin and adjoining

waterways. The availability of a seaplane service (used primarily by vacationing fishermen) was an important logistics and safety consideration.

During the 1981 summer, there were a variety of offerings including those described in a colorful brochure (Becket Academy, 1981d). On the Connecticut campus, a summer school was conducted at an individual cost of \$1,165 tuition, room, and board ("Becket Academy, East Haddam, Connecticut," 1981). A C.E.T.A.-supported work program was implemented, and a number of students worked with Willard Hedden on the farm. (This was Hedden's second summer at Becket.) In addition, the East Haddam campus was utilized by a computer camp that leased a portion of the facility.

The newly-hired wilderness employees attended a two-week staff development program in late June and early July. Wilderness personnel also received the new staff manual that included leader responsibilities, trip goals, emergency telephone numbers, trip procedures, standing medical orders, and a section on minimum impact camping (Teschner, 1981a).

There were about sixty students initially participating in the 1981 Becket Adventures program. Three groups (one exclusively female) set out to climb the New Hampshire forty-seven peaks, a fourth to hike Vermont's Long Trail (led by veteran long-distance walker Warren Doyle), a fifth to paddle the Connecticut River, and the sixth (the Voyageur program) to canoe at the new site in Canada.

The newly renovated New Hampshire farmhouse served as a base of operations.

The Long Trail and Connecticut River trips were both successful, but the three New Hampshire trips suffered from low motivation. Early into the summer, a major reorganization was initiated and a group of boys went to Canada under the leadership of Ronald Fullerton. The remaining male students successfully completed the New Hampshire peaks under the combined leadership of Dave Meade (a veteran from the previous winter in Florida) and Willie MacMullen. The female trip ended prematurely after the girls left the program without permission.

In Canada, the Voyageur program experienced low motivation, students leaving without permission, and abuse of equipment. In early July, the group was divided in two; the new Voyageur trip consisted of the former Connecticut program students and was led by new staff Pat Dezell and Greg Norman.

The second trip consisted of new students who had been directly admitted into the Voyageur program (without prior experience on the East Haddam campus) at the beginning of the summer. Each of these youth had experienced repeated failures in previous placements and were in need of such a highly specialized program. Dr. Wayne Smith (who handled the initial intake process) had successfully negotiated for much higher rates than were paid for the regular Becket students. (Although the Voyageur program was much more expensive to operate on a per-student cost than the regular

Connecticut program, Becket had been receiving the mainstream rate for Voyageur placements.) Dr. Smith named this new program Ultra which

has two meanings--first, beyond the ordinary limits because the kids go beyond the normal limits; secondly, we are making a commitment to hang on to these kids regardless of what they do. (Wayne Smith as quoted in McCabe, 1981, p. 41)

The Ultra staff included Frank Zeller and Janet Heck.

Among the three Canada trips, the mainstream and new Voyageur offerings continued successfully, but the Ultra program endured a number of motivational and related problems. In August, there were major incidents involving students leaving the program, intimidation, and unauthorized use of canoes and food. Two students were also involved in a forest fire extinguished by Province of Quebec water bombers and a ground team.

At the end of the 1981 summer, Greg Norman and Dave Meade assumed leadership of the Ultra program. The Voyageur alternative was temporarily ended.

Another Becket wilderness trip of note--a two-day paddle on the Connecticut River--occurred in August 1981. The participants included United States Congressman Sam Gejdenson, Karen Gejdenson, Jeremy Dodd, John and Joan Wolter, Sidney DuPont, James Reardon, and Edmund Gubbins (Gubbins, 1981; Joan Wolter, pers. comm.). The purpose of the trip was to acquaint the participants with the ecology of the river (Gubbins, 1981). Also during the late summer, John Wolter and William Fullerton undertook a reconnaissance of a

potential new wilderness site: New York's Adirondacks.

The trustees met three times during the course of the 1980-1981 year (McCarry, 1980, 1981). Secretary-treasurer Peter Kenney resigned and was replaced by school accountant William McCarry (ibid.). Frank Carr, Arthur Eve, Roger Peck, and John Wolter were re-elected trustees (ibid.). Among the items discussed was the proposed graduate school (ibid.).

Another notable event in 1980 was Becket's approval for out-of-state placement by the State of New Jersey (Kenney, 1980b).

In summary, 1980-1981 was an interesting year for the Academy. There was an influx of new staff (including John Blaschik, William Fullerton, Edmund Gubbins, Wayne Smith, and Douglass Teschner), adverse publicity in the East Haddam community, development of new programs (Voyageur, Ultra, and the proposed graduate school), and use of a new wilderness site (Clova, Quebec).

Financially, the school's assets for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1981, decreased slightly (for the second year in a row) to \$1,524,669; liabilities also declined (to \$898,776), but the difference between assets and liabilities increased (Siskin, Shapiro, & Co., 1981). Total expenditures were \$1,495,133 (ibid.), significantly higher than the previous year. According to Bunting and Lyon, the school's Connecticut plant was valued at more than two million dollars ("Becket Academy, East Haddam, Connecticut," 1981, p. 2).

The Eighteenth Year: 1981-1982

The 1981-1982 school year began with only ninety-seven students in attendance (ninety in the Connecticut mainstream program and seven Ultra students in Canada), but rose to 134 (117 mainstream, seventeen Ultra) by year's end (Becket Academy Daily Bulletin, 1981, 1982). The low early enrollment was, in part, the result of the girls having left during the previous summer. During the course of the year, there was significant discussion about the future of female programming at Becket.

At the beginning of the school year, there were only five students total in the fifth and sixth grades. The two-track admissions policy continued, but the students enrolled were almost exclusively publicly funded. The State of Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services was responsible for most referrals and paid for board and care; local education authorities assumed the education costs.

Administratively, the school was much the same as the previous year; personnel included John Wolter (president), Ed Gubbins (administrative consultant to the president), Mal Winkley (director), Don Hirth (dean of students), Mary Smith (academic dean), Michael Penkert (director of admissions), and Doug Teschner (wilderness director).

The faculty included team II teachers Robin Goeler (team leader), Bob McGee, Scott Leslie, and Peggy Scribner (Becket

Academy, 1982c). The team III staff included leader Sandy Bassett, teachers Judy Downs and Bruce Metzger, and aide Patty Sidell (ibid.). Resource room staff were Richard Dodge, Theresa Kenney, and Nancy Jermaine. Among the new East Haddam staff were wilderness veterans Steve Messier (team II teacher) and Patrick Dezell (dorm parent), the latter's new bride Paula, teacher Jody Goeler (Robin's brother), and dorm couple William and Mary Ann Milanese. Diana Schleis continued to manage the business office with the assistance of bookkeeper Jeanette Maheu (ibid.).

According to Becket Academy tax records (Schleis, 1979-1982), a total of 155 individuals were on the payroll at one time or another during the 1982 calendar year. This was the greatest number in the history of the school--largely because of the extensive wilderness program (see subsequent discussion). (This total compared with 144 in 1981, 96 in 1980, and 117 in 1979; ibid.).

During Becket's first seventeen years, Joan Wolter had assisted in various capacities. She had substitute taught and helped in the library, provided secretarial and bookkeeping support, managed the payroll, served as a dorm parent (when, on one occasion, high enrollment resulted in four youth living with the Wolters), supervised the evening canteen (which for many years had been held in the Wolter dwelling), prepared the school budget, helped organize parent days (including the box lunch fund-raising auctions), filed reports required by state agencies and the National Association of Independent Schools, conducted the chapel fund-raising effort,

served as a trustee, and otherwise helped out as needed (Joan Wolter, interview). Joan's primary function, however, had been providing moral support for her husband's efforts and assuming primary responsibility for raising the couple's five children (Jef, Mari-Kim, Jay, Lara, and Mindy).

By 1981, however, the children were of high school age or older, and Joan assumed financial responsibilities and took on other special projects (ibid.). Through her experiences at Shangri-la and involvement with the farm, she developed an interest in the Becket nutrition program; this activity was also encouraged by a professor at nearby Wesleyan University (where Joan began working on her master's degree) (ibid.).

During 1981-1982, the evolving Becket nutrition program was an area of considerable activity. The newly-formed dining hall committee made a variety of specific menu recommendations: salads at every meal, two vegetarian meals per week, use of unprocessed meat and dark breads, fresh fruit as the principal dessert, removal of salt and sugar dispensers from the tables, and elimination of soft drinks (Dining Hall Committee, 1981). Throughout the course of the year, these were implemented whenever feasible.

At the three-day September orientation for East Haddam staff, a comprehensive orientation packet was distributed. It included 1981-1982 school policies and procedures (Becket Academy, 1981c), academic program procedures (M. Smith, 1981b), the no smoking policy (Hirth, 1981a), a detailed daily routine for dorm parents (Hirth,

1981b), medical guidelines (Englemann, 1981), a discipline ladder (Hirth, 1981c), the philosophy of coeducation (which discouraged student romantic involvements) (Becket Academy, 1981f), and other materials (beach rules, and laundry, dining hall, and study hall procedures) (Becket Academy, 1981b). Detailed job descriptions were also enclosed, as was a Saturday detention coverage schedule for the entire academic year. Although most of these various policies and procedures had been in effect in the past, a number were defined on paper for the first time.

The weekday daily schedule included the 6:15 a.m. two-mile run followed by morning chores, breakfast, 8:30 chapel, classes from 8:45 to 2:30 (with a break for lunch), calisthenics at 3:10, activities (including detention) from 3:20 to 4:50, dinner at 6:00, study hall from 6:35 to 7:35, and lights out at 9:30 (for the younger boys on the third floor of Baruch Hall) and 10:00 p.m. for the remainder of the students (ibid.).

In 1981-1982, a return to a strict dress code (jackets and ties for the boys, skirts or slacks for the girls) was implemented (Penkert, 1981). The academic curriculum was further refined and developed by Mary Smith (1981a).

The East Haddam discipline system included the development of "project payback":

If a student breaks a window which costs fifteen dollars (and the minimum wage is three dollars), he must work five hours. If he needlessly causes a teacher [or administrator] an hour of extra work. . . he must work [an equivalent time] on the wood operation [gathering and preparing firewood for the school's

furnaces]. . . . In cases where the hours are long, students can work on weekends and over vacations. This program is eminently fair and puts a student in touch with reality--namely, the cost of things and people's time. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 54)

The counseling program continued to grow and develop. On the East Haddam campus, Peter Marshall (full-time) and J. John Ashe (part-time) provided services. Dr. Wayne Smith worked with the Voyageur and Ultra programs prior to his leaving Becket during the winter. Subsequently, Robin Powell (M.S.W.) and Dr. Gene Schulze provided psychological services for the Ultra students. At the request of Dr. Wolter, the latter also conducted an evaluation of all Becket social services.

In his report, Schulze observed that this period in Becket's history

is a time when new programs are being developed that have significant impact on the total Becket community. These programs include new and more specialized experiential education programs designed for students, staff, and graduate students, utilizing a variety of environmental settings. Other new developments include the planning for retarded clients, elderly clients, female clients, and a potential new influx of clients from agencies in other states.

Over the past decade, Becket Academy's client population has shifted from nearly 100% private placements to nearly 100% placements funded by public agencies. The types of students referred are. . . increasingly exhibiting complex needs requiring more and more specialized, individualized programming. . . . Becket used to emphasize the implementation of a program best suited for re-integrating middle class adolescent white male students back into their families and local public school systems. Becket is now dealing with a much more diverse population with more diverse needs and more diverse goals. This includes a number of students for whom re-integration with family and local communities is not a viable objective. With public schools developing increasingly sophisticated programs. . . for meeting the special education

needs of their student populations, the current trend towards an increasingly challenging client population is likely to continue. . . . [T]he definition of Becket Academy as primarily a school. . . [has] value in helping students shift their identities from [that of a] patient to a more conventional view of themselves as regular students preparing to re-enter the educational mainstream. The problem [for Becket Academy] is how to increase the delivery of counseling services on an on-going basis for those students who can utilize those services without changing the definition of Becket. . . [from that of] an educational facility. (Schulze, 1982, pp. 1-2)

Among his suggestions for improving the Ultra program were daily assessment of student progress, increased emphasis on formalized academic components, and on-site clinical counseling. He recognized, however, that it took a skilled counselor to accurately assess Ultra student motivations (ibid., p. 9).

In March 1982, a Department of Children and Youth Services monitoring team visited the East Haddam campus. In their report (released in May), the group noted that a "high priority is placed on staff training at Becket" (Stevenson, Cooke, and Cook, 1982, p. 6), "the program as a whole appears to promote continuity in staffing through the promotion of staff from within" (p. 7), and "the staff at Becket should be commended for their ability to provide a range of recreational and wilderness activities" (p. 8). Among their recommendations were implementation of a fire prevention training program (ibid., p. 6) and a procedure for writing discharge summaries (p. 13). In summary:

Administrative and program staff should be commended for the establishment of a thorough and structured system of program policies and procedures applicable to all areas of residential life.

Becket Academy appears to have eliminated or avoided many of the traditional problems experienced in some residential care facilities. These [successes] include a very low and infrequent staff turnover, vastly reduced energy costs by utilizing wood heat and relatively low food costs by establishing an attractive farm. . . while simultaneously providing a constructive work experience for the students. (ibid., p. 14)

With respect to the physical plant, major renovations of the St. Thomas More dormitory were begun in the spring of 1982. Becket also received Department of Children and Youth Services' grants totalling \$118,536 for a new sewage system, new well, Founder's Hall renovations, insulation and repair of the school building roof, and a new oil burner for Baruch Hall (Marcus, 1982). Edmund Gubbins played a key role in applying and negotiating for these funds. Much of the actual construction was undertaken by the revived River Road Corporation.

A major tragedy occurred in December 1982 when John Wolter's parents were struck and killed by a motor vehicle while walking near their Pelham, New York, home. Beyond the personal loss, John and his siblings were faced with a practical problem: their retarded youngest brother Brian suddenly needed a place to live. John had long-expressed interest in developing programs for developmentally disabled adults, but Brian's situation galvanized him to take action. Wolter began to seriously explore the possibility of starting an adult group home.

The 1981-1982 year included the largest wilderness program in Becket Academy history (before or since). In the fall, all the

girls underwent an experience that included activities based at the New Hampshire farm and canoeing in New York's Adirondacks (Teschner, 1982a, 1982d). The veteran trip leader Elaine Becker subsequently returned to the campus to serve as the girls' dorm parent in Founder's Hall.

The Becket Outing Club, a program of weekend trips for East Haddam students, was implemented. Ten different groups (with up to eight students each) went to New Hampshire prior to Christmas (Teschner, 1982a, pp. 3-4).

The Voyageur program, under the leadership of Ronald Fullerton, Todd LaFlamme, and Dan Norton, returned to Canada in early September. As previously, boys who had difficulty achieving success on the East Haddam campus were placed in this alternative. One youth who had left campus without permission was found in the East Haddam community and (with the support of his social worker) taken directly to Canada.

The Ultra program, under the leadership of Greg Norman, Dave Meade, and new staff member Janet Dineen, continued to operate in Canada. An arrangement was made with the French Canadian owner of a remote fishing camp to use his facility. The Voyageur group also began building this man a cabin on an island across from his main camp.

The owner of this camp was at first friendly and open, and Becket personnel thought he would be an excellent local resource. Unfortunately, he ultimately proved detrimental to the program. The

first incident occurred that fall when the camp owner's girlfriend called the Quebec Department of Youth Protection and Connecticut's D.C.Y.S. claiming that Becket staff were abusing the youth (W. Smith, 1981b). Wayne Smith immediately departed for Clova to investigate.

In his report, Dr. Smith (1981b, p. 5) concluded that there had been no abuse. He acknowledged, however, that the high demands of the very needy and disadvantaged Ultra students required firm intervention on the part of the staff (ibid.). As for the reason the campowner's girlfriend had raised the issue, the local store manager suggested that she was angry at her boyfriend and was using Becket as a means to get back at him (ibid., p. 2). Becket personnel accepted this at face value and continued to maintain a working relationship with the campowner.

In addition, the Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services investigated and found no basis for the charges (Wolter, 1982c, p. 3). Also as a result of this incident, Becket Academy employed the services of a Canadian attorney who contacted the Department of Youth Protection (W. Smith, 1981a); that agency expressed no further interest in the situation.

In November 1981, the newly-married Douglass Teschner completed a comprehensive, 149-page revision of the Staff Manual for Becket Wilderness Programs. The document included an overview of Becket Academy, procedures and policies for wilderness trips, outdoor educational components, and specific information appropriate to

various program sites (including Florida, Quebec, the Appalachian Trail, New Hampshire, Vermont's Long Trail, the Connecticut River, and the Adirondacks) (Teschner, 1981b).

In October 1981, the Ultra and Voyageur programs departed Canada by van for Florida (Teschner, 1982a). In Florida, the Voyageur group canoed the Peace River and the Everglades until late November when that program was terminated.

The Voyageur program had served as a viable option for youth who were unsuccessful in the Becket Connecticut program; it had allowed for maximum flexibility in responding to individual needs. Unfortunately, however, the program was expensive (including student travel both overland and by air), and Becket had been unsuccessful in negotiating for a separate rate. At the same time, the new Ultra program had the same capabilities as the Voyageur program: thereafter, Ultra students included both those directly enrolled and students unable to achieve initial success in the Connecticut program. By spring, the Ultra rate was \$28,162.82 per year (Stevenson, Cooke, and Cook, 1982, p. 1).

The evolution of the Ultra program interested Francis McCabe who was continuing to work on his doctorate at the University of Massachusetts. In a comprehensive examination paper entitled "Ultra--A Case Study of a Juvenile Rehabilitation Wilderness Program," McCabe (1981) argued that the program was Becket's most creative response for serving special needs youth. He also traced its development and roots including John Wolter's Marine Corps

experiences, the early philosophy of Becket, the Founder's School, the first school-year New Hampshire program, and the Voyageur alternative.

In Florida, the Ultra program (which comprised two small groups; Teschner, 1982a) was based on islands outside Everglades National Park. Use of the Park itself was limited by formalized use restrictions. Becket undertook a major effort to increase Park access and offered to help develop and maintain group campsites. Despite extensive discussion and correspondence (see, for example, Wolter, 1981b; Teschner, 1981c; Gejdenson and Dodd, 1982), in 1984, this issue remains unresolved to the school's satisfaction.

In November 1981, the school faced another problem. The owner of the Canadian fishing camp, whom Becket had invited to Florida as its guest, became uncooperative and was asked to leave the Ivey House. Before leaving Everglades City, he directed threatening remarks at Becket personnel. This man subsequently sent the school an exorbitant bill for supposed damages to his camp, and--in the interest of community relations--the school agreed to a reduced settlement. When the camp owner received the Becket check, he attempted to forge it for a greater amount. Planning ahead to the 1982 summer in Canada, everyone at Becket agreed that this man was to be avoided.

In December 1981, the first group of Ultra graduates returned to the Connecticut campus. Initial plans had called for use of the New Hampshire farm, but licensing procedures were not yet completed;

renovation of the Pike facility was also in progress. In Connecticut, the Ultra group of six students had exclusive use of St. Thomas More Hall where they lived with dorm parent David Meade.

From January through March of 1982, four six-week Becket mainstream trips (including one exclusively for girls) went to Florida. Doug Teschner supervised these trips and the Ultra program, while living in the Ivey House with his wife Marte. Dr. Timothy Parsons was hired by the school to undertake an independent evaluation of the school's entire Florida operation. In his report, Parsons (1982b) commended Becket for its staff training efforts (p. 14), organizational "speed and responsiveness" in implementing new initiatives (p. 17), safety procedures (p. 18), basecamp facilities (p. 19), and backup and logistics support including Captain Glenn Smallwood (p. 19). His specific recommendations included increased use of positive peer counseling (ibid., pp. 6-7), hiring certified special education teachers (p. 9), designing specialized female programs (p. 13), and development of a written process for staff evaluation (p. 15). Parsons (1982a) also noted that the Ultra program could be strengthened by focusing more on student feelings. Overall, he observed:

Becket has forged ahead with the various revolutionary undercurrents which grew roots in the sixties. It is certainly an embodiment of "small is beautiful." It emphasizes. . . the whole person. Becket focuses on nutrition and physical fitness as has become central to the "wholistic health" movement. Becket maintains a strong thread of the spiritual in its program. (1982a, p. 1)

John Wolter spent a large part of the winter in Florida. He

undertook a twenty-eight day fast during which he dictated a lengthy commentary on his life and the development of Becket Academy. (This unedited transcript was a major source document used in this dissertation.) Among Wolter's observations:

I shall always be indebted to those [Becket Academy students] from the 1960s who literally built the school, not only the buildings. . . but also many of the traditions as well as the basis for the curriculum. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 48)

The education of the American elite has always been lacking in a basic humanness. This is why they [are] unable to understand or react to the revolutionary and social upheavals in the world. . . Our elite is, in my opinion, uneducated. (ibid., p. 51)

The first seven years at Becket gave me an idea what kids needed. Basically, they needed what I had [undergone:] . . . valuable experiences which I had worked my way through. . . . They needed to do things, they needed trial and error, they needed ethical role models, they needed real men and women [teachers] firm in their identities. (ibid., p. 51)

Neither the animal husbandry part of our program nor the raising of animal feed or organic vegetables is a game. . . . It is a serious business. No "petting" farm for us, or cute little experimental plots. . . . It is my opinion that no one should eat meat until he's first handled manure, cared for an animal, and at least witnessed its death. (ibid., p. 53)

So many of these students do not possess high verbal ability and, because our educational system is largely based on. . . . [this quality, experience difficulties in school. Children use foul language] principally because they are nonverbal and are trying to express anger. . . . What do you do when you're nonverbal, your back is against the wall, and a really verbal person is yelling in your face? Better the "f__ you's" than giving someone a knuckle sandwich. I dropped my bad language based on love and motivation. I have a feeling for the future. Many of these kids do not have a feeling for the future. (ibid., p. 57)

The minimum wage laws have just about destroyed giving kids a job. . . . [Another problem is child labor overregulation:] its questionable whether or not a child can run a rotary lawnmower until after age sixteen or whether he can paint more than six

feet off the ground or work around machinery. I was doing this stuff when I was twelve. . . . We had our picture in the paper one time for working with wood during the first oil crisis. There was a letter to the editor. . . about how our kids didn't have safety toe shoes and safety helmets. In a way [that person] was right, but its pretty tough to get activity going when everyone needs a fifteen dollar helmet and forty-five dollar pair of shoes. . . . How does a young person accumulate enough money to buy a used bike for sixty or seventy dollars or a new [one] for 140? Where does a young person get the money to spend three dollars for the movies and one dollar for popcorn? The work just plain isn't out there, the economics do not work. . . . This is why there is an abundance of crime. On the one hand the society beams advertisements for material goods to youngsters, on the other hand it does not [provide] the means for the children to buy the goods. . . . [By] having all the Becket students travel. . . [we] try to give [them] the courage to go to the boom areas where the work is. (ibid., pp. 57-58)

Travel broadens a [person] and a change is as good as a rest. The knowledge students [assimilate] in their travels and the out-of-doors comes to them from the earth through the bottoms of their feet. It comes to them from the wind, from the sun, the battling of tides, from the air. The cold and heat teach them lessons It is a form of education which is painlessly painful. (ibid., p. 59)

Throughout the winter, new students were admitted to the Everglades-based Ultra program. Most flew directly to Florida, often escorted by a staff member, and were taken to the island by motorboat. Improvements and modifications were also made in the program. A week-long wilderness staff training was held in February. East Haddam Team II leader Robin Goeler visited the Ultra site to help the staff improve the academic component. Oliver Dillon, a new Becket staff member and master in Aikido, trained the Ultra staff in physical restraint. Edmund Gubbins, Malcolm Winkley, attorney Susan Halperin, and the City of Hartford's director of support services Larry Volpe all visited the program and made

significant suggestions. Both Robin Powell and Gene Schulze provided specialized counseling services (in addition to working with Ultra students on the main campus).

The Ultra program represented a creative collaborative effort between the public (Department of Children and Youth Services) and private (Becket Academy) sectors. When it learned about Ultra, the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Retardation contacted Becket about placing high-level retarded youth with special needs (Winkley, 1982c); the first D.M.R.-referred youth were flown to Florida at the beginning of March (Teschner, 1982a, p. 1).

By April, the Ultra program had become increasingly refined and better defined on paper. In a written program description, it was stated that "the responsibility for changing the target behaviors agreed upon in the pre-placement meeting is placed solely upon the student" (W. Smith, M. Smith, Goeler, Winkley, Teschner, Schulze, and Hirth, 1982, p. 5). An individual treatment plan was developed for each student; it served as the basis for "immediate feedback, both positive and negative, . . . provided by staff during all waking hours" (ibid., p. 7).

Given the skilled nature of the Ultra staff, the winter in Florida went well. There were, however, several incidents involving students leaving the program without permission. One occurred after a group of Ultra students participated in a five-day outing on a chartered sailboat in a different area of Florida (Teschner, 1982a, p. 1). En route back to the Ultra camp, one student left the

program and was found attempting to use a private automobile. Soon after rejoining the Ultra program, this same student was involved in a second interaction with Everglades City police.

On April 14, 1982, the Ultra group departed Florida by van; in Texas, this same youth gained access to a private automobile which he drove to Louisiana. The boy was apprehended by police and subsequently released back to Ultra staff. He was flown to New Mexico--the spring Ultra site.

New Mexico's Gila Mountains had been first suggested as a program area by Pat Dezell, and John Wolter and Michael Penkert had toured the area just prior to Christmas. The Ultra program was based at a remote campsite on the continental divide. In addition to basecamp activities, students participated in backpacking expeditions and field trips to local sites (including a ghost town and the city of Santa Fe). In June, the group departed for the Quebec program site via the Colorado Rockies, Yellowstone National Park, and a stopover at the Pike, New Hampshire, farm.

During the 1982 spring, there was also considerable wilderness activity for Becket's mainstream students. Eight seniors hiked 600 miles on the Appalachian Trail under the leadership of new staff members Scott Baker and James B. Smith. A series of seven offerings, mostly two and one-half weeks in duration, were based at the New Hampshire farm. This northern program (staffed by Eric Pangman, Elaine Becker, Richard Dodge, Bruce McCarthy, and others) included hiking, canoeing, field trips, and academics at the

schoolhouse; a total of fifty-two students participated (Teschner, 1982a). By this same time, the New Hampshire farm operation had a full-time manager, Pete Moody, and an expanding herd and haying operation.

In June, a five-day staff development program was held in New Hampshire for employees of the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services. Activities included backpacking, rock climbing, and canoeing (McCabe and Teschner, 1982). The staff were Francis McCabe, Peter Ely, and Douglass Teschner. Also during the spring, plans were underway in regard to both summer and 1982-1983 school year wilderness offerings (Teschner, 1982f, 1982g).

Although it did not directly influence the wilderness program, there was a major effort during 1981-1982 to develop a graduate school which would educate outdoor instructors and others for work with special populations. In November 1981, a state-appointed panel of experts visited the Connecticut campus to evaluate the proposed program. Among the group were Dr. Richard Kraft (from the University of Colorado), Dr. Morris Weiner (from the University of Northern Illinois), and Wesleyan's Dr. Charles Church, Jr.

The evaluation was based on Becket's 213-page "Proposal for a Master of Science Degree in Experiential Education" which incorporated responses to the State Board of Education's evaluation questionnaire. The goal of the proposed Institute of Experiential Studies was described as development of "trained leaders to meet the growing demand of public and private organizations for professionals

to work with persons having special needs" (Institute of Experiential Studies, 1981, p. i). The proposed faculty consisted of present and former Becket Academy staff (including Drs. DuPont, Earle Fox, Gubbins, Schulze, Wayne Smith, and Wolter plus V. Curtis Hunter, Peter Marshall, Francis McCabe, Steven Messier, and Douglass Teschner), trustees (Drs. Arthur Eve and Roger Peck), and associates (Drs. Dennis Kalma and Timothy Parsons).

The visiting committee was "impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm . . . [and] combination of skills, academic background and sensitivity of the faculty" and felt the total Becket facilities represented a "major program asset" (Skinner, 1981, p. 29).

Further, the group

was impressed with the Institute's proposed program which they viewed as a thoughtful and balanced graduate curriculum which is at the forefront of development in this emerging field. It will serve a largely unmet need in this region of the United States. (ibid.)

Specific recommendations included broadening some of the proposed courses, improved access to library resources, and clarification with respect to both tuition policies for Becket Academy employees and graduation requirements (ibid., pp. 30-31).

Institute staff responded positively to each if these recommendations in a document entitled "Implementation of the Evaluation Committee Recommendations and Suggestions" (Institute of Experiential Studies, 1982). Despite the committee's highly favorable report and good faith efforts to implement the recommendations, the State Board of Higher Education did not grant

licensure. In July 1982, John Wolter withdrew the application (Wolter, 1982a). At the same time, he began to consider other ways to implement this component of the Becket plan.

For the 1982 summer, there was a major thrust to attract private placements (see, for example the summer brochure; Becket Academy, 1982b), but most of the participants were continuing (or incoming) school-year students. The Connecticut campus program included both a summer school and C.E.T.A.-supported work offerings; Willard Hedden returned to Becket for his third summer directing the organic garden operation. But the major thrust of activity was in the wilderness, primarily in Canada.

By early July, a new and more comprehensive 225-page wilderness staff manual was available (Teschner, 1982e). Arrangements were made to use a remote island north of Clova as a base for the Ultra program (Teschner, 1982c), and contact was initiated with the Canadian consulate in Boston regarding the immigration status of Becket employees. Three houses were leased in Clova to accommodate summer staff and provide a support infrastructure.

A two-week wilderness staff training program was conducted in East Haddam. Soon afterward, three mainstream trips departed for Canada (with a total of twenty-seven students), while another mainstream group (ten students) began an expedition down the Connecticut River (Teschner, 1982a); each of these experiences was planned to last six weeks. Staff included David Boudreau, Mark Bruns, David Cornwall, Janet Dineen, Tim and Tom Marshall, and Dan

Norton.

The one-year-old Ultra program was also in Canada. After nearly a full year of wilderness living and working with the Ultra youth, veteran staff Greg Norman and Dave Meade were, to put it simply, tired. Five replacement staff (four of whom had prior experience with Becket mainstream students) underwent a full month of training in Connecticut; the program included development of improved reporting procedures (see, for example, Winkley, 1982b), procedures for use of newly-acquired student clothing and equipment, and development of detailed job descriptions for each staff member (including the certified special education teacher).

On July 18, 1982, the five new Ultra staff (including co-leaders Scott Baker and Elaine Becker) arrived in Canada and began to implement the program. There were fifteen Ultra students: ten from Connecticut (six placed by D.C.Y.S. and four by D.M.R.), two from Vermont, and one each from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire.

Five days later (July 23), the same Ultra student who had been involved in the automobile incidents in Florida and Texas/Louisiana left the program without permission (Teschner, 1982b, p. 1). The incident occurred during an overnight canoe trip to pick up equipment cached at a remote roadhead thirty miles north of Clova. Police were notified, and a four-day search (involving helicopters and a trained dog) undertaken.

On July 26, a police helicopter team located the missing

student and, without allowing Becket staff to make a positive identification, flew him to the closest police station (in Val d'Or, some 100 air miles to the west). The youth reportedly claimed to have been tied naked to a tree.

The police informed Doug Teschner that the owner of the fishing camp--the same man who had been uncooperative in Florida and had attempted to forge the school's check--had directed them to the youth. It later became apparent that he had harbored the boy. Although Becket staff had been avoiding this individual throughout the summer, he was aware of the school's presence and had allegedly made threatening comments.

The following day (July 27), a provincial policeman, an officer of the federal Office of Criminal Investigations, and a social worker came to Clova by helicopter to meet with Donald Hirth (who had arrived from Connecticut the previous evening by chartered airplane) and Douglass Teschner. Questions were presented "in a way alleging we were guilty [of child abuse] and challenging us to prove we were innocent" (Hirth, 1982, p. 1). The three were offered a copy of the wilderness staff manual, but appeared uninterested and left it behind.

The three Canadian officials and two Becket administrators flew to the Ultra campsite where a similar line of interrogation continued. Hirth wrote:

What frustrated me during their visit to the island was a lack of professionalism and tact. They certainly had a right to question our program and philosophy, but they. . . continued to

belittle, accuse and undermine our Ultra staff authority and integrity in front of the students. (ibid., p. 2)

The trio were skeptical about Becket's health and nutrition policies, and one officer handed out cigarettes to the children. Later they spoke with Clova's most prominent resident: store manager and principal property owner Frank Rivet. He reportedly spoke strongly on Becket's behalf, pointing out that the school purchased the highest quality food. That evening the three officials flew back to Val d'Or.

Two days later on July 29, seven Canadian officials flew (in two helicopters and an Otter seaplane) directly to the Ultra camp. The students were taken into temporary custody on the basis of suspected child abuse and flown to Val d'Or. The five Ultra staff, counselor Robin Powell, and wilderness director Douglass Teschner were arrested for working in Canada without permits; they were flown to Val d'Or and jailed overnight.

The Canadian officials involved represented seven different federal and provincial agencies: Quebec police, the Office of Criminal Investigations, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Department of Youth Protection, the Social Services Center, Fish and Game, and Immigration. The decision to undertake this action was apparently based exclusively on the dialogue with the previously missing student and the visit to Clova and the Ultra camp; no attempt had been made to contact State of Connecticut officials to inquire about the status of Becket Academy and the youth in its

programs.

Six of the officials also flew to the three Becket mainstream trips and, while they thought these trips were "better," continued to make allegations on such topics as the availability of food and nature of the equipment (Teschner, 1982b). There was no evidence that any of these officials had experience or familiarity with outdoor education. None of the mainstream staff were arrested nor were the children taken into custody. Becket was not instructed to end these trips, and they temporarily continued.

That same evening, a meeting was held in Val d'Or between the various Canadian officials and Becket personnel (including Mal Winkley, attorney Jim Reardon, Dr. Gene Schulze, Don Hirth, and Doug Teschner). The Canadians expressed a determination to pursue criminal charges of child abuse and prosecute the seven Becket staff for working illegally in Canada.

On the following day (July 30), the seven were arraigned and released on bail. The children, who had been held in a youth detention facility (where some were involved in trading Becket clothing and equipment to Canadian youth workers in exchange for cigarettes and money), were subsequently bound over to Connecticut officials.

On the same day, a Montreal newspaper headline stated, "Des Jeunes Tortures dans un Camp 'Nazi' Exploite par des Americains en Abitibi" (translation: Youth Tortured in American "Nazi" Camp) (Lacasse, 1982). This was the first in a series of articles in

Canadian papers. Some of the headlines: "Children 'Denied Food' Judge Closes Camps in Northern Quebec" (1982), "Les 'Martyrs' de l'Abitibi" (1982), "Pas Question de Camp Nazi au nord de Clova" (1982), and "Camp de Redressement Pour Jeunes Delinquants" (1982). Some of the articles included pictures of the handcuffed staff and views of the Ultra campsite.

There was also press coverage in Connecticut newspapers: "East Haddam Pupils Back in School after Summer Camp is Shutdown" (Sullivan, 1982a) and "East Haddam Pupils Reaffirm Charges Against Summer Camp" (Sullivan, 1982b). On August 6, the Connecticut Departments of Mental Retardation and Children and Youth Services completed a joint investigation clearing Becket of all charges (headline: "State Clears Becket Academy of Charges of Abuse at Camp"; Sullivan, 1982d). D.C.Y.S., however, apparently had second thoughts: one day after returning the Ultra students to Becket's East Haddam campus, the Department reassumed custody pending further investigation.

An August 11 headline: "Becket Awaiting DCYS Ruling on Abuse Charges" (J. Smith, 1982d). August 18: "'Abused' Boy Recants Story; Report Due" (J. Smith, 1982a). By this time John Wolter was frustrated by the delay; an August 19 headline stated "School Faults Probe in Camp Abuse Case" (Sullivan, 1982c). D.C.Y.S. officials were reportedly awaiting a report from Canadian officials which was slow in arriving. In the meanwhile, Becket had voluntarily ended the three Canadian mainstream trips: two finished out the summer on

the Connecticut River, while the third was based on the Connecticut campus.

In late August, Department of Children and Youth Services representatives began to publicly express doubts about aspects of Becket programs. An August 27 headline stated: "Camp Elicits Concern from Youth Agency" (Cohen, 1982). The investigation--and cloud over Becket Academy--carried into the fall. A September 8 headline: "Becket Starts New Year; Charges are Unsubstantiated" (1982). It was not until mid-October that the school was officially cleared: "State Officials Clear Becket Academy of Abuse Allegations" (Barkin, 1982) and "No Proof Found for Camp Abuse Claims" (Sanger, 1982).

Ironically, in the midst of this controversy, a completely unrelated article appeared on the editorial page of the Hartford Courant. Its author argued:

Schools across the nation have done an excellent job of educating the majority of our children and have failed miserably in dealing with the difficult ones. Rare are appropriate programs for students whose behaviors are considered inappropriate. (Petty, 1982)

The Canadian incident was perhaps best placed in perspective by psychologist Gene Schulze who argued that the decision to assume custody of the children (based exclusively on a few hours dialogue with the students and staff) was ill-considered (1982a, p. 1).

Further,

the subsequent raid on the Ultra Program by officials from seven different Canadian departments with a large sea plane and two helicopters could not have been a more effective

discrediting of the Ultra Staff if it had been deliberately designed to do so. Although I do not know of any basis for challenging the legality of the proceedings, from a clinical perspective the impact of that raid and the arrest of the Ultra staff probably eradicated much of the progress that the Ultra students had made toward the accomplishment of the program objectives negotiated with them and stated in their treatment plans. (ibid.)

In sum, he called the Canadian intervention "well-meaning but psychologically disastrous," adding:

The lesson to the students terminated from the program in this manner will be loud and clear: whenever you want some real excitement or resent being limited from getting what you want when you want it, blow the child abuse whistle. It is. . . important that the students experience justice in the form of a balanced, objective, professional, and thorough evaluation of their child abuse allegations. I want the Ultra students to experience legitimate authority as reasonable and just, not as impulsive [or] capricious. (ibid., p. 4)

Donald Hirth, who sacrificed his annual vacation to assist during the Canada situation, recalls the experience as one of his most memorable at Becket: it involved "travel, excitement, intensity, responsibility, the need to assess quickly" (Donald Hirth, interview). For John Wolter, the Canadian crisis posed a serious threat to Becket's existence and necessitated a level of response similar to the 1973 death of a student. He also maintained a sense of humor, distributing olive drab t-shirts printed with the message "We Survived Val d'Or."

At the end of the summer, Doug Teschner took a leave of absence to pursue doctoral studies at the University of Massachusetts. His last act was an accreditation meeting with American Camping Association officials; despite the lingering impact of the Canadian

incident, Becket Adventures was re-accredited with a ninety-one percent standards compliance score (Earley, 1982).

The trustees met twice during 1981-1982 (both prior to the Canadian incident). Among their actions were re-election of members Nancy Cornwall, Joan Wolter, Curt Hunter, and Jean Banks; agreement to purchase ten more acres of Becket School, Inc. land; approval of five-year leases for New Hampshire corn and hay fields (recently purchased by John Wolter) plus the two Becket farm properties; and agreements to study both instituting an employee retirement plan and the future of co-education at Becket (McCarry, 1981, 1982).

In summary, 1981-1982 was a memorable year for the Academy. The main campus enjoyed an unprecedented degree of middle management stability, and there were program refinements in a variety of areas (including the academic curriculum, counseling, and nutrition). The wilderness program experienced considerable growth including expansion to new sites (New Mexico and New York's Adirondacks), two staff manual revisions, and the first offering for adults (training for the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services). The graduate school proposal was endorsed by the evaluation committee, but, when it became apparent that the state was unwilling to grant licensure, was ultimately withdrawn.

Becket's long-standing "commitment to educate youth who had failed in previous placements" (McCabe, 1981, p. 53) led to the July 1981 creation of the Ultra program. As noted by McCabe, the birth of this alternative "took a period of six years of experimentation

with different concepts of experiential education" (ibid., p. 40). Extensive improvements were implemented in 1981-1982: since Ultra's difficult beginning in the 1981 summer (including the forest fire and other incidents), the program had achieved a significant degree of stability. Tragically, the five new staff had worked barely ten days when Becket's most creative alternative for youth in need suffered a surprising and abrupt termination.

The Canadian incident did more than end an innovative program, however. It generated significant adverse publicity which affected the entire Becket operation and strained the school's long-positive relationship with its principal referral source (the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services).

On a more positive note, the school experienced an increase in its rates. Even so, the \$12,885.12 tuition, board, and care annual mainstream rate (Spector, 1981) remained the lowest among the members of the Connecticut Association of Child Caring Agencies. The Ultra rate of \$28,162.82, although significantly higher, was very competitive given the needs of the youth served. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1982, Becket had assets of \$1,595,347 against liabilities of \$875,305; total expenditures were \$1,859,812 (Dayton, Piercey, & Knapp, 1982).

The Nineteenth Year: 1982-1983

Becket opened for its nineteenth year with 118 students in attendance: 114 mainstream and four Department of Mental Retardation (and former Ultra) placements (Becket Academy Daily Bulletin, 1982). These latter four became the nucleus of a new New Hampshire program, the Pike School (see subsequent discussion). The other Ultra students did not return to Becket: the Department of Children and Youth Services Canada investigation continued until mid-October and, by then, the Ultra staff were no longer employed. In sum, the Ultra program had lost critical momentum.

The negative publicity did not, however, result in curtailed Academy enrollment: by year's end, there were 159 students in the mainstream program alone (ibid., 1983). There was a significant contingent of females and increased emphasis upon serving their special needs. Furthermore, there was also some positive publicity: a January 1983 article in the New York Times included Becket as one of the few schools in the country specializing in service to learning disabled youth (O'Neill, 1983).

Administrative staff included John Wolter (president), Malcolm Winkley (director), Donald Hirth (dean of students), John Blaschik (assistant to the dean), Robin Goeler (principal), Sanford Bassett (director of homelife and dean of women), Mary Smith (pupil personnel coordinator), Michael Penkert (admissions director), Edmund Gubbins (consultant), and William Fullerton (Pike School

director). Among the new staff were dorm parent Mary Ellen Ramsdell, counselor Susan Brown, teacher Chris Veronesi, and maintenance/vocational education director Arthur Brown--an ex-Marine who had formerly owned and operated his own machining business in East Haddam. The dining hall staff included Ed Ferrante, Herman Baskin, and Marion Walton, while secretarial support was provided by Betty Helmedach, Audrey Ely, Jane Brothers, Bea Bula (part-time), and Gert Tanski. Diana Schleis managed the business office with the assistance of Dick Bula and later Regina Malsbary.

A new brochure outlined Becket's commitment to academics, community, environment, physical development and health, self-esteem, discipline, and spiritual growth (Becket Academy, 1982a). The school's discipline program (described in the brochure as "an imposed structure designed to help students acquire self discipline"; *ibid.*) was upgraded (Becket Academy Discipline Ladder 1982-1983, 1982).

Efforts to improve the growing female program included the addition of a full-time girls' counselor (Susan Brown) and attempts to give that subcomponent a partially separate identity (Dye, 1983, p. 30). With the assistance of Ed Gubbins, a new teacher evaluation procedure was developed (Goeler, 1982).

The 1982-1983 school year represented a serious test for the Connecticut mainstream program. As a result of the Canadian incident, the school was experiencing ongoing negative publicity. At the same time, there was no alternative for youth who were

unsuccessful on the campus.

However, previous program refinements and increased staff stability paid dividends: the school was able to effectively serve the needs of most students enrolled. By 1982-1983, Becket's Connecticut program had achieved a high level of sophistication with regard to educating youth with special needs.

An area of new development was creation of a group home for developmentally disabled (mentally retarded) adult men. The independent Brian House, Inc., was granted corporate status in January 1983 (Jane Brothers, pers. comm.), and leased the renovated Faculty House (one of the original Becket buildings). The clients (including John Wolter's brother Brian) worked for pay on the Becket Academy campus. Former Becket dorm parents William and Mary Ann Milanese became the houseparents. Mal Winkley was increasingly involved in the Brian House (as well as the Pike School), leaving much of the day-to-day Becket Connecticut operation to dean of students Don Hirth and other staff.

During 1982-1983, there was a continued effort to upgrade the Becket nutrition program. In December 1982, Joan Wolter completed her master's thesis "The Effects of Sugar, Preservatives, Additives, and Synthetic Foods on Anti-social Behaviors." In addition to making a convincing case that inappropriate behavior can be attributed to diet, Joan included a curriculum of study (Joan Wolter, 1982). She also modified the dining hall and wilderness

menus to conform to Becket's nutritional principles; menus incorporated analysis of calories, protein, carbohydrates, fiber, and fat (Joan Wolter, 1983). The Becket organic garden and nutritional program received special emphasis in a highly positive article about the school in the Middletown Press (Davidoff, 1983).

Physical plant development included several improvements, including a cinder track around the pond (thereafter used for the morning run) and a freezer facility behind the dining hall. Work was also begun on the new vocational education building (J. Smith, 1983d). This was the most significant construction effort since the dining hall was built in 1975. Arthur Brown supervised the project; students were involved, although not to the same extent as in the school's early construction. The building was financed by the State of Connecticut through a grant procured by Ed Gubbins. Although students had been involved in construction and maintenance from the school's beginning, the development of a formalized vocational education program was a significant step in the evolution of Becket Academy.

Although the state cleared Becket of the Canadian child abuse allegations in October, negative publicity about the school continued. An East Haddam neighbor publicly charged that Becket youth were dangerous and asked the town selectmen to investigate. October and November newspaper headlines: "Concern Expressed by Neighbor of School" (Friedman, 1982a), "Becket Academy Neighbor Complains to Selectmen" (J. Smith, 1982c), "Becket Academy Complaint

to Come before Selectmen" (J. Smith, 1982b), "Selectmen in East Haddam Discuss Controversy Surrounding Academy" (1982), and "Private School Taxes Neighbors' Patience Within East Haddam" (Auclair, 1982).

Becket's zoning status (which was first questioned in 1980) once again became a public issue. A November 24 headline: "Gubbins Told P-Z [Planning and Zoning] File in Becket Case Open" (Friedman, 1982b). East Haddam first selectman Douglas Ferrary undertook an investigation of the school (East Haddam, Town of, 1982; J. Smith, 1982e). The controversy continued into the spring. A March 10, 1983, headline: "Academy Charges to be Revived Monday" (J. Smith, 1983a). March 17: "Becket Status Questionable, Town Attorney to Study Conflict" (J. Smith, 1983c).

Without making any significant compromises, the Academy was able to resolve differences with the neighbor ("Peace at Last? Becket Academy Fashions Mutual Accord with its Chief Detractor"; Friedman, 1983b). The zoning violation charges were also dropped (J. Smith, 1983b): Edmund Gubbins argued convincingly that Becket Academy continued to be a school--the reason it had a child-care license was because state statutes mandate that all special education schools be so licensed (Edmund Gubbins, pers. comm.).

Because the Canada situation had made him "immune," John Wolter was able to stand his ground in the face of this local criticism (John Wolter, pers. comm.). He also believed that Becket was not

vulnerable: the program was very high in quality and the physical plant (including the new septic system) stringently met all health and safety standards. Wolter also felt the argument that Becket had changed from its earlier status was based on a misconception of the nature of the world; in an unreleased commentary, he enumerated extensive changes in East Haddam in the previous eighteen years, concluding:

Somehow people think that Becket should close or somehow Becket pulled the wool over the eyes of local leadership, Planning and Zoning, etc. The fact of the matter is that the world is on the move. . . . and things will never be the same in East Haddam in our lifetime. East Haddam has come into its own, whether we like it or not, and will have its effect on the world around us. Hopefully, the effect will be positive and East Haddam can be proud of its institutions. When I read the papers, I somehow feel that the institutions and people who are doing the most to make the world a little bit better are the object of suspicion and lack of understanding. I guess it was always that way. But it does not have to be. Men and women, AWAKE! The world is a lovely place, and your positive contribution to it is needed. (1983a, p. 5)

In June 1983, Becket employee and East Haddam native John Blaschik declared his candidacy for first selectman (Lalo, 1983). John Wolter was among his active supporters.

Efforts had been underway since the fall of 1981 to obtain formalized State of New Hampshire approval for the Pike facility (see, for example, Winkley, 1981b). Approval for use as a special education school was granted in May 1982 (Brunelle, 1982). One plan was to use the Pike facility for a second Ultra phase, but the Canadian incident eliminated that possibility.

Despite the events in Canada, the State of Connecticut

Department of Mental Retardation continued to express a desire to place male youth with Becket. Four of the former Ultra students referred by this agency thus became the nucleus of a new Becket New Hampshire program (named the Pike School) which opened in September 1982. Soon thereafter, it became obvious that there was a significant demand for such an alternative for boys requiring a highly individualized placement (but not necessarily an Ultra-type situation).

The Pike School staff included administrator William Fullerton, special education teacher Ruth Claypool, houseparent Willie MacMullen, and activities coordinator Ron Fullerton. The program itself was a small-scale version of that at East Haddam; it consisted of classroom academics, work projects on the farm, field trips, and recreational activities (including hikes in the adjacent White Mountains) (Fullerton, 1982). In early November, a homelife program manual was developed with the assistance of East Haddam's Sandy Bassett; it incorporated the morning run, house chores, afternoon activities, discipline, and nutrition ("Homelife Program Manual, Pike, N.H.," 1982).

Unfortunately, this new program experienced a series of fires. The most serious was suspicious in origin and totally destroyed the office and classroom facility--the old Pike two-room schoolhouse--and the Becket outdoor equipment inventory stored in its basement (Poliquin, 1982; "Early Morning Fire Destroys Pike School," 1982; "Suspicious Fires Could Be Beckett--sic--Academy Related," 1982).

Prior to this November blaze, there was an unsuccessful fire bombing of the Warren Klare house--which was soon thereafter purchased and renovated for use as a dormitory. A third fire, in January 1983, resulted in major damage to the recently renovated original farmhouse (where the students were living) ("Beckett--sic--Fire Caused by Power Failure," 1983).

Despite these problems, the program continued to operate successfully. While the farmhouse was repaired, the students lived in the Klare house, and a second purchased residence (the Elsie Bolton house) was converted to a school and office facility.

By comparison with the previous year, there was limited Becket wilderness program activity in 1982-1983--in part because many of the staff left (due to inactivity) during the drawn-out Canadian investigation. Scott Baker was one who continued, and he was responsible for initiating a new concept in Becket off-campus programming: the historical-cultural trip. Becket wilderness offerings had often included stops at historical sites during the roadtrips to their destination, but it was Baker who first developed complete programs with visits to Washington, D.C., Gettsburg, Williamsburg, and other sites. A group of girls also visited a Marine Corps base in the South.

During 1982-1983, there were three Florida trips--two for mainstream students and one for Pike pupils. The latter group's trip was described in a Miami Herald article (Jacobsen, 1983). Also

during the winter, East Haddam youth participated in several New Hampshire weekend camping trips. The seniors took a hike on Cape Cod's rail trail in preparation for their southern Appalachian rite of passage.

In the spring, Pat Dezell led a trip to New Mexico's Gila Wilderness; it was the second Becket offering to that site (and the first for mainstream students). The seniors hiked the Appalachian Trail under the supervision of James Smith.

In June, two mainstream groups went to New Hampshire: one hiked in the White Mountains, while the second canoed a section of the Connecticut River. Francis McCabe (who was writing his doctoral dissertation) supervised this program. When one student left the river without permission, McCabe proposed that an Ultra-type alternative be developed to serve the youth's needs (McCabe, 1983a). This possibility did not materialize, however.

Although a full-time doctoral student, Douglass Teschner (who was living near Pike) continued to work for Becket on a consulting basis: implementing staff development for wilderness personnel, cooperating with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to provide Becket assistance during search and rescue missions, and undertaking other special projects. He was also involved in the Department of Children and Youth Services review of the Becket wilderness program.

There was concern that this evaluation was an inappropriately timed reaction to the Canadian incident and whether any D.C.Y.S.

staff member had sufficient credentials for such a project. The school cooperated fully, however. As part of this program review, D.C.Y.S. representatives visited one of the mainstream Florida trips.

The Department's report, released in March 1983, included many positive comments: "Becket Academy appears to hire the most competent staff available" (Milling, Cooke, Stevenson, and Cook, 1983, p. 21), "Becket Academy's policies and procedures for health and safety in the wilderness are detailed, comprehensive and address a wide range of potential health and safety standards" (pp. 32-33), "Becket's Ultra program may be among the most innovative services anywhere available" (p. 50), and "Becket has maintained an excellent wilderness safety record" (p. 53). There were also criticisms: that the school had a "loosley [sic] structured system of communication and supervision" (ibid., p. 16), "Becket has not specified written guidelines for mininum [sic] levels of qualifications in outdoors, safety and health, leadership, and child management skills" (pp. 20-21), the school had a "lack of fully-qualified personnel" (p. 50), and "the staff manual is excessively cumbersome and detailed" (p. 53).

In a lengthy response, Wolter (1983b) criticized the report on a variety of grounds including quality (p. 5), the evaluators' misunderstanding of the goals of a review process (p. 5), their failure to recognize philosophical bases of disagreement (Becket's

educational outlook vs. a traditional treatment approach; the Academy's flexible organizational structure vs. a traditional bureaucracy; p. 7), and omissions (including the proposed graduate school, academic components of wilderness trips, the school's record-keeping, and the American Camping Association's re-accreditation; p. 8).

The impact of the Canadian incident lingered throughout the 1982-1983 year. There was extensive correspondence with Canadian officials regarding the clothing and equipment that the Quebec youth workers procured from the Ultra students, as well as equipment stolen from the remote roadhead (see, for example, Winkley, 1982a; Falardeau, 1982; Landry, 1982; Teschner, 1983b, 1983c).

Despite the Canadian officials' stated intent to bring charges of criminal child abuse against Academy employees, none were filed. Immigration violations were thus the only charges brought, and, in June 1983, the seven staff were acquitted of these charges in a Val d'Or court ("Becket Staffers Exonerated," 1983). Among those testifying on the employees' behalf was Frank Rivet, the principal property owner in Clova. Rivet also informed Douglass Teschner and Malcolm Winkley that the provincial policeman who had organized the Ultra camp arrests and student evacuation had since been demoted. He added that the fishing camp owner was in trouble for alleged illegal activities. With these final charges resolved in the school's favor, Becket Academy was thus completely cleared of any wrongdoing in Canada.

In July 1981, John Wolter asked Dr. Larry Dye, a former associate from the University of Massachusetts doctoral program and an authority on youth, to undertake an evaluation of the Academy. By coincidence, the beginning of his study coincided with the Canadian incident. In his 1982 report, Dr. Dye called Becket "an innovative and creative educational institution that integrates many new concepts relative to the development of young people" (1982, p. 9). He found the staff "loyal. . . hard working and energetic" (p. 20) and observed that the school's "idealism was often confronted with the practical realities of the child caring business and the changing nature of financial resources available to state agencies" (p. 6).

Dr. Dye acknowledged the conflict between the school and the state resulting from the Canadian incident, adding, "The State of Connecticut's Department of Children and Youth Services is very fortunate to have a [private] program such as Becket Academy" (ibid., p. 23). He also raised an important question:

Is Becket Academy's philosophy to maintain an educational program that has the capacity to work with special needs youth on a continuing basis. . . or is Becket Academy's philosophy to become a residential treatment program with a special education thrust? This issue is probably the single most important. . . affecting Becket Academy. . . . Traditionally, the strengths of Becket Academy have been. . . its academic program and the ability to integrate the academic with the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of the youth attending the school. Over the course of the last few years, the Academy has received extraordinary pressures both from a philosophical as well as a regulatory point of view to move towards a residential treatment [model]. (ibid., p. 7)

Among the specific areas Dye mentioned as indicative of this pressure was the issue of Becket's vacation policy. Since the beginning of the school, students had always gone home on a regular basis. John Wolter believed this was an essential element since it provided students with home contact and created a mechanism by which students could periodically get a "fresh start" in the program (John Wolter, pers. comm.). Many state personnel criticized this policy, however, arguing in favor of open-ended placement.

Further, Dr. Dye observed that Becket had a "low profile" resulting from "a planned and conscientious decision to maintain low visibility and high program thrusts" (ibid., p. 20). He believed that the school had developed a wide-ranging expertise and

could play a significant role in helping to establish standards, create alternatives, support member agencies or professional organizations and assist in the development of child care services in the State of Connecticut. . . .

[Further, T]here is a need for Becket. . . to clearly articulate and influence the growth of the good child care practice throughout the United States. (ibid., pp. 21-22)

Among Dye's specific recommendations were reaffirmation of Becket's educational model (p. 24), documentation of the school's "unique aspects" (ibid.), increased minority staffing (p. 25), and sponsorship of conferences (p. 25).

Wolter acted to implement these suggestions, requesting that Dr. Dye develop documentation about the Becket program. Dye solicited written information from thirty-one staff members which he edited and compiled as the "Becket Academy Program Development Draft Report" (Dye, 1983).

Another of the recommendations--sponsorship of a conference--was also undertaken. In May 1983, a three-day gathering entitled "Wilderness Challenge: A Positive Development Model for Troubled Youth" was conducted on the East Haddam campus (Eastman, 1983; Institute of Experiential Studies, 1983a; "Wilderness Conference to Explore Youth Programs," 1983; "Wilderness Program Praised," 1983). Speakers included United States Congressman Sam Gejdenson, D.C.Y.S. Commissioner Mark Marcus, the University of Colorado's Dr. Richard Kraft, Richard Gable from Pittsburgh's National Center for Juvenile Justice, and Robert Burton, founder of the Arizona-based VisionQuest. State representative Dean Markham also attended. Some 150 individuals from twenty-five states and Canada participated in the event.

The conference was directed by Doug Teschner and officially sponsored by the Institute of Experiential Studies. At the suggestion of Becket trustee Dr. Arthur Eve, it was decided to expand the original Insitute concept (a graduate school) to include training and staff development, technical assistance, publications, and research (Gubbins and Teschner, 1983). The Institute would thus become Becket's means to share its expertise on youth programs as suggested by Dr. Dye. Teschner increasingly assumed a role of developing the Institute; among other activities, he spoke at a variety of other conferences.

The Institute also sponsored a second "wilderness group

dynamics organizational development" program for the Massachusetts Development of Youth Services; this five-day offering was held in New Hampshire in August 1983 (Institute of Experiential Studies, 1983b, 1983c). During the 1983 summer, Teschner also developed two major Becket-related papers as part of his comprehensive examination: the first was an initial draft of the edited conference proceedings (Teschner, 1983d), while the second was entitled "Foundations of Experiential Education and Their Application at Becket Academy" (Teschner, 1983a).

In late spring, a number of major Becket staff changes occurred. Pupil personnel coordinator Mary Smith resigned because her family was moving from the area. Jeremy Dodd, who as a consultant had previously undertaken a feasibility study on the use of video at the Academy (Dodd, 1983), became a full-time employee undertaking development projects. Frank McCabe, in the final stages of completing his doctoral dissertation, became director of the Pike School.

Donald Hirth became director of Becket Academy replacing Malcolm Winkley, who resigned to become director of Brian House, Inc. Winkley, who continues in this post in 1984, looks back on his ten-year employment at Becket with great fondness: "I learned how the world was put together" (Malcolm Winkley, interview). Winkley considers John Wolter a "teacher" and "mentor": "I couldn't do what I'm doing now without his tutelage" (ibid.). With regard to his contributions to the school, Malcolm observes, "I helped Becket

Academy through its adolescence. . . . [and] gave John loyalty and consistency" (ibid.).

The Academy's nineteenth graduation was held in June 1983. Hartford mayor Thirman Milner was the commencement speaker, and the school building was dedicated in honor of Francis Donohue ("Milner Featured at Becket Ceremony," 1983). Donohue, who had helped with the early Becket construction, was killed in Vietnam in 1967.

During the 1983 summer, activity was focused on the Connecticut campus, much of it related to the new vocational facility. Willard Hedden came up from Florida to work on the farm. He and a group of students took vegetables to area fairs, and the produce received a large number of blue ribbons. Vegetables were also sold at the local farmer's market. For the first summer in many years, there were no major wilderness offerings, although Scott Baker led some historical trips. In addition to working on their farm, the Pike School students went on several extended field trips throughout the Northeast (McCabe, 1983b).

The trustees met three times during 1982-1983. John Wolter and Roger Peck were re-elected to the board, an additional eight acres of Becket School, Inc., property (including the pond area) was purchased (for \$60,000), and it was decided to sell the small lot on which the gutted Pike schoolhouse stood (McCarry 1982, 1983). The ongoing efforts of Ed Gubbins regarding rate increases and grant procurement were also discussed, as was the need for more positive

publicity about the school (ibid.).

In summary, 1982-1983 was a momentous year--even when considered with respect to the previous one. The twelve-month education, board, and care rate was increased to \$16,572.40 (Milling et al., 1983, p. 3). The East Haddam program demonstrated both the capability to continue successfully serving youth (despite the adverse publicity after Canada) and the ability to endure negative publicity in the community. The nutrition program was upgraded, and work was begun on a major new vocational building.

A major new program (the Pike School) began operation and continued despite three fires; by year's end, enrollment had risen to twelve boys. A major national conference was held at Becket under sponsorship of the developing Institute of Experiential Studies. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1983, the Academy's assets grew substantially (to \$2,228,970), while liabilities (\$871,203) declined (Markham, 1983). Total expenditures were \$2,301,391 (ibid.)--a twenty-four percent increase over the previous year and nearly double the 1979-1980 total.

Despite these gains, 1983-1984 was widely perceived as a major test, given the loss of key staff Mary Smith and (especially) Malcolm Winkley.

The Twentieth Year: 1983-1984

The Connecticut campus opened for the 1983-1984 year with 130 students (Becket Academy Daily Bulletin, 1983), while the Pike School enrolled twelve boys (Bonnie French, pers. comm.). By year's end, enrollment had risen to 144 mainstream boys and girls (Becket Academy Daily Bulletin, 1984) and twenty-one Pike students (Bonnie French, pers. comm.). The twelve-month rate for the Connecticut mainstream program was \$17,549.40, while the Pike School rate was \$32,270.40 (Diana Schleis, pers. comm.).

Since the Canadian incident, an increased percentage of the students were non-committed; despite this status, they had diverse needs (Donald Hirth, pers. comm.). In one survey, ninety-six out of 101 students were from one-parent homes (Peter Marshall, pers. comm.).

Administrative staff included president John Wolter, consultant Edmund Gubbins, director Donald Hirth, principal Robin Goeler, director of homelife Sanford Bassett, counseling services director Peter Marshall, pupil personnel coordinator Andrea Bogue, wilderness director Jeremy Dodd, and Pike School director Francis McCabe. Staff on the Connecticut campus included team II leader Richard Dodge, team III leader Nancy O'Neill, vocational team leader Ray Williams, dormitory team leader Mary Ellen Ramsdell, student advocate Oliver Dillon, night supervisor David Meade, community relations officer Mary Jean Gagnon, nurse Maria Cunningham, teachers

Amy Armstrong, Judy Downs, Karen Guest, Michelle Homer, Melinda Myer, and Kathy Yawin, and dorm parents Earle Everett, Bernice Jalbert, Vickie Henzy, and Rod Vaught. After several years' absence, Alan Clark returned to Becket to teach auto mechanics. Pike School staff included activities coordinator Ronald Fullerton, special education teacher Ruth Claypool, houseparent Lin Chase, and trip leaders Janet Dineen, Robert McConville, and Mel Labelle.

At East Haddam, major program refinements and improvements were undertaken. The new vocational school (which included auto mechanics, carpentry, machine shop, buildings and grounds maintenance, agriculture, and food preparation) was fully operational. The new facility was dedicated on December 16, 1983 (Husson, 1983). Governor William O'Neill was present to dedicate the building and announce that it was to be named after Edmund Gubbins (who had been a major force in developing the project and also wrote the vocational curricula). Department of Children and Youth Services Commissioner Mark Marcus was also in attendance. During the spring, Central Connecticut State College offered a vocational course on the Becket campus.

The counseling program was significantly upgraded with the addition of two new full-time counselors (Beth Rayner and Bob Romeo) and a full-time secretary (Kathleen Gubbins). There were thus four full-time counselors and one part-time (J. John Ashe). In addition to working with individual students, family counseling services were increasingly implemented. The original Wolter (and

more recently Winkley) residence was renovated for use as a counseling center, infirmary, and faculty apartment.

In the academic area, principal Robin Goeler undertook major curriculum revisions. In addition, a year-long teacher in-service training program was implemented by a Southern Connecticut State University team that included trustee Roger Peck; this program was designed to improve the curriculum and teacher evaluation process plus help the faculty deal positively with teaching stress (Robin Goeler, interview).

Athletic teams were active throughout the year. The basketball team was especially successful, finishing a 9-1 season by winning the Rocky Hill Invitational Tournament ("Team Caps Season," 1984).

Brian House clients continued to work on the East Haddam campus throughout the 1983-1984 year. By July 1984, that organization was no longer leasing the Faculty House; the clients who had lived on Academy grounds moved into Brian House's second group home in nearby Chester, Connecticut.

In addition to the completion of the vocational education building and renovations for the new counseling/infirmary center, there were other East Haddam physical plant developments. The former counseling center (and previous central office) was renovated for use as a faculty dwelling, and a new dishwashing wing was added to the dining hall. There were also a variety of improvements funded through grants: upgraded fire protection ("Becket Awarded Fire Protection Grant," 1984), energy conservation efforts, and

library renovation (Edmund Gubbins, pers. comm.).

During 1983-1984, Becket Academy was evaluated by the State Department of Education which extended certification until 1986-- when the school will be evaluated by the National Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges (Edmund Gubbins, pers. comm.).

John Blaschik, Jr., who resigned his post at Becket, defeated first selectman Douglas Ferrary in the East Haddam Democratic primary ("Blaschik Upsets Incumbent Ferrary," 1983). During the subsequent election campaign, the Republicans publicly charged that the Democratic candidates (Blaschik and incumbent second selectman Gubbins) "are tied to Becket Academy. Common sense says this loyalty will affect their performance" ("Help East Haddam Vote Republican," 1983). In November 1983, Blaschik and Gubbins were elected, as was Donald Hirth (who ran for Planning and Zoning Commission Alternate) ("Blaschik Leads Democratic Wins," 1983; Friedman, 1983a).

During 1983-1984, the Pike School underwent a major period of growth, including a significant increase in enrollment. The youth admitted were up to age twenty-one and, while some were developmentally disabled, others were of average or above-average academic ability (Francis McCabe, interview). Their common denominator as a group was that each required a more individualized education program than was available at East Haddam. All of the students were publicly funded, with about half from Connecticut and the remainder from New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine (Michael

Penkert, interview). The students lived in the original farmhouse, the Klare house, and (by year's end) the renovated Bolton house.

During the year, the Pike School's licensed-bed capacity was increased to twenty-four ("A History and Overview of the Pike School's First Two Years," 1984). During the winter and spring of 1984, the State of New Hampshire evaluated the school and approved the program through June 1986 (ibid.).

The Pike program included the morning run, homelife, school, career exploration (in food preparation, auto mechanics, and agriculture), community service projects (roadside litter removal, entertaining residents at the nearby home for the elderly), and recreational activities. In April and July 1984, meetings were held between East Haddam and Pike staff in order to refine and further develop the New Hampshire program.

Throughout the year, there were major improvements in the New Hampshire facility in order to accommodate the growing program. The former Blake's Creamery building (which had been used as a bunkhouse and garage) was extensively renovated and became a new classroom/office complex. Houseparent apartments were added to two of the three residential facilities including the renovated Bolton house (which had previously served as schoolhouse after the original one was destroyed by fire). During the summer, work was begun on a fourth house and a small gymnasium ("Questions and Answers about the Pike School," 1984).

Over the course of the year, the Pike School's expenditures were nearly \$700,000 (ibid.). During the 1984 summer, the school's first brochure was printed (Pike School, 1984).

The New Hampshire farm operation continued to be developed; among the physical improvements was the addition of a new pole barn to house the various machinery. More than ten thousand bales of hay were cut during the 1984 summer.

During 1983-1984, there was considerable wilderness and off-campus activity. In November, Jeremy Dodd became Becket's wilderness director. Negotiations to re-establish the Ultra program were unsuccessful, but there were numerous offerings for both the East Haddam and Pike students.

A group of Pike School students hiked and canoed in the Adirondacks in the fall of 1983. Throughout the course of the year, alternating groups of Pike students participated in extended field trips throughout the United States; these included visits to historical, cultural, and ecological sites plus outdoor activities (including whitewater rafting in North Carolina). During the winter, Pike School students went to Florida where they canoed and helped Willard Hedden develop his new farm site.

Offerings for East Haddam students included fall historical cultural trips led by new staff member Steve Czarnecki. Throughout the winter, there were numerous Florida trips. The Ivey House received extensive renovations and was used by Becket and Pike School students as well as a group of senior citizens participating

in an Elderhostel. A highlight of the winter was the presence of a National Geographic photographer developing an article on Becket's Florida operation for the Society's student publication World ("Becket Academy's Florida Program," 1984; "National Geographic Society to Publish Story on Becket Academy's Florida Program," 1984; "Everglades Adventure," 1985).

In the spring, trips were run in North Carolina's Pisgah National Forest and the seniors hiked the Appalachian Trail. Staff for the latter program included James Smith (on his third successive senior trip) and Sanford Bassett. The Trail was Sandy's culminating Becket experience after five years at the Academy. In May, Mary Ellen Ramsdell replaced Bassett as Becket's homelife coordinator.

In the spring of 1984, a major revision of Becket's wilderness staff manual was released. The manual was the first major document produced using the school's computer with word-processing capability. (The payroll and financial record-keeping were also increasingly computerized.) Entitled Staff Training Manual for Becket Wilderness and Off-campus Experiential Programs (Teschner, 1984c), this 251-page document represented the fourth version produced in a three-year period. It included an outline for developing each off-campus trip's plan, including the itinerary, staff profiles, budget, education program, menus, staff training, clothing and equipment lists, job descriptions, report forms, and various other information (see, for example, Dodd, 1983b).

Correspondence continued between Becket and Canadian officials

with regards to the 1982 incident. Reviewing the public ridicule, missing and/or stolen equipment, and total absence of substantiated charges, letters from Becket concluded, "Nous voulons justice. Nous croyions que vous nous devriez une apologie" (translation: we want justice; we believe you owe us an apology) (Teschner, 1984a, 1984b).

Also with respect to wilderness programming, the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services requested that Becket apply for grant money under a federal private sector corrections initiative. With the cooperation of Massachusetts officials, a new Ultra-type program was designed. During the summer of 1984, Alfred Regnery (administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) informed Becket that its proposal received a high score and was under further consideration for funding (see Regnery, 1984).

The Institute of Experiential Studies was further developed over the course of 1983-1984. During the fall, efforts were undertaken to purchase a suitable facility, but these were unsuccessful. Alternatively, it was decided to temporarily base the Institute on the East Haddam campus. In January 1984, Douglass Teschner (who had begun work on his doctoral dissertation on the history of Becket Academy) returned to Connecticut to become the Institute's director.

In April, the Institute sponsored its second national three-day conference on outdoor alternatives for youth in need. Like the previous gathering, it was held on the East Haddam campus. Speakers included Alfred Regnery; founding trustee of Outward Bound,

Inc., Joshua Miner; 1981 California teacher of the year Reno Taini; and the father of therapeutic camping, Campbell Loughmiller from Texas (Institute of Experiential Studies, 1984; "Becket Conference Draws National Dignitaries," 1984).

Also in April, the Institute published its first book, an expanded version of Teschner's comprehensive paper. Wilderness Challenge: Outdoor Education Alternatives for Youth in Need was edited by Teschner and John Wolter. The 173-page document included chapters by a variety of authorities in the field, including Becket staffers Steve Messier, Mary Ellen Ramsdell, and Joan Wolter plus former chaplain Earle Fox; an early reader called it the most important book to emerge from the field in the past five years. Teschner and Wolter also published an article entitled "How to Improve the Hiring, Training, and Professional Development of Staff" in the summer 1984 issue of the Journal of Experiential Education.

Other Institute activities included three Becket staff development programs, presentations at conferences sponsored by the Association for Experiential Education and Community Program Innovations, and a meeting with a special populations group of the American Camping Association New England section. Negotiations were also in progress with respect to implementing the graduate school program. In June, Teschner travelled throughout the United States to learn more about other programs and how the Institute might serve their needs.

The Academy's twentieth graduation was held in June; the

speaker was East Haddam first selectman John Blaschik. A small ceremony was held at the Pike School to honor its first high school graduate.

Summer 1984 programs included Connecticut vocational, academic, and work programs. The vocational agriculture students had the opportunity to show animals at area fairs under the tutelage of instructor John Michalak; they had practiced for these events during the school year ("Becket Students Excel in Livestock Contest," 1984). The organic garden continued to produce quality vegetables (although Willard Hedden was unable to spend the summer in Connecticut).

In addition to Connecticut campus programs, there were two summer wilderness offerings for East Haddam students: the traditional Connecticut River expedition and the new Becket trail crew (which undertook public service trail maintenance in New Hampshire's White Mountain National Forest). Two groups of Pike School students enjoyed a summer program of recreation and field trips; they lived in tents on leased lakeside land in Vermont.

The trustees met twice during the 1983-1984 year. Arthur Eve, Frank Carr, and John Wolter were re-elected, and James Reardon was elected a new board member (McCarry, 1983). Additional trustee activity included land purchases: the Academy bought the remaining Becket School, Inc., holdings (which included the farm, adjacent house and sheds, and the Wolter family residence) for \$605,000 (McCarry, 1984). The few parcels of Academy-owned New Hampshire and

Florida property were sold (McCarry, 1983, 1984).

As a result of these transactions, the Academy owned the entire Connecticut property and leased the Florida and New Hampshire properties from Joan Wolter and limited partnership trusts (whose beneficiaries are Joan Wolter and the Wolter children) respectively (John Wolter, pers. comm.; James Reardon, pers. comm.). The decision to maintain the Florida and New Hampshire properties in private ownership was based on the belief that (1) it was in the long-term interest of the school that they be kept on the tax rolls and (2) the separation facilitated program independence and the planned future decentralization of Becket (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

In summary, 1983-1984 was a highly successful year that lacked the intensity and controversy of 1981-1982 and 1982-1983. Despite the loss of key staff at the end of 1982-1983, the Connecticut program not only sustained past accomplishments, but forged new improvements (most notably in the vocational and counseling programs). The Pike School was rapidly developing an identity of its own, representing (in effect) the first full-scale effort to duplicate the East Haddam model. The Institute of Experiential Studies, although lacking its own infrastructure, began to develop an identity and reputation through publication of a book and sponsorship of its second national conference.

By 1983-1984, Becket's relationship with the Department of Children and Youth Services had undergone a period of healing. In

a letter of support with regard to Becket's federal grant application, D.C.Y.S. deputy commissioner Charles Launi wrote:

The Department of Children and Youth Services has been utilizing. . . [Becket Academy] as a placement resource for over ten years. We have found this program to be exceptional, and would highly recommend it. (1984)

The school's rates were increased, but the East Haddam program remained the least expensive program with respect to the types of services offered.

By 1983-1984, the quality of the Becket program began to be increasingly recognized. There was positive publicity in the state (see, for example, Morgan and Bombster, 1984). Kendall Lingle, Project Director of the National Consortium on Alternatives for Youth at Risk (and who attended both outdoor conferences), nationally distributed information on the school. In his introduction, Lingle wrote, "So far as we know Becket may be the only school providing [such a comprehensive] combination of experience[s]" (Teschner, Wolter, and Lingle, 1984). Becket also gained attention internationally: information requests were received from France and other countries. In July 1984, Merle Hurcomb, Associate Director of Australia's Sydney City Mission, toured the East Haddam campus ("Administrator Tours Academy," 1984).

In addition, a 1984 report by the Connecticut River Watershed Council noted that this river was less polluted and acknowledged the early efforts of the school (Asinof, 1984; "Connecticut River is Getting Cleaner," 1984).

With regard to finances, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1984, Becket Academy assets were \$3,015,208, while liabilities totalled \$830,581; total expenditures equalled \$2,823,295 (Markham, 1984).

Conclusions

Characteristics and Trends

The period 1980 through 1984 can be characterized as follows:

Institutionalization of the Connecticut program. Refinements and improvements were made throughout the period in virtually all program areas. Academic curriculum revisions, the new vocational program, an upgraded counseling component, emphasis upon nutrition, and development of the organic garden are several prominent examples. Further, considerable effort was made to institutionalize the program, including efforts to define its various components on paper. The development of personnel policies, written job descriptions, policy manuals, and the discipline ladder are several specific examples. The wilderness program was also increasingly institutionalized in a similar manner.

New program development. While the East Haddam program was becoming increasingly refined and institutionalized, there were also major new program thrusts. The Voyageur and Ultra programs were creative responses for needy youth. The wilderness program expanded its site capabilities to include Canada, New Mexico, and New York state's Adirondacks; historical trips were also developed and implemented. The Pike School was originally conceived as a follow-up program for Department of Mental Retardation youth who had experienced the Ultra wilderness alternative; but it rapidly developed its own identity as a small-scale version of the East

Haddam program serving youth in need of a more highly individualized situation.

The Institute of Experiential Studies was initially conceived as a graduate school, but evolved to incorporate staff and organizational development, conferences, publications, and other activities. Although totally independent of Becket, Brian House, Inc. (group homes and supervised work for developmentally disabled adults) was another Becket derivative.

A diverse student population. With respect to the number of students, enrollment was consistently high throughout the four-year period. Youth enrolled were typically disadvantaged, and specialized programs (i.e., Voyageur, Ultra, and the Pike School) were developed to expand Becket's capabilities to serve diverse needs. Among those enrolled were mildly developmentally disabled youth who were placed in the Ultra program and later the Pike School.

Although there continued to be a few private placements and local day students, the two-track admissions policy was de-emphasized after the Canadian incident (Michael Penkert, interview). By 1984, there was also a more rapid student turnover due to a Department of Children and Youth Services policy of reducing the maximum period of residential care. As recently as 1982, Becket mainstream students were typically enrolled for two years, but--by 1984--the average stay was twelve to eighteen months (Michael Penkert, pers. comm.). The Pike School students, however, have

tended to experience longer term placements.

Increasing involvement with the state. During this four-year period, the vast majority of the students were referred through the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services. This agency was very involved in development of the Ultra program and evaluated both the East Haddam and wilderness programs. As invariably happens in all close relationships, the Becket-D.C.Y.S. liaison underwent a difficult period--in particular, immediately after the Canadian incident.

A high public profile. Except for the period of the first Connecticut River trips (1968-1970), Becket had a relatively low public profile throughout its first sixteen years. The strategy had been to devote available energy to improving the program (as opposed to talking about it). During this period, however, the negative publicity generated by the Canadian incident (1982) and events in the East Haddam community (1980 and again in 1982-1983) brought significant attention to the school.

In response to this publicity, a community liaison officer was hired and steps were undertaken (including conferences and publications) to publicly display the positive aspects of Becket. Not only did the Academy withstand the negative publicity, it was able to turn these situations around to the school's advantage. By 1984, Becket had an international reputation for its quality programs.

Financial growth and stability. As a result of continued high enrollment, rate increases, and supplementary grants, Becket Academy had achieved a high degree of financial stability by 1984. The Academy owned all of the land, buildings, and assets of the East Haddam campus. The school undertook construction of a new vocational education center, implemented a variety of renovations, and significantly improved the upkeep and maintenance of its physical plant.

Reaffirmation of an educational model. As noted in 1982 by Dr. Larry Dye, Becket has been under regulatory pressure to adopt a residential treatment model. The school has resisted this pressure and reaffirmed its educational approach. For example, the Academy continues to have vacations every four to six weeks--a practice disliked by many state personnel. Even the Ultra program--which represented Becket's closest venture to a treatment modality--was rooted in a positive and humanistic educational perspective.

Staff continuity. Throughout 1980-1984, there was a high degree of staff continuity at the middle management level and, in many cases, among the line staff as well. Sanford Bassett, Richard Dodge, Judy Downs, William and Ronald Fullerton, Robin Goeler, Edmund Gubbins, Donald Hirth, Peter Marshall, Steve Messier, Michael Penkert, Douglass Teschner, Chris Veronesi, and Malcolm Winkley are among those administrators and line staff who were employed for all (or much) of this period.

A developing bureaucracy. By 1984, the central office included five administrative staff (Wolter, Gubbins, Penkert, Dodd, and Teschner), two financial officers (Diana Schleis and Joan Wolter), two bookkeepers, and three clerical staff. The East Haddam program employed five administrators (Hirth, Goeler, Marshall, Bogue, and Ramsdell), two secretaries, and a number of staff with quasi-administrative/supervisory responsibilities. The Pike School had a director and secretary.

Although such a bureaucracy may seem relatively small by the standards of business or public institutions, in Becket's case, it represents a significant departure from the school's early philosophy of "every man a rifleman." The increasing complexity of the operation (including state paperwork requirements) has generated a need for specialists--and they do not necessarily need to be highly skilled at working directly with children.

Further, Becket administrative tasks are increasingly computerized. Although the computer is an effective management tool, its use at Becket is a major step (even with respect to the school's ethos in the late 1970s).

John Wolter clearly has mixed feelings about this growth in organizational complexity. He acknowledges that the school's stability has meant that "these past two years have been the happiest years in my life" (John Wolter, pers. comm.). At the same time, the scope of the operation creates a different sort of burden than Wolter assumed in Becket's early years. More than ever, he has

to work through other people; Wolter is responsible for the quality of an expanding operation, but (paradoxically) has less and less direct control.

Becket's Relationship to the Larger Society

Nationally, 1980-1984 was a period of political conservatism and increased national pride under the Ronald Reagan presidency. Events in the news included the development of the Polish labor union Solidarity (1980), expanded American military aid to El Salvador (1981), the Vietnam War Memorial dedication (1982), the American intervention in Grenada (1983), the terrorist bombing of the United States military headquarters in Lebanon (1983), the Los Angeles Olympic Games (1984), and the nomination of woman vice-presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro (1984).

The entrepreneurial zeal of the young, upwardly mobile professionals is, in one respect, the same spirit that built Becket. There are, however, some fundamental value differences between this period's mainstream America and Becket Academy. The period's heavy emphasis on materialism has led one critic to call the 1980s the "mine decade." The Becket values of simplicity, sacrifice, commitment, humanism, discipline, moral standards, compassion, and community would seem to place the school out of step with much of what is happening in the larger society.

Educational Purpose

With respect to educational purpose, the school continued to implement its previously espoused goals. The growth of the counseling program is representative of the school's commitment to affective development. Physical development and health received increased emphasis (i.e., an expanded nutrition program). Life experiences continued to be stressed, as evidenced by extensive travel and outdoor offerings. The wilderness, farm, and nutrition components each promoted the purpose of increased environmental awareness.

Becket's commitment to practical and career skills development was evidenced by a new vocational school with a range of skill options. The school's wholistic, educational approach was reaffirmed, in part, because of the advice of consultant Dr. Larry Dye--who recognized that this fundamental aspect of the school was being undermined as a result of ongoing regulatory pressure.

When Becket was founded in 1964, the school had lofty ideals that did not always conform to actual realities. By 1984, however, experience, hard work, and commitment had greatly reduced this gap.

SECTION THREE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final two chapters incorporate a discussion of Becket's organizational evolution and implications for broad-based educational innovation.

C H A P T E R X

BECKET ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION: STABILITY WITH CHANGE

The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order. (Alfred N. Whitehead as quoted in Kennedy, 1982)

Anyone beginning a new venture must know the path to success is one which has many intricate processes and personalities operating together in an attempt to bring seemingly chaotic forces and phenomen[a] into a unified program. (Wolter, 1972a, p. 194)

Introduction

Although success may be an elusive concept, it is difficult to argue that Becket is anything less. Such a conclusion is warranted by a variety of measures, including duration of existence, diversity of program offerings, numbers of youth served, financial and physical growth, and employment opportunities created. In his 1972 doctoral dissertation, John Wolter articulated a variety of reasons for the school's initial success (1972, pp. 197-201); these same elements apply to the more recent history of the school.

Of course, Becket Academy has also been criticized. One charge is that the school develops new programs too fast and with insufficient planning. The pattern of internal promotion has led to charges that the school is incestuous. Becket is criticized for allegedly being more interested in making money than providing services. The Academy's philosophy has been called elusive. Some

have charged that the school is overly male-dominated and militaristic. The school has been criticized for allegedly bringing dangerous youth into rural communities. Social agency personnel have objected to the school's vacation policy and argued that Becket is too independent.

Although there is some validity to these criticisms, they are outweighed by the many positive aspects of the school. The remainder of this chapter focuses upon the nature of Becket's organizational evolution with respect to this positive development.

Reseachers have attempted to generalize the processes of organizational growth and development (see, for example, Greiner, 1972). Every organization--be it public or private--faces the inevitablity of change as a result of internal forces and/or external stimuli. As regards the latter, Baker describes a critical dilemma which

revolves around the difficulty in maintaining enough boundary regulation to provide adequate system stability, continuity, and pursuit of goals while the organizational system is being buffeted from all sides by environmentally-based disturbances or demands. On the one hand, a human service organization needs to maintain feedback functions, which permit openness to new information and to legitimate demands. On the other hand, if the organization becomes too open or permeable, it can lose its sense of control or direction. (1974, p. 466)

The evolution of Becket Academy can be characterized as a process of stability with change. The school has been able to maintain an identity while simultaneously evolving and responding to external stimuli. Subsequent discussion includes changes and trends in Becket history, unchanged and/or stable factors, John Wolter's

role as a stabilizer and change agent, and conclusions/future issues.

Changes and Trends in Becket History

"The history of Becket Academy can best be described as evolutionary in nature" (Dye, 1982, p. 5). Changes and trends are evident in a variety of areas including physical growth, program expansion and refinement, staff specialization and professionalism, organizational complexity, institutionalization, organizational diversification, a diversified student population, changing funding sources, and approval/recognition.

Physical Growth

The changes in Becket's physical plant represent the most tangible evidence of the school's growth. Upon recently returning to the school, a former teacher observed that "the progress of the last ten years is measured in light years" (Charles Farrow, pers. comm.). From three rundown buildings ("virtually nothing"; Sidney DuPont, interview), the Connecticut physical plant has grown significantly. The school also has access to New Hampshire and Florida facilities. This growth was achieved, in part, because tight management produced surplus funds which were applied to capital improvements.

Finances represent a second area of significant physical growth. From an initial corporate value of \$1,000, the school has grown to control nearly three million dollars in assets (less liabilities of \$800,000).

Tuition and board and care rates have increased significantly

since the early years when most of the students were privately supported and the state and federal government involvement in education was limited. Even with consideration for this change, Becket's financial growth has been dramatic. With income based almost exclusively on tuition--and without an endowment or outside monies and with limited fund-raising and few grants--Becket Academy has achieved a significant degree of fiscal stability.

Enrollment represents a third area of physical growth. The number of students have risen over the years, but not in a consistent pattern. From thirty-five boys at the school's 1964 opening, enrollment increased rapidly to an early period high of 132 (at the end of the fourth year). A subsequent decline bottomed out at sixty-eight students during the ninth year (1972-1973). By 1978-1979, there were as many as 145 students enrolled. At the end of the twentieth year, enrollment totalled 165 (144 in the East Haddam program and twenty-one at Pike School).

Growth in the number of staff (and the staff-student ratio) is more dramatic. Even in the early peak year of 1967-1968, there were only thirteen teachers (and no specialized dorm parents) for 132 students. In the fall of 1984, there were ninety-eight total employees (fifty-seven of whom were direct line staff) for approximately the same number of students.

Program Expansion and Refinement

From a beginning with little more than academic and work programs (plus staff role modelling), the program has diversified to also include formalized outdoor, farm, homelife, counseling, athletic, and nutrition components. Becket academics have been significantly upgraded and improved, and the original work program has expanded to incorporate an accredited vocational component. John Wolter asserts that the present-day Becket is "the most dynamic and comprehensive program of education in the United States today . . . (maybe in the world)" (interview).

Staff Specialization and Professionalism

Affiliated with this program refinement and expansion is the growth of staff specialization and professionalism. The early Becket staff were generalists: they taught classes, served as dorm parents, supervised in the dining hall, conducted recreational activities, and undertook construction projects. As Gilbert Morneault recalls, "At Becket you did alot of [the maintenance and custodial] work yourself" (interview). Staff were hired more for their attitude and enthusiasm than for particular skills and knowledge.

In 1984, the employees have more specialized jobs and, in most cases, prior job-specific training. The school now employs vocational instructors, special education teachers, outdoor leaders, dorm parents, counselors, maintenance personnel, and other

specialists. Reasons for this shift include increased financial resources, growing regulatory requirements, and an expanded scale of operations.

Organizational Complexity

With expanded program offerings and increased staff numbers (and specialization), the Becket organization has grown in complexity. The Academy evolved from essentially a one-person (owned and operated) school to a non-profit organization with a board of trustees; by the 1980s, Becket operations were increasingly institutionalized. There has also been growth in the number of staff in administrative and/or supervisory roles: responsibility has become increasingly decentralized (with a concurrent need for formalized communication lines). The Academy now utilizes such bureaucratic devices as formalized job descriptions and a computerized payroll; even in the late 1970s (when the atmosphere was described as "folksy"; Donald Hirth, interview), such tools were foreign to Becket's nature.

Institutionalization

The early development of Becket was "like an artform" (Sidney DuPont, interview): out of necessity, every aspect of the school incorporated a high degree of applied creativity. By 1984, however, the operation of the East Haddam program (if not necessarily the affiliates) is more of a science. Although creativity is still required, many aspects of the program are highly refined based on

years of experimentation.

Perhaps no single evidence of Becket's institutionalization rivals the increase in paperwork. This is, to a large extent, an inevitable aspect of organizational growth and development. After successful program experimentation and refinement, it is only logical that administrators do not want new staff to reinvent the wheel (thus the development of policy manuals). The increased complexity of an organization requires formalized communication (such as job descriptions, personnel policies, and detailed trip plans). Furthermore, decentralized authority necessitates more formalized accountability (for example, daily logs and incident reports).

Paper thus fulfills a variety of a growing organization's needs. However, beyond internal needs, this trend at Becket has been greatly accelerated as a result of external pressure from funding agencies.

Organizational Diversification

Becket has grown from a single Connecticut school to a diversified operation with three residential sites (Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Florida), four separate operations (Becket Academy in East Haddam, the Pike School, wilderness programs, and the Institute of Experiential Studies) and one offshoot organization (Brian House, Inc.). Outreach has also been made to adults (including Academy employment of Brian House clients, facility use by senior citizens,

and professional conferences run by the Institute).

Although the school's income has always been primarily from a single source (tuition and room and board), expenses have been reduced by diversification into such areas as construction, the farm, and use of wood fuel.

A Diversified Student Population

In its first year, Becket served a relatively homogeneous student population: boys in grades six through eight, predominately Roman Catholic, Caucasian, and from stable families. As a result of the school's evolution, the present-day student population is more diverse with respect to age, sex (with programming for both males and females), religion, and race (with a significant percentage of minority students). Nearly all the present-day students are from one-parent families. Most of the students are disadvantaged, typically from deprived socio-economic backgrounds and/or urban settings.

Although John Wolter always wanted a school for underachievers (Joan Wolter, interview), Becket's concept of the underachiever has expanded and diversified. This shift reflects, to a large extent, the rapid development of state and federal government intervention in education and the development of educational labelling; as a result, perceived differences in the students are partially subject to exaggeration.

The diversification of the student body was affiliated with the

shift from private to public funding. The early school's publicly-financed youth were carefully selected by social agencies (J. John Ashe, interview), but--as the school demonstrated its capability--increasingly needy and disadvantaged youth were referred. Present-day students typically have multiple needs (ibid.) Becket's expansion of program offerings was, in part, designed to meet these diversified needs.

Changing Funding Sources

Although the school's income has always been primarily based on tuition and room and board, there has been a dramatic shift from total private to almost exclusively public payment. Ninety-five percent of the present-day students are publicly supported (Diana Schleis, interview). This change was a direct result of increasing state and federal involvement in education in the early 1970s: prior to that time, there was little public money available. As a result, many youth who might have been accepted as private placements became eligible for public funding.

School boards made a significant number of the early public referrals for the purpose of adhering to the special education laws. Although local education authorities continue to pay the educational costs of attending Becket, state agencies are responsible for most present-day referrals and pay for board and care. Under the present system, there is a financial disincentive for direct public school placement.

Because of this close relationship with the state, Becket is directly impacted by a variety of issues over which it has little control. For example, the declining average student duration in the program (and, in turn, the rapid turnover) is a direct result of recent Department of Children and Youth Services policy aimed at reducing the maximum term of residential placement.

In sum, both the diversification of Becket's student body and the shift in funding were in response to the declining private school market and increasing state and federal involvement in education. Becket thus survived a period when many private schools were forced to close. John Wolter believes that all schools must adapt to changing circumstances. Looking back, Chris Warren adds that the "direction was a right one. . . . Becket is serving a need in society" (interview). James Hanrahan observes that Becket "became a standard bearer. . . a very necessary school" (interview).

Approval and Recognition

Becket Academy opened without any formal approval or certification. Over the course of its history, however, the school has been granted extensive approval, accreditation, and recognition for its quality programming. In March 1984, D.C.Y.S. deputy commissioner Charles Launi called the Becket program "exceptional" (Launi, 1984). From virtually no status whatsoever, Becket has achieved widespread recognition.

Unchanged and/or Stable Factors in Becket History

Although much has changed over the course of Becket history, many elements have remained essentially the same. As former trustee Langdon Rankin observes, "There has been a consistency all the way through" (interview). Among these stable factors are the wholistic education model, humanistic emphasis, opportunity for personal and professional growth, hard work/sacrifice, "can do" spirit and energy, challenge/survival, spirituality, programmatic structure and discipline, reality orientation, independence and self-sufficiency, evolution and innovation, and dualism/sublime consistency.

Wholistic Education Model

Even as new programs developed and the nature of the students changed, the wholistic educational philosophy of Becket has been consistently maintained. Admittedly, program growth has reduced the discrepancy between a very high-minded rhetoric and an often down-to-earth reality. It is also true that Becket's model of education has only recently been well-articulated. Despite these disclaimers, Becket's fundamental educational elements and purposes were always intuitively operable--or, at least, in the process of being implemented.

Although the enrollment difficulties of the early 1970s created some uncertainty about the school's identity, the earlier philosophy was ultimately reaffirmed. The adherence to an educational approach

has been called "a courageous effort to try to stay away from the medical [i.e. treatment] model" (Neal Rist, interview). Becket's program is "primarily based on education rather than counseling, confinement, or punishment" (William McCarry, interview).

This aspect of Becket--adherence to a wholistic education model--makes it unique among programs serving youth with special needs. Becket's concept of education is comprehensive: it includes classroom-based academics as well as experiential learning in all phases of a student's involvement (including work projects, the farm, homelife, and wilderness trips).

Humanistic Emphasis

"The biggest problem besetting schools is the primitive quality of human relationships" (Barth, 1980, p. 170). Even as Becket has grown to become a relatively large and complex organization, it has continued to stress positive human interaction. The program itself is "totally humanistic. . . . based on relationships" (Ronald Papp, interview). There is also an "atmosphere of sharing and community" (Michael Penkert, interview) that is a fundamental aspect of the Becket experience (for students and staff alike). As Frank Carr observes, the "cement is not that important" (interview).

Although there are no formal studies, available evidence indicates that the needs of children have been--and continue to be--served by the program. Christopher Warren (interview) recalls being recently impressed by a young man making a presentation on

television--a former Becket student who had been a needy child: "Ten years later the threads of his life are running back to Becket" (ibid.). William Toller (interview) still gets calls from former students. Peter Marshall (interview) reports that former students speak consistently in positive terms. Trustee Frank Carr calls the Academy's success "unbelievable" (interview). The continued confidence of the Department of Children and Youth Services and other referral agencies is perhaps the most significant evidence of programmatic quality.

In addition to the emphasis on serving children, Becket has a twenty-year history of attracting people-oriented staff. Ronald Papp recalls the "pure concern for kids" and observes that the Becket staff during his tenure were "some of the finest people I've ever worked with" (interview). Peter Marshall observes that Becket has attracted a large number of "outstanding individuals," adding further that he has "never met such a variety of people" (interview).

While some Becket staff have common characteristics (Roman Catholic upbringing and/or Marine Corps experience being two obvious ones), the school has always attracted a diverse population of individuals. And, while there was (at times) high turnover, those staff who stayed with the school were invariably high quality. Peter Marshall observes, "you have to have a strong personality and be secure to work at Becket" (interview).

Opportunity for Personal and Professional Growth

Closely affiliated with Becket's humanistic orientation is its emphasis on personal development--for staff as well as students.

"I believe I gained experience that I couldn't get anywhere" (Dye, 1983, p. 11) is a typical staff comment. For most of the twenty-three persons interviewed, personal and professional growth was a significant aspect of their involvement with Becket.

Gilbert Morneault observes, "After working at Becket, I felt I was prepared to work anyplace, I felt I could conquer the world" (interview). William Toller recalls his Becket experience as "a tremendous opportunity for personal growth" (interview). Michael Penkert considers Becket "a catalyst and focus for my life," adding that there is "alot of professional growth and mobility by being associated with the school" (interview). Christopher Warren recalls the "climate for individual growth" (interview). Neal Rist reports that his Becket experience provided an opportunity to gain an "understanding of how the world works" (interview). He adds that employment at Becket "forces you to confront your own problems" because of the "intensity" of the situation (ibid.).

For Donald Hirth, Becket "has given me an incredible confidence to 'conquer mountains,' take on a challenge" (interview). Joseph LaFrance also notes an increase in personal confidence achieved through his involvement at Becket. Robin Goeler (interview) learned to deal more effectively with stress, improved his communication skills, and became more willing to take chances. John Wolter "grew

in tolerance" and believes that he "could not have gotten a better education anywhere in the world" (interview).

Internal promotion has always been the rule at Becket, and new staff have the opportunity "to rise to positions of importance almost overnight" (Wolter, 1972a, p. 140). Promotion is invariably based on energy, commitment, enthusiasm, and attitude--more than age, prior experience, or credentials.

Academic advancement has also been a consistent theme throughout Becket history. Staff have been encouraged to pursue advanced degrees and other specialized training. In many cases, Becket paid for these opportunities.

None of this is to suggest that personal or professional growth comes easy at Becket: on the contrary, a high price is exacted. As Robin Goeler recalls, "I was willing to pay my dues--a given here" (interview). It has been suggested that the "primary mission of a school is to confront a student's value structure," and that this is "often painful" (Michael Penkert, interview). At Becket, this concept applies equally to students and staff alike.

As Francis McCabe observes, "To. . . [foster] change you have to have some trauma" (interview). Pain is an integral part of Becket employment, but, as Donald Hirth recognizes, "The biggest pain to working here is growing pain" (interview). An inherent component of this process is taking personal risks: "People can help you [only] if you open yourself up" (Michael Penkert, interview).

Becket's philosophy of professional development was recently articulated in an article in the Journal of Experiential Education (Teschner and Wolter, 1984a); a combination of on-the-job experience in conjunction with supervision and formal training is the model described. The primary reason people continue to work at Becket is well-expressed by Michael Penkert: "The place is still growing and I want to grow with the place" (interview).

Hard Work/Sacrifice

In the early days, hard work was absolutely essential for the day-to-day survival of the school. Even after the situation stabilized, however, the work ethic has remained a fundamental aspect of the school--for students and staff alike. Becket employees "can't go through the motions" (Robin Goeler, interview); there are "no goof-offs" at Becket (Peter Marshall, interview). Anything less than a major commitment to the job is simply not tolerated.

It is true, however, that "the test used to be bigger" (Donald Hirth, interview). For example, Sidney DuPont (interview) recalls spending weeks on campus without leaving. Even as recently as the mid-1970s, Malcolm Winkley (interview) recalls having only one day off every two weeks. In the days of Founder's School, Francis McCabe remembers the camaraderie and that--despite the commitment involved--it was "fun to get up to go to work" (interview).

In the 1980s, belief in the work ethic is on the decline, and

Becket is thus an anachronism. The program itself remains "tough, extremely demanding" (Roger Peck, interview), and staff are held accountable for the highest expectations. Compared with Becket staff, "public school teachers don't know what work is about" (Frank Carr, interview).

Sacrifice is an affiliated Becket ingredient. Christopher Warren remembers undertaking graduate training in reading--not because he was all that personally interested; the "needs of the school were placed before our own academic interests" (Christopher Warren, interview). When Donald Hirth was needed during the 1982 Canadian incident, he sacrificed his annual vacation; he recalls good-naturedly, "If I had to forfeit a vacation, there was no better way to go: [there was both] excitement and travel" (Donald Hirth, interview).

In sum, working at Becket is "not a job, [it's] a total commitment" (Ronald Papp, interview).

"Can Do" Spirit and Energy

Throughout its history, Becket has been infused with the belief that anything is possible if one is willing to work for it. As Francis McCabe (interview) observes, the school has "energy." In practical terms, this translates into the Becket attitude that "if you want to do it, [then] do it. Make it happen" (Donald Hirth, interview).

Much of this spirit was derived from staff Marine Corps

experiences. John Wolter, Christopher Warren, Joseph LaFrance, Richard Maher, Bernie Dobbins, Arthur Brown, and Herman Baskin are among the present or former Becket staff and trustees who are ex-Marines.

Challenge/Survival

Challenge is an integrated element of the Becket program: most notably as part of the wilderness trips, but also as an aspect of the morning run, athletics, and other activities. A major goal of the program is to provide students with peak experiences.

I firmly believe that these peak experiences serve as benchmarks for later in life. The heavy use of the out-of-doors. . . also gives the students a worthy use of their leisure time. . . No matter where they are, there is always a woods to explore [or] a swamp or a stream. It also makes the lives of the students more interesting. So many people today are culturally deprived. They live in cities, watch television, eat processed food, and maybe are able to go for short periods of time to the countryside. But the duration of their stays. . . [is] not enough. . . . time to have real experiences and let the experiences sink in. Just plain not enough time. . . for real adventure. Youth is not made for pleasure, but for heroism. So many times the misadventures of youth for thrillseeking, etc. [are] just a product of boredom and a natural inclination for students to seek the unknown or to test [themselves]. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 56)

Beyond being part of the program, challenge, adventure, and creative problem-solving infuse the entire Becket operation. Examples abound in Becket history. The broken-down snowplow incident was turned into a school-wide snow stomp. The death of John Wolter's parents led to the development of group homes for retarded adults. The Canadian incident was the stimulus for two national conferences and positively influenced the development of

the Pike School.

One of the most important things to be learned at Becket is the need to adjust to changing circumstances and simultaneously maintain positive energy. It is essential to perceive the world as dynamic and recognize that a problem is also an opportunity that should not be lost. John Wolter observes, "there's so much you just back into" (interview).

Such an attitude is not easily internalized, however. As Robin Goeler observes, staff sometimes "get caught in a negative trap" (interview).

Survival is a related aspect of Becket. Recalling the school's difficulties in the fall of 1976, William Toller observes, "Becket survived as Becket always does" (interview). Becket's survival has required creativity, determination, hard work, flexibility, anticipation, proactive planning, good timing, and seizing available opportunities. Malcolm Winkley goes so far as to suggest that Becket's survival is an integral part of the school's curriculum: "The way the place survives is the message to the kids about how they themselves can survive" (interview).

Spirituality

Spirituality is a consistent theme throughout Becket history; as one example, the goal of helping each child achieve his or her God-given potential has been consistently articulated. During the early years and the transitional period, there was considerable

emphasis on Christianity (especially Roman Catholicism). Joseph LaFrance recalls that Bible studies for administrators "seemed to pull alot of things together" (interview). Many of the staff participated in the Cursillo movement.

In more recent years, the Christian aspect of Becket has been slightly downplayed (becoming what J. John Ashe calls "between the lines"; interview). At the same time, however, a generic spiritual emphasis continues to be stressed.

Those interviewed spoke of promoting an "inner spirituality" (Joan Wolter, interview), "inner strength" (Christopher Warren, interview), and "a sense of sacrifice" (ibid.), as well as helping to "eradicate pain" (Neal Rist, interview). "Spiritual connectedness" (Francis McCabe, interview) and "a bond and a connection"--as articulated in the official Becket prayer by Cardinal Newman--(Malcolm Winkley, interview) were also articulated as fundamental aspects of the school.

In 1984, Becket remains essentially a "Christian community" (Donald Hirth, interview). Unlike within most organizations, there are "no turf fights" (Peter Marshall, interview)--undoubtedly a result of the spiritual (and humanistic) emphasis. William Toller (interview) recalls that "compassion" and the need "to be forgiving" were essential aspects of Becket employment.

Christopher Warren observes that there is a "spiritual force at work at Becket" (interview). John Wolter believes that the school has divine grace: "Whenever we have asked, we have always received"

(1982b, p. 47).

Programmatic Structure and Discipline

Imposed structure and discipline have always been an essential element of the Becket program. Michael Penkert observes, "Even though it [Becket Academy] may look like a resort or a country club, it is not" (interview). He and a variety of those interviewed (including Peter Marshall, Gilbert Morneault, Ronald Papp, and William Toller) articulated the school's emphasis on programmatic structure. Neal Rist recalls an "environment of discipline and expectation" that was at times "autocratic" and "militaristic" (interview). Malcolm Winkley (interview) points out that Becket enforces its expectations.

Donald Hirth observes, "I know in my heart that kids want to be told what to do," adding, "Confrontation is what we are about" (interview). A climate of expectation is also imposed upon staff: "We hold them accountable for details" (ibid.).

Reality Orientation

Affiliated with Becket's willingness to confront is the school's emphasis on the here-and-now. The program has always incorporated a philosophy of Spartan simplicity and an honesty that sometimes seems brutal. "The academy does not duck issues" (Wolter, 1979c, p. 2). Becket's approach is consistent with that espoused by fictional headmaster Dr. Frank Prescott who "wanted no escapists in his school" (Auchincloss, 1980, p. 139).

As part of this reality orientation, there has been an effort to realize internal program consistency: "We do what we say we do" (Peter Marshall, interview). Being honest with oneself is also highly valued (John Wolter, interview).

Independence and Self-sufficiency

Becket has always strived toward the ideal of independence. Even in the early years, it was different from other schools--and it continues to maintain such a distinction today. Nor does it fit any of a variety of other institutional labels: camp, residential treatment center, or training center. By maintaining a wholistic emphasis, Becket overlaps many systems: education, mental health, social welfare, and juvenile justice among them.

Becket does not conform to either of the political labels conservative and liberal. It has extracted the best from each: emphasis on hard work and many of the traditional values from conservatism with a belief in compassion and helping others from liberalism. Further, the school's back-to-the-land ethic and humanistic orientation might be considered new age in trend.

Self-sufficiency is another aspect of the school's independence. The process by which the buildings were constructed and the ongoing effort to raise much of the school's own food are obvious examples. Emphasis upon the community as a self-sustaining entity is a related concept.

In sum, Becket Academy is "a unique and exciting place to work"

(Peter Marshall, interview), a school with "a tremendous individuality" (Neal Rist, interview).

Evolution and Innovation

Perhaps nothing has been as consistent over Becket history as recognition that nothing is static, that change is inevitable. As a result, Becket is "always growing and expanding" (Gilbert Morneault, interview) and "has always been in a process of growth" (John Wolter, interview). Because the Academy has always been "dynamic" (Frank Carr, interview) and innovative, it has avoided many of the typical organizational problems described by Sarason (1972).

This evolutionary "nature of Becket requires enthusiastic young people" (Peter Marshall, interview). A high degree of flexibility is necessary to successfully work at the school: "You had to like the changes. . . alot of people couldn't take that" (Diana Schleis, interview). Successful Becket employment involves the ability to "deal with CHANGE [and] INCONSISTENCY, and at the same time maintain a FLOW which is conducive to harmonious human relations" (Wolter, 1979c, p. 3).

Dualism/Sublime Consistency

Another constant in Becket history is dualism: a reconciliation between often-expressed lofty ideals and typically down-to-earth realities. At times, the Becket model (indeed many aspects of the present discussion) appear disjointed and inconsistent. Dualism unifies these apparent discrepancies.

A closely related concept is what essayist Roger Rosenblatt calls "sublime consistency":

As admirable as consistency may sometimes be, it is not the truth, and in many a way it violates truth by holding the mind in a vise. Consistent people are often said to be the most in control of their lives, but rather than possessing consistencies, it is their consistencies that possess them; and they probably are less in control of themselves than more erratic and volatile spirits. (1983, p. 88)

Becket has implemented a philosophy of "striving toward the ideal while accepting the real" (Wolter, 1984, p. 98). The school has always attempted to achieve the highest possible standards:

Becket tried to be a truly independent and innovative school that would serve as a model for excellence. In a time when most programs were under heavy fire and criticism, Becket was trying to reach for the sky so that we would be a model for . . . any organizations which want . . . to bring youth to their potential. (John Wolter as quoted in Dye, 1982, pp. 5-6)

There are, of course, many constraints (including money, time, and regulations) which make it difficult to achieve high goals. By setting the highest standards, Becket is thus vulnerable to criticism from those who choose to emphasize the discrepancies rather than the accomplishments.

John Wolter: Stabilizer and Change Agent

Introduction

"A school. . . depends so much on the man who founds it" (James Hanrahan, interview). In Becket's case, its "innovative nature. . . can be directly attributed to its founder, president, and chief executive officer, Dr. John Wolter" (Dye, 1982, p. 5).

As Wolter's sister Gail observes, "you can talk to alot of people and get very different views. . . He affects people deeply, some positively and some negatively" (Gail Hunter, pers. comm.). Any attempt to dissect such a person is undertaken at the risk of oversimplification. Acknowledging this possibility, the following elements are offered: charisma/people orientation, idealist/philosophical, a man of action, a good business sense, foresight/vision, spirituality/mysticism, courage/risk-taker, industry/perseverance/commitment, flexibility/openness/motivation to learn, creativity/innovation, family involvement, egalitarianism, political sophistication, and complexity.

Charisma/People Orientation

Charisma is Wolter's forte, and he "always had it"--at least since high school (Gail Hunter, pers. comm.). John Wolter understands how to motivate people to accomplish tasks he considers important: "I make a conscious effort to get the most out of people" (John Wolter, pers. comm.). Convincing, charming, and

effusive are among the adjectives that have been used to describe him.

Wolter is a good storyteller (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.) whose enthusiasm rubs off on those with whom he interacts. His effectiveness in motivating people has generated the criticism that he is manipulative. Wolter is always thinking how persons he meets might be able to help the school, but he is also sincerely interested in them as individuals. He also has an ability to work with people at their own level and build relationships based on common interests.

James Hanrahan remembers him as one who "loved children" (interview). Although he is "still involved with the kids alot more than people think" (John Wolter, interview), Wolter's present energies are primarily directed towards the Becket senior staff.

Wolter's philosophy of management is consistent with the definition offered by Hersey and Blanchard: "working with and through individuals and groups to accomplish organizational goals" (1969, p. 3). He has consistently attracted quality staff (Langdon Rankin, interview) and given them opportunity.

In the hiring process, John looks for people who exude "positive energy" (John Wolter, pers. comm.) and will be good role models for the children:

I have never hired a teacher without first saying to myself would I mind if my son grew up [to be] like this man. . . . [T]hen I begin to look at his other qualifications. (Wolter, 1967, p. 11)

Sidney DuPont adds that Wolter "hires people not because of grades, but because of the 'moxie' they have and their background" (interview).

Wolter also looks for a "potential for loyalty" (pers. comm.), but insists that the loyalty he seeks is not blind. Instead, it is an attitude that is conducive to developing a relationship of mutual trust and sharing (ibid.). Among those interviewed, both Diana Schleis (interview) and Malcolm Winkley articulated what the latter called "a lifelong loyalty to John Wolter" (interview).

Working at Becket is not for everyone--indeed, probably not for most people. As Wolter wrote, "What inspire[s] some, discourage[s] others" (1972a, p. 195). He sets high expectations and holds staff accountable--and has been criticized as one who overworks staff. Wolter is demanding, direct, and forceful; he has also been called domineering, dictatorial, and fault-finding. When you work for John Wolter, you know where you stand: he openly shares his opinions and does not mince words. He is criticized for playing staff off against each other.

Wolter has also been called generous, a trait which is most evident in regard to his personal investment of time and energy in developing relationships with staff. Gilbert Morneault recalls that Wolter "gives encouragement, builds up self-confidence, gives responsibility. . . . That's why I stayed [at Becket] so long . . . because of John" (interview). Sidney DuPont remembers "his faith in me" (interview), and William Toller expressed "utmost respect and

regard" for his former boss (interview).

Joseph LaFrance recalls, "I always dreamed of being an administrator without a college degree. . . . John gave me that opportunity. I've always been grateful" (interview). Michael Penkert acknowledged Wolter's "willingness to let an eager person come in and have a shot at something" (interview).

As much as Wolter is devoted to the staff, he does not allow them to become overly dependent. As Neal Rist observes, John "sees the need to get rid of people" (interview). Wolter is like the boss he advises Becket students to seek:

What [the students] must do is simply find a good boss who will pay them what they are worth (no more and maybe a little less). We tell them that a good boss will teach them what he knows, will pay them. . . and--if he finds that their abilities exceed his usefulness--he will usually advise them to move on and give them direction as to what they can do. (Wolter, 1982b, p. 58)

He advised those who plan to start a school:

Anyone involved in the founding of a school should expect to give infinitely more than he can possibly receive. In short, he must love himself, his fellow workers, and especially the children with whom he will live and work. (Wolter, 1972a, p. 201)

Idealist/Philosophical

John Wolter is an idealist: he reaches for the seemingly impossible and makes it happen. He is change-oriented, frustrated by the status quo, and discriminating. Wolter believes in quality and strives to achieve it. He is a dreamer, and, as Robert Greenleaf writes in Servant Leadership,

Behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams. Much more than a dreamer is required to bring it to reality; but the dream must be there first. (1977, p. 16)

As an idealist, Wolter is fundamentally motivated by altruism:

There are loads of people like John who go into business. . . . He did it to make an impact on people. (Peter Marshall, interview)

Affiliated with John's idealism is his philosophical outlook. His academic training in history lends itself to this perspective. Wolter is well-read and knowledgeable in a wide-range of areas (including ancient and modern-day philosophy and religion).

A Man of Action

As much as John Wolter is an idealist and philosopher, he is also a man of action who is result-oriented. He has been called "a builder" (J. John Ashe, pers. comm.) and "a doer" (ibid.; Peter Marshall, interview). At Becket, "there's always something going [on]" which is part of "the Wolterian philosophy" (Donald Hirth, interview). Wolter thrives upon difficult tasks and can be restless, impetuous, and impatient.

An affiliated trait is Wolter's opportunism, a characteristic for which he is both praised and criticized. In founding Becket, he set out to "find a need and fill it" (Wolter, 1972, p. 150). Throughout Becket's history, he has maintained this perspective and adapted the school accordingly.

The philosophical reconciliation between John Wolter's lofty idealism and his action orientation is the previously discussed

dualism; Wolter has observed that his view on this topic is largely based on his readings of St. Augustine (John Wolter, pers. comm.). He is criticized as being inconsistent, hypocritical, and prone to exaggeration.

A Good Business Sense

John Wolter's success in developing Becket was in part the result of his outstanding business sense. He has the "old entrepreneurial spirit" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.) which enabled him to make "something from nothing" (John Wolter, pers. comm.). Wolter is a "very successful manager. . . in an area [education] where there is a void of successful managers (as compared to the business world)" (William McCarry, interview). Becket "started out on a shoestring" (James Reardon, interview) and, despite limited resources, Wolter made it into a stable financial operation.

Wolter likens the financial development of Becket to a poker game in which he kept pushing each hand's winnings back into the center of the table: year after year, there was continual financial risk with the stakes being all the school's assets (John Wolter, pers. comm.). Although the Academy's bills have always been paid (William McCarry, interview), it is only in the past two years that Becket has achieved a degree of financial security (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

Although such financial risk is "typical of a growth business," it is "very unusual" for an educational endeavor (William McCarry,

interview). The success was rooted in Wolter's willingness to do much of the school's construction (including being general contractor); the resulting improvements are thus worth far more than the money directly expended in building them. Wolter is also a "bargain hunter" (ibid.) who has no inhibitions about asking people for things (John Wolter, interview). Through tight management, the school has always been able to operate at a surplus. Wolter dislikes bureaucracy, in part, because he objects to organizational top-heaviness as a means of accomplishing tasks, but also because such a structure is costly.

Wolter's success in financially developing Becket also included some degree of good luck. For example, William McCarry recalls the time a high-ranking bank officer extended a line of credit which "went way beyond whatever you could have expected" (William McCarry, interview). Low interest rates during the school's early years also helped fuel the school's growth. Wolter's success involved far more than chance, circumstance, or low interest rates, however. (Even in today's financial climate, William McCarry observes, "interest rates don't hamper success stories"; ibid.). John Wolter is an opportunist who seeks advantage in whatever the situation may offer.

The 1968 changeover to non-profit status was eventually followed by the Academy's acquisition of the Connecticut property from John Wolter. Wolter "set the price" and "gave the school away": "I wanted to keep the school healthy so I didn't take the assets out of it" (John Wolter, pers. comm.). At present, Becket

Academy is "in excellent [financial] shape. . . . It couldn't have been better managed" (ibid.).

Wolter is criticized for spending surplus funds on capital improvements (as opposed to increasing staff salaries or diverting them to program areas). He is also criticized for personally benefiting from Becket's financial growth: there is little question that Wolter and his family are financially well-off. James Reardon observes, "Money is a goal for John as it is for ninety-eight percent of people, but I don't think that's John's primary goal" (interview). It would appear that Wolter earnestly desires to do things which will benefit humanity--but not at any or all costs, or by shunning all personal gain.

In the early years of Becket Academy, Wolter struggled with the concept of deriving financial benefit from the success of the school. He resolved this issue upon hearing the advice of his mentor Wilson Parkhill: "You have a right to your destiny and what you earn. . . . Take care of your heritage and your family" (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

Wolter unquestionably perceives money as one important aspect of perpetuating the school and supporting his family. At the same time, he appears to maintain a broader perspective:

[Some] people want to make finances part of their religion, morality, etc., but in reality its just finances. (John Wolter, interview)

Foresight/Vision

John Wolter has an ability to anticipate and prepare for the future: an almost psychic understanding of situations and people and a prophetic knowledge of the outcome of events. This "gift" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.) has enabled him to move with the flow of events while also controlling his own destiny.

Throughout Becket history, there are many examples of this ability. In founding the Academy, Wolter "put his finger on the pulse of what was happening" with respect to the demand for a private elementary boarding school (Christopher Warren, interview). He later "anticipated the changing needs of students" (William McCarry, interview), and the transition to enrollment of publicly-financed youth was "a masterpiece of timing" (Christopher Warren, interview). Wolter has also demonstrated, with few exceptions, the ability "to bring on the right [staff] people at the right time" (ibid.).

Wolter believes his success in this regard is the result of being "an observer" (John Wolter, interview). He is fond of the expressions "A warrior is aware" and "What is real is not apparent, and what is apparent is not real." Wolter believes understanding people "has nothing to do with how they act or what they say"; instead one needs to "read their energy" (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

Spirituality/Mysticism

John Wolter is a "deeply spiritual man" (Peter Marshall, interview) who "lives by a Christian ideal" and believes "God put him on earth to perform a function" (Christopher Warren, interview). Wolter claims that Becket was "founded from prayer" and is "divinely inspired" (interview). He believes that religion plays a vital role in life by providing hope.

Wolter says that "all my life I was aware of the existence of God," and he prayed for a vocation "on a very, very active level" (ibid.). His concept/definition of prayer is the "opening of heart and mind to God" (ibid.). He knows how to put the spiritual into terms people can understand.

Although Wolter's beliefs are rooted in Christianity, he is also open to other spiritual influences (including the martial arts, eastern religions, and philosophy). He believes that clarity of mind can be derived from ritual and repetition, including physical conditioning (John Wolter, pers. comm.); John regularly runs three to five miles per day and has undergone a variety of major endurance activities (including a twenty-eight day fast, walking from East Haddam to Pike, and running eleven marathons in one twelve-month period).

There is also a "mystique" about Becket as an institution (Christopher Warren, interview) and John Wolter as a person--a sense of a powerful and elusive element. Wolter is fond of quoting motorcycle daredevil Evil Knieval, who--when asked why he planned to

jump the Snake River Canyon--reportedly replied, "There are three mysteries in life: where we came from, where we are going, and why we do what we do." Criticisms related to this aspect of Wolter include that he is aloof and elusive.

Courage/Risk-taker

John Wolter has been described as independent and daring. He has also been appropriately called a "risk-taker" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.; James Reardon, interview). Although Wolter observes that "gambles are necessary in starting a school" (1972a, p. 200), it is also true that taking gambles is relatively easy for him. A "willingness to risk failure" (John Wolter, interview) is part of his essence. The financial aspect of the school (as previously discussed) is a good example.

With regards to the program, Wolter has given staff considerable freedom and encouraged them to experiment (Christopher Warren, interview). This willingness has always represented a major risk on John's part, since he is ultimately accountable for staff actions.

John Wolter claims that his willingness to risk is affiliated with his spiritual beliefs: "It was easier to take risks because you knew God would take care of it--but you didn't have the right to be stupid" (interview). He also acknowledges that every risk was carefully considered: "I'm very cautious, but when I decide to do something I just dump it [i.e., money, time, energy] in" (John

Wolter, pers. comm.).

Industry/Perseverance/Commitment

John Wolter observes, "I did not know how we were going to accomplish these things, I just knew that if we worked at it they would happen" (1982b, p. 50). Hard work is a central aspect of Wolter's attitude toward life: he has a "fantastically tremendous drive" (Langdon Rankin, interview). Wolter "eats, drinks, and sleeps Becket" (Peter Marshall, interview).

Speaking in regards to both himself and Wolter, Jim Hanrahan (who has served as headmaster of St. Thomas More School for twenty-two years) observes that school is one's "whole life" (interview). Jim Reardon argues that, if John (and Joan) had not worked for years on a "twenty-four-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week" basis, Becket "wouldn't be the success that it is today" (interview).

Associated with Wolter's emulation of the work ethic is his persistence--some would say stubbornness. John is fond of the expressions "A warrior never gives up" and "What does not destroy me makes me stronger." Given his ability to confront problems, Langdon Rankin observes that "John never seems to be overbothered by these things, he comes out right in the end" (interview).

Commitment is another aspect of this dimension of John Wolter. He is fond of calling himself a "long-term person" and often uses the Cursillo movement expression "A tree only grows when it is planted." As part of this commitment, John Wolter does not hesitate

to defend what he has built. He is criticized as aggressive, egocentric, strong-willed, and independent.

Becket represents Wolter's personal "path with a heart." As outlined in the teachings of Yaqui socerer don Juan, one must "be capable of finding satisfaction and personal fulfillment in the act of choosing the most amenable alternative and identifying oneself completely with it" (Castaneda, 1968, p. 199). Wolter is criticized as a workaholic, but Becket represents a challenge he truly loves. John Wolter "enjoys life to the fullest" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.).

Flexibility/Openness/Motivation to Learn

Throughout the history of the school, Wolter has sought, and heeded, the advice of others (including legal, accounting, education, and other professionals). He has repeatedly demonstrated flexibility (including adapting the school to meet existing needs). John also built the program around available resources, including staff capabilities; as Sidney DuPont recalls, Wolter was "flexible enough to go with what he had" (interview).

As much as he is committed to Becket, Wolter also maintains flexibility to the extent that he is willing to close the school down at any time. This philosophy is exemplified in the statement "We can't own Becket, and Becket can't own us" (John Wolter, pers. comm.).

Langdon Rankin observes that "John had an awful lot to learn

about. . . schools, and he learned it" (interview). Learning is one of Wolter's greatest strengths, in part because he perceives education as an ongoing, lifelong process.

Morris Cogan argues that an effective supervisor "must learn to recognize the springs of his own behavior" (1973, p. 43). It is in the domain of self-knowledge that John Wolter is particularly well-educated. In a 1970 graduate school paper entitled "The Socratic Method," he wrote: "The quest was always. . . to know oneself or recognize one's ignorance; and then to approach the truth as nearly as possible, no matter what the consequence" (1970, p. 25). He is what don Juan calls a "man of knowledge": "one who has followed truthfully the hardships of learning" (Castaneda, 1968, p. 82).

Such learning requires a deep-seated faith and exacts a high personal price. . "When you confront your fears, you're facing the death of some part of yourself" (John Wolter, interview).

Creativity/Innovation

Wolter has been called a "genius" (Peter Marshall, interview) and, although this label may be inaccurate in a traditional (i.e. pure intellectual) sense, it seems appropriate with respect to his ability to innovatively solve real-world problems. John has proven capable of realizing original and individualistic ideas and goals, but is criticized as being arbitrary and whimsical. Wolter's ability parallels Getzel's observation that

it is. . . the discovery and creation of problems rather than superior knowledge, technical skill, or craftsmanship that often sets the creative person apart from others in a given field. (1980, p. 243)

Family Involvement

One interesting aspect of Becket history has been the involvement of the Wolter family. Jim Hanrahan (who has thirteen children) calls St. Thomas More School "a family project" (interview), and the same is true of the Wolters and Becket Academy.

John Wolter "instilled pride" in his children's feelings about the school (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.). All five attended Becket and lived and worked on the campus. Once in college, they have also worked during summer and school-year vacations. Oldest son John F. (Jef), who is currently attending law school, was recently elected to the Becket board of trustees.

Beyond her numerous and diverse direct duties, Joan Wolter's greatest contribution to Becket has been her devotion to her husband and unflinching support of his school-building effort. She is an unusual woman, and her contribution to the success of Becket is difficult to overstate. John observes, "My love for my wife grows more every year" (interview).

John Wolter has called running a school "an advantageous way of life for bringing up a family" (1972a, p. 75). As hard as he has worked to build Becket, Wolter has also involved his wife and children in the process. He considers the opportunity to have impacted on his children one of the most positive aspects of the

Becket experience.

Wolter's firm belief in traditional family values has also generated criticism. He has been called chauvinistic and out of step with the times.

Egalitarianism

John Wolter's success is partially based on his sense of egalitarianism. He is open to giving any child the opportunity to attend Becket: "We should take [a child] if we possibly can" (John Wolter, interview).

Wolter identifies with the underdog. He believes that inner-city youth are not given the same educational opportunities as their suburban counterparts--that the "the deck is stacked" (ibid.). He also believes that our society overvalues superficial personality traits--as opposed to an individual's inner core or essence.

Wolter respects the individuality in every person and hires staff on the basis of their abilities. Rather than discouraging potential employees who do not fit the Becket mold (or a specific job description), he often creates opportunities which match their talents. At the same time, he has been successful in molding this diversity of people into a whole that is bigger than its individual parts.

Political Sophistication

Although John Wolter is essentially a direct man, he has also learned to be politically sophisticated. It was written about

Deerfield's former headmaster Frank Boyden:

Before 1924, according to some long-resident observers in Deerfield, the headmaster was straightforward in his ways, but after he saw what a small concentration of pettiness almost did to his school, he became, as he remained, a fox. (McPhee, 1966, p. 62)

John Wolter was exposed to pettiness early--in 1964 when Lyme citizens objected to the proposed Academy. He learned quickly that developing and protecting a school requires far more than good intentions and a sound program.

Wolter is both poised and confident. He is very articulate in expressing his beliefs and explaining the nature of Becket to local citizens and public officials. He is well-known and respected in the communities of East Haddam, Pike, and Everglades City. Wolter is active in town affairs, has always used the services of local businesses whenever possible, and has willingly helped neighbors (he calls these activities "working the street"; John Wolter, pers. comm.). John Wolter strives to keep communications open and maintain good relations with everyone. Critics charge that he is devious and a wheeler-dealer whose ultimate motives are selfish.

Wolter prefers an open, straightforward approach, but is also wary and maintains his guard. When attacked, he fights back--often in a subtle manner (expression: "Delay, confuse, negotiate"). Wolter avoids fights, however, preferring a philosophy of "live and let live." He does not usually hold grudges: once a conflict is resolved, it is usually over as far as Wolter is concerned.

Complexity

John Wolter has been called "a great man" (Arlene Wolter, pers. comm.), "an extraordinary person" (James Reardon, interview), and "a strong personality whose interest in Becket Academy is deep and all encompassing" (Rouse et al., 1977, p. 21). But what of his darker side? What of his domineering and opinionated nature, egocentricity, arrogance, and unwillingness to let go?

It was written of Deerfield's Boyden:

He is famous for his simplicity, which he cultivates. He is, in the highest sense, a simple man, and he has spent his life building a school according to elemental ideals, but only a complicated man could bring off what he has done, and, on the practical plane, he is full of paradox and politics. Senior members of his faculty, in various conversations, have described him as "a great humanitarian," "ruthless," "loyal," "feudal," benevolent," "grateful," "humble," impatient," "restless," "thoughtful," "thoughtless," "selfish," "selfless," "stubborn," "discerning," "intuitive," and "inscrutable"--never once disagreeing with one another. (McPhee, 1966, p. 13)

As another example, consider the fictional rector of Justin, Dr.

Francis Prescott:

He knew himself thoroughly, good and bad. He knew his capacity to be petty, vain, tyrannical, vindictive, even cruel. He fully recognized his propensity to self-dramatization and his habit of sacrificing individuals to the imagined good of his school. Yet he also saw at all times and with perfect clarity that his own peculiar genius was for persuading his fellow men that life could be exciting and that God wanted them to find it so. And having once seen and understood the good that he was thus destined to accomplish, how could he ever stop? How could he ever, even in moments of doubt, switch off his genius and leave his audience before a darkened stage? (Auchincloss, 1980, pp. 340-341)

Surely, Wolter is as complex and elusive a personality as either the factual Boyden or the fictional Prescott. Every person

has both strengths and weaknesses: it is tempting to extoll the former and ignore the latter. It is appealing to argue that the many strong points outbalance the weaker ones. Greatness is, however, far less tangible than the bottom line of such a theoretical balance sheet. It involves something far more amorphous. John Wolter himself has characterized it as a

quality that almost defies description. Some people call it "guts," others call it "heart". But if you possess this intangible, you will know it and so will those about you. (1972, p. 201)

Other appropriate terms include moxie, personal power, intuition, grace, and baraka (an Arabic concept with no English counterpart). To use the vernacular of the 1980s, perhaps the best expression is the right stuff.

Throughout twenty years of Becket history, Wolter has shouldered ultimate responsibility for the school. Even many who work at Becket Academy in 1984 may fail to understand the implications: from not-that-much distance, being president of Becket looks like a pretty easy job. However, John Wolter "paid a deep price": he "was in the trenches all those years. . . now it looks soft" (Peter Marshall, interview).

Upon closer examination, one finds that any apparent softness is mere illusion. Although the physical appearance of Becket might generate the conclusion that the school is highly stable, the reality is far different. A changing economy--or even a new state statute--could threaten its existence. John Wolter knows all too

well that it is his ultimate (and lonely) responsibility to anticipate and act to keep the expanding operation going. This is what Malcolm Winkley describes as Wolter's "burden" (interview).

Although John Wolter is no longer as involved in the day-to-day operations, the responsibility is not any less. On the contrary, he admits that "it's harder for me now than in the early days; there is so much going on" (pers. comm.). As the man at the top, it remains his duty to "keep all the energies flowing" (ibid.). It is a complex job that has required a person of diverse resources and talent.

Conclusions and the Future

In this chapter, the evolution of Becket Academy was described with respect to both stable and changing elements. The role of John Wolter, as the founder and driving force behind the school, was examined. The complicated--and sometimes apparently contradictory--nature of the program was integrated into the discussion. As Donald Hirth observes, "It's an amazing place. . . . It's taken me awhile to figure it out" (interview).

The school's history is well-summarized by Peter Marshall: "It keeps getting better, that's the story of Becket" (interview). Diana Schleis notes that "each change brought about something better for Becket. . . it made it a better place" (interview). It has been suggested that Becket has survived its infancy and adolescence and is now into a "young adult phase" (Michael Penkert, interview). What will the next phase bring?

The future is obviously difficult to ascertain. Who in 1964 would have been able to predict the nature of Becket twenty years later? The school faces several major issues, the resolution of which will shape Becket's future direction.

The first is maintaining the energy that created it. Becket's innovative nature is directly related to its historical context of ongoing struggle. As Francis McCabe observes, there is a risk that "once it's built, the vitality's gone" (interview). As Becket becomes increasingly refined and institutionalized, it might well

become just another rigid and bureaucratic organization. Malcolm Winkley believes that a positive future step for Becket might be an "unfreezing" of the institutional structure (interview), but--at a time when government agencies are demanding increasing paper accountability--such a direction would seem unlikely. A successful future Becket will, however, operate simultaneously in two seemingly antithetical worlds: the institutional and the creative.

A second important issue facing Becket is survival without John Wolter. Wolter, who is in the process of reducing his involvement, perceives the need "to get Becket into the hands of people who will keep the organization growing" (John Wolter, interview). James Reardon believes that "Becket will survive without John" (interview), and Diana Schleis states optimistically, "The new people will make changes to make Becket better" (interview). The decreased involvement of Wolter will, however, create a vacuum difficult, if not impossible, to fill.

A third issue is maintaining financial self-sufficiency. At present, this issue is almost totally tied to enrollment derived from referrals by the State of Connecticut Department of Youth Services. A future Becket must consider alternative and diversified sources of income.

A fourth issue is maintaining independence--an essential element if Becket is to continue as a creative and innovative educational alternative. The school must walk the very fine line

between serving existing needs and maintaining its educational purposes and unique identity. As a result of ongoing regulatory pressure, a high degree of vigilance will be required.

The future of Becket will undoubtedly include fine-tuning and refinement of existing programs. The East Haddam program is, of course, the most developed; it is possible that future changes will have more to do with execution (as opposed to major new program thrusts). It is unlikely that there will be major new physical developments (on the Connecticut campus) to rival past efforts.

The Pike School and Institute of Experiential Studies will, in all probability, be incorporated separately from the East Haddam operation. A future "Becket" will thus probably be an umbrella of independent (or at least quasi-independent) operations.

It also seems likely that new offerings will be developed for senior citizens and other populations; a willingness to innovatively serve existing needs will no doubt continue. Further it is likely that the success of Becket will result in increased recognition and the development of replicated programs based on its model. Becket will thus become increasingly influential in the broad domain of education and human services (for further discussion, see the next chapter).

At the same time, Academy concepts may well infuse ventures beyond the scope of these fields as Becket seeks additional ways to contribute to society. Surely, Becket is as much an idea--a way of looking at the world--as it is a place or a school.

In sum, the founding of Becket Academy was described as "educational pioneering" (Wolter, 1972, p. 200). As Becket begins its third decade, this same spirit endures.

C H A P T E R X I

BECKET ACADEMY AND BROAD-BASED EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

Innovation is generally superior to reform or revolution.
(Aaker, undated, p. 9)

John [Wolter] is not so much concerned with education as with making better human beings. (James Hanrahan, interview)

Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, there is wide agreement that changes are needed in American public education. It was further recognized that those who advocate for changes have largely overlooked alternative educational models currently in operation. The failure to confront the fundamental issue of educational purpose was discussed in chapter two.

This concluding chapter includes an overview of educational purpose in the contexts of public schools and Becket Academy, an examination of the problems of public education, presentation of elements in an educational innovation model, and a brief discussion of broader implications.

A fundamental assumption of this chapter is that the Becket Academy educational model is not limited (with respect to its applicability) to special needs students--that the essence of the Becket model is generically suited for service to most youth. As Becket trustee Frank Carr (interview) observes, public school

students should have similar experiences. The Becket approach is also perceived as relevant in areas outside the domain of formal education.

The Purpose of Education: Public Education and Becket Academy

Recalling the discussion in chapter two, it is appropriate to compare and contrast the purposes of education in the public schools and at Becket Academy. Obviously, public schools vary, and this discussion is general in nature. At the same time, it is fair to suggest that our system of American public education is far more homogeneous than otherwise. It should also be acknowledged that this discussion integrates implemented purposes--whether formally articulated or not.

The public schools primarily emphasize intellectual/cognitive development. When included, aesthetic and physical education are generally considered frills. Little formalized effort is directed toward motivational development, although individual teachers are often able to achieve success in this area. Affective/psychological development is widely perceived as outside the realm of public education, and very few attempts are made to provide the students with life experiences.

Values/moral development is a highly controversial area in public education. It appears that the public would prefer that morals and values be kept out of the schools; whether this is truly possible is a matter rarely discussed. Character, wholistic, and spiritual development are also generally perceived to be outside the realm of public education.

In contrast, Becket Academy places high value on character,

wholistic, and spiritual development. Values and morals are an integral part of a Becket education. Although the school includes cognitive learning, it also emphasizes both physical/health and affective/psychological education. Aesthetic development is relatively limited in emphasis. Motivation is promoted by exposing students to a variety of learning opportunities--many of which involve direct life experiences (i.e. work projects, wilderness trips, the farm).

With respect to utilitarianism/practical skills, the public education system emphasizes acquiring basics that can be subsequently applied in training for careers; the direct development of employment skills is not generally perceived as a role of public education (with the exception of vocational education offered to a small percentage of students). Instead, the schools prepare students for further education. Leisure skills development receives relatively limited emphasis.

At Becket, there is a firm belief that students should be exposed to practical/utilitarian skills. Teaching of the work ethic is integrated in the program, and many students learn vocational skills. Leisure skills development is emphasized, especially through the outdoor program and afternoon activities.

With respect to social goals, public schools have traditionally incorporated transmission of civilization/social continuity, but this emphasis has declined in recent years. Social conformity is highly integrated (often covertly) in public education. Social

change is emphasized very little--although the schools are sometimes used to promote political aims (i.e. bussing for desegregation). Social selection is a major function of public education which heavily emphasizes competition (to the relative exclusion of cooperation and human relationships).

At Becket Academy, transmission of civilization/social continuity is not highly emphasized, but the school openly teaches students to conform to social expectations. At the same time, Becket is also promoting fundamental social change in a direction consistent with the values espoused in the school's principles. Cooperation and human relations are more emphasized than competition.

In the public schools, individual empowerment is incorporated primarily in the context of competition and social selection. Alternatively, Becket's emphasis on empowerment is more wholistic, incorporating development of inner strength, self-discipline, and self-knowledge.

Promotion of ecosystem responsibility is given limited emphasis in the public schools. At Becket, this purpose is well-integrated in the curriculum, especially in the farm and outdoor programs.

Public education tends to be primarily product-oriented, while Becket emphasizes both product and process/lifelong skills development. Public schools tend to be organizationally rigid, while Becket is highly innovative and rapidly evolving.

In sum, public education and Becket Academy are in relatively limited agreement with respect to educational purposes. For those individuals who believe in the fundamentals of the Becket approach, these discrepancies suggest possible directions for public school innovation.

What is Really Wrong with the Public Schools?

It is, however, simplistic to conclude that the problems of the public schools are that their purposes are, to a large extent, different from those espoused at Becket Academy. The problems of public education are multi-faceted and involve other social institutions. A public school teacher laments:

Come visit a public school and see the number of kids who come to us unloved, rootless, with no sense of social responsibility, no philosophical or religious training, no sense of belonging to a socially responsible group. They are often angry, resentful of authority that seems to have done nothing for them. (Cucinatto, 1983, p. 13)

The public school emphasis on cognitive skills is undoubtedly a carryover from times when family and other social institutions were more consistently serving the other developmental needs of youth. However, the modern preoccupation with the cognitive has only contributed to a deteriorating social situation. As other institutions (including the family and religion) are failing to serve these needs, the schools must be willing to fill the vacuum.

A major criticism of public education is its failure to meet the individual educational needs of all children: many are reasonably well-served by the existing structure, but a significant percentage are not. It must be recognized that process is often as important as product--that a youth's success in any area can foster achievement in others. In public schools (unfortunately) there is generally limited opportunity for significant success except in academics and team sports.

The problem can be addressed by providing more diverse learning opportunities (especially those that involve direct experiences)--educational alternatives for students who have repeatedly experienced classroom failure. Experiential education opportunities also serve to broaden the knowledge of those who are academically successful.

There is also a need to promote the development of personal qualities--as opposed to present overemphasis on assimilation of information. As Conrad and Hedin argue, teacher training must incorporate "understanding adolescence and human development in contrast to the current emphasis on teaching a discipline" (1981, p. 18). Combs observes:

Modern education must produce far more than persons with cognitive skills. It must produce humane individuals, persons who can be relied upon to pull their own weight in our society, who can be counted upon to behave responsibly and cooperatively. (1972, p. 23)

Unfortunately, humane qualities are already relegated in our public schools to 'general' objectives--which means they are generally ignored--while teachers concentrate their efforts on what they are going to be evaluated on. (ibid., p. 25)

This points to another problem area: the enormous gap between espoused ideals and implemented realities. Schools often have appropriately stated aims, but little effort is made to achieve them. Goodlad (1983) observes that, even though non-cognitive goals are generally recognized, educational measurement is primarily oriented toward intellectual assessment. Thus, by default, these other worthy goals are effectively ignored.

At the same time, many students are alienated by the profusion of covert purposes (including the selection/triage process and social control). Silberman observes that a "major source of underlying hostility is the preoccupation with grades" (1970, p. 138). He argues further that schools have a "pervasive atmosphere of distrust" (ibid., p. 134) and

teach students every day that they are not people of worth, and certainly not individuals capable of regulating their own behavior. (ibid.)

Further,

schools discourage students from developing the capacity to learn by and for themselves. (ibid., p. 135)

A further gap between the ideals and reality of public schools is their nonegalitarian nature. One striking example is the ideal of equal educational opportunity--and the reality that wealthy and upper middle class communities have far better schools than less affluent areas.

Perhaps the most significant problem area in public education is the failure to promote human spirituality. The worthy aim of church/state separation has been distorted to the point that public schools lack a sense of relevance, commitment, and joy. McMurrin calls this

the failure of the schools to contribute with adequate effectiveness to the development of spiritual strength in the individual--the cultivation of a genuine sense of meaning, purpose, and worth in human existence. (1971, p. 150)

Silberman argues that "the proper kind of education gives meaning

and direction to the search for identity" (1970, p. 336). John Holt goes so far as to suggest that schools have contributed to the problem:

Schooling destroys the identity of children, their sense of their own being, of their dignity, competence, and worth. I now feel the damage goes still deeper, and that the schooling of most children destroys a large part, not just of their intelligence, character, and identity, but of their health of mind and spirit, their very sanity. (1970, p. 51)

Richard Kraft adds:

I cannot help but feel that unless and until we begin to once again talk of such values as the ability to take risks, empathy with the trials of our fellow human beings, commitment to causes and persons, honesty in our relationships and vulnerability to the exigencies of life, then all the national commissions on education. . . will be but mere verbiage. (1984, p. 158)

Schools need to promote what Robert Pirsig calls "an inner quietness, a peace of mind so that goodness can shine through. . . . [and] involves unself-consciousness, which produces a complete identification with one's circumstances" (1974, p. 265).

Another fundamental problem in public education is rigidity with respect to evolution and change--a point noted by Goodlad (1983). As Silberman observes, "The reform movement has produced innumerable changes, and yet the schools themselves are largely unchanged" (1970, pp. 158-159). In the 1940s, Maria Montessori wrote that secondary schools

do not take any special care for the personality of the children, nor do they give all the special physical attention that is necessary during the period of adolescence. Thus not only do they not correspond to the social conditions of our day, but they fail to protect the principal energy on which the future depends: human energy, the power of individual

personality. Young people in the secondary schools are compelled to study as a "duty" or a "necessity." They are not working with interest nor any definite aims that could be immediately fulfilled and would give them satisfaction and a renewed interest in continuous effort. They are directed by an external and illogical compulsion, and all their best individual energy is wasted. Adolescents and young people almost right up to maturity are treated like babies in the elementary schools. At fourteen or sixteen they are still subjected to the petty threat of "bad marks" with which the teachers weigh up the work of boys and girls by a method that is just like that of measuring the material weight of lifeless objects with the mechanical aid of a balance. The work is "measured" like inanimate matter, not "judged" as a product of life.

And on these marks the future of the student depends. So study becomes a heavy and crushing load that burdens the young life instead of being felt as the privilege of initiation to the knowledge that is the pride of our civilization. The young people. . . are formed into a mold of narrowness, artificiality and egotism. What a wretched life of endless penance, of futile renunciation of their dearest aspirations! (1973, pp. 100-101)

Recalling his early 1960s public school teaching experience, John

Wolter reports:

I observed that the majority of the teachers failed to pay proper attention to the students, and the students were not receiving the kind of education relevant to their needs. The key ingredients necessary for achievement--a sense of purpose and a willingness to work hard--that I had learned from the Marine Corps, were lacking in the students and the majority of the faculty as well. There was no group, nor even much individual, effort on the part of the professional staff, and there. . . [were] no overriding objectives in the educational program, no encouragement nor reward for industry. (1972a, p. 61)

Unfortunately, these two statements ring as true today as they did when they were written: so very little has changed.

A Model for Educational Innovation

Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to propose a detailed new educational model, it is appropriate to suggest some of the elements that such a model would include. First, it must be based upon a succinct concept of educational purpose. The model must not fall into the trap observed by Combs: "Whenever we want to change education we usually end by providing people with more and more information" (1972, p. 21).

R. Freeman Butts (1960) has suggested that a central theme of American education has been the search for freedom. He argues that our national concept of freedom has conceptually evolved from the colonial period's freedom from damnation to the modern emphasis on individual liberty.

Individual liberty is, however, an elusive concept--and one which has been abused to the point of trivialization. The image of the Marlboro man evokes an emotional link with a "freedom" of invulnerability, detachment, and ultra-independence/self-reliance. The latest (and raciest) sports car is presented as an alternative vehicle for achieving this same state. Then there is the advertisement for a convenience store chain which promotes "freedom" by implementing extended business hours.

Certainly, true freedom is very different (and far deeper) than suggested by these--or any of the similar--messages with which we are continually bombarded. A more accurate concept might be the

ability to perceive "untested feasibilities" (Freire, 1972, p. 105): developing an internal process/capability to reach beyond preconceived notions for the highest level of truth.

Freedom and educational purpose are inextricably linked: to truly understand educational purpose, it is essential to be free to recognize alternatives. Freedom may be a goal of education--but it is also very much a process that enables us to reach that goal. Education must promote the understanding of freedom which will, in turn, serve to enhance our quest for purpose. At the same time, there is no higher purpose of education than to be free to understand (and improve) ourselves and our social institutions.

A model of educational innovation must incorporate a never-ending quest to understand the fundamental nature of education. Learning needs to be perceived as both a means and an end. Education must be infused with challenge, emphasis upon achieving individual potential, and belief in future possibilities. It should be wholistic ("It's just alot different to learn with your whole self as opposed to only your intellect"; Wolter, 1982b, p. 59) and spiritual in character. It must incorporate responsibility to one's neighbors and community plus a sense of loyalty and commitment. The ideals of self-discipline and sacrifice should be promoted.

Education should incorporate a diversity of learning paths in order to promote individual success and peak experiences. Alternatives should include hands-on encounters with the world outside the classroom. High value should be placed on

personal growth (for students and staff alike) and the importance of role modelling. Education should promote the concept that hard work is necessary in order to achieve, and that life is an endless series of growth-promoting struggles.

Such a model would include both idealism and realism. Idealistic aspects include high expectations and aspirations, a belief that anything is possible. At the same time, there must be recognition that survival and growth toward the ideal require hard work, commitment, and responsibility. The model must be responsive to the needs of the local, state, national, international, and ecological communities. It should be creative and innovative-- instructionally as well as organizationally.

What exactly would such a model look like? It would be presumptuous to suggest that every school should be a duplicate of Becket Academy. To suggest so would be to miss the most important point. Rather than focusing exclusively on the Becket that exists today, it is more critical to examine the process that got it there.

What built Becket was an innovative spirit, a willingness to risk, experiment, and learn. It is this critical element that is missing in public education. Public schools are hampered by bureaucracy, rigidity, and other disincentives for achieving excellence. Instead of attempting to control what happens in the schools, the public sector should provide incentives for development of creative alternatives.

Probably the most effective strategy for promoting educational innovation would be decentralization and reduced regulation of education. Placing individual schools (or school districts) in private hands is a promising possibility. Providing educational innovators with increased room to maneuver would undoubtedly do more for public education than is possible through any centralized reform effort.

The Becket experience demonstrates that private initiative and public service can be integrated. The most innovative and successful educational programs will be those that can operate in both domains: drawing from the private sector a sense of independence and entrepreneurial zeal and from the public sector a commitment to serving human needs.

Is such innovation possible in the public schools? Clearly, this cannot be achieved overnight; fundamental change is evolutionary in nature, and the effort will be a long struggle demanding a high level of commitment. However, as the Rev. Jesse Jackson reportedly stated during his recent presidential campaign, "If you can conceive it, and you can believe it, you can achieve it." The growth of Becket is evidence enough of this truism.

Beyond Education

One prediction is for a future in which the individual is in danger of losing himself in a beehive-like habitat which is the city, of losing his identity in a complex of institutions which is society, and of losing his emotional stability in a stressful, leisure-oriented, value mosaic which is his cultural environment. The prediction is also for a future in which the very fabric of society may be threatened by power struggles between socioeconomic subgroups, by value conflicts between generations and sociocultural groups, and by the lack of purpose and direction which accompany the demise of the value system. And finally, the prediction is for a future in which the physical environment in which man exists may be threatened by continued industrial growth, resulting in pollution of the air and water and destruction of ecological balances. (Downey, 1971, p. 157)

We have concentrated on the successful appearance of things to the starvation of who we are. Our world of appearances is a marvel of technological expertise while our hidden world of meanings droops, languishes, and becomes moribund from lack of attention, lack of acknowledgement.

We have unwittingly put a false face on the nature of things and placed a high value on its maintenance. Transient matters--how much we make, how much we bought, what grade we got, who won--these are the meanderings of the shallow rivers that end in the dry gulch of hopelessness. We finally become, as a people, atomized masses, deodorized, sanitized, scented, and sunk in the bamboozlement that if only we could quantify happiness--in dollars, degrees, and domains--then surely all the others would know who we really are and there would be an end to heartache. (Houston, 1979, p. 49)

The crisis in education is but the tip of the iceberg of the far deeper problems facing our society. One wonders if we--both as individuals and as a nation--have not somehow lost the ability to learn. We seem incapable of internalizing the truths that emerge from experiencing life. Our sense of awareness and responsiveness--to other humans, our nation, our environment--seems to have lost

some fundamental direction.

Becket Academy is about alot more than education. On a higher level, Becket is a community of children and adults struggling to find a responsible and fulfilling path through a modern-day wilderness of confusion and despair. As such, it is a beacon of hope.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A is the interview guide which was utilized.
Appendix B is a complete list of those interviewed with appropriate additional information. Appendix C is a listing of addresses and telephone numbers of Becket programs.

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

The following interview guide was employed in all twenty-three interviews.

Initial Statement

My name is Douglass Teschner, and I have been an employee of Becket Academy for the past three years. As part of my doctoral program at the University of Massachusetts, I am writing a dissertation on Becket. I have the full support of John Wolter in this effort. I have reviewed available documents and developed a list of a number of individuals (yourself included) who have had a major impact upon the school. I am hoping to interview these individuals regarding their own perspectives on the growth of the Academy and their own involvement. Eventually we hope to publish a book describing the history of Becket. I am hoping that you are willing to be interviewed. In general, I would prefer to use your name as the source of the information that you provide (although I can maintain confidentiality as regards specific information if you so request). If agreeable with you, I would like to tape record our conversation, although I can stop taping anytime you would so prefer. I will also be taking notes.

Questions

(1) Let's start in the present. Could you tell me about what you are doing now?

(2) Recalling your employment (or involvement) with Becket, could you clarify the years you were employed at (or involved with) Becket, and your title(s) and responsibilities?

(3) I am interested in learning more about you as a person and your involvement with Becket. What is it about you--your situation, your personality, your desires, whatever--what is it about you that you think led you to become part of Becket?

(4) What factors do you think contributed to your successful involvement?

(5) Looking back, what do you think is (was) your most important contribution to Becket; what would you like to be remembered for?

(6) What was your most memorable experience with Becket?

(7) I am also interested in how employment (or involvement) with Becket impacted on your personal and professional life. More specifically, what areas of growth did you experience as a result of your involvement with Becket?

(8) Now I would like to talk more generally about Becket Academy. Suppose that you were talking with someone totally unfamiliar with Becket. How would you describe the program?

(9) What do you consider to be the underlying philosophy of Becket's program?

(10) I am also interested in the growth of Becket over time. From your perspective, how has (did) Becket change(d) from your first involvement until the present (or the time at which you were no longer involved)?

(11) Do you have any other thoughts or feelings about Becket Academy and your involvement that you would like to share?

(12) Can you tell me about your background: home, upbringing, college, and how it affected your involvement in the program.

(13) Lastly, could you clarify any missing factual information: your full name, address, telephone--home and work, age, education, and current occupation.

Thank you. You have been very helpful.

APPENDIX B

Persons Interviewed

NAME & AGE DATE OF INTERVIEW	HISTORY WITH BECKET (Incl. Various Titles Held)	SITUATION AT TIME OF INTERVIEW
J. John Ashe 42 May 21, 1984	<u>1966-67</u> : part-time re- creation and child care aide <u>1969-1984</u> : counselor/ therapist (one day per week)	Deputy Superintendent Hamden County Jail Springfield, Ma.
Frank J. Carr 61 Dec. 3, 1984	<u>1977-present</u> : trustee; chairman of trustees	Consultant Essex Machine Works Essex, Ct.
Sidney I. DuPont 43 May 14, 1984	<u>1966-1972</u> : teacher, athletic director; director of studies; director of maintenance; director of Becket Adventures (summer)	Headmaster Grosse Point Academy Grosse Point, Mi.
Robin B. Goeler 30 Jan. 20, 1984	<u>1977-present</u> : dorm parent; wilderness trip leader; teacher; athletic director and team II leader; principal	Principal Becket Academy
James F. Hanrahan 60 May 25, 1984	<u>1964-5</u> : co-founder and principal owner	Founder and Headmaster St. Thomas More School Colchester, Ct.
Donald R. Hirth 32 Jan. 19, 1984	<u>1977-present</u> : athletic director, phys. ed. teacher, & dorm parent; dean of students; director	Director Becket Academy

NAME & AGE DATE OF INTERVIEW	HISTORY WITH BECKET (Incl. Various Titles Held)	SITUATION AT TIME OF INTERVIEW
Joseph A. LaFrance, Jr. 49 May 23, 1984	<u>1970-1975</u> : dean of discipline & athletic director; houseparent director; asst. headmaster	Caseworker/Houseparent Milton Hershey Sch. Hershey, Pa.
Peter Marshall 53 Jan. 24, 1984	<u>1977-present</u> : counselor/therapist; director of counseling	Director of Counseling Becket Academy
Francis J. McCabe, Jr. 34 May 11, 1984	<u>1975-1980</u> : dean of students & teacher; wilderness director <u>1983-present</u> : director of The Pike School	Director The Pike School Pike, N.H.
William H. McCarry 48 May 9, 1984	<u>1965-present</u> : accountant; secretary/treasurer (unpaid) of the corporation	C.P.A. in private practice Old Saybrook, Ct.
Gilbert G. Morneault 42 May 21, 1984	<u>1968-1974</u> : teacher and dorm parent; reading specialist; director of summer school; librarian; art teacher; academic dean	Authority and exhibitor of books on dyslexia and learning disabilities Union, Ct.
Ronald J. Papp 47 May 10, 1984 May 17, 1984	<u>1973-1975</u> : director of admissions & senior teacher; headmaster	Administrator Northwestern Regional H. S. Winsted, Ct.
Roger H. Peck 47 May 14, 1984	<u>1976-present</u> : trustee; training consultant	Professor Southern Connecticut State Univ.; Educational & Business Consultant
Michael R. Penkert 37 May 15, 1984	<u>1976-present</u> : cook; art teacher; wilderness trip leader; director of admissions	Director of Admissions Becket Academy
Langdon G. Rankin 71 May 29, 1984	<u>1968-1978</u> : trustee	Retired Essex, Ct.

NAME & AGE DATE OF INTERVIEW	HISTORY WITH BECKET (Incl. Various Titles Held)	SITUATION AT TIME OF INTERVIEW
James D. Reardon 52 May 8, 1984	<u>1964-present</u> : school attorney; vice president (unpaid) of the corporation; trustee	Attorney Old Saybrook, Ct.
W. Neal Rist 40 May 31, 1984	<u>1966-1971</u> : teacher and dorm parent; director of athletics; dean of discipline <u>1976-79</u> : consultant; principal	Consultant Alexander & Alexander, Human Resource Division Bridgeport, Ct.
Diana P. Schleis 54 May 30, 1984	<u>1966-present</u> : secretary; supervisor of office staff; financial officer; assistant secretary of trustees	Financial Officer Becket Academy
William R. Toller 34 May 9, 1984	<u>1973-1976</u> : teacher and dorm parent; assistant director; director of summer school; principal	Assistant Deputy Superintendent for Human Services Hampden County Jail Springfield, Ma.
Christopher J. Warren 44 May 14, 1984	<u>1964-1972</u> : teacher and dorm parent; summer school director; assistant headmaster	Journalism and Media Instructor Middletown (Ct.) High School
Malcolm W. Winkley 34 May 15, 1984	<u>1973-1983</u> : teacher and dorm parent; director of Founder's School; director	Director Brian House, Inc. Chester, Ct.
Joan M. Wolter 47 May 4, 1984	<u>1964-present</u> : co-founder; bookkeeper, dorm parent; business manager; nutrition consultant; secretary of the corporation; trustee	Business Manager and Nutrition Consultant Becket Academy
John J. Wolter 47 May 12, 1984	<u>1964-present</u> : founder; teacher; headmaster; trustee; president	President Becket Academy

APPENDIX C

Addresses

Becket Academy River Road East Haddam, Connecticut 06423	(203) 873-8658
The Pike School R.R. 1, Box 18 Pike, New Hampshire 03780	(603) 989-5680
The Institute of Experiential Studies P.O. Box 23 Hadlyme, Connecticut 06439	(203) 873-8658

